

Question

Transportation	
1	<p>When using contracted bus drivers, are the required driver background and license checks performed by the contracted company (E.G. Irvin Raphael Bus, Inc.) or directly by Montgomery? If they are performed by the contracted company, how do we access/verify this information?</p> <p>The State of New Jersey requires background checks on all school district drivers. All information (license, medical, fingerprints, state training certificate) must be submitted to the county office for review by August 31st annually.</p>
2	<p>Who is responsible for calling the police should a bus go missing and what is the threshold (in time) before authorities are called</p> <p>If the Transportation Department is unable to make contact with a bus and it is determined that the bus is missing, the Transportation Department would contact the police. If a child is missing, the school would contact the police.</p>
3	<p>Why are the same triple-tier routes assigned to contracted bus drivers every year? Does this not create a disparity in the quality of transportation for those living in contracted areas every year?</p> <p>The district does not have enough buses and drivers to cover all district routes. All of the bus drivers serving Montgomery Township are committed and dedicated to serving the children of the school district. Each driver deeply cares about the safety and security of the children while in their care.</p>
4	<p>Are all routes optimized and carefully pre-planned during the Summer, or are the routes from the previous year used with a "shakeout" period at the beginning of each school year?</p> <p>Routes are prepared for the following year beginning in May. Routes are reviewed by the transportation staff and adjustments are made to balance bus loads and optimize the length of the ride.</p>
5	<p>How are bus stops determined (ie- how far can a bus stop be placed from the home, do they ensure a safe walking path is provided to the stop for children (ie sidewalks)?</p> <p>Bus stops are determined based on safety and are within .5 miles from a student's home.</p>
6	<p>Why are our Montgomery drivers not assigned to K-2?</p> <p>We have a triple-tier bus system which consists of one high school, one middle school and one elementary school. We will look into the feasibility of assigning non-contracted drivers to K-2</p>
7	<p>Can we ensure that a practice route is conducted (via paystub confirmation)?</p> <p>Yes. We plan to hold a meeting prior to the start of school and assign a local driver as a mentor to a contracted driver. Drivers will be required to document that they completed the practice route.</p>

8	<p>What are the requirements for Orchard Hill buses (aides on buses, epi-pens, emergency binders, etc)?</p> <p>The requirements for OHES buses are the same for other schools. IEP's and 504 Plans dictate the supports on buses.</p>
9	<p>What are the signage requirements on the buses for kids to locate their correct buses and can they be standardized across all Montgomery and Contracted buses?</p> <p>They are standardized. The route numbers are located in most cases on the second window passenger side of the bus. The May Bus Company has their signs in the glass to the left of the door.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> 1H 20LM 5R </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> 2H 20UM 6V </div> </div> <p>H – High School, LM – Lower Middle School, R – Orchard, UM – Upper Middle School and V - Village We are looking into additional signage for K-4 buses.</p>
10	<p>What are the protocols for bus drivers to inform transportation and transportation to inform school of bus delays, accidents, and buses not showing up?</p> <p><u>Accident or Breakdown</u> – The driver calls the dispatcher. The dispatcher calls the transportation supervisor, the police and the school. The dispatcher sends a mechanic to the scene. The transportation supervisor calls the superintendent and/or the business administrator and goes to the scene. The school sends out information to the parents.</p> <p><u>Buses Running Late</u> – The dispatcher notifies the schools. The school sends out information to the parents.</p>
11	<p>What is the current protocol for the bus drivers to inform transportation that they have begun/ended a specific route?</p> <p><u>Morning</u> – All drivers, including contracted drivers, check in with the dispatcher to notify that they are starting their route.</p> <p><u>PM</u> – At the end of their final route of the day, the drivers call into the transportation office when their buses are empty and they are returning to base.</p>
12	<p>What are the protocols for bus drivers after they finish drop offs? Do they sweep their entire bus ensuring there are no remaining children left on bus? Where do buses return to after they are finished with routes? Do the drivers ever leave buses unattended?</p> <p>Drivers report in via radio that their buses are empty. They must walk to the back of the bus to shut off the child check system. They then report to the transportation office if they find any items.</p>
13	<p>Is there someone who is responsible for checking off that each bus has arrived to school letting the administration know that all buses are accounted for? What procedures are in place to ensure this during the middle of the day for the PM Kindergarten buses?</p> <p>School staff doing this at least for grades K-6. School staff reports if kindergarten buses are late arriving midday. Also, drivers report to the dispatcher if they are running late. The dispatcher then calls the schools to notify them of a late bus.</p>

