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Close of 2021/22 and staffing forecast for 22/23

1 message

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Dr. Shelton -

As we wind down the 21/22 school year, I wanted to share with you some details on how difficult things have been in transportation. Due to staffing shortages we have been forced to cancel routes 56 times, averaging 11 times per month. These cancellations were due to more open routes (routes without a driver) or more absences than available subs. The average number of riders per tier in our system is 42 and each cancellation impacts 4 tiers for each route. This means an average cancellation impacts the ability for 168 students to get to and from school. In an effort to prevent cancellations, routers, mechanics and administrators worked additional hours to support student transportation by covering routes. Since January, we have had at least one person in the office driving everyday. We have had 27 days where we have had 3 or more people from the office driving which is about 30% of the second semester. We have had coaches, assistant principals and technology staff members filling openings when available. I truly believe the effort of the staff members in this department have kept the cancellation number from ballooning into the hundreds.

The staffing forecast for next school year is also troubling. We currently have 12 routes that will not have a route assigned due to resignation or retirement. These open routes will need to be filled by new drivers (we currently have 1 in training) or contracted through First Student. First Student was supposed to send us 10 drivers this year, but has never sent us more than 4. We need either some additional support from Human Resources with an influx of candidates or some other intervention to drive an increase in applications. The other option would be to reduce the number of eligible riders, and in turn reducing the number of routes.

It is my opinion that without policy changes for the 2022-23 school year we will be faced with daily cancellations that will impact students' ability to consistently attend school.

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