

If you would like to register your child(ren) for Yinghua Academy's busing service:

1. Please read this packet.
2. Go to [www.yinghuaacademy.org/current-families/transportation/](http://www.yinghuaacademy.org/current-families/transportation/).
3. Fill out the online registration form by August 3, 2018.

*\*If you would prefer a hard copy of the registration form, please contact the Main Office at 612-788-9095.*

<b><u>CONTENTS</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Busing Policies</b>	<b>3-4</b>
Route Design	3
Cost & Billing	3-4
Registration	4
<b>Bus Stops &amp; General Busing Guidelines</b>	<b>5-7</b>
Morning Bus	5
Bus Dismissal	6
Afternoon Bus	6-7
<b>Bus Behavior &amp; Safety Expectations</b>	<b>7-9</b>
Bus Prefects	9
Bus Safety	9
<b>Bus Routes</b>	<b>10</b>
Choosing Your Stop	10
List of Routes & Stops	10
<b>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)</b>	<b>11-13</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

This packet includes everything you need to know about Yinghua Academy's busing service. We ask that all families carefully consider using busing as a transportation option for their child(ren). In addition to being a convenient alternative for many, using the busing service reduces traffic congestion around the school during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal. For those who do not like waiting in traffic lines, or negotiating busy streets, busing may be an attractive option to help avoid the crowding that occurs around the school during peak hours.

For some, it may be that driving to school would take about the same amount of time as it would to ride the bus. For others, riding the bus may be a longer commute than if they drove straight to school. For Minneapolis families who find either to be the case, we strongly urge you to choose busing.

We make this request for a few reasons. First, busing is free for all Minneapolis families. Second, by reducing traffic congestion around the school we reduce the impact the Yinghua community has on our neighbors. This is something we have committed to work towards at the request of the NE Neighborhood and the City of Minneapolis.

In the end, every family must decide which transportation option works best for them. The YA busing service is provided as an added option for our families. The school hopes that your family will choose busing.

Sincerely,  
Joe Scartozzi  
Operations Coordinator

## SUMMARY OF CHANGES FOR 2018-2019

- **NEW BUSING BOUNDARIES FOR 2017-2018** –YA busing has grown large enough that it is now necessary to implement transportation boundaries. The new boundaries are:
  - **North** – 694
  - **East** – 35E/Shepard Road/Hwy 5
  - **South** – 494
  - **West** – Hwy 100

These boundaries will help ensure that the busing service retains a high level of service and efficiency. Some stops outside these new boundaries have been discontinued or have been relocated and moved just inside the boundaries. A few outlying stops have been “grandfathered in” and allowed to stay where they are. Please see the published routes on the school website’s “Transportation” page for more information.

## BUSING POLICIES

Yinghua Academy contracts with a private bus company, *Metropolitan Transportation Network, Inc. (MTN)*, to provide our busing service. By using a private bus company Yinghua gains the ability to freely manage and design our own routes. It also allows the school to ensure that Yinghua students are only riding the bus with fellow Yinghua students, and no one else.

MTN provides Yinghua Academy with nine bus routes servicing over 90 ZIP codes using a hub stop model. This means that the majority of stops are centrally located at street corners, parks and business parking lots. Yinghua does not schedule bus stops at individual home addresses. In addition, one of the benefits of a hub stop system is that families are not required to choose a stop near their homes. Many families choose stops that are along their routes to work, near day care providers, baby sitters, YMCAs, etc.. Yinghua provides one morning and one afternoon bus per day. Students using aftercare or participating in sports or music before or after school must find their own transportation – no early or late busing is provided.

## **Route Design**

The bus routes and stops are determined by the school in coordination with the bus company by taking into consideration: the density of the population of families located in each ZIP code/area/neighborhood, the number of families who sign up for each stop, route length, seniority (the length of time the stop has been in existence and used by those families) and safety. Much effort is given in designing the routes to be as beneficial as possible for all riders in a given area while attempting a one hour maximum route length, under normal circumstances. (Parents are advised that traffic patterns, construction and weather can increase route length.)