14	<p>What are the consequences to the contractor if events such as these occur? Does the contract discuss monetary penalties? If there are no consequences then consider revising the contract or going out to bid.</p> <p>There are penalties in the contract for no show drivers or drivers who are late in starting the route. This does not apply to traffic, detours, breakdowns, etc. which are beyond the control of the driver.</p>
15	<p>Who checks to see if the children can buckle their seat belts? Enforces that their seatbelts are fastened? Ensures that everyone stays in their seats during the ride to/from school? Is this responsibility being placed on the bus driver and if so how do you expect them to enforce this and drive the bus at the same time?</p> <p>The law concerning seatbelt use states that a driver is to remind the student to use the seatbelt. At the school, many drivers walk the aisle to check that the seatbelt is fastened. Upon getting on the bus, they wait to hear a click. While driving, if the driver sees a child standing or leaning in the aisle, they will tell the child to secure their seatbelt.</p>
16	<p>Why don't parents receive information regarding their assigned bus driver prior to school starting along w/ the route number and pick up / drop off times?</p> <p>Bus information (bus route, pick up and drop off times) is available in Genesis a week before the opening of school. Drivers introduce themselves on the first day. Unfortunately, not all drivers introduce themselves. I want to ensure that this practice happens going forward.</p>
17	<p>Can we create a better orientation system for kids to the buses so they can meet their drivers and learn about safety on buses.</p> <p>Yes, and we are working on this to be in place prior to the start of the 2019-2020 school year.</p>
18	<p>Can we explore the possibility of asking parent volunteers (and crucially Montgomery residents familiar within the area) to ride the bus on the first weeks of school until the bus drivers are comfortable with the route, the stops, the rosters and conversely the children are confident with the process and the safety procedures? Better yet, can we place bus aides on the OHES buses?</p> <p>The first few days of school, a district staff member will be on each K-4 bus to assist students and the driver.</p>
19	<p>Why are parents not allowed to ride the buses?</p> <p>Policy states that parents are not allowed to enter the bus. This is a liability issue.</p>
20	<p>How many workers are there in the Transportation Dept?</p> <p>There are 2.5 permanent office staff, consisting of a supervisor (regular day 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), assistant supervisor/AM dispatcher (5:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.), and clerical assistant (1:30 – 4:30 p.m.). An additional person has been added in the office (8 a.m. – 12 p.m.) There are two mechanics. Aides are dependent on IEP needs. Currently there are 9 aides and 49 drivers.</p>
21	<p>Who makes the routes and how are they optimized?</p> <p>The supervisor and assistant supervisor/dispatcher with the help of our drivers using a transportation software system.</p>

22	<p>Why don't we get detailed information on our children's bus routes and all of their stops?</p> <p>All students' bus information is found in Genesis. Route information regarding other students is not shared.</p>
23	<p>Why aren't siblings always placed on the same bus route if one is expected to ride a special needs bus and the other a general education bus? Shouldn't exceptions be made for families such as this if they have children going to the same school from the same location? If exceptions cannot be made why are the route times to and from the same location so vastly different? (ie: one bus with pick-up/drop-off times of 8:50/4:52 and the other 9:10/4:32)</p> <p>The transportation department is informed by the special services department if a child needs to be on a small bus with an aide. All others will be placed on the regular bus. In the past, we have made exceptions for a sibling to ride on a small bus with their sibling. Sometimes Village Elementary School bus routes are different than Orchard Hill bus routes. This depends on how it was routed, and the times can vary by 20 minutes.</p>
24	<p>Does the Board of Education continually conduct evaluations of safety at the school and on the buses? What is the Board of Education review process to ensure changes have actually been implemented?</p> <p>Bus evacuation drills, as required by statute, are done twice a year,</p>
25	<p>How will the bus routes be affected when all of the new housing is built?</p> <p>Routes may be added or light load buses may be changed to balance bus loads. The transportation department evaluates number of students per bus throughout the year and makes adjustments as necessary.</p>
<h2>Communication/Technology/Documentation</h2>	
26	<p>How is the emergency transportation line manned and is there a defined phone tree to ensure that this line does not go unanswered? Is there an emergency line manned at the school as well? What are the hours of operation for the emergency phone lines?</p> <p>The phone lines are required to be staffed fully at the beginning of the year.</p>
27	<p>Who sends out the delay texts and e-blasts and why are they not received in advance of a delay?</p> <p>The transportation department and the schools affected by the delays have a shared responsibility to send out texts and e-blasts. If it is early in the morning, the transportation department sends out the communication. The affected schools will send out the communication at all other times.</p> <p>All communication is sent as soon as a delay is known.</p>
28	<p>How can we monitor incidents reported and the response time of the calls to the transportation hotline?</p> <p>The Transportation Department monitors the incidents and responses based on the calls to the hotline.</p>

