

Hello,

A couple of years ago I think either 2017 or 2018 we experienced our first major issue with rural school bus services.

A day before the school year started we were notified that our school bus route was drastically changing by adding the most northern families to our bus (we were the most southern family) which not only meant nearly an hour increase for our child to be on the bus for being first on at 7am from memory and last off. In winter it would be dark in the morning at this time, no consideration to road conditions and the added time necessary to safely drive the dangerous slippery gravel roads, added highly dangerous slippery unsealed roads to the route and the bus would go past the school twice before my son would arrive at school. I also had to consider I had another child who would be school age for the next year.

After we had no success in any help to resolve any issues we chose to change our son to Gnowangerup School (not a change made lightly as we tried to support the student numbers at Borden). There was a bus to Gnowangerup that went past our front gate to pick up our neighbours children the year before but we were made to go to our other neighbours stop because of the technicality rule of "closest school" which was a difference of something like 4 or 7 km direct route to the schools NOT THE ACTUAL BUS ROUTE.

Technically both neighbours stops should of been considered closest school to Borden so how they received a stop and we couldn't receive a bus stop at our gate baffled me but we didn't want to loose the neighbours bus stop so I kept quiet.

The Gnowangerup bus travels on fully sealed and safe roads. My child gets on the bus at 8am at the neighbours stop 6 minutes away on the same road as us and gets off at around 3.33pm in the afternoon.

The second issue we had not long after we had changed schools was that the bus service tried to force us back to Borden and looked like they would try to make our neighbours change schools by removing their stop from the Gnowangerup route. I deemed this highly inappropriate of them seeing that in no way did they offer any solutions while we attended Borden and had forced us to change schools and I most certainly was not going to up root them and change schools again.

Luckily with Support of Mr Peter Rundle we fought to keep the bus stop.

Currently we still drive to our Neighbours stop to go to Gnowangerup School. I have a toddler at home and having a stop to our gate would be amazing beneficial when the baby is asleep or to stop getting him in and out of the car for a 12 minute morning and afternoon drive, when our neighbours past us had this service for some reason.

To summarise,

1. Why are people in the city making these decisions from offices that have no understanding of road conditions and other route issues. Who can change a bus route up to an hour longer with as little as 1 day prior to school returning?
2. Where is the flexibility?
3. The "Closest School" by direct route to school not the bus route needs accessing. Maybe instead have a section of the bus application form asking what are your local schools in your area and what is the km difference. Then ask which is your preference. And then assess what all the route times to all schools listed are and make a recommendation from that. If parents then have valid reasons to want another school then re access.

I hope there is some success in changing these very outdated rules, ever child should have the right to an education.

Thank you [REDACTED]