

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007, the New Jersey Legislature passed the “CORE” law, P.L. 2007, c.63, to encourage the financial accountability of local units of government. As a result of this legislation, the role of Executive County Superintendent (ECS) was established to examine areas that may result in greater efficiency such as the consolidation of smaller school districts, elimination of school districts that were not operating schools and student transportation. In the area of student transportation, N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-57(d) required that each ECS “complete a study of pupil transportation services... to determine ways to provide pupil transportation services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner.”

To comply with the statutory mandate, each of the ECSs formed a county transportation advisory committee to develop recommendations to achieve maximum efficiency in student transportation. With varied compositions in each county, the county transportation committees generally included representatives from the county offices of education, jointures, educational services commissions and local school districts. The ECSs and Executive County Business Administrators convened the committees specifically to collaboratively “examine ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services of public school districts and nonpublic schools” as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6(b).

This complete report contains the 21 county transportation efficiency studies, which not only explain the transporting needs of districts and their students but also offers recommendations on methods to provide transportation services more efficiently. Considering the individual characteristics of each county, the studies all address issues based on educational needs, geography, political climate or other unique circumstances. For example, expansive mileage between school districts is a significant factor in Salem County’s study of transportation efficiency given the sparsely populated environment. Conversely, coordination with the commercial bus/light rail system in Hudson County is proposed as an option given the heavy use of mass transit that is characteristic of more densely populated regions. Additionally, the synchronization of a county-wide school calendar has been achieved by all school districts in Ocean County; yet school districts in Union County have, to date, been unable achieve a common calendar to promote efficiency.

Efficiency Rating

Currently, the NJDOE Office of Student Transportation measures the efficiency of transportation for each school district. The school transportation efficiency plan sets a standard level of efficiency at 120 percent of vehicle capacity. To achieve this standard, each school district would have to use some of their vehicles for more than one route each day. A district’s efficiency rating (vehicle utilization) is calculated by dividing student ridership by vehicle capacity. The District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) provides the data used for this calculation.

Each study refers to the efficiency rating for school districts in the county. For school districts that fall below the 120% efficiency rating, the ECS addresses the deficiency by working with those districts to implement measures to bring their efficiency to an acceptable rating.

Data Sources

In addition to the DRTRS, ECSs and their county transportation committees utilized data from the Application for State School Aid and the Comparative Spending Guide to gain insight into the transportation services provided by school districts. Also some ECSs distributed a survey to school districts that was intended to assist with the assessment of transportation efficiency. (Appendix A)

Recommendations

Each ECS worked with their county transportation committee to develop a list of recommendations that, if implemented, would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of transportation services among their school districts. Despite the various differences across counties, as referenced previously, many of the recommendations in the studies are remarkably similar. The following list reflects common recommendations noted in almost all of the studies.

- *A county wide school calendar should be established by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools and all schools - public, non-public and charter schools - within the county be required to follow the agreed upon calendar. The ECS should be given the authority to impose coordinated calendars on all schools when efficiency in transportation can be achieved.*
- *Bell schedules need to be coordinated ranges of starting times and ending times for all elementary, middle and high schools in the county. Again, ECSs should be given the authority to regulate bell schedules to increase efficient transportation services.*
- *There should be a county authority that will control the transportation of all pupils in the county.*
- *There should be a single database of all bus routes and bus schedules in the county to achieve maximum efficiency and create state reports.*
- *There should be a county-wide system to consolidate and establish a uniform training program for all bus drivers, bus aides and sub drivers.*
- *There should be a county-wide system established for purchasing buses, other transportation equipment and supplies.*
- *The bus inspection process needs to be reviewed and revised. It should focus on mechanical issues and not cosmetic concerns (e.g. first aid kits, cut seats, minor color variations, etc.).*

- *Aid-in-lieu of transportation should be prorated for students living in the same residence attending the same non-public school.*

Coordination of Efforts

The development of each county's transportation efficiency study required the collaborative effort of representatives from several agencies. Likewise, the implementation of the recommendations in the studies will require the joint efforts of policy making bodies, educational service agencies and public school districts and non public schools.

The safe transport of our students is, without question, of paramount importance for transportation services. The most efficient delivery of those services should be our objective as we continue to pursue cost-effective means of delivering quality services.

County Transportation Efficiency Studies

(To access each county transportation efficiency study, please click on the link of the county name you wish you review.)

[Atlantic County](#)

[Bergen County](#)

[Burlington County](#)

[Camden County](#)

[Cape May County](#)

[Cumberland County](#)

[Cumberland - Appendix](#)

[Essex County](#)

[Essex - Appendix](#)

[Gloucester County](#)

[Gloucester – Appendix A](#)

[Hudson County](#)

[Hudson - Appendix](#)

[Hudson – Appendix A](#)

[Hudson – Appendix B](#)

[Hunterdon County](#)

[Hunterdon - Appendix](#)

[Mercer County](#)

[Mercer - Appendix](#)

[Middlesex County](#)

[Middlesex - Appendix](#)

[Morris County](#)

[Ocean County](#)

[Passaic County](#)

[Passaic - Appendix A](#)

[Passaic – Appendix B](#)

[Salem County](#)

[Somerset County](#)

[Somerset – Appendix A](#)

[Sussex County](#)

[Sussex – Appendix A](#)

[Sussex – Appendix B](#)

[Union County](#)

[Warren County](#)

[Warren- Appendix](#)

ATLANTIC COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Thomas Dowd

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Located in the southern half of the State, Atlantic County is the third largest in land area, with over 566 square miles connected by 7,104 miles of roads. The County is bounded on the north by the Mullica River, on the south by the Great Egg Harbor Bay and the Tuckahoe River, on the west by Camden and Gloucester Counties, and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean. Atlantic County's principal industries are casino/hotels, aviation testing/engineering, agriculture, glass, plastics, pharmaceutical research, and tourism.

The County is incorporated into 23 governing bodies, all legally classified as municipalities, although they are properly titled boroughs(3), towns(1), townships(6), and cities(13). The U.S. Census estimates population for 2008 at 270,681. There are 26 school districts in Atlantic County, including two county-wide school districts (Atlantic County Special Services, and Atlantic County Institute of Technology). [Sources: www.aclink.org/culturalaffairs/fastfacts; www.aclink.org/freeholders/manual/pdfs/history.pdf]

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (*See Table A for further details.*)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	44,701
• Number of districts transporting students	24
• Number of students transported ²	-
➤ Regular education students	28,377
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	1,339
➤ Non-public transported students	1,916
➤ Special education students—in-district	2,611
➤ Total students transported	34,243
• Percentage of students transported	77%
• Total annual route costs ³	\$42,438,107
• Efficiency Rating ⁴	-
➤ “Rated districts”	14
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	7 / 50%

[Sources: Total Enrollment—“Application for School Aid”, October 15, 2008 counts; Efficiency Rating—“Comparative Spending Guide”, March 2009; All other data—“District Report of Transported Resident Students”, October 15, 2008 counts]

¹ NJDOE/Office of Finance- Application for State School Aid-Data Listing

² Summary of October 2008 DRTRS

³ Student Transportation/Atlantic/Atlantic County Route File – DRTRS Oct 2008

⁴ For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

The reasons districts did not attain the 120% efficiency were due to incorrect DRTRS reporting, geographic locations, and routes not being tiered.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Greater Egg Harbor Regional Consortium which consists of: Absecon, Egg Harbor City, Galloway Township, Greater Egg Harbor Regional, Hamilton Township, Mullica Township, Port Republic and Washington Township School Districts, the efficiency rating for their consortium is 2.59%. In addition to the to/from transportation, the Consortium provides non-public and charter school routes.
- The Hammonton School District jointures with several districts to provide transportation for special education students. A large number of Hammonton's public school routes are tiered and are multiple destination routes. In addition the Hammonton School District provides transportation to St. Joseph's Catholic School District, a K-12 school. The efficiency for Hammonton is 2.09%.
- The Buena Regional School District also provides transportation for Estell Manor and Weymouth School Districts. The districts stagger their school start times in order to tier the buses routes. Buena Regional efficiency rating is 2.18%.
- The Egg Harbor Township School District is a preK-12 school district. This district tiers buses where possible and provides nonpublic routes for their district students as well as using contractors. The district's efficiency rating is 1.59%.
- The Atlantic County Special Services serves as the county's Coordinated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA). The Special Services School District provides public, non-public, and special education routes. In addition, the CTSA provides bidding services for districts who wish to participate.
- The Greater Egg Harbor Regional Consortium entered into a parent contract for special education transportation, the cost was estimated to be \$73,000. The district reached an agreement with the parent to pay \$9,000, which resulted in a savings of \$64,000.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Atlantic County Transportation Committee's (Committee) goal for the initial meeting was to isolate the various modes of transportation utilized by New Jersey school children. The Committee utilized existing transportation data, district surveys, and years of transportation experience to develop the analysis and recommendations. The Committee identified 10 categories of transportation:

- To & From Transportation
- Jointures
- Special Education
 - Students transported to Atlantic County Special Services
 - Students transported to Private Schools for the Disabled
 - Students transported to Other LEAs
- Charter School Transportation
- Out of County Routes to Other LEAs

- Nonpublic Transportation
- Aid in Lieu of Transportation
- Mid-year Unanticipated Routes
- Sports and Activities Transportation
- Auxiliary Services

The Committee addressed a county-wide calendar and the staggering of school start times. County-wide calendars are recommended, however professional development days, start and end of school dates, county-wide decision on snow days, religious holidays, fall and spring break dates must be considered. The start and end of school times does not have to be county-wide. In Atlantic County, these times are considered for K-12 districts, districts providing transportation to other districts through jointures and consortiums.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *Continue with the existing tiering of bus routes and maintain their common calendars, while continuing to explore more efficient methods of transporting the school district's students (all districts, except for those that are part of a consortium or have a rating over 1.20%).*

Recommendation 2: *Evaluate remaining seven districts for increased efficiency. A committee consisting of a representative from each of the seven districts will be developed to explore the possibility of more efficient methods of transporting the district students. Some methods would include, but not be limited to, joining an existing consortium, developing a new consortium, tiering of bus routes, staggering school times, and joining with another school district as a shared service. The County Office will coordinate and provide oversight responsibility for this committee.*

Recommendation 3: *Establish a minimum distance between bus stops to shorten the time of the route, which will enable the bus to be tiered more easily with another route. This will require legislation.*

Recommendation 4: *Verify DRTRS information for accuracy in reporting since they are the figures being used when determining efficiency.*

Recommendation 5: *Share common software county-wide in order to develop more efficient routes or enhance the efficiency of existing routes.*

Recommendation 6: *Develop special education programs locally that would enable students to be transported less distance.*

Recommendation 7: *Evaluate the origin of students by district and program. This task would be completed by the County Special Services District. It could be possible for districts to enter a shared service agreement where a district could provide a program for Special Services.*

Recommendation 8: *Contact agencies such as Head Start to determine if their buses can run any of the special education routes.*

Recommendation 9 - *Eliminate the requirement of a district having to send a letter to parents if the cost of transportation exceeds the current aid in lieu amount. It should be treated as aid in lieu for nonpublic students.*

Recommendation 10: *Require charter and non-public school students to ride the public school routes and then use the school district schools as “bus stops” to transport the charter school students to the charter school. This would also include that the opening times for the charter school be changed to meet the schedule.*

Recommendation 11: *Require districts that must send a student out of county to another LEA to notify the Executive County Superintendent of Schools. The Executive County Superintendent of Schools shall determine if a comparable program is available in the resident county. This will require legislation.*

Recommendation 12: *Require nonpublic schools to have a common calendar with public schools and stagger opening and closing time. This will allow busing to be tiered and will be very effective if the nonpublic students ride the public routes and utilize the public schools as pick up locations.*

Recommendation 13: *Amend legislation to only allow Aid in Lieu payment to the family based on one student per nonpublic school. Currently, the Aid in Lieu amount is \$884 per student. Under current statute, each student is entitled to this amount. For example if a family has four (4) students attending the same nonpublic school, the parent would receive \$884 x 4 for a total of \$3,536. The amended legislation, which would allow Aid in Lieu payment to the family based on household not per student. For example, a family has four students attending two nonpublic schools, the reimbursement would be \$884 x 2 for a total of \$1,768.*

Recommendation 14: *Develop a “pool” of buses that would be available on a county-wide basis. The pool should be on a common database and coordinated by the CTSA, also the pool of buses should be developed by the time of year, day of week, and the length of time the bus is available. The length of the trip should include the pick-up time, drop off time, and should include district owned and contracted buses that would be available. Develop a formula for calculating the cost of the trip. It should, at a minimum include mileage, tolls, salary/benefits and maintenance.*

Recommendation 15: *Hold mandatory trainings at least semi-annually for all bus drivers and bus aides.*

Recommendation 16: *Develop a co-op or consortium of districts for the purchase of school buses. This could also include other counties and could be done on a statewide basis.*

Recommendation 17: *Explore the possibility of utilizing state contract for purchasing buses.*

Recommendation 18: *Apply to various Traffic Safety Councils for training grants.*

NEXT STEPS

N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

1. **Coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county for both public and nonpublic schools:** Atlantic County Public Schools have a slight variation on a countywide calendar; however districts in a consortium or regional transportation use a common calendar. There are 24 school districts in Atlantic County that participate in a consortium or jointure. There are seven districts that will be analyzed for the potential of timing buses or joining a consortium. The County Office will meet with each of these six districts to discuss ways to increase their transportation efficiency.
2. **Staggering bell schedules in order implement a tiered system of busing within the school district and with adjoining school districts:** This practice is currently in place in multiple districts and coordinated consortiums. As per previous recommendations, developing a “pool” for sports/activities might also alleviate difficulties with afternoon bell schedules. The county office will develop a data base of bell schedules and determine where the tiering of buses can occur.
3. **Centrally coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements, including practices and/or policies in place to more effectively provide for special education transportation services:** Atlantic County participates with the Ocean County Vocational Technical School’s data base (Real Time) for recording and identifying special education program availability at other LEA’s. The transportation component is part of this software. Atlantic County will continue to encourage districts to participate in their program. The software is currently offered to districts at no charge.
4. **Consolidating transportation services in combinations of two or more school districts:** As reported this is currently happening amongst 25 districts in the County. The county office will develop a list of services and make them available to other districts. The Egg Harbor Township School District has offered to share their bus bid specifications with other districts.
5. **Establishing a consolidated countywide transportation system by jointure agreement or county- based service provider:** Atlantic County currently has an effective consortium (Greater Egg Harbor Regional) and CTSA (Atlantic County Special Services School District) and other regional transportation entities which have an efficiency rating ranging from 138% to 259%. This practice will continue, and districts with efficiency rating under 120% will be encouraged to join a consortium.
6. **Analyzing district school bus routing and scheduling to encourage the use of efficient routing practices:** Currently various software is used for bus routing; there should be one software that districts have access to. This will allow districts to “join” other districts to

provide more efficient routes. This has proven to be successful with the Greater Egg Harbor Regional Consortium.

7. **Improving cooperation between local boards of education and nonpublic school administrators leading to more efficient and effective student transportation service:**
The County Office will continue to utilize the annual meetings of nonpublic schools and public school administrators, to encourage route efficiencies, common calendars, etc. This will be done on a county-wide basis and on a district basis.
8. **Soliciting input from current public school district transportation employee representatives and school employee representatives regarding ways to institute efficiencies and savings.** The Transportation Committee will continue to meet to discuss new transportation issues and follow up on prior recommendations. In addition discussions on transportation will be a regular part of the Business Administrators' Monthly Roundtable Meeting agenda.

CONCLUSION

The common theme throughout the Atlantic County transportation report focuses on the need for a common database for students transported; therefore common software would allow districts to operate more efficiently. The common calendar is recommended. A common calendar should be used and normally is used by districts that are part of a shared services consortium or by the use of jointures. A common calendar should be explored in the nonpublic area; the utilization of existing public school routes by nonpublic and charter schools should decrease the route time and cost, in addition it will allow for more tiering of buses. A pool of buses for sports, co-curricular activities, and field trips should be developed.

ATTACHMENT A: ATLANTIC COUNTY TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS

DISTRICT	Advertised Enrollment	Students Transported in County					Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
		Regular Education	Special Ed. Out-of-District	Nonpublic	Special Ed. In-District	Total			
ABSECON CITY	917	192	30	50	18	290	14		\$378,175.70
ATLANTIC CITY	6,407	1906	202	113	68	2,289	30	0.74	\$3,369,674.99
BRIGANTINE CITY	994	664	58	107	53	882	7	1.46	\$771,904.37
BUENA REGIONAL	2,107	1,572	66	90	313	2,040	61	2.18	\$2,173,547.52
CORBIN CITY	92	69	22	.	.	91	.		\$108,850.84
EGG HARBOR CITY	455	16	11	32	5	64	10	1.18	\$161,499.20
EGG HARBOR TWP	7,951	7,094	86	727	889	8,796	90	1.59	\$6,279,592.99
ESTELL MANOR CITY	314	286	19	.	13	318	10		\$247,280.08
FOLSOM BORO	488	482	21	19	.	522	8	1.01	\$455,410.73
GALLOWAY TWP	3,681	3,212	148	162	280	3,802	58		\$3,101,039.29
GREATER EGG HARBOR REG	4,053	3,177	153	217	451	3,997	79	2.59	\$9,644,499.94
HAMILTON TWP	3,084	2,920	137	120	273	3,450	45		\$3,007,549.64
HAMMONTON TOWN	2,327	1,892	73	37	108	2,110	29	2.09	\$2,026,466.09
LINWOOD CITY	962	102	22	1	15	140	14		\$80,174.00
LONGPORT	64	65	1	4	.	70	1	0.52	\$61,880.00
MAINLAND REGIONAL	1,649	527	40	39	55	661	14	1.38	\$701,841.18
MARGATE CITY	612	129	12	50	20	211	34	1.09	\$244,672.71
MULLICA TWP	662	692	6	17	10	725	20	1.07	\$424,962.63
NORTHFIELD CITY	1,095		11	.	1	12	30		\$139,157.60
PLEASANTVILLE CITY	3,967	1,679	115	44	11	1,849	66	1.13	\$2,013,584.98
PORT REPUBLIC CITY	135	65	3	12	.	80	22		\$77,875.53
SOMERS POINT CITY	1,080	202	25	3	5	235	5		\$189,037.50
VENTNOR CITY	1,278	1,119	49	69	12	1,249	14	1.95	\$796,960.26
WEYMOUTH TWP	331	315	30	3	12	360	17		\$213,270.97
COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES						-			\$5,769,198.43
9998-COUNTY TOTAL	44,701	28,377	1,339	1,916	2,611	34,243	678		\$ 42,438,107

Sources: Total Enrollment--"Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

Note: Non-public students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

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Attachment A: Bergen County Transportation Statistics

DISTRICTS		Students Transported in County							
	Resident	Regular	Regular	Non-	Special Ed.		Nonpublic	Efficiency	Route
	Enrollment	Education	Spec Ed	Public	Spec Needs	Total	A.I.L.	Rating	Cost \$
ALLENDALE	954	0	.	0	13	13	.		\$ 218,972
ALPINE	217	73	.	1	23	97	79	1.52	\$ 221,954
BERGEN COUNTY VO/TECH	2021.5								
BERGENFIELD	3588	63	5	6	190	264	.	0.77	\$ 1,609,584
BOGOTA	1230	58	4	0	66	128	.		\$ 678,715
CARLSTADT	557.5	2	8	0	17	27	.		\$ 154,870
CARLSTADT-E. RUTHERFORD	507	203	.	0	37	240	.	1.35	\$ 294,735
CLIFFSIDE PARK	2143	32	73	0	44	149	.	0.76	\$ 616,916
CLOSTER	1191	53	1	15	23	92	70		\$ 246,303
CRESSKILL	1686.5	17	.	0	39	56	.		\$ 394,101
DEMAREST	677	4	2	16	17	39	17	0.61	\$ 237,580
DUMONT	2833	36	3	0	91	130	.	0.99	\$ 537,555
EAST RUTHERFORD	648.5	275	4	0	38	317	.	2.91	\$ 634,807
EDGEWATER	733	497	4	0	63	564	71		\$ 635,598
ELMWOOD PARK	2386	843	52	73	89	1057	139	1.39	\$ 1,481,880
EMERSON	1189	437	2	23	28	490	63	2.28	\$ 516,285
ENGLEWOOD	2846	1067	111	191	84	1453	269	0.86	\$ 2,724,818
ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS	427	442	.	60	15	517	56		\$ 629,969
FAIR LAWN	4836	206	14	144	225	589	297	1.00	\$ 1,372,097
FAIRVIEW	1440	140	17	0	32	189	.	0.95	\$ 387,437
FORT LEE	3545	64	25	76	75	240	204	0.71	\$ 1,190,570
FRANKLIN LAKES	1443	640	97	44	9	790	101	1.16	\$ 663,346
GARFIELD	4334.5	144	19	0	181	344	.	1.24	\$ 1,621,072
GLEN ROCK	2569.5	23	15	0	47	85	.	0.77	\$ 779,611
HACKENSACK	4521	92	86	0	133	311	.	0.57	\$ 1,501,018
HARRINGTON PARK	739	9	.	6	8	23	11	0.44	\$ 109,768
HASBROUCK HEIGHTS	1639	37	1	0	45	83	.	0.42	\$ 1,154,937
HAWORTH	507	0	.	12	9	21	12		\$ 137,428
HILLSDALE	1466	754	.	1	33	788	25	4.35	\$ 534,613
HO HO KUS	862	190	6	34	32	262	31	1.04	\$ 273,777
LEONIA	1470	34	.	0	15	49	.		\$ 171,778
LITTLE FERRY	1277	344	1	19	77	441	72	0.96	\$ 536,481
LODI	3296.5	78	48	0	179	305	.		\$ 1,683,625
LYNDHURST	2276	72	3	0	77	152	.	0.77	\$ 651,537
MAHWAH	3530	2412	219	209	84	2924	233	1.64	\$ 2,720,507
MAYWOOD	1158.5	131	15	128	30	304	37		\$ 423,180
MIDLAND PARK	1155	12	1	0	39	52	.	0.27	\$ 467,090
MONTVALE	1041	411	6	32	9	458	6	1.06	\$ 489,158
MOONACHIE	355	168	14	5	33	220	19	0.63	\$ 244,724
NEW MILFORD	2159	58	18.5	129	49.5	255	138	0.85	\$ 916,885
NORTH ARLINGTON	1594.5	12	.	0	81	93	.	1.20	\$ 635,427
NORTHERN HIGHLANDS REG	1053.5	486	66	84	14	650	29	1.87	\$ 567,027
NORTHERN VALLEY REG	2591.5	325	15	142	35	517	60	1.24	\$ 1,096,511
NORTHVALE	602	0	1	6	4	11	6	0.12	\$ 84,953
NORWOOD	647	58	2	17	10	87	34		\$ 182,837
OAKLAND	1696	611	48	39	21	719	63	1.21	\$ 934,309
OLD TAPPAN	868	48	.	10	6	64	42	0.40	\$ 115,795
ORADELL	813	0	.	0	8	8	24		\$ 62,222

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Attachment A: Bergen County Transportation Statistics

DISTRICTS	Students Transported in County						Nonpublic	Efficiency	Route
	Resident	Regular	Regular	Non-	Special Ed.				
	Enrollment	Education	Spec Ed	Public	Spec Needs	Total	A.I.L.	Rating	Cost \$
PALISADES PARK	1448.5	28	9	0	31	68	.		\$ 280,526
PARAMUS	4262	2520	10.5	134	152.5	2817	147	1.83	\$ 2,772,800
PARK RIDGE	1348.5	12	.	0	42	54	.		\$ 573,194
PASCACK VALLEY REG	1985.5	613	8.5	68	36.5	726	99	1.47	\$ 1,250,791
RAMAPO-INDIAN HILL REG	4334	1266	9	274	34	1583	139	1.34	\$ 1,248,255
RAMSEY	3005	344	15	44	86	489	30	0.98	\$ 1,419,171
RIDGEFIELD	1706.5	25	28	0	18	71	.	0.56	\$ 523,236
RIDGEFIELD PARK	1843.5	36	24.5	0	46.5	107	.		\$ 633,769
RIDGEWOOD	5719.5	892	63	124	92	1171	115	1.10	\$ 2,431,426
RIVER DELL REGIONAL	1543.5	124	1	73	26	224	42	1.05	\$ 444,344
RIVER EDGE	1136	3	18	0	4	25	20		\$ 111,562
RIVER VALE	1394	130	18	22	17	187	30	1.00	\$ 459,781
ROCHELLE PARK	607	138	.	21	20	179	73	0.72	\$ 216,911
ROCKLEIGH	23	19	.	3	4	26	6	0.68	\$ 75,375
RUTHERFORD	2533	28	.	0	52	80	.	0.61	\$ 741,422
SADDLE BROOK	1761	136	38	109	34	317	78	0.84	\$ 768,091
SADDLE RIVER	404	179	1	16	25	221	74		\$ 435,989
SOUTH BERGEN JOINTURE									\$ 16,768,882
SOUTH HACKENSACK	297	62	1.5	3	31.5	98	3		\$ 310,816
TEANECK	4287.5	1217	.	1918	246	3381	396	1.17	\$ 3,839,973
TENAFLY	3524.5	60	1.5	53	86.5	201	100	0.74	\$ 1,190,170
TETERBORO	4	5	.	0	1	6	.	0.05	\$ 33,874
UPPER SADDLE RIVER	1384	168	11	11	25	215	43	1.20	\$ 502,877
WALDWICK	1606	65	12	70	39	186	46	0.88	\$ 488,925
WALLINGTON	1148	15	.	0	28	43	.		\$ 261,300
WESTWOOD REGIONAL	2785	338	3	169	91	601	69	0.88	\$ 1,062,225
WOOD-RIDGE	1130	22	1	0	33	56	.		\$ 409,585
WOODCLIFF LAKE	843	75	6	29	15	125	21	0.78	\$ 240,638
WYCKOFF	2393	227	22	46	48	343	93		\$ 901,347
9998-COUNTY TOTAL	135,777	20,408	1,308	4,709	3,842	30,267	3,832		\$ 73,941,617
Sources: Resident Enrollment -Application for State School Aid, October 15, 2008									
All other data - District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008									

BERGEN COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Aaron R. Graham

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Bergen County is the most populous county of the state of New Jersey. As of 2000 Census, the population was 884,118, growing to 894,840 as of Census Bureau 2008 estimate. The county's population is larger than the population of the District of Columbia and that of six other states. Bergen County is located in Northern New Jersey. It covers 234 square miles of land and 13 square miles of water. The county is bounded on the west by Passaic County, on the north by Rockland County, New York, on the east by New York City (Manhattan) and on the south by Hudson and Essex Counties. [Source: U.S. Bureau of Census 2000]

There are 70 municipalities within the county. It has 76 school districts, including 1 vocational – technical district, 1 special services district, 1 jointure commission and 3 charter schools. In the 2008-2009 school year, there were approximately 135,777 resident students attending Bergen County public schools or private schools for the handicapped both within and outside the county. Of this total number, 30,267 were transported to and from school. There were 53 districts rated for transportation efficiency, of which 16 achieved the standard of 120% or better. An additional 12 are at least 98% or better. The total of all route costs in the county is approximately \$73,941,617. [Source: DRTRS and ASSA, October 15, 2008]

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	135,777
• Number of districts transporting students	53
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular Education Students	20,408
➤ Non-public Transported Students	4,709
➤ Regular Special Education	1,308
➤ Special Education Special Needs	3,842
➤ Total students transported	30,267
• Percentage of students transported	22.3%
• Total annual route costs	\$73.9M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	53
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	16/30%

[Sources: 2008 ASSA and DRTRS]

There were 53 districts rated for transportation efficiency, 16 of which achieved the standard of 120% or better. An additional 12 are at least 98% or better. Most of the districts scoring below 120% are doing so because of expansive geography or because they are smaller districts with single schools.

¹ County-wide enrollment is Resident Enrollment from October 15, 2008 ASSA.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Bergen County has a long history of cooperation among school districts for shared services, and several Coordinated Transportation Service Agencies (CTSAs) have been in existence for many years. Five of these CTSAs include:

South Bergen Jointure Commission
Region I with Northern Highlands Regional as the LEA
Region II with Pascack Valley Regional as LEA
Region III with Northern Valley Regional as LEA
Region V with River Edge as LEA

These CTSAs communicate and coordinate with each other and are currently serving 70 school districts in the county. Most non-public transportation is coordinated through the South Bergen Jointure Commission and CTSAs.

- The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has facilitated discussions and encouraged districts to share transportation services. Several districts are working on inter-local agreements and jointure agreements to combine transportation services with two or more schools, notably, Bergenfield, Dumont and New Milford.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the “School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures” was formed to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Bergen County. The Committee consisted of jointure and regional coordinators, district school business administrators, the county office transportation coordinator, county fiscal analyst, the Executive County Business Administrator and the Executive County Superintendent.

Both independent of the transportation survey distributed to districts and in conjunction with the responses received, the Committee met to: (1) review the county’s current transportation process; (2) identify significant barriers to improving transportation effectiveness and efficiencies (i.e.: calendar and school day scheduling; board policies; employment contractual obligations); and (3) consider the concerns of parents, particularly, length of times on bus for individual students. In addition, the Committee discussed types of computer programs available with a view of developing common database(s) to improve route planning.

Two of the Committee’s more emphatic recommendations were to: (1) set a county-wide school calendar and (2) develop a county-wide transportation data base.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Bergen County, the following are major recommendations to provide such services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner.

Recommendation 1: *Establish a single county-wide calendar. A single uniform calendar would allow for more efficient transportation of students throughout the county.* The Executive County Superintendent would establish the calendar and could use the calendar set by the superintendents in

Bergen County as a beginning. The county-wide calendar should also be used by nonpublic, private, and charter schools.

Recommendation 2: *Establish coordinated ranges of starting times and ending times for all elementary, middle, and high schools in the county including private schools to facilitate a tiered system of routes.*

Additional challenges and variables that would need to be considered for Recommendations 1 and 2 include:

- Snow days/delayed openings/early dismissals (because weather varies in different parts of the county)
- Construction projects affecting start dates
- County wide coordination of staff development days/non-student contact days
- Teacher contract issues especially as related starting times

Recommendation 3: *Conduct meetings of the CTSA school business administrators, transportation coordinators and region directors with school superintendents and business officials, as well as with district special services directors, in order to raise awareness of existing cooperative transportation services, review policy, and discuss ways to continue to improve these services. This could include, for example, the possibility of more parental contracts for cost savings.*

Recommendation 4: *Develop a common transportation internet-based system that all districts may consult. This database would list all bus routes, schedules and numbers of students on each bus in the county to achieve maximum efficiency in routing. The database should include an interface feature such that would enable electronic data input and for the creation of state reports.*

Recommendation 5: *Establish the Bergen County Jointure Commission (BCJC) as the county wide transportation coordinating agency in conjunction with and as directed by the Executive Country Superintendent. BCJC will also coordinate route opportunities with other counties. CTSAs may continue to be lead agencies in their respective Regions in coordination with BCJC.*

Recommendation 6: *Allow parents/guardians to waive their child's seat on the bus, so as to allow more students to be serviced by each bus. This will result in greater flexibility and reduced cost.*

Recommendation 7: *Consider a county-wide coordinated training program for all bus drivers, bus aides, and substitute drivers.*

Recommendation 8: *Require districts with their own bus fleets to list route information on the county-wide data base including data for non-public, special education and charter school routes.*

Recommendation 9: *Encourage all districts to join transportation cooperatives especially when serving new cooperative educational programs. An example is the new Tri-district program with joint transportation agreement by Bergenfield with New Milford and Dumont.*

Recommendation 10: *Review and revise the bus inspection process.*

Recommendation 11: *Consider a county-wide system for the purchase of buses utilizing generic bid specifications.*

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

1. Consolidating transportation services through central coordination

South Bergen Jointure Commission (SBJC) should become the county wide transportation coordinating agency in conjunction with and as directed by the Executive County Superintendent. BCJC will also coordinate route opportunities with other counties. CTSAs may continue to be lead agencies in their respective Regions in coordination with SBJC.

2. Coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county

The Bergen County Executive Superintendent will encourage districts to adopt a county calendar. Districts in Bergen County continue to make significant progress in using and implementing jointures and coordinating bus routes. Nonpublic and private schools start and stop times will need to be addressed to increase efficiency for these routes.

3. Coordinated range of starting times and ending times for all county schools

The committee's findings were that in addition to the need to stagger nonpublic school times within the county there is a need to stagger start and stop times for the private schools for students with disabilities outside the county.

4. Central coordination of transportation for out-of-district special education placements

As the committee began to review coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements it was decided that it would be beneficial to use an internet-based system that all districts may consult for out-of-district placements.

CONCLUSION

This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Bergen County. By working together, districts recognize that many efficiencies can be achieved not only in transportation, but those relating to special education, extra curricular activities, nonpublic services and other areas that are part of an intricate educational system.

BURLINGTON COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Lester W. Richens

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Located in the lower half of the State, Burlington County is the largest county in the State based on geography. It covers 827 square miles, (or 529,351 acres), and stretches from the Delaware River on its Western side to the Great Bay (on the Atlantic Ocean) on its Eastern side. Clockwise, it is bound on the North by Mercer County; on the Northeast by Monmouth County; on the East by Ocean County; on the Southwest by Atlantic County; and on the West by Camden County. More Burlington County acres are devoted to farming than for any other county in the State. There are forty (40) political subdivisions within the county, consisting of 3 cities; 31 townships; and 6 boroughs. [Source: Per Burlington County's website, at: <http://co.burlington.nj.us/info>]

Burlington County has 41 public school districts, consisting of 39 regular operating school districts and 2 county-wide school districts (Burlington County Special Services and Burlington County Institute of Technology). In addition, it has 42 non-public schools and 7 private schools for the disabled. [Source: DOE website (school directory and approved in-state private schools for the disabled)]

The following are highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts as of October 15, 2008. [See **Table A: "Transportation Statistics (Burlington County)"** for more details].

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	72,875
• Number of districts transporting students	39
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	49,590
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	2,541
➤ Non-public transported students	2,876
➤ Special education students—in-district	4,451
➤ Total students transported	59,458
• Percentage of students transported	82%
• Total annual route costs	\$45.4M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ "Rated districts"	33
➤ "Rated districts" meeting or exceeding 120% standard	20 (61%)

[Sources: Total Enrollment—"Application for School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts; Efficiency Rating—"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009; All other data—"District Report of Transported Resident Students", October 15, 2008 counts]

Most of the districts operating below 120% are primarily doing so because of limited tiering, in that they are either: (1) walking districts with limited busing; (2) subject to geography (i.e. remoteness from other districts); or (3) are single school districts.

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the two county-wide special services and vocational school districts.

² For "rated districts" conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State's minimum standard. Public students for "non-rated districts" are transported by another public school(s) and counted in the efficiency rating of such other district(s).