***NOTE: Parents may not move or create stops, nor pressure drivers or the bus company to move stops. Parents wishing to make an adjustment to a stop should contact the school directly to submit their request. However, once the school year begins, routes and stops will only be changed at the discretion of administration under the following conditions.***

- *Safety or traffic concerns regarding the location of a stop;*
- *Not enough students sign up to justify the location and time required to reach the stop;*
- *Dead stops (no one registered for the stop);*
- *Elimination of a stop by the parties who own the property on which the stop is located;*
- *Other qualifying circumstances as determined by the school and MTN.*

## **Cost & Billing**

### **Minneapolis Residents**

YA's busing service is free to families who are Minneapolis residents.

### **Non-Minneapolis Residents**

YA's busing service is fee-based for non-Minneapolis families. Non-Minneapolis residents may take advantage of free busing by using a Minneapolis stop. However, students must be pre-registered for a Minneapolis stop and use it every time they ride to qualify for free busing. This is required because it affects MDE transportation funding. Non-Minneapolis residents who get on or off at a non-Minneapolis stop will be billed the entire monthly fee, even if they only ride one time.

The busing fee for non-Minneapolis residents is: **\$75 per child per month** payable for ten months, September through June. Families will be billed at the end of each month. Parents may pay by cash, check, credit card, or automated withdrawal (ACH). If you wish to be enrolled in the ACH payment plan for billing, please fill out the *Automatic Payment Agreement* form posted on the school website and return it to the Main Office. The ACH form must be completed annually. <https://www.yinghuaacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ACH-Authorization-2016-17.pdf>

Busing fees should be paid in a timely manner. Outstanding busing balances may result in families losing bus privileges until the account is made current. Please contact Jennifer Olsen in the Business Office with all billing questions.

## **Educational Benefits**

Students qualifying for Educational Benefits are eligible to pay a reduced rate. Minneapolis residents ride free of charge. If you qualify for Educational Benefits, please call Jennifer Olsen in the Business Office for the corresponding busing rates.

## **Registration**

**ATTENTION MINNEAPOLIS RESIDENTS - Minneapolis residents who wish to waive their right to busing should not fill out the registration form. By not filling out the form you automatically waive your busing rights.**

Regardless of where they live, students must complete the registration process before they will be permitted to ride a Yinghua school bus.

### **One Stop per Family**

Families may only select one stop when registering and must commit to using only that stop. This is very important for billing, bus coordination, and safety.

### **Changes to Bus Registration**

Families wishing to make an official change to their bus registration (i.e, choosing a new stop, change of home address, etc.) should contact the school directly. Please allow two business days for the school to coordinate the change with the bus company before the change will take effect.

### **To register for the Yinghua Academy busing service:**

1. **Finish reading this packet.**
2. **Go to <http://www.yinghuaacademy.org/current-families/transportation/>.**
3. **Complete and submit the online Bus Registration Form by FRIDAY, JULY 21, 2017.**

***\*If you would prefer a hard copy of the registration form, please contact the Main Office at 612-788-9095.***

## **BUS STOPS & GENERAL BUSING GUIDELINES**

### **When to Arrive at Your Stop**

Parents/students should arrive ten minutes early to their stops.

### **Late Buses**

Please factor an additional 10-20 minutes into bus times during the first three weeks of school. It is normal and expected for buses to be running late for the first few weeks as drivers learn their routes, students, families, and the school settle into a routine. Families are advised to arrive at their stops at the normally scheduled time and asked to wait the additional 15-20 minutes if needed. Arriving fifteen minutes late may cause you to miss the bus if it is on schedule.

If a bus is running late, the school will alert parents via email, text, or phone call through our automated system as soon as possible. Parents should make sure their contact information and preferences are current using the Infinite Campus Parent Portal in order to receive these important messages.

During the school year Yinghua's main office opens at 7:30 a.m. and some bus routes begin earlier. If parents are concerned that their bus is running late, or that they missed the bus before the Main Office is open, they may call MTN's dispatch office directly at 763-571-1541.

### **Switching Buses or Stops**

Students may only ride their registered buses and should exit at their designated stops every time they ride. Students may not switch buses or bus stops. This includes registered bus riders who wish to go home with friends on a different bus.

### **Non-Riders Riding With Friends**

For safety, non-registered students may not ride the bus for any reason.

### **Parents & Caregivers Riding the Bus**

Parents, caregivers, and other adults may not ride the bus at any time. Exceptions are the bus drivers, MTN and YA staff. In addition, parents and caregivers may not enter the bus at anytime, except in the case of an emergency.

