



NEW LENOX SCHOOL DISTRICT 122
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YOU ASKED.....WE ANSWERED

WHY IS THE DISTRICT ASKING BUS DRIVERS TO TAKE ATTENDANCE?

Over the years our bus drivers have continually demonstrated their dedication and commitment to the safety of our students. They know each of the students on their buses and have become an integral part of the students' daily routines. However, there have been times when communication between the District, daycare, and parents gets confused and students get on the wrong bus, get in a car, or walk home. That is when the flares go up and we are frantically looking for a child.

Therefore, we designed a quick attendance procedure that calls for the driver to simply check off when a student gets on and when a student gets off the bus. For ease of use, the students are listed on the drivers' sheets according to bus stop. After the students clear the roads at the stop, the drivers then "mark" the students off the daily erasable list. We have been using the system over the last month and our drivers have been great about providing input and helping us to refine the system.

Our role is to try to anticipate "the worst case scenarios" in order to do our best to implement procedures that ensure the safety of the students. Consider these:

A student says goodbye to Mom in the morning and walks to the bus stop. The child is abducted on the way to the stop. The school calls the Mom to ask why the child is absent. The Mom replies that the child got on the bus. With the attendance procedure, the school calls the bus driver who is able to immediately confirm the child did not get on the bus. The police are immediately called.

With this scenario, the bus driver is not put in the situation of trying to recall if they picked the student up that day. They know without a doubt that the child did not get on the bus.

Mom and Dad agree that Johnny will be going to Aces after school and not taking the bus home. Mom thinks Dad called the school to let them know and Dad thinks Mom called the school to let them know that he will not be riding the bus. But, neither of them called. So, the school puts Johnny on the bus. Mom calls Aces to check on Johnny but Johnny is not present. Aces and Mom call the school who confirms that Johnny was put on the bus. The principal immediately contacts the driver to find out if Johnny got off at his stop. The driver confirms that Johnny got off at his stop. The principal sends Officer Jurka over to check to see if the child is at home.

With this scenario, the principal was able to find the student immediately when made aware of the miscommunication.

On the way home, Bus 1200 is hit by a car and the back of the bus bursts into flames. The Fire Department, Police Department, Transportation Department, and the Principal arrive on the scene. Several children are injured. Word spreads quickly throughout the community that Bus 1200 is or was on fire. Parents at work are upset because they do not know if their child was still on the bus when the accident occurred. Due to the attendance, the principal is able to quickly notify parents that their child is safe or on the way to the hospital.

As noted, we are always playing these types of scenarios out to be proactive in a crisis.

While we know that new routines take a few weeks to learn and implement, we are convinced that it is all worth it for the safety of our students. Obviously, it is our goal to never misplace or lose a child, but if it happens, at least we have quick documentation of where the child was last seen. If you have ever lost sight of your child, you know how precious minutes, even seconds become.

As stated earlier, our drivers are beloved by our families. This system provides them with additional coverage, as well as extra safety for our students. Routines are critical so that when a crisis occurs, we are able to sift through the fog created from the anxious moment. Our hope is that everything will always be routine. It's like the old saying---If you prepare for the worst, it will never happen.

Thank you for your support in this endeavor. We have been monitoring the times associated with the routes and have found that all are running on time. If you feel your route is not running on time, please contact the Transportation Center or the principal so that we can determine what the cause may be. If you ever have questions about our procedures, please do not hesitate to call. You may not agree with everything we do, but at least we can provide you with our rationale for our decisions.