



To: Dr. Mike Riggle
Board of Education

From: Dr. R.J. Gravel

Date: Monday, January 28, 2019

Re: Transportation System Update

Background

Since 1972, the high school and elementary school districts have coordinated functions of their transportation services in an effort to minimize costs for families. This includes coordination of routes and the sharing of vehicles for the daily transportation of students to and from school. The partnership has evolved from informal agreements into a joint contract with a single transportation provider. The current agreement was entered into in February 2017, providing services to school districts 27, 28, 30, 31, and 225 for school years 2017-18 through 2019-20. This agreement enables all of the participating school districts to financially benefit from the ability to share vehicles and drivers, ultimately generating a higher amount of revenue for each bus on a daily basis, which keeps costs down.

Understanding the Cost of Transportation Services for Township Schools

The cost for transportation services are based on a daily, per-bus rate which increases by 3% annually. Below is a chart summarizing the change in per-bus rate for the life of our current contract:

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Per-Bus Rate	\$250.00	\$257.50	\$266.23

Because the majority of buses used by township schools each day are shared between multiple school districts, a rate formula has been developed to determine a per run rate. This “blended” rate is then charged to a school based on the number of runs that are utilized. (Note: A run represents a single route in the AM or PM.) Below is the calculation of the blended rate for the 2019-20 school year:

Total Bus Expense	Total Number of Buses		71
	Daily Revenue Required for Each Bus	x	\$265.23
	Total Revenue Required	=	<u>\$18,831</u>
Per Run Calculation	Total Number of Runs for All Township Schools	÷	220
	Per Run Blended Rate	=	<u>\$85.60</u>

For Glenbrook, we operate 25 morning routes, 25 afternoon routes, and 3 activity routes as part of our fee-based transportation system. Additionally, the school district operates additional morning/afternoon routes for students attending the Glenbrook Off-Campus Center, as well as several shuttles during the school day for multi-school programs (e.g. Glenbrook Academy, Glenbrook Off-Campus) and student activities/athletics. In total, Glenbrook utilizes the equivalent of 78 runs each day, which represents the largest use of transportation services within the township (elementary school districts utilize between 16 and 51 runs).

Because the usage needs for our elementary school districts change with a higher level of frequency compared to the high school, the number of buses required often changes once or twice each year. As a result, the per run blended rate is updated in the fall (August) and spring (January) of each year, to reflect an updated calculation as outlined previously. This calculation is reviewed by the leadership team at First Student and the Chief School Business Officials for all participating school districts.

Evaluation of Potential Transportation System Enhancements

In January 2018, the Board of Education discussed possible enhancements to our transportation service. At that time the administration explained that our structure is linked to the operations of our elementary school districts, given that we share vehicles and drivers. As a result of the conversation, it was agreed that we would evaluate the benefits of maintaining a shared transportation agreement to securing a separate transportation agreement for the high schools.

In an effort to begin the evaluation process, the Finance Committee reviewed the structure of the transportation system during the October 16, 2018 meeting. The committee considered two financial scenarios for the 2019-20 school year: one that utilized the current shared expense model; a second illustration assumed that the district would enter a standalone agreement for transportation services. After considering both models, the committee directed the administration to develop a transportation scenario that would enable the high schools to no longer rely on pairing vehicles with the elementary school districts, while remaining in the current shared transportation agreement.

The Business Services team worked with First Student throughout October and November, developing an updated transportation model enabling the high schools to no longer rely on sharing vehicles with the elementary school districts. In developing the model, several changes that were requested by the elementary school districts were incorporated (e.g. smaller vehicles for certain routes). The proposal was presented to the Finance Committee at the November 7, 2018 meeting representing a total annual cost increase of \$100,130 for all township schools, or \$35,501 for Glenbrook. Given the minimal cost increase and substantial benefit of the model to operate our buses independent of the elementary school district bell schedules, the Finance Committee asked Dr. Riggle and Dr. Gravel to gather feedback from the elementary superintendents.

During the week of November 26, 2018, Dr. Riggle and Dr. Gravel met with the superintendents and chief school business officials. The meeting provided an opportunity to review the structure of the current joint transportation agreement, and the structure of the proposed model. The response from the elementary school districts was extremely supportive of the proposed model beginning with the 2019-20 school year.

Future Considerations

Given the ability for Glenbrook to operate its bus routes independent of the elementary school districts beginning with the 2019-20, there is no longer financial/logistical limitation requiring Glenbrook North and Glenbrook South to operate with two separate bell schedules. As a result, the Glenbrook North

leadership team has started to gather feedback regarding the potential of aligning their bell schedule with Glenbrook South. This initial alignment would result in a consistent schedule for all students in the school district, enabling future focus groups and discussions to evaluate different schedules in the future. Electronic surveys were distributed to current parents, students, and staff at Glenbrook North for feedback during the week of January 14, 2019. The surveys will close on February 1, 2019. An update regarding the data collection will be presented at the February 11, 2019 Board of Education meeting.

We have also developed a recommendation for the 2019-20 bus pass fee. The recommendation includes several adjustments to the current bus pass structure, resulting in a modest increase to the per student cost, while increasing service quality and options for students. All student fee recommendations, including the bus pass fee, will be considered by the Finance Committee at the February 6, 2019 meeting, and a recommended fee structure for the 2019-20 school year will subsequently be presented to the full Board of Education at the February 11, 2019 meeting.