



SOMMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Transportation Review

JANUARY 2020

Scope of Work

1. A review of current policies and procedures related to transportation
2. Address opportunities for improvement in transportation policies, procedures, and technology
3. Notan “Internal Investigation”

Transportation Procedures

The below exists for accidents but not for medical emergencies or erratic operation of the bus.

1. Notifications

- a. 911
- b. School Resource Officer
- c. Director of Transportation (or his/her designee)
- d. Bus Dispatcher
- e. District Administration

Incident Overview

The bus driver was contacted immediately via radio by the Director of Transportation and instructed to:

- Provide the current location of the bus
- Cease operation of the vehicle by pulling off the roadway in a safe location and providing this location

Improvement Opportunities

The transportation dispatcher should contact/remain on the line with 911 to provide real-time location information and any other relevant information. Police should be notified even if contact is made with the driver who denies any issue.

Scene Management

Improvement Opportunities

1. A bus driver who is alleged to have been operating in an unusual manner, has the appearance of an altered medical state or appears to be suffering from another medical condition, **should be evaluated at the scene by police and emergency medical services (EMS) as needed.**
2. Drivers should not be removed from the scene until they have been cleared to do so by emergency responders.

Scene Management

3. Students and any other passengers on the school bus should be immediately evaluated by district personnel to verify there are no injuries, which require the attention of EMS and/or the school nurse.
4. Special consideration should be given to the potential for **mental trauma** that may be experienced by passengers as was apparent in the December 9th incident.

Scene Management

Improvement Opportunities

5. If mental trauma is identified, a formal **parent reunification process** should be initiated, whereby students are reunified one-on-one with parents.
6. Students suffering from mental trauma should not be permitted to continue to their destination on their bus without close supervision. Specific plans for mental health intervention and follow up should be coordinated through the district's mental health team.

Communications

Prompt communication with parents and guardians in a critical incident is essential. The first communication to parents was not disseminated by the Director of Transportation until approximately 5:05 PM after arriving on the scene at 4:20 PM.

Improvement Opportunity

Information should be relayed from the scene to central administration and parents updated promptly with information including:

- the nature of the incident
- notification of any delays in transportation
- arrangement for parent reunification (if applicable)
- anticipated time of future updates

October 5th, 2018 Incident

- Police responded to the scene to investigate and completed a NYS MV-104A Police Accident Report form. There is no indication on the form of operator impairment.
- A U.S. DOT Alcohol Testing Form was completed by Robert Damico of the district bus contractor, Royal Coach Lines.
- A “DOT Drug Screen” form was completed by D.R.S. Medical Review Service.

Transportation Procedures

Driver Observation - Improvement Opportunity

- While drivers are required to obtain their keys from a wall in the transportation garage, greater interaction with drivers when obtaining their vehicle keys should be considered. Currently, there is limited interaction between drivers and the bus dispatcher when drivers are obtaining their keys.
- Training of personnel in the identification of signs of impairment should also be considered. Training may be provided by law enforcement or an approved transportation training vendor.

Transportation Procedures

Driver Observation - School Dismissal

- Previously, these “School Dismissal Manager” manifest sheets were picked up by drivers or their colleagues in the main office. This procedure was inconsistent.
- Both Primrose and Somers Intermediate School have initiated a procedure where these sheets for each bus are presented to each bus driver.
- Training for non-law enforcement personnel in the identification of signs of impairment should be considered. Training may be provided by law enforcement or an approved transportation training vendor.

Transportation Procedures

Student Accountability

Parents communicated an ancillary concern during an incident review that students on rare occasions were placed on incorrect buses.

Survey of 12 area school districts revealed similar procedures related to student accountability.

Improvement Opportunity

- District may wish to consider the use of a technology platform to assist in this area.

Technology

Location Tracking

- Royal Coach reported “passive” GPS systems installed on each bus used in the Somers operation.

Improvement Opportunity

- The district may wish to consider “active GPS” that would allow for real-time monitoring of bus locations as well as other information such as vehicle speed.

Technology

Surveillance Cameras

- Royal Coach reported “passive” cameras systems installed on each bus used in the Somers operation.

Improvement Opportunity

- The district may wish to consider active surveillance cameras that would allow for real-time monitoring of both the bus interior and exterior.

Equipment

Royal Coach currently uses a rapid oral saliva test to estimate blood alcohol content when conducting on -site screenings.

Improvement Opportunity

The district should consider acquiring and mandating the use of a portable commercial -grade breathalyzer, that continues to be the standard for driver impairment investigations.

Policy Updates

A review of district and contractor transportation policies identified opportunities for improvement including:

- revision of contractor policies
- adoption/revision of district policies

Policy Updates

Policy: Article IV, Drug and Alcohol Testing: Section 1: Policy *“Employees are forbidden to consume or carry any alcoholic beverages or illegal contraband on Company property or vehicles at any time. A driver should not consume any alcohol beverages for at least eight (8) hours prior to reporting to work. Infraction of this policy will not be tolerated and will result in termination”*

Recommendation: While the district contract with Royal Coach specifies twelve (12) hours, the contractor’s manual does not reflect this requirement. A modified policy should be adopted by the contractor to include the revision, *“..not consume any alcoholic beverage, alcohol-based medications or other medications that may impair the operation of a motor vehicle, for at least twelve (12) hours prior to reporting to work.”*