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Historically, Burlington County school districts have actively pursued opportunities to improve their transportation efficiencies and reduce such costs, as illustrated below:

- Transportation coordinators within the county network with each other on a regular basis during the year to identify non-public route sharing opportunities. Accordingly, approximately 47% (18 of 38 survey³ respondents) indicated that they use a jointure or similar arrangements for their non-public transportation, with the Burlington County Educational Services Unit (“ESU”) providing about 18% of such services, per ESU’s records. In further support of this endeavor: (1) ESU annually coordinates a joint meeting between the public school districts and the non-public schools for purpose of coordinating routes (“Bingo Sessions”) and (2) the Executive County Superintendent annually conducts a meeting between the public school districts and their corresponding private schools to review any problems and determine opportunities to improve transportation efficiencies.
- ESU maintains a data base of all special education out-of-district placement transportation routes. Approximately 73% (29 of 40 districts) indicated that they use ESU’s services for their special needs transportation.
- Approximately 61% (20 of 33 districts rated for their transportation utilization efficiency) are operating above the State’s current minimum standard of 120%. Per the survey results, nearly 60% (576 of 969) of the routes used are multi-tiered (i.e.: doubled; tripled; or four or more tiered).

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee (“Committee”) authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the “School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures” was formed to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Burlington County. The Committee consisted of four experienced district transportation coordinators; representatives from the ESU; a district superintendent; the County Office’s transportation coordinator; the Executive County Business Administrator; and the Executive County Superintendent.

Both independent of the transportation survey distributed to districts and in conjunction with the responses received from all 39 districts surveyed, the Committee met to: (1) review the county’s current transportation plans; (2) identify significant barriers to improving transportation effectiveness and efficiencies (i.e.: differing calendar and school day scheduling; differing board policies; differing employment contractual obligations; and the vast and diverse geography of the county); and (3) address the emotional passions of parents concerning their children’s transportation, particularly, any change of routes and times on bus. In addition, the Committee undertook to identify the diversity of computer programs in use by districts in planning their transportation use, with a view of developing common database(s) to improve route planning. In this regard, the following seven programs were identified as being predominate in the county: Bus-

³ The “2008-09 District Transportation Questionnaire Analysis”, developed by Student Transportation and mailed to 39 school districts.

Boss; Trans Finder; Versa Trans; Bus Stop; EDU Log; Micro-Chip; and one in-house program used by a district.

Two of the Committee's more emphatic recommendations were for: (1) giving the Executive County Superintendent authority to set a county-wide school calendar and (2) dividing the county into regional hubs, with a designated district serving as the coordinating district in each hub.

The county-wide Regionalization and Consolidation Task Force ("Task Force") was also given an opportunity to review the transportation survey and provide suggestions on handling the county's transportation needs; their recommendations were similar to those of the Transportation Committee.

Due in part to the work of the Transportation Committee and the Executive County Superintendent follow-up activities, the following noteworthy step(s) were undertaken during 2008-09 to enhance transportation efficiency and effectiveness in the county:

- One of the regional districts (Northern Burlington County Regional School District) identified as a future "transportation hub", has developed a "common calendar" for all of its constituent districts for implementation in 2009-10, which should result in cost savings by reducing the incidents of operating vehicles when other districts are not in session.
- Southampton School District reached out to its receiving constituent district (Lenape Regional High School District) to provide transportation services for 2009-10. Lenape was also similarly identified as a potential hub.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Burlington County, the following are recommendations to provide such services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner.

Recommendation 1: *Establish a county wide school calendar ("common calendar") that all schools within the county would be required to follow for more efficient use of transportation resources (i.e.: increased multi-tiering capabilities).* Per review of the districts' recent bus utilization efficiency rating, approximately 40% (21 of 35 rated districts) are operating below the State's current minimum 120% standard and per the survey results, approximately 40% of the districts' routes (393 of 969) are single tiered.

This recommendation would encompass all public, non-public and charter schools in the county (The County's first charter school is expected to commence operations in September 2009). By necessity, achieving this goal would require coordination, with county level oversight for continued consistency, of: (1) all school vacations and professional development days; (2) emergency closings and openings times; and (3) general bell schedules, as well as, (4) adequate notice by all parties of any required emergency changes.

Moreover, its achievement would also necessitate successfully addressing certain barriers, including:

- Legislative change(s) from the current process of school calendar adoption.
- Possible accommodations for recognized religious observations by some non-public schools.

- Coordination of calendars with neighboring counties due to inter-county transportation of non-public school students.
- Possible conflicts with collective bargaining agreements.

Recommendation 2: *Divide the county transportation services into regional hubs shown below, (1) based on common regional specific calendars, whereby (2) one or more smaller districts join an existing larger district, with (3) such larger districts coordinating transportation services for their respective hubs. This would help ensure more efficient use of transportation resources (i.e.: increased multi-tiering capabilities) while minimizing the length of time students would be on a bus each day and particularly serve as an alternative in those situation where it might be impossible or impractical to achieve a county-wide common calendar as outlined above.* As mentioned, Burlington County is the State's largest county in geographic area, stretching 827 square miles and, per the survey results, students are currently bussed between 25 to 60 minutes at the elementary level; 22 to 60 minutes at the intermediate/middle school level; and 18 to 60 minutes at the high school level.

The various geographic hubs would consist of:

- a. Northern Burlington County Regional—Coordinating District
 - Bordentown Regional
 - Chesterfield
 - Florence
 - Mansfield
 - New Hanover
 - Springfield
- b. Cinnaminson School District—Coordinating District
 - Maple Shade
 - Moorestown
 - Palmyra
 - Riverton
- c. Tabernacle School District—Coordinating District
 - Woodland
- d. Lenape Regional High School District—Coordinating District
 - Shamong
 - Southampton
- e. Delran School District—Coordinating District
 - Delanco
 - Riverside
- f. Burlington School District—Coordinating District
 - Beverly City
 - Burlington City
 - Edgewater Park

To the extent it is impossible or impractical to achieve a county-wide calendar as outlined in Recommendation 1 or the regional hub system outlined above, constituent districts should at a minimum be required to adhere to the same school calendar, thereby still affording the opportunity to achieve some efficiency benefits.

Recommendation 3: *Develop a single data base of all bus routes and schedules in the county under the county authority, with a requirement for all districts to submit their data to this data base to assist in more effectively managing transportation route planning and coordination within the county. The Transportation Committee identified at least 7 predominate transportation routing programs in use by districts in the county.*

Recommendation 4: *Districts below the State's minimum efficiency standard (currently 120%) should be required to have the county authority coordinate their transportation services to improve transportation utilization efficiencies. Approximately 40% (13 of 33) of the rated districts are presently operating below this minimum standard.*

Recommendation 5: *A county wide agency should be responsible for administering all non-public transportation to improve efficiencies. Approximately 47% (18 of 38 survey respondents) indicated that they use a jointure or similar arrangements for their non-public transportation, with ESU providing about 18% of such services. ESU would seem like a logical choice to undertake this on a county-wide basis as they currently have routes throughout most of Burlington and the other surrounding counties.*

Recommendation 6: *The current bus inspection process should be reviewed and revised, with a focus on mechanical issues, versus cosmetic concerns, in order to direct limited resources more cost effectively.*

Recommendation 7: *Prorate aid-in-lieu of transportation reimbursements for students living in the same residence and attending the same non-public school, to provide measurable overall cost savings. This would require Legislative action, as aid-in lieu of transportation is currently paid to every eligible non-public student. For the 2008-2009 school year each eligible student received \$884. Thus, if for example, two eligible students from the same family attending the same non-public school, both were eligible to receive the same \$884.*

Recommendation 8: *Develop a process permitting a parent to waive their child's seat for transportation to and from school to reduce the oversubscription of bussing resources required to be maintained. This would have greater relevance to high school districts with seniors driving to and from school.*

Recommendation 9: *Establish uniform county-wide or state-wide system(s) job descriptions and training programs for bus drivers and bus aides to provide consistent practices and improve operational effectiveness and efficiencies. Per the survey responses, only 27% (10 of 37) and 30% (11 of 36) of the districts provided job descriptions or training, respectively.*

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

For 2009-10 and beyond, the Executive County Superintendent, in coordination with the Transportation Committee, plans to continue the examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services in the county, as contemplated under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 (b), including:

a. Implement “regional hubs” system:

Commencing in October 2009, the Executive County Superintendent will undertake forming regional hubs for 2010-11. This would include:

- Meetings with all participants;
- Development of common calendar(s)
- Route scheduling

b. Expand non-public transportation jointures and related transportation coordination:

As previously mentioned, approximately 47% (18 of 38 survey respondents) indicated that they use a jointure or similar arrangements for their non-public transportation, with about 18% using ESU for such services. During 2009/10, the Executive County Superintendent will be meeting with the ESU on approaches for expanding its non-public transportation coordination to include more non-public schools.

c. Enhanced Outreach Efforts:

Expand number and extent of outreach to county districts at every opportunity during 2009-10 on seeking transportation efficiencies, including at: (1) monthly roundtables; (2) county-wide Regionalization and Consolidation Task Force meetings; (3) mid-year and annual budget reviews.

CONCLUSION

Based on work conducted in reviewing transportation services in Burlington County, while districts are doing much in this regard, nevertheless there appears to be opportunities for improving the county's transportation effectiveness and efficiencies, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-57. However, all participants in the process have generally agreed that achieving such results would be substantially predicated on the establishment of a common county-wide calendar (or minimally its equivalent on a regional basis), for all public and nonpublic schools to address the differing schedules and approaches currently in use. Such a common calendar (or calendars) would in turn require Legislative change enabling the Executive County Superintendents to effectuate this. Thus, this report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Burlington County.

Attachment A: Transportation Statistics (Burlington County)

DISTRICT	Resident Enrollment	Students Transported in County (1)					Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
		Regular Education	Special Ed. Out-of-District	Nonpublic	Special Ed. In-District	Total			
BASS RIVER	129	88	2	3	3	96	4	0.93	\$ 91,438
BEVERLY CITY	328	96	60	33		189	35	1.07	\$ 390,101
BORDENTOWN	2,485	1,948	93	54	118	2,213	72	2.25	\$ 1,676,751
BURLINGTON CITY	1,920	474	58			532		0.82	\$ 413,409
BURLINGTON TWP	4,227	3,182	138	214	524	4,058	135	2.31	\$ 1,825,197
CHESTERFIELD	441	389	25		23	437	28	1.09	\$ 273,370
CINNAMINSON	2,494	2,324	88	69	100	2,581	85	2.31	\$ 1,735,081
DELANCO	546	95	26	16	1	138	16	1.07	\$ 168,859
DELRAN	2,978	2,526	37	65	127	2,755	59	2.08	\$ 1,027,142
EASTAMPTON	755	323	13		11	347	18	0.98	\$ 225,538
EDGEWATER PARK	1,052	738	72	82	24	916	16	2.08	\$ 465,550
EVESHAM	4,938	3,521	210	258	314	4,303	132	1.45	\$ 3,020,102
FLORENCE	1,675	935	72	107	47	1,161	76	2.20	\$ 725,798
HAINESPORT	685	578	15	96	13	702	47	1.42	\$ 348,936
LENAPE	7,614	6,772	182	536	772	8,262	106	1.10	\$ 8,689,410
LUMBERTON	1,714	1,028	43	54	74	1,199	106	1.59	\$ 786,660
MANSFIELD	716	640	32		36	708	64		\$ 637,418
MAPLE SHADE	2,070	746	93	78	139	1,056	45	2.12	\$ 539,581
MEDFORD LAKES	556	9	5	29	5	48	12		\$ 146,112
MEDFORD TWP	3,102	2,942	84	162	25	3,213	18	1.89	\$ 2,497,370
MOORESTOWN	4,434	3,752	35	109	51	3,947	51	1.94	\$ 2,228,166
MT HOLLY	1,061	5	39		6	50	28		\$ 329,269
MT LAUREL	4,371	3,489	309	236	306	4,340	185	1.88	\$ 3,711,875
NEW HANOVER	268	144	33		14	191		1.04	\$ 238,273
NORTH HANOVER	1,151	1,027	49		67	1,143	21	1.25	\$ 1,333,734
NORTHERN BURLINGTON	1,830	1,579	53	15	209	1,856	82	1.79	\$ 1,962,295
PALMYRA	976	28	31			59			\$ 225,308
PEMBERTON TWP	5,302	4,325	202		771	5,298	103	1.98	\$ 2,311,877
RANOCAS VALLEY REG HS	2,433	1,539	163	168	159	2,029	47	1.00	\$ 1,813,889
RIVERSIDE	1,440	21	50		4	75		0.99	\$ 352,055
RIVERTON	325	4	14			18			\$ 75,217
SHAMONG	944	878	3	32	64	977	5	1.57	\$ 559,529
SOUTHAMPTON	808	115	10	23	118	266	36	1.05	\$ 790,844
SPRINGFIELD	316	271	27		14	312	33		\$ 186,138
TABERNACLE	891	763	6	21	99	889	7	1.44	\$ 646,027
WASHINGTON TWP	108	97	19		2	118	2	0.52	\$ 169,948
WESTAMPTON	938	663	11	16	63	753	68	1.55	\$ 494,684
WILLINGBORO	4,706	1,408	138	400	132	2,078	152	1.52	\$ 2,196,638
WOODLAND TWP	148	128	1		16	145		0.99	\$ 134,578
Totals	72,875	49,590	2,541	2,876	4,451	59,458	1,894		\$ 45,444,167

Sources: Total Enrollment-"Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide, March 2009

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

(1): Non-public students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

Attachment B

Transportation Committee Members

Mr. Steve Bada – Supervisor of Transportation, Education Services Commission

Mr. John Bilodeau – School Business Administrator, Gloucester Township Board of Education

Ms. Noreen Boston – School Business Administrator, Education Services Commission

Mr. John Gaskill – Transportation Supervisor, Winslow Township Board of Education

Dr. Rita Hanna, Interim Executive County School Business Administrator

Mrs. Margaret J. Nicolosi, Executive County Superintendent
Mr. Mark Ritter – School Business Administrator, Haddon Township Board of Education

Mrs. Barbara Strasser – Assistant to the Executive County School Business Administrator

Attachment A: District Transportation Report Summary

[illegible]

HADDON TWP.	2,130	318	42	17	51	428	43	1.32	\$628,191.68
HADDONFIELD	2,340		62			62			\$356,175.80
*HI NELLA	92	53	3	1		57	4		\$81,378.80
LAUREL SPRINGS	349	3	5	2		10			\$58,679.60
LAWNSIDE	484	71	45	3		119	36	.84	\$312,478.16
LINDENWOLD	2,274	1,161	123	71	35	1,390	100	1.57	\$850,243.30
MAGNOLIA	443	1	10			11			\$110,649.00
MERCHANTVILLE	416	59	24			83	30	.09	\$126,224.36
MT. EPHRAIM	642	3	17			20			\$145,177.70
OAKLYN	481	2	6			8			\$68,857.90
PENNSAUKEN	5,503	4,133	232	416	701	5482	238	2.27	\$2,948,646.61
PINE HILL	1,632	717	114	24	171	1,026	37	1.65	\$727,561.28
*PINE VALLEY									
RUNNEMEDE	823	198	29		30	257	34	1.43	\$349,308.36
SOMERDALE	455		3		2	5			\$46,241.10
STERLING	904	10	25		5	40			\$196,148.60
STRATFORD	782	198	42		19	259	6	.79	\$332,537.50
VOORHEES	3,306	2,315	118	14	269	2,716	140	1.47	\$1,796,879.90
WATERFORD	1,786	1,520	211	106	133	1,970	35	1.95	\$1,462,007.01
WINSLOW	5,663	5,268	154	883	605	6,910	318	2.64	\$5,888,928.18
WOODLYNNE	649	43	33			76	1		\$265,464.30
Total	82,581	40,336	3,667	3,141	4,038	51,182	2,171		\$46,430,367.55

Sources: Total Enrollment – Application for State School Aid, October 15, 2008 counts
Efficiency Rating – Comparative Spending Guide, March 2009
All other data – District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

Nonpublic students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

CAMDEN COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Margaret Nicolosi

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Located in the lower half of the State, Camden County is adjacent to Burlington County, Atlantic County, Gloucester County and Philadelphia County in Pennsylvania. Its county seat is the city of Camden. The county has a total area of 228 square miles of which, 223 square miles of it is land and 5 square miles is water.

As of the 2000 census, the population of the thirty-six municipalities in the county was 508,932. The population density was 2,289 people per square mile. There were 199,679 housing units at an average density of 898 per square mile. There were 185,744 households out of which 34.6% had children under the age of 18 living with them. While most of its boroughs are working class, Camden County has many contrasts in demographics. Most of Camden and parts of Lindenwold are considered highly impoverished, while Cherry Hill Township, Voorhees Township, Haddon Heights and Haddonfield have a number of upper-class enclaves.

There are 36 political subdivisions within the county, consisting of two cities; eight townships; and twenty-six boroughs. It has 38 public school districts, the Regional Day School, the Educational Services Commission and the Camden County Technical High School with two locations one in Pennsauken and the other in Sicklerville. In addition there are eight charter schools and fifty-one non-public schools.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. [See Attachment A: District Transportation Report Summary—~~Source: district DTRS reports October 09~~]

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	82,581
• Number of districts transporting students	37 8
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	40,336
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	3,667
➤ Non-public transported students	3,141
➤ Special education students—in-district	4,038
➤ Total students transported	51,182
• Percentage of students transported	62%
• Total annual route costs	\$46.4M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	23
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	15 (67 5%)

¹ County-wide ASSA (October 09) enrollment data does not include the vocational school district.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

Sources: 2008 ASSA and DRTRS

Most non-public transportation is coordinated through the Camden County Educational Services Unit (“ESU”). Most of the districts operating below 120% are doing so because of courtesy busing involving young children crossing hazardous routes i.e. Black Horse Pike, White Horse Pike, Route 130.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has facilitated discussions with County Superintendents and Business Administrators in which they have been urged to tier bell schedules within their districts.
- The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has facilitated discussions and encouraged districts to share transportation services. Most districts are working on inter-local agreements and jointure agreements to combine transportation services with two or more schools.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee (Committee) authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the “School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures” was formed to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Camden County. The Committee consisted of three experienced school business administrators, one experienced transportation coordinator, one representative from the Camden County Educational Services Unit (“ESU”); the assistant to the Executive County School Business Administrator, the Executive County Business Administrator; and the Executive County Superintendent.

Using the responses made by district school business administrators and transportation coordinators to the transportation survey distributed to the districts, the Committee met to: (1) identify significant barriers to improving transportation effectiveness and efficiencies (i.e.: calendar and school day scheduling; board policies; employment contractual obligations); and (2) address the emotional passions of parents concerning their children’s transportation, particularly, any change of routes and times on bus.

Two of the Committee’s more emphatic recommendations were for: (1) giving the Executive County Superintendent authority to set a county-wide school calendar and (2) establish a county wide transportation hub to be maintained by the Educational Services Commission.

As a result of the meetings on transportation efficiencies, the committee will continue or undertake the actions listed below to implement and further encourage efficiency and coordination throughout the county:

- Continue the use of jointures, which are quite prevalent in the county with 85 jointures existing between districts and the Educational Services Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Camden County, the following are recommendations to provide such services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner.

Recommendation 1: *Expand services of the ~~the~~ Educational Services Commission to provide a consolidated county-wide transportation system that includes the coordination of all to/from transportation for public, non-public, vocational and charter schools located within the county. The ESC will operate the county-wide transportation system on a common county-wide calendar, a staggered system of school opening and closing times and a tiered system in order to achieve efficiencies resulting in a cost savings for its county member districts.*

Recommendation 2: *Expand services of the Educational Services Commission services to include the coordination of all transportation needs of out-of-district special education placements to ensure effective and efficient transportation for these students. Districts throughout the county must arrange jointure agreements for their out-of-district special education placements through the ESC.*

Recommendation 3: *Establish a single county-wide calendar, which will be done by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools. The calendar should address unified holiday schedules, school opening and closing dates, half days, snow days, and staff development days county-wide for all public and non-public schools. A uniform calendar will produce an efficient transportation program for districts throughout the county. Any school district deviating from the uniform calendar will have to go through a waiver process. Legislative action will be required to change the current process of adoption of a school calendar.*

Recommendation 4: *Establish a coordinated range of starting times and ending times for all public, non-public, charter and private elementary, middle and high schools in the county. This recommendation requires legislative action to set a range of starting and ending times for all schools in the county. This recommendation will address the coordination of bus routes and bell schedules to achieve an efficient county-wide school transportation system. A tiered transportation system may be necessary due to the availability of busses. All established efficiency standards that apply to public schools shall be adhered to by nonpublic, private schools and charter schools. Legislative action will be needed to require all school entities to operate on the same calendar and school day.*

Recommendation 5: *Allow districts that have an efficiency rating at 2.0 and/or above to remain independent and continue to operate their own transportation system. If they choose, these districts have the option to join the Educational Services Commission. An analysis of districts county-wide that have efficiency ratings at or above 2.0 reveal their success is gained from excellent practices, staggered starting times and tiered transportation routes. Legislation is required to achieve this recommendation.*

Recommendation 6: *Require ~~distries~~districts ~~that~~that fall below the 2.0 efficiency rating to be part of the county-wide ESC program. A waiver process would be available to districts to opt out. Current legislation would require modification to achieve this recommendation.*

Recommendation 7: *Establish a single county-wide data base of all bus routes and bus schedules to achieve maximum efficiency and produce the information required to create state reports. The data base and preparation of the reports should be produced and maintained by the Educational Services Commission. Current legislation requires modification to permit the ESC to prepare county-wide the DRTRS reports on behalf of the districts in the county.*

Recommendation 8: *Review and revise policies of the Educational Services Commission and/or school districts to reduce the number of bus stops as a way to reduce costs.*

Recommendation 9: *Establish a county-wide system to consolidate a uniform training program for all bus drivers, bus aides and substitute drivers. Additionally, a county-wide mandatory drug screening program should be established for all bus drivers. Legislative action is required to establish this recommendation.*

Recommendation 10: *Establish a county-wide system for purchasing busses, transportation equipment and supplies. A generic bid specification should be developed for the purchase of the items mentioned above. The use of a state contract for the purchase of busses should be investigated and implemented. Legislative action would be required to develop this recommendation*

Recommendation 11: *Review and revise the process used for the inspection of busses. The focus should be on mechanical issues not on cosmetic concerns such as cut seats, first aid kits and scratches in paint, etc. Legislative action is required to change the current procedure for the inspection of busses by the Division of Motor Vehicles.*

Recommendation 12: *Revise the current law that requires a seat for every student on the bus being transported to and from school. A waiver process should be developed permitting parents/guardians to decline a seat on the bus. This action would significantly reduce costs for districts. Legislative action will be required to develop this recommendation.*

Recommendation 13: *Revise legislation regarding aid-in-lieu payment rules and regulations for potential cost reductions for families who send more than one child to the same non-public school. Currently, aid-in lieu of transportation is paid to every eligible non-public student. For the 2008-2009 school year, each eligible student received \$884. If two eligible students from the same family attend the same non-public school each is eligible to receive the \$884. A family pro-ration formula should be developed to reduce costs. Legislation will be required to change the formula from a per-pupil amount to a per-family amount.*

Recommendation 14: *Review and evaluate the administrative fees charged by the Educational Services Commission. Applicable recommendations will be made based on the review/evaluation..*

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6 (b) Exam ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

1. Coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county:

The transportation committee will be expanded to include Superintendents and Curriculum Directors to coordinate a county wide calendar. The commencement of the school year in September, the scheduling of professional developments days and spring break will facilitate a county wide calendar.

Districts have made significant progress in using and implementing jointures and coordinating bus routes. Nonpublic and private school start and stop times still need to be addressed to increase efficiency for these routes.

2. Staggering bell schedules in order to implement a tiered system of busing:

From survey data, districts within the county who have implemented staggered bell schedules have realized efficiency ratings as high as 264%. There remain some district policy issues regarding staggered school schedules for all schools in a district.

The Committee's findings were that in addition to the need to stagger nonpublic school times within the county there is a need to stagger start and stop times for the private schools for students with disabilities outside the County. Currently, most private schools for students with disabilities have an 8:30 a.m. start time. This practice results in using several buses traveling the same routes when in many instances one bus could serve more students along the same route.

Although the Committee has not addressed transportation needs for athletic, activity, school trips, band, etc. it should be noted that these costs must be included in the overall study of transportation. The committee will continue to research ways to increase efficiency for athletic event transportation as it appears that tiering and sharing of routes may provide for some significant cost savings. Communication between the business office of each district and the athletic directors of each district needs to be implemented.

3. Centrally coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements:

As the committee began to review coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements it was decided that through the use of the Camden County Office of Education database transportation information will be available to districts to promote transportation efficiency.

4. Consolidating transportation services in combinations of two or more school districts:

Through the creation of jointures, students are currently transported to and from schools in Camden County. In order to increase consolidation and coordination of transportation services, the committee recommends that the Camden County Educational Services Commission serve as the county wide service provider.

The Executive County Superintendent will investigate the possibility of working with the county on the maintenance of the school buses.

In addition, the Executive County Superintendent will explore a uniform training program for all bus drivers, bus aides and substitute bus drivers.

CONCLUSION

This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Camden County. By working together, districts recognize that many efficiencies can be achieved not only in transportation, but those relating to special education, extra-curricular activities, nonpublic services and other areas that are part of an intricate educational transportation system.

Attachment B

Transportation Committee Members

~~Mr. Steve Bada—Supervisor of Transportation, Education Services Commission~~

~~Mr. John Bilodeau—School Business Administrator, Gloucester Township Board of Education~~

~~Ms. Noreen Boston—School Business Administrator, Education Services Commission~~

~~Mr. John Gaskill—Transportation Supervisor, Winslow Township Board of Education~~

~~Dr. Rita Hanna, Interim Executive County School Business Administrator~~

~~Mrs. Margaret J. Nicolosi, Executive County Superintendent~~

~~Mr. Mark Ritter—School Business Administrator, Haddon Township
Board of Education~~

~~Mrs. Barbara Strasser—Assistant to the Executive County School Business Administrator~~

CAPE MAY COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Terrence J. Crowley

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Located in the southeastern part of the State, Cape May County has 256 square miles, 98,000 year round residents and an estimated 650,000 summer residents. Cape May County is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and south, the Atlantic County to the north, the Delaware Bay to the west.

There are 16 municipalities located in Cape May County; and the number one industry is tourism. [Source: *Official Cape May County 2009 Directory*]

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (*See Attachment A for details.*)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	12,671
• Number of districts transporting students	18
• Number of students transported ²	-
➤ Regular education students	9,434
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	814.5
➤ Non-public transported students	587
➤ Special education students—in-district	1,120.5
➤ Total students transported	11,956
• Percentage of students transported	94%
• Total annual route costs ³	\$ 9,258,108
• Efficiency Rating ⁴	-
➤ “Rated districts”	9
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	5 / 56%

The reasons districts did not attain the 120% efficiency were due to incorrect DRTRS reporting, geographic locations, and routes not being tiered.

¹ NJDOE/Office of Finance – Application for State School Aid – Data Listing

² Summary of October 2008 DRTRS

³ Student Transportation/Cape May/Cape May County Route File – DRTRS Oct 2008

⁴ For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **The Dennis Township School District** has two (2) schools and tier bus routes in addition the route and time are developed to tier with the Middle Township High School routes. The efficiency rating for Dennis Township is 1.343%.
- **The Lower Cape May Regional School District** has two (2) schools on one campus. The schools start times are staggered to allow tiering of buses. Lower Cape May Regional owns their own buses and contracts only a few routes. The efficiency rating for Lower Cape May Regional is 1.390%.
- **The Lower Township School District** has 4 schools. The district staggers school opening times and tiers routes. Lower Township owns their own buses and jointures routes with other districts. The efficiency rating for Lower Township is 2.108%.
- **The Upper Township School District** has three (3) schools. All schools have staggered start times. In addition to tiering the 3 schools, Upper Township tiers routes for their high school students attending the Ocean City High School. The efficiency rating for Upper Township is 1.661%.
- **The Middle Township School District** had a meeting with the area nonpublic schools to discuss a common calendar. Although a complete common calendar could not be adopted the calendar was changed from a difference of 7 days in the schools calendar to 4 days.
- **A parent contract** is an agreement between the school district and a parent. It is seldom used but does result in savings. For example a route cost for a Special Education student was estimated to be \$27,000. The district reached an agreement to pay \$8,500. This resulted in a savings of \$18,500.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The transportation committee's goal for the initial meeting was to isolate the various modes of transportation utilized by New Jersey school children. The committee identified 10 categories of transportation, they are:

- To & From Transportation
- Jointures
- Special Education
 - Students transported to Cape May County Special Services
 - Students transported to Private Schools for the Disabled
 - Students transported to Other LEA's
- Charter School Transportation
- Out of County Routes to Other LEA's
- Non-Public transportation
- Aid in Lieu of transportation
- Mid year unanticipated routes
- Sports and activities transportation
- Auxiliary Services

The Committee discussed the possibility of a county wide calendar and staggering start times. Although the concept of county wide calendars and staggered start times should be considered; the concept of a county wide calendar is recommended, however professional development days, start and end of school dates, county wide decision on snow days, religious holidays, fall and spring break dates must be considered. The start and end of school times does not have to be county wide. In Cape May County these times are considered for K-12 districts, districts providing transportation to other districts through jointures and consortiums.

Recommendation 1 *Continue existing tiering of bus routes and maintain common calendars, in districts that are part of a consortium or have a rating over 1.20%. These districts should also continue to explore more efficient methods of transporting the school district's students.*

Recommendation 2 *Evaluation the remaining districts for increased efficiency. A committee consisting of a representative from each of the seven districts will be developed to explore the possibility of more efficient methods of transporting the district students. Some methods would include but not be limited to joining an existing consortium, developing a new consortium, tiering of bus routes, staggering school times, and joining with another school district as a shared service. The County Office will coordinate and provide oversight responsibility for this committee.*

Recommendation 3 *Establish a minimum distance between bus stops to shorten the time of the route, which will enable the bus to be tiered more easily with another route. This will require legislation.*

Recommendation 4 *Verify DRTRS information for accuracy in reporting since they are the figures being used when determining efficiency.*

Recommendation 5 *Require all districts to share common software in order to develop more efficient routes or enhance the efficiency of existing routes.*

Recommendation 6 *Develop special education programs locally that would enable students to be transported less distance.*

Recommendation 7 *Evaluate the County Special Services District's origin of students by district and program. It could be possible for districts to enter a shared service agreement where a district could provide a program for Special Services.*

Recommendation 8 *Contact agencies such as Head Start to determine if their buses can run any of the special education routes.*

Recommendation 9 *Eliminate the requirement of a district having to send a letter to parents if the cost of transportation exceeds the current aid in lieu amount. It should be treated as aid in lieu for nonpublic students.*

Recommendation 10 *Require charter and non-public school students to ride the public school routes and then use the school district schools as "bus stops" to transport the charter school*

students to the charter school. This would also include that the opening times for the charter school be changed to meet the schedule.

Recommendation 11 *A district that must send a student out of county to another LEA, must notify the Executive County Superintendent of Schools who shall determine if a comparable program is available in the resident county. This will require legislation.*

Recommendation 12 *Require nonpublic schools to use a common calendar and stagger opening and closing times which will allow buses to be tiered. This will be very effective if the nonpublic students ride the public routes and utilize the public schools as pick up locations.*

Recommendation 13 *Amend current legislation to only allow Aid in Lieu payment to the family based on one student per nonpublic school. Currently the Aid in Lieu amount is \$884 per student. Under current statute each student is entitled to this amount. For example if a family has four (4) students attending the same nonpublic school, the parent would receive \$884 x 4 for a total of \$3,536. For example, a family has four students attending two nonpublic schools; the reimbursement should be \$884 x 2 for a total of \$1,768.*

Recommendation 14 *Develop a “pool” of buses that would be available on a county-wide basis. The pool should be on a common database and coordinated by the CTSA. The pool of buses should be developed by the time of year, day of week, and the length of time the bus is available. The length of the trip should include the pick-up time, drop off time, and should include district owned and contracted buses that would be available. Develop a formula for calculating the cost of the trip. It should, at a minimum include mileage, tolls, salary/benefits and maintenance.*

Recommendation 15 *Hold mandatory trainings at least semi-annually for all bus drivers and bus aides.*

Recommendation 16 *Develop a cooperative or consortium of districts for the purchase of school buses. This could also include other counties and could be done on a statewide basis.*

Recommendation 17 *Explore the possibility of utilizing state contract for purchasing buses.*

Recommendation 18 *Apply to various Traffic Safety Councils for training grants.*

Recommendation 19 *Combine efforts of the CTSA, host districts, and districts with high efficiencies to develop a system that better utilizes the County’s transportation resources. In addition the CTSA will put their current routes on their website for districts to utilize.*

NEXT STEPS

The items listed below will address the areas stated pursuant to 6A:23A-2.6 (b):

1. **Coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county for both public and nonpublic schools:** All districts should share common software in order to develop more efficient routes or enhance the efficiency of existing routes. All routes not currently tiered should be analyzed for the potential of entering a Joint Transportation agreement with another district, consortium, or CTSA.
2. **Staggering bell schedules in order implement a tiered system of busing within the school district and with adjoining school districts:** All districts that are part of a consortium or have a rating over 1.20%, no changes are recommended, however, these districts should continue with the existing tiering of bus routes and maintain their common calendars, while continuing to explore more efficient methods of transporting the school district's students. The remaining four (4) districts need to be evaluated for increased efficiency; a committee consisting of a representative from each of the four districts will be developed to explore the possibility of more efficient methods of transporting the district students. Some methods would include but not be limited to joining an existing consortium, developing a new consortium, tiering of bus routes, staggering school times, and joining with another school district as a shared service. The County Office will coordinate and provide oversight responsibility for this committee.
3. **Centrally coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements, including practices and/or policies in place to more effectively provide for special education transportation services:** Cape May County participates with the Ocean County Vocational Technical School's data base (Real Time) for recording and identifying special education program availability at other LEA's. The transportation component is part of this software. Cape May County will continue to encourage districts to participate in this program. The software is currently offered to districts at no charge.
4. **Consolidating transportation services in combinations of two or more school districts:** As reported this is occurring in most districts in Cape May County. The County Office in cooperation with the CTSA and transportation committee will develop a list of services and make them available to all districts in the county. A meeting has been scheduled for early September.
5. **Establishing a consolidated countywide transportation system by jointure agreement or county- based service provider:** The CTSA will take a more active role in developing routes throughout the county. There should be a combining of efforts in Cape May County; the CTSA, host districts, and districts with high efficiencies should develop a system that better utilizes the county's transportation resources.
6. **Analyzing district school bus routing and scheduling to encourage the use of efficient routing practices:** Currently various software is used for bus routing; there should be one software that districts have access. This will allow districts to "join" other districts to provide

7. **Improving cooperation between local boards of education and nonpublic school administrators leading to more efficient and effective student transportation services:**
The County Office will continue to utilize the annual meetings of nonpublic schools and public school administrators, to encourage route efficiencies, common calendars, etc. This will be done on a county wide basis and on a district basis. Individual meetings such as the meeting held between Middle Township School District and the nonpublic schools will be strongly encouraged to promote efficiencies.
8. **Soliciting input from current public school district transportation employee representatives and school employee representatives regarding ways to institute efficiencies and savings:** The Transportation Committee will continue to meet to discuss new transportation issues and follow up on prior recommendations. In addition discussions on transportation will be a regular part of the Business Administrators' monthly Roundtable meeting agenda.

CONCLUSION

The common theme throughout the Cape May County transportation report focuses on the need for a common database for students transported; therefore common software would allow districts to operate more efficiently. The common calendar is recommended. A common calendar should be used and normally is used by districts that are part of a shared services consortium or by the use of jointures. A common calendar should be explored in the nonpublic area; the utilization of existing public school routes by nonpublic and charter schools should decrease the route time and cost, in addition it will allow for more tiering of buses. A pool of buses for sports, co-curricular activities, and field trips should be developed.