## **Morning Bus**

### **Missing the Morning Bus**

The bus will wait 3 minutes at each stop after the scheduled time before moving on. Buses cannot wait longer or it will make them late for the rest of the route. If students miss the morning bus, their parents are responsible for transporting them to school. The bus will not loop back to pick up students who missed the bus. Buses are not permitted to stop mid-route after leaving a stop to pick up students who miss the bus. Students arriving late to school because they missed the bus will be recorded as having an *unexcused* tardy.

### **If the Bus is Late to School**

If students are late to school in the morning because the bus was late, their lateness will be recorded as excused, and they will not receive any consequences for being late. This includes when their parents have to drive them to school because the bus was running abnormally behind schedule.

## **Bus Dismissal**

### **Individual Student Afternoon Riding Schedule**

Many families have complex schedules that vary from week to week, and sometimes daily. With more than 800 students to coordinate through dismissal every afternoon it is not possible for YA to manage individual family schedules. Instead, parents are asked to manage their own schedules by using YA's Silent Dismissal system.

Silent Dismissal allows parents the power and flexibility to manage their dismissal schedules on their own for each of their children. Parents simply set up a free online account and select the dismissal option they would like for each day of the week (i.e. - aftercare, bus, pick-up, sports, etc.) for each of their children. This M-F routine stays set until an authorized parent changes it. Changes may be made until 2:44 p.m. the day of the change. When you select the correct bus, your child's name will automatically appear on the daily electronic bus roster. The school uses iPads to check students on the bus every afternoon following instructions that you, the parents, are providing. It is critical that parents keep their Silent Dismissal settings accurate.

**IMPORTANT – Over the summer YA will code all registered bus riders for their bus for the entire week, M-F in Silent Dismissal. This will ensure that all students will show up on our electronic bus rosters the first week of school. Parents will need to log into Silent Dismissal to change their settings on their own based on their desired schedules before the first week of school if they do not want their child(ren) to ride the bus home. For more information, including Silent Dismissal instructions, please see “Silent Dismissal Accounts” on the Transportation Page of the Yinghua Academy website.**

### **End of the School Day Departure**

Dismissal begins at 3:30 p.m. Students have ten minutes to gather their belongings, check in with their adult bus captains and board their buses before they leave at 3:40 p.m.

### **Missing the Afternoon Bus**

Tracking down missing students is the most common reason for delays in bus departure. In order to keep the buses on schedule we are not able to wait for missing students. This makes the bus late and negatively affects every other family on the route. The following policies shall be in effect regarding missing/late students.

**Kindergarten** – Teachers will escort kindergarten bus riders to their buses according to the daily Silent Dismissal settings chosen by their parents. For safety, kindergarten students will not be allowed on the bus if they are not on the electronic Silent Dismissal bus roster.

**Lower School (1-4)** – The school will attempt to track down missing lower school students until 3:40 p.m. if they are on the electronic Silent Dismissal bus roster as set by parents. For safety, lower school students will not be allowed to get on the bus if they are not on the electronic Silent Dismissal bus roster.

**Middle School (5-8)** – The school will not track down missing middle school students. For safety, middle school students will not be allowed on the bus if they are not on the electronic Silent Dismissal bus roster.

***\*It is very important that parents keep their Silent Dismissal settings current and accurate or their children may not get on the bus, or they may be put on the bus mistakenly. At 3:40, the buses will be released and any students who miss the bus will be sent to the main office to contact their parents. After parents have been contacted they will be checked into Aftercare to wait for pick-up.***

## **Afternoon Bus**

### **Meeting the Bus at Drop-Off**

For the safety of our students, YA's policy is that no child is left at a bus stop if a parent/caregiver is not there; nor is a child allowed to walk home from the stop unsupervised without permission. If you would like to give your child special permission to wait for pick-up or walk home from their stop alone, please check the appropriate box on the *Bus Registration Form*.

### **Missing Your Child's Bus**

If parents miss their child's afternoon bus, the student will continue riding the bus through the end of the route while the bus company or the school contacts the parents. Parents then have the option of either catching the bus at a later stop along the route, or picking up their child at the school. All students remaining on the bus at the end of the route will be brought back to the school to wait for pick-up. All students must be picked up by 6:00 p.m.. Parents may contact the dispatch office directly if they missed their child's stop. Calling the school's main office is also appropriate; however, the office closes daily at 4:30 p.m.. Parents who routinely miss their child's afternoon drop-off may lose busing privileges for the remainder of the school year.

