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September 19, 2017

Dear Parents—

I wanted to take a moment to provide you with an update regarding transportation services in the Silver Falls School District and address some questions being asked of the bus barn, building principals and district office staff as we enter the third week of the school year.

First, please know that student safety is always our number one priority as we transport more than 2,000 children across 260 square miles on a daily basis. Durham Transportation is the district's contracted transportation company and this is their second year with us. During the 2016-17 school year, they inherited the routes from First Student Transportation and as the year progressed began to make slight changes. The school district then asked the company to conduct an audit of our transportation routes during the summer with three goals in mind:

1. Minimize time students were on buses as possible,
2. Create efficiencies throughout those routes, and
3. Establish equitable practices throughout the district.

This audit has seen many route changes and created some confusion. We apologize for this confusion and know that it will take time for some details to be worked out. I have also asked Durham to bring in an expert from the regional office to review our routes just to be certain we aren't missing anything. At this point in time we know that we need to add two buses to the high school/middle school runs due to overcrowding. I have asked the bus barn to complete those route changes as soon as possible.

The Silver Falls School District believes that bus drivers are an important connection for students. These are often the first people students interact with before their school day begins and the last people they see at the end of their day. It is expected that they will maintain a safe and orderly environment as they transport students throughout the district. Drivers received initial training in Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) in August with more trainings occurring during the school year. That said, if you have concerns for any reason, your first point of contact would be the Bus Barn Manager, John Crain, at 503-873-3721. If you are not satisfied with his response or wish to have your concerns addressed further, you would contact me. I serve as the district's liaison with this contracted service.

Customer service is a priority and one I reiterated this morning to Durham Transportation. There is comfort in knowing that the message you leave is not sitting endlessly in some voicemail box. I am asking that the company schedule additional staffing to answer the phone during peak hours of operation and return phone calls in a timely manner. For non-emergency issues, it is the district's expectation that a person would receive a return phone call within 24 hours.

Thank you for your feedback to best support our students.

Sincerely,

Dandy Stevens
Assistant Superintendent
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