TABLE A: CAPE MAY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS

TABLE A

[illegible]

Sources: Total Enrollment--"Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Michael Elwell

County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Cumberland County is a large rural community that occupies approximately 500 square miles of land in the southern part of New Jersey and has over 40 miles of Delaware Bay coastline. According to 2007 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, over 155,500 people reside in Cumberland County. It is comprised of three cities, ten townships and one borough.

[Source: Cumberland County's website <http://www.co.cumberland.nj.us/content/161/default.aspx>]

Cumberland County has fifteen school districts—three K-12 districts, one regional high school, ten K-8 districts (six of the K-8 districts are constituent districts of Cumberland Regional), and one shared-time Cumberland County Tech Ed Center. In addition, there are approximately eleven non-public schools, four private schools for the disabled, and a new charter school anticipating opening in August 2009.

The large rural setting of Cumberland County requires all school districts in Cumberland County to provide transportation to their students, excluding the shared time Cumberland County Tech Ed Center. However, the city districts (Bridgeton, Millville and Vineland) do have a number of students who are considered “walkers,” as well as do other rural districts.

The cost of transportation for the school year 2007-2008 for Cumberland County students, based on the June 30, 2008 Comprehensive Annual Financial Review (CAFR), was \$20,313,140. Therefore, any recommendations that can be brought forward to reduce cost and the respective tax burden of communities should be seriously considered. A small savings of just 5% could generate approximately one million dollars of tax relief.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. [See **Attachment A**: “Students Transported in Cumberland County” for more details.]

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	25,121
• Number of districts transporting students	14
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	19,783
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	770
➤ Non-public transported students	843
➤ Special education students—in-district	1726
➤ Total students transported	23,122
• Percentage of students transported	92%
• Total annual route costs	\$31.3M
• Efficiency Rating 2	
➤ “Rated districts”	11
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	7 (64%)

[Sources: Total Enrollment – “Application for School Aid”, October 15, 2008 counts; Efficiency Rating – “Comparative Spending Guide”, March 2009; All other data – “District Report of Transported Resident Students”, October 15, 2008 counts]

¹ County-wide enrollment does not include the shared time students of the vocational school.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard

Three of the four districts operating at below 120% are one building school districts which limits their ability to “tier” bus routes. They are also hindered by geography.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Cumberland County has a transportation consortium coordinated by the Upper Deerfield School District with an efficiency rating of 3.90 as provided in the 2009 Comparative Spending Guide. This rating is third highest in the state. This consortium provides daily transportation to approximately 4500 students for the six constituent districts of Cumberland Regional and is certainly a model of transportation efficiency.
- Cumberland County additionally has the Bridgeton School District with an efficiency rating of 2.90 which is the fifth highest rating in the state. The district provides daily transportation to approximately 4,400 students and is another example of transportation efficiency in Cumberland County.
- The Cumberland County Educational Cooperative coordinates transportation services for participating districts in Cumberland County. The Cooperative currently coordinates transportation for 759 special education, non-public, homeless, and vocational students on 164 routes. By arranging transportation cooperatively, school districts reduce costs and the duplication of effort, while enhancing administrative efficiencies and reducing tax burdens.
- The Cumberland County Educational Cooperative, in collaboration with the Cumberland County Office of Employment and Training, offers a unique opportunity for displaced workers. The Cooperative trains displaced workers, homemakers, single parents, single pregnant women, disadvantaged persons age 55 and over and chronically unemployed individuals to acquire their Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Class B. This program, “Drive to Your Future,” allows displaced workers to gain employment as drivers of small trucks, limousines, heavy equipment, commercial buses, and school buses.
- By tiering their bus routes this past year, Commercial Township generated savings of approximately \$75,000.
- The County Superintendent of Schools has discussed and encouraged districts to share transportation services.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee (“Committee”) authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the “School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures” was formed to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Cumberland County. The Committee consisted of the four experienced high school district transportation coordinators (Bridgeton, Millville, Vineland and Cumberland Regional); the Executive Director from the Cumberland County Educational Cooperative; a former school board president, the county office’s transportation coordinator and the Executive County Business Administrator.

The Committee met to: (1) review the county's current transportation plan (2) identify significant barriers to improving transportation effectiveness and efficiency, i.e., calendar and school day scheduling, board policies, employment contractual obligations and (3) develop a method and delivery system to sustain and improve county transportation efficiency.

The Committee considered all possibilities, without limitation, for recommendations of efficiencies. The Committee understood the possibility that legislation would be needed to be introduced to implement some of the suggested recommendations.

Three of the Committee's most enterprising recommendations were for: (1) giving the Executive County Superintendent authority to set a county-wide school calendar with respective bell times (2) dividing the county into four regional hubs, with the high school districts designated as the coordinating district in each hub and (3) the need for greater bid competition within Cumberland County.

In the Committee, an area of concern was the lack of competition in our county. The vast rural setting of Cumberland County has lead to a lack of competition in our county. There is one large local vendor that frequently out bids the competition. The relationship with the vendor and the districts is a positive one and is appreciated; however, there still remains a need for greater competition in Cumberland County.

As a result of the meetings on transportation efficiencies, the Committee will continue to address the actions listed below to implement and further encourage efficiency and coordination throughout the county:

- Support legislation (A371) to lengthen the life of a school bus to 15 years;
- Continue to work with district superintendents to finalize a county calendar. A sub-committee of superintendents was formed to work collaboratively and progress has been made; however, more work is needed;
- Continue the use of the Cumberland County Educational Cooperative to coordinate special education, non-public, homeless, and vocational students;
- Continue the pursuit of collaboration with local municipalities on cooperative purchasing agreements as well other efforts;
- Regionally work with the smaller one building school districts to assist them with greater resources to promote a greater level of efficiency. This process would blend well for the recommendation of implementing the four regional hubs as described in recommendation 1; and
- Initiate discussion with the Cumberland County Board of chosen Freeholders to investigate coordination of transportation services between the county and school districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Cumberland County, the following are recommendations to provide such services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner.

Recommendation 1: *One county governing body should be developed to coordinate all transportation efficiencies.* The suggestion is to expand the scope and use of the four high schools' transportation coordinators as the governing body or transportation entity, with additional participation from school districts or other interested individuals, i.e., municipality representation.

The use of the four high schools would provide the existence of one governing body split into four regions that would regionally coordinate greater efficiency and competition.

Recommendation 2: *A four-region school calendar should be established and all schools within the county and their respective region be required to follow the agreed upon calendar.* Public, non-public and charter schools should be required to adhere to the established calendar. All school vacations and professional development days should be coordinated at a county level to ensure more efficient use of transportation resources. Emergency closing days should also be managed at the county level to ensure school calendars remain in sync.

The start and end of school times do not have to be county-wide and could be done regionally as stated in recommendation #1. The staggered times for Cumberland County should consider K-12 districts, sending receiving relationships (K-8 sending to HS) and especially the geographical location of the district or districts.

There are barriers to establishing a county-wide school calendar that need to be addressed. First, legislative action would be needed to change the current process of school calendar adoption. Some non-public schools that observe religious holidays may not be able to adhere to the county calendar. The county wide calendar should also be coordinated with neighboring counties as appropriate because several districts in Cumberland County border Salem County. This recommendation would have to consider the standardization of teachers' contracts and required number of hours worked in a contract, not specific start and end times.

This should include non-public entities in our county with an emphasis on mixing non-public and public students on current routes, creating shuttle or perimeter routes, mass pick-up points, public transportation, etc.

Recommendation 3: *Residency rules for Homeless Transportation should be revised.* Currently, the district of last known residence is considered the responsible district and the timeframe is endless. This creates higher transportation costs for the "resident district" to transport a student living in another district to and from school.

The suggested revision would be for the resident district of a homeless student in the first year to be the district in which the student last resided. In the second year, the homeless student would become the responsibility of the district where the child currently resides. This recommendation would require legislative action.

Recommendation 4: *Districts and municipalities should be required to review and analyze school districts' hazardous routes for greater efficiency.* The review/analysis would determine if it would be more cost effective to incur a one time cost to provide sidewalks and thus replace increasing annual transportation contracts, i.e., the Millville School District worked with their municipality to have sidewalks installed near one of its schools and saved four bus routes at an approximate cost savings of \$56,500 the first year or an estimated cost savings of \$174,700 over three years. This recommendation would require legislative action.

Recommendation 5: *Districts and municipalities should be required to enter into cooperative purchasing agreements for fuel.* This requirement would compel greater collaboration between the two interested parties and eliminate inefficiencies. This recommendation would require legislative action.

Recommendation 6: *Aid-in-lieu of transportation should be prorated for students living in the same residence attending the same non-public school.* Currently, aid-in-lieu of transportation is paid to every eligible non-public student. For the 2008-2009 school year, each eligible student received \$884. If two eligible students from the same household attend the same non-public school each is eligible to receive the \$884. This recommendation would require legislative action.

Recommendation 7: *Greater coordination and communication is required between district child study teams and transportation departments to ensure transportation needs of special education students are met.* Updates to a student's IEP should be clearly communicated to the transportation department on an annual basis. Wheelchair requirements need to be verified annually to ensure the proper vehicle is specified in bid documents.

Recommendation 8: *There should be a county-wide or state-wide system to consolidate and establish a uniform training program for bus drivers and bus aides.* Training requirements and job qualifications should be standardized.

Recommendation 9: *A single, county-wide data base of all regular, special education, and non-public transportation routes should be established and maintained by a central county-wide entity.* This comprehensive data base would facilitate analysis of transportation data and serve as a clearing house for available seats on existing routes. Districts could then access the data base and search for existing routes to possibly join.

Recommendation 10: *A county-wide system should be established for purchasing buses, other transportation equipment, and supplies.* A generic bid specification should be developed.

Recommendation 10: *There should be a county/regional coordination of school bus repairs.* The feasibility of providing a county-wide, regionally or with local municipalities bus repair delivery system should be explored for potential cost savings. This could possibly eliminate the duplication of efforts, fixed buildings, and other related cost savings.

Recommendation 11: *Larger city districts, under certain circumstances, should be granted an exemption and allowed to increase bus capacity from 54 students to 64.* The increased bus capacity would decrease, over time, the number of required buses. This recommendation would require legislative action.

Recommendation 12: *There should be county-wide coordination and bus availability for temporary replacement of buses in for repair.* The availability of spare buses would eliminate the need to bid routes when buses are being repaired.

Recommendation 13: *A minimum distance between bus stops should be established.* This would shorten the time of the route, which will enable the bus to be easier tiered with another route. This recommendation would require legislative action.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6 (b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services

Cumberland County has demonstrated a great deal of transportation efficiency from the third and fifth highest efficiency ratings within the state to its Educational Cooperative providing transportation routes for special education, non-public, homeless, and vocational students.

The next step would be for the Executive County Superintendent to facilitate and move forward with the following recommendations of the Committee and guide the county to an even greater level of transportation efficiency:

- Work with the Committee in establishing four regional hubs to promote greater transportation efficiencies by coordinating common bell times, calendars, and bus routes;
- Coordinate with the Cumberland County Educational Cooperative, the feasibility of expanding their “in house” data base and providing all district access. This expanded access would allow all districts to review existing special education, non-public, and homeless routes and potentially eliminate the need for additional routes; and
- Increase the collaboration and participation of all stakeholders, including discussions with the Cumberland County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

CONCLUSION

The county continues to strive and accomplish the fundamental goals of promoting shared services and creating greater efficiencies which, in turn, will reduce the tax burden for our communities. By working collectively and collaboratively, we recognize the many opportunities to achieve a higher level of efficiency to include, but not limit to, transportation, special education, extra curricular activities, non-public services, and other areas that are part of an intricate delivery system. This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among all the stakeholders in Cumberland County.

Attachment A**Transportation Statistics (Cumberland County)**

Students Transported in County (1)									
District	Resident Enrollment	Regular Education	Special Ed. Out of District	Nonpublic	Special Ed In-District	Total	Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Cost
BRIDGETON CITY	4,480	3,937	178	5	153	4,273	50	2.90	\$ 2,681,265
COMMERCIAL TWP	880	868	28	13	17	926	12	1.25	\$ 765,609
CUMBERLAND REG.	1,335	1,358	21	0	15	1,394	41	1.02	\$ 1,230,126
DEERFIELD TWP	350	374	1	0	2	377	28	0.00	\$ 246,864
DOWNE TWP	191	175	7	0	17	199	17	0.88	\$ 267,109
FAIRFIELD TWP	561	599	14	0	15	628	38	0.00	\$ 456,787
GREENWICH TWP	74	31	2	0	3	36	2	0.72	\$ 45,013
HOPEWELL TWP	478	497	9	0	1	507	16	0.00	\$ 373,933
LAWRENCE TWP	616	523	14	0	0	537	32	0.78	\$ 610,454
MAURICE RIVER TWP	553	485	41	7	43	576	18	1.59	\$ 633,195
MILLVILLE CITY	5,122	2,953	163	170	414	3,699	65	1.79	\$ 3,653,833
STOW CREEK TWP	138	123	4	0	4	131	21	1.31	\$ 47,900
UPPER DEERFIELD TWP	801	602	3	0	1	606	68	3.90	\$ 2,520,775
VINELAND CITY	9,542	7,258	286	648	1,042	9,233	191	1.36	\$ 11,694,959
Cumberland County Cooperative (2)									\$ 6,071,477
COUNTY TOTAL	25,121	19,783	770	843	1,726	23,122	599		\$ 31,299,299

[Sources: Total Enrollment – “Application for State School Aid”, October 15, 2008 counts; Efficiency Rating – “Comparative Spending Guide, March 2009; All other data – “District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts]

- (1) Non-public students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.
- (2) The Cooperative coordinates transportation for special education, non-public, homeless, and vocational students for the districts of Cumberland County.

Attachment B

Transportation Committee Members

Wayne Knight, Executive County School Business Administrator, Cumberland County

Patricia Goebel, Transportation Coordinator, Cumberland County

Sharon Olbrich, Transportation Coordinator, Bridgeton School District

Kathy Fiore, Transportation Coordinator, Cumberland Regional School District

Vicki Sandefer, Transportation Coordinator, Millville School District

Joseph Callavini, Transportation Coordinator, Vineland School District

Bonnie Berrios, Director, Cumberland County Educational Cooperative

Joseph DeLuca, Former Board President, Hopewell Township

**Essex County
Attachment A**

DISTRICT

	ASSA Resident Enrollment	Students Transported in County					Non-Public AIL	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
		Regular Education	Special Ed Out of Dist	Non-Public	Special Ed In District	Total			
Belleville	4527	401	179	0	32	612	1	1.55	\$1,265,387.07
Bloomfield	5885	1223	347	189	1	1760	2	1.74	\$3,113,828.00
Caldwell-West Caldwell	1635	84	93	0	1	178	1	0.93	\$773,097.20
Cedar Grove	1624	157	65	21	9	252	1	n/a*	\$779,994.66
East Orange	10230	2614	336	0	364	3314	0	n/a*	\$5,552,205.36
Essex Fells	242	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a*	n/a
Essex Regional Commission	n/a	this cost data represents all ESC contracts							\$34,464,178.80
Essex Vocational	2129	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a*	n/a
Fairfield	731	658	8	0	56	722	0	0.68	\$645,692.91
Glen Ridge	1813	9	26	0	8	43	0	1.28	\$288,456.72
Irvington	7627	10	388	0	174	572	0	0.43	\$1,028,510.00
Livingston	5761	1891	160	262	14	2327	0	2.29	\$2,425,811.19
Millburn	4727	2164	55	204	6	2429	3	1.74	\$1,540,522.04
Montclair	6786	3159	114	0	112	3385	0	1.73	\$3,401,471.44
Newark	45960	3133	829	417	3920	8299	0	n/a*	\$21,097,753.79
North Caldwell	617	482	26	0	3	511	0	n/a*	\$481,805.80
Nutley	4090	0	169	0	6	175	0	1.13	\$949,411.90
Orange	4566	595	173	0	267	1035	0	n/a*	\$3,014,607.60
Roseland	505	471	10	0	17	498	0	1.34	\$343,862.54
South Orange Maplewood	6308	911	269	107	59	1346	1	1.13	\$3,287,616.54
Verona	2086	1	31	0	0	32	5	0.49	\$352,861.00
West Essex Regional	1616	1438	19	7	151	1615	0	0.65	\$2,062,947.62
West Orange	6541	3195	356	564	535	4650	0	1.61	\$5,913,037.79
Totals	126006	22596	3653	1771	5735	33755	14		\$92,783,059.97

Note: Nonpublic students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

*n/a the district contracts out all routes

Total Enrollment--"Application for State School Aid,"

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide," 03/09

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident

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Essex County

Attachment A

ESSEX COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Essex County is located in northern New Jersey and is the second most densely populated county in the state after Hudson County. It is bound by Union County to the south, Morris County to the west, Passaic County to the north, parts of Bergen and Hudson County to the east. The county consists of a combination of urban and suburban municipalities that include Newark, the largest city and school district in the state [*Source: 2000 U.S. Census*].

In the 2008-2009 school year, there were approximately 126,000 students attending the county's 23 school districts. Approximately 38,500 students are transported countywide at an estimated cost of \$93,000,000 [*Sources: Application for School State Aid (ASSA), District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS)*].

The following are highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts as of October 15, 2008. [See **Table A**: "Transportation Statistics (Essex County)" for more details].

TABLE A	
• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	126,006
• Number of districts transporting students	20
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	22,596
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	3,653
➤ Non-public transported students	1,771
➤ Special education students—in-district	5,735
➤ Total students transported	38,755
• Percentage of students transported	26.8%
• Total annual route costs	\$93M
• Efficiency Rating (measured by vehicle utilization with 120% standard or 1.20)	
➤ "Rated districts"	15
➤ "Rated districts" meeting or exceeding 120% standard	8 (53%)

[*Sources: Total Enrollment—"Application for School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts; Efficiency Rating—"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009; All other data—"District Report of Transported Resident Students", October 15, 2008 counts*]

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the two county-wide special services and vocational school districts.

¹ For "rated districts" conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State's minimum standard. Public students for "non-rated districts" are transported by another public school(s) and counted in the efficiency rating of such other district(s).

It has been reported in the October 15, 2008 DRTRS that seven districts did not meet the 1.20 efficiency standard. Of those seven districts, four districts have extenuating isolated data integrity circumstances and have the bulk of their transportation performed by contracted service providers, such as an Educational Services Commission (ESC). Their failure to reach the 1.20 is due to either incorrect reporting data or their own special education routes. The other eight districts exceeded the 1.20 standard. It shall be noted that this rating is only a reflection of rider capacity and not financial efficiency.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As a result of the transportation efficiency meetings, the Essex County Transportation Committee will continue to meet to discuss and develop further ideas. The county office, in conjunction with the Department of Education's Office of Transportation, discussed the consolidation of existing regular education routes for five districts within the West Essex region. Four elementary districts send to a regional middle school/high school as noted below:

- West Essex Regional (grades 7-12)
- Essex Fells (grades K-6)
- Fairfield (grades K-6)
- North Caldwell (grades K-6)
- Roseland (grades K-6)

Currently, these districts are serviced by the same transportation vendor. They individually negotiate separate contracts with said vendor. The efficiency concept includes all five districts consolidating their individual transportation needs into one contract. Over time, this would provide a savings and contract renewal cost protection for all of the constituent districts. By combining these smaller valued contracts, a larger contract would be created with a higher value and command attention by only large vendors. As a unified body, this larger contract would protect the individual districts by ensuring a consistent renewal rate instead of different renewal rates. The five districts appear eager to pursue this initiative, which is scheduled to begin fall 2009.

Another Essex County district, Irvington, is currently transitioning most of their in-house transportation to an ESC at an estimated savings of \$1 million dollars. A major saving in this example is the elimination of employee salary, benefits, as well as the inspection fines and maintenance costs.

Currently, districts also utilize a software database called *RealTime* for tracking special education programs in public schools. One idea is to expand this database to also show transportation routes to these programs and allow others districts to join.

As exemplified in the above examples, as well as data from the transportation study questionnaire, school districts understand the conceptual basis regarding transportation efficiency. There is always an ongoing expressed need for districts to share routes to private schools and special education placements. Districts utilize Education Service Commissions (ESCs) when it is not cost effective for them to provide their own routes. Various ESCs currently conduct business in Essex County to provide effective

and efficient transportation. In addition to the role of an ESC, a central transportation coordinating body or computer database would be useful in curtailing costs.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee, authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures, was charged to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Essex County. This committee met to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services for the public and non-public schools. The committee used the code requirements as a guide in the Transportation Efficiency Study. In order to understand the perspective of the districts in Essex County, the Committee was created to represent the county's diverse make-up (see Attachment A).

The Committee examined ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services for public and non-public schools. The Committee's focus centered upon cost effective/ efficient issues, barriers to deliver service, innate problems with the current system, personnel issues, and related topics.

The Committee's main thrust was to identify and discuss those barriers to efficiency. The committee recognized that a true county transportation initiative can only be achieved by overcoming the following common barriers to efficient transportation:

- Coordination of bus routes with bell schedules and calendars that are similar
- Staggering bell schedules to implement a tier bus system
- Centrally coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements
- Consolidating transportation services in combination of two or more school districts
- Establishing a consolidated countywide transportation system by jointure agreement or county based service provider
- Encouraging efficient routing practices
- Improving cooperation between local boards of education for more efficient and effective student transportation services
- Increasing input from public school personnel

As a result of the meetings on transportation efficiencies, the committee will continue to undertake the development of ideas to promote cost savings throughout the county.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *Utilize the Essex Regional Education Services Commission (ERESC) to coordinate transportation routes quickly became a major focus.* The Essex ERESK currently coordinates a significant number of routes (most in the state) and can continue this process for districts that choose to utilize them. It is suggested that districts experiencing inefficiencies, especially with non-public and PSD routes, should submit all of their transportation data to the ESC to allow them to create common routes.

Recommendation 2: *Coordinate school calendars and bell times across the county.* The ESC should collect the various route data from all participating districts. Through their ability to generate common route determinations, the ESC should be able to derive common routes for students attending an array of public, nonpublic and private schools for the disabled.

Recommendation 3: *Coordinate special education routes.* The barriers to efficiency that create problems for regular education transportation are different for special education due to the specific needs and smaller economies of scale. Efficiency discussions in this area should focus on a more regional analysis of students moving across county lines.

Recommendation 4: *Expand the current county database, RealTime, to enable districts to post routes/seats to all private schools.* RealTime is a county database for special education placements called, which is currently being used by school systems to show open slots in district programs. It is agreed that transportation efficiency starts with better communication for districts sending children to out-of-district special education placements in both the private and public sector. Such an initiative could help districts move closer to a true countywide coordinated transportation system.

Recommendation 5: *Explore the use of NJ Transit to accommodate regular education students traveling across main roads in suburban communities.* Currently, NJ Transit accommodates regular education students in urban centers.

Recommendations 6: *Verify transportation data integrity.* Occasionally, the self-reported DRTRS data is reported incorrectly. If the data does reveal inefficiencies, then the district would need to examine areas of weakness and begin the process of becoming more efficient. This process begins with identification of inefficiency and taking next steps to rectify.

Recommendation 7: *Promulgate regulations to ensure that only responsible vendors can bid on routes.* The committee evaluated problems of the current system, such as attracting quality bidders. By statute, districts award a contract to the lowest responsible bidder. Many times the vendor is not prepared or lacks the proper equipment to fulfill their obligation. This type of situation costs school districts time and money.

Recommendation 8: *Explore ways for districts to address minor bus inspection infractions without removing the bus from the fleet.* Maintenance of district owned bus fleets presents a major problem. It has been suggested that bus inspections appear too strict when districts are forced to pull buses off the fleet for minor infractions. The district would then need to obtain a temporary contract with another vendor to cover the loss of a bus. This impediment can make maintenance a serious time/cost issue.

Recommendation 9: *Enforce and monitor districts' on-going "Certification of Bus Driver" documentation (i.e., driver fingerprinting), ensure school districts access and review driver abstracts, multiple times per year, to ensure the quality of their drivers and safety of students, and require every employee of a bus company transporting students is fingerprinted.* Another area of concern is the employment of drivers and aides with

alternate titles that are used to conceal unsuitable drivers/ aides who do not possess the proper credentials. This practice should be eliminated.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

The Executive County Superintendent, in coordination with the Transportation Committee, will continue to examine ways to promote coordination of pupil transportation services in the county, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 (b).

Below is an initial examination of the aforementioned findings, to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

1. Utilization of the ESC

The ESC should play a larger role in promoting consolidated transportation services. The county office is currently working with these districts in finalizing such usage.

2. Calendars and Bell Times

District coordination of bell times is critical if tiered routes are to occur in order to provide the biggest efficiency savings. Also the coordination of school calendars would be needed in order for all busses to run on the same days. This would provide a significant cost savings if both public and non-public schools followed the same schedule.

3. Special Education, Database

Districts should utilize an ESC or a countywide database such as *RealTime* for coordination of students attending various private schools.

4. NJ Transit

Public transportation is greatly utilized in our urban school districts. This transportation method should be further explored for possible use along all main roads throughout the county.

5. Data Reporting

Districts need to ensure that their state transportation reporting is accurate. This data can also indicate those districts that may be in need of transportation efficiency measures.

6. Vendors

Through a combination of better bid specifications as well as possible suspension of vendors by the Executive County Superintendent, such regulations need to ensure only capable vendors are awarded contracts.

7. Vehicle Maintenance

Many districts have reported that the bus inspection process needs to be reviewed for frivolous infractions. The Division of Motor Vehicles should be involved with this issue.

8. Annual Certification of Bus Drivers

Districts and vendors need to check driver abstracts more frequently and enforce a policy of employing proper drivers.

CONCLUSION

The Transportation Efficiency Committee, in conjunction with the Executive Superintendent of Schools, will develop the Recommendations and Next Steps as presented above. There is no doubt that the main thrust of any transportation efficiency study must include district communication. Through appropriate district communication, the most notable areas that can yield efficiency are:

- special education routes
- non-public routes
- small districts that are in close proximity

In Essex County, the leading entity to provide coordination of district communication is the Essex Regional Education Services Commission, which has the ability to achieve this goal. In addition to the use of an ESC, a shared county database, such as *RealTime*, could be utilized to help coordinate district communication.

In addition to districts communicating about shared routes, areas dealing with bus vendors and maintenance should also be reviewed as follows:

- districts need to find prepared quality vendors
- the inspection process needs to be reviewed
- the annual certification of bus drivers requires better follow-up
- the DMV online driver abstract system should be affordable for districts and vendors to use

This report has identified and discussed impediments to district transportation efficiency. Through the continued collaboration with all stakeholders, transportation efficiency will be realized in Essex County. The Transportation Efficiency Committee of Essex County will continue to meet with the Executive County Superintendent and Executive County Business Administrator. The committee's goal will be to further develop the aforementioned findings and recommendations so that the taxpayers of Essex County will ultimately pay less for student transportation.

Attachment A

Insert Excel Document here

Attachment B

The 2008-2009 members of the Transportation Efficiency Committee are:

- Executive County School Business Administrator- John Ferraro
- County Transportation Coordinator- Angel D'Auria
- Bloomfield School Business Administrator - Michael Derderian
- Cedar Grove School Business Administrator - Alan Chadrjian
- East Orange School Business Administrator - Victor Demming
- ERESC Transportation Director- Sandra Stevenson
- ERESC School Business Administrator - Janet Su
- Livingston School Business Administrator- Steve Robinson
- Livingston Transportation Director- Maryann McGowen
- Newark Transportation Director- Joe Somai
- North Caldwell School Business Administrator - Michael Sawicz
- North Caldwell Transportation Director- Gale Messier
- Nutley School Business Administrator - Michael DeVita
- S. Orange/Maplewood School Business Administrator - Karla Milinette
- West Orange Superintendent- Jerry Tarnoff

District Transportation Questionnaire
2008-2009 Data

Hit F1 in selected fields for help.

Use tab, shift tab, or the arrow keys to navigate.

Please place commas and strike the enter key where requested to assist in the data collection formatting.

Please insert 0 (zero) or NA if questions do not apply.

District name:

County:

District grade levels: PK-12

Number of school buildings:

0 District primary/elementary

0 District intermediate/middle/Jr. high school

0 District high school

0 Nonpublic elementary

0 Nonpublic high school

0 Private schools for the handicapped

Routes:

1. Number of tiered route buses:

0 Single routes

0 Double route packages

0 Triple route packages

0 Four or more route packages

2. How many of your routes are tiered by a jointure with another district?

0 Regular public

0 Nonpublic

0 Charter

0 Vo Tech

0 Special ed

0 Combinations of the above

3. To your knowledge how many of your contracted buses

do another route in nearby districts without a jointure? 0

Please list those districts followed by a comma; then the county in which the district is located followed by the enter key:

4. If you operate any multiple destination routes how many are tiered with other routes?

- 0 Regular public
- 0 Nonpublic
- 0 Charter
- 0 Vo Tech
- 0 Special ed
- 0 Combinations of the above

Bell Times:

5. If bell times were changed in your district could you do an additional tier?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If not please explain some reasons why not:

If so, in minutes, what would be the smallest bell time change required?

6. Which way does the teacher's collective bargaining agreement express school work hours in your district?

- ☐ Clock hours: i.e. the school day will be from 9:00 a.m. to 3:05 p.m.
- ☐ Total hours: i.e. the school day will be 6 hours and five minutes long.
- ☐ Other method; please specify:

School Calendar

7. If your district's calendar does not match a county calendar, if available, how many days differ? (Please answer 180 if no county calendar is available.) 0

8. If your district's calendar does not match the districts around your district please estimate the maximum number of different days. 0

9. If your district's calendar does not match the nonpublic schools your students attend please estimate the maximum number of different days. 0

Operations

10. If you have a practice or policy as to the standard amount of students initially assigned to a bus please state as a percentage the limit: (e.g. if you initially assign 48 students to a 54 passenger bus you would answer 89%; 48/54)

- 0 % Primary/elementary level
- 0 % Intermediate/middle/Jr. high school level
- 0 % High school level
- 0 % Other method; please explain:

11. If you have a practice or policy as to the maximum amount of time a route can run please state the maximum in minutes for:

- 0 Primary/elementary level
- 0 Intermediate/middle/Jr. high school level
- 0 High school level
- 0 Other level; please explain:

Nonpublic

12. If you provide transportation for any nonpublic students please check all that apply

- ☐ On district buses
- ☐ On contracted buses
- ☐ With a CTSA
- ☐ By jointure
- ☐ Public transit
- ☐ Other; please explain:

13. If you combine public and nonpublic students on routes please list how many routes:

- 0 Primary/elementary level
- 0 Intermediate/middle/Jr. high school level
- 0 High school level
- 0 Other combinations; please list:

14. If the nonpublic school bell times which district students attend were changed you could: (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Provide transportation and not pay aid
- ☐ Tier nonpublic routes
- ☐ Tier with public routes
- ☐ Combine public and nonpublic students
- ☐ Other; please explain:

Jointures

15. Does your district join with other districts for (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Regular public routes
- ☐ Nonpublic routes
- ☐ Charter school routes
- ☐ Vo Tech routes
- ☐ Special ed routes
- ☐ School related activities
- ☐ Other; please list:

16. Does your district join with a CTSA for:

- ☐ Regular public routes
- ☐ Nonpublic routes
- ☐ Charter school routes
- ☐ Vo Tech routes
- ☐ Special ed routes
- ☐ School related activities
- ☐ Other; please list:

Special Education

17. Do you provide aides on any routes not required by a student's IEP?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

18. Does your student services department provide a job description, with specific duties, for each transportation aide?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Does your student services department provide training for each transportation aide and do you keep records of the completed training?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

20. When an existing route is not available for a special ed student do you: (check all that apply)

- ☐ Check with all CTSA's in the area
- ☐ Check with other districts for possible routes to schools near the assigned school
- ☐ Check with the assigned school for other routes near your district
- ☐ Other; please specify:

Nonmandated Busing

21. If you provide any nonmandated busing please indicate:

- ☐ Courtesy only
- ☐ Hazardous only
- ☐ Both

Do you have a hazardous transportation policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

22. For what grade levels do you provide courtesy or hazardous transportation?

23. If you have a subscription busing program please check all that apply:

- ☐ Parents pay
- ☐ Municipality pays
- ☐ Other; please list:

Person completing this questionnaire:

Position:

Direct phone:

Email:

Date completed:

Please express comments or note any major changes expected to the above data for the 2009-2010 school year

Continued on next page

Supplemental district data

For the following types of schools located in your district please list the school name followed by a comma, the start time followed by a coma and the end time followed by the enter key.

District schools including early childhood community providers:

Nonpublic schools located in your district:

Charter schools located in your district:

Private schools for the handicapped located in your district:

Attachment A: Gloucester County Transportation Statistics

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District	Students Transported in County							Efficiency Rating	Route Cost
	Resident Enrollment	Regular Education	Special Ed. Out of District	Nonpublic	Special Ed In-District	Total	Nonpublic A.I.L.		
Clayton	1,304	576	58	79	22	735	34	2.16	750,125
Clearview	2,426	2,218	59	100	257	2,634	61	2.50	2,009,986
Delsea	1,785	1,597	66	72	209	1,944	34	2.06	2,092,900
Deptford	4,378	3,681	126	247	449	4,503	119	1.75	2,006,152
East Greenwich	910	718	23	44	53	838	24	-	671,134
Elk Township	376	337	14	10	20	381	17	-	191,009
Franklin	1,452	1,251	206	71	2	1,530	21	1.34	1,756,429
Gateway	907	569	37	28	135	769	29	1.28	1,431,434
Glassboro	2,308	1,340	75	180	20	1,615	108	1.68	1,904,784
Greenwich	533	530	49	-	17	596	40	1.38	184,193
Harrison	1,513	1,478	37	43	-	1,558	56	1.45	1,379,115
Kingsway	2,124	1,657	40	23	150	1,870	84	1.66	1,490,556
Logan	886	979	17	1	27	1,024	41	1.27	1,041,288
Mantua	1,563	1,183	85	63	59	1,390	39	1.03	786,899
Monroe	6,115	5,062	170	185	760	6,177	190	1.67	4,725,087
National Park	305	-	9	-	-	9	9	-	75,614
Newfield	243	113	32	9	-	154	14	-	138,745
Paulsboro	1,343	248	31	-	7	286	-	2.45	541,730
Pitman	1,567	18	50	-	-	68	-	-	307,595
South Harrison	337	317	6	25	14	362	24	0.70	244,573
Swedesboro-Woolwich	1,582	1,146	69	35	137	1,387	30	1.21	1,225,203
Washington	8,723	7,362	245	483	508	8,598	182	2.47	4,557,293
Wenonah	244	-	4	-	-	4	15	-	23,997
West Deptford	3,182	2,528	127	123	222	3,000	81	1.77	1,544,955
Westville	336	57	2	1	7	67	14	-	55,490
Woodbury	1,594	24	90	-	2	116	-	1.16	573,798
Woodbury Heights	236	-	10	-	-	10	-	-	77,702
COUNTY TOTAL	51,454	34,989	1,737	1,822	3,077	41,625	1,266		31,787,786

Sources: Total Enrollment --- "Application for State School Aid" , October 15, 2008 count
Efficiency Rating ---"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009
All other date --- "District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts
Non-public students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. H. Mark Stanwood

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Gloucester County is located in the south west portion of the state and is a combination of small urban areas, suburban bedroom communities and rural farmland. It is bound on the north by Camden County, on the east by Atlantic County, on the south by Cumberland County and on the West by the Delaware River. The southwest portion of the county has seen rapid residential development in spite of the economic downturn. There are 28 school districts in Gloucester County including the Gloucester County Special Services School District and the Gloucester County Institute of Technology. Woodbury City, Paulsboro and Pitman Boro are not required to provide mandated transportation to regular education students.