## **BUS BEHAVIOR & SAFETY EXPECTATIONS**

### **Parents please review this with you children – especially “remaining seated on the bus!”**

Yinghua Academy emphasizes the importance of the partnerships between the school, parents, students, and the bus company, which are essential in creating a safe environment during bus transportation.

Students and parents are reminded that riding the bus is a privilege and not a right. The school and the bus company reserve the right to refuse transportation to any student who is disruptive, disrespectful, or creates an unsafe condition for themselves or others. The school and the bus company also reserve the right to hold parents financially responsible for any vandalism their child(ren) may commit while on the bus. Parents and students are advised that all MTN buses have video cameras to assist the school and MTN with behavior management.

Yinghua Academy is responsible for enforcement of discipline and security on each bus for the safety of all concerned. In the same way that teachers are responsible for basic classroom management and safety, bus drivers manage the daily operation of their buses. The school is responsible for managing escalated behavior and safety concerns and will enforce appropriate consequences as needed. Proactive strategies and follow-up consequences may include seating charts/assigned seats. Just as in a classroom, seating charts can be very useful tools in managing behavior on the bus. When needed, seating charts are designed by the Dean of Students in coordination with the driver, Bus Prefects, Operations Coordinator and MTN Management.

For all of these reasons, students are expected to abide by the Yinghua Academy expectations for appropriate student behavior at all times, as outlined in the school's *Student and Family Handbook*.

These behavior expectations can be summarized in Yinghua Academy's ***Great Expectations***. Parents are asked to review the following expectations with their child(ren) before they begin riding the bus.

The ***Great Expectations*** are:

- 1) **Always Try.**
- 2) **Do Your Best.**
- 3) **Cooperate and Help Others.**
- 4) **Respect People and Property.**
- 5) **Manage Yourself.**

Practical examples of abiding by these expectations while riding a bus include, but are not limited to:

- Treating the bus driver and Student Life Bus Prefects with courtesy and respect.
- Following all directions and requests made by the bus driver and Bus Prefects promptly and politely.
- Following all bus safety procedures and all bus rules.
- Boarding and exiting the bus properly.
- Treating fellow student riders with courtesy and respect.
- Remaining seated while the bus is moving and remembering “No Physical.”
- Using appropriate language and appropriate voice levels.

If a student strays from appropriate behavior expectations it will result in disciplinary consequences. Serious misconduct may result in the suspension of bus and school privileges.

Whenever possible, the school will follow the procedures outlined below when addressing behavior concerns regarding student bus riders:

**First Infraction** – The student will receive a warning, which may include being written up on a *Student Behavior Infraction Form* (YA) or a *Student Bus Misconduct Report* (MTN), a meeting with the Dean of Students, and a phone call or email to a parent. The incident may also be documented and referred to the Executive Director.

**Second Infraction** – The student will be written up on a *Student Behavior Infraction Form* (YA) or a *Student Bus Misconduct Report* (MTN), the Dean will meet with the student and call or email a parent, the incident will be documented, and the student will be referred to the Executive Director. The Director may meet with the student, and the student may be suspended from bus privileges for three (3) school days.

**Third Infraction** – The student will be written up on a *Student Behavior Infraction Form* (YA) or a *Student Bus Misconduct Report* (MTN), the student will meet with the Executive Director and the Dean; parents will be contacted and may be required to come to school for a conference with the Director and Dean, and the student may be suspended from bus privileges for up to thirty (30) school days.

**Fourth Infraction** – Repeat of the consequences listed under the “Third Infraction” above, and the student will be suspended from bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

***Yinghua Academy reserves the right to modify these guidelines as needed and apply alternative consequences for policy violations and inappropriate behavior based on the unique factors surrounding each individual disciplinary case including, but not limited to, seating charts/assigned seats, letters of apology and/or commitments to change, restitution, various forms of community service, referrals to social services, suspension of extracurricular activities, special projects, Behavior Action Plans, etc.***

## **Bus Prefects**

The school designates older, responsible students to assist the bus driver in managing general student behavior on the bus. These students are called Bus Prefects and are an extension of Yinghua Academy's Student Life Organization which is comprised of middle-school-aged student leaders, also called "Prefects."

