

**Transportation Workshop Minutes
Monday, March 2, 2004 – 6:00 p.m.
School Board Meeting Room
Stuart, FL 34994**

Members Present

Dr. David Anderson, Chairman
Vicki Davis, Vice-Chair
Susan Hershey
Laurie Gaylord
Lorie Shekailo
Dr. Sara A. Wilcox, Superintendent
Tom Elfers, School Board Attorney

Members Absent

Matt Rudling, Student Representative (SFHS)

Staff Present

Hank Salzler, Rosemarie Taylor, Gail Newman, Deana Newson, Leighton O'Connor, Louise Piper, Dr. Frank Raffone, Coraletha Johnson, Harla Haynes, Terry Glenn, Willie Sauls, Sandra Graham, Cecelia Smith

Public

None

Press

PBPost – Rani Gupta

Stuart News – Kelly Tyko

MCEA – No Representation

AFSCME – Lisa Edwards

2. Transportation Review

Dr. Wilcox thanked Mr. Salzler for his work to put this review together as well as transportation staff and drivers. Mrs. Piper provided a short review of the department back to May 2002, and feels the department made an excellent transition. In the fall of 2002, transportation purchased additional radios, physical improvements were made, and a new phone system was installed to ensure callers are routed quickly and correctly to minimize the time necessary to obtain information needed.

She discussed the employee successes that have been made. 100% of the mechanics passed their mandatory recertification's to perform safety inspections, ten training classes for new operators and lead and utility operators were promoted and did an outstanding job. The routes were redefined through contract negotiations and eighty-four routes were condensed to seventy-seven. In the summer of 2003, all routes and stops were checked for safety, nine new buses were received with air conditioning, cameras and lap belts and eleven buses are scheduled for delivery in the fall of 2004.

She reviewed the findings from the consultant whose primary recommendation was to hire an Operations Supervisor and Mr. Sauls was hired in January. She thanked Mr. Salzler for leading the department through the restructuring process. The management team has reviewed the job descriptions and supervisory relationships. The organization chart has been distributed to staff and they were given the opportunity to ask questions and then she reviewed the organizational chart following the assumption of duties from Laidlaw as compared to the proposed organizational chart.

Mr. Sauls reviewed the small, yet technical changes suggested for his job description. He explained staffing needs to be improved from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to meet the dispatch function needs. Currently there is a vacant utility operator who would be converted to a data entry clerk to assist him in his daily duties as well as cover the mid-day dispatching needs. Due to minimal differences in the job descriptions of the Lead and Utility positions, it was suggested the two positions be combined and the Lead Operators would be identified as Lead 1 (182 days) and the Lead 2 (227 days).

Mr. Terry Glenn, Dispatch Specialist, proposed the board consider splitting the department into two zones: North and South and reviewed the zones. Each zone would have an Operations Manager and would encourage better communication.

Ms. Coraletha Johnson, Computerized Routing Specialist, stated the zones were successful in the past and would work again. Having a supervisor on duty from opening to closing would define and exhibit courage, integrity, support and provide a positive impact on the drivers and children. The combined position will provide better communication and support throughout the opening and closing of the department. This process would enable cross training and facilitate a smoother addition of the new high school and Joint Use Facility.

Ms. Harla Haynes, Safety Specialist, explained the safety team needs to be expanded due to growth. The Lead Operators would supplement the training team and assist in the training of new applicants. There would be title changes from Field Specialist to Safety Specialist and would provide an expanded focus on safety.

Ms. Sandra Graham discussed the Continuous Improvement Plan. This plan allows employees an opportunity to help with the continued improvement in the transportation department and gives all employees a chance to make a positive impact. There were four individuals chosen to serve as committee members and any transportation employee can place their concerns in the locked suggestion box either signed or anonymously. She holds the key to the box which would be opened bi-weekly at the team meetings. All suggestions regarding the improvement of the department would be placed in memo form and distributed to all employees. Any feed back would go through their lead or utility operators. The support team members and management would then meet to discuss solutions to the suggestions. She explained personal issues would not be dealt with and no personal attacks would be accepted.

Mrs. Piper explained in summary that often times positive outcomes come from adversity. The mission of transportation is to provide safe, reliable, caring courteous services to students, the school district and to the community through the cooperative efforts of well training and dedicated professionals. The highest priority of the management team is to affirm and support the bus operators and assistants. She feels the plan presented and the recommended job descriptions are focused on the mission.

