

Transportation Committee Meeting - April 29, 2024

The meeting of the Mercer County School District Board of Education Transportation Committee was held on Monday, April 29th, at 5:00 p.m., in the Unit Office. Persons present were Board Members Julie Wagner, Lori Nelson, and Supt Scott Petrie.

*Call to Order at 5:10 p.m. by Wagner. Roll Call: Wagner, Nelson, Supt Scott Petrie. Balmer absent.

Old Business

1. **Bus Monitors:** We have hired 2 additional monitors this year, for 4 total. Working out well so far. They rotate around routes as needed. Very helpful with special issues we have on routes – severe diabetic, non-verbal child who only understands Spanish, etc.
2. **Driver Shortage:** No new drivers this year. Held discussion on compensation – MC vs RR, salary vs insurance, etc.
3. **Additional Vehicles:** Still looking for a transit van that fits school code regulations (can only use 9 passenger transit vans for school transportation). We would like to have 2 more. May need to order new, instead of looking for used. Cannot find used ones available anywhere.

New Business

1. **Busing Concerns:** Discussed options to help alleviate early pick up time issues that still plague MC after 15 years.
 - A. **Option 1** – Possibility of utilizing a small bus for outlying areas around Eliza, Hamlet, and/or Seaton?
 - B. **Option 2** – Possibility of utilizing dual routes on east and west end of district? One bus route would pick up only PreK thru 5th grade student and take them directly to NBE. A second bus route would pick up only 6th thru 12th grade students and take them directly to Joy, then Aledo. This would allow PreK thru 5th graders to arrive at school closer to 8 a.m., instead of 7:15 a.m. and then waiting for 45 minutes for school to start. The distance between NBE and the schools in Aledo is the reason for the west end's early pick up times. **WE WOULD NOT BE USING DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF BUSES.** Two buses would still cover the same area they would this year, just segregate students by location they go to school. Example: Two routes that pick up students around Eliza – one bus picks up only PreK thru 5th grade, the other picks up only 6th thru 12th grade. The bus of younger kids goes directly to NBE, arriving at 7:45 to 7:50 a.m. (30 to 35 minutes later than the current year, so pick up time would be approx. 30 minutes later also). The bus of older kids has no need to go to NBE, so it heads directly to Joy for pick up of Jr/Sr High kids, then on to the two drop offs at MCJH and MCHS. Saves backtracking to NB and cuts time on buses for kids.

As for the east end of the district, utilizing 2 buses for in-town pick-ups only would significantly cut route time on those buses who pick up rural students. Would alleviate the early pick up issue for Hamlet / Seaton areas. Works similarly to a dual route configuration.

Adjourn Nelson moved, Wagner 2nd to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Wagner