

# SOUTH BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear South Brunswick Families,

I am writing to provide details concerning the safe transportation of our students for the 2018 – 2019 school year. As you know, the last school year was replete with transportation issues. We faced daily concerns for the prompt pick-up of students and, in many cases, students not being picked-up at all. The time spent on transportation issues by so many was far beyond extensive. At that time, I promised our community that we would be working on a significant fix to the Transportation Department and provided substantial communication to keep you informed along the way.

I want to provide more details of our total findings while rebuilding the system and department:

1. Many, many routes had simply been rolled over year in and year out with no changes. This is fine when things are static; however, our town has not stayed static and as we all know continues to grow with new construction. While rolling over a route is sometimes the most inexpensive solution, the district had been bubbling over with these routes and last year we all felt what it is like when the bubble bursts.
2. Many buses were unable to complete their route promptly at one school in order to get to their next school and begin that route on time. This resulted in one of two things - either the bus sat for an hour and waited until the entire next tier of busing was ready (i.e. High School run and then Elementary) or the bus would be assigned to do the next school's run, but barely able to get there on time or frequently was late.
3. After a full assessment of the High School routes, it was evident that in many cases (if not most) the routes were running with about 20 students daily of the possible 54. This was due to the fact that many high schoolers find other means of transportation to and from school or are involved in extracurricular activities thereby not needing bus transportation. Having buses run daily with so few students is inefficient and diverts dollars from educating children.
4. The routing software that was being used was overdue for an upgrade and this has now been fully accomplished.
5. The most obvious problem was that we were being hurt by our vendors due to the shortage of drivers nationwide as well as the inefficient bidding of routes resulting in some of the issues mentioned above.
6. While there are more items I could share at this time, I will stop here with a final statement that rebuilding a system with so many moving parts and with the issues we found has been a monumental undertaking. And while I know we will never be perfect and be everything for everyone, we are certainly going to try.

What we have been hearing since the stops have been shared is that changes made to routes again have caused transportation to be a concern for our families. Please know these changes were necessary to rebuild a system that was in much turmoil. Nevertheless, with that said, our commitment to our community is as follows:

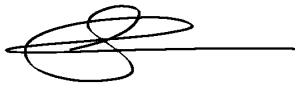
1. We are going to keep our students SAFE and ensure that our stops are safe.
2. We are going to get our students to their perspective schools ON TIME
3. We are going to monitor each route over the first three weeks of school and use our findings to shorten and push back routes whenever able.
4. After monitoring, we may be reaching out to entire bus routes to alter times.
5. We are going to listen to concerns and do our best to resolve.

I am aware that in some instances the pick-up times for the high school are earlier than in the past and, of course, we will assess this specific issue carefully. As mentioned above, part of the issue relates to two main factors: the High School routes were inefficient; routes were ending at the High School way too late to be able to do the next run. A change had to be made, but I understand that there are situations that are not ideal. While we will do our part to make this component better, fixing an entire transportation department that had caused so much distress for so many in recent years needed a complete and total overhaul.

I once again find myself asking for your patience and understanding as we work through the next phase of rebuilding this department to be the best it can be. Yes, changes have been made, and yes, we are looking to make things better, but with the magnitude of this work, there are going to be a few bumps, but nothing like the mountains we all were climbing day in and day out last year.

Thank you all for your support and please know we are working for the betterment of the entire community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Scott Feder  
Superintendent of Schools