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## Re: Let kids be Public Transportation Leaders

By Letters to the Editor  
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""Poll: leave school start times alone", ""Parents choose schools close to home" and ""Public transportation may one day be a reality." Maybe it is serendipity that these three topics have graced the pages of The Times at about the same time recently.

They all have one thing in common: transportation. This brought to mind an idea that I feel could remedy some of the schools' transportation woes while at the same time giving a boost to public transportation. My idea is for the schools to offer a new high school class called ""Public transportation 101".

High school students in grades 11 or 12 would be offered school credit for using public transportation instead of school buses. Passes could be provided so there would be no additional cost to the students. Since it's been found that parents are choosing schools closer to home, the commute shouldn't be too bad, even with our currently underfunded public bus system.

Many of these kids are the same ones that are taking the PSTA bus to the mall on weekends already anyway. And they're about the same age as kids that we ask to find their way around Baghdad on a daily basis.

Immediately Apparent benefits:

- Less school buses needed.
- The idea of later starting times for high school students could be implemented without affecting the younger kids.
- More demand for public buses would increase PSTA revenue to allow more buses, more routes.
- More PSTA buses and more routes would increase public ridership, creating demand for even more PSTA buses and routes.
- Kids that haven't been using public transportation would be exposed to it, starting a good habit for adult life.
- Budding young adults would get an opportunity to demonstrate their maturity and sense of responsibility while at the same

time enjoying an early taste of adult independence. It would be an easy "A" but a service to the

community.

There may even be energy conservation or public transportation grant money available to offset any cost of the program. If such money is available, there should be a better than average chance that we would win it since it would serve both schools and public transportation.

This would let our young people of have a real and pivotal influence on the future of their community. Let these leaders of tomorrow start today. Lao-tzu: ""A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step." Let that step be a student's and onto a public bus.

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