

Talking Points-Please contact me at [Darleen.vanriper@firstgroup.com](mailto:Darleen.vanriper@firstgroup.com) with any comments or questions

**1. First Student Summer in Pictures**



**2. Getting Ready for SY 2023/2024**

Since August 14, 2023, all First Student employees were busy getting ready for the new school year. It all started with our Kick-off meeting, during which Dr. Tolan shared her bus driving experiences us, and how she became the audience of her very own Taylor Swift Concert.

For the remainder of August, our drivers prepared themselves and their buses with the annual Bus Olympics. Activities include taking the bus through the mirror grid to adjust all seven of their mirrors, learning & practicing chaining of the buses, cleaning & sanitizing of their vehicle, and completing a composite of their assigned asset (just like we do when we rent a car).

**3. Versatrans & R2X**

No, this is not a Starwars episode...Versatrans is our routing program and R2X is our brandnew routing request system. During the Secretaries' training on 08/08/2023, LCSD was introduced to the R2X. The district's transportation staff received their login information through First Planning Solutions, and new staff also received their login credentials for Versatrans, so they can print out their daily transportation reports.

With a few minor hiccups, we are steadily helping all LCSD staff to get logged into the systems.

**4. Driver/Candidate Comparison Report (as of 09/07/2023)**

	6/5/2023		9/7/2023	
Lincoln County Bus Routes	73	Driver Shortage	73	Driver Shortage
Drivers on hand (as of 09/07/2023, LOA excluded)	55	18	46	27
Out of Town Drivers	3	15	0	27
Routes not currently serviced (combos)	14	1	20	7
<b>Other Considerations:</b>				
Cover Drivers positions not staffed	3	21	4	31
Route Monitor positions not staffed	0		5	
Drivers on LOA/FMLA/WC (Regular & Casual)	4		3	
Casual Drivers with limited availability	7		6	
LCSD & FS Staff (1 & 9) Available to Drive	8		9	

Please note that this information is subject to frequent changes.

As the data shows, we we had lots of movement in our staffing and routing. Because we ended the year with all FS staff on routes and without having concrete numbers for the beginning of the school year, we worked on combo-loops. Figuring our which routes could drop off students before heading to other schools helped us manage student load counts in a way that allowed us to combine routes. The twenty routes that are currently not serviced do not only include the looping routes, but also those routes that we are currently not servicing due to students not having registered, yet. Eventually, we will be back up to sixty routes.

To begin the school year we have the following staff cover routes: Kim Bolden, ALM; Sheila Morris, LSM; Donald Ayarza, SM; Brenda Porter, Dispatcher; Karen Howard, Dispatcher; Eric Treve, Tech; Dave Pearson, Tech; Annette Brooks-Flatt, LCSD Staff (as needed with prior approval from Rich Belloni); and Darleen Van Riper, LM (W76).

Fortunately, we have eight candidates in the pipeline at varying stages. Mona Miller and Lisa Loring are our dispatchers until we can get the candidates through training. At that point, we hope that staff can be relieved from driving.

Athletic Trips and Fieldtrips are also filling up the schedule which is always a juggle of drivers. Susan VanLiew assists us with communications of trip priorities. What we cannot cover with our drivers, we try to either combine or refer to Type 20 usage. Many coaches have their Type 20 certificates, so they can help by driving their activity vehicles. If that doesn't work, we outsource to receiving locations...and we are off to another adventure!

**5. Losing our Resident Cowboy**

During the summer, Lawrence Patchen, Jr., driver of E54, passed away after a very short and intense fight with cancer. He was the guy who was ready to jump on whatever we asked him to do. We will miss him greatly.

