



RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

1 ACADEMIC AVENUE, SUITE 200, JOHNSTOWN, PA 15904
PHONE: (814) 266-6063 FAX: (814) 266-7349

April 4, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you may be aware, our current school transportation contract with *McIlwain School Bus Lines (MSBL)* is coming to an end on June 30, 2018 after fifteen (15) years of service. This is after the Richland School District developed and sent out *Request for Proposals* to area transportation providers in an effort to follow routine recommendations that have been provided by the Auditor General of Pennsylvania for quite a few districts across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is also common for the Richland School District to seek quotes, proposals, and bids for a variety of services as contracts come to an end, as it is a standard acceptable business practice.

The Richland School District is grateful for *MSBL's* dedication and commitment over the last fifteen (15) years and our sincerest appreciation is extended to Mr. Timothy McIlwain (owner), Mr. Russell Keen (supervisor/ dispatcher), and the many fine and caring drivers for your friendship and commitment to our students and families.

Effective, July 1, 2018, *Miller Motor Company* of Salix, Pennsylvania will become our new transportation provider with the public awarding of a new ten (10) year contract to provide stability to our district. Transportation contracts require very large capital outlays due to the cost of the buses and such contracts are longer to distribute those costs.

Miller Motor Company has been in the school transportation business since 1959, currently provides transportation services to the Windber Area School District, and is one of three (3) contractors to provide service in the Forest Hills School District.

As it relates to the current drivers, some have chosen to retire, some will choose to stay with *MSBL* due to loyalty and dedication, and others may transfer to *Miller Motor Company*. *MSBL* has said that no drivers will lose their jobs as they can transfer to other local districts within the *MSBL* system, plus *MSBL* has invested money in their drivers as a result of training and rewards. We respect and appreciate employee and employer loyalty. In addition, just as in education with substitute teacher shortages, there are school bus driver shortages across the United States. Some drivers have also decided on their own that they want to remain with your children and have transferred to *Miller Motor Company* and we appreciate their commitment and compassion for our students.

"A student is never an interruption of our work ~ he or she is the purpose of our work!"

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

It is the Policy of the Richland School District not to discriminate in employment or program services for reasons of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or handicapping conditions.

Transportation Contract

The 2018-2019 school year will also see twenty-six (26) new buses and vans for our students with an aggressive replacement cycle beginning in the second year of the contract in an effort to increase our state reimbursement while reducing the local share paid by residents as newer equipment yields a higher reimbursement, along with other factors in the state transportation formula.


Miller Motor Company plans to purchase property within the Richland School District to serve as a depot and they also made a commitment by providing a full-time mechanic for our new fleet and a full-time and dedicated supervisor dispatcher for our district as part of the contract with the supervisor/dispatcher being Mr. Steven Stahl, a Richland School District resident. All of which are investments in our district through the return of tax revenue and jobs for district residents. The owner, David Miller, has stated and has put into writing that he will replace any bus that we do not like as part of his commitment to the district.

In the coming months, *Miller Motor Company* will be providing a fresh set of “eyes” by evaluating all of our routes for efficiencies and possible improvements. It is our hope and intent not to make major route changes or to add significant amounts of time to our routes.

We ask for your patience and understanding during this time of transition. There will be some new faces, some new students and younger students with school “jitters” who are used to routines and some first time or new parents that are going to be unfamiliar with the routes and stops.

Finally, we ask that an adult or older responsible child be present at the bus stop before and after school for the first two weeks of the transition to provide support, supervision, and an added layer of security for all children. As part of our new procedure in 2018-2019, children in third (3rd) grade or below will not be dropped off without an adult or older sibling present at the bus stop.

Sincerely,


Arnold J. Nadonley
Superintendent of Schools

AJN:dk