



Shrewsbury Public Schools

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Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

September 21, 2023

To: School Committee

Subj: Transportation Update for 2023-2024 School Year

Overview

This presentation highlights the key aspects of transportation for the Shrewsbury Public Schools. Topics in this presentation include:

- Contract with AA Transportation and fleet recognition
- Response to SPS time changes effective 2023-2024 school year
- Current ridership
- School bus registration
- Late bus program

Contract with AA Transportation and Fleet

Shrewsbury Public Schools is in year one of five year [August 2023-August 2028] contract renewal with AA Transportation following our M.G.L. Chapter 30B bid process completed on February 2, 2023. The contracted rates for a school bus are \$ 475.53 per bus per day which equates to \$85,595 per bus per school year. Shrewsbury Public Schools is accessing a vehicle fleet of 39 seventy-seven passenger buses, 8 thirty-four passenger buses (with 3 containing a wheelchair lift) plus an additional 3 vans for transportation to and from the RISE Program, and multiple vans supporting specialized runs for specific student out-of-district needs. The total contract for FY24 is \$5,050,342 with an annual increase of 6% over the life of the contract. Please see the following table for a breakdown in transportation pricing:

Transportation Service	FY24 Budget
Regular Day	\$3,167,030
Special Education: In-District and Out of District	\$1,206,403
Vocational	\$174,044
Field Trips, Athletics and Extra-Curricular	\$ 502,865
	\$5,050,342

In August, Dr. Sawyer notified you that the district would need to contract an additional two 77 passenger school buses to appropriately meet the demands of school start and end time changes. The two buses are included in the 39 bus total listed above. These additional routes are being funded out of the Transportation Fee account at the cost of \$171,190

In addition to our contracted transportation with AA, Shrewsbury Public Schools owns three vehicles obtained through sponsorship and grant funding. We are grateful to Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union for sponsoring a 12 passenger Ford Transit van; additionally, the district has a 12 passenger Ford Transit van and a Toyota Sienna 7 passenger van, both funded through grants and dedicated to community program access for the RISE program.

The following chart shows the services and contracted providers needed to support transportation needs for our community:

Services & Contracted Providers

Service	Vendor	Notes
Regular day [aka Home to School]	AA Transportation	▶ Shrewsbury Public Schools ▶ Assabet Valley Reg. Technical H.S. ▶ St. Mary's, St. John's, Al-Hamra, Montessori
Out of District- Special Education	Varied	▶ Private school placements throughout the state
Athletic Competitions/ Extra Cutricular Events/ Music Travel	AA Transportation	▶ High school and middle school events
Homeless Students (McKinney-Vento)	Varied	▶ Includes busing students sheltering in other towns back to SPS and students sheltering in Shrewsbury to other public school systems
Summer School	AA Transportation	For special education students with transportation in their IEP
Field Trips ["yellow bus"]	AA Transportation	Coach buses contracted separately for long trips or special events

Response to School Time Changes (Please see Appendix for [SPS Bus Routes 23-24](#))

This summer, the School Department worked closely with AA Transportation to rebuild the bus schedules to reflect new start and end times that went into effect this school year [2023-2024 school year] following School Committee approval on January 25, 2023. Start and end times are shown in the table below:

School	Start Time of Student School Day	End Time of Student School Day
Shrewsbury High School	7:55am	2:20pm
Sherwood & Oak Middle Schools	8:35am	3:00pm
Beal School Coolidge School Floral Street School Paton School Spring Street School	9:15am	3:30pm

The School Department focused on the recommendations from the Sleep Health Advisory Committee and contractual agreements with our collective bargaining units to ensure transportation patterns meet the following outcomes:

- All high school bus routes begin after 7:00 AM.
- All morning bus routes at all levels arrive at school in time for students to participate in breakfast, if they so choose.
- All afternoon buses depart schools within the identified dismissal times barring unforeseen circumstances.
- All afternoon buses are scheduled to maximize route times. The target route time is 30 minutes or less to account for minimizing later dismissal times conflicting with after-school activities.

