

September 8, 2017

Dear Families,

I am reaching out to recap our first day. First, I hope your child enjoyed their first day and was excited to meet their teacher(s), see friends and maybe even made some new ones. As your children arrived to school they were greeted by smiling faces and I am sure they were able to feel the energy and excitement from all of the summer planning and preparations. I was able to spend a little bit of time in a few of the schools and felt the contagious energy, leaving each location feeling pretty amazed that almost 9,000 students were going to get to experience the love of learning generated by this incredible staff.

I have shared the above because that really should be the focus of a first day of school and having seen it live, I do not want to lose sight of this even though I know the transportation issues for some of you may have taken center stage. Even though I know we may have tolerance for some sort of imperfection in opening day transportation, I do not think we ever considered buses running as late as they did. The feeling of not knowing when your child will be picked up in the morning or delivered home in the afternoon is frustrating and at times even scary. For our students, waiting around for a bus to arrive to take them to or from school cuts into the good feelings they had about the opening days of school. For the staff and myself, we certainly would have much preferred to have been writing solely about the smiles on kids' faces as they walked into the buildings, and the stories of what our little ones share about their summers (always too cute).

What I want to convey about transportation is that our team and my office will not rest until we have solved the issues and are providing stable, predictable and timely transportation for EVERY student, EVERY day. I will share that the issues of our first day were many - from more typical first day types to an extreme issue from one of our providers, as they did not meet their commitments for transporting our students. This company informed us late in the afternoon that they would not have enough drivers to fulfill their contracted routes (20+ routes). This was the primary cause of the extensive delays for some of our afternoon routes. This unprecedented issue caused us to scramble to find ways to get our kids home safely and timely. I am happy to report the former was successful, but not the latter. Some schools were hit worse than others, and for that I offer my sincere apologies.

More than my apology, you have my commitment to action. Saying sorry does not get the job done, but prioritizing and problem-solving will. We have been in constant communication with the company in question and have been devising various strategies to resolve these issues should they arise again. Although I cannot guarantee a perfect second day, I can guarantee our putting everything into the solution.

Our staff is ready, excited and energized to make it another great day for your children. I know it is a big task, but let's make Day 2 about that. Your children are why we do this work and I know each professional is prepared to make tomorrow a sunny day (even if there is a cloud or two over our bright yellow rolling friends.)

Have a wonderful Day 2 and again, a sincere thank you in advance for your patience and understanding!

*Scott Feder*  
Superintendent of Schools