Transportation Program Evaluation

August 2012

**A. Description of the Program:**

Our District offers daily home to school and school to home transportation to all students that live a distance of ½ mile or more from their school. The District allows students that live within the ½ mile area the option of walking to the nearest current stop and using bus transportation as well. Students of the District also have opportunity to use transportation through sports and other activities where bus transportation is needed. Our District buses traveled 850,000 miles during the 2011-2012 school-year. Our District buses had an average daily student ridership of 5,639. The transportation staff includes 61 bus drivers, 12 bus aides, 1 driver trainer, 1 driver coach, 3 mechanics, 3 office staff, a director and assistant director. We also utilize 6 part time bus drivers to assist with the activity trips.

**B. Budget Information:**

The total Transportation Department budget for the 2011 – 2012 school-year was $ 2,972,398.

**C.** **Date Reviewed: August 2012**

**D. Program Personnel Responsible:**

Dr. Travis Hux, Assistant Superintendent of Support Services

Dennis Robertson, Director of Transportation

**E. Evaluators:**

Dr. Travis Hux, Assistant Superintendent of Support Services

Dennis Robertson, Director of Transportation

**F. Current Program Goals and/or Objectives:**

Provide safe and efficient transportation for the students of the Raytown C-2 School District.

Provide a calm and comfortable atmosphere for students when riding the bus.

Maintain a consistent bus schedule; buses arrive on time to their bus stops and schools.

Avoid overcrowded buses.

**New Goals and Objectives: A recent third party assessment was conducted by Transpar. The resulting assessment noted a variety of recommendations. The department will focus on implementation of those recommendations. The following data will be used to evaluate the recommendations:**

* + 1. AM Run Distribution
    2. AM Routes
    3. AM Resource Utilization Timeline
    4. AM Route Yield by building
    5. PM Run Distribution
    6. PM Routes
    7. PM Resource Utilization Timeline
    8. Interview Questions for Drivers and Monitors
    9. Principal Surveys
    10. Documents affiliated with recommended changes

**G. Data Used to Evaluate Program:**  OSEDA Safe and Drug Free School Data is collected through survey within the District. Of students that responded, 88.43% indicated that they feel safe going to or from school.

1. Average daily student ridership. We currently transport on an average, 64.89% of total student enrollment per day (home to school).

2. Average route length in minutes. We currently have 394 in district routes, including AM and PM routes, the average length of each route is 22.9 minutes.

3. Results of the 2012 Annual Missouri State Highway Patrol school bus inspection for our district was an approved rate of 98.6%

4. Results of the 2012 Transpar Group Audit of the Department.

**H. Analysis of Strengths:**

A significant number of students use district buses as their means of transportation to get to and from school. There are many programs and activities that also rely upon district buses to transport students to alternative locations and events.

1. The transportation staff receives ongoing training in PBS (positive behavior support). The transportation staff is dedicated to providing service and information to the parents, students and employees of the district to aide in the education of our students.

2. District transportation helps get students to school safely and contributes to good attendance of students that may not have other means of transportation.

3. Buses are parked at a central location, buses are parked in indoor garages, and the facility has paved parking and driving areas. The transportation facility meets/exceeds industry standards.

4. Even with a turnover rate of 20%, which is a common level, the District has retained many long-term employees. The department has a high number of experienced drivers.

5. The current rate of absenteeism is 5.6%. Restricted days off enhance customer service for the District.

6. While the department should create an office procedure manual because it currently operates through ‘corporate knowledge,’ a handbook for drivers does exist. 7. A formal transportation handbook is provided, signed off by drivers, and was last updated in August of 2011.

8. The department engages with a leadership teams. Forming teams comprised of management and drivers is important in sharing concerns of both drivers and management’s expectations.

9. There are video cameras on all buses. These cameras allow for video downloads via intranet to occur for principal viewing, making the process efficient.

10. An inspection of the facility was performed focusing on work areas and status of safety equipment. Maintenance cost per bus is approximately $5,000 or $.041 per mile. This is an improvement since 2006 and is better than industry standard of $5,600 per bus or $0.43 per mile.

11. A review of bell times and utilization of buses per bell times was conducted. Bell times have been set to allow maximum utilization of fleet assets.

12. The residency building serves as an enrollment center for students new to the District. Transportation and the enrollment center works closely together to communicate to insure accuracy of information regarding students.

13. Office routers route actual riders rather than eligible riders. This practice allows buses to utilize the greatest number of seats possible.

14. Children are allowed only one alternate address. This practice prevents continuous variance in addresses of drops, minimizing the opportunity to drop off a student at an inappropriate location.

