



Deer Park
SCHOOL DISTRICT

10 June 2024

Deer Park School District
Attn: President, School Board
N. 428 Main
Deer Park, Washington 99006

Sequence: 2024-011, School Bus Transportation

Dear School Board President and Directors,

From December to early spring I was on the DPSD Transportation Committee, and I was pleased to be part of a great mix of DPSD personnel and staff on that team. With any well-ran "brain storming" team activities, there is no shortage of identifying the issues and boiling them down to major subsets. I believe the two major subsets were "Double Routing" and "Improved DPSD communication." However, when our team wrapped up, I still felt we fell short to capture ongoing issues. I feel two major subsets didn't make the list such as "Bus Driver Happiness" and "Bus Driver Safety/Security." Obviously, we'll go a long way in making our bus drivers happy with a new transportation facility. For our bus drivers and kids' safety, some county roads are not wide enough and shoulders are none existent in places, making them extremely unsafe at times. One bus driver picks up kids in the middle of the road because there is a steep ditch with no shoulder. I propose DPSD address these with the respective county commissioners. Our drivers and kids are also unsafely exposed to drivers not yielding to flashing "yellow" or "red" bus lights. This spring I have witnessed three separate drivers run through "flashing yellow" lights as my daughter was about to cross the road to board. I feel DPSD needs to discuss possible solutions with the county law enforcement. Does the DPSD consider buying two camera systems, which could be moved from bus to bus to record violating drivers, which are then turned over to law enforcement for processing?

I am not supportive of full district "double routing" implementation, which is driven by lack of drivers and money savings. First, I am concerned about our rural community riders, where older siblings are not on the same bus as younger siblings. When I rode the school bus, I always looked for my younger sisters. I understand this is widely typical of older siblings. Safety of our children outweigh cost savings. I am also concerned about the additional scheduling burden on our bus superintendent and her assistant. The pencil drill they already do today to lay out routes with diminishing bus drivers is already very difficult. While DPSD already does some level of "double routing" our bus superintendents make it work within the constraints. Therefore, I will support hybrid solutions that is the easiest on our bus superintendents with minimal parent/guardian complaints.



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And I would like to propose an idea for consideration. To obtain more bus drivers can we legally offer bonuses or incentives? For example if a current driver refers a new driver, could DPSD offer a \$500/month to each the existing bus driver and new bus driver for up to a year for each month the new bus driver drives for DPSD? Also, does the DPSD have a means to find a list of CDL drivers retiring from service, who'd be interested in driving a school bus?

With regards,
Gerald F. Ashby
Deer Park School Board Director, #4