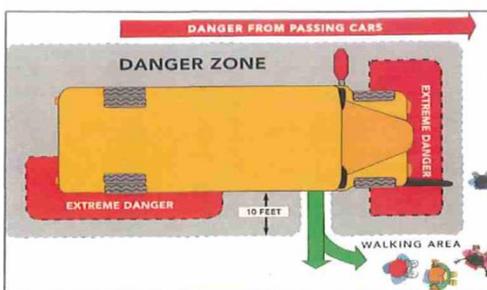
Bus Prefects are chosen based on their demonstrated maturity, trustworthiness, integrity, and character, and report directly to the Dean of Students. They are the administration's "eyes and ears" on the bus. Their input and support is invaluable. They are to be respected by all students at all times.

## **Bus Safety**

Please study the safety pictures below with your child(ren), go over the bus rules, and discuss bus safety together. Please spend extra time talking to your child(ren) about being aware of their environment, which is one of the most important factors in staying safe in any situation.

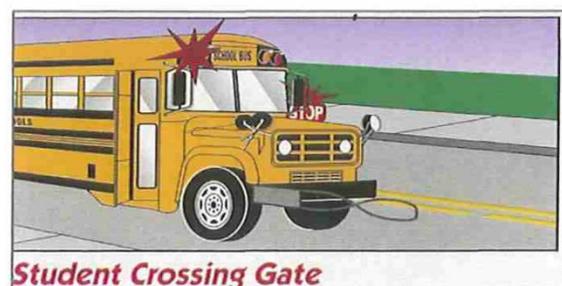
### Basic Bus Rules:

- Stay back from the curb while waiting for the bus.
- Line up in single file when you see the bus approaching.
- Wait for instructions from the driver before crossing the street.
- Stay seated on your bottom, face forward, and do not switch seats.
- No Physical (hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, pushing, pulling, wrestling, fighting, etc.)
- Sit in your assigned seat if you have one.
- Food is not allowed on buses – students will eat their snacks in PM homeroom before getting on the bus.
- Water is the only beverage allowed on the bus.
- Indoor Voices.
- Do not throw things.
- Keep the isles clear of body parts and belongings.
- Do not stick body parts out the windows.



### **Danger Zone**

Students who must cross the street **MUST** wait for the signal from the bus driver and **MUST** walk ten feet out from the bumper of the school bus. This places them outside the danger zone surrounding the school bus. Students must always remain where the driver can see them.



### **Student Crossing Gate**

All school buses are equipped with a student crossing gate. This is a device which extends from the bumper of the bus when the entrance door is opened when making student pickups and drop-offs.

## **Bus Safety Training**

The school will conduct annual bus safety training every fall and spring in coordination with the bus company for all YA students in grades K-8. Every student will be included because all YA students will ride a bus at some point during the school year for field trips. This safety training will familiarize students with safety procedures and basic bus rules.

## **BUS ROUTES**

Below you will find a list of the stops being offered this coming school year. Before filling out the online registration form, you will need to review the routes on the school website to determine which stop works best for your family. The list includes all of the information you will need to help you decide on a stop, including the name, address, city, ZIP code, AM/PM time, and any special instructions regarding the stop. Stops in italics are new or were changed this year.

The route schedules are approximate and are as accurate as possible at the time of this writing. The buses are covering long distances throughout the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. Each bus is scheduled for timely arrival, barring weather and/or traffic complications. It is normal for bus times to fluctuate five to ten minutes, and sometimes much more during inclement weather and heavy traffic.

**NOTE - The route schedules are subject to minor change after bus registration closes, the school year gets under way, dismissal routines are solidified and traffic patterns are established. Typical changes range from five to fifteen minutes. One of the unknown factors affecting final bus scheduling is the number of students who sign up for a stop. For example, the more students at a stop, the more time it takes to load/unload at that stop.**

### **Choosing Your Stop**

The easiest way to find a stop that will work for you is to start with the ZIP code. Simply determine the ZIP code of your home, work place, etc., search the "ZIP code" column, then choose a stop that works for your family in, or near, that ZIP code. Be sure to check the entire list. The stops are ordered by bus and some ZIP codes can be found on more than one bus route.

