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# ST. CROIX PREPARATORY ACADEMY
# SCHOOL START TIMES 2025-2026
# FAQ Document

In 2025-2026, the St. Croix Prep school day will operate from 9:45 am to 4:15 pm. This is a 15 minute difference from the current school day times of 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. This FAQ Document will address many of the questions that have been asked about this change.

What are the options for bus transportation to St. Croix Prep students? St. Croix Prep may provide its own bus transportation or have its resident district (Stillwater ISD 834) provide bus transportation on its behalf. (Minn Stat 124E)

> **124E.15 TRANSPORTATION.**
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> (a) A charter school must comply with all pupil transportation requirements in section 123B.88, subdivision 1. A charter school must not require parents to surrender their rights to pupil transportation under section 123B.88, subdivision 2.
>
> (b) A charter school must notify the district in which the school is located and the commissioner by July 1 of its first fiscal year of operation if it will provide its own transportation or use the transportation services of the district in which it is located. For each subsequent year of operation, a charter school must give that district and the commissioner notice by March 1 for the following fiscal year.
>
> (c) If a charter school elects to provide transportation for pupils, the charter school must provide the transportation within the district in which the charter school is located. The state must pay transportation aid to the charter school according to section 124E.23.

What is the history/impact of St. Croix Prep requesting transportation from its resident district?

> Since 2004, St. Croix Prep has requested Stillwater (ISD 834) to provide transportation to its students. This means that Stillwater receives St. Croix Prep's state transportation aid and that Stillwater can determine the daily hours of operation for the school. Since 2004 our school start/end times have ranged between 9:00 am-3:30pm and 9:30am -4:00 pm.

Why did our school times change?

> Stillwater adjusted their start times so that their elementary schools start earlier and their high school students start later. Their 2025-2026 start times are:
> - Elementary – 7:45 am – 2:15 pm
> - Junior High – 8:35 am – 3:05 pm
> - High School – 8:45 am – 3:15 pm
>
> This change has required them to adjust start/end times of other schools in the area who utilize their transportation services.

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Was St. Croix Prep involved in discussions related to these start/end times?

Over the past 18 months, St. Croix Prep, and other schools utilizing Stillwater's bus transportation services have been involved in many meetings to discuss revised school calendars and potential changes in the start/end times. We have advocated for more optimum start/end times throughout this process. Due to the size of our student population, it is extremely difficult for us to move to an earlier start time; and we have continually asked that, at a minimum, our school day times remain the same.

Has St. Croix Prep considered getting its own bus transportation?

We have considered this many times during the course of our operations. Currently, we receive approximately $500,000 in transportation aid from the state of Minnesota. When we request transportation services from Stillwater, those funds are transferred to Stillwater. Our last analysis indicated that the cost for us to provide transportation would be approximately $1.2 million – this would result in the general fund absorbing approximately $700,000 ($1.2 million - $500,000) every year. We will continue to evaluate potential solutions.

Have any other solutions been investigated?

We did approach Stillwater with the option of implementing "hub stops" in order to maintain our start/end times. Stillwater indicated that they would be willing to provide this, but this violates state statute which requires them to provide similar (house stops) transportation services to charter schools who request their bus transportation.

How will this change impact the daily schedules (e.g., building opening, YCare, lunch, class schedules, etc.)?

All schedules will be pushed back 15 minutes. This includes when the school buildings open, YCare availability, lunch, and class schedules.

If my student(s) need to be picked up early from school for non-St. Croix Prep extra-curricular activities, will they be penalized for it?

Our school hours will end at 4:15 pm. Our current policy related to early dismissals remains the same. This means that individual family situations may be determined on a case by case basis once the school year begins.