

Dear CCSD Families,

After much discussion and thought, decisions regarding bussing changes for the 2020-2021 school year were woven into the CCSD approved Return to Learn plan. When making difficult decisions, several factors were considered and key data sources were considered.

The district administrative team, along with the school board, completely understands the concern of families and asks all to look through the lens of our position. We will continue to receive changing information from the Iowa and Page County Departments of Public Health and will need to keep our plan fluid based on data and specific situations in classrooms, buildings, and the district as a whole. The timing of this decision has caused us to be agile and respond in the most positive way possible. We invite you to join us.

Many families, including our own staff, will be impacted by district transportation decisions. In-town bus routes, shuttles between buildings, one combined rural route, and other bussing changes are required due to the physical distancing necessary for COVID-19 expectations per health experts. Because we care deeply about the safety of our students and staff, we are required to make decisions which will create challenges and possible frustrations. One of them is to discontinue in-town shuttles.

As we approach this new logistic, we have an opportunity to be creative with our solutions and come together as a community. Lending a helping hand to one another is crucial to keeping our students learning, safe, and in school. As a district, we have been able to provide bussing services beyond state requirements for many years; however, this is no longer the case.

When we make decisions as a district administration and school board, the needs of students come first. When the time comes to choose between safety and convenience, we must always choose safety. In this instance, safety equates to changes in bus routes. Providing transportation access to students on rural routes will promote student safety and timely arrival to school.

In the past, “before and after school” busses were filled with rural route students along with shuttle students. Not only were busses filled to capacity and required students to sit three to a seat on a 65 or 68 capacity bus, shuttles called for students to cross from one building to another. Within our Return to Learn Plan, we have greatly minimized the amount of contact each student and staff member have with others. Running shuttles is counter to this premise, as physical distancing cannot be maintained.

It is not cost effective or time efficient to run multiple trips for in-town shuttles to maintain physical distancing. With the number of students riding shuttles, contract tracing would be next to impossible and would inhibit our ability to keep students and staff safe.

On a separate note, the cost to drive and maintain busses is paid from the General Fund which also pays for instructional resources for quality student learning opportunities and staff salaries. At this time, we need all-hands-on-deck and are adding custodial support for sanitation purposes.

Many points were considered in this decision, and we appreciate your support in finding creative solutions for your family. As we do not know when the entire plan might need to shift, it is imperative for each family to have a plan in the event a temporary closing is necessary.

Take care,

Chris