As of Tuesday, September 19, 2023, we can share:

- All high school bus routes begin after 7:00 AM.
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Earliest pick-up time for SHS bus routes <u>before</u> 2023-2024 school start time change	6:13 AM
Earliest pick-up time for SHS bus routes: 2023-2024 school year	7:00 AM (AVG 7:05 AM) Average of 46 minutes more sleep opportunity for SHS bus students

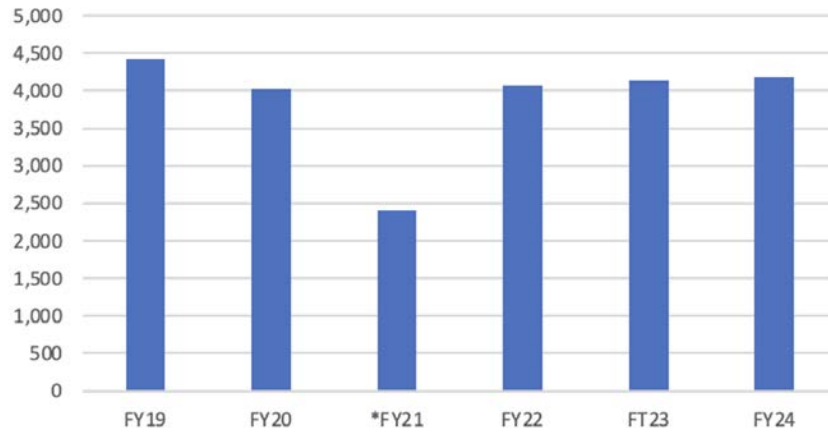
Earliest pick-up time of Middle School bus routes <u>before</u> school start time change	7:13 AM
Earliest pick-up time for Middle School bus routes: 2023-2024 school year	7:36 AM (AVG 7:46 AM) Average of 28 minutes more sleep opportunity for Middle School bus students

- All morning bus routes at all levels arrive at school in time for students to participate in breakfast, if they so choose.
- All afternoon buses depart schools within the identified dismissal times barring unforeseen circumstances.
 - 4 buses consistently arrive at elementary schools at the 3:45 PM dismissal time. Two buses consistently arrive at approximately 3:50 PM. We continue to work with AA Transportation to maximize route efficiency and elementary school routines.
 - These early patterns are historically consistent and improve through the following practices:
 - new drivers improve their times gaining experience with the route.
 - All drivers benefit from developing relationships with students and families, resulting in route efficiency.
 - schools improve their internal dismissal routines, particularly elementary schools building kindergarten routines.
- All afternoon buses are scheduled to maximize route times; target route is 30 minutes or less to account for later dismissal times conflicting with after-school activities.
 - Bus routes are meeting their intended route times once en route; the goal is to have them depart the schools on time to meet the promised drop-off time.

Ridership

Ridership is in a healthy place with approximately 69% of students registered for transportation as of September 18, 2023. This percentage is on par with historical data with a continued increase in registrations following the COVID shutdown years. The following chart provides registration data over the past six years, showing the averages from two years prior to the COVID pandemic through this year. Non-COVID year registrations hover around 70% of the overall student population.

Ridership by Year- 6 Year Span



Shrewsbury Public Schools is also required to provide transportation per M.G.L Ch 76, Section 1 to pupils who attend approved private and regional vocational schools. The following chart shows ridership to each of the approved affiliates with differences between FY24 and FY23. Although there are minimal differences with most schools, please recognize the downward trend of students accessing transportation to Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School. The School Department will monitor the demand for transportation as fewer students are able to attend Assabet and adjust our transportation assets accordingly. Currently, we run two buses to Assabet during the morning and afternoon runs (down from three in previous years) and we are studying options for FY25 to gain efficiency as ridership continues to decrease.

Ridership

School District	2022-2023 Riders	2023-2024 Riders	Difference
Shrewsbury Public Schools	4,133	4,184	+51
Assabet Valley Regional Tech. H.S.	51	36	(-15)
St. John's High School	46	45	(-1)
St. Mary School	12	21	+9
Al Hamra Academy	29	34	+5
Montessori School	24	21	(-3)
Out of District Students (includes McKinney-Vento transportation for homeless students)	39	42	+3
Total Daily Riders	4,334	4,374	+40

