



SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Suffield, Connecticut

DATE: August 11, 2016
TO: Karen Berasi, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Bill Hoff, Business Manager
RE: School Transportation Readiness

M&J continues to work to improve their service for Suffield. After some initial issues last year, they installed an additional manager in the Suffield office. She has been extremely proactive in identifying issues and reacting to and solving problems. Overall busing ran very smoothly for the last eight months of the year.

Our preparations for 2016-17 started during the budget process as we determined that we could reduce one bus. M&J began in April to plan for this reduction by looking at actual ridership on each bus and potential route changes. We met in July to discuss the implications and issues with the reduction in routes. The key issues identified were:

- a. Potential for overcrowding on a few middle school and high school buses.
- b. Longer runs due to more students per bus and longer runs.
- c. Potential for longer runs for some students due to restructuring of routes, i.e. students who were picked up as a last morning stop could be moved to an early stop resulting in significantly more time on the bus.

We agreed to reduce the number of stops by combining stops whenever possible. This will mean more neighborhood and corner stops rather than individual stops or stops in cul-de-sacs. We will not jeopardize student safety. We will continue to make multiple stops on busy roads.

We received the bus routes this week and posted them to infosnap. Parents are able to request changes in infosnap. I have received a few requests for adding back stops that were eliminated. For each request, I drive to the street and review the distance and safety of the stop. At this point I have not added back any stops. The overall routes will be posted on our website and in the *Journal Inquirer* next week.

M&J has all the needed buses in place. All drivers have been hired and completed training. I will be attending their start-up meeting on August 22nd where I will emphasize our expectations for drivers.

Drivers will complete trial runs of their routes the week of August 24-30.

As always there will be transportation issues the first few weeks. We expect additional issues this year due to the route changes and the school start and end time changes. M&J is committed to reacting quickly to any issues. We will be closely monitoring overcrowding issues and length of runs. I will also be working closely with the school offices and families to resolve issues quickly.