



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Transportation Office

(475) 220-1600

Memorandum

Date: September 29, 2021

To: Tom Lamb, Chief Operating Officer

From: Carl L. Jackson, Director of Transportation

Subject: Driver Shortage & COVID-19 Status

Given the national shortage of bus drivers, NHPS and First Student collaborate daily to troubleshoot late buses. Because of this collaboration, bus service has improved incrementally, and bus delays and no shows have concurrently improved. However, lingering effects of the driver shortage and COVID-19 compliance with Executive Order No.13G persist. Here is a status update:

Status and Scope

- Of the approximately 18K students transported daily, fewer than 5% are affected by the current driver shortage. First Student is combining as many as 10 routes, which can result in delays of 10 minutes or more. Some delays have been 30 minutes or more when road conditions or accidents change traffic flow.
- 301 routes need to be covered daily and 301 drivers are need to cover all routes. Currently, there are only 274 drivers available. Therefore, 27 drivers are needed to cover existing runs.
- In addition, a spare driver ratio of 10% should be maintained for emergencies. For example, it can be difficult for First Student to cover routes when positive cases of Covid or quarantines are required, and these happen weekly. In addition, up to 10 drivers could call out sick on any day – comparable to other businesses of this scale.
- Given the slow pace of onboarding new drivers, the shortage is likely to continue into the next month.
- First Student is continuing to advertise locally for experienced and new bus drivers. Bonuses of up to \$5,000 for new drivers are part of the advertising campaign. As many as 40 potential drivers are in some phase of certification with Connecticut DMV.

No Costs/Financial Implications to NHPS

There are no additional costs to NHPS for First Student's recruitment and bonuses offered to potential drivers. First Student will also take advantage of free COVID-19 testing and vaccination programs available in New Haven and within the State. No additional charges to NHPS are anticipated at this time. First Student is in compliance with the language memorialized in the current agreement. Contractually, the pandemic and COVID-19 fall within the "Force Majeure" clause in Article XVI, number 3, which states, "No deduction shall be made in the event of delays and nonperformance due to any act of God, civil disturbance, fire, riot, war, terrorism, government action or any other condition or cause beyond the Contractor's control". Changes in the contract with financial implications for either party are subject to negotiations.

Finally, the "Contractor's Declaration Attesting Compliance with Executive Order No. 13G" will be updated by First Student and submitted to the NHPS's Transportation Office every Monday until further notice. A copy will be forwarded to the appropriate members of NHPS's Executive Team.