



TOMS RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOLS
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Dear Parents,

You may have read in the press of the increasing challenges school districts across the nation, and especially New Jersey, are facing due to bus driver shortages. See the links to recent articles below. These are a result, in part, of new regulations that have made certification a more lengthy and difficult process. Some districts have addressed this by consolidating or modifying routes, reducing courtesy busing, or canceling extracurricular transportation. Hiring extra buses from private companies has not proven to be a solution because most contractors are having the same difficulty.

Toms River Regional Schools has the largest Board-owned bus fleet in the state and transports nearly 13,000 students daily. Because of our size, our school schedules have been divided into four tiers that allow our buses to do multiple runs each morning and afternoon. A transportation study the Board engaged in two years ago showed that our routes are as compact as they can be short of reducing courtesy busing.

The impact of driver shortages in the first seven weeks of school has resulted in buses occasionally running late. We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience this may cause and are doing our best to address the issue. The district began proactively advertising for drivers last year and raised the pay rate to draw more of them to our district. On days when there is a shortage, some drivers are doing double runs. We continue to advertise in every venue we know of. And our transportation department does its best to keep each school informed so that they can communicate to parents in a timely manner.

Several education organizations are in the process of appealing to the state and enlightening them of the issues that the new regulations have created. Our Board and administration will continue to do the same and look at every solution that can help address this problem, including working with these organizations and local legislators.

Thank you for your continued understanding and support.

Sincerely,

David M. Healy
Superintendent of Schools



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Articles:

<http://newjersey.news12.com/story/36170557/report-us-facing-school-bus-driver-shortage>

<http://nj1015.com/bus-driver-shortage-creating-bumpy-start-for-nj-schools>

http://www.burlingtoncountytimes.com/news/local/bus-drivers-wanted-new-rules-causing-transportation-trouble-for-burlington/article_9c399982-1908-11e6-9381-67a9e2c93bf1.html