In addition, be sure to make note of the stop location, schedule, and special instructions for the stop you choose when you register. **The school will also coordinate with MTN to send out confirmation post cards in August that will verify your stop information.**

### **List of Routes & Stops**

**For a list of current routes please see the document entitled "YA BUS ROUTES 2017-2018" located at <http://www.yinghuaacademy.org/> under "Current Families/Transportation".**

**If you would prefer a hard copy of the current routes, please contact the Main Office at 612-788-9095.**

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

- 1) ***Why did Yinghua Academy choose a Hub Route Model?*** Yinghua Academy's student population includes families from more than 90 ZIP codes spread throughout the Twin Cities Metro Area. Many of our families do not desire transportation services, but many do. Currently, YA is only able to provide nine bus routes. Since our families are so spread out it is impossible to design routes that stop in everyone's neighborhoods, or at home addresses. Most schools in this situation opt for a hub system instead. Hub routes are designed to reach into areas that hold large numbers of our families. The stops are then set up along those routes while taking into consideration safety, traffic patterns, location, permission (if needed), route length, mileage, cost, etc. Families are then able to look at the "menu" of routes and choose the stop that best meets their needs. Participation in busing is optional. YA's busing service is designed to be an alternative for those families who really need it or choose it for convenience. It also helps reduce traffic around the school during peak hours. With a hub system, it is understood that some families may need to drive to their stops. In some cases, this is actually beneficial, rather than an inconvenience, as parents can find a stop along their commute to work or near their day care provider. Yinghua Academy's routes are designed to be as equitable as possible, within the goal of a one hour maximum route length (under normal circumstances).
- 2) ***Is Yinghua Academy mandated to provide busing to students living within the city of Minneapolis?*** **YES.** The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) mandates that public and charter schools provide free busing to all of their students living within the district's boundaries. This service is then partially subsidized (80-90%) each year by the State based on the number of riders signed up for the service. For this reason, students signed up for the bus are considered riders, whether they end up riding the bus each day or not. Minneapolis families may choose to waive their right to The School's transportation service at the beginning of each school year. Families who wave this right need to find alternative school transportation on their own.
- 3) ***Why do we have to pay for the bus service if we do not live within the city of Minneapolis?*** Yinghua Academy is a non-profit public charter school. As a public school, YA is only partially reimbursed (80-90%) by the State for transportation services provided to students living within the district's boundaries (i.e. the City of Minneapolis boarders). Yinghua Academy covers the remaining cost for busing each year. There is no reimbursement from the State for transportation services provided to students living outside the district's boundaries. Transportation services for these students must be paid for by each rider's family. For this reason, students signed up for the bus are considered riders and are billed whether they ride the bus each day or not. *(See question #2 for more information.)*
- 4) ***What if we live outside the City of Minneapolis, but choose a stop inside the city boundaries? Would that qualify for free busing?*** **YES.** Non-Minneapolis families may take advantage of free busing by presenting themselves to a stop in the city of Minneapolis. However, students must be pre-registered for a Minneapolis stop and use it every time they ride. Non-Minneapolis students who get on or off at a non-Minneapolis stop will be billed the entire monthly fee, even if they only ride once a month.
- 5) ***Is there any support available if we do not live within the city of Minneapolis, but do qualify for Educational Benefits?*** **YES.** YA families who do not live within Minneapolis and qualify for Education Benefits may receive a

partial refund for expenses paid towards school transportation services. If you have further questions regarding how to apply for these benefits, please contact the Yinghua Academy Business Office.