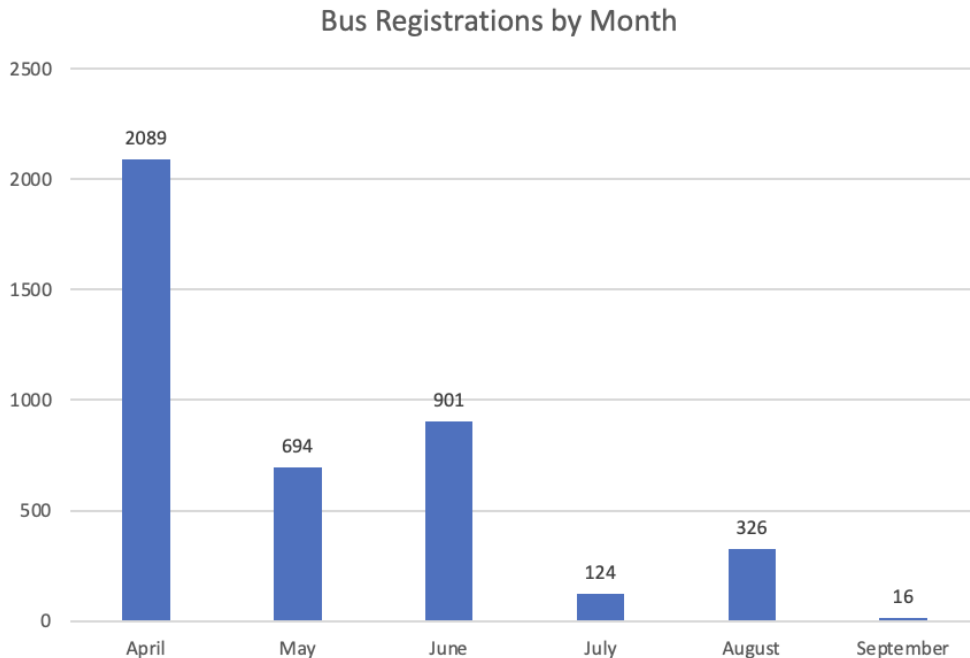
School Bus Registration

School bus registration opened April 3, 2023 and out of the 4,133 registrations, 2,089 [or ~50%] occurred in April following the first communication. School bus registrations responded positively to reminder communications from SPS in May and June, and again in August. This year, Shrewsbury Public Schools initiated a change in practice in August to put forth a deadline of August 11th for families who have had the opportunity to register for transportation since the opening window of April 3rd [this did not include all new student registrations including kindergarten families and recent move-in's, who were routed as soon possible after registration.]

This deadline meant that any transportation registration submitted after the August 11, 2023 deadline [and not meeting the new student registration criteria] could be subject to not receiving their bus assignment until Tuesday, September 12, 2023; two weeks after the start of the school year. This change of practice was initiated to allow the School Department and AA Transportation ample time to prepare bus routing in the midst of new school start and end times without the weight of adding last minute bus stops leading up to the start of school due to late registrations.

The data shows that families responded positively to the deadline with **0 issues that could not be resolved in time for a child to have a school bus assignment in place for Day 1 of school.** Please note that the School Department did have families who did not receive transportation for a period of time at the start of the year due to unpaid late fees not being resolved.

Please see the attached chart for registrations by month beginning April 3, 2023:



Late Buses

Late Buses went into effect on Monday, September 18, 2023. Late bus access is funded out of the ESSER III grant fund with the intention of allowing students access to school (extra academic support, participation in after-school extra-curricular activities, space to study.) Three buses are allocated for Shrewsbury High School and three buses for Oak and Sherwood Middle Schools on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Families can sign their students up for the late bus through a district Google sign-up. Please see the following charts to see ridership from the spring of 2023.

Late Bus Service Ridership Counts											
	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Mon.	Totals
High School											
	W#1	W#2	W#3	W#4	W#5	W#6	W#7	W#8	W#9	5/23	
Red	5	15	13	10	8	8	10	20	9	5	103
Green	37	43	31	36	16	32	23	24	20	6	268
Blue	28	42	28	38	27	28	26	25	21	5	268
Daily/Wkly Totals	70	100	72	84	51	68	59	69	50	16	639

Late Bus Service Ridership Counts											
	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Wkly	Mon.	Totals
Middle Schools											
	W#1	W#2	W#3	W#4	W#5	W#6	W#7	W#8	W#9	5/23	Totals
Red	13	14	14	17	16	5	10	11	9	0	109
Green	34	19	19	15	22	18	13	16	17	1	174
Blue	26	16	21	24	13	7	20	13	6	0	146
Daily/Wkly Totals	73	49	54	56	51	30	43	40	32	1	429

The estimated cost of late bus service in FY24 is \$174,424, funded through the ESSER 3 federal grant.