[Source: Gloucester County Website www.co.gloucester.nj.us]

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	51,454
• Number of districts transporting students	27
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	34,989
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	1,737
➤ Non-public transported students	1,822
➤ Special education students—in-district	3,077
➤ Total students transported	41,625
• Percentage of students transported	80%
• Total annual route costs	\$31.7M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	19
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	16 (84%)

[Sources: 2008 ASSA and DRTRS]

Of the 19 districts rated for the 2008-09 school year, three (15.8%) did not attain the 120% standard established by the Office of Student Transportation. South Harrison Township is a one building district and cannot tier their routes without establishing different start times within the same school. Mantua Township provides courtesy transportation for 845 elementary students which adversely affects their efficiency rating and Woodbury City recently began transporting special education out of district students with a district owned bus. It is also important to note that 10 (52.63%) of nineteen rated districts had an efficiency rating that exceeded 150%.

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the two county-wide special services and vocational school districts.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

In order to gather transportation data, all districts were asked to complete a survey developed by the Office of Student Transportation. Districts were asked to provide information concerning the number of routes run in the district, routes operated by contractors, the extent transportation routes in the district were tiered as well as other questions. Of the 19 responding districts, 12 indicate that their transportation routes are already tiered and additional adjustments to bell times would not result in more efficient transportation routes.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has facilitated discussions and encouraged districts to share transportation services. Seventeen districts report participating in transportation jointures to combine transportation services with two or more school districts.

Delsea Regional High School District provides transportation services to Elk Township through a shared services agreement. Delsea also shares its transportation coordinator with Clayton Borough through a shared services agreement.

Franklin Township and Delsea Regional school districts are currently in negotiations to construct a shared bus maintenance garage. If this proposal is successful both districts will realize substantial savings in bus maintenance costs.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Gloucester County Transportation Committee, authorized under N.J.A.C 6A:23A-2.6 was formed to address the areas of increased efficiency and cost effectiveness in transportation operations. The Committee met to review specific areas to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services of public and non-public schools. The Committee consisted of two experienced district transportation coordinators; a representative from the Gloucester County Special Services School District; the Gloucester County office transportation coordinator; and the Executive County School Business Administrator.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee discussed the current transportation operations in the county and also discussed ways to improve delivery of services. Topics discussed include the need for a county-wide school calendar, coordination of non-public school transportation, special education transportation needs and aid-in-lieu of transportation payments. Listed below are specific recommendations of the Committee. It should be noted that the recommendations of the Gloucester County Transportation Committee have not been vetted through the Gloucester County Superintendents Roundtable.

Recommendation 1: *Establish a county-wide school calendar that all schools within the county must follow.* Public, non-public and charter schools should be required to adhere to the established calendar. All school vacations and professional development days should be

coordinated at a county level to ensure more efficient use of transportation resources. Emergency closing days should also be managed at the county level to ensure school calendars remain in sync. There are barriers to establishing a county-wide school calendar that need to be addressed. First, legislative action would be needed to change the current process of school calendar adoption. Some non-public schools that observe religious holidays may not be able to adhere to the county calendar. The county-wide calendar should also be coordinated with neighboring counties because several districts in Gloucester County transport students to non-public schools in Camden County and other neighboring counties. Lastly, collective bargaining agreements would need to be reviewed to ensure there are no conflicts with the proposed calendar. If these barriers cannot be overcome the committee strongly recommended that at a minimum constituent districts of a regional high school be required to adhere to the same school calendar.

Recommendation 2: *Require non-public schools to adhere to a county-wide school calendar and agree to give districts providing transportation to non-public students adequate notice of schedule changes...* Non-public schools often change the school calendar with little or no notice to local districts. In order to accommodate the last minutes schedule changes districts must use substitute drivers for the unanticipated non-public runs thereby increasing their labor costs.

Recommendation 3: *Require non-public school routes to use the same practice or policy regarding the number of students initially assigned to a bus as public routes.* Non-public schools have in the past requested one full bus seat per child to allow adequate space for student book bags and musical instruments.

Recommendation 4: *Prorate aid-in-lieu of transportation for students living in the same residence attending the same non-public school.* This would require legislative action, but could potentially produce substantial savings. Currently, aid-in lieu of transportation is paid to every eligible non-public student. For the 2008-2009 school year each eligible student received \$884. If two eligible students from the same family attend the same non-public school each is eligible to receive the \$884.

Recommendation 5: *Revise the requirement to publicly bid each non-public route should be revised.* N.J.A.C 6A:27-2.1 requires local districts to publicly bid for non-public transportation before a determination is made to provide transportation or aid-in-lieu of transportation. In the 2008-2009 school year The Gloucester County Special Services School District (GCSSSD) solicited public bids for over 180 non-public transportation routes. 100% of the bids returned exceeded the maximum allowable per pupil cost of \$884 and all students on those routes were paid aid-in-lieu of transportation. Many of the routes that sent out to bid were for busses that were not filled to capacity. If non-public routes with busses at less than 65% capacity were not required to be bid before awarding aid-in-lieu of transportation printing, mailing and advertising costs could be reduced. This recommended change would also require legislative action.

Recommendation 6: *Identify a county-wide agency that would be responsible for administering non-public transportation.* The Gloucester County Special Services School District currently provides 75%-80% of the non-public transportation in the county and would be the logical choice to administer the program.

Recommendation 7: *Require greater coordination and communication between district child study teams and transportation departments to ensure transportation needs of special education students are met.* Updates to student's individualized education plans (IEPs) should be clearly communicated to the transportation department on an annual basis. Wheelchair requirements need to be verified annually to ensure the proper vehicle is specified in bid documents.

Recommendation 8: *Identify a county-wide or state-wide system to consolidate and establish a uniform training program for bus drivers and bus aides.* Training requirements and job qualifications should be standardized.

Recommendation 9: *Establish a single county-wide data base of all regular, special education and non-public transportation routes should be established and maintained by a central county-wide entity.* This comprehensive data base would facilitate analysis of transportation data and serve as a clearing house for available seats on existing routes. Districts could then access the data base and search for existing routes to possibly join.

CONCLUSION

The transportation committee will continue to meet in order to discuss issues relating to transportation efficiency and cost effectiveness. The committee will share its findings and recommendations with the Gloucester County Superintendents Roundtable in order to solicit the memberships input. This report should be viewed as part of an ongoing effort by the Executive County Superintendent to facilitate and promote shared services, including transportation, in Gloucester County.

Attachment B

Transportation Committee Members

William Takacs, – Executive County School Business – Hudson County, Chair

Dr. Timothy Brennan- Acting Executive County Superintendent – Hudson County

Vincent Ascolese, Assistant Superintendent of Business, North Bergen

John Fauta, Assistant Superintendent Administrative Services, West New York

Frank Menendez, Supervisor of Transportation, West New York

Aida Rivera, Transportation Analyst, Hudson County, Schools of Technology

Israel Salgado, Supervisor of Transportation, Hudson County. Schools of Technology

Stanley Wojcik- Transportation Coordinator, Jersey City

Debbie Zapoluch, Transportation Assistant, Secaucus

Attachment A Hudson County Transportation Statistics

HUDSON COUNTY District	Students Transported in County							Nonpublic	Efficiency	Route
	Resident Enrollment	Regular Education	Spec Ed Out-of- District	Nonpublic	Spec Ed In- District	Total		AIL	Rating	Costs
Bayonne City	8,671		37		276	313			0.537%	\$1,842,698
East Newark Boro	356		11							\$49,950
Guttenberg Town	1,255		18							\$280,818
Harrison Town	1,768		59							\$711,312
Hoboken City	2,223	17	18		52	87			0.979%	\$623,003
Hudson Count										
Vocational	2,205	1,687			217	1,904			2.244%	\$2,055,523
Jersey City	29,816	1,671	436		570	2,677	961		1.939%	\$7,883,908
Kearny Town	5,493		152		13	165			0.901%	\$1,084,216
North Bergen Township	7,110	1,523	76		35	1,634	438		1.571%	\$1,912,979
Secaucus Town	2,011	374	39	43	29	485	36		1.150%	\$1,001,970
Union City	9,961	299	287			586			2.051%	\$1,778,731
Weehawken Township	1,139	394	33			427			1.398%	\$1,095,241
West New York Town	6,226	352	145		64	561			0.905%	\$1,927,054
TOTAL	78,234	6,317	1,311	43	1,256	8,839	1,435			\$22,247,403

Sources: Total Enrollment--Does not include nonpublic students; "Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

HUDSON COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Tim Brennan

Acting Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

An ethnically diverse urban environment, Hudson County borders New York State. Counties adjacent to Hudson include New York County, NY and Kings County, NY to the east; Essex County, NJ and Union County, NJ to the west; Richmond County NY to the south; and Bergen County, NJ, the only one with which it shares a land border, to the north and west.

Much of the county lies between the Hackensack and Hudson Rivers on a geographically long narrow peninsula that forms a contiguous urban area where it's often difficult to know when one has crossed any of the 12 municipal boundaries. These boundaries and the topography-including the many hills and inlets-create very distinct neighborhoods. John F. Kennedy Boulevard (CR 501) runs the entire length of the peninsula, through seven of those contiguous municipalities.

Hudson County contains just 46.6 square miles of land, making it the smallest County within the State; however, it has a population density of over 12,800 persons per square mile, making it one of the top ten most densely populated Counties in the nation. The County is bisected by the Hackensack River which separates Kearney, East Newark and Harrison from the peninsula. The County government is responsible for maintenance of 23 bridges throughout the county.

Hudson County is one of the major transportation Hubs in the United States. Its citizen transportation system is serviced by the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail system which travels from East 22nd Street and Avenue E in Bayonne to Tonnelles Avenue and 51st Street in North Bergen. Public transportation is operated by a variety of public and private corporations, notably New Jersey Transit (with 3 transit hubs in the County), The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and NY Waterway, each of which charge customers separately for their service.

The County is comprised of 12 municipal school districts, containing over 110 school buildings and one County Technology/Vocational School, as well as 10 Charter Schools. Hudson Public District School's population is in excess of 90,200 students. Districts vary in area from .1 square miles to a high of 14.7 square miles. The two smallest districts (East Newark and Guttenberg) contain one school each, and the largest (Jersey City) contains 43. The County also has 84 private, nursery and parochial schools with a student population exceeding 16,000.

The County has no Education Service Commission, Coordinated Transportation Services Agencies or Special Services School District; The Hudson County School of Technology, located in North Bergen, chairs/manages a consortium of six districts in supporting special needs students' transportation services and limited regular education and athletic student's needs, as bus availability and staffing permit. The consortium's data is kept on paper records. Long term plans are being formulated to relocate the school facility from North Bergen, but are not definite at this time. Should there be a relocation and expansion, due to a new expanded facilities location, both educational and bus support savings could be achieved by the consortium, by offering expanded busing services, staffing and an expanded storage/maintenance facilities for all participants, as well as, perhaps staging/storage for private bus companies. The limited number of private bus companies, offering school student transportation, find operating within the County to be difficult due to congestion, as well as, the competition for scarce expandable spaces; they, the private bus companies, vie with the needs of, the real estate developers',

businesses and County Government, all searching for facilities expansion space, residential expansion needs, along with worker, residential and university parking shortages.

SOURCES:

www.hudsoncountynj.org (The Official Hudson County Web Site)

New Jersey State Department of Education; Hudson County Public School Directory; 2008-2009

State of New Jersey; County of Hudson: Street Map 2008

Wikipedia

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	90,279
• Number of districts transporting students	10
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	3,372
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	1,311
➤ Non-public transported students	43
➤ Special education students—in-district	1,256
➤ Total students transported	5,982
• Percentage of students transported	6.6% (7%)
• Total annual route costs	\$31.1M
• Number of Students Transported via Public Transportation	1,897
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	10
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	5 (50%)

[Sources: 2008 ASSA and DRTRS]

Noted in the above, 1,897 Jersey City students received discounted

Public Transportation, Bus Passes costing the District \$680,000 annually.

Of the County’s 13 school districts, five are operating at or above the established efficiency standard of 120%, five are below the standard and three are not transporting students. Of the five Districts operating at less than the established standard of 120% of their vehicle capacity, they all operate these buses/vans for transportation of their Special Needs students’ both in-district and out-of -district transportation needs. While their vehicle usage may at first appear operationally inefficient, these same vehicles are used quite cost-effectively for students on class trips, transportation to plays, athletic events and occasional senior citizen trips. While such uses are not considered in the efficiency calculation, they would require outside vendors and fees to

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the two county-wide special services and vocational school districts.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

accomplish, if these vehicles did not exist. Safety and hazardous routes also play a role in each of the five districts.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Hudson County Office hosts a web portal, supplied with information by all the districts, listing all special services classes contained within the 13 districts. Listings are by program, teacher, listing total seats offered, seats available, classroom aides and contact information. This portal was created as an efficient alternative, prior to seeking an out of county private school placement. Also, in order to form efficient inter-local transportation routes(both district transported and bid), special service student placements are shared during the summer, to consolidate students transported to districts, non-district county and out-of-county schools. Alternatively, the Kearny school district has successfully encouraged the Sawtelle private school program, to begin an autistic school program in the district, by creating and offering classroom school space within a district school. This allows six local autistic students, a relative transportation free education.

For the 2010-2011 school year, the West New York School District has created space so as to return five students, previously educated outside the district, providing a net savings over \$1 million for the taxpayers.

Whenever possible, public transportation has been encouraged for student transportation; this requires close cooperation between the schools districts and public transportation providers, so as to balance the transportation needs of the students and the regular public riders. The goal is to provide both the students and the riding public with time-sensitive efficient transportation routes, while continuing to offer student transportation discount to the districts.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee (Committee), authorized under 6A:23A-2.6 of the School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures, was charged to study the Transportation Efficiency of school districts in Hudson County. This Committee met to review specific areas to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services of public and nonpublic schools. The Committee used the eight points in the Transportation Efficiency Study code as a guide in their discussions. The Committee was comprised of representatives from five Districts (including consortium representatives) and consisted of seven transportation specialists. The Committee planned ongoing meetings are scheduled with district business administrators. (See Attachment A for team members list).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *Establish a single county-wide calendar, which would be developed by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools.* A single uniform calendar would allow for more efficient transportation of students throughout the county. Any school district wishing to deviate from this calendar would have to go through a waiver process.

Recommendation 2: *Establish coordinated ranges of starting times and ending times for all elementary, middle and high schools in the county.* This will address the coordination of bus routes and bell schedules to achieve efficient transportation. A tiered system may be necessary due to the availability of buses; road congestion poses major problems.

Recommendation 3: *Require that non-public, private and charter schools adhere to all efficiency standards that apply to public schools.* This will require legislation to have all school entities operate on the same calendar and school day.

Recommendation 4: *Develop a single database (computer based) of all bus routes and bus schedules in the county to achieve maximum efficiency and create state reports.* This single data base should be controlled by a county authority and will require changes in current legislation to permit the authority to RFP or bid for software to handle all bus routes. (This database listing all bus routes, schedules and numbers of students on each bus in the county would help to achieve maximum efficiency and create state reports. An electronic bulletin board could be used to post messages and future requirements. Hudson County currently has such a database for vacancies within special services programs, for each district within the county).

Recommendation 5: *Require school districts that opt out from the centralized transportation co-operative shall review and revise policies to reduce the number of bus stops as a way to reduce costs.*

Recommendation 6: *Develop a county-wide system to consolidate and establish a uniform training program for all bus drivers, bus aides and sub drivers.* In addition, a county-wide mandatory drug screening program should be established for all bus drivers.

Recommendation 7: *Establish a county-wide system established for purchasing buses, other transportation equipment and supplies. A generic bid specification should be developed.*

Recommendation 8: *Review and revise the State's Division of Motor Vehicles bus inspection process.* The process should focus on mechanical issues and not cosmetic concerns (e.g. first aid kits, cut seats, etc.).

Recommendation 9: *Revise the current law that requires a seat on the bus for every eligible student to be transported to and from school.* There should be a process established for a parent to waive their child's seat on the bus. This would significantly reduce costs for high school districts that have senior students who drive to and from school.

Recommendation 10: *Review and revise aid-in-lieu rules and regulations for potential cost reductions for families that send more than one child to the same non-public school.* This will require legislation to change the per pupil amount to a per-family amount.

Recommendation 11: *Develop magnet alternative schools by coordinating the locations of five high schools and convenient stops on the light rail lines.* The magnet alternative schools would be piloted in school year 2010-2011 and fully operational (five centers, two operating on extended schedule) beginning in school year 2011-2012.

Recommendation 11: Prepare a bus/light rail pass system for all students, so that asynchronous instruction can be introduced as a procedure to accommodate students who are dropping out at grade 10 (See Appendix A), sometimes, to work as a means to supplement family/personal income.

Recommendation 12: *Conduct a feasibility study for the development of an Educational Services Commission.*

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6 (b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services

Through an ongoing series of meetings with the Hudson County Schools of Technology, a computerized database of all combinable routes should be developed by the end of summer 2009. Calendars and bell schedules are being collected for analysis and recommendation in Fall 2009.

CONCLUSION

The data presented here imply great potential for improving transportation efficiency resonating with effectiveness. To realize this potential, the county must continue to regionalize and centralize planning among school districts (Summer, 2009). Next, we must build on this newly flexible transportation paradigm to share services, particularly special services. (Fall 2010). Finally we must harness the power of the entire county transportation infrastructure to move high school dropouts from their places of work to convenient magnet alternative schools as an alternate path to high school graduation. (Pilot fall 2010, full implementation fall 2011.) This report should be viewed as a beginning effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to encourage the building of a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Hudson County. By working together, with the support of an enriched consortium, districts will recognize that many efficiencies can be achieved, not only in transportation, but those relating to special education, extracurricular activities, nonpublic services and other areas that are part of an intricate educational system.

Appendix A
Hudson County Transportation Statistics

	Students Transported in County								
HUDSON COUNTY	Resident	Regular	Spec Ed		Spec Ed		Nonpublic	Efficiency	Route
District	Enrollment	Education	Out-of-District	Nonpublic	In- District	Total	AIL	Rating	Costs
Bayonne City	8,671		37		276	313		0.537%	\$1,842,698
East Newark Boro	356		11			11			\$49,950
Guttenberg Town	1,255		18			18			\$280,818
Harrison Town	1,768		59			59			\$711,312
Hoboken City	2,223	17	18		52	87		0.979%	\$623,003
Hudson Count Vocational	2,205	1,687			217	1,904		2.244%	\$2,055,523
Jersey City	29,816	1,671	436		570	2,677	961	1.939%	\$7,883,908
Kearny Town	5,493		152		13	165		0.901%	\$1,084,216
Noth Bergen Township	7,110	1,523	76		35	1,634	438	1.571%	\$1,912,979
Secaucus Town	2,011	374	39	43	29	485	36	1.150%	\$1,001,970
Union City	9,961	299	287			586		2.051%	\$1,778,731
Weehawkwn Township	1,139	394	33			427		1.398%	\$1,095,241
West New York Town	6,226	352	145		64	561		0.905%	\$1,927,054
TOTAL	78,234	6,317	1,311	43	1,256	8,927	1,435		\$22,247,403
Sources: Total Enrollment--Does not include nonpublic students; "Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts									
Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009									
All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts									

DISTRICT	Resident Enrollment*	Students Transported in County					Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
		Regular Education	Special Ed. Out-of-District	Nonpublic	Special Ed. In-District	Total			
Alexandria Township	622	531	17	-	65	613	62	N/A	\$ 504,817
Bethlehem Township	595	483	25	-	61	569	50	1.4	\$ 512,946
Bloomsbury Borough	134	63	9	1	1	74	19	N/A	\$ 57,774
Califon Borough	150	-	3	-	-	3	4	N/A	\$ 38,493
Clinton Town	535	152	41	-	2	195	21	0.95	\$ 274,453
						-			
Clinton Township	1,752	1,485	8	3	237	1,733	169	1.34	\$ 1,641,949
Delaware Township	458	380	8	2	37	427	33	1.26	\$ 458,016
Delaware Valley Regional H.S.	986	872	22.5	-	113.5	1,008	23	**	\$ 1,244,699
East Amwell Township	486	440	7	-	36	483	31	N/A	\$ 406,419
Flemington Raritan	3,595	2,970	99	-	279	3,348	130	**	\$ 3,001,249
						-			
Franklin Township	345	317	10	-	26	353	44	N/A	\$ 351,883
Frenchtown Borough	160	-	-	-	-	-	8	N/A	\$ -
Hampton Borough	165	-	-	3	-	3	3	N/A	\$ 850
High Bridge Borough	402	-	-	-	3	3	24	N/A	\$ 18,328
						-			
Holland Township	672	574	1	-	77	652	16	N/A	\$ 352,052
Hunterdon Central Regional H.S.	3,069	2,763	54	-	329	3,146	136	2.08	\$ 6,008,877
Kingwood Township	453	423	2	-	30	455	23	N/A	\$ 330,031
Lambertville	160	-	4	-	-	4	-	N/A	\$ 114,903
Lebanon Borough	81	-	2	-	-	2	10	N/A	\$ 5,443
						-			
Lebanon Township	817	695	15	-	93	803	35	0.98	\$ 791,552
Milford Borough	111	-	1	-	-	1	7	N/A	\$ 38,416
NH/Voorhees Regional H.S.	3,011	2,658	49	26	341	3,074	56	1.54	\$ 3,024,332
Readington Township	2,138	1,860	61	-	193	2,114	85	1.75	\$ 1,635,607
South Hunterdon Regional H.S.	333	277	19	-	58	354	39	1.67	\$ 497,060
						-			
Stockton Borough	36	-	-	-	-	-	4	N/A	\$ -
Tewksbury Township	779	710	17	-	52	779	111	1.58	\$ 792,338
Union Township	580	533	13	-	37	583	49	N/A	\$ 547,361
West Amwell Township	271	256	5	-	9	270	25	N/A	\$ 150,831
Totals	22,896	18,442	492.5	35	2079.5	21,049	1,217		\$ 22,800,679

Sources: Total Enrollment-"Application for State School Aid," October 15, 2008 counts

All other data -"District Report of Transported Resident Students," October 15, 2008 counts

*Non-public students are not in the resident enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

**Data entered incorrectly in DRTRS

HUNTERDON COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Christine Harttraft

Interim County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Hunterdon County is 437 square miles geographically with 26 municipalities and a population in 2007 of approximately 129,349 residents. It has 31 school districts. There are 4 regional high school districts, 1 vocational school district, 1 alternative school, 1 regional elementary school district, 1 elementary sending district and 23 elementary districts which are designated either K-6 or K-8. There are an estimated 22,896 pupils enrolled in 2008-09.

The 31 school districts include 51 school buildings and employ approximately 2,544 full and part-time instructional, supervisory and administrative personnel

Hunterdon is a very rural county with many areas that are sparsely populated. As a result, it is more difficult to combine transportation routes than it may be in a more suburban or urban county. That said, Hunterdon Central Regional high school has done a well in coordinating transportation as evidenced by their bus utilization efficiency ratio of 2.080.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	22,896
• Number of districts transporting students	26
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	18,442
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	492.5
➤ Non-public transported students	35
➤ Special education students—in-district	2,079.5
➤ Total students transported	21,049
• Percentage of students transported	92%
• Total annual route costs	22.8M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
◇ “Rated Districts”	10
◇ “Rated Districts” meeting or exceeding 120%	8(80%)

[Sources: 2008 ASSA and DRTRS]

Those districts not meeting or exceeding the standard are limited due to geographical constraints. Many districts were not rated since they are walking districts or participants in transportation jointures.

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the Educational Services Commission and county vocational school.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

All 28 districts in the county share transportation services on some level. For example, the high school districts provide transportation for many of their elementary districts; the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission provides both regular and special education transportation services in an effort to increase efficiencies. In a few cases, services are shared with districts in neighboring counties where transportation runs can be merged.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Hunterdon County ECS was authorized under 6A:23A-2.6 of the School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures, to study the Transportation Efficiency of school districts in Hunterdon County. Attachment A provides detailed information pertaining to the number of students transported and the cost.

The Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission and participating local districts convene transportation bi-monthly meetings to coordinate countywide transportation services. These meetings have resulted in increased tiering of bus routes and coordinated shared services. With the recent addition of an interim county business administrator, the county office will increase its involvement to further streamline cost saving measures through the implementation of the recommendations set forth in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In an effort to promote increased coordination and the combining of routes in order to affect cost savings for the transportation of students, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: *Establish a single county-wide calendar for all public and non-public districts to follow.*

Recommendation 2: *Establish starting and ending times for all elementary, middle and high schools in order to maximize tiering opportunities.*

Recommendation 3: *Consider a single data base of all bus routes and bus schedules in the county to achieve maximum efficiency and create state reports. (This may be opposed by software providers.)*

Recommendation 4: *Provide a uniform training program for all bus drivers, bus aides and substitute drivers, conducted by the Hunterdon County ESC.*

Recommendation 5: *Establish a state wide committee to review the bus inspection process and make recommendations for improvement.*

Recommendation 6: *Investigate the liability of having parents sign a waiver for their high school student to give up a seat on the bus because the student drives to school. Many high school students drive but districts must still allow for a seat on the bus. However, since many*

people believe that students are safer on bus, an alternative solution might be to charge students for a parking space in order to recoup some of the money spent on transportation.

Recommendation 7: *Review all hazardous routes that are less than one mile in length in order to determine if it would be feasible to build sidewalks.* Students would become walkers. Construction of the sidewalks is a one time expense while transportation is an annual expense, increasing every year with inflation. (Since the passage of the Highlands Act, this may not be possible in many areas of Hunterdon County.)

Recommendation 8: *Provide competitive grant money for districts to apply for in order to encourage transportation efficiency studies.*

Recommendation 9: *Provide a mechanism for non-public schools to participate in the establishment of joiner routes.* Non-public schools know how many students are attending their school and where they live. It is much easier for the non-publics to put together joiner routes. Currently, public districts find it difficult to establish joiner routes for their non-public school students.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23 A-2.6 (b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

Developing transportation efficiencies is an ongoing effort on the part of school districts in the county. Most districts have made significant progress in combining efforts to effect efficiencies and share services. The issue of common calendars, and coordinated start and end times continues to be a goal in order to increase efficiencies.

Conversations with non-public entities and municipal offices could yield additional savings, if non-public schools could assume coordination responsibilities to better tier bus routes, and the addition of sidewalks in certain areas could possibly reduce the number of courtesy bus routes.

A single data base may further increase transportation efficiencies, although coordination to a large extent is already being achieved. Sharing of services related to busing including countywide training programs are continuing to be addressed.

CONCLUSION

Hunterdon County schools rely heavily on sharing services in the area of transportation to increase efficiencies. The geography and its rural nature contribute to some districts having a low efficiency rating. This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Hunterdon County. By working together, districts recognize that many efficiencies can be achieved not only in transportation, but those relating to special education, extra curricular activities, nonpublic services and other areas that are part of an intricate educational system.

Table A: County-Wide Transportation Statistics (Mercer County)

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		Students Transported in Mercer County							
DISTRICT	Total resident Enrollment	Regular Education	Special Ed. In-District	Nonpublic	Special Ed. Out-of-District	Total	Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
EAST WINDOSR REGIONAL	5,024	2,762	325	189	165	3,441	123	2.51	\$ 2,912,884
EWING TWP	3,779	1,247	168	264	99.5	1,779	168	1.73	\$ 2,326,972
HAMILTON TWP	13,224	3,032	996	586	529.5	5,144	286	1.38	\$ 7,982,118
HOPEWELL VALLEY REGIONAL	3,992	2,035	247	218	155	2,655	263	1.43	\$ 3,016,074
LAWRENCE TWP	3,914	1,543	226	385	105	2,259	199	1.46	\$ 2,333,179
MERCER COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES	-	-	-	-		-	-		\$ -
MERCER COUNTY TECHNICAL	384	-	-	-		-	-		\$ -
PRINCETON REGIONAL	3,478	958	15	275	96	1,344	77	1.48	\$ 2,023,313
TRENTON	13,869	510	623	386	566	2,085	160	0.65	\$ 3,222,232
ROBBINSVILLE	2,651	1,381	151	111	75	1,718	73	2.10	\$ 1,710,589
WEST WINDSOR PLAINSBORO REGIONAL	9,865	5,621	704	178	263.5	6,767	257	1.65	\$ 7,291,407
Totals	60,180	19,089	3,455	2,592	2,055	27,191	1,606		\$ 32,818,767

Sources: Total Enrollment-"Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

Non-public students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

MERCER COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Samuel Stewart

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

As New Jersey's capital county, Mercer County is a center for commerce and culture in the Garden State. Located midway between New York City and Philadelphia in New Jersey's center, Mercer County's 13 municipalities are home to more than 350,000 people in 226 square miles in the heart of region with 10% of the US population all within a 75-mile radius.

Source: <http://nj.gov/counties/mercerc/about/>

Mercer County has nine public school districts, one county technical school district, one special services school district, nine charter schools and four State facilities. There are a total of 110 schools buildings in Mercer County which includes 15 high schools, 13 middle schools, 63 elementary schools, 9 charter schools, 6 technical schools, and 4 special education schools. In addition, there are over 70 nonpublic schools in the county, including private, nonpublic, State approved private schools for the disabled and preschool/kindergarten programs.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. See Table A, County Wide Transportation Statistics, for detail.

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	60,180
• Number of districts transporting students	9
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	19,089
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	2,055
➤ Non-public transported students	2,592
➤ Special education students—in-district	3,455
➤ Total students transported	27,191
• Percentage of students transported	45%
• Total annual route costs	\$32.8M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	9
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	8 (89%)

Trenton School District is the only district in Mercer County that did not meet the 120% efficiency standard. Some of the reasons that they are below this efficiency standard is due to students being transported to overflow schools, bilingual programs only being offered in certain schools, the under utilization of vehicles related to their current inability to use the same vehicle for more than one route, the use of bus tickets for students to use public transportation, and the their school policy on courtesy bussing and non hazardous courtesy bussing.

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the two county-wide special services and vocational school districts.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State's minimum standard.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mercer County has a Coordinated Transportation Services Agency (MCTS, Mercer Coordinated Transportation System). MCTS has been in operation for 29 years and was created to assist districts in providing an efficient, safe, and economical means for in-district and out of district placement. MCTS coordinates transportation for the 9 sending districts in Mercer County on a county wide basis. The largest function of MCTS is to coordinate the transportation for Special Education students in Mercer County to their out-of-district placements. MCTS also coordinates transportation for Vocational, Non-public, and Special Services School District. Currently, MCTS is transporting to 65 schools on approximately 300 routes which results in fewer vehicles being used and a major cost savings for the individual districts.

There are over 70 nonpublic schools operating in Mercer County. Annually, we hold a meeting for nonpublic school administrators and public school coordinators. This meeting is convened to discuss issues and concerns related to the transportation on nonpublic students. Also, reviewed at this meeting are the pertinent deadlines that impact on the bidding for and awarding contracts as well as the coordination of transportation services in the county. The MCTS plays a major part in this meeting since they ultimately end up preparing all of the routes for non public students for which the districts were unable to obtain transportation services. Also, in attendance at this annual meeting are representatives from the New Jersey Catholic Conference. This meeting has become very valuable in our county in the past several years. We have overcome many obstacles and every year there appears to be more cooperation between both the school districts and the nonpublic schools.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee (Committee) authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the “School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures” was formed to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Mercer County. The Committee consisted of two experienced district transportation coordinators, two school district business administrators, the County Office’s transportation coordinator, the Executive County School Business Administrator, a representative from the MCTS, a representative from the New Jersey Catholic Conference, and the Executive County Superintendent.

The transportation survey was distributed to districts and the results were summarized and analyzed. The Committee met to review the county’s current transportation operations and identify the barriers hindering transportation effectiveness and efficiencies. The committee focused on non-public and special education transportation since this appears to be the area where our districts can improve efficiency. The Committee also reviewed the current operations of the MCTS and discussed areas that could be improved in order to service the districts more effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *Provide a single county-wide calendar, established by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools.* The need for a county calendar is evident from the questionnaire responses as well as discussions among the transportation committee. All school vacations and professional development days should be coordinated at a county level to ensure

more efficient use of transportation resources. Emergency closing days should also be managed at the county level to ensure school calendars remain in sync. There are barriers to establishing a county wide school calendar that need to be addressed. Legislation would be needed to require the creation of a county-wide school calendar that all public and nonpublic school districts would be required to follow. The county wide calendar should also be coordinated with neighboring counties.

Recommendation 2: *Require that non-public schools coordinate their school calendars, bell schedules, and delayed opening/early dismissal times with those of their corresponding public school(s).* The issue of the nonpublic schools following a county-wide school calendar is more problematic due to such schools normally being closed for religious observances. Most nonpublic schools should have no problem with a common calendar of dates (Jewish faith schools excluded due to the different religious holidays observed). It is the opening and closing times, however, which seem to create the problem since religious schools have at least one extra course in the curriculum (Religion).

Recommendation 3: *Create a single database of all bus routes and bus schedules in the county including non-public and private schools for the disabled.* Nonpublic school transportation appears to be a major burden on public school districts. If a county-wide agency was responsible for providing all non-public transportation this would avoid a delay in having the LEA responsible for making the initial route designs. Having the eligible nonpublic school students' names available from the outset, would create a better opportunity for efficient routing by the MCTS. This single data base should be controlled by the MCTS. Districts should also post on this website all non-public students who they were unable to provide transportation. Districts would also post on this data base any available seats on both special education and non public routes. If seats were available, this would allow the opportunity for districts to fill the busses to capacity and achieve a higher efficiency.

Recommendation 4: *Require non-public schools to return the form, "Application for Private School Transportation (B6T) to the public school by April 30th in order to allow sufficient time for the public schools to bid on non-public routes.* If the B6T is not returned by the April 30th date, the public school district will not be required to provide transportation or aid-in-lieu for that child. Aid-in-lieu should only be reserved for unusual circumstances. Of the 4,000 non-public students 1,600 receive aid in lieu. Over 42% of the eligible students are currently given aid-in-lieu rather than transportation services. Only limited exceptions should be allowed such as move-ins.

Recommendation 5: *Review and revise the aid-in-lieu regulations from a per-pupil to a reduced per-family amount in cases where multiple children are sent from one family to the same non-public school.* The public school will be required to show due diligence in obtaining transportation for the non-public pupils. The concern expressed on behalf on the non public school community was they would be opposed to this since it may encourage districts to provide aid-in-lieu rather than make every effort to bid the routes in a manner that would be attractive to the bus contractor.

