

March 30, 2011

All parents of nonpublic school students:

The Board of Education is in receipt of a communication dated March 7th from a number of nonpublic (private and parochial) school parents expressing concern about the district plan to provide transportation via public carrier for as many students and routes as possible for reasons of economy and efficiency. The Board of Education wanted to take this opportunity to formally respond to the letter of March 7th, as well as address some of the questions from the budget hearing on March 16th.

1. It is the stated intention of the Board of Education to provide transportation to eligible nonpublic school students. Wherever possible this transportation will be provided on public carrier in accordance with §3635 Education Law and Commissioner's Decisions. Rye Neck UFSD currently uses public carriers for several routes: Fordham Prep, Iona Prep, Ursuline, Holy Child, Keio, Archbishop Stepinac and Saints John & Paul.
2. Other districts in the region have used public carriers successfully for years.
3. Where possible, the District currently shares routes with other school districts. Presently the Rye Neck District shares routes with Mamaroneck UFSD on nonpublic school and special education transportation.
4. Sharing opportunities with other districts can be limited by:
 - a. Available space on the bus,
 - b. School arrival/dismissal times,
 - c. Contractual provisions, and
 - d. A prohibition against "piggybacking" with a district that contracts out its transportation services. When another district has a route in place through a transportation contract, already bid, sharing space on that route is prohibited by law.
5. Prior to the school year, the Sound Shore school districts collaborate on sharing strategies for reducing transportation expense. In addition, when new applications

arrive during the year, the District seeks to learn which local schools are already transporting to a particular school.

6. Annually the District bids transportation routes and may elect to renew contracts at up to the CPI rate for up to five years.
7. Contract bus rates are influenced by the following factors:
 - a. A contracted bus company must abide by all rules and regulations of the State of New York, including the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Transportation.
 - b. All drivers must have appropriate training and current/valid driver's license with the appropriate class issued by NYS and conduct required random drug and alcohol testing pursuant to Federal laws and regulations. Every driver is fully trained in emergency procedures and fingerprinted for a criminal background check.
 - c. Buses must meet strict safety and inspection standards, be outfitted with communications, first aid and safety equipment.
 - d. The bus contractor must provide a 100% performance bond
 - e. The bus contractor must provide insurance for commercial general liability, comprehensive auto liability, workers' compensation and employers liability

Following the deadline for all nonpublic school transportation applications for the 2011-12 year, April 1, 2011, the District will take the following steps:

1. Review all received applications and analyze all transportation requests, including requests to new schools.
2. Review each request for availability of public transportation.
3. Seek to coordinate transportation with other districts where possible (Summer 2011).
4. Prepare bids and/or renew contracts for routes that require private contractors. (May-June 2011)
5. Advise parents of routes (June-July 2011)
6. For those students serviced by public carrier: provide parents with train passes and/or metro cards (August, 2011)
7. For those students with contracted bus service: provide parents with route and bus stop information (August, 2011).

It is hoped that this clarifies the Board of Education's position and the Rye Neck UFSD's procedures with regard to nonpublic school transportation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heidi Sickles".

Heidi Sickles
President
Rye Neck Board of Education

