

FIRSTstudent **Transportation Update**

Lincoln County School District Board Meeting General Session, August 12, 2025

Date: August 7, 2025

Dear: LCSD School Board & Transportation Leadership,

We're pleased to provide you with an update on activities at our location. This month's report includes the status of driver staffing and overall updates on your student transportation services. With the new school year comes a fresh new look. I hope you enjoy this version of the report. Your feedback is always welcome.



Driver staffing

We are working diligently to increase the applicant flow through recruiting campaigns.

- FY 26 Wages: \$22.45 – \$27.91
- Hiring Bonuses of \$3500 for CDL S/P endorsed drivers
- Hiring Bonuses of \$2000 for non-CDL S/P endorsed drivers
- Paid Training
- \$500 Employee Referral Bonus

The data on the left represents driver availability and route count based on student registrations and drivers intentions to return. At this point we anticipate that we will need at least two OOT drivers to cover start-up routes. Note that this data will change as we get closer to school start.



Recruiting

Our recruiting efforts have been successful. Since the end of SY 24/25, we received approximately 50 applications. We currently have 20 candidates in the pipeline at varying stages. As candidates complete their training and receive their qualifications, OOT drivers will be dismissed to their home locations. Depending on the success rate of current candidates, we hope to bring back combined routes to lower student load counts and route lengths.

We encountered a few hiring issues due to the closure of South Beach Security and Samaritan Health currently not providing DOT Physical & Pre-employment Drug Screening services. We have found alternative ways to move candidates through the federal and state requirements

Route Count	56
GenEd	35
SpEd	12
Type 10	9
Driver Staffing Goal	63
Drivers Assigned to a Route	56
Cover Drivers	6
Borrowed Drivers	0
Total Drivers On Hand	40
Excluding staff or borrowed drivers	
CDL	42
Type 10	8
Casual Drivers (limited route availability)	(8)
Over/(Short) for Route Coverage	-6
Drivers in Training/Testing	6
Apps as of 08/08/2025	8
Permit Pending	6
Total # in Training (Classroom)	3
Behind-the-Wheel Training	3
Leave/Unavailable	0

Contact Darleen Van Riper, Location Manager, at 503-708-7609 with questions.



Customer issues/ resolutions

- **Driver Shortage:**
 - We anticipate the addition of several drivers over the next two months, which will help with driver shortage.
 - FirstAlt is an opportunity that can help us with the transportation of students in various programs (HELP, MV) and students with special needs. A meeting with Dr. Tolan and Rich Belloni is set for 08/15/2025 to discuss this option to help with high student load counts and route lengths.



Noteworthy Successes

- This summer, our recruiting efforts have led to record high numbers of applications. We will work diligently with our team to provide hiring experience that is pleasant and successful for everyone who chooses to become a vital part of our community.
- Our wonderful technicians have completed the preventative and annual maintenance on the entire fleet. Cameras and radios are being tested to make sure they are ready for the new school year.
- Our LCSD Fleet is getting older, and we are starting to replace vehicles that are aging out. This summer we received three brand-new Type 20 vehicles and one brand-new Type C bus with Wheelchair Lift. We are currently in the process of getting these vehicles state legal for student transportation.
- With the promotion of Brenda Porter from Dispatcher to Location Safety Manager, we needed to hire a new dispatcher. I am proud to share that we were able to hire from within. Jason Caldwell has been using the summer to learn about coordinating trips, routing and driver management. He is doing great, and I am sure that he will continue to prove his worth as a member of operations.



Technology Updates

- **First Planning Solutions** – Routing Specialists – Already in place.
- **R2X-** Route Change Request Tool- Utilized by district staff to request changes to a student's scheduled pick-up or drop-off location/time.
- **First View District Dashboard and Parent Tracking App-** During the summer, FirstView was upgraded. Users of the old platform were notified about the upgrade and how to switch over to the new dashboard that has become more intuitive and user friendly. As we get closer to route completion, parents will receive detailed instructions on how to switch to the updated ParentApp. As always, we will be available to help with any issues that may arise.
- **Driver Hub** – Driver turn-by-turn directions and onboard job aid.



Routing updates

- After a few technical adjustments to data transfer from Synergy to Versatrans, student registrations are populating in our routing system, and our routers are in full swing of assigning students to their transportation plans.

- This year, Vince Dye was able to add multiple columns for parents to list authorized persons, so our transportation team can quickly assist drivers with identifying whether a person is allowed to pick up a student from the bus. This adds a layer of protection for our students and our employees.



Latest news

- First Student launched the HALO Transportation Platform. Watch the video [here](#), or read more at Ed Tech Innovation Hub [here](#).
- First Student surpasses 5 million miles driven in electric school buses. Watch the video [here](#), or read more at School Bus Fleet magazine [here](#)



Important dates

- 08/13/2025-Chili Cook-off in Toledo. An employee favorite: cooking and savoring good food!
- 08/18/2025-First Student Kick-off Meeting. Starts at 9:00AM
- 08/19-29/2025-Bus Olympics: Employees complete composites, training & dry-runs.
- 08/25/2025-**SVS & ECS School Start**
- 09/02/2025-LCSD School Start