Recommendation 6: *Require directors of special education to investigate and review IEPs which contain the related service of “door to door” transportation services to ensure that this service is based on students’ disability and needs.* Through discussions with our transportation Coordinator’s it has been noted that there is an extremely high number of special education students that have “door to door” as a related service in their IEP. Also, any updates to student’s IEP should be clearly communicated to the transportation department on an annual basis. Wheelchair requirements should also be verified annually to ensure the proper vehicle is specified in bid documents.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6 (b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

All of the districts in Mercer are K-12 with very large student populations ranging from the smallest district Robbinsville at 2,400 students with an efficiency rating of 2.10 to the largest district Trenton at 14,700 students with an efficiency rating of 0.65. It is evident that it is not the size of the district that results in a more efficient transportation system. It is assumed that all of these districts could become more efficient as individual districts without consolidating. Therefore, consolidation of school district transportation is not being actively promoted. However, the focus is on other ways which the districts could become more efficient such as more jointures and more tiering. Eight of the nine districts are operating above the State’s current minimum efficiency standard of 120%. The Mercer County Office staff is currently working together with the Trenton school district; they have already made changes in their transportation system for the 09-10 school year, which potentially should increase their efficiency.

Although there are a significant number (254) of multi-tiered routes reported (doubled and tripled), approximately 78% (903 of the 1,157) of the reported routes are single routes, definitely suggesting efficiency opportunities. Only 16 routes are tiered by jointure with another district. Fifteen of those routes involve special education. Further investigation will be undertaken to determine jointure opportunities for the 903 single routes noted above. The majority of districts in Mercer already have staggering bell times and multi-tiered routes (doubled and tripled). Only one district does not tier at all but does have staggering bell times. The Executive County Superintendent is recommending that this district do a cost analysis if they choose not to tier their routes again in 09-10.

CONCLUSION

This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Mercer County. By working together, districts recognize that many efficiencies can be achieved not only in transportation, but those relating to special education, extra curricular activities, nonpublic services and other areas that are part of an intricate educational system.

Table A:**Transportation Statistics****Middlesex County**

FY2008-09 Transportation Efficiency Ratings								
		Students Transported in County (1)						
	Resident	Efficiency		Sp Ed		Sp Ed		
Rated	Students	Rating	Regular	Out of	Non	in		Route
	2008-09	2008-09	Public	District	Public	District	Total	Costs
Carteret	3,816	1.16	951	66.5	100	113.5	1,231	1,872,969
Cranbury	878	1.58	451	44.0	4	25.0	524	760,079
Dunellen	1,115	0.28	12	24.5		0.5	37	265,593
East Brunswick	8,947	1.81	6,052	302.5	157	775.5	7,287	5,644,476
Edison	14,131	1.59	7,274	376.0	346	150.0	8,146	8,823,341
Highland Park	1,503	1.11	147	37.0	185	25.0	394	899,093
Metuchen	2,054	1.47	827	63.0	15	12.0	917	1,076,797
Middlesex	2,072	1.16	129	79.5	96	10.5	315	554,483
Monroe	4,965	2.25	4,979	138.5	249	33.5	5,400	4,214,185
No. Brunswick	5,645	1.93	3,556	202.0	266	264.0	4,288	3,769,914
Old Bridge	9,777	1.94	8,097	294.5	874	536.5	9,802	5,875,181
Perth Amboy	8,690	0.86	1,464	546.0	8	78.0	2,096	6,375,016
Piscataway	7,007	2.03	3,943	153.0	350	534.0	4,980	4,129,263
Sayreville	5,895	1.72	3,537	307.0	392	594.0	4,830	3,876,872
So. Amboy	1,114	1.04	42	59.5		1.5	103	453,831
So. Brunswick	8,850	1.53	7,418	278.5	189	4.5	7,890	6,139,279
So. Plainfield	3,737	1.71	830	111.0	47	19.0	1,007	1,742,786
So. River	2,233	1.17	117	90.0	160		367	650,054
Woodbridge	13,566	1.61	7,635	756.0	726	226.0	9,343	9,202,219
Not-Rated								
Jamesburg	841		210	65.0	47		322	542,327
Milltown	965		254	46.0	47		347	456,768
New Brunswick	7,089		2,568	382.0	58	65.0	3,073	5,530,593
Spotswood	1,489		282	61.0	15		358	596,242
MRESC								19,025,898
	116,379		60,775	4,483.0	4,331	3,468.0	73,057	92,477,759
Sources: Total Enrollment-"Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts							(1): Non-public students are not in	
Efficiency Rating- "Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009							the Resident Enrollment, but are	
All other data-"District Report of Transported Resident Students", October 15, 2008 counts							required to transport such students	
							if they transport public students.	

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Patrick Piegari

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Middlesex County, also known as the “Heart” of New Jersey is located squarely in the center of New Jersey and stretches from the Rahway River south to Mercer and Monmouth Counties and from Raritan Bay on the Atlantic Ocean west to Somerset County. The county is 318 square miles in size, has 25 municipalities which includes the City of New Brunswick, the seat of Middlesex County Government and included extensive industrial, office, and residential areas. [Source: *Per Middlesex County’s website, at: <http://co.middlesex.nj.us>*]

There are 26 school districts in Middlesex County, which includes the Middlesex County Vocational and Technical District, the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission (MRESC) and the Greater Brunswick Charter School. In addition, there are a number of Private Special Education Schools and nonpublic schools located within Middlesex County. [Source: *DOE website (school directory and approved in-state private schools for the disabled)*]

There were 19 districts rated for transportation efficiency in 2008-09. Twelve districts exceeded the 1.20 efficiency standard and seven districts were below the 1.20 standard.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. [See **Table A**: “Transportation Statistics (Middlesex County)” for more details].

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education)*	116,379
• Number of districts transporting students**	24
• Number of students transported**	
➤ Regular education students	60,775
➤ Special education students – out-of-district	4,483
➤ Non-public transported students	4,331
➤ Special education students – in-district	3,468
➤ Total students transported	73,057
• Percentage of students transported	62%
• Total annual route costs	\$92.5M
• Efficiency Rating***	
➤ “Rated districts”	19
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	12/63%

[Sources: Total Enrollment-“Application for School Aid”, October 15, 2008 counts; Efficiency Rating-“Comparative Spending Guide”, March 2009; All other data-“District Report of Transported Resident Students”, October 15, 2008 counts]

* County-wide enrollment includes resident students in school districts; NJDOE ASSA 2/25/09.

** DRTRS Summary 2008

*** DRTRS County Route File, October 15, 2008

Most of the districts operating below 120% are primarily doing so because of limited tiering, in that they are either: (1) walking districts with limited busing; (2) subject to geography (i.e. remoteness from other districts); or (3) are single school districts.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The public school districts in Middlesex County completed the District Transportation Questionnaire 2008-09 Data. Districts attempt to share transportation services for special education, non public and vocational programs when feasible. In addition, the MRESC provides Coordinated Transportation Services for special, public, non-public and vocational-technical education students. The MRESC serves in excess of 6,500 students with over 550 transportation routes. The MRESC also provides transportation services to districts in other counties. In addition, two receiving districts, Monroe and Spotswood provide transportation services for their receiving districts. There has been additional transportation sharing services initiated by individual districts via the Northern Middlesex County Alliance, which includes districts which are geographically congruent within the county.

The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has facilitated meetings to encourage districts to share transportation services. These discussions included non public, private and public school districts.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures was formed to review transportation efficiency of school districts in Middlesex County. The committee consisted of the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary from a pre K - 12 receiving district, the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary from the MRESC, the Transportation Coordinator and Energy Manager from a pre K-12 district, the Transportation Coordinator from the Middlesex County Office, The Middlesex Executive County School Business Administrator and the Executive County Superintendent of Schools.

The committee reviewed and discussed the county wide summary of the District Transportation Questionnaire data from 2008-09, reviewed the 2007-08 and 2008-09 Transportation Efficiency Ratings of the Rated Districts and data from the FY 2008-09 District Transportation Questionnaire.

The committee developed a list of recommendations that it considered would help improve transportation efficiencies for school districts. The committee also encouraged the Executive County Superintendent of Schools' office to annually meet with districts who were below efficiency to assist these districts in improving their efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Middlesex County, the following recommendations would assist districts in providing such services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner.

Recommendation 1: *Establish a County/Regional or State school calendar to provide maximum transportation efficiency among the school districts in the county. An annual school calendar, which would be established by the Department of Education, would be used by public, nonpublic, private and charter schools. Compliance with this standardized calendar by districts will ensure maximum state transportation aid. Districts that fail to comply would lose state aid for dates that differ.*

Recommendation 2: *Continue to meet with nonpublic schools to synchronize school calendars, bell times, and routing.* The Executive County Superintendent of Schools shall meet with representatives of nonpublic schools to work towards the adoption of a schedule of bell times, and calendars to increase efficiency in nonpublic transportation services.

Recommendation 3: *Investigate the use of computer based bus routing using Versa Trans and Google Earth to track bus routes.* Bus routing software is an invaluable tool in developing efficient bus routes. This information is also beneficial in tracking school busses in the event of an emergency.

Recommendation 4: *Develop a central tracking system for students with special needs and the schools they are attending out-of-district with more input from information obtained through Child Study Team placements for Special Education needs.* Specialized and child specific transportation services should to be incorporated into transportation specifications. Timely identification of these services will help to obtain bids which address the needs of the child. It would also allow time for staff and driver training.

Recommendation 5: *Change the deadline for identification of nonpublic transportation needs to May or June.* This modification will make the bid specifications more accurate and should result in greater bid accuracy, increased bus routes and less problems resulting from late notification of student attendance in nonpublic schools.

Recommendation 6: *Review district transportation services to verify they are reporting correctly and make them aware of budget efficiencies by transporting with adjoining districts.* The Executive County Superintendent of Schools shall meet with districts that do not meet the efficiency standard. This meeting may result in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to assist the district in improving its transportation efficiency rating. The formula for calculating the efficiency standard may need revision to assist districts that cannot meet the efficiency standard due to size and other local contributing factors.

Recommendation 7: *Require districts under the efficiency rating to develop a CAP as part of the budget process.* The Executive County Superintendent of Schools can implement this during the annual budget review process.

Recommendation 8: *Planning with municipal, county and state officials to address delays and increased costs due to traffic congestion.* Local traffic patterns vary by community. As traffic congestion increases, school districts should work with municipal, county and state officials to address the impact on transportation services and costs.

Recommendation 9: *Involve Child Study Teams (CST) in transportation planning and timelines.* Timely preparation of bid specifications would result in cost effective routes. Involving the CST in the renewal and rebidding of routes will avoid higher cost routes and timely service.

Recommendation 10: *Promulgate legislation that would permit district Boards of Education to stagger bell times by up to 15 minutes to improve transportation efficiencies.* This would address conflicts with Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA). Local Board of Educations have CBA restrictions related to starting and ending of school. These include collective bargaining agreements, after school extra curricular activities and availability of school busses. Legislation to permit local board of educations to adjust bell times could also help to increase vehicles tiering and

utilization. Adopting legislation will eliminate the need to renegotiate teacher contract language and permit timely formation of bus routes and jointures.

Recommendation 11: *Promote communication between districts to establish transportation routes with nearby Monmouth, Mercer, and Somerset Counties.* Utilization of vehicles to service school districts in neighboring counties could result in savings.

Recommendation 12: *Develop administrative procedures that would increase vehicle load factors and verify transportation of students with parking permits.* Districts may limit vehicle load factors to insure seats are available for all eligible students. The promulgation of administrative procedures will help districts increase vehicle load factors. This would increase efficiency of transportation services and reduce the number of routes operating under full capacity.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

During the 2009-10 school year and beyond, the Middlesex Executive County Superintendent, in coordination with the County Transportation Committee, plans to continue the review and analysis of ways to promote further coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services in the county in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6(b).

CONCLUSION

This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools and districts to improve transportation services for students in Middlesex County. This includes public, private, special and non-public schools. Improvement to efficiencies can be measured in reduced costs, improvement in instructional programs and student safety. In addition, the cooperation and collaboration amongst the education community will continue to provide informed and educated citizens within our communities.

Table A: County-Wide Transportation Statistics (Monmouth County)

DISTRICT	Resident Enrollment	Students Transported in County					Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
		Regular Education	Special Ed. Out-of-District	Nonpublic	Special Ed. In-District	Total			
ALLENHURST	3	16	-	24	-	40	17	54%	\$ 43,985.34
ASBURY PARK	2,600	308	124	-	104.5	536	-	58%	\$ 1,817,713.59
ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS	270	-	-	2	-	2		4%	\$ 1,368.60
AVON	167	39	12	40	-	91	2		\$ 156,291.93
BAYSHORE						-			\$ 46,074.89
BELMAR	503	161	13	13	-	187			\$ 359,233.67
BRADLEY BEACH	343	53	24	5	-	82	14		\$ 250,470.38
BRIELLE	903	135	11	60	2	208	31	156%	\$ 420,885.36
COLTS NECK	1,350	1,108	150	252	82	1,592	41	142%	\$ 857,377.45
DEAL	30	10	2	23	-	35	26	34%	\$ 80,985.52
EATONTOWN BORO	1,158	730	27	165	60	982		124%	\$ 863,768.23
FAIR HAVEN BORO	968	-	4	57	-	61			\$ 150,788.00
FARMINGDALE	131	-	-	2	-	2	5		\$ 1,982.00
FREEHOLD BORO	1,299	2	52	4	-	58	11		\$ 323,806.08
FREEHOLD REGIONAL	11,773	12,056	176	1,018	281	13,531		168%	\$ 12,043,833.83
FREEHOLD TOWNSHIP	4,477	3,861	79	153	598	4,691	109	149%	\$ 4,362,430.63
HAZLET TOWNSHIP	3,306	1,732	131	140	31	2,034	60	147%	\$ 1,884,999.22
HENRY HUDSON	439	410	11	18	36	475	34	113%	\$ 740,965.92
HIGHLANDS BORO	158	-	10	2	-	12			\$ 48,521.82
HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP	3,362	3,420	68	174	13	3,675	116	175%	\$ 1,897,524.00
HOWELL TOWNSHIP	6,894	6,001	414	238	606	7,259	111	153%	\$ 8,706,994.96
INTERLAKEN	12	37	5	16	-	58		77%	\$ 166,208.93
KEANSBURG BORO	1,681	334	60	28	60	481	10	95%	\$ 1,135,021.47
KEYPORT BORO	924	18	28	-	4	50		123%	\$ 333,710.25
LITTLE SILVER	797	142	7	58	8	215	72	107%	\$ 167,894.78
LONG BRANCH	4,156	1,917	70	200	158	2,345	172	148%	\$ 1,963,109.34
MANALAPAN-ENGLISHTOV	5,464	4,934	204	98	312	5,548	158	183%	\$ 1,483,728.61
MANASQUAN BORO	971	42	15	28	1	85	12		\$ 330,663.96
MARLBORO TOWNSHIP	6,060	5,654	181	146	284	6,265		216%	\$ 5,163,570.53
MATAWAN-ABERDEEN	3,747	2,061	146	142	90	2,438	104	271%	\$ 2,116,340.03
MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP	10,160	5,375	397	1,418	530	7,719	138	149%	\$ 8,404,585.68
MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP	2,273	2,229	50	119	27	2,425	66	132%	\$ 3,151,892.13
MONMOUTH BEACH BORO	319	2	4	16	-	22			\$ 83,144.59
MONMOUTH REGIONAL	1,146	989	49	200	179	1,416	89	127%	\$ 1,706,729.88
MOESC			-		-	-			\$ 24,208,818.47
NEPTUNE CITY	566	53	28	-	-	81			\$ 262,223.33
NEPTUNE TOWNSHIP	4,009	2,071	278	269	167	2,785	104	152%	\$ 3,021,060.14
OCEAN TOWNSHIP	4,158	3,783	92	335	228	4,438	153	192%	\$ 2,013,404.85
OCEANPORT BORO	635	433	5	41	4	483	39	157%	\$ 167,262.07
RED BANK BORO	970	686	22	28	18	754	44	132%	\$ 706,504.20
RED BANK REGIONAL	861	532	8	78	33	651	96	91%	\$ 1,095,483.02
ROOSEVELT BORO	129	63	12	-	-	75			\$ 162,941.84
RUMSON BORO	995	711	29	107	-	847	2	142%	\$ 489,789.97
RUMSON-FAIR	956	446	10	68	41	565	14	161%	\$ 726,296.52
SEA GIRT BORO	218	6	4	-	-	10			\$ 49,937.71
SHORE REGIONAL	726	534	42	178	28	781	10	145%	\$ 763,748.25
SHREWSBURY BORO	508	11	1	46	1	59	6		\$ 69,420.27
LAKE COMO	205	48	13	3	-	64			\$ 140,824.90
SPRING LAKE BORO	324	116	11	32	-	159	25		\$ 241,324.87
SPRING LAKE HEIGHTS	522	90	15	34	-	139	2	43%	\$ 221,161.78
TINTON FALLS	1,607	1,336	95	194	153	1,778		121%	\$ 1,651,118.25
UNION BEACH	1,182	334	43	18	1	396	9	113%	\$ 486,701.00
UPPER FREEHOLD REGIONAL	1,689	1,161	90	90	122	1,462	115	219%	\$ 1,367,052.83
WALL	4,314	3,951	188	497	161	4,796	106	171%	\$ 3,208,899.04
WEST LONG BRANCH BORO	631	581	8	108	-	697		156%	\$ 665,041.44
Totals	103,041	70,722	3,514	6,985	4,420	85,640	2,121		\$ 102,985,616.35
Sources: Resident Enrollment "Application for State School Aid", October 15,2008 counts									
all data--"District Report of Transported Residents Students, October 15,2008 counts									

Non-public students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

MONMOUTH COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Carole K. Morris

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Monmouth County, one of the four original counties of East Jersey, is located in the central part of the state. It is boarded on the North by Middlesex County, on the South by Ocean County, on the East by the Atlantic Ocean and on the West by Mercer and Burlington Counties. Monmouth County has more than 659,000 residents and is the sixth largest county in the state by area. The county is made up of 54 municipalities, including 37 boroughs, 11 townships, 2 cities, 1 village and 1 camp meeting association. (Source: Monmouth County Directory – 2009)

The Executive County Superintendent of Schools oversees 56 school districts which consist of 51 operating districts, 1 jointure, 1 education services commission and 3 charter schools. (Source: 2008-2009 Monmouth County Public School Directory)

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (Source: Attached Table A: “County-Wide Transportation Statistics Monmouth County” for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	103,041
• Number of districts transporting students	53
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	70,722
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	3,514
➤ Non-public transported students	6,985
➤ Special education students—in-district	4,420
➤ Total students transported	85,640
• Percentage of students transported	83%
• Total annual route costs	\$103.0M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	38
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	27 (71%)

The above table represents an overview of the transportation in Monmouth County. The diversity of the school districts and the location of the districts show that the vast majority of students are transported because they live remote from their school. Those districts that have the highest efficiency ratings are multiple school districts that have the ability to tier their busses. Those districts that have poor efficient rates are not able to tier because they have only one school or because of the size of the district.

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the Educational Services Commission, Bayshore Jointure, three Charter Schools and the vocational school district.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Monmouth County schools began a discussion of a county-wide public school calendar for 2009-2010. This initiative was the result of the transportation committee's information gathering and interim reports on their progress. As a result of the work of the committee there was considerable cooperation among school districts. While a county-wide calendar was not adopted, a large number of school districts achieved a similar calendar to achieve greater efficiencies in the transportation of students. A comparison of transportation efficiencies from the 2009-2010 school year with the 2008-2009 school year will tell if savings were achieved.
- Central to the task of providing efficient transportation is the sharing of data among districts. Particular attention is focused on special education programs provided in schools throughout the county and special education programs provided by private schools for the handicapped. Transportation coordinators are linked to child study team student placements by a computer program initiated by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools and the Ocean County Vocational-Technical School. A data base developed for special education program placements has been modified to include transportation information provided by the New Jersey Department of Education's District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) data base. School districts are now able to search all the schools in Monmouth County and private schools for the handicapped for special education program placement availability, along with a listing of those school districts that transport to the placement location. This internet application has cut costs, along with promoting more educationally appropriate placement for special education students. The cost savings has not been analyzed. This will be reviewed as part of the budget analysis.
- The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has facilitated discussions and encouraged districts to share transportation services. Several districts are working on inter-local agreements and jointure agreements to combine transportation services with two or more schools. Notably, Shore Regional has produced projected savings for the 2008-2009 school year through cooperative transportation bids, jointures and tiers. The three districts are projecting a total of \$150,000 in reduced transportation costs.
- The Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District has proposed a restructure of the district schools to include new grade levels at each building and additional tiering of transportation routes for the 2009-2010 school year. The results of these changes will save the district \$538,000 in salaries and benefits of drivers.
- The Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission ("MOESC") was the prime coordinated transportation services agency (CTSA) for Monmouth County. On a daily basis MOESC transported 7,765 children to the various non-public schools in the county.
- The Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission ("MOESC") is unique in that it also provides transportation services for Ocean County. Several of the efficiencies that are achieved in Ocean County have been used in Monmouth County, especially in the area of special education i.e. Real Time. This has produced significant savings.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Transportation Committee, (Committee) authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures, was charged to study the Transportation Efficiency of school districts in Monmouth County.

Consistent with the legislation, the duties of the Executive County Superintendent were to establish a committee, appoint a chair and provide the committee with the materials necessary to complete the task. All tasks were completed in a timely fashion and this report is the result of the Committee's findings and recommendations.

The Committee was established to look at transportation statistics and other factors and come up with recommendations for a more efficient method of transporting students to and from school. The committee met five times to establish the charge of the committee, discuss handouts, establish timelines, assign tasks, analyze reports and write recommendations. This Committee reviewed short term and long term goals that could truly shape the transportation efficiencies for school districts. The Committee noted that any recommendations emanating from the Committee would have to affect public, private, non-public and special education schools. As a result of the Committee's work, recommendations are given as a means and method of obtaining tangible changes in the transportation of students not only in Monmouth County but throughout the state. The recommendations are done in a manner as to achieve efficiencies by introducing changes over a period of time. The fifteen members of the Committee included 1 Executive County School Business Administrator, 3 Superintendents, 2 board of education members, 1 teacher, 1 mayor, 1 township committeeman, 3 Business Administrators and 3 Transportation Coordinators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *Establish a county-wide school calendar that all schools within the county will be required to follow.* Public, non-public and charter schools should be required to adhere to the established calendar. All school vacations and professional development days should be coordinated at a county level to ensure more efficient use of transportation resources. Emergency closing days should also be managed at the county level to ensure school calendars remain in sync. There are barriers to establishing a county-wide school calendar that need to be addressed. First, legislative action would be needed to change the current process of school calendar adoption. Some non-public schools that observe religious holidays may not be able to adhere to the county calendar. The county-wide calendar should also be coordinated with neighboring counties because several districts in Monmouth County transport students to non-public schools in Ocean County and other neighboring counties. Lastly, collective bargaining agreements would need to be reviewed to ensure there are no conflicts with the proposed calendar. If these barriers cannot be overcome the committee strongly recommended that at a minimum constituent districts of a regional high school be required to adhere to the same school calendar. Any school district wishing to deviate from this calendar would have to go through a waiver process.

Recommendation 2: *Establish coordinated ranges of starting times and ending times for all elementary, middle and high schools in the county.* This will require legislation to set a range of

starting and ending times. Collective bargaining agreements would need to be reviewed to ensure there are no conflicts with the proposed coordinated ranges of starting times and ending times for all elementary, middle and high schools in the county. The enactment of this recommendation will achieve efficient transportation. A tiered system may be necessary due to the availability of buses.

Recommendation 3: *Require non-public schools to adhere to a county-wide school calendar and give districts providing transportation to non-public students adequate notice of schedule changes.* The county-wide calendar would be developed by the Executive County Superintendent. Non-public schools often change the school calendar with little or no notice to local districts. In order to accommodate the last minutes schedule changes districts must use substitute drivers for the unanticipated non-public runs thereby increasing their labor costs. All efficiency standards that apply to public schools shall be adhered by nonpublic, private schools and charter schools. This will require legislation to have all school entities operate on the same calendar and school day.

Recommendation 4: *Establish a county authority (such as Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission) that will control the transportation of all students in the county.* This entity will establish a consolidated county-wide transportation system by jointure agreements, county-based service providers, and consolidating transportation services combining two or more school districts. Any district wishing not to be a part of the county authority would have to go through the waiver process through the Executive County Superintendent. This will require the current legislation to be modified to achieve the desired results.

Recommendation 5: *Develop a single database of all bus routes and bus schedules in the county to achieve maximum efficiency and create state reports.* This single database should be controlled by the county authority recommended in recommendation 4 and will require changes in current legislation to permit the authority to RFP or bid for software to handle all bus routes.

Recommendation 6: *Require districts at or below the efficiency standard of 200% to join the county authority.* Districts above the state standard would have the option of joining or remaining as an independent. Should a district obtain an efficiency rating of 200% in the future, the district would have the option continuing as a member of the authority or becoming independent.

Recommendation 7: *Permit school districts opt out from the transportation authority shall review and revise policies to reduce the number of bus stops as a way to reduce costs.* This recommendation will have school districts continue to evaluate their efficiency.

Recommendation 8: *Establish a county-wide system to consolidate and establish a uniform training program for all bus drivers, bus aides and sub drivers.* In addition, a county-wide mandatory drug screening and child abuse training programs should be established for all bus drivers. Having these programs conducted on a county-wide rather than an individual school district basis will provide cost savings and greater efficiencies for districts.

Recommendation 9: *Establish a county-wide system established for purchasing buses, other transportation equipment and supplies.* A generic bid specification should be developed.

Recommendation 10: *Review the bus inspection process needs and revise it if necessary. The inspection process should focus on mechanical issues and not cosmetic concerns (e.g. first aid kits, cut seats, etc.).* This will require legislation action to change the current procedure for the inspection of buses by the Division of Motor Vehicles.

Recommendation 11: *Revise the current practice that requires a seat on the bus for every student being transported to and from school.* There should be a process established for a parent to waive their child's seat on the bus. This would significantly reduce costs for high school districts that have senior students who drive to and from school.

Recommendation 12: *Prorate aid-in-lieu of transportation be prorated for students living in the same residence attending the same non-public school.* This would require legislative action, but could potentially produce substantial savings. Currently, aid-in lieu of transportation is paid to every eligible non-public student. For the 2008-2009 school year each eligible student received \$884. If two eligible students from the same family attend the same non-public school each is eligible to receive the \$884.

Recommendation 13: *Provide a county review of all designated hazardous routes that are less than one mile in length.* The purpose of this review would be to determine if the construction of sidewalks along the route would eliminate the need for some "hazardous" busing.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

The Executive County Superintendent, in coordination with the Transportation Committee, will continue to examine ways to promote coordination of pupil transportation services in the county as follows:

1. Coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county:

Monmouth County public school districts have adopted a county calendar for the 2009-10 school year, with a 80% alignment rate. Districts have made progress in using and implementing jointures and coordinating bus routes. A large number of nonpublic and private school with varied start and stop times cause many of the inefficiencies in transportation and this is an area that still needs to be addressed to increase efficiency for these routes.

2. Staggering bell schedules in order implement a tiered system of busing:

Districts within the county have implemented staggered bell schedules resulting in efficiency ratings as high as 270%. There remain issues regarding staggered school schedules for all schools due to contractual requirements and the number of schools in a district.

The Committee found that, in addition to the need to stagger nonpublic school times within the county, there is a need to stagger start and stop times for the private schools for students with

disabilities inside and outside the county. Currently, most private schools for students with disabilities have an 8:30 a.m. start time. This practice results in using several buses traveling the same routes when in many instances one bus could serve more students along the same route.

The Committee will continue to research ways to increase efficiency for athletic event transportation as it appears that tiering and sharing of routes may provide for some significant cost savings. Communication between the business office of each district and the athletic directors of each district needs to be implemented.

3. Centrally coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements:

The database established by Ocean County (Real Time) has been used by Monmouth County districts that have provided additional efficiencies in the transportation of special education students. To achieve greater efficiencies additional steps must be done by districts. To achieve increased efficiency in the transportation of special education students, the following issues need to be addressed:

1. Increase communication and coordination between the child study team and the transportation supervisor in each district.
2. Determine, in uniform manner the services required for students with medical needs. Who has the medically authority to determine which students need a nurse and does their situation preclude the nurse from being able to provide services to more than one student on the bus?
3. What are the best practices for nursing service students with medical needs?
4. What are the corresponding “standards of care” for students with medical needs?

This is one area of transportation that could yield significant savings if all of the above are done in a coordinated and consistent manner.

4. Consolidating transportation services in combinations of two or more school districts:

The Transportation Committee, in recommendation 4, believes that consolidation of transportation services in combinations of two or more districts can be achieved by a greater number of districts and in a more efficient manner if a single county authority controls the transportation of students within the county.

CONCLUSION

This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Monmouth County. By working together, districts recognize that much efficiency can be achieved not only in transportation, but those relating to special education, extra curricular activities, nonpublic services and other areas that are part of the total educational system.

MORRIS COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Kathleen C. Serafino

Acting Executive County Superintendent

July 10, 2009

MORRIS COUNTY TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted By:

Dr. Kathleen C. Serafino, Acting Executive County Superintendent

Anthony Mistretta, County Business Administrator

July 10, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Located in the northern half of the State, Morris County has a total area of 481 square miles of which, 469 square miles is land and 12 square miles is water. The county rises in elevation and relief from east to west, with only the more developed eastern suburbs in the Passaic River Valley being relatively level. The highest point is at 1,395 feet above sea level in the Mahlon Dickerson Reservation in Jefferson Township; the lowest point is about 140 feet in elevation, at Two Bridges, the confluence of the Passaic and Pompton Rivers. Morris County is a county located about 25 mi west of New York City, with a population of 493,160, as part of the New York Metropolitan Area. Its county seat is Morristown. Morris County is the sixth-wealthiest county in the United States by median household income, and ranked tenth by per capita income. It is the ninth-wealthiest county in the United States by personal per-capita income, the highest rank in New Jersey. (U.S.Census 2004)

There are 39 political subdivisions within the county, consisting of 3 towns, 20 townships and 16 boroughs. It has 40 school districts, consisting of 38 regular operating school districts, and two countywide school districts (Morris County Educational Services Commission and Morris County School of Technology). Of the 38 regular operating school districts, 3 are consolidated districts: Chester Borough and Chester Township, Morristown and Morris Township, and Chatham Borough and Chatham Township. (U.S. Census 2004)

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	81,294.5
• Number of districts transporting students	38
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	51,006
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	2,367
➤ Non-public transported students	2,736
➤ Special education students—in-district	4,635
➤ Total students transported	60,744
• Percentage of students transported	74.7%
• Total annual route costs	\$53.2 M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	33
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	29 (88%)

¹ Countywide enrollment excludes the countywide educational service commission and vocational school district.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

[Source: Total Enrollment – “Application for State School Aid” 10/15/08 counts; Efficiency Rating – “Comparative Spending Guide” 03/09; All other data – “District Report of Transported Resident Students” 10/15/08]

Most non-public transportation is coordinated through the Morris County Educational Services Commission (ESC). Of the four districts operating below 120%, three are doing so due to inaccurate completion of the DRTRS report. The fourth district is a walking school district with one school bus which is used for special education and vocational transportation.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has facilitated discussions and encouraged districts to share transportation services. Many districts have been working through inter-local agreements and jointure agreements to combine transportation. Several, but not all, examples of these jointures and local agreements are: Hanover Park Regional with its constituent districts, Hanover Township and East Hanover; Morris Hills Regional with its constituent districts, Rockaway Township, Rockaway Borough, Wharton and Denville Township; Washington Township, Roxbury, Mt. Olive have agreements for special education transportation.
- The CTSA of Morris County, the Educational Services Commission, and the CTSA of Sussex County, partner with school districts in both counties to create inter-county jointures and coordination of special education transportation.
- The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has introduced the concept of a central database for special education program placements to enable school districts to search for public and private placements for special education program placement availability, along with a listing of those school districts that transport to the placement location.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

In accordance with 6A: 23A-2.6 the Morris County Transportation Efficiency Committee was formed. The Executive County Superintendent, appointed the Superintendent of the ESC of Morris County as the chairperson. The other members of the Committee were chosen by the Executive County Superintendent based on their expertise in transportation and in sharing services to promote greater efficiencies: the Morris County Business Administrator, the Morris County Coordinator of Transportation, the Director of Transportation of Washington Township BOE, the Director of Transportation of Mt. Olive Township BOE, the Director of Transportation of the ESC, the Business Administrator of Pequannock Township BOE, the Superintendent of Mt. Arlington Borough BOE

The Committee met over several months to discuss the factors that drive transportation efficiency. With the assistance of the Office of Student Transportation, the committee sent out a survey to be completed by each district. The survey was distributed by email and posted on a central website. The committee received almost a 100% response from the districts in Morris County, demonstrating a level of commitment by the districts of Morris County to improve efficiency standards in transportation.

The Committee also reviewed the status of the three districts that were below the efficiency requirement. Recommendations were provided to those three districts, which the Committee believes will bring them into compliance with the efficiency standards. Rated districts in Morris County meeting or exceeding the efficiency standard of 120% presently represent 92% of the 35

rated districts. It is anticipated for the 2009-2010 school year our rating may be as high as 99% due to the implementation of recommendations for the three districts below the efficiency standard.

The major conclusion drawn by the Committee is to promote increased communication and coordination with all school districts within the county, which will lead to greater efficiencies. In addition to the recommendations listed below, the members of the Committee have agreed to continue to meet to establish regional sections in Morris County, which will begin continuous and ongoing information sharing. This is expected to lead to the centralization of information, and promote sharing and efficiencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Committee meetings, reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Morris County, the following recommendations are made in an effort to enhance transportation efficiency.

Recommendation 1: *Meet regularly with contiguous districts to discuss potential sharing of transportation services for greater efficiencies.* Districts need to talk to each other about capacity to provide bussing. In order to accomplish this, districts need to meet regularly, review their equipment capacity and determine what routes and/or equipment can be shared.

Recommendation 2: *Develop long-term commitments between districts for the purchase of transportation equipment, and the hiring of drivers.* Districts that have capacity are sometimes reluctant to share the cost of equipment if changes in transportation requirements could result in loss of financial support. Long-term interlocal agreements can assure each party that purchases of equipment and responsibilities for employment of personnel will be shared over a period longer than one year.

Recommendation 3: *Develop a regional cluster of school districts to share transportation.* A master configuration of which districts should talk to each other is necessary to provide for the feasibility of sharing. The entire county does not necessarily constitute the most logical configuration for centralized bussing. Local geography and traffic patterns have an impact on the coordination of transportation between districts. The impact of possible consolidation of districts must also be considered.

Recommendation 4: *Hold mandated meetings with county and state athletic associations and transportation providers to take place annually.* Scheduling for athletic events, while not in itself part of efficiency, can impact on bussing capacity. Conferences and state athletic organizations need to be a part of the scheduling of events with transportation requirements as a consideration.

Recommendation 5: *Propose a county wide or regional cluster bell schedule.* Each district bell schedule and calendar can have a significant impact on transportation sharing, leading to efficiency. Sussex County has voluntarily adopted a standard calendar. In promoting sharing, regional calendars and sending receiving calendars should be considered, before consideration is given to a countywide calendar. In an effort to coordinate schedules and calendars, even on a regional basis, a long-term commitment to accomplish that, must include the coordination of current labor contracts and future negotiations.

Recommendation 6: *Administer the scheduling of all special education transportation through a central agency.* Scheduling for special education schools, which include the schools themselves, through a central agency would facilitate what districts, can do, and what needs to sub contracted. Requiring districts to send all of their special education transportation needs to a countywide website gives each district information for more efficient financial planning.

