

Alisa King
Director of Elementary Education

Christy Chicklo
Special Education Director K-5

Sheila Lubert
Business Manager

Marc Mayer
*Education Center Principal
Student Services Coordinator
Federal Programs*

SOUTH ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2743 Washington Boulevard
Liberty Borough
McKeesport, Pennsylvania 15133
Phone (412) 675-3070
Fax (412) 672-2836

Dr. Lisa N. Duval
Superintendent

David McDonald
*High School Principal
Director of Secondary Education*

Katelyn Vogel
Elementary School Principal

Charles Michael
*Middle School Principal
Special Education Director 6-12*

STATEMENT TO ALL FAMILIES AND STAFF OF THE SOUTH ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

This message is being sent to all parents, guardians and staff of the South Allegheny School District. We at the District understand that you experienced significant upheaval regarding your child's transportation services since the District's transportation provider, Sun Coach Lines, LLC, terminated their transportation contract with the District on Friday, January 29, 2021, effective immediately. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we continue to work to resolve this significant issue. We are providing this update to keep you informed of the most recent developments.

Because Sun Coach's termination of the transportation agreement occurred the Friday prior to the return of all four Borough elementary students the next Monday, the School District asked the Court to issue an injunction against Sun Coach to require it to continue transporting the District's students. The Judge was reluctant to order Sun Coach to continue transporting all of the District's students but made provision to assure that those students attending special education out-of-district placements continued to receive transportation services until the parties resolved the issues in mediation or the Court took action on the injunction request. The Judge issued an "Interim Order" requiring Sun Coach to transport only those students for the short term. However, when the Interim Order was received, the daily rate requested by Sun Coach was extremely high because it was for a full size 74-80 passenger school bus when Sun Coach was primarily only providing passenger vans to transport the students. Paying the rate for a large school bus when most of the students were transported on passenger vans was prohibitively expensive for the District to transport its special education students who attend out-of-district placements for the remainder of the year. Accordingly, the District worked tirelessly over the last couple weeks and successfully made alternative arrangements with other providers to transport its special education students. The School District notified Sun Coach on three occasions over the last week that its services were no longer needed. Sun Coach refused to end its transportation services. It took the position that the Court's Interim Order entitled it to be paid the

large bus rate when it was primarily providing only passenger vans and that the District was forced to use Sun Coach even though the District notified them that their services were no longer needed. Since Sun Coach would not voluntarily stop providing transportation services, our legal counsel was forced to return to Court to have the Judge confirm that the District's relationship with Sun Coach is completely terminated.

We are pleased to report that late in the afternoon on Friday, February 12, 2021, the court issued an Order granting the District's request to withdraw its injunction against Sun Coach and dissolve the Court's February 4, 2021 Interim Order. Therefore, as of February 12, 2021, Sun Coach is no longer the authorized transportation service for the District, and no District students will be transported by them.

The District and your family now have clear direction on the transportation provider moving forward. Through the District's tireless efforts over the last couple of weeks, several alternative transportation providers had already stepped in to transport the District's special education students who were attending out of district placements. Now that the Court has ruled that Sun Coach has no future right to transport any District students, the District is confident that it will be able to arrange more and more transportation for the special education students. Also, the District has begun the process of obtaining a replacement student transportation service that will be able to transport all of the District's students for the remainder of this school year and into the future. However, this may not occur immediately. Again, we appreciate your patience and understanding as we work through these issues, and we thank you for the trust you have placed in us. We will continue to update you as we receive more information. We encourage you to use the replacement transportation provider for your child based on the District's notification to you.

The District and Sun Coach will continue to litigate the underlying payment dispute until a final decision is made as to the amount Sun Coach is entitled to receive during the time last school year when the Governor closed schools completely and the time this year when many students were and continue to be educated virtually.
