

To: Steve Goss, Assistant Superintendent
From: Ric Beers, Transportation Director
Date: January 5, 2011
Subject: Transportation Report to
The Vicksburg Community School Board

The 2009-2010 school year started with one less bus on the road for Vicksburg Transportation. Our drivers did a good job of making the transition. This eliminated route covered the Tobey Elementary attendance area for high school/middle school as well as Tobey Elementary. This year we eliminated another route in the Tobey attendance area; without eliminating staff due to a retirement. At this time, we've reached a point where I think it would be counter productive to cut any additional routes.

In November of 2009, we had our annual inspection, which resulted in a score of 100%. We are currently waiting notification as to when our next inspection will occur. The term annual state police inspection has come to mean anywhere between six and eighteen months. Recently the State of Michigan cut nine bus inspector jobs; it appears that in an effort to save money, there is a push to end the inspection of every bus and inspect a percentage of the state's total fleet. To do this, would require a change in state law. Every transportation director I know is concerned about this possible change.

There is some interesting news from the state. There is talk that they might actually change the date when Michigan Schools do their pupil transportation count, to the same day that districts are doing their pupil count. Currently, the transportation pupil count is held on national walk to school day!

Attached, you will find the SE-4094 state report that I submitted in September of last year. Remember the state report will never match what our budget shows; as there are some account variables like fuel and insurance listed under transportation that are also used by the maintenance department. Athletics, band and B4K are not claimed on the state SE 4094 report. Our overall budget for the last year was \$1,495,005. Note that is a \$62,365 decrease over the previous year. That's after a significant increase in special education numbers. I attribute this to a decline in fuel cost, the elimination of a route and no Saturday athletic trips.

Normally transportation is not thought of unless a bus is delayed due to weather or trains, etc. That's okay with us as we like to work behind the scenes. Most don't give a second thought that their children will be safe on the bus and we will endeavor to keep it that way.

Here's a brief description of a driver's day. Most drive approximately three hours in the morning and at least an hour and a half at noon. After a brief lunch they are ready to start their afternoon routes, most finishing between 4:40 and 5:00 p.m. Also included in their days are OEC, PAC, field trips, athletics and band trips. We can't forget, half days for high school exams, MEAP test, all while our other buildings maintain their normal schedules.

A driver's day may start at 5:45 a.m. and not end until 10:00 p.m. or later, and they get up and do it all over again the next day. Our drivers are also required to attend monthly safety meetings, random quarterly drug tests as well as continuing education classes in the summer. If there is a group with a more varied and flexible schedule, I am not aware of it. I am proud of the job our drivers do.

While I am highlighting our drivers today, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the excellent job that Al Reynolds and Brad Russell, our mechanics do at keeping the fleet safe and on the road while filling in as drivers when needed (which is a lot). I appreciate all the talents that they bring to the job.

I also want to mention the great job that Linda VanderStraaten does in the office; she exemplifies flexible hours; I believe this instills confidence in the public to know that they can talk to someone who represents our district before and after normal hours (we receive many calls that don't regard transportation directly). As result, many times this office is the go to place for information for the public. We may get a call at 5:30 in the morning and the same person may be calling at 5:00 p.m. looking for directions to a school athletic event; this adds to the continuity of the whole department.

Finally, I would like to add my thanks for Charlie Glaes and Steve Goss's support as well as the Vicksburg Board of Educations continued support for our department. They have remained solid for their support of our employees while many other boards have chosen another route.

As always, if any board member has a question about any part of our operations, I would be happy to talk to them at any time.