Recommendation 7: *Expand the availability information on transportation to all districts.* Training sessions, which draw upon the expertise of district professionals, is needed to provide valuable information on the opportunities available to improve efficiency.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6 (b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

1. Centralize data of public, nonpublic and special education transportation in the county:

The survey data collected needs to be assessed, centrally posted, and continuously updated to provide the most current information. A centralized registry of all routes operated by districts or contracted by districts, needs to be established for regular, and nonpublic and special education transportation to facilitate sharing.

2. Partition county in to regional cluster to promote efficiency:

The design of the regional consortia needs to be established based on current geography and traffic patterns, with consideration towards current calendars, and bell schedules. This would include contiguous districts, regionals, send/receives, and any proposed consolidations planned. Once completed, regularly scheduled meetings should begin.

3. Study the impact of a countywide calendar on transportation efficiency.

Research on the impact of a countywide calendar needs to be completed before recommendations about its possible “efficiency” in Morris County can be made. This should include schedules of private special education school and other nonpublic schools where districts are responsible for transportation.

CONCLUSION

This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Morris County. By working together, districts recognize that much efficiency can be achieved not only in transportation, but those relating to special education, extra curricular activities, nonpublic services and other areas that are part of an intricate educational system.

Attachment A

Students Transported in County									
DISTRICT	Resident Enrollment	Regular Education	Special Ed. Out of District	Nonpublic	Special Ed. In-District	Total	Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
Boonton Town	986	14	30	0	8	52	0	0.69	350,387
Boonton Twp.	809.5	712	51	0	23	786	63	1.69	532,439
Butler Borough	949.5	501	35	13	7	556	70	1.08	518,114
Chatham	3641	1037	82	130	8	1257	145	1.66	1,451,198
Chester	1439	1277	21	128	147	1573	59	1.42	1,266,239
Denville Twp.	2010	1876	4	15	114	2009	106	1.85	584,843
Dover Town	2720	251	76	1	53	381	4	2.02	866,535
East Hanover Twp. ESC	1148	1128	22	57	71	1278	55	1.68	840,649
Florham Park	1037	285	16	3	4	308	73	1.08	470,732
Hanover Park Reg.	1546	1325	57.5	220	129.5	1732	74	4.89	1,609,146
Hanover Twp.	1585	875	45	12	0	932	51	2.25	1,096,074
Harding Twp.	451	316	24	113	27	480	162	-	569,185
Jefferson Twp.	3664	3034	108	146	503.5	3791.5	121	1.90	2,208,666
Kinnelon	2220	2025	47.5	55	128.5	2256	106	1.47	1,810,149
Lincoln Park	1232	904	81	55	81	1121	103	1.82	1,190,345
Long Hill Twp.	1067	683	10	67	49	809	83	1.30	828,855
Madison	2180	157	32	146	28	363	125	1.32	809,036
Mendham Borough	669	81	3	30	2	116	32	-	208,943
Mendham Twp.	904	853	13	88	76	1030	72	2.69	680,246
Mine Hill Twp.	576	223	40	0	2	265	32	-	425,929
Montville	4435	2980	96.5	74	176.5	3327	228	1.94	2,731,638
M.C. Vo-Tech	617.5								
Morris Hills Reg.	2761.5	2396	90.5	44	292.5	2823	115	1.41	3,379,463
Morris Plains	821.5	506	24	18	7	555	45	2.25	541,500
Morris School Dist	4562.5	3342	281	388	514.5	4525.5	354	1.79	5,139,253
Mt. Arlington	608	458	53	30	69	610	21	-	376,809
Mt. Olive	4962.5	4047	159	176	395	4777	87	2.03	3,269,254
Mountain Lakes	1643	73	10	0	6	89	39	1.63	200,193
Netcong	302	0	3	0	0	3	0	-	43,529
Par-Troy Hills	7352	3918	277	77	131	4403	339	1.84	4,814,814
Pequannock	2467	118	90	22	2	232	154	1.31	515,738
Randolph Twp.	5614	4665	204	123	339	5331	210	3.09	2,964,842
Riverdale	392	247	13	0	4	264	20	1.89	224,062
Rockaway Borough	646	29	3	0	0	32	10	0.69	54,120
Rockaway Twp.	2737	2138	25	122	461	2746	74	1.70	2,011,653
Roxbury	4496	3714	97	152	93	4056	70	1.62	3,665,243
Washington Twp.	2899	2528	70	77	279	2954	53	2.59	2,834,151
West Morris Reg.	2359	2290	56	154	403	2903	92	1.53	2,039,564
Wharton Borough	785	0	17	0	1	18	32	1.32	124,891
Totals	81,294.50	51,006	2,367	2,736	4,635	60,744	3,479		53,248,427

[Source: Total Enrollment – “Application for State School Aid” 10/15/08 counts; Efficiency Rating – “Comparative Spending Guide” 03/09; All other data – “District Report of Transported Resident Students” 10/15/08]

Nonpublic students are not included in the resident enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public school students.

OCEAN COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Bruce Greenfield

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Ocean County is the second largest county in the State in terms of size and one of four New Jersey counties which border the Atlantic Ocean. Toms River serves as the County Seat and is centrally located within Ocean County. The County is in close proximity to two of the Nation's largest metropolitan centers, New York City, approximately 60 miles to the north, and Philadelphia, roughly 50 miles to the west. In addition, Atlantic City is located approximately 50 miles to the south of the County Seat. These metropolitan areas are easily accessible to Ocean County via several major highways.

Source: www.oceancountygov.com/history/overview.htm

Development in Ocean County has traditionally occurred along the coastal beaches and in the corridor formed by the Garden State Parkway and US Route 9. Major interchanges along the Garden State Parkway have encouraged development along east-west corridors, such as County Route 526, Route 528, State Highway 37 and State Highway 72. Interstate 195 is a major highway which is playing an increasing role in the development of the northern portion of the County. The Interstate provides direct access to the major employment areas of Trenton, the State Capitol, to the west and Monmouth County to the northeast. With the growing year round population, Ocean County's economic base has become increasingly diverse, with a variety of industries now supplementing traditional tourist related businesses.

Source: www.oceancountygov.com/history/overview.htm

There are 29 school districts located in Ocean County, which includes the Ocean County Vocational Technical School District. There are 76,309 students enrolled in public schools in Ocean County. 83,977 students are transported in Ocean County. This number represents both public and nonpublic school students. Thus, the nonpublic population has a significant impact on student transportation in Ocean County.

Source: NJDOE District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) October 2008

In addition to student transportation, the Ocean County Department of Transportation Services county transit system, Ocean Ride, includes two major services, the Reserve-A-Ride program and local bus routes. Reserve-A-Ride provides door to door, non-emergency medical transportation service to seniors (age 60 and over) and persons with disabilities. This service is offered by advanced registration primarily to destinations within Ocean County.

Source: www.co.ocean.nj.us/transportation

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for details.)

• County-wide public school enrollment (regular and special ed.) ¹	76,309
• Number of districts transporting students	19
• Number of students transported	83,977
Regular education students	63,472
Special education students – out of district	3,272
Nonpublic transported students	10,284
Special education students – in district	6,949
Total students transported	83,977
• Percentage of Transported ²	110%
• Total annual route costs	\$57.9M
• Efficiency Rating ³	
“Rated districts”	19
“Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	16/84%

Sources: District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) October 2008
Application for State School Aid (ASSA) Enrollment October 2008
NJDOE DATA <http://www.state.nj.us/education/guide/2009/trans.pdf>

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This report highlights the ongoing efforts in Ocean County to improve accountability and efficiencies with student transportation.

- Ocean County schools have established a county-wide public school calendar for 2009-2010. This initiative was the result of considerable cooperation among school districts. Administrators and school boards, in the spirit of mutual cooperation, recognized the need to standardize daily attendance to achieve efficiencies beyond their restricted boundaries. To the credit of these school districts, a mutually agreed county calendar is in effect for 2009-2010 and consideration of a 2010-2011 calendar is planned.

-
1. County-wide enrollment excludes the two county-wide special services and vocational school districts.
 2. For “Rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.
“Rated districts” are districts that provide bus transportation services through contracts, jointures or district operated busses.
 3. Percent transported includes public and nonpublic transported students, thus the percentage is greater than 100% of the public school enrollment. This percentage reflects the large population (10,284) of nonpublic students transported in Ocean County, especially 7,103 of the nonpublic students versus a resident enrollment of 5,409.

- The relative success of a standardized county school calendar promotes the discussion of increased efficiencies of transportation scheduling, including staggering bell schedules to facilitate multiple tier bus routes and transportation jointures. Districts have been exploring efficiency possibilities related to pick up and drop off times, also a standardized late opening policy is under consideration.
- Central to the task of providing efficient transportation is the sharing of data among districts. Particular attention is focused on special education programs provided in schools throughout the county and special education programs provided by private schools for the handicapped. Transportation coordinators are linked to child study team student placements by a computer program initiated by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools and the Ocean County Vocational-Technical School. A data base developed for special education program placements has been modified to include transportation information provided by the New Jersey Department of Education's District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) data base. School districts are now able to search all the schools in Ocean County and private schools for the handicapped for special education program placement availability, along with a listing of those school districts that transport to the placement location.
- The Executive County Superintendent of Schools has facilitated discussions and encouraged districts to share transportation services. Several districts are working on inter-local agreements and jointure agreements to combine transportation services with two or more schools. Notably, Pinelands Regional and Little Egg Harbor School Districts continue to expand cooperative transportation bids, jointures and tiers.
- Monmouth-Ocean Education Services Commission (MOESC) has serviced Ocean County as a county based services provider. MOESC provides nonpublic and special education transportation for many districts in Ocean County. Their service coordinates those bus routes that individual districts find difficult to manage.
- District efficiency ratings are provided by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). The three districts in Ocean County that did not reach the minimum efficiency rating had various circumstances including geographic limitations which contribute to a low efficiency rating. Regardless, the county office staff is working with those districts to achieve a minimum efficiency rating and improve the efficiency ratings in other districts.
- Annual meetings and local transportation personnel have been productive in addressing nonpublic transportation efficiencies. Each year Ocean County provides an opportunity for school bus contractors, public and nonpublic schools to work on transportation issues. This meeting and other meetings throughout the county have been instrumental in providing information and unique solutions for school transportation.
- Notably, there are over 100 nonpublic schools in Ocean County which receive transportation services provided by public school districts in the county. The Lakewood School district reported in October 2008 a total of 17,611 students transported. This represents approximately 4,243 public and 13,368 nonpublic students transported by Lakewood. This large amount of students, coupled with the many hazardous bus routes

that include Route 70, Route 9, County Line Road, Route 88, and other highly traveled roads, combine to stretch the resources of the district.

- The Ocean Ride transportation system currently includes 17 bus routes which operate throughout Ocean County. The routes are designed to connect key residential areas with popular destinations such as local governmental facilities, healthcare, shopping, employment, social services and other transit connections. This county wide resource may have application for unique student transportation issues if legislation would permit the Executive County Superintendent to permit selected placement of a student capable of utilizing this service to promote safe and efficient transportation of students.
- Ocean-Monmouth-Atlantic Council (OMAC) for Transportation and shared services meetings to provide a forum to address a multitude of transportation issues. OMAC is an active organization where transportation coordinators and contractors meet several times during the year. Equipment innovations, training events for bus drivers, and general discussions concerning other emerging topics include:

GPS Devices for Bus Tracking

Video Recorders for Safety Purposes

MERSA and H1N1 Influenza Sanitation of School Buses

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The first meeting of the Transportation Shared Service subcommittee was held on May 13, 2008. The subcommittee was composed of 12 individuals comprised of district superintendents, business administrators and transportation coordinators. The purpose of this meeting was to develop processes, methodologies and mechanisms that would elicit information to be utilized in the development of the Ocean County Transportation Efficiency Study.

Everyone at the meeting believed that transportation for special education students should be a top priority and an area that could be impacted in a positive manner by the utilization of this information. Another area that played a major role within this transportation analysis was the development of a county wide calendar.

In addition to school district initiatives to share transportation resources, the Ocean County Transportation Department has been able to provide services. Vehicle maintenance, specialized routes, and fuel cooperatives are areas that need further investigation for improved efficiency and cost reduction.

Further, discussions initiated by the Executive County Superintendent included county and state representatives to study possible safe road crossing solutions such as, installing sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, and other improvements that could eliminate costly hazardous routes.

The annual transportation meetings held in June, 2009 and May, 2008 were conducted by the Executive County Superintendent. These meetings included public and nonpublic schools, Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission representatives, and transportation contractors. Input from these meetings confirmed common transportation problems and

provided a forum to express concerns and solutions for specific issues that concerned all in the room. Several suggestions included the need for a county calendar, staggered school hours and coordination of nonpublic and vocational bus runs.

The Ocean-Monmouth-Atlantic Council (OMAC) meetings have provided another opportunity for district transportation staff and transportation contractors to share common concerns. Topics at these meetings range from student discipline on buses to participation in the Bus Rodeo for drivers. The sharing of concerns and innovative solutions among transportation professionals has provided a valuable resource in addressing successful implementation of the Transportation Accountability Regulations.

Coupled with county shared service meetings, annual county transportation forums and OMAC association meetings were individual meetings with school districts to address transportation issues. Several meetings were held to build a consensus county school calendar. Over several months with district superintendents, bus coordinators, business administrators and curriculum experts, a county calendar was established for 2009-2010. The county office expects to continue this initiative along with other issues for discussion that includes a standard delay opening time and more attention to staggered school times.

Individual districts have met with the county office to discuss remedies to low school bus efficiency ratings. Certain districts have requested the county office to participate in meetings to improve nonpublic route management. Meetings with local municipalities and county officials were held to improve safety for pedestrians and subsequently reduce the costly operation of hazardous bus routes. Several meetings with NJDOE transportation staff and Ocean Ride administrators have been held to look at the obstacles of providing special transportation for selected students.

The Ocean County Purchasing Cooperative has a county-wide system established for purchasing buses, other transportation equipment and supplies. A generic bid specification should be developed through the Ocean County Vocational School for a school bus capable of being used by any school district in Ocean County through the Ocean County Bid Portal.

Source: <http://webhost.co.ocean.nj.us/ocbidportal.nsf/mainbids?openframeset>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the review of data provided by district surveys, county-wide meetings, NJDOE data analysis, internal and external environmental factors, the following recommendations are offered for consideration:

Recommendation 1: *Establish a a single county-wide calendar in each county.* As stated previously, a county wide calendar, agreed upon by all districts, has been established for 2009-2010 in Ocean County. This calendar allows for more efficient transportation of students throughout the county.

Recommendation 2: *Establish coordinated ranges of starting times and ending times for all elementary, middle and high schools in the county.* This will address the coordination of bus routes and bell schedules to achieve efficient transportation. A tiered system may be necessary due to the availability of buses.

Recommendation 3: *Require nonpublic, private and charter schools to observe all efficiency standards that apply to public schools.*

Recommendation 4: *Continue to provide, through the Executive County Superintendent, a real time data base maintained by each school district that offers current special education program offerings by school. This information allows school districts to quickly determine if an adjacent or a school district in close proximity has a suitable special education program with availability to share resources. In addition, transportation routes can be displayed to encourage jointure agreements to reduce costs and improve student access to local special education programs.*

Recommendation 5: *Authorize the Executive County Superintendent to place students on county-wide transportation systems where appropriate. This requires legislation which affects both New Jersey Department of Education Transportation and New Jersey Department of Transportation statutes.*

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6 (b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

1. The coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county for both public and nonpublic schools;

Ocean County has initiated a county calendar which permits schools to operate their transportation routes in conjunction with other districts in the county. This initiative promotes cost savings and efficiencies throughout the county. The county-wide calendar committee will meet in November and December 2009 to begin planning the 2010-2011 calendar.

2. Staggering bell schedules in order to implement a tiered system of busing within the school district and with adjoining school districts;

Implementation of the county calendar has led to new opportunities for districts to coordinate transportation routing. New starting times for certain schools encourages opportunities for cost effective tiered bussing solutions resulting in financial savings. The transportation subcommittee will continue to meet to address these issues.

3. Centrally coordinating transportation for out of district special education placements, including practices and/or policies in place to more effectively provide for special education transportation services;

Ocean County has initiated a data base for special education programs offered by school districts. This data listing is utilized to promote effective sharing of special education resources, which links to transportation services. A single placement of a special education student in an adjacent school district enhances the student's educational program and produces significant cost savings. The databases for special education

programs and transportation will be continually reviewed for effectiveness and utilization.

4. Consolidating transportation services in combinations of two or more school districts;

Several school districts have shared transportation resources utilizing inter-local agreements and jointure contracts. The county office will continue to facilitate the development of inter-local agreements and jointure contracts.

5. Establishing a consolidated countywide transportation system by jointure agreement or county based service provider;

MOESC has provided transportation services to schools in Ocean County for many years. Their services include transportation of nonpublic students, special education routes. Often, MOESC is able to combine transportation routes for districts. The county office and school districts will continue to work with MOESC to improve transportation efficiencies.

6. Analyzing district school bus routing and scheduling to encourage the use of efficient routing practices;

As districts are able to adjust their calendars and starting times, more opportunities can emerge for efficient routing practices. Information available to districts from the District Report of Transported Resident Students and the innovative special education program data base provide opportunities for development of efficient routing practices.

7. Improving cooperation between local boards of education and nonpublic school administrators leading to more efficient and effective student transportation services; and soliciting input from current public school district transportation employee representatives and school employee representatives regarding ways to institute efficiencies and savings.

Ocean County has various venues for public and nonpublic transportation participants to express concerns and resolve issues. Annual county-wide transportation meetings, OMAC, MOESC and shared services forums combine to solicit input for transportation surveys were conducted to identify special concerns by districts that can be related to the whole county. This information will be analyzed to improve efficiencies. Private transportation contractors will continue to express their concerns and suggestions for increased cost savings and efficiencies.

CONCLUSION

This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Ocean County. By working together, districts recognize that many efficiencies can be achieved not only in transportation, but those relating to special education, extra curricular activities, nonpublic services, and other areas that are part of an intricate educational system.

Consolidation of districts, the sharing of services, and providing county-wide forums for districts to reach out for assistance and explore innovative ideas, cannot be overlooked as an unanticipated result of this initial report required by the Accountability Regulations. The Transportation Committee recognizes the efforts of the legislature to respond to the public's cry for a more responsive attempt to develop an effective and efficient educational service. The efforts detailed in this report are coterminous with the public and legislators to produce changes that result in a world class educational product that serves our children and future.

ATTACHMENT A: OCEAN COUNTY TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS

Students Transported in County									
	Resident	Regular	Special Ed.		Special Ed.			Nonpublic	Efficiency
District	Enrollment	Education	Out-of-District	Nonpublic	In-District	Total		Aid-in-Lieu	Rating
									Costs
Barnegat	3,296	2,774	197	67	102	3,140		-	2.033
Bay Head	114	-	3	-	-	3		7	25,988
Beach Haven	57	64	-	3	2	69		-	1.257
Berkeley	1,949	1,578	142	83	98	1,901		14	2.281
Brick	10,361	8,044	606	987	1,599	11,236		101	2.270
Central Regional	2,078	1,742	63	111	336	2,252		9	1.798
Eagleswood	126	109	12	13	8	142		-	112,736
Island Heights	107	-	-	11	-	11		-	9,724
Jackson	9,802	8,123	147	608	1,453	10,331		110	2.118
Lacey	4,820	3,784	59	98	688	4,629		5	3.367
Lakehurst	576	138	65	-	10	213		-	330,224
Lakewood	5,409	10,255	653	7,103	281	18,292		404	1.680
Lavallette	202	54	10	7	-	71		4	1.257
Little Egg Harbor	1,537	1,550	108	62	107	1,827		2	1,450,043
Long Beach Island	221	199	7	13	14	233		-	0.843
Manchester	3,111	2,710	192	116	504	3,522		33	2.323
Ocean Gate	151	2	2	8	-	12		2	55,183
Ocean Twp.	978	943	31	18	14	1,006		-	675,517
Pinelands	1,847	1,477	63	33	350	1,923		9	3.102
Plumsted	1,836	1,541	26	-	180	1,747		17	1.862
Pt. Pl. Beach	689	5	16	-	3	24		-	0.787
Pt. Pl. Borough	3,124	1,445	83	56	4	1,588		22	2.008
Seaside Heights	184	-	4	-	-	4		-	28,600
Seaside Park	56	-	2	6	-	8		4	31,874
Southern Reg.	2,564	2,245	51	41	313	2,650		-	1.708
Stafford	2,459	2,200	205	95	62	2,562		-	1.325
Toms River Reg.	17,240	12,397	520	738	800	14,455		143	2.120
Tuckerton	237	93	5	7	21	126		-	1.194
Vo-Tech	1,178	-	-	-	-	-		-	
Totals	76,309	63,472	3,272	10,284	6,949	83,977		886	35.333
									57,912,819

Source: District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) October 2008; Application for State School Aid (ASSA) Enrollment October 2008; NJDOE DATA <http://www.state.nj.us/education/guide/2009/trans.pdf>
Nonpublic students are not in the Resident Enrollment but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

Attachment B

Committee Members

- Robert M. Gilmartin, Acting Executive County Superintendent
- Kathryn Davenport, Executive County School Business Administrator
- Lori Van Der Stad, Passaic County Transportation Coordinator
- Albert J. Guazzo, Superintendent, Lakeland Regional HS
- Robert Mooney, Superintendent, Hawthorne Schools
- Steve Cea, Business Administrator, West Milford Township Schools
- Richard Giglio, Business Administrator, Passaic County ESC and Passaic County Technical Institute
- Sonia Figueroa, Passaic County ESC Transportation Coordinator
- Aida Esquilin, Passaic City Transportation Coordinator
- Debbie Lypowy, Ringwood Transportation Coordinator
- Jack DeKnight, Hawthorne Schools Facilities Manager

Attachment A

Passaic County Transportation Statistics

		Students Transported in County							
	Resident***	Regular	Special Ed.		Special Ed.		Nonpublic	Efficiency	Route
DISTRICT	Enrollment	Education	Out-of-District	Nonpublic*	In-District	Total**	A.I.L.	Rating	Costs
BLOOMINGDALE BORO	951	162	52.0	27	28.0	269	120	0.96	\$ 844,816
CLIFTON CITY	10,859	1,989	108.0	263	515.0	2,875	1,121	1.20	\$ 3,173,808
HALEDON BORO	996	-	6.0	5	13.0	24	40	0.48	\$ 180,620
HAWTHORNE BORO	2,476	108	46.0	72	33.0	259	158	0.67	\$ 1,130,860
LAKELAND REGIONAL	1,156	716	49.5	107	68.5	941	22	1.54	\$ 1,241,405
LITTLE FALLS TWP	903	597	26.0	32	30.0	685	51	1.50	\$ 368,088
NORTH HALEDON BORO	695	210	18.0	53		281	113	1.09	\$ 276,840
PASSAIC CITY	11,891	311	767.5		0.5	1,079		1.02	\$ 5,764,062
PASSAIC CO MANCHESTER REG	806	126	23.0	164	6.0	319	50	0.95	\$ 483,739
PASSAIC VALLEY REGIONAL	1,275	1,089	26.5	40	3.5	1,159	86	1.28	\$ 1,029,313
PATERSON CITY	24,835	4,527	713.0	720	652.0	6,612	515	1.14	\$ 14,092,846
POMPTON LAKES BORO	1,682	3	61.0		3.0	67			\$ 581,927
PROSPECT PARK BORO	818	2	6.0	3	6.0	17	34		\$ 94,267
RINGWOOD BORO	1,368	1,239	107.0	118	92.0	1,556	19	2.48	\$ 1,486,650
TOTOWA BORO	1,007	320	11.0		20.0	351	60	0.83	\$ 422,435
WANAQUE BORO	972	43	47.0	55		145	28		\$ 415,627
WAYNE TWP	8,770	2,725	120.0	218	461.0	3,524	360	1.83	\$ 5,672,903
WEST MILFORD TWP	4,148	3,466	83.0	124	646.0	4,319	196	1.91	\$ 3,065,667
WEST PATERSON BORO	1,054	469	7.0	14	19.0	509	111	1.77	\$ 379,861
Totals	76,660	18,102.0	2,277.5	2,015	2,596.5	24,991	3,084		\$ 40,705,734

CF 24,991

Sources:

Total Enrollment--"Application for State School Aid," 10/15/08 counts

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide," 03/09

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students," 10/15/08

** Non-Public Students are not included in the Resident Enrollments in Col #1*

*** Includes Technical School Students not included in Resident Enrollment for each district*

**** Resident Enrollments for PCESC and PC Charter School are included in each district's Resident Enrollment*

PASSAIC COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Robert Gilmartin

Acting Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Passaic County is located in north-central New Jersey and borders New York State to the north. It also borders four other New Jersey counties on its remaining sides: Sussex and Morris to the West; Essex to the South and Bergen to the East. Passaic County has the distinction of being in the shape of an hourglass with a large bulb at the north end and a large bulb at the south end, connected by a corridor of land. Locally, the two large sections are referred to as up county and “down” county. The up county or northern section of the hour glass shares some characteristics of its rural neighbor, Sussex County, including the hills and open fields. The “down” county section of the hour glass has both suburban and urban areas intermingled.

The three largest urban districts are the former Abbott districts, Passaic City and Paterson and the rim district of Clifton. There are 24 educational entities within the county. These 24 entities are comprised of 19 regular operating districts, 1 vocational-technical school, 1 educational services commission, and 3 charter schools. These nineteen (19) districts transport students to and from school, while the students of the vocational school and educational services commission are transported by the resident districts.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	76,660
• Number of districts transporting students	19
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	18,102
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	2,278
➤ Non-public transported students	2,015
➤ Special education students—in-district	2,597
➤ Total students transported	24,991
• Percentage of students transported	32.6%
• Total annual route costs	\$40.7M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	16
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	8 (50%)

Sources: Total Enrollment – “Application for State School Aid” 10/15/08
Comparative Spending Guide, 3/09 (efficiency rating); DRTRS, 10/15/08

Listed below are the major reasons why eight of the districts do not meet the efficiency standard of 1.20:

- Incorrect data submitted by districts for the DRTRS “Operator” category – miscoding errors.
- Impact of 504 student transportation not being considered special education (Passaic City)
- Courtesy bussing policies (North Haledon and Totowa)

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the two county-wide special services and vocational school districts.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Passaic County schools have already established a consolidated, county-wide public school calendar for 2009-2010. There are some idiosyncrasies that need yet to be adjusted, but the spirit of cooperation and recognition of the need to standardize daily attendance to achieve efficiencies does exist. To the credit of the up-county districts, they have worked diligently to eliminate most differences in their calendars and have also made efforts to stagger bell schedules in order to reduce transportation costs and maximize efficiency. Going forward, the county goal for 2010-2011 is to achieve that same level of coordination county-wide.
- The single most important component to cutting student transportation costs and efficiently structuring routes is access for all districts to a shared database of both student and send/receive information. An area of greatest savings can be realized in organizing the transport of students to both out-of-district Special Education and Non-Public schools. In many cases other counties have organized their county-wide transportation data through a centrally-located Coordinated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) to more efficiently share its routes. Passaic County, by the nature of its shape gravitated to using two CTSA's. One CTSA is the Educational Services Commission, located down-county in Wayne. The other CTSA is one of the regional high-schools (Lakeland) located in the up county community of Wanaque.

These two distinct regions of Passaic County have had differing histories regarding inter-district cooperation for out-of-district Special Education and Non-Public students. The up-county region has organized itself informally but very cooperatively by sharing a database of students attending 119 non-public and private schools for the disabled originating in the 6 educational entities in that part of the county as well as 6 districts from contiguous counties outside Passaic County.

Much of the energy for this collaboration stemmed from the up-county CTSA at the Lakeland Regional HS. Today, that dynamic has shifted but the cooperation amongst the up county districts still exists. These informal steps have generated greater efficiencies for all the districts that participate, including those in neighboring counties.

- A number of districts have created both inter-local and jointure agreements throughout Passaic County and have realized significant cost reductions in doing so. There are also several districts that aggressively tier their routes and have mentored additional districts wishing in that strategy.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures regulations, a Passaic County Transportation Committee ("Committee") was assembled in the spring of 2009. The committee was composed of the Executive County Superintendent, the Executive County School Business Administrator, the Passaic County Transportation Coordinator, three experienced district transportation coordinators, two district superintendents, two district school business administrators and one district facility manager. (See Attachment B for a list of committee members.)

The members were asked to perform a basic SWOT analysis, identifying the county's transportation Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, using the eight points in the above-referenced code as a guide for their discussions. Additionally, the Committee utilized data from the transportation survey October 2008 DRTRS data, a county-office analysis of districts with less than 120% efficiency, the sample database for out-of-district students (used by 6 districts) and considered the county's unique geographic shape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on those same reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Passaic County, the following are recommendations to provide such services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner:

Recommendation 1: *Coordinate public school calendars and bell schedules on a county-wide basis but also regionally and/or statewide to promote efficiencies reaching as far as possible from any single school district. Coordinate calendars and bell schedules between the public and all nonpublic, special education and charter schools to create maximum cost savings.* Because cooperation has been difficult to achieve or nonexistent with the nonpublic group, some form of legislative change may be required to ensure that this level of coordination of calendars and bell schedules takes place.

Recommendation 2: *Develop an effective method of communication between the public school districts and the non-public, charter and special education schools to promote sharing of student enrollment information.* Therefore, all districts would be aware of which students are attending what schools in the non-public sector. This method of communication should include a deadline for each district to submit a final list of where they will be sending their out-of-district special education students.

It became clear among all parties in the committee's discussions that one of the largest obstacles to efficiently routing and bidding cost-effective routes for out-of-district students is the untimely submission of student placement information. Although the Passaic County Educational Services Commission (ESC) requires such information by June 5th, it is common that the information is not submitted until mid or late August and often not until Labor Day. Requiring districts to submit information with enough time to construct and bid the most efficient routes would dramatically reduce costs in this area. This could be accomplished if all superintendents in the county made this goal a priority and cooperatively set firm program-placement deadlines for their child study teams to have annual reviews completed before the end of May. By doing this, the districts could submit all district special education student transportation information to the ESC by the June 5th deadline.

Recommendation 3: *Establish a statewide student transportation database or at minimum a regional database to enable districts to construct more efficient transportation collaborations than would be possible when confining the database to their own county.* This may mean ultimately that each county-level database has the ability to "talks to" other county-level databases through a commonly accepted program.

Because Passaic County has the distinction of being in the shape of an hourglass, its geography creates a challenge to creating collaborations for transportation that are confined to Passaic County only. Passaic County's geographic shape has made it even more apparent and necessary to districts

within its borders to create inter-county collaborations in order to establish the most efficient relationships with other districts for out-of-district transportation services.

Recommendation 4: *Designate a county-level agency responsible for accumulating, organizing and sharing student transportation information for Passaic County as a mechanism for feeding local county information into a state-wide or regional student transportation database.* A logical entity for management of this function would be the county's educational services commission. This conclusion requires careful scrutiny of Passaic County ESC's current stability and what steps would be necessary to rebuild and restructure it so that it is a viable, self-supporting entity.

Recommendation 5: *Develop a method of asset-sharing that would enable districts to keep their busses running a majority of the day and minimize "downtime."* Within Passaic County there is a huge network of transportation assets that could be shared in a creative fashion to maximize the tremendous investment made by each district that owns vehicles. This would likely require legislative change and/or development of new software to coordinate districts owning available vehicles with districts in need of vehicles.

Recommendation 6: *Place limitations on the public schools' obligation to transport non-public and special education school students.* In 1995, as part of the Government That Works Initiative Deloitte and Touche conducted a study of New Jersey's student transportation system and concluded that this state has the highest cost of pupil transportation in the nation. It is primarily the result of nonpublic and special education students' transportation that contributed to this distinction. This is because many states do not transport their nonpublic students and, if they do, transportation is only offered when empty or existing seats are already free on existing routes. This recommendation would require legislative change.

Recommendation 7: *Improve the accuracy of DRTRS reporting.* Since the Department of Education relies on this information to make informed decisions regarding student transportation within its borders it is essential that the reporting inaccuracies be corrected. The DRTRS information is also used as a basis for awarding transportation aid and calculating each district's efficiency rating.

It is recommended that this improved accuracy be achieved through some of the following steps:

- Closer county-office supervision of the districts' DRTRS submission
- Enhanced training of the districts in the DRTRS submission process by county-office staff (Passaic County will be holding individual DRTRS district submission meetings in Fall 2009).
- The addition of a reconciliation period for the DRTRS report much like the Send/Receive edits of the ASSA submission. This will eliminate duplicate reporting by districts or inaccuracies reported by host/joiner arrangements.
- Some form of county-office sign off should be established before the final DRTRS is submitted to Trenton. We have already begun such a process in Passaic County and expect significant changes in the data that will be submitted in the fall of 2009.

Recommendation 8: *Explore the use of “hubs” in student transportation routing with any necessary legislative changes being proposed and enacted to facilitate districts’ ability to utilize this strategy.* A “hub” is a location that is central to or at a crossroads/intersection of several major transportation “feeder” routes with a reasonably protected and/or supervised stopping area available for students. At this juncture, students can exit one vehicle and re-board a 2nd vehicle or wait for a 2nd vehicle in order to continue his/her journey to their destination. The up county members of our committee have used this strategy to great advantage and increased their efficiency and lowered costs in doing so.

One limitation to the ability of districts to coordinate routes using “hubs” is the widely varying Board policies for “maximum time on bus” established by different school districts. In Passaic County we have a range in Board-established “maximums” of from 30 minutes on a bus to 90 minutes on a bus. Those who have utilized the “hub” concept shared that a Board policy of a 30-minute maximum on a bus is far too restrictive for taking advantage of this “hub” concept. Districts could modify their policies in order to adopt two different “maximum times on bus”; one for in-district to/from transportation and a different maximum for out-of-district transportation.

Recommendation 9: *Place limitations on public schools’ practice of placing special education students in private schools for the disabled that are much further from the district of residence than is geographically necessary to obtain that same program of instruction.* This recommendation is being made in conjunction with Recommendation 2. School districts should be required to seek out-of-district placements in the closest facility to the district of residence that offers the program outlined in a student’s IEP. This really supports the concept of “least restrictive environment” and any legislative changes that would be necessary to ensure this practice is followed should be enacted.

Recommendation 10: *Examine hindrances to transportation vehicle ownership, with a goal of eliminating unnecessary or wasteful procedures, streamlining the inspection process and extending the legal life of 12-year-old vehicles to 15 or more years if they are still in excellent condition.* (Assembly Bill A-371). In several scenarios that the committee examined, it was demonstrated that a CTSA that owned its own vehicles could more cost-effectively run routes than a CTSA that did not own vehicles and had to bid all its routes.

