



# BURGETTSTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## Mr. Stephen P. Puskar Superintendent

Dear Parent/Guardian,

It has been a difficult week for our transportation department with regard to employee absences. Our drivers pride themselves on being there for your child(ren) and realize that when they are not able to work, you and your family experience disruption in your routines. Our school district is fortunate to have such dedicated drivers. None of us want our families to experience disruptions related to school district operations, but if these last few years have taught us anything, they have taught us to expect the unexpected.

The purpose of this note is to give you a bit of insight into what occurs when we find ourselves in a position of being down one or more bus drivers. We currently have 11 bus runs, with 11 assigned drivers. When there are shortages in drivers as a result of call-offs, we look to our bus mechanic and Director of Transportation to fill that void. We are very fortunate that these two can fill in as needed. Unfortunately, as is the case in most school districts, licensed drivers are hard to come by, and while we would like to have more substitute drivers, we do not at this time. So, when there are more than two regular driver absences, we have to make difficult decisions with regard to cancelling runs. These decisions are made with the following in mind:

- Our first goal is to keep students in school and not shift to a day off or a remote day if we do not absolutely have to.
- When there are more than two drivers off on the same day, we examine bus rosters.
- We consider which of the affected busses have the largest rosters and attempt to run those.
- We remain mindful of the smaller runs because we do not want to always affect the smaller runs. We keep track of what runs have been cancelled, but can't guarantee that the same bus won't be affected multiple times.
- When we are able, we combine bus runs, but recognize this can result in delayed pick-up/return times.
- We assess the situation as it unfolds, beginning the afternoon or evening before so we can notify parents/guardians as soon as possible. Sometimes, as was the case on one occasion last year, we have to issue multiple notifications for the same school day because of increased call-offs.
- While we do not have a set number with regard to how many busses would have to be affected before we switch to remote learning or an emergency day off, when we approach the situation where five or more busses would not be able to run, we would strongly consider shifting to remote instruction or cancelling school for the day. We are mindful that cancelling school would result in a make-up day and this is not always desirable.
- We welcome parent/guardian feedback, and our Director of Transportation, Principals, and I are always willing to discuss any concerns you may have.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate these situations.