Conclusion

Locally and nationally, school transportation is in the midst of a crisis due to the lack of competition, shortage of bus drivers, and fluctuation in fuel costs. However, thanks to the excellent work of the SPS Transportation Team, especially April Yu, Assistant Manager of Finance & Operations, and the team at our partner AA Transportation, we are grateful to report that the Shrewsbury Public Schools transportation program is in a very strong place compared to many other school districts, with the following highlights:

- School bus routes are on pace to meet the expectations of adjusted school start and end times
- Ridership continues to be strong with approximately 70% of students registered for transportation
- All bus routes have qualified and consistent drivers

I look forward to answering any questions you have at the meeting on September 27.

High School AM Bus Routes 23-24					Sherwood and Oak AM Bus Routes 23-24					Elementary Schools AM Bus Routes 23-24					
Route #	Riders	1st Pickup	Route Time	Arrial at SHS	Route #	Riders	1st Pickup	Route Time	Arrival at MS	Route #	School	Riders	1st Pickup	Route Time	Arrial at ES
1	46	7:09 AM	21:30	7:31 AM	1	43	7:46 AM	21:36	8:07 AM	1	Floral	50	8:18 AM	26:42	8:45 AM
2	32	7:09 AM	20:24	7:29 AM	2	48	7:41 AM	29:24	8:11 AM	2	Floral	44	8:36 AM	10:18	8:46 AM
3	45	7:00 AM	26:06	7:27 AM	3	34	7:41 AM	27:06	8:08 AM	3	Spring	29	8:18 AM	24:00	8:42 AM
4	47	7:21 AM	14:30	7:36 AM	4	39	7:51 AM	17:06	8:08 AM	4	Spring	22	8:25 AM	20:48	8:45 AM
5	17	7:07 AM	23:12	7:30 AM	5	35	7:46 AM	26:54	8:13 AM	5	Spring	30	8:23 AM	24:01	8:47 AM
6	45	7:05 AM	20:36	7:26 AM	6	41	7:46 AM	21:18	8:07 AM	6	Floral	35	8:39 AM	7:18	8:46 AM
7	46	7:01 AM	24:24	7:25 AM	7	53	7:40 AM	32:06	8:12 AM	7	Paton	37	8:24 AM	22:36	8:46 AM
8	46	7:00 AM	31:18	7:32 AM	8	39	7:41 AM	26:24	8:07 AM	8	Beal	28	8:31 AM	14:19	8:45 AM
9	34	7:00 AM	28:36	7:28 AM	9	44	7:54 AM	14:06	8:08 AM	9	Floral	26	8:36 AM	9:50	8:46 AM
10					10	39	7:52 AM	20:12	8:13 AM	10	Beal	25	8:30 AM	17:06	8:47 AM
11	36	7:00 AM	27:36	7:28 AM	11	39	7:45 AM	23:30	8:08 AM	11	Beal	19	8:35 AM	12:16	8:48 AM