Recommendation 11: *In order to address the law that requires a seat on the bus for every student being transported to and from school, it is suggested that a statewide, legally appropriate “Waiver Form” be developed.* Some districts already use such a waiver form when a parent and/or student wishes to waive a seat on the bus for students that drive, are driven or have some other form of transportation to and from school. This waiver would be subject to cancellation in writing should the student’s circumstances change for any reason. While in force, the waiver would free the district from reserving a seat for a non-rider and enable it to further maximize capacity on its routes.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

- Immediate action is being taken to expand the up-county out-of-district Special Education and Non-Public transportation database to a county-wide database. Details concerning how this will be accomplished and managed are currently being reviewed. Coupled with the expansion of this database will be the increased structuring of collaborative agreements

- Work is underway to create a coordinated school calendar county-wide to eliminate most differences in varying district schedules in order to reduce transportation costs and maximize efficiency. It is planned that in conjunction with this bell times can be staggered to boost vehicle efficiencies.
- Focus is being directed from the Passaic County Office to the county's Educational Services Commission in order to identify the historical issues that have recently weakened it fiscally and programmatically. In Passaic County the ESC has in recent years experienced numerous setbacks through withdrawals of district participation which has dramatically affected its fiscal standing. It has gone from an educational entity with a fund balance of \$1.4 million in 2005 to a deficit of \$4,623 in 2008. The committee spent a good deal of time examining the reasons for this and discussed at length the need for incorporating safeguards into the design of the future ESC fee structure to ensure that it be appropriately compensated for the tremendous investment in software and man hours necessary to manage a county-wide transportation database.

Currently the Passaic County ESC charges the following service rates for routes it has contracted with districts:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----|
| • Member contracting | > \$500K | 3% |
| • Member contracting | < \$500K | 4% |
| • Non-Member | | 8% |

The second CTSA in Passaic County (Lakeland Reg. HS) charges 3% across the board. It is clear from our committee's discussions that there is a constant need for sharing of this county-level transportation information and route-structuring service that doesn't always result in an ESC transportation contract. By instituting a fee structure that would compensate the ESC for the use of the data or structuring of routes, all parties could benefit from the management of such a database. Various fee structures were discussed and different options could be considered to optimally address this need:

- Charge a per-student fee for data entry into the county-wide or regional transportation database
- Establish a "finders fee" for constructing a route no matter who hosts the route/contract
- Create a multi-tiered fee structure for each step in the routing process from identifying students for a route to constructing the route, developing specs, bidding/awarding the bid and hosting the route
- Decide how to handle "renewal" routes
- Additional price-per-student rates could be considered, as follows:
 - Price \$ X.XX per student if a contracted route
 - Price \$Y.YY per student if a jointure
 - Price \$Z.ZZ per student if tiering

This effort is already underway and is also discussed in Recommendation #4.

- In order to enhance the timeliness and understanding of county transportation contracting, the County Office of Education has created a training program for those Passaic County district employees involved with transportation contracts. This was announced to the districts at a County-wide transportation meeting held on June 10, 2009. The training will take place during two separate weeks in the month of July, 2009. A heightened understanding of the contracting process and options available to districts will be covered, as well as detailed information regarding the submission and recording of contracts. Coupled with this enhanced instructional support, the County Office will renew its enforcement of contract deadlines so that resulting data is timelier and more valuable.
- Stemming from the county-office analysis of the eight Passaic County districts with a less-than-120% efficiency rating, it was learned that in all cases districts had major reporting inaccuracies that significantly skewed the DRTRS information. The Passaic County Office of Education will undertake a second training program in late September for all Passaic County district personnel who are involved with the submission of their district's DRTRS data. This was also unveiled at the June 10 county-wide transportation meeting. This training will culminate with individual district meetings at the end of October focused on correcting any inaccuracies and eliminating skewed data for the final DRTRS submission.
- The energy and momentum of the Passaic County Student Transportation Task Force was captured in the unanimous decision to continue meetings on a quarterly basis in order to further the important goals established during this analysis and solidify the cost-cutting strategies and identified efficiencies.

CONCLUSION

The process that was followed to accumulate, organize and analyze the data necessary for this report has done much more than generate a series of worthy, cost-cutting recommendations for both Passaic County and the State as a whole. In addition, it has heightened awareness and identified strengths and challenges that are now being actively addressed to promote more cost-effective transportation throughout Passaic County. The creation of the Passaic County Student Transportation Task Force ensures that this remains a continuing work in progress.

SALEM COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Robert Bumpus

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Salem County, “The Garden Spot of the Garden State”, is located in the southwest corner of the State. The County covers 337 square miles of land and 35 square miles of water. Nearly half of the land is actively farmed. Salem County is bounded by the Delaware River to the West; Gloucester County to Northeast and Cumberland County to the Southeast. [Source: Salem County website www.salemcountynj.gov]. The 2000 U.S. Census reports less than 65,000 residents with a population density of 190 people per square mile, the lowest population and population density in the State. This sparse population density limits the ability of the rural school districts to tier routes effectively because of the amount of time required for a single transportation route. 25.6% of this population was under the age of 18 while 14.5% were 65 years of age or older. The County is comprised of 15 municipalities, including one city, three boroughs and eleven townships. [Source: 2000 U.S. Census]

There are fifteen public school districts in Salem County. These fifteen districts include thirteen regular operating school districts and two county-wide school districts: the Salem County Vocational Technical School (including the N. J. Regional Day School at Mannington) and the Salem County Special Services School District. There are five non-public schools, one private school for the handicapped and no Charter schools.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for details.)

County-wide Resident Enrollment (Regular & Special Education)*	10,762
Number of Districts Transporting Students	11
Number of Students Transported	
Regular Education Students	7,146.0
Special Education Students (Out-of-District)	154.0
Special Education Students (In-District)	99.0
Non-Public Students	17.5
Total Number of Student Transported	7,416.5
Percentage of Resident Enrollment Transported	68.8%
Total Annual Cost of Routes	\$6.7M
Efficiency Ratings	
Number of Rated Districts	11
Number of Rated Districts Meeting or Exceeding 120% Standard	5/45%

*County-wide resident enrollment excludes the Salem County Vocational Technical School, the N. J. Regional Day School at Mannington, the Salem County Special Services School District and non-public students.

[Sources: 2008 ASSA and DRTRS]

Five districts exceed the efficiency rating standard of 120%. Five of remaining six districts are K-8 districts that cannot easily achieve the 120% standard because of conflicting starting and ending times in sending/receiving relationships for high school students; they cannot tier K-8 and 9-12 routes. The sixth district not meeting the standard is a PK-12 regional district that provides transportation within a large geographic area that is sparsely populated. It is noted that transportation for all but one of these six districts is provided by a transportation contractor while three of the five districts achieving the standard use district-operated buses.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Thirteen regular operating districts are participating in the Salem County Cooperative Transportation Program which is operated by the Gloucester County Special Service School District (GCSSSD) in 2009-10. The GCSSSD receives transportation requests for students in need of transportation, including homeless, nonpublic, public, special education and vocational school students. Transportation requests are collected, collated, bid or quoted. GCSSSD combines students from several districts and/or receiving schools, thus eliminating the need for separate jointures between districts. In addition, it provides training workshops for bus aides, bus drivers and transportation supervisors and coordinators.

It is anticipated that the July 1, 2009 merger of the Salem County Board for Vocational Education and the Salem County Special Services School District Board of Education will provide an opportunity to explore and develop plans for an increased variety of countywide shared services that will include student transportation.

The establishment of a multi-county special education database will provide the opportunity to expand the database to include transportation routes and possibly surplus transportation supplies.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A "Transportation Efficiency Study Committee" authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6, and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-57, was formed to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Salem County. The Committee consisted of a PK-12 regular district transportation coordinator utilizing district operated buses; a PK-8 school business administrator in a district that contracts for all transportation; the SCSSSD business administrator who is responsible for coordinating the Salem County Transportation Cooperative; the Director of the Gloucester County Special Services School District (Salem County Transportation Cooperative); a PK-12 transportation secretary who is responsible for district-wide, contracted transportation under the supervision of the school business administrator; the manager of a transportation contracting firm that provides to/from school transportation services for five Salem County school districts as well as special education, field trips and special program transportation for an additional four districts; the Executive County School Business Administrator and the Salem County Office of Education Administrative Clerk who is responsible for oversight of all transportation contracts, reporting, etc. (See Attachment B for a list of Committee members.)

The Committee reviewed the eight elements of the transportation efficiency study as defined in N.J.6A:23A-2.6. An immediate outcome includes a commitment to continue to work as a committee in an effort to improve transportation services county-wide. The Committee will support development of a multi-county database of regular and special education transportation routes as a component of the special education database developed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.7; encourage development of a county-wide school calendar and develop a checklist and/or guidelines for use by Child Study Team personnel when requesting special education transportation services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *Mandate countywide, if not statewide, school calendars that include anticipated transportation services for all public and non-public schools, including county vocational schools and special services school districts. Mandate staggered bell schedules in districts that could reduce transportation costs with tiered bus routes.*

Recommendation 2: *Encourage the involvement of transportation department personnel in contract negotiation planning to insure that changes in bell schedules, school calendars, length of teaching day, etc., do not conflict with transportation efficiencies such as staggered start/end times, compatible school calendars and tiered routes. If efficiencies cannot be met through this process, then consideration should be made to remove these items from collective bargaining.*

Recommendation 3: *Encourage improved communication between district transportation departments and child study team personnel. When short notice for a special education route is provided, it is often difficult to obtain the most efficient transportation at the lowest possible cost. It is also critical that complete and accurate IEP information is provided at the time of the transportation request such as seizure protocols, bus aides and lifting requirements, car seats, special vests/harnesses and wheelchair accessible vehicles.*

Recommendation 4: *Establish and maintain a regional database of transportation routes for districts to access so they may arrange shared/joint transportation for special education programs, alternative programs, athletic and co-curricular activities, vocational school programs and non-public transportation routes.*

Recommendation 5: *Establish and maintain a regional database of surplus transportation supplies, including bus parts, car seats, harnesses, etc, enabling districts to buy, sell, donate or borrow items as needed.*

Recommendation 6: *Coordinate regional, uniform bus driver and bus aide training to provide improved training at a lower cost. Training should be offered throughout the school year and not only at the beginning of the school year.*

Recommendation 7: *Establish a formal process allowing parents/guardians to waive transportation to/from school throughout the State, possibly offering a monetary incentive similar to non-public aid-in-lieu of transportation.*

Recommendation 8: *Offer state sponsored, uniform regional training to school district personnel responsible for any aspect of pupil transportation planning and reporting, i.e. transportation department, business, superintendent and principal's office staff as well as child study team staff. Training should be mandated for districts not meeting efficiency rating requirements.*

Recommendation 9: *Investigate the potential effectiveness and practicality of county or regional transportation commissions to determine whether or not efficiencies would be achieved if pupil transportation is consolidated county or region wide. One size doesn't fit all when comparing urban and rural counties.*

Recommendation 10: *Study carefully and consider the impact of mandates that would require districts to re-bid existing routes simply to increase an efficiency rating when contract renewals may be more cost effective.*

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services

It is anticipated that regionalization or consolidation of school districts will improve transportation efficiencies including school calendars, bell schedules and staggered start/end times in these districts. The following ideas will be investigated and possibly implemented through the Salem County Office of Education including continuation of the Transportation Efficiency Study Committee and increased involvement of the Gloucester and Salem County Special Services School Districts (Transportation Cooperative):

1. Investigate the feasibility of bidding consolidated routes for two or more districts.
2. Educate district administrators and child study team staff about the need for transportation efficiencies, including a countywide calendar, staggered starting/ending times, special needs transportation requests, etc. This may be accomplished through presentations at the monthly meetings of each group, i.e. Superintendent's Roundtable, B-Case.
3. Offer local training seminars for district staff involved in any aspect of student transportation to accommodate personnel that are unable to attend full or half day seminars at locations remote to Salem County.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the Transportation Efficiency Study, it is evident that change is needed in order to reduce the cost of student transportation and improve efficiencies in Salem County and the State of New Jersey. These changes include legislative changes that will provide for efficiencies that cannot be achieved without mandates; local changes that may result through improved communication with school district personnel and boards of education, and increased emphasis on training to insure the most effective and efficient student transportation services and reporting.

Attachment A

**Salem County Transportation Efficiency Study
Statistical Data**

District Information		Students Transported**							
District	Resident Enrollment 10/15/08*	Regular Education	Special Education Out-of-District	Special Education In-District	Non-Public Schools	Total Students Transported	Non-Public Aid-in-Lieu of Transp.**	2008-09 Efficiency Rating***	Total Cost of Routes**
Alloway	609.0	544.0	21.0	1.0	0.0	566.0	27.0	113.3%	\$296,486
Elmer	202.5	113.0	11.0	0.0	1.5	125.5	4.0	NA	\$120,794
Elsinboro	129.0	111.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	118.0	2.0	113.9%	\$91,244
Lower Alloways Creek	261.5	286.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	290.0	7.0	80.8%	\$319,573
Mannington	190.5	212.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	217.0	6.0	70.5%	\$166,707
Oldmans	276.0	235.0	16.0	2.0	0.0	253.0	4.0	130.3%	\$190,684
Penns Grove-Carneys Point	2,191.0	1,110.0	20.0	13.0	0.0	1,143.0	43.0	170.5%	\$1,197,271
Pennsville	1,974.5	904.0	6.0	55.0	0.0	965.0	56.0	137.2%	\$1,168,833
Pittsgrove	1,601.5	1,726.0	2.0	3.0	15.0	1,746.0	56.0	213.2%	\$1,331,832
Quinton	396.5	361.0	19.0	3.0	0.0	383.0	13.0	83.0%	\$461,924
Salem City	1,083.0	25.0	3.0	15.0	0.0	43.0	0.0	N/A	\$414,715
Upper Pittsgrove	551.0	540.0	23.0	0.0	1.0	564.0	39.0	152.1%	\$182,380
Woodstown-Piles Grove	1,296.0	979.0	17.0	7.0	0.0	1,003.0	30.0	113.5%	\$714,204
Salem County Totals	10,762.0	7,146.0	154.0	99.0	17.5	7,416.5	287.0		\$6,656,647

*Source: Application for State School Aid (ASSA) 10/15/08

**Source: District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) 10/15/08

***Source: N. J. Department of Education website, Comparative Spending Guide

Attachment B

Salem County Transportation Efficiency Study – Committee Members

A Transportation Efficiency Study Committee authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6, and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-57, was charged to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Salem County. The committee members include:

Ollie Hiltebrand, Transportation Coordinator, Pittsgrove Township School District

The efficiency rating for this school district for 2008-09 is 2.13%. Regular to/from school transportation is provided by district-owned buses with some contracted routes for special education.

Chloe Williams, Manager, B. R. Williams, Inc

B.R. Williams, Inc. is a major transportation contractor in Salem County. B.R. Williams, Inc. provides to/from school student transportation services for Alloway Township School, Elsinboro Township School, Mannington Township School, Quinton Township School and Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District as well as special education, field trip and special program transportation for Penns Grove-Carneys Point Regional School District, Salem City, Salem County Vocational School and Salem County Special Services School District.

Rebecca Joyce, School Business Administrator, Alloway Township School District

The Alloway Township School District contracts with B. R. Williams, Inc. to transport elementary students to Alloway Township School and high school students to Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District. The efficiency rating for this district for 2008-09 is 1.13%, increasing from 91.8% in 2007-08.

Pat Lerch, Director of County Services, Gloucester County Special Services School District

Gloucester County Special Services School District (GCSSSD) operates a countywide Transportation Cooperative Routing Service for homeless/nonpublic/public/special education and vocational school transportation. Salem County school districts participate in this service. The GCSSSD receives transportation requests for students in need of transportation. These requests are collected, collated, bid or quoted; combining students from several districts and/or receiving schools thus, eliminating the need for separate jointures between districts.

Melanie Allen, School Business Administrator and Shared Service Coordinator, Salem County Special Services School District

The Salem County Special Services School District manages a large number and variety of shared services in Salem, Camden, Cumberland, Cape May, Atlantic and Gloucester Counties, including student transportation in conjunction with the Gloucester County Special Services School District. It is anticipated that the Salem County Special Services School District may play an even greater role in potential county-wide transportation services as a result of the transportation efficiency study.

Diane Rottkamp, Transportation Secretary, Pennsville Township School District

Diane Rottkamp serves as Transportation Secretary in the Business Office at the Pennsville Township School District under the direct supervision of the Business Administrator. The district does not have a Transportation Supervisor. Pennsville is the second largest school district in Salem County, serving Pennsville Township students in a K-12 school system. Student transportation is provided by transportation contractors.

Doris J. Isaacs, Executive County School Business Administrator, N. J. Department of Education, Salem County Office

Prior to becoming the Executive County School Business Administrator for the Salem County Office of Education in 2008, Ms. Isaacs' 27-year career as a School Business Administrator included the Alloway Township School and the Salem County Vocational Technical School in Salem County and the Ocean City School District in Cape May County. In addition, Ms. Isaacs worked in the Salem County Office of Education in the 1970's; one of her responsibilities was oversight of student transportation reporting, contracts, etc.

Mary Nardelli, Administrative Clerk, Salem County Office of Education

Ms. Nardelli is new to the position of Administrative Clerk responsible for oversight of student transportation reporting, contracts, etc. Prior to accepting the position of Administrative Clerk, Ms. Nardelli managed Teacher Certification for the Salem County Office and has more than 18 years experience in this office. Ms. Nardelli's knowledge of Salem County, the local school districts as well as professional and support personnel is an asset in her new role.

SOMERSET COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Trudy Doyle

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Somerset County is at the hub of Central New Jersey. Its 21 municipalities, which encompass 305 square miles, contain a diversity of landscape, population, and development that reflects the varied lifestyles of its estimated 323,552 residents. Located in the heart of the nation's largest metropolitan area, Somerset County contains a balance between urban and suburban neighborhoods and rural country sides. (Source: www.co.somerset.nj.us/)

The county consists of 19 school districts, including Somerset County Vocational School and the Somerset County Educational Services Commission (SCESC).

The following represents Somerset County transportation data from districts and the Department of Education web site, as of October 15, 2008. [See Attachment A: Somerset County Student Transportation Efficiency Study Survey Data for more details.]

• County wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	55,124
• Number of districts transporting students	19
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	37,689
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	1,622
➤ Non-public transported students	1,982
➤ Special education students—in-district	4,096
➤ Total students transported	45,388
• Percentage of students transported	82%
• Total annual route costs	\$53.9M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	15
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	12 (80%)**

[Sources: Total Enrollment—“Application for School Aid”, October 15, 2008 counts; Efficiency Rating—“Comparative Spending Guide”, March 2009; All other data—“District Report of Transported Resident Students”, October 15, 2008 counts]

¹ Source: <http://www.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/education/data/enr.pl>.

² Source: Somerset County Summary – DRTRS 2008 & Somerset County Route File – DRTS Oct 2008. <http://www.state.nj.us/education/guide/2009/trans.pdf>

****Three districts, Bound Brook, Manville, and Somerville fall below the 1.20 efficiency standard because they only transport students to the Somerset County Vocational-Technical School and special education students.**

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Supported legislation (A371) to lengthen the life of a school bus to 15 years. The Somerset County Transportation Committee members contacted the county Freeholders and local legislators for support of this bill, and the Somerset County Association of School Administrators sent letters to local legislators in support of this bill.
- Developed a three-year county calendar that was distributed to all districts for 2009-2012. There is approximately a 90% alignment at this time with the county calendar among 19 school districts.
- Continued the use of jointures, which are quite prevalent in the county with 60 in-county routes handled, 7 out-of-county routes and scores of routes addressed by participation in coordinated transportation agreements with the SCESC resulting in the transportation of 8,014 students. (Source: See attached Attachment B, Jointures, Contracts received by the Somerset County Office)
- Sought proposals from vendors/consultants to perform an efficiency study in a pilot district or for the entire county. The Executive County Business Administrator drafted a request for proposal to perform a transportation study, which includes a guaranteed-break-even provision. Four vendors responded (EarthSpec LLC, Edulog, MGT of America, Inc., and Ross Haber Associates, Inc.). On May 21, 2009, the Transportation Committee met to review the proposals and narrowed their selection to two: Edulog and MGT of America, Inc. After further discussion and suggestions on different pilot districts, Executive County Superintendent Doyle suggested a county wide study, which would result in further cost savings. The Committee requested that Edulog and MGT provide them with two or three county wide studies conducted in other states for counties similar in size to Somerset County for their review. (After receiving input from local district transportation directors it was decided to postpone the selection of a consultant until the committee had an opportunity to meet again and identify specific areas for research by a consultant.)
- Used Franklin Township's database of special education routes throughout the county so that all districts can list all special education routes to make existing routes available for "joining". Researched the use of the Real Time database for special education transportation.
- Initiated discussion with non public schools and private schools in the county for students with disabilities to seek cooperation in using the county calendar and adjusting start and stop times to enhance tiering of transportation routes.

- Instituted regularly scheduled meetings with all district transportation directors and coordinators to identify additional efficiency strategies.
- Researched fueling and vehicle maintenance shared services opportunities.
- Completed the Transportation Questionnaire developed by the Transportation Department of the Department of Education (all Somerset County school districts participated).
- Continued the work of the Committee to further all possible efficiencies.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Somerset County Committee for Transportation Services/Busing Cooperatives and County Wide Transportation, authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures, was charged to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Somerset County. The Committee met to review specific areas to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services of public and nonpublic schools. The committee used the eight points in the transportation efficiency code as a guide in their discussions. Committee membership included superintendents, business administrators, transportation directors, representatives of the Somerset County Educational Services Commission, the Executive County Superintendent and County Business Administrator. (See Attachment A for a list of Transportation Committee members.)

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on September 29, 2008, November 3, 2008, January 16, 2009, February 27, 2009, May 21, 2009 and June 18, 2009. Meetings with all of the county's business administrators to review Committee recommendations were held on April 24, 2009 and June 12, 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *Enlist the Somerset County Educational Services Commission to serve as the county wide service provider for coordinating and consolidating transportation services for the county.*

Recommendation 2: *Convene regularly scheduled meetings with all district transportation directors and coordinators, facilitated by the Executive County Superintendent, to identify additional efficiency strategies, share solutions and coordinate efforts.*

Recommendation 3: *Provide access to an online Google spreadsheet, which identifies special education routes, to every district in the county and enlist districts outside the county to utilize the spreadsheet (pending the availability of the Real Time database). The Google spreadsheet was created by the Franklin Township transportation director.*

Recommendation 4: *Establish legislation to assist in increasing transportation efficiency, consolidation and coordination. The Committee supports the passage of A371 to lengthen the*

life of a school bus. This legislation would save Somerset County school districts approximately \$10 million dollars. New legislation is needed to require school districts, non public schools and private schools for students with disabilities to follow a county developed school calendar. This legislation should also require that non public schools and private schools for students with disabilities collaborate and cooperate with the Executive County Superintendent in adjusting start and stop times to enable additional tiering of these bus routes.

Recommendation 5: *Address the issues of courtesy busing, hazardous route busing, subscription busing, modification of district start and stop times to provide the greatest opportunities for tiering, provision of more efficient transportation for athletic events (e.g. combining varsity and junior varsity teams on one bus) and develop a process to enable regular communication between the special education department and the transportation department of the district.*

Recommendation 6: *Develop athletic event transportation cost reports that would be shared with the athletic directors so that they could take a more active role in the accounting for student athletic transportation costs.*

Recommendation 7: *Issue guidance on the “standards of care” and best practices for nursing services to “medically fragile” students while being transported to and from school. The requirement for nurses to accompany students on the bus to and from school is a great expense for some school districts. Guidance should be developed by the State Department of Health and Senior Services, in conjunction with the Attorney General’s office and the Department of Education.*

Recommendation 8: *Select a consultant to assist the Committee in increasing the efficiency of bus routing and in transportation practices.*

Recommendation 9: *Require conformity with a county wide school calendar regarding the bid specifications for nonpublic school routes.*

Recommendation 10: *Utilize the county database of nonpublic and private schools to encourage districts to adopt the county calendar.*

NEXT STEPS

N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6(b) examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

The Executive County Superintendent, in coordination with the Transportation Committee, will continue to examine ways to promote coordination of pupil transportation services in the county. The Executive County Superintendent will also schedule a meeting with district Superintendents in the county to discuss transportation policy matters, special education communication issues and ways in which to develop efficiencies in athletic transportation.

The following is a list of actions for Somerset County:

1. Coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county:

Somerset County public school districts have adopted a three-year county calendar with a 90% alignment rate. Districts have made significant progress in using and implementing jointures and coordinating bus routes. Nonpublic and private school start and stop times still need to be addressed to increase efficiency for these routes.

2. Staggering bell schedules in order implement a tiered system of busing:

Districts have implemented staggered bell schedules resulting in efficiency ratings as high as 2.3%. There remain some district policy issues regarding staggered school schedules for all schools in a district.

The Committee's findings were that, in addition to the need to stagger nonpublic school times within the county, start and stop times for private schools for students with disabilities outside the county should also be staggered. Currently, most private schools for students with disabilities have an 8:30 a.m. start time. This practice results in using several buses to travel the same routes when, in many instances, one bus could serve more students along the same route.

The Committee will continue to research ways to increase efficiency for athletic event transportation as it appears that tiering and sharing of routes may provide for some significant cost savings. Communication between the business office of each district and the athletic directors of each district needs to be fostered.

3. Centrally coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements:

As the Committee began to review coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements, it was decided that through the use of the SCESC and an on-line Google spreadsheet (and in the near future a county wide data base, Real Time) that additional efficiencies could be achieved. The following barriers and questions need to be addressed in order for the county's transportation supervisors to achieve further progress:

1. Lack of communication and coordination between the district child study team and the transportation supervisor.
2. Who is medically proficient enough to determine which "medically fragile" students need a nurse and does their situation preclude the nurse from being able to provide services to more than one student on the bus?
3. What are the best practices for nursing service to "medically fragile" students?
4. What are the corresponding "standards of care" for "medically fragile" students?

Work on the first issue could yield not only reduced costs, but reduced time on the bus for the special education student population. The issue regarding nursing services is critical in

the county as Franklin Township alone spends \$600,000 on nursing services for its transported special education students.

4. Consolidating transportation services in combinations of two or more school districts:

Through the creation of jointures, over 8,000 students are currently transported to and from schools in Somerset County. In order to increase consolidation and coordination of transportation services, the Committee recommends that the Somerset County Educational Services Commission serve as the county wide service provider. (Source: information derived from the District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) 2008 – Somerset County)

Currently, Warren and Watchung Hills Regional have a significant number of routes contracted with the same two vendors. This represents a potential combination that warrants further investigation. The Executive County Superintendent will investigate the possibility of working with the county on the maintenance of the school buses.

5. Establishing a consolidated countywide transportation system by jointure or countywide provider:

The Committee has reviewed proposals from several consultants to conduct a transportation efficiency study for the county and has selected two consultants to consider. Regularly scheduled meetings will be held for transportation directors and coordinators to share solutions and coordinate their efforts.

6. Analyzing district school bus routing and scheduling to encourage the use of efficient routing :

In reviewing the DRTRS data for the county, the Committee concluded that in Somerset County, the issue is not inefficient vehicle utilization, but transportation policy issues. The Committee will pursue the possibility of hiring a consultant to analyze existing bus routes (county wide or district specific) using vendor software and specific transportation technology to increase the efficiency of bus routing.

7. Improving cooperation between local boards of education and nonpublic administrators:

The Committee considered this issue and has made several recommendations: supporting legislation that would require the nonpublic schools to follow the county calendar, negotiating with the nonpublic schools to follow the county calendar, adding the calendar requirement to the bid specifications for the nonpublic school routes, and completing a database of private schools in the county so that the county calendar could be shared with them.

8. Soliciting input from current school district transportation supervisors and school representatives:

This objective was achieved by including in the membership of the Transportation Advisory Committee six business administrators, two superintendents, one transportation coordinator, the Executive County Superintendent and the Executive County Business Administrator. The committee has since expanded to include four additional transportation supervisors. The Executive County Superintendent is instituting regularly scheduled meetings with all district transportation directors and coordinators to identify additional efficiency strategies, share solutions and coordinate efforts.

CONCLUSION

Somerset County school districts can improve transportation efficiencies by instituting changes in board policy, proposing enabling legislation, implementing a county wide efficiency study using the expertise of a consultant and facilitating teamwork across a broad spectrum of constituent interests.

INSERT ATTACHMENT A
HERE
IN A SEPARATE FILE
ON SHARED DRIVE

Attachment B
Table Two: Somerset County Jointures, 2008-09

In-County

Host - 08-09	Joiner	Destination	Amount
Bound Brook	Bridgewater-Raritan	UMDNJ Behavioral Program	\$630.00
Bound Brook	Bridgewater-Raritan	UMDNJ, Behavioral Programs	\$9,876.60
Host 2008-2009	Joiner	Dstination	
Bridgewater-Raritan	Bound Brook	Midland School	\$10,926.00
Bridgewater-Raritan	Watchung Hills Reg.	Immaculata HS	\$8,760.00
Bridgewater-Raritan	Watchung Hills Reg.	St. James	\$7,605.00
Bridgewater-Raritan	Somerville	Midland School	\$18,000.00
Bridgewater-Raritan	Somerville	Somerset Academy	\$10,800.00
Bridgewater-Raritan	South Bound Brook	Somerset Academy to Martin I	\$4,500.00
Green Brook	Watchung	Valley View School	\$1,500.00
Green Brook	Watchung Hills Reg.	Somerset County Vo.Tech	\$22,589.70
Green Brook	Watchung Hills Reg.	Somerset County Vo.Tech	\$20,300.65
Green Brook	Watchung Hills Reg.	Votech to Watchung HS	\$4,696.02
Green Brook	Watchung Hills Reg.	Watchung HS to VoTech	\$4,696.02
Green Brook	Watchung Hills Reg.	Home to Vo. Tech	\$14,242.86
Green Brook	Watchung Hills Reg.	To & From Watchung HS	\$1,050.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Montgomery HS	\$8,356.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Montgomery Upper Middle	\$3,254.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Montgomery Upper Middle	\$2,740.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Montgomery Lower Middle	\$2,987.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Village School	\$763.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Village School	\$6,896.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Orchard Hill Elem. Sch.	\$1,496.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Orchard Hill Elem. Sch.	\$334.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Orchard Hill Elem. Sch.	\$5,601.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Orchard Hill Elem. Sch.	\$940.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Montgomery Lower Middle	\$3,708.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Midland School	\$11,444.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Orchard Hill Elem. Sch.	\$1,416.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Orchard Hill Elem. Sch.	\$3,917.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Mercer Regional Day	\$32,355.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Capella Sch.	\$34,731.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Chapin - PDS, American boy	\$17,680.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Orchard Hill Elem. Sch.	\$1,059.00
Montgomery	Rocky Hill	Midland School	\$1,894.00

Warren	Watchung Hills Reg.	Developmental Lrn Ctr.	\$10,858.40
Warren	Watchung Hills Reg.	Watchung Hills Reg.	\$14,760.00
Warren	Watchung Hills Reg.	Ridge HS Basking Ridge	\$8,733.60
Warren	Watchung Hills Reg.	Bernards HS	11,361.60
Warren	Green Brook	Develop. Learning Center	\$11,920.00
Warren	Watchung	Childrens Inst. Verona	\$1,500.00
Warren	Watchung	Developmental Lrn Ctr.	\$1,200.00
Warren	Watchung	Stevens Inst.	\$500.00
Warren	Watchung	Developmental Lrn Ctr.	\$5,429.20
Warren	Watchung	Childrens Inst. Verona	\$10,147.65
Watchung	Warren	Bayberry School	\$704.00
Watchung Hills	Watchung	Valley View & Bayberry	\$19,025.90
Watchung Hills	Watchung	Valley View & Bayberry	\$19,025.90
Watchung Hills	Watchung	Valley View & Bayberry	\$19,025.90
Watchung Hills	Watchung	Valley View & Bayberry	\$19,025.90
Watchung Hills	Watchung	Valley View & Bayberry	\$19,025.90
Watchung Hills	Watchung	Bayberry School	\$19,025.90
Watchung Hills	Watchung	Bayberry School	\$19,025.90
Watchung Hills	Warren	Hunterdon Learning Center	\$7,905.00
Watchung Hills	Green Brook	Pingry School	\$2,371.50
Bound Brook	So. Bound Brook	Somerset County Vo.Tech	\$99.00
Bound Brook	So. Bound Brook	Somerset County Vo.Tech	\$2,310.00
Bound Brook	So. Bound Brook	SCESC-Alternative HS	\$1,140.00
Bound Brook	So. Bound Brook	SC Vo. Tech	\$4,785.00
Bound Brook	So. Bound Brook	SC Vo. Tech	\$412.50
Bound Brook	Bridgewater-Raritan	4 Keeps Program St. Peters	\$2,800.00

Out of County - Jointures 2008-2009

Host	Jointure County	Destination	
Sussex county Reg.	Sussex	Various	See File
Franklin Twp.	Middlesex	Swimming Fords - Summer only	\$4,575.00
Franklin Twp.	Middlesex	Swimming Fords - Summer only	\$2,375.00
Franklin Twp.	Middlesex	St. Mathias	\$884.00
Franklin Twp.	Middlesex	Immaculata HS	\$884.00
Watchung Hills Reg. HS	Union	WHRHS	\$1,320.00
Sussex county Reg.	Sussex	Reed Academy	\$42,292.22
SOURCE: CONTRACTS RECEIVED BY COUNTY OFFICE.			

Attachment C

EXECUTIVE COUNTY SUPERINTENENT'S TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Trudy Doyle, Somerset Executive County Superintendent

John Bolil, Somerset County Executive County School Business Administrator

John Calavano, Assistant Superintendent for Business, Franklin Township School District

Robert Cline, Transportation Supervisor, Branchburg Township School District

Hal Dunsavage, Superintendent, Somerset County Educational Services Commission

Patricia Estin, Executive Administrative Assistant to the ECSBA Somerset County

Dianne Faucher, School Business Administrator, Watchung Borough School District

Robyn Friedlander, Transportation Supervisor, Montgomery Township School District

Valerie Goger, Superintendent, Bernards Township School District

Gloria Gross, School Business Administrator, Green Brook Township School District

Wendy LaFontaine, Director of Transportation, Somerset County Educational Services
Commission

Aiman Mahmoud, School Business Administrator, Hillsborough Township School District

Gary Peatick, Director of Transportation, Franklin Township School District

Jennisse Peatick, Director of Transportation, Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District

Jeff Siipola, School Business Administrator, Somerset County Educational Services Commission

Tim Stys, School Business Administrator, Watchung Hills Regional High School District

Guest: Jerry Ford – Director of Transportation – New Jersey Department of Education

Table One: Somerset County Student Transportation Efficiency
Study Survey Data

DISTRICT	Total Enrollment	Students Transported in County					Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
		Regular Education	Special Ed. Out-of-District	Nonpublic	Special Ed. In-District	Total			
Bedminster	833	750	40	43	41	874	72	1.27	763,523
Bernards	5,640	2,976	88	270	61	3,395	219	1.32	3,711,070
Bound Brook	1,398	31	32		31	94		0.86	493,814
Branchburg	2,606	2,233	177	186	125	2,720	84	2.3	1,739,068
Bridgewater-Raritan	9,165	7,710	239	294	1,173	9,416	285	2.1	5,923,365
Franklin	7,583	6,415	382	654	503	7,953	652	1.6	8,858,346
Green Brook	1,355	1,219	58	10	23	1,310	90	2.14	926,073
Hillsborough	7,543	6,301	131	228	888	7,547	166	2.33	5,159,994
Marville	1,319	56	19		6	81		0.77	217,499
Millstone (Non-Op)	66	51	8			59	1		64,732
Montgomery	5,274	5,169	124	61	3	5,357	362	1.76	3,267,065
North Plainfield	3,172	103	102		26	230		1.28	1,018,858
Rock Hill (Non-Op)	96	88	8			96	20		120,938
Somerset County ESC									15,997,017
SC Vo. Tech	432								
Somerset Hills	1,911	1,167	54	116	67	1,404	245		1,652,763
Somerville	1,591	72	55		2	129		0.79	504,183
So. Bound Brook	537	55	23			78			374,320
Warren	2,227	1,274	34	43	892	2,243	142	1.67	1,308,629
Watchung Boro	696	563	18	6	71	658	41	1.65	476,790
Watchung Hills Reg.	1,685	1,456	32	71	186	1,744	230	1.4	1,362,406
Totals	55,124	37,689	1,622	1,982	4,096	45,388	2,609		

Notes:

Nonpublic students are not in Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

Bedminster, Branchburg and Green Brook Regular Education numbers include transported high school students.

