

Hello Byram Township Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a notice that I had shared out last month regarding school start and end times for Byram Township Schools for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

Just as a quick reminder as to what was shared out in the last notification for those who may not have had a chance to see it... Over the last couple of months, the superintendents and business administrators from Byram, LVRHS and Hopatcong have met with the administration and owner of Byram Bus as well as a representative from the Sussex County Regional Cooperative to discuss busing going forward. The purpose of these meetings was to see if there was an interest in formulating timelines for more efficient busing as the three districts work together with a tiered busing scenario that saves the districts money. Tiered busing means that the same buses are used to pick up and drop off the students in each of the three districts, allowing the bus company to more effectively and efficiently utilize their driving staff and pass the savings along to the school districts. Obviously we are interested. These meetings had continued as there was an additional meeting held in January to finalize information and times. The initial times were developed by Byram Bus as a starting point. Byram Township Schools currently pays approximately \$20,000 per bus route (and has 16 bus routes), which is much less than what others are currently paying per route, \$25-35,000 per route or even more. This is the current contract we are working with. If were to break away from this tiered system and the current contract, costs could balloon somewhere upwards to \$40-50,000 per bus route or more.

That additional cost will force the district to experience a reduction in force in several staff members. The Board of Education has made a promise to try to keep as many programs as possible in the district because that is just one area among many that sets Byram Township Schools apart from other districts. The district has to consider any and all options that will save the district money and keep programs as they are now for as long as we can. Loss of staff equates to loss of programs over the long run. This agreement in busing will allow the district to continue with keeping the programs that we have for at least the foreseeable future.

The district is also dealing with S-2, which is tied to student enrollment and will cut state aid to the district by almost \$2,000,000 over the next few years. Next year alone, the district is losing state aid as a result of S-2 in the neighborhood of \$400,000 and the year after that approximately \$500,000. The district has already felt the impact of S-2 and will continue to feel the hit for the next several years, so the busing option is something that the district has to consider. Breaking away from the current tiered bus routes and our current contract would have huge negative impact on staffing and programs.

At our last meeting January, concerns were shared regarding the proposed times and an agreement was made to look at stops more closely with all of the buses that transport Byram Township students to not only make the routes as efficient as they could be, but also attempt to keep the times as close to where they are now, all within staying under the same tiered contracted pricing. Below are the agreed upon and finalized start and end of day times for the Byram Township Schools' students for the 2020-2021 school year. Basically the times have been adjusted to be only ten minutes later than they are currently.

Regular Day: 8:50am-3:45pm
Delayed Opening: 10:50am-3:45pm
Early Dismissal: 8:50am-1:25pm

Sincerely,
Bryan Hensz