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SHUSD Transportation Program Update – October, 2021

Dear SHUSD Parents:

I apologize for interruptions in bus services this year that resulted from driver shortages (and vehicle issues in one case). I know our families count on reliable transportation for their students, and I am working to improve our services. Following is some background about our transportation program, and information about the steps we are taking to provide more reliable, consistent service moving forward.

Background:

While school districts in the state of California are no longer required to provide home-to-school transportation (except for some students who participate in special education), many school districts including SHUSD continue to offer bus services. The SHUSD Board of Trustees and staff believe that transportation services are an important part of providing students with the support they need to succeed in school.

In past years, SHUSD contracted with a company called “First Student” for transportation services. They provided the drivers and the school busses, which was a good option for a district our size. The company was no longer able to provide SHSUD with services after the 2017-18 school year, so we contracted with the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) instead to provide drivers and busses. Due to the nationwide and local school bus driver shortage, NVUSD informed us that they could no longer provide services after the 2019-20 school year because they were having difficulty staffing their own routes.

With approval from the SHUSD Board of Trustees, district administration worked with an outside consultant to develop and implement our own transportation program which began during the 2020-21 school year. The school bus driver shortage continues to be the biggest challenge in providing consistent, reliable service. Drivers must have special training and a Class B license, and they typically work split shifts (early in the morning and until late in the afternoon). Currently, we contract with Michael’s Transportation for drivers, and we are actively recruiting to hire and train our own drivers (we will provide free training). We purchased used busses last year to allow for time to research different vehicle options including electric busses.

Action Steps:

- We have hired a Transportation Assistant who is training to drive a school bus. When her training is complete and she has her Class B license, she will be able to substitute as a driver when needed.
- We are recruiting for three full-time school bus drivers. These positions are full-time with fully-paid medical benefits. Additional “split-shift” compensation is included, and free training is provided.
- When we must temporarily cancel a route for a day or more, we will alternate which route is cancelled whenever possible to minimize the impact to families.
- SHUSD has one spare bus, and we have contracts with Calistoga Joint Unified School District and Michael’s Transportation to use their busses also when ours need repairs. All busses are inspected and maintained on a regular schedule.
- Staff is researching different vehicle replacement options such as electric busses. Districts who have owned diesel busses for at least two years may be eligible for replacement grants for electric busses; however these busses may not be suitable for our longer routes that go to Lake Berryessa and Angwin. Newer busses that use clean (low emissions) diesel are also under consideration, as well as utilizing more vans if feasible.

How You Can Help:

Spread the word about our school bus driver vacancies. Candidates can visit the [Human Resources Department](#) on our district website to learn more, and to submit an application through an employment database called [Edjoin](#). They can also contact me at the e-mail or phone number below to discuss the positions and/or make an appointment for help completing the application.

Next Update:

I will provide another transportation update in December, 2021.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

DocuSigned by:

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Andi Stubbs, Chief Business Official

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