53,940,453

Sources: Total Enrollment--"Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts
Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009
All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

Attachment B

Transportation Committee members:

Neil K. Cramer, State Coordinator – Executive County School Business
Administrators, and Executive County School Business
Administrator – Sussex County

Dr. Rosalie S. Lamonte, Executive County Superintendent – Sussex County

Dr. Wayne L. Threlkeld, Director, Sussex County Regional Transportation
Cooperative, and Superintendent, Hopatcong Borough School District

Theresa Sierchio, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Hopatcong
Borough School District

Amanda Ferrington, Regional Coordinator, Sussex County Regional
Transportation Cooperative

Deborah Greulich, Transportation Director, High Point Regional High School

Steve Kepnes, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Vernon Township
School District

Jamie Van Gilst, Transportation Director, Vernon Township School District

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Sussex County Transportation Statistics

District	Resident Enrollment	Students Transported in County					Non-Public ALL Students	Efficiency Rating	Route Cost
		Regular Educaiton	Special Education Out-of-District	Special Education In-District	Non-Public Students *	Total **			
Andover	945	834	38	79	108	1059	15	1.09	\$ 784,696.00
Byram	1128	978	8	142	39	1167	19	1.07	\$ 779,828.00
Frankford	648	589	3	49	33	674	19	0.90	\$ 871,150.00
Franklin	523	23	2	36	4	65	2	N/A	\$ 148,619.00
Fredon	347	319	17	15	38	389	1	N/A	\$ 370,062.00
Green	705	621	31	60	79	791	16	1.29	\$ 432,857.00
Hamburg	292	34	11	4	20	69	3	N/A	\$ 125,550.00
Hampton	418	412	1	45	20	478	2	0.94	\$ 332,169.00
Hardyston	759	636	24	101	53	814	14	1.17	\$ 956,950.00
High Point	1281	1146	64	162	84	1456	3	1.62	\$ 2,413,596.00
Hopatcong	2333	1780	60	132	136	2108	54	1.86	\$ 2,233,910.00
Kittatinny	1199	1082	41	120	76	1319	20	1.16	\$ 1,162,529.00
Lafayette	294	248	5	41	11	305	8	N/A	\$ 313,412.00
Lenape Valley	897	697	22	79	31	829	10	N/A	\$ 523,258.00
Montague	492	459	60	31	1	551	5	1.11	\$ 710,474.00
Newton	1118	40	32	5	32	109	3	1.08	\$ 222,427.00
Ogdensburg	327	1	3	9	12	25	3	N/A	\$ 74,317.00
Sandyston	168	138	7	23	1	169	1	1.09	\$ 202,267.00
Sparta	4003	3708	77	422	287	4494	77	1.70	\$ 2,811,214.00
Stanhope	398	0	10	0	0	10	0	N/A	N/A
Stillwater	396	344	1	50	1	396	4	0.99	\$ 292,300.00
SCESC ***		0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
SC Charter ***		0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
SC Technical	600	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Sussex Wantage	1553	1258	44	194	142	1638	10	1.16	\$ 1,793,391.00
Vernon	4513	3924	87	585	103	4699	23	2.00	\$ 5,383,358.00
Wallkill	849	795	44	91	83	1013	0	1.20	\$ 1,062,150.00
Totals	26186	20066	692	2475	1394	24627	312		\$ 24,000,484.00

Sources:

Total Enrollment--"Application for State School Aid," 10/15/08 counts

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide," 03/09

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students," 10/15/08

* Non-Public Students are not included in the Resident Enrollments in Col #1

** Includes Technical School Students not included in Resident Enrollment for each district

*** Resident Enrollments for SCESC and SC Charter School are included in each district's Resident Enrollment

SUSSEX COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Rosalie S. Lamonte

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Sussex County is the northernmost county in New Jersey and borders New York State to the north and Pennsylvania to the west. It is predominantly a rural county with several suburban areas located mainly in the southeastern portion of the county. The county was founded on June 8, 1753 from portions of Morris County.

Given Sussex County's location at the top of the state, it is bordered by counties in New Jersey as well as in neighboring New York and Pennsylvania. This region is often collectively known as the Tri-State Area. The following counties are adjacent and contiguous to Sussex County (in order starting with the northernmost and rotating clockwise):

- Orange County, New York - northeast
- Passaic County, New Jersey - east
- Morris County, New Jersey - south
- Warren County, New Jersey - southwest
- Monroe County, Pennsylvania - west
- Pike County, Pennsylvania - northwest

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 536 square miles, of which 521 square miles is land and 15 square miles is water. High Point in this county is also the highest elevation in the state at 1,803 feet (549.5 m) above sea level. The county's lowest elevation is approximately 300 feet (90 m) above sea level along the Delaware River near Flatbrookville. [Source: 2000 U.S. Census]

Sussex County has 24 incorporated municipalities, consisting of one town, fifteen townships, and eight boroughs. As of July 1, 2009, there were 27 school districts. Of these, three are countywide districts that include: 1 vocational-technical school, 1 educational services commission, and 1 charter school.

Due to its rural nature, the county's school children are often transported many miles to and from school. A total of 24 districts transport students in the county. In the 2008-2009 school year, there were 26,186 county students enrolled in either Sussex County public schools, non-public schools within or outside the borders of the county, or private schools for the handicapped both within and outside the county. Of this total number, approximately 24,627 were transported to and from school.*

*See attached table for more detailed information.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• Countywide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	26,186
• Number of districts transporting students	24
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	20,066
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	692
➤ Non-public transported students	1,394
➤ Special education students—in-district	2,475
➤ Total students transported	24,627
• Percentage of students transported	94%
• Total annual route costs	\$24.0M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	17
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	6 (35%)

¹ Countywide enrollment excludes the three countywide vocational, educational services commission, and charter school districts.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

[Source: Total Enrollment – “Application for State School Aid” 10/15/08 counts; Efficiency Rating – “Comparative Spending Guide” 03/09; All other data – “District Report of Transported Resident Students” 10/15/08]

The chart above shows that a large percentage of students across virtually every district in Sussex County are transported to school. The primary factor that contributes to this high percentage is the rural nature of the county and the geographical hindrances to pedestrian safety. There were 17 districts rated for transportation efficiency, 6 of which achieved the standard of 120% or better. The remaining 10 districts in the county either do not transport students or have joiner contracts in place with other districts that by definition make them efficient.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- There is a long history of cooperation among school districts, and several transportation consortiums have been in existence for many years. Three of the main groups in Sussex County are as follows:

Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative, Hopatcong, NJ
Director: Dr. Wayne Threlkeld

High Point Regional High School District, Sussex, NJ
Transportation Director: Deborah Greulich

Vernon Township School District, Vernon, NJ
Transportation Director: Jamie Van Gilst

- The directors and/or their representatives of the various transportation consortiums meet several times per year to discuss services and routes, and to problem solve areas of concern that may arise.
- The Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative is currently serving 77 districts across the northern part of the state.
- A conservative estimate of the cost savings realized by the Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative yields a 45% savings on an approximate total of \$15 million in county transportation costs, for an approximate net savings of \$7 million. As an example of the savings gained by using cooperatives, for a district that might expend \$350 per day for a transportation route, the cooperative can provide the same service for \$50 per day.
- Sussex County schools have a long-established practice dating back more than ten years of a countywide public school calendar that represents the result of considerable cooperation among school districts. Administrators and school boards have recognized the need to standardize daily attendance to achieve efficiencies beyond their restricted boundaries. To the credit of these school districts, a mutually agreed upon county calendar continues to be in effect for 2009-2010 and for the foreseeable future.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee (Committee), authorized under N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgeting Procedures, was charged to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Sussex County. This Committee met to review specific areas to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services of public and nonpublic schools. The Committee used the Transportation Efficiency Study code as a guide in their discussions. The members of the Committee included: one Sussex County superintendent in charge of a large regional consortium; three experienced regional district transportation coordinators; two school business administrators; the Executive County School Business Administrator; and the Executive County Superintendent. (See Attachment B for a list of Committee members.)

In their deliberations, the Committee addressed the following: 1) reviewed the county's current transportation plan; 2) identified significant barriers to improving transportation effectiveness and efficiencies; 3) identified possible solutions to the identified barriers; and 4) identified technology practices that would aid in these solutions.

As a result of its deliberations regarding transportation efficiencies, the Committee will continue to undertake the actions listed below to implement and further encourage efficiency and coordination throughout the county:

- Support any proposed legislation that would lengthen the life of a school bus from the current requirement of 12 years.
- Continue the implementation of the county calendar that has enjoyed long-standing success in Sussex County.
- Continue the use of regional transportation cooperatives and jointures, which are quite prevalent in the county and that in many cases, cut across county lines.
- Establish a bi-annual meeting schedule for the Transportation Committee in order to continue to share ideas related to cost efficiency and coordination throughout Sussex County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Listed below are specific recommendations of the Transportation Committee based on reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Sussex County, with an eye to providing such services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner.

Recommendation 1: *Create a common transportation database to be posted via website that all districts may consult.* A common transportation database would list all bus routes, schedules and numbers of students on each bus in the county to achieve maximum efficiency and create state reports. Such a comprehensive database would facilitate analysis of transportation data and serve as a clearinghouse for available seats on existing routes. Districts could then access the database and search for existing routes to possibly join. An electronic bulletin board could be used to post messages and future requirements.

Recommendation 2: *Enhance communication between transportation directors and school district officials.* The directors of county transportation cooperatives should meet on a regular basis each year with school superintendents and business officials, as well as with special services directors in order to raise awareness of existing cooperative transportation services, review policy, and discuss ways to continue to improve these services. Special services directors should work with their staffs to be knowledgeable about the availability of transportation services as they are making recommendations for placement of students.

Recommendation 3: *Establish greater coordination and communication between district child study teams and transportation departments to ensure transportation needs of special education students are met.* Accurate information must be provided to the cooperatives as to any special needs of the student(s), including the necessity of an aide or of special equipment, so that additional costs are not incurred unnecessarily.

Recommendation 4: *Ensure district compliance with the needs of transportation cooperatives so that better service at lower cost may be provided.* Districts must be held accountable for adhering to deadlines established by transportation cooperatives so that routes may be maximized for greater efficiency.

Recommendation 5: *Extend transportation coordination to countywide student events.* Transportation for major athletic and county, regional or state extracurricular events should be coordinated so that districts may share transportation of their students to these events. This information could be added to the database created by virtue of Recommendation #1.

Recommendation 6: *Analyze the process of re-bidding routes to determine if cost savings are actually realized.* Districts attempting to raise their Transportation Efficiency rating to 120% or better, must consider the cost to accomplish that task. Re-bidding of routes to improve efficiency ratings that result in higher cost of the same transportation routes should be avoided. It is not the intent to increase costs to simply increase the efficiency rating.

Recommendation 7: *Institute a countywide system to consolidate and establish a uniform training program for bus drivers and bus aides.* A countywide coordinated training program for bus drivers and aides could be provided by the Sussex County Regional Transportation Cooperative as an additional service to all districts and bus companies. More frequent training should also be considered due to the high turnover of personnel.

Recommendation 8: *Require all districts within the county to the established countywide school calendar.* A countywide calendar already exists in Sussex County. The Executive County Superintendent should strive to ensure compliance to that calendar.

Recommendation 9: *Standardize a county-wide delayed opening.* It is additionally recommended that a standard number of minutes be established for delayed openings (90 or 120 minutes) so as to increase transportation efficiency and alleviate confusion, specifically when contracting between multiple districts.

Recommendation 10: *Standardize starting and ending times for school days.* The County Office should assist Coordinated Transportation Service Agencies (CTSAs) and regular districts with establishing a range of starting and ending times for all types of school districts within the county.

Recommendation 11: *Enlarge transportation cooperatives wherever possible.* All districts should be encouraged to join transportation cooperatives. Cooperation must also be encouraged between/among counties.

Recommendation 12: *Review bus inspections for ways to improve efficiency.* The bus inspection process needs to be reviewed and revised to yield a more streamlined and cost efficient procedure.

Recommendation 13: *Allow parents to waive transportation rights.* Parents/guardians should be allowed to waive their child's seat on the bus, so as to allow more students to be serviced by each bus, thereby reducing bus routes and subsequently reducing costs.

Recommendation 14: *Create a standing committee to analyze additional transportation efficiencies.* A county committee should be established that would meet on a bi-annual or quarterly basis to review efficiencies that have been realized and to make recommendations for further improvements. This committee could serve as a standing committee for that purpose.

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6 (b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services:

1. Coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county:

Sussex County public school districts have continued to adopt a county calendar and one has already been established for 2009-2010. Most districts have made significant progress in using and implementing transportation cooperatives and jointures. The issues of school starting and ending times as well as a common delayed opening schedule still need to be addressed in order to increase efficiency for these routes.

2. Coordination of countywide events:

The Committee, along with the directors of the transportation cooperatives will continue to research ways to increase efficiency for countywide programs, including major athletic and county, regional or state extracurricular events.

3. Centrally coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements:

During its deliberations, the Committee realized that additional cost savings were possible through better communication between transportation cooperatives and district officials on transportation routes already established for out-of-district special education placements. A centralized transportation system not only could yield reduced costs, but also lessen the time spent on the bus for the special education student population.

CONCLUSION

This report should be viewed as a continuing effort by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Sussex County. By working together, districts recognize that many benefits may be achieved not only in transportation cost efficiencies, but also in enhanced services to students.

Attachment A: Union County Transportation Statistics
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DISTRICT	Advertised	Students Transported in Union County					Nonpublic	Efficiency	Route
	Enrollment	Regular Education	Special Ed. Out-of-District	Nonpublic	Special Ed. In-District	Total	A.I.L.	Rating	Costs
BERKELEY HEIGHTS	2,598	1,424	24	196	27	1,671	141	1.748	\$ 1,875,021
CLARK	2,196	249	36	86	42	413	82	0.937	\$ 1,150,700
CRANFORD	3,723	91	29	140	79	339	129	0.674	\$ 1,642,436
ELIZABETH	19,756	4,435	314	626	601	5,976	418	1.173	\$ 13,936,159
GARWOOD	539	154	32	12		198	12		\$ 257,020
HILLSIDE	3,053	578	174		64	816		1.784	\$ 1,506,612
KENILWORTH	1,252	176	17		2	195			\$ 545,806
LINDEN	6,073	1,198	149	232	265	1,844	167	0.592	\$ 5,533,824
MOUNTAINSIDE	1,007	819	33	89	7	948	86	2.698	\$ 684,468
NEW PROVIDENCE	2,215	17	32		32	81		0.378	\$ 905,498
PLAINFIELD	7,333	390	116	901	255	1,662	251	1.219	\$ 4,360,792
RAHWAY	3,795	654	36	319	155	1,164	174	0.592	\$ 2,826,593
ROSELLE	2,879	60	97		222	379			\$ 3,110,209
ROSELLE PARK	1,979	68	15		10	93		0.819	\$ 341,053
SCOTCH PLAINS/FANWOOD	5,407	1,038	71	345	229	1,683	198	1.648	\$ 3,254,165
SPRINGFIELD	1,999	377	39	182	52	650	181	0.765	\$ 1,310,555
SUMMIT	3,809	17	32		31	80		0.804	\$ 776,884
UNION	7,679	1,737	119	605	95	2,556	331	1.406	\$ 6,132,442
WESTFIELD	6,308	257	105	332	91	785	253	0.827	\$ 2,923,415
WINFIELD	154	41	16	21		78	20		\$ 211,021
	83,750	13,780	1,486	4,086	2259	21,611	2,443	18.064	\$ 53,284,673

Sources: Total Enrollment--"Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

Nonpublic students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

UNION COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Carmen Centuolo

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Union County is southwest of New York City and is in the New York Metropolitan Area. Union County's population as of the 2000 U.S. Census is 523,000 in a land mass of 105 square miles. Of New Jersey's 21 counties, Union County ranks 6th in population and 20th in size. It is the third most densely populated county in New Jersey, and one of the most densely populated counties in America. It also ranks 92nd among the highest-income counties in the country. [Source: <http://www.ucnj.org/about/index.html>]

There are 21 political subdivisions within the county, consisting of seven boroughs, five cities, eight townships, and one town. It has 20 regular operating school districts, one jointure, one educational Services Commission, one institute of technology, and four charter schools.

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts, as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	83,750
• Number of districts transporting students	20
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	13,780
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	1,486
➤ Non-public transported students	4,086
➤ Special education students—in-district	2,259
➤ Total students transported	21,611
• Percentage of students transported	26%
• Total annual route costs	\$53.0M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	16
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	6 (38%)

[Sources: 2008 ASSA and DRTRS]

From the information in the above chart, Union County school districts definitely need to improve their transportation efficiencies. However, there are categories of students that do not permit the district to regulate the need to transport; this includes students with IEPs transported within the districts; transport of a large number of nonpublic to varied locations as far as 20 miles from home location.

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the Educational Services Commission and vocational school districts.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State's minimum standard.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Executive County Superintendent of the Union County Office had authorized a study of pupil transportation services pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 for the purpose of determining ways to provide pupil transportation services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner. The Superintendent appointed a transportation committee from district superintendents, business administrators, transportation coordinators, jointure and service commission staff, county freeholders and the Union County Business Administrator. This Committee continues to meet and has since expanded to include members of local boards of education and the community.

The Committee was responsible for investigating inter-district and intra-district coordination of bus routes, bell schedules, school calendars, tiered system of busing, coordination of special education transportation placements, efficient routing practices, and countywide transportation coordination.

As a result of the transportation committee investigation, the following list of conclusions was derived:

- It was extremely difficult for district superintendents to agree on a county wide calendar and bell schedules for various reasons, specifically individuality of the districts and communities.
- The Morris Union Jointure and the Union County Educational Services Commission claimed that their existing bus routes were currently operating efficiently.
- The coordination of inter-district special education transportation is extremely difficult because parents in one district would not agree to have their children transported with a child from another district.
- It was impossible to coordinate public and private school calendars.
- There is unwillingness for one district to act as a host district and act as an agent for all districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on reviews and analyses conducted to provide transportation services, the following are recommendations to provide such services in a more cost-effective and efficient manner:

Recommendation 1: *Create a countywide agency that is mandated by law to have authority and jurisdiction over all public, private, and charter school pupil transportation in each county.* The countywide agency would be responsible for establishment of the same county wide school calendar which would include coordinated emergency closings, bell schedules, and coordination of bus routes for public, private,

and charter schools in the county. In addition to transportation aid, districts would be billed for transportation services from the newly created agency.

Recommendation 2: *Create only one transportation operation from the newly created agency. A central transportation agency would eliminate duplicate services and staffing in each district. With a central agency a master data base can be created and further the development of transportation routes that are more efficient. The agency would also develop a long range transportation plan that addresses the future needs of the county. The transportation operation would be responsible for hiring and training of staff, the purchase of equipment, and for a network pupil transportation data base system.*

Recommendation 3: *Coordinate and enhance the transportation operation from the Morris-Union Jointure and the Union County Educational Services Commission, avoiding duplication of routes.*

Recommendation 4: *Change mileage eligibility for students from 2 miles to 3 miles for elementary students and 2.5 miles to 3.5 miles for high school students.*

Recommendation 5: *Count each eligible student who is transported unless the parent waived their right to have their eligible child transported. Eliminate a bus utilization efficiency of 1.20%.*

Recommendation 6: *Present a list of statutes that must be modified, eliminated, or established to affect the Regional Transportation Agency concept.*

Recommendation 7: *Ensure that decisions for transportation of special education students are thoughtful, accurate and timely. Special education case managers can no longer boiler plate transportation into a student IEP.*

NEXT STEPS

6A:23A-2.6(b) Examination of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services

The Executive County Superintendent, in coordination with the Transportation Committee, will continue to examine ways to promote coordination of pupil transportation services in the county, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6.

1. A Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) will be established. Artificial barriers, including county boundaries, will be avoided, as the goal will be to provide an efficient and effective transportation system using geography, location, distance, traffic patterns, safety, as determining factors for the consolidation of services.
2. The RTA will control the transportation of all pupils in the region. The RTA will establish a transportation system by jointure agreements with the regional service

3. The DOE will maintain and share a common data base for RTA based on the information collected annually from the district's budget support document 6B2, indicating anticipated out of district placements for the subsequent year.
4. School districts that choose not to participate with the RTA and seek a waiver must collect cost data each year to validate that they can provide the services more efficiently.
5. The RTA will establish a uniform training program for all bus drivers, bus aides, and substitute drivers.
6. RTA will establish a regional system for purchasing buses, transportation equipment, supplies, etc. A generic bid specification will be developed.

CONCLUSION

County-wide transportation cannot be considered in the absence of a discussion regarding a county-wide calendar, county-wide coordination of schedules, athletics, and other activities. The county office must be a leader in a cooperative spirit but legislative reform will be necessary to make change happen.

Attachment B

Warren County Transportation Efficiency Committee

Allamuchy	Timothy Frederiks, Chief School Administrator
Alpha	Timothy Mantz, School Business Administrator
Belvidere	Dirk Swaneveld, Chief School Administrator
Blairstown	Pam Rusweiler, Transportation Coordinator
Franklin	Heather Spitzer, School Business Administrator
Frelinghuysen	Dwight Klett, Chief School Administrator
Great Meadows Regional	Julie Mumaw, School Business Administrator
Greenwich	Annette Edmonds, School Business Administrator
Hackettstown	Christopher Conklin, Director of Special Services
Harmony	Raelene Catterson, School Business Administrator
Hope	Dawn Huff, School Business Administrator
Knowlton	Sharon Mooney, Chief School Administrator
Lopatcong	Teresa Barna, School Business Administrator
Mansfield	Mary Rozkowski, School Business Administrator
North Warren Regional	Christina Sharkey, School Business Administrator
Oxford	Patricia Decibus, School Business Administrator
Phillipsburg	William Bauer, School Business Administrator
Pohatcong	Diane Mandry, Chief School Administrator
Warren Co. Special Services School Dist.	Donald Harms/Stephanie O'Keefe, Transportation Coordinator
Warren County Technical	Carol Petroeci, Transportation Coordinator
Warren Hills Regional	Cathy Kelly, Transportation Coordinator
Washington Borough	Lance Rozsa, Chief School Administrator
Washington Township	Cathy Kelly, Transportation Coordinator
White	Linda Heilman, Chief School Administrator
County Office	Dr. Kevin Brennan, Executive County Superintendent
County Office	William Poch, Executive County School Business Administrator
County Office	Tracy Rowe, Transportation Coordinator

ATTACHMENT A

Warren County Transportation Statistics

District	Students Transported in County						Nonpublic A.I.L.	Efficiency Rating	Route Costs
	Resident Enrollment	Regular Education	Special Ed Out-of-District	Nonpublic	Special Ed In-District	Total			
Allamuchy	484	443	24	52	24	543	14	1.4	\$394,877
Alpha Borough	353	93	14	4	0	111	9	N/A	84,681
Belvidere	510	0	1	0	4	5	0	N/A	19,380
Blairstown Twp.	744	594	20	3	79	696	12	0.96	462,741
Franklin Twp.	298	277	6	1	16	300	29	0.9	232,981
Frelinghuysen Twp.	191	180	0	2	9	191	5	0.97	380,987
Great Meadows Reg.	1,433	1,262	95	46	80	1,483	31	1.97	935,695
Greenwich Twp.	1,287	1,079	61	94	87	1,321	53	1.51	820,206
Hackettstown	1,336	3	17	0	17	37	0	0.93	272,356
Harmony Twp.	422	368	20	0	26	414	17	1.11	312,301
Hope Twp.	294	261	17	1	14	293	14	1.18	258,029
Knowlton Twp.	291	244	4	0	43	291	4	0.9	216,286
Lopatcong Twp.	1,247	324	13	18	23	378	44	1.01	389,566
Mansfield Twp.	683	615	3	7	64	689	25	1.04	527,401
North Warren Reg.	1,132	961	19	12	146	1,138	39	1.24	938,773
Oxford Twp.	413	229	29	6	10	274	15	1.32	138,496
Phillipsburg	2,478	1,025	32	21	16	1,094	25	1.29	1,790,046
Pohatcong Twp.	515	476	28	6	14	524	9	1.72	351,612
Warren Tech	449	355	0	0	94	449	0	0.89	414,856
Warren Hills Reg.	1,963	1,517	29	13	196	1,755	40	1.62	1,539,940
Washington Borough	544	0	10	15	0	25	15	N/A	73,522
Washington Twp.	626	528	21	13	29	591	43	1.12	350,310
White Twp.	600	519	39	2	39	599	16	1.01	563,348
Total	18,293	11,353	502	316	1,030	13,201	459		\$11,468,390

Sources: Resident Enrollment--"Application for State School Aid", October 15, 2008 counts

Efficiency Rating--"Comparative Spending Guide", March 2009

All other data--"District Report of Transported Resident Students, October 15, 2008 counts

Nonpublic students are not in the Resident Enrollment, but districts are required to transport such students if they transport public students.

WARREN COUNTY

TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY STUDY

Submitted by:

Dr. Kevin Brennan

Executive County Superintendent

July 8, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Located in northwest New Jersey, Warren County is home to more than 110,000 residents. Bordered by Hunterdon, Morris and Sussex Counties in New Jersey and Bucks, Monroe and Northampton Counties across the Delaware River in Pennsylvania, Warren County is largely rural, with a rich history and beautiful scenery.

Source: County of Warren website

There are 22 municipalities within the county, consisting of three towns, two boroughs and 17 townships. Warren County has 24 school districts consisting of 22 regular operating school districts and two county-wide school districts (Warren County Special Services School District and Warren County Vo-Tech). In addition, there is one charter school in the county (Ridge and Valley Charter School).

The following represents highlights of selected self-reported transportation data from districts as of October 15, 2008. (See Attachment A for more details.)

• County-wide enrollment (regular and special education) ¹	18,293
• Number of districts transporting students	23
• Number of students transported	
➤ Regular education students	11,353
➤ Special education students—out-of-district	502
➤ Non-public transported students	316
➤ Special education students—in-district	1,030
➤ Total students transported	13,201
• Percentage of students transported	72%
• Total annual route costs	\$11.5M
• Efficiency Rating ²	
➤ “Rated districts”	20
➤ “Rated districts” meeting or exceeding 120% standard	8 (40%)

Sources: 2008 ASSA and DRTRS

There are 12 rated districts that do not meet the 120% standard. These 12 districts include nine single school districts, two districts with two schools each (Lopatcong Township and Washington Township) that are in relatively large geographic areas, and one district (Hackettstown) that provides in-district transportation for only 20 students.

¹ County-wide enrollment excludes the county-wide special services school district.

² For “rated districts” conducting their own transportation; measured by vehicle utilization rates, with 120% (1.20) representing the State’s minimum standard.

Most nonpublic transportation is coordinated through coordinated transportation services agencies (CTSAs). Three CTSAs that service districts in Warren County are Warren County Special Services School District, the Sussex County Co-Op, and Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission.

COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- One of the key components in providing efficient transportation is the sharing of data among districts. The Executive County Superintendent's Office has identified special education placement information that was shared among districts in the county. The county office identified out-of-district placements which students are being transported by more than one contractor and/or more than one district. As a result, districts will be able to combine special education routes for out-of-district placements.
- The Executive County Superintendent's Office has also identified regular education routes that are being provided by the same contractor or by the same bus. As a result, districts are reviewing the feasibility of tiering their transportation routes. The school districts of Mansfield Township and Warren Hills Regional tiered six of their routes and bid these routes for the 2009-10 school year. As a result of the tiering of their routes, the two districts saved over \$100,000.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A Transportation Committee (Committee) authorized pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6 of the "School District Fiscal Accountability, Efficiency and Budgetary Procedures" was formed to study the transportation efficiency of school districts in Warren County.

Twenty-three districts in the county were represented on the Committee. In addition, the Executive County School Business Administrator (ECSBA) chaired the Committee, the County Transportation Coordinator served as a resource to the Committee, and the Executive County Superintendent participated in the Committee meetings. The district representatives on the Committee included six superintendents, 11 school business administrators, five transportation coordinators, and one director of special services. The results of the Committee meetings were reviewed at the monthly meetings of the Warren County Superintendents' Roundtable and the Hunterdon/Warren Association of School Business Officials. Among the issues that the Committee discussed were establishing a countywide data base, for both regular education students and special education students, the potential for increasing the number of tiered routes, and the coordination of district, charter school, and nonpublic bell schedules. (See Attachment B for list of Committee members.)

Among the obstacles that were raised at the Committee meetings were the limited number of bus contractors servicing districts in Warren County and the large geographic area of the county. Also, several district representatives expressed a concern that attempts to tier transportation routes could result in an increase in costs rather than a savings.

As a result of the meetings on transportation efficiencies, the Committee will continue to undertake the actions listed below to implement and further encourage efficiency and coordination throughout the county:

- Use of jointures and participation in coordinated transportation agreements with CTSA's.
- Communication with other districts both within and out of the county to tier regular education and special education routes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on reviews and analyses conducted on the transportation services in Warren County, the following are recommendations to provide such services in a more cost effective and efficient manner:

Recommendation 1: *Prepare and maintain a database for special education routes.* Districts will provide updated special education placement information to the county office, whenever the information changes. The county office shall notify districts as to destination(s) that are being served by more than one contractor and/or more than one district. District personnel responsible for transportation shall contact other districts sending student(s) to the same destination to determine if the routes can be combined.

Recommendation 2: *Prepare and maintain a database for regular education routes.* Districts will provide updated information for regular education routes to the county office prior to the end of the school year. The county office shall notify districts as to regular education routes that are being provided by the same contractor or by the same bus. District personnel responsible for transportation shall contact other district(s) to determine if the routes can be tiered.

Recommendation 3: *Review the bell times for Warren County Special Services School District (WCSSSD) programs located in Warren County school districts.* WCSSSD, in consultation with the county office, will then determine if it is advantageous to have the same start and dismissal times as the host schools or to stagger the times.

Recommendation 4: *Review the bell times for clusters of school districts during school year 2009-10, to determine if start and dismissal times for schools in each cluster can be adjusted in the 2010-11 school year to take advantage of tiered transportation routes.*

Recommendation 5: *Require adherence by non-public, private and charter schools, of all efficiency standards that apply to public schools.* This will require legislation to have all school entities operate on the same calendar and school day.

Recommendation 6: *Meet with representatives of the Ridge and Valley Charter School during school year 2009-10 to determine if start and dismissal times can be adjusted in the 2010-11*

school year to take advantage of tiered transportation routes. These meetings will be conducted by staff of the Warren County Office of Education.

Recommendation 7: *Meet with representatives of the nonpublic schools to obtain start and dismissal times to determine if times can be adjusted in the 2010-11 school year to take advantage of tiered transportation routes. These meetings will be conducted by county office staff.*

Recommendation 8: *Provide aid in lieu of transportation for students living in the same residence who attend the same nonpublic school. This would require legislation to change the per pupil amount to a per family amount, and this could result in significant savings. Under the current law for the 2008-09 school year, each eligible student received \$884.00. If two or more eligible students from the same family attend the same nonpublic school, each student is currently eligible to receive the \$884.00.*

Recommendation 9: *Develop, within the Phillipsburg cluster, transportation route(s) to nonpublic schools in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. For the purpose of developing transportation route(s) to nonpublic schools, the Phillipsburg cluster shall review the feasibility of including Harmony Township School District nonpublic students. This review and development of routes will be accomplished during the 2009-10 school year.*

Recommendation 10: *Review, within the Belvidere, Hackettstown, North Warren and Warren Hills clusters, the feasibility of developing transportation routes to nonpublic schools in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. This review will be conducted during the 2009-10 school year.*

Recommendation 11: *Review the feasibility of bidding transportation routes on a cluster district basis. This review will be conducted during the 2009-10 school year.*

Recommendation 12: *Coordinate transportation for athletic contests and county, regional, or state extracurricular events so that districts may share transportation of their students. This information could be added to the database noted in Recommendation #2.*

Recommendation 13: *Review, at the state level, the feasibility of changing the requirement for bus maintenance from 3,000 miles to a specific period of time (i.e. 90 days) to ease the burden on rural districts.*

NEXT STEPS

N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.6(b) Examinations of ways to promote coordination and regionalization of transportation services:

- 1. Coordination of bus routes, bell schedules and school calendars within the county for both public and nonpublic schools.**

Warren County public school districts' calendars are coordinated on a cluster district basis, and to a slightly lesser extent, on a county-wide basis. During the 2009-10 school year, the Executive County Superintendent's Office will be reviewing the feasibility of having coordinated calendars for nonpublic schools and the Ridge and Valley Charter School with the public school districts.

2. Staggering bell schedules in order to implement a tiered system of busing.

The majority of the districts in Warren County have only one school, and the districts with two or more schools have implemented a system of staggered bell schedules to take advantage of a tiered system of busing. One of the recommendations in this study is for districts in each cluster to review bell schedules to possibly stagger the times of their schools.

3. Centrally coordinating transportation for out-of-district special education placements.

At one of our early meetings, the committee determined that a county-wide database was needed for special education placements. The County Transportation Coordinator prepared an initial county database and identified special education placements for students who were going to the same destination. For several placements, there were two and in some cases three routes being serviced by two and three CTSAs. It will be the responsibility of the districts to contact each other to determine if the routes can be combined. It will also be the responsibility of the districts to keep the information in the database up-to-date.

4. Consolidating transportation services in combination of two or more school districts.

A recommendation of the committee is to prepare and maintain a database for regular education routes. The Executive County Superintendent's Office has identified regular education routes that are being provided by the same contractor or by the same bus, and could, therefore, possibly be tiered. Some districts have become comfortable in knowing that their transportation routes can be renewed at a predetermined percentage increase (CPI percentage), and they are reluctant to "take a leap of faith" and go out to bid for newly tiered routes. However, as was demonstrated by the bids for the tiered routes of the Mansfield Township and Warren Hills Regional school districts, there is potential for significant cost savings.

5. Improving cooperation between local boards of education and nonpublic school administrators leading to more official and efficient student transportation services.

A recommendation of the committee is to obtain the start and dismissal times of nonpublic schools in Warren County. Also, the Executive County Superintendent will meet with representatives of the nonpublic schools to determine if the bell schedules can be adjusted in the subsequent school year to take advantage of tiered transportation routes. Having a dialogue with nonpublic schools will also result in having the administrators offer their input on ways to provide more efficient and effective student transportation services.

CONCLUSION

This transportation efficiency study is part of a continuing effort to build a broad base of shared transportation services among districts in Warren County. It was important that the transportation efficiency committee had representatives from the majority of the districts in the county. Districts had “heard the talk” about improving transportation efficiency, but now they had an opportunity to offer their input and recommendations on improving efficiency not only in their county, but in particular, for their district. Districts realize that by working together, more efficiencies in transportation can be achieved.