29	<p>Does the Board of Education receive copies of all email/text alerts sent to parents from schools and Transportation Dept for emergency archival purposes?</p> <p>The Board of education does not automatically receive this information.</p>
30	<p>Do Montgomery buses have GPS on board (IE - do the drivers have access to using GPS for their routes)?</p> <p>No, Montgomery buses do not have GPS tracking devices nor GPS navigation systems. We are currently in the process of researching and securing GPS tracking devices and navigation systems for all buses.</p>
31	<p>Do contracted buses (E.G. Irvin Raphael busses) have GPS on board (IE - do the drivers have access to using GPS for their routes)?</p> <p>Two of our contracted companies provide GPS tracking systems on their buses. These are not navigation systems.</p>
32	<p>Do Montgomery buses have GPS TRACKERS on board (IE - can the transportation dept. track the location of the busses remotely)?</p> <p>No, Montgomery buses do not have GPS trackers at this time.</p>
33	<p>Do contracted buses (E.G. Irvin Raphael busses) have GPS TRACKERS on board (IE - can the transportation dept. track the location of the busses remotely)?</p> <p>Two of the contracted companies have GPS tracking devices. The Montgomery transportation department can call the contractor and give them a route number, and they can provide the location of the bus.</p>
34	<p>Who is responsible to do the research on the GPS tracking system/platform which can be accessed by parents/school/transportation dept? What's the timeline for researching, making the selection of the system and putting system online?</p> <p>The transportation supervisor along with the business administrator are presently researching this technology.</p>
35	<p>Can the district supply each child with a tracking device so parents can individually locate their child?</p> <p>No, this is not a consideration of the district at this time.</p>

School Organization/Safety

36	<p>What is the explanation for the level of disorganization in getting children off busses at OHES? Why are there not ALWAYS teachers/aides ensuring kids get safely into the school and their classrooms?</p> <p>Mrs. Scotti has formed a school solutions committee to reflect on and ultimately address the OHES processes and procedures for student dismissal. She created an invitation to all OHES parents to attend a meeting on 10/24 (meetings scheduled by grade K, 1, 2) to ask for parent input in person or in writing using a Google Form. Mrs. Scotti plans on making a bus video to welcome back students. All other improvements will be shared in the spring in preparation for a smooth back to school in September.</p>
37	<p>Why is a roll call not performed on every ride?</p> <p>Currently, all bus drivers are taking attendance for OHES and VES in the afternoon. We are investigating other ways to use technology for the 2019-20 school year.</p>
38	<p>Is there someone who is responsible for checking off that each bus has arrived to school letting the administration know that all buses are accounted for? What procedures are in place to ensure this during the middle of the day for the PM Kindergarten buses?</p> <p>Yes, the administration is responsible for checking arrival of all buses.</p>
39	<p>Why is it taking 40+ minutes to get kids from OHES onto the buses?</p> <p>At the beginning of the school year, the process takes a longer time. Once students are used to the process, the length of time is significantly reduced.</p>
40	<p>Knowing that the buses are typically late on the first day(s) of school could the administrative staff at the school/school district a) commence dismissal earlier to account for the extra time it takes to ensure the children are on the correct buses; b) send out emails and texts a week before the first day of school, a day before the first day of school, the morning of the first day of school, and again at dismissal reminding parents to expect delays (up to 1hr for e.g.)? The communication can be improved!</p> <p>The principals are addressing this concern. Our goals is also to improve overall communication with parents.</p>
41	<p>Can we review the bus tag system by color coding or character matching the bus tag with the corresponding bus? Can we make the school responsible for printing and issuing bus tags to each child on the first day of school? (To create a uniform approach to how they are filled out). Instead of placing the bus tags on children's backpacks, where they cannot see them themselves, can we explore wearing them on lanyards around the neck so they can "participate" in learning which bus route number, color or character they need to identify?</p> <p>We are reviewing the current system and look forward to making positive changes for the 2019-2020 school year.</p>

42	<p>Why are the bus tags not sent home to each student in Orchard Hill prior to the first day of school, and why are parents responsible for filling the tags out and not someone from the school/transportation? Do the teachers receive a class list indicating which bus each of their students should be placed on upon dismissal?</p> <p>We are reviewing the current system and look forward to making positive changes for the 2019-2020 school year.</p>
43	<p>Can we explore the possibility of asking parent volunteers (and crucially Montgomery residents familiar with the area) to ride the bus on the first week of school until the bus drivers are comfortable with the route, the stops, the rosters and conversely the children are confident with the process and the safety procedures? Better yet, can we place bus aides on the OHES buses?</p> <p>Staff members will be on the K-4 buses during the first few days of school next year to address this concern.</p>
44	<p>If Bus route/#'s change, who updates these changes in the Genesis portal (school or transportation) and how quickly?</p> <p>The transportation department makes these changes. It updates in Genesis every 24 hours. We are looking to shorten that time.</p>
45	<p>Can we create a better orientation system for kids to the buses so they can meet their drivers and learn about safety on buses.</p> <p>We are working to create an orientation system for next school year.</p>
<h2>Community Outreach/Damage Control</h2>	
46	<p>Provide a debrief in public session of the next board meeting on the details of what specifically went wrong with the two buses and what remedial actions were taken beyond the driver being suspended. - Calls to the transportation hotline were not answered - Information about delays were not sent timely - Impacted parents were not informed that kids were being routed back to school - The main office did not have any additional information to confirm safety of children - The eblasts were sent at 4.45pm, well past the designated time when children are supposed to be dropped off.</p> <p>A debrief was provided to parents prior to the September 25th board meeting.</p>
47	<p>Have the transportation dept. present the current state of the Montgomery transportation plan in public session so everybody understands the current state.</p> <p>The Transportation Department provides an update to the Operations, Facilities and Finance Committee (OFF) each year. In addition, an update will be provided at the October 16th board meeting.</p>