

Talking Points-Please contact me at Darleen.vanriper@firstgroup.com with any comments or questions.

1. **OOT Drivers: Out-of-Towners Who are Here to Help**

As our numbers of available drivers continue to drop, we reached out to our regional team for assistance. Our call for help was answered by Washington and Montana. We received five OOT drivers, and over the spring break, we trained and prepared them to be ODE ready and ready to roll.

The process to get experienced drivers from out-of-state ODE-ready is simple: we need updated DOT physicals, fingerprints, background checks and four hours of Experienced Driver Training, so we can apply for the temporary permit and then the “green card” for bus drivers.

2. **First Student Employees and Social Media**

Facebook, Twitter, tiktok...it has become so easy to for individuals to express themselves publicly and share their lives with the world. Sometimes those posts are friendly, funny and endearing, and other times, posts are mean, hateful and borderline slander. Too often, people share information that are solely based on their opinion without investigating the issue further. Unfortunately, our employees become the subject of such posts...and most of the time, these posts are based on emotions and half-truths rather than on informed investigation.

First Student’s policy on the use of social media is clearly outlined. Especially when our employees become the center of attention of a disgruntled individual’s social media post, we remind them to focus on the positive and continue to be the safest bus driver on the block.

Safety & Security at First Student: Route Familiarity

First Student’s main priority is to transport our children safely to their destinations. During training, our drivers learn how to become professional drivers and how to build and maintain a safe school bus environment for all passengers and for the operators. One of the many terms our drivers memorize is “Route Familiarity.”

Route Familiarity is a state in which a driver automatically recognizes any changes while on route, at school bus stops and in school loading zones. While our bus drivers are operating their vehicles, they become aware of which cars park at their bus stops, who is there to pick up their students, when to slow down to avoid that pothole, and listen for anything that seems to be off topic with their passengers.

Our drivers also know who the student’s responsible adult is, and when something is off (like that white van with the unfamiliar individual waiting at a bus stop); they radio in any unusual events or simply ask if a new individual is authorized to pick up the student.

3. **Trainers Help Drivers: Know Your Bus is in Working Order**

Pre-trip Inspections are the very beginning of a school bus driver’s day. The moment they approach their buses, they are already looking for anything unusual such as open doors, puddles under the engine, or tilted buses. Our busdrivers check the entire bus for any missing parts, new dents, leaking hoses, or bald spots on their tires.

Part of this inspection is also making sure that the breaks work. While our small buses work with hydraulic breaks, the big buses exclusively run (or stop) on air breaks. The inspection of the sir breaks is quite involved and requires the driver to check for air leakage, break pad wear and tear ans well as the timing of filling the air tanks. If any part of the break does not satisfy the driver’s check, the bus is downed and a new bu must be issued to the driver. This can sometimes lead to delays on route, but we believe that it is safer to check the breaks, than run late for school or home drop off.

4. **Driver/Candidate Comparison Report (as of 4/4/2024)**

| | 3/7/2024 | | 4/9/2024 | |
|--|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|
| Lincoln County Bus Routes | 73 | Driver Shortage | 73 | Driver Shortage |
| Drivers on hand (as of 01/04/2024, LOA excluded) | 47 | 26 | 45 | 28 |
| Out of Town Drivers | 4 | 22 | 5 | 23 |
| Routes not currently serviced (combos) | 16 | 6 | 17 | 6 |
| Other Considerations: | | | | |
| Cover Drivers positions not staffed | 3 | 29 | 4 | 32 |
| Route Monitor positions not staffed | -1 | | 1 | |
| Drivers on LOA/FMLA/WC (Regular & Casual) | 1 | | 1 | |
| Casual Drivers with limited availability | 9 | | 10 | |
| LCSD & FS Staff (1 & 7) Available to Drive | 8 | 10 | 8 | 14 |

Please note that this information is subject to frequent changes.