

A Report on Transportation Operations and Efficiency

Provided to: Hartland Consolidated Schools

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Project Scope Summary

The following were the key areas of focus for the study.

- Evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of operations
- Conducting a community survey on transportation concerns
- Addressing the persistent driver shortage

Operational Analysis

- The foundational elements of policy and organizational structure are appropriate for existing operations. The scope of available technology is adequate but recommendations for enhancements are provided.
- Organizational alignment on the goals and objectives for the department can be clarified in order to develop the needed operating model.
- The constraints of the driver shortage have resulted in comparatively long ride times and low ridership.
- The large geographic area limits some efficiency options such as changes to bell times that would reduce cost and the demand for drivers.
- Comparative cost metrics are within expected values on a planned basis but higher than peers when actual riders are considered.

Community Survey Analysis

- The survey had robust participation (235 responses over a one-week period) and included a significant number of helpful narrative comments (84 total).
- The community paid many compliments to the quality of the bus drivers.
- The negative impact and ongoing concerns about the driver shortage were clearly evident in the responses and comments.
- In the event of a continuation of the driver shortage, the community indicated that limiting service and a structured, well communicated, and defined term for pauses in service were the most preferable options for mitigation.
- Anecdotal evidence in the survey highlighted a set of reasons why the quantitative assessment of routing showed low ridership.

Driver Shortage Analysis

- The structure of the HCS compensation package provides helpful options for different applicant and employee needs.
- When supplemental compensation such as the cash-in-lieu and the retention bonus are considered, HCS had a very strong compensation package.
 - The retention bonus was available for employees with 2-years of service.
 - Greatly supports reducing future problems by reducing driver churn.
- Entry-level compensation, inclusive of the sign on bonus, is competitive but insufficient to attract enough candidates.
- The contractual relationship with the RTC and HCS organizational culture concerns present challenges from an employee experience perspective.

Proposed Options Page 1

- Continue evaluating the routing network to maintain an alignment between driver supply and student demand as reflected in the actual riders.
 - This effort should be coupled with an effort to align HCS on the goals and objectives of the system and the methods for ongoing actions in light of changes to supply or demand.
- Increase entry-level driver compensation in an effort to increase the number of applicants and the resulting number of employed drivers.
 - This can be done concurrently with the recently initiated recruiting effort being undertaken with the RTC.
 - Given the revisions to the RTC contract, HCS should also consider the organizational need for a dedicated or primarily assigned recruiter of bus drivers.
 - Refine, and develop where required, the existing scope of process and performance metrics jointly with RTC that identify areas of success and concern within the hiring process (i.e., mean number of days from application to hire, mean number of days from application to first contact, mean days from application to start of training, etc.).
 - Consider options that allow an applicant to begin receiving compensation while necessary employment activities are being completed.

Proposed Options Page 2

- Continue efforts to segment and differentiate compensation practices to address different stages of the employee management process.
 - Refining and monitoring the process metrics mentioned previously are designed to ensure candidates are not lost to the hiring process.
 - The sign on bonus remains a useful tool for initial applicants.
 - The retention bonus is targeted at reducing employee churn.
 - Additional employee and applicant engagement activities can be considered to promote a strong workplace culture and the mission-driven nature of the department.

Additional Items for Consideration

- Additional technologies offer useful benefits in the ongoing management and evaluation of routing efficiency.
 - Telematics (GPS), student ridership management, and parental communications are an integrated set of options that would benefit both the department and parents.
- Assessing the ongoing relationship with the RTC to determine how best to structure a mutually beneficial relationship is necessary.

Questions

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