12	28	7:10 AM	17:06	7:27 AM	12	42	11/20 AM	29:36	8:08 AM	12	Spring	42	8:24 AM	21:30	8:46 AM
13	47	7:00 AM	26:54	7:27 AM	13	42	7:40 AM	26:24	8:08 AM	13	Beal	20	8:30 AM	12:48	8:43 AM
14	43	7:05 AM	20:30	7:26 AM	14	43	7:36 AM	31:54	8:08 AM	14	Spring	23	8:32 AM	13:05	8:45 AM
15					15	49	7:40 AM	27:12	8:07 AM	15	Coolidge	47	8:25 AM	17:56	8:43 AM
17	40	7:10 AM	16:06	7:26 AM	17	45	7:46 AM	21:24	8:08 AM	17	Beal	40	8:21 AM	24:40	8:46 AM
18	38	7:00 AM	28:42	7:28 AM	18	52	7:51 AM	16:48	8:08 AM	18	Coolidge	48	8:20 AM	25:04	8:45 AM
19	33	7:10 AM	20:06	7:30 AM	19	43	7:46 AM	21:24	8:08 AM	19	Coolidge	47	8:33 AM	12:35	8:45 AM
20	38	7:00 AM	28:48	7:28 AM	20	43	7:52 AM	15:36	8:08 AM	20	Beal	29	8:30 AM	17:16	8:47 AM
21	48	7:02 AM	24:06	7:27 AM	21	42	7:46 AM	21:30	8:07 AM	21	Floral	28	8:33 AM	13:38	8:47 AM
22	45	7:08 AM	17:48	7:26 AM	22	46	7:40 AM	28:00	8:08 AM	22	Beal	42	8:21 AM	24:04	8:45 AM
24	33	7:01 AM	31:06	7:32 AM	24	44	7:43 AM	24:36	8:08 AM	24	Beal	37	8:27 AM	18:02	8:45 AM
26	15	7:06 AM	22:30	7:28 AM	26	48	7:46 AM	22:16	8:08 AM	26	Beal	28	8:21 AM	22:45	8:44 AM
27	33	7:06 AM	20:48	7:27 AM	27	25	7:54 AM	13:56	8:08 AM	27	Floral	26	8:36 AM	11:24	8:47 AM
30					30	43	7:46 AM	26:01	8:12 AM	30	Paton	30	8:22 AM	18:54	8:41 AM
31					31					31	Beal	36	8:15 AM	26:30	8:41 AM
32	25	7:10 AM	22:24	7:32 AM	32	46	7:50 AM	22:24	8:13 AM	32	Paton	32	8:24 AM	15:00	8:39 AM
33	47	7:01 AM	29:30	7:30 AM	33	51	7:43 AM	29:12	8:12 AM	33	Paton	33	8:18 AM	24:10	8:42 AM
39	49	7:09 AM	21:06	7:30 AM	39	47	7:48 AM	24:24	8:13 AM	39	Beal	32	8:26 AM	10:11	8:36 AM
40	45	7:00 AM	27:42	7:28 AM	40	51	7:55 AM	16:18	8:12 AM	40	Beal	14	8:43 AM	5:03	8:49 AM
43	27	7:01 AM	25:30	7:27 AM	43	44	7:48 AM	25:06	8:13 AM	43	Floral	26	8:24 AM	18:37	8:42 AM
51	50	7:09 AM	21:06	7:30 AM	51	52	7:52 AM	25:42	8:13 AM	51	Floral	41	8:26 AM	15:09	8:41 AM
52	46	7:07 AM	23:12	7:31 AM	52	38	7:54 AM	20:48	8:13 AM	52	Floral	41	8:22 AM	24:05	8:46 AM
53	45	7:06 AM	25:06	7:31 AM	53	48	7:47 AM	25:12	8:12 AM	53	Floral	33	8:28 AM	18:35	8:47 AM
54					54	44	7:43 AM	30:00	8:13 AM	54	Beal	28	8:19 AM	23:05	8:42 AM
55	49	7:07 AM	23:30	7:30 AM	55	45	8:00 AM	12:42	8:13 AM	55	Beal	28	8:26 AM	16:18	8:42 AM