- 6) ***If we sign up for the busing service at the beginning of the school year, may we drop the service later in the year? YES.*** However, you must give the Yinghua Academy Operations Coordinator and Business Office two weeks' notice before dropping the service.
- 7) ***Aren't we a neighborhood school, and if so, why don't we spend more time servicing the NE Neighborhood?*** By definition, as a public charter school, Yinghua Academy is not considered a neighborhood school. Yinghua Academy is open to any family within the Twin Cities Metro Area, and currently has families from more than 90 zip codes. While adhering to MDE mandates, YA strives to equitably meet the needs of ALL of our families. However, busing for Minneapolis residents is free so the school does focus a higher percentage of stops within the boundaries of Minneapolis. *(See questions 3 and 4 for more information.)*
- 8) ***How close to the school will the bus service pick-up?*** As per MDE mandates, Yinghua Academy's bus service will transport students who live one mile or more from the school, but may stop within a mile in some cases.
- 9) ***Can we reverse the routes in the PM to create a more equitable bus ride length?*** **NO.** Due to fuel costs, traffic considerations, mileage, etc., it is not possible for Yinghua Academy to reverse the routes in the afternoon.
- 10) ***May we switch buses during the week?*** **NO.** Due to the complexities of managing bus rosters, taking daily bus rider attendance, and the need for the buses to depart in a timely fashion, Yinghua Academy does not allow students to ride multiple buses during the week. Each family is allowed **one bus** and **one stop** along that route for the year.
- 11) ***What about shared custody between separated parents? May our child switch buses then?*** **NO.** It is the responsibility of the parents to coordinate custody exchanges outside of school/bus hours. It is not the responsibility of the school to accommodate custody exchanges. *(See question #10 for more information.)*
- 12) ***May we request to have a bus stop moved closer to our home or request a new bus stop be created?*** **YES.** However, once registration is open we will not make any changes to any routes. With only nine bus routes it is not possible to make custom stops for individual families. Creating more stops adds more time to each bus route. Also, moving a stop may meet the needs of one family while upsetting many other families who were previously happy with the stop's location. In addition, MDE does not mandate the distance a stop must be from a student's home. All bus routes and stops are carefully designed by Yinghua Academy in coordination with the bus company. The goal is to reach into our most densely populated areas, while also trying to attain Yinghua's goal of a one hour maximum bus ride, under normal circumstances. *(See "Route Design" on page 2 for more information.)*
- 13) ***My child's bus ride time is too long. Can we adjust the route so it's not so long?*** **NO.** MDE does not regulate bus route length for any school in the state. Most schools have routes between one and one-and-a-half hours in length. In addition, adjusting the route to accommodate individual requests will usually make the over-all route longer. YA does everything possible to maintain a one hour maximum bus route, under normal circumstances. *(See question #12 for more information.)*

- 14) **What happens if my child misses the morning bus?** If students miss the pick-up time, their parents are responsible for transporting them to school. Buses will not loop back to pick up students who miss the bus and are not allowed to stop mid-route after leaving a stop. **PLEASE NOTE** – Students late or absent because they missed the bus will be recorded as absent/tardy/unexcused.
- 15) **What happens if I miss my child's afternoon bus stop?** As a hub stop system, we understand that our families may not live near their bus stops. For this reason, the buses will not drop children at their stops if parents or caregivers are not there. If parents miss their child's afternoon bus, the student will continue riding the bus through the end of the route. Parents then have the option of either catching the bus at a later stop along the route, or picking their children up at the school. Note: Buses are not allowed to stop mid-route after leaving a stop. All students remaining on the bus at the end of the route will be brought back to the school to wait for pick-up. Parents may contact the dispatch office directly if they missed the stop. Calling the school's main office is also appropriate; however, the office closes daily at 4:30 p.m.. During the school year the school officially closes at 6:00 p.m. and all students must be picked up by that time. The school will call parents and/or emergency contacts for any bus rider waiting for pick-up after 6:00 p.m.. Parents who routinely miss the bus drop-off time may be subject to additional fees and/or lose their busing privileges for the remainder of the school year.
- 16) **Can my child walk home from the stop? YES.** Parents who would like to allow their children to walk home on their own (referred to as "Drop and Release") must first submit official authorization to the school. The authorization needs to be written, signed, and dated. Or, parents may check the appropriate box on the *Bus Registration Form*. This permission needs to be submitted every school year.
- 17) **What happens if my child's bus is late to school?** If buses are late to school due to traffic, weather, or any other extenuating circumstance, the students will be *tardy excused*.
- 18) **May friends, guests, or parents ride my child's bus home for special occasions? NO.** The only exception is for family emergencies. If you request special travel arrangements due to an emergency, please contact the school as soon as possible. (See question #10 for more information.)
- 19) **What if we have a family emergency and need to change our bus plans at the last minute?** If parents have an emergency change in plans for the afternoon bus ride, they need to contact the main office to submit their requests. Requests for emergency changes must be received in the Main Office by 3:00 p.m. on the day of the change. **With more than 800 students to manage during dismissal, it is not possible to change dismissal routines at last minute. If the main office does not receive notification before the deadline, the school will follow the student's normal dismissal routine and/or the students Silent Dismissal settings.** (See section titled "Bus Dismissal" for more information.)
- 20) **Is it okay for my child to walk or ride a bike to school? YES.** However, parents must select "Walk/Bike to school" in Silent Dismissal before the school will allow their child(ren) to walk or bike to/from school.

**If you have additional busing questions, please do not contact the bus company directly. Please direct questions regarding bus registration to Joe Scartozzi (Operations Coordinator) and billing questions to Jennifer Olsen (Business Office) by calling the main office @ 612-788-9095.**