

Hanover Bus Routes – Challenges and Changes

Our transportation service provider, Student Transport of America (“STA”) has spent numerous hours going over bus routes and discussing potential changes with us. During the entire process, we have made decisions utilizing the guidance set forth by the Hanover School Board in May of 2009 known as Policy EEA Student Transportation: Bus Routes and Stops. It is important to manage our operations safely and our assets/overhead efficiently while trying to accommodate a multitude of requests. The information to follow is the result of our most recent meeting on August 14th. Routes are still subject to change and most probably will as we begin to run them over the first 2-3 weeks of school.

Some of our challenges towards the end of last year included increased traffic flow and construction projects causing buses to pull into the schools just barely before the bell or often just after it. Parents have notified us with concerns about students getting to school too close to the bell and other parents have shared their concerns with the number of stops and their close proximity to the schools. We feel it is important to share NH’s requirements for providing transportation services in order to address some of these problems. Unfortunately we have a limited amount of buses/drivers as well as a limited amount of time to pick students up (no earlier than 7) and deliver them (no later than 7:55). Everyone can’t be picked up at their door and can’t be picked up last and dropped off first.

The unemployment rate is low, which is good, however the nationwide bus driver shortage is still a problem. Over the past 2 years, our provider has been able to hire an appropriate number of drivers, but as working population ages, we do experience retirements and resignations. In the past two weeks, two drivers have given notice.

In order to accommodate all of the requests, address some of the concerns and provide a level of service that is required, we have made the following changes.

Hanover Route 1 – last year there was 38 AM stops, we have added 5 more; we will monitor the arrival times and if necessary consolidate route stops, which may prove somewhat difficult as the beginning of this route is very rural, but the stops after Hanover High School do fall within the 2 miles radius of the other elementary schools

Hanover Route 2 – last year this was an elementary only route for Ray students, apparently some 15 years ago there were three routes that were known as “a” routes for Ray elementary only, five years ago (or more) all of the other “a” routes were consolidated with their “b” counterparts, except #2. As of now we are proposing that #2 and #10 be consolidated. All routes will now be in conformity and ride times will be similar across the district. The decision to close H-10 will produce a savings of \$47,301 plus the cost of fuel.

Hanover Route 3 – We are proposing the addition of a portion of Hanover Route 8 along Mulherrin and Lyme Road. Last year we extended the route by driving up into the Montview Cul-de-sac, which was problematic in bad weather. With the route consolidation, we will be asking parents in this area to once again bring the students to the end of the road for pickup.

Hanover Route 4 – We have added a portion of Hanover Route 8 to the beginning of H4. The decision to close H-8 and consolidating it with 4, we will produce a savings of \$47,301 plus the cost of fuel.

Hanover Route 5 – There have been a couple of stops added, this route is also in town yet spread out. There have been requests to add Huntley Drive again, which the transportation company is still declining. Folks in that area can board at Huntley & Route 10 or up at School Street/Ripley on Route 9.

Hanover Route 6 – Two stops in the area of Lebanon St, Carter and Crowley Terrace have been moved from H-6 to H-7 to accommodate for earlier drops at the Hanover High School and get the bus through traffic and onto the other schools for a reasonable drop off time.

Hanover Route 7 – This is an in-town bus that transports many students within the 2 mile “walkers” radius. Concerns have been raised about why the bus ride is so long when folks live so close to the elementary schools, why does it have to travel out past Greensboro Road when another bus is in that area and why does it arrive so late to school. The end part of last year’s route they are questioning was originally done due to the lack of sidewalks in the Lebanon Street area for students to walk to other stops without crossing the busy road on a corner. In an effort to minimize rider time on board and get the students into the schools before the bell rings, we have consolidated pick up stops at the beginning of the route (Low Road) and at the end of the route (81-89 Lebanon/AT Bldg). The route will now leave Ridge Road and drive across to Crowley Terrace allowing it to make a loop on it’s way back towards the schools.

Hanover Route 8 – disbanded and consolidated with Routes 3 & 4

Hanover Route 9 - This is another “in town” bus that actually covers quite a bit of ground around the perimeter of Hanover. Changes include dropping students off at the Ray School first this year and Richmond second in the morning and boarding the Richmond students first in the afternoon then over to Ray School.

Hanover Route 10 – disbanded and consolidated with Route 2

Hanover Route 11 – predominantly special needs, vocational and inter-district special routes

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION: BUS ROUTES AND STOPS

The SAU staff under the direction of the Superintendent shall establish bus routes and stops. These routes and stops will be developed in conjunction with the transportation contractor and the school administration. Routes will be over the most direct roads practicable and safe for bus travel to serve those entitled to transportation service by statute or district practice. Routes will be designed to employ the full carrying capacity of each bus trip and to minimize the time students spend in transit.

Authorized bus stops shall be located at convenient intervals in safe locations. Bus stop locations must be sited so that pupils can be safely loaded or unloaded, cross highways and await arrival of buses based upon road conditions, terrain, and visibility. The number of bus stops on each trip shall be limited to facilitate shorter riding times for students. Changes in designated bus stops may be made only by the Superintendent of Schools.

The Superintendent or designee will provide transportation only to sites located within district boundaries.

Ray School students may, upon written permission of their parents and with the consent of the principal, be transported to places other than their own residence provided that the capacity of the bus is not exceeded, the bus is not required to make additional stops, the request is submitted and approved in advance in accordance with guidelines in the Ray School Student Handbook.

Students and parents must adhere to the transportation guidelines and regulations included in the Ray Student Handbook.

EFFECTIVE: Hanover May 20, 2009

RSA 189:6