High School PM Bus Routes 23-24					Sherwood and Oak PM Bus Routes 23-24					Elementary Schools PM Bus Routes 23-24					
Route #	Riders	1st Stop Time	Route Time	Arriaval at MS	Route #	Riders	1st Stop Time	Route Time	Arriaval at ES	Route #	School	Riders	1st Stop	Route Time	Last Stop Time
1	46	2:40 PM	19:54	2:58 PM	1	43	3:12 PM	20:24	3:33 PM	1	Floral	42	3:39 PM	23:13	3:55 PM
2	32	2:36 PM	19:54	2:54 PM	2	48	3:15 PM	26:42	3:36 PM	2	Floral	44	3:45 PM	9:12	3:51 PM
3	45	2:38 PM	21:48	2:57 PM	3	34	3:10 PM	21:30	3:40 PM	3	Spring	29	3:48 PM	26:20	4:11 PM
4	47	2:32 PM	13:36	2:50 PM	4	39	3:11 PM	20:42	3:31 PM	4	Spring	22	3:39 PM	19:18	3:56 PM
5	17	2:37 PM	22:54	3:01 PM	5	35	3:18 PM	18:18	3:36 PM	5	Spring	29	3:43 PM	17:54	3:59 PM
6	45	2:36 PM	26:12	3:01 PM	6	41	3:20 PM	18:48	3:36 PM	6	Floral	35	3:44 PM	6:44	3:47 PM
7	46	2:37 PM	19:30	2:59 PM	7	55	3:09 PM	20:42	3:31 PM	7	Paton	37	3:37 PM	28:43	4:04 PM
8	46	2:41 PM	29:12	3:07 PM	8	49	3:21 PM	18:36	3:37 PM	8	Beal	28	3:47 PM	14:41	3:56 PM
9	34	2:37 PM	25:30	3:01 PM	9	44	3:15 PM	12:36	3:20 PM	9	Floral	36	3:31 PM	10:04	3:37 PM
10					10	39	3:08 PM	28:00	3:39 PM	10	Beal	25	3:50 PM	18:26	4:02 PM
11	36	2:41 PM	27:54	3:08 PM	11	40	3:10 PM	24:42	3:38 PM	11	Beal	28	3:45 PM	20:48	3:56 PM
12	28	2:38 PM	16:54	2:54 PM	12	42	3:12 PM	22:00	3:36 PM	12	Spring	42	3:45 PM	21:27	4:03 PM
13	47	2:37 PM	27:18	3:00 PM	13	53	3:09 PM	22:18	3:35 PM	13	Beal	20	3:42 PM	12:02	3:51 PM
14	43	2:41 PM	19:06	2:55 PM	14	43	3:15 PM	20:48	3:35 PM	14	Spring	23	3:42 PM	17:45	3:58 PM
15					15	49	3:11 PM	21:00	3:34 PM	15	Coolidge	47	3:42 PM	15:42	3:54 PM
17	40	2:36 PM	16:48	2:51 PM	17	45	3:08 PM	20:42	3:33 PM	17	Beal	40	3:42 PM	21:41	3:59 PM
18	38	2:37 PM	24:24	2:58 PM	18	53	3:13 PM	14:06	3:25 PM	18	Coolidge	48	3:31 PM	26:08	3:57 PM
19	41	2:39 PM	28:12	3:03 PM	19	41	3:16 PM	18:54	3:35 PM	19	Coolidge	47	3:41 PM	11:24	3:51 PM
20	38	2:40 PM	24:12	3:03 PM	20	43	3:16 PM	09:30	3:28 PM	20	Beal	29	3:36 PM	17:57	3:51 PM
21	48	2:38 PM	23:48	2:59 PM	21	42	3:15 PM	23:06	3:39 PM	21	Floral	28	3:47 PM	12:58	3:57 PM
22	45	2:38 PM	18:00	2:50 PM	22	46	3:11 PM	28:48	3:40 PM	22	Beal	42	3:46 PM	20:34	4:05 PM
24	33	2:39 PM	31:18	3:05 PM	24	43	3:14 PM	19:36	3:36 PM	24	Beal	37	3:42 PM	16:17	3:57 PM
26	25	2:40 PM	26:12	3:03 PM	26	48	3:20 PM	22	3:37 PM	26	Beal	28	3:46 PM	20:08	4:03 PM
27	33	2:34 PM	20:00	3:03 PM	27	25	3:19 PM	12:12	3:32 PM	27	Floral	26	3:39 PM	10:41	3:46 PM
30					30	43	3:14 PM	19:48	3:34 PM	30	Paton	30	3:40 PM	19:28	3:58 PM
31					31				3:30 PM	31	Beal	36	3:37 PM	22:14	3:52 PM
32	25	2:32 PM	22:18	2:55 PM	32	46	3:12 PM	21:36	3:35 PM	32	Paton	32	3:42 PM	20:11	4:00 PM
33	47	2:38 PM	29:12	3:07 PM	33	51	3:14 PM	27:18	3:39 PM	33	Paton	33	3:47 PM	27:59	4:11 PM
39	49	2:39 PM	19:36	2:57 PM	39	47	3:15 PM	24:12	3:33 PM	39	Beal	32	3:42 PM	9:19	3:49 PM
40	45	2:37 PM	21:54	2:56 PM	40	51	3:12 PM	11:06	3:24 PM	40	Beal	12	3:36 PM	9:50	3:36 AM
43	27	2:39 PM	25:18	3:03 PM	43	44	3:19 PM	22:38	3:40 PM	43	Floral	26	3:50 PM	16:41	4:03 PM
51	50	2:35 PM	21:06	2:58 PM	51	38	3:12 PM	16:54	3:29 PM	51	Floral	41	3:38 PM	17:08	3:51 PM
52	45	2:36 PM	28:06	3:04 PM	52	37	3:19 PM	18:06	3:36 PM	52	Floral	41	3:47 PM	24:04	4:06 PM
53	35	2:43 PM	23:12	3:00 PM	53	49	3:16 PM	25:48	3:39 PM	53	Floral	33	3:50 PM	19:43	4:03 PM
54					54	43	3:12 PM	24:36	3:35 PM	54	Beal	28	3:44 PM	21:06	4:01 PM
55	49	2:39 PM	24:18	3:00 PM	55	45	3:14 PM	14:30	3:24 PM	55	Beal	28	3:33 PM	13:05	3:42 PM