



POPE JOHN XXIII

Regional High School

Dear Parents in the Catholic Academy of Sussex County,

We hope this letter finds our families well rested and enjoying their summer. Today's letter is to inform you about your child's bus transportation for the 22-23 school year. Whether your child rides the bus or not, you need to read this. **You may receive notice from your district stating that your bus route has been canceled. This may not be the case, so please read the following carefully.**

Many Academy students rely on their local school districts for bus transportation. Students who reside in Sussex County within 30 miles of the Academy and in Warren, Morris, and Passaic Counties within 20 miles are entitled to state funded bus transportation. As you know, each spring parents are asked to return a filled out B6T form (also known as the "book and transportation form"). These forms are critical as they alert local districts where Academy students reside, and in turn then create bussing routes. Once routes are created, they go out to bid, and local bus companies are able to purchase those contracts. If a contract is not awarded, parents receive what is called "aid in lieu of transportation."

We are well aware of the rising costs of everything including gasoline as well as the nation-wide bus driver shortage which never recovered after the pandemic. **As a result, eleven Academy routes were not picked up, affecting 491 students (36% of our student population).** *This also accounts for almost half of our annual routes.* You may be receiving a letter from your local district that your route has been canceled and that you will be receiving "aid in lieu of transportation." Please do not panic!

Our Academy schools have a long standing relationship with our local public school transportation coordinators and the Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative. They have been working around the clock with our school administration to come up with creative

ways to help our students. As a result a solution has been reached and these canceled routes **will run**, as the Catholic Academy of Sussex County will now provide transportation for these routes at a cost exceeding \$600,000.

Parents who receive notice that they will be receiving “aid in lieu” instead of guaranteed transportation this year, will receive two checks from their local public school district in February and June for a grand-total of \$1,022. Academy students, from September to June, will receive a monthly charge of \$102.20 on their FACTS account. This will help the Academy to ensure the operation of these bus routes and continue to provide your child with adequate transportation.

In other words, funds that were normally paid directly to the bus companies on your behalf are now being sent directly to you, which you will in turn, pay your new transportation provider - the Catholic Academy of Sussex County. ***Finally, it is very important that you fill out and return “B7T Request for Payment of Transportation Aid” which you may have already received – this will ensure your “aid in lieu” payment.***

Again, you will have bus transportation this year. Please be patient with the Academy as we work through this. We will be in touch with you throughout the month of August with more details and information about your specific routes.

Sincerely,

The Catholic Academy of Sussex County