She reviewed the training that has been provided and spoke about the training given by Ms. Kitchens that covered how transportation could work together more supportively and productively. They attended the Diversity Awareness Training and felt everyone was shocked at their own lack of knowledge. They would be attending training sessions at IRCC every Wednesday night for fourteen weeks.

Mrs. Davis asked about the hours of the two Operations Managers due to the extension of hours and Mrs. Piper stated one employee would report at 5:30 a.m. and work until their eight hour day is completed and would be overlapped by the second person that would come in mid-day and work until 5:30 or 6:00 in the evening. Rotation of these employees has been discussed, as well as herself and Mr. Sauls assisting in the early hours in order to take all the calls. Mrs. Hershey feels an undue burden has been placed on the 5:30 a.m. person and would like to see alternatives or a rotation and Mrs. Piper agreed.

Dr. Anderson asked for the differences between Operational Manager and Dispatcher and Mrs. Piper explained the differences. He inquired on the positions that are open and was told the Transportation Data Entry Clerk, Clerk / Dispatch and the Transportation Safety Specialist. Dr. Anderson clarified that there were not any positions that did not exist prior on the prior organizational chart and the listed vacant positions were already anticipated but not filled and Mrs. Piper stated yes, except the data entry clerk is a converted position; therefore it is revenue neutral.

Mrs. Hershey asked if the Safety Specialist is an administrative index position and was advised it is a non-supervisory, non-managerial position.

Dr. Anderson asked who makes the decision to monitor buses with cameras and Mrs. Piper answered regarding the different cameras available and monitoring decisions. Dr. Anderson clarified that the bus cameras are never being monitored without the driver knowing it and was advised that is correct. The persons that have the VCR cameras know that they come on when the bus is turned on and Ms. Haynes explained how the older cameras are utilized. The Secretary of State requires districts to maintain all bus tapes for a minimum of thirty days. Dr. Anderson again asked for clarification on if a bus driver can be monitored without them knowing it and Mrs. Piper stated if the driver did not know that there was in fact a camera on the bus then it would be possible. She further explained that the buses with cameras are due to the driver coming forward with a problem child or parent. There are only thirteen cameras for one-hundred buses. She explained that it is now standard for the district to purchase buses with cameras already installed; however all buses are legally required to post signs that they are subject to being videotaped. She explained a new digital system is being looked into that would allow more flexibility in searching day, date and time specific issues. Dr. Anderson asked how the decision is made for where the ten permanent cameras will go and Mrs. Piper stated the new buses were assigned based on age and condition of the bus that was removed from service. Dr. Anderson stated the transportation department should be able to project certain problem areas of the town and that is where the buses with cameras should be placed. Mrs. Piper explained the newer buses came with lap belts and statutorily the younger children were a priority for receiving these lap belts, and therefore a criterion looked at for assigning the buses, secondly the age and miles of the bus and finally the known difficult areas. There are a number of routes that would lend themselves to need a camera and feels placement of cameras must be done in a manner that is fair and equitable especially if you are receiving a new air conditioned bus, which is helping with discipline issues. There are ten air conditioned buses, and they do in fact attempt to use on long field trips.

Mrs. Shekailo asked if there are plans to update the procedural driver's manual and was told drivers received new "draft" manuals last September and are considered the model to base changes on. Updated manuals would be brought back to the board over the summer for adoption.

Mrs. Hershey commented that transportation would be visited in the upcoming future by an audit team.

1. Open to the Public

- A. Ernestine White, a driver, stated the Utility Driver position has been deleted and asked what happens to the applicants who have applied for said position and secondly, stated that when you turn the bus off, the cameras run for an extra fifteen minutes. She further explained that the new buses are not coming in with the lap belts installed and they have to be installed when they arrive at the depot.
- B. Cecelia Smith, a driver for 22 years, stated the Utility Position was posted and has had applicants apply and agrees with Ms. White and questioned what happens to those applicants. Dr. Anderson asked if the job description has changed and was told the position has been deleted and that the transportation data entry clerk position is open. Ms. Smith stated the data entry job description is not the same as the Lead and they are now going to be called all Lead's.

There being no further business to bring before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN (Vicki Davis)

SECRETARY (Sara A. Wilcox, Ph.D.)