

Rochester CUSD #3a

Family and Community Voice

Summary Report on District Transportation Services

September 8, 2023



We asked families of Rochester CUSD #3a to share their thoughts on how the District may improve transportation services to better serve students and families by asking the following question, ***“What suggestions or ideas do you have that can help us further enhance our school bus transportation services and ensure a better experience for our students and the community?”***

The responses suggest various solutions to address the bus driver shortage and improve the school transportation system. These include hosting open interview processes and job fairs, expediting the hiring process, offering competitive pay and benefits, implementing neighborhood pick-up stops, adjusting school start and stop times, and providing support for obtaining CDL licenses. Additionally, respondents propose improving communication, utilizing bus stops instead of door-to-door stops, and involving school staff and administration in driving duties. Some also mention the need for better management and addressing the root causes of driver turnover.

“At Rochester Schools, our commitment to excellence extends beyond the classroom. We are dedicated to providing top-tier transportation services, embracing innovative solutions, and fostering a community-driven approach to ensure every student's well-being.”

Summary

1 Recruitment Strategies

The responses discussed a variety of recruitment strategies, such as hosting a job fair, offering a referral bonus, paying for CDL licenses, and using buses as a traveling billboard. Participants had a range of perceptions, from supporting the idea of paying for CDL licenses to disagreeing with the idea of paying for recertification and classroom supplies. Other strategies mentioned included changing start and stop times, rotating child watching duties, and using HS students to help troubleshoot the bus app.

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2 Safety Measures

The responses discussed various safety measures related to transportation, such as hosting an open interview process, offering same-day or week job starts, fast-tracking paperwork and background checks, providing engaging activities for students before and after school, setting neighborhood pick-up stops, and offering a superior hourly rate and benefits package. The participants had a range of perceptions, from agreeing with the need for better safety measures to disagreeing with the idea of paying for CDL licenses. Overall, the responses highlighted the need for efficient hiring processes, better communication, and more support for bus drivers.

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3 Compensation

The responses discussed various aspects of Compensation related to the bus system, such as offering a sign-on bonus, paying for CDL licenses, providing a referral bonus, and offering a superior hourly rate and benefits package. The participants had a range of perceptions, from believing that the district should be a leader in Compensation to disagreeing with the idea of paying for CDL licenses. They also suggested solutions such as job fairs, rotating child watching duties, and utilizing high school students to help troubleshoot the bus app.

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4 Communication

The responses discussed various aspects of communication related to the bus system, such as inconsistent communication across buildings, the need for efficient hiring processes, and the need for clear bus numbers and routes. Participants also discussed the need for better communication tools, such as the Here Comes the Bus App, and the need for competent leadership to manage the bussing. Overall, participants seemed to agree that communication is an important factor in the success of the bus system.

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5 Student Support

The responses discussed various aspects of Student Support, such as providing snacks, tutoring, and board games for before and after school options, setting up neighborhood pick-up stops, offering an hourly rate and benefits package, changing start and stop times of the various buildings, scanning IDs, hosting job fairs, paying for CDL licenses, rotating child watching duties, and utilizing HS students to help troubleshoot the flaws in the bus app. The participants seemed to have a negative perception of the current Student Support, as they mentioned the need for efficient hiring processes, competent leadership, and consistent communication across buildings.

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Conclusion

Thank you for your valuable input and suggestions regarding our school district's transportation challenges. Your feedback is essential in helping us identify areas for improvement and potential solutions. We have carefully reviewed your responses and would like to summarize the key points raised.

Many of you emphasized the importance of an efficient hiring process for bus drivers, including hosting open interview days, fast-tracking paperwork, and offering competitive hourly rates and benefits packages. Additionally, several suggestions were made to improve the before and after-school options for students, such as providing engaging activities and rotating child-watching duties among staff.

Safety was another significant concern, with calls for more efficient routes to schools and the implementation of neighborhood pick-up stops. Some of you also suggested varying start and end times for different campuses to reduce bus behavior issues and overcrowding.

In terms of technology, there were concerns about the effectiveness of the "Here Comes the Bus" app and suggestions to improve its functionality. Many of you also highlighted the need for better communication across buildings and consistent messaging regarding bus schedules and routes.

Based on your input, we have identified the following priorities:

1. Enhance the efficiency of the bus driver hiring process and ensure competitive compensation packages.
2. Elevate the quality of before and after-school programs for students.
3. Strengthen safety measures, including optimized routes and the implementation of neighborhood pick-up stops.
4. Optimize routes by adjusting the start and end times of the school day at different campuses.
5. Tackle concerns related to the "Here Comes the Bus" app and foster improved communication between school buildings.

We appreciate your continued engagement and support as we work together to address these challenges and create a better transportation system for our students. Your input is invaluable, and we will keep you updated on our progress in addressing these priorities.

It's a great day to be a Rocket!!! 

"A Tradition of Excellence!"