



Clinton Public Schools

September 25, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

No doubt you are aware that Clinton Public Schools has changed bus companies. We entered into a four-year contract last spring with First Student Inc. While we are realizing considerable savings over the life of the contract, the transition to the new company has been more difficult than we anticipated. As we all can appreciate, the start of a new school year typically brings some unexpected issues with transportation as routes are adjusted and new drivers become accustomed to their students. Transition from one company to a new one adds yet another dimension to the start of the year. However, even accounting for these situations, the transition to the new company has been fraught with unusual problems and delays which have raised a number of concerns for parents, the school staff, and me.

Please know that our business manager Rosemary Hanson and I have been working very closely with the First Student management and local personnel to address the myriad of concerns and issues. It is important to note that one of the issues is that we are currently using a temporary fleet of buses and that our permanent fleet is currently being processed by the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles. The reasons for the delayed arrival are varied, and some of the reasons should have been anticipated by the company. At this point we are anticipating having our permanent fleet in place in early October.

I have met with the regional and east coast vice presidents of First Student, Inc., and they have been very attentive to our concerns. To that end, they reassigned six additional mechanics and technicians to our buses to ready the permanent fleet for inspection and registration and to support the maintenance of the existing buses. In addition, they assigned a route-design specialist/troubleshooter to work with our local dispatcher and drivers to remedy the timing of each bus run. I am pleased to note that we are experiencing improvements across the board. Unfortunately, just when we were beginning to feel that we had routes well in hand, the state inspectors picked Thursday, an early release day, to do an impromptu inspection. The good news is that there were no safety citations or violations, just a delayed start to the day.

We are also evaluating our response time when buses are delayed, and to that end you should have received a pre-printed letter with emergency numbers. This is an effort to verify and update our emergency reverse 911 system that we use for school delays. You will note that we are also asking for your cell phone number and email address. The cell phone number, especially for our elementary parents, is critical when there are delays in the afternoon so we can contact you as you are waiting at bus stops. Please be sure to return this form as soon as possible.

Lastly, I want to thank you all for your patience and understanding during this transition. I also want to thank you for communicating your concerns. While we are aware of most of the issues, several communications with parents have illuminated issues and

concerns for which we were not aware. Please feel free to contact your child's school with concerns. If you have specific concerns about routes and bus stops, please contact the district's business office (860-664-6506) as we do have a transportation committee that reviews all such concerns. Drivers do have specific directions and protocols for safety, and they are instructed to contact the dispatcher whenever there is a concern about the safety of children.

Again, thank you for your understanding and support as we make this transition.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Cross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "C".

Jack Cross  
Superintendent of Schools