



Office of Chief Financial and Operations Officer

625 – 9th Street, Suite 620

Rapid City, SD 57701

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8/14/2024

Dear RCAS parents and guardians,

As many of you are aware, Rapid City Area Schools has struggled to staff many of its bus driving positions over the last few years. This has led to a significant number of route cancellations over that time period. Though the District has been able to hire several new drivers over the summer, it has also experienced additional turnover, which has left staffing levels under where they need to be to fill all of its routes. This situation is unfortunate however, it is not unique to RCAS. School districts across the nation are facing driver shortages and struggling to recruit and retain drivers. Less people are entering the bus driver profession and drivers are leaving the profession at a faster rate than ever before. The District has discussed a myriad of potential options and solutions, all of which have positive and negative impacts on the situation and the community. It is clear, at this point, that this issue is not an anomaly and that a long-term solution that will likely require difficult discussion and decisions is necessary. To that end, a proposal will be brought before the Board of Education in the coming weeks for a professional transportation and logistics company to conduct a function study of the District's student transportation function. The information derived from this study will help administration and the Board of Education make informed, data-driven decisions about the future of student transportation in the District.

Of course, those decisions will take time to implement and, unfortunately, will not change the immediate circumstances that the District is facing. At this point, the District has made the decision to continue cancelling routes on a two-week, rotating basis, as it has over the past two years. This is not an ideal solution however, the District feels it is the most appropriate way to handle the situation in the short-term.

Please understand that the District is using every CDL licensed staff member available and will do everything it can to only cancel routes when it is absolutely necessary.

The families specifically impacted by route cancellations will be alerted through SchoolMessenger with as much as advanced notice as possible.

The District is working on streamlining the process for mileage reimbursement in lieu of transportation and additional information on that process will be communicated in the near future.

RCAS apologizes for the inconvenience that route cancellations will place on its families and sincerely appreciates your patience and understanding as we work towards long-term solutions.

Sincerely,

Coy Sasse

RCAS Chief Financial and Operations Officer