15. Trips are impartially assigned using a driver seniority rotation list. Regular AM and PM routes take priority over field trips. Trip drivers are available for trips during route times.

**I. Goals and Objectives for 2012-13 School Year: See Recommendations below**

**J. Board Focus:**

* + 1. What information can you share that ensures this program is the best focus for our student in this particular area or need? **School buses represent 25 percent of the miles traveled by students but account for less than 4 percent of the injuries.**
    2. What data sources have been reviewed and analyzed to establish the connection between the program and the results?

**Student ridership count is taken the second Wednesday of October and February, the data indicates that we had a total average student ridership of 5639 per day**.

* + 1. What evidence do you have to show this program is improving student performance or meeting/exceeding board or district goals?

**Our buses passed the Missouri State Highway Patrol Safety Inspection at a rate of 98.6%.**

**OSEDA Safe and Drug Free School Data is collected through survey within the District. Of students that responded, 88.43% indicated that they feel safe going to or from school.**

* + 1. Can this program sustain itself if funds are cut? If not, what makes this program the one we should fund or support?

**No. Many students have no other means of transportation and rely upon district buses to get to and from school.**

**K. Recommendations:**

**The following recommendations are those made by Transpar Group following the 2012 Audit of the Transportation Department.**

1. The audit notes that the department has the correct number of office staff: 7. With the departure of the assistant director configure a new position to maintain management of tasks such as safety/training, and personnel.
2. Initial hire pay for drivers is above all other surrounding districts. Top pay is at the median level. Reset starting pay to $13.00 from $13.46. The change would save $6,000.00 in year 1 and $19,000.00 by year 3.
3. The turnover rate of the department is 20%. This is within the normal range for this type of service. Beginning in July recruit and train drivers at a rate of 2 per month through March.
4. The department absenteeism rate increases 28% on Mondays and Fridays. Be strict on approving PDO’s on Monday’s and Fridays.
5. No formal set of questions are used during interviews. The assistant director conducts interviews alone. This can pose an issue with regard to discrimination. Use a set of questions and involve others from the leadership team to sit in on interviews.
6. The front desk area is open and informal allowing for chatting of drivers with office staff. Encourage drivers to stay out of the office area.
7. There is no formal complaint tracking process in place. Staff follows through, but does not necessarily document the chronology or outcome. Make use of a complaint tracking form to document the events leading up to resolution of a complaint.
8. No policy and procedures manual exists pertaining to the step-by-step process of “how things are done.” Utilize the TLT to develop a procedures manual.
9. The current year’s accident rate is higher than last year and exceeds the industry standard of 1 per 100,000 miles. The department rating is currently 1.23 from July through December. The department needs to formally track accident rates. Assessing types of accidents and training to follow should reduce the number of accidents.
10. The department has not kept up with the replacement schedule of the bus fleet. Some buses are 13 years old. The department should add $320,000.00 to capital outlay on an annually basis to replace 4 buses per year beginning in 2013.
11. The department averages 7 prime-time trips per day. This adds to wear and tear, miles, fuel, wages, etc. Reduce the number of trips to match the industry standard of 1 per 10 routes; for Raytown that would mean 5.6 trips per day. Reduce the funding for trips by $100,000.00 and limit schools to a number of miles they can travel each year.
12. The transportation efficiency rating is 114.5% and costs $63,000.00 in penalties from DESE. The department should increase the number of students per bus, operate fewer buses, reduce the ½ mile transportation to 1 mile, and shift more costs to special needs transportation.
13. The District currently transports 1,225 students who are ineligible because they live within a mile of a school building. Transporting these students requires the use of 6-7 buses and drivers and costs an additional $320,000.00+ per year to the budget. Consider transporting students who are more than one mile from a building.
14. The student information system and the routing software are not linked. This results in continual maintenance by the routers. Work with technology to set up a data connection to keep the routing system up to date.
15. The current allocation of buses, drivers and routes is not efficient. Use Route Yield (a software program) each October to check for routing efficiency. Reduce the current routes by 3 buses, saving $180,000.00 per year. Consolidate two runs into one at the following schools: EW, FR, LH, RO, SHS, SW, SV, and WR to save $88,000.00 per year.
16. Currently drivers have a 6 hour minimum guarantee. This was most likely put into place to retain drivers in a tight labor market. This guarantee creates a high inefficiency for routes. On average, a driver is only needed 4.6 hours per day. Reduce the guarantee to 4 hours per day to save an additional $180,000.00 per year. To retain drivers, insurance should still be provided. If not, turnover would likely rise, but there could be an increase in savings of $240,000 per year.

**Signatures:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Dennis Robertson, Director of Transportation Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Travis Hux, Assistant Superintendent of Support Services Date**