

March 13, 2017

Transportation Board Presentation

Thank you Board members for your support of the Transportation Dept. We have had a great year so far and expect it to continue. I work with a great team of dedicated, safe, and conscientious people.

We started off the year at our orientation meeting here at VAB with a focus training on pre-trip inspections. Safe transportation starts with safe buses. We had specific training on our pre-trip inspection both inside and out. We had fun playing Family Feud, answering the Top ten questions on the board. Mechanic Bob VanderStraaten was our game host, and it was not only educational but also entertaining.

We learned at our orientation that we would start the year out one driver short. That HS/MS route only had 10 students riding that bus, so I felt this was a perfect opportunity to combine some stops with routes. With this change, I was able to eliminate a HS/MS run leaving a single run for SSL. Then in December, Mike Mock decided to retire. This gave me another opportunity to see where I could tighten our belt. I was able to again combine some stops with other routes and eliminate an elementary run. With the elimination a HS/MS run and an Elementary run, I successfully was able to eliminate one complete run. I believe this is the last of the tightening we will be able to do for some time. It has been an adjustment for a few drivers who took on a little more than they were used to, however, so far things are going smoothly.

I'm very proud to announce that our state inspections have been completed with excellence yet again. Bob and Al Reynolds worked together getting through the five days. In the past the inspector would get thru our fleet in 3 days. With the state cut backs the inspectors hours were limited to 8 hours. So, during the inspection it felt like weeks! We have a great fleet, thanks to your support and investment and a couple of dedicated mechanics who care about what they do. We actually have 20 routes and 17 of those routes are driven in buses that are four years old or younger! Just three of our route buses are older, #3, 2010, #7, 2012 and our special needs bus #97 that is a 2009. That is something we as a district can take pride in!!

So, inspections were over, the fleet was in tip top shape, leave it to us women (Linda and I) to identify our next project! I mentioned to the boys how nice it would be to go through and organize the shelves in the shop. The reaction was typical; but to our surprise the next day, the dust was flying. Wow, they pulled everything out of the garage, sorted, recycled, repurposed things that had been on the shelves over 15 years, and dealing with parts that we no longer had buses to put those parts on. In two days the side of the garage that had not been seen in years was empty. Hmm, us girls felt we could be supportive of all the things they had done by painting the walls, if by suggesting painting the walls after they washed down the walls first. Colors?? We got our color chart, ordered paint and let them at it! Their creativity began to flow☺ The garage had been transformed! These guys really know how to get it done. I believe they would even admit how nice it is to work in a better organized and brighter garage.

Our Christmas luncheon was even more fun in our updated garage. It was great to have Will Emmert stop to see us, and we hope all the rest of you can join us next year. He saw first-hand what the new garage looked like. We all enjoyed having lunch with most of our admin team. We also enjoyed some

music by our very own HS Chamber Singers. We even had enough food left over to feed the students, nothing left after they went through the line.

Santa did make a stop at the Transportation Department this Christmas. He brought our department new coats! Look at us now!! Everyone was excited and felt like we look like a team! Thank you Vicksburg Schools for this gift.

Now, at the start of 2017, I finally have my new dispatch position filled. I had been working on getting this position filled with a seasoned driver so that I would have an extra driver available when necessary. It had to be someone who could jump on any bus and be comfortable to do any route. So, along came Denise Morren. Denise has been with the district for 17 years. She shared her interest and I was happy to place her in that position. Now, with this position filled, Miss Linda VanderStraaten won't be working 12 hour days any more. Linda has been working 12 hour days for close to 14 years.

Our Regular routes this year covered 132,183 miles, Athletics & Field Trips totaled 17,017 miles, and we used 24,091 gal of fuel so far. Our Special Education buses covered 46,523 miles with 6,025 gal of fuel so far.

Our Team has traveled so far this year a total of 194,723 miles. We have used 30,116 gal of fuel.

Besides our regular daily routes, we have transported 100's of students to different activities, these are just a few examples:

OEC - 478 students

PAC – 974 students

Expo Center - 400 students

HS & MS – Ski Club (14 trips)

Chenery Auditorium - 252

Timber Ridge – 200 5th graders

Kalamazoo Nature Center – 252

MS Rink – 200 students

Great Skate – 234 Tobey students

When I talk about the magic school bus, the special education buses are the ones that do the magic. We have four special needs buses.

Colleen drives #97 and transports our young adult students to the Young Adult Program out at the KRESA-West Campus which is located out on Drake Rd. It used to be Croyden before Woodsedge was completed. YAP is a post-secondary program providing a range of transition services to young people with disabilities ages 18-26 years old. Students access volunteer opportunities in a range of community agencies and learn adult living skills thru several of these agencies. Colleen transports 13 students to and from this location. Colleen starts her mornings at 5:30am. The first student on this route loads at 6am.

Judy drives #17 with Penny as her aide and transports all our special needs students who attend the Woodsedge Learning Center on Milham Rd. This educational institution serves students from three years old to 26 years old. The students that attend can have Autism, Cognitive impairments of many

levels and physical handicaps of all kinds. Judy transports nine students, four of them are in wheelchairs. These are the more fragile in our district, and Miss Judy cares for each one of them like they were her own.

Tammy drives #5 with Melanie as her aide. They transport up to four students. This bus transports to Valley Center where students whose behavior hinders their education for smaller class sizes and training on proper behavior habits. The goal is to help them earn the right to return to their own school. The ages can vary from 1st grade up to high school level. We do have one student that has made it through her levels and is back attending her home school for one hour a day. Tammy has also been transporting to ILC, Intensive learning Center/Juvenile Home. This school works collaboratively with the court, day treatments, Juvenile Home and local districts to plan for successful transition of adjudicated youth back into their local school and community. This particular route changes almost weekly to accommodate the transitions the students go through. The ability for flexibility is a requirement on this route. Tammy and Melanie have definitely been flexible this year.

Nancy also drives a Magic school bus this year. Nancy drives #7, she transports to VHS and Schoolcraft HS, then she takes several students into Portage and drops at three different elementary buildings at the same time. Portage Central El, Amberley El, and Angling Rd