

SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PROGRAM EVALUATION FOR  
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

February 2006

# Table of Contents

Attachment 1	Bus Log (sample)
Attachment 2	Bus Log (sample)
Attachment 3	Driver and Monitor Handbook
Attachment 4	Penalty Description from Vendor Contract
Attachment 5	Driver Trip Card
Attachment 6	Principal Survey
Attachment 7	Late Report

## **Program Evaluation Question**

Is SSD providing on-time transportation to school?

### **Personnel Responsible for Evaluation**

Jeff Wood  
Robin Orsbon  
Karen Sides  
Carl Bay  
Kenny Mulder  
Yvette Dennington

### **Goal/Objective of Program/Services**

To determine the timeliness of the Transportation Department's arrival at schools while meeting School Board guidelines.

### **Date of Evaluation**

June 2004 – January 2005

### **Description of relationship between goals, CSIP & MSIP Standards**

If transportation is late in delivering students to school, there is an interference with educators in meeting IEP goals and the required minutes. Delays in delivery may cause some students to become more agitated, which may also delay their abilities to concentrate on the day's lessons.

### **Demographic Description of Program**

#### **Locations:**

##### **North Garage**

1832 Derhake Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63033  
112 Routes  
121 Drivers

##### **Central Garage**

10022 Meeks Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63132  
79 Routes  
84 Drivers

##### **South Garage**

12721 West Watson Road  
St. Louis, MO 63127  
52 Routes  
57 Drivers

## **Number of Staff:**

### **North Garage**

- 1 Manager
- 2 Dispatchers
- 1 Safety Manager
- 3 Trainers
- 4 Mechanics
- 1 Fueler
- 1 Clerk

### **Central Garage**

- 1 Manager
- 3 Dispatchers
- 1 Trainer
- 4 Mechanics
- 1 Fueler
- 1 Maintenance Supervisor (for Central & South)
- 1 Safety & Training Manager (for Central & South)

### **South Garage**

- 1 Manager
- 2 Dispatchers
- 1 Trainer
- 1 Fueler

### **Transportation Department**

- 1 Director of Transportation
- 1 Administrative Assistant
- 2 Routers
- 3 Road Supervisors

## **I. Length of Program/Service**

Evaluation of timely transportation is ongoing. Employees record arrival times daily and are submitted at the end of each calendar week. All recorded times are reviewed for compliance.

The Transportation Department continually receives and investigates reports of late buses as they occur. Road supervisors provide eyewitness accounts of arrival times, which they share with managers, routers and/or director.

## **II. Description of Stakeholders Engaged in Program Evaluations**

Jeff Wood	Director of Transportation
Robin Orsbon	Administrative Assistant, Director of Transportation
Karen Sides	Central Garage Manager
Carl Bay	South Garage Manager
Kenny Mulder	Maintenance Director
Open	Safety & Training Manager

### III. Evaluation Criteria for Programs/Services Offered

At the beginning of the school year, schools report the arrival times for buses that serve their school (example, Attachment 1). During this period, this information is submitted daily. As the year progresses, these reports become less frequent and late buses are reported through telephone calls or e-mails. The information reported is based upon actual observations by any one of the following: Principals, Road Supervisors (Attachment 2), Teachers, Parents and Drivers.

Drivers are subject to disciplinary actions if they do not report immediately to dispatch when they are running more than 10 minutes late while on their route (Attachment 3). There are penalties or damages in place for SSD Transportation contractors that are unable to provide on-time transportation (Attachment 4).

The District and its contractors have in place disciplinary policies for reporting absences. It is the District's position that the best person to drive a route is the driver that is assigned to it. The regular driver is most familiar with the route, the children to be transported and their disabilities.

### IV. Data Collection Methodology

Drivers complete "trip cards" daily (Attachment 5), documenting the actual arrival time at each school. The card also has the desired arrival time for easy comparison with the actual time. Dispatchers have these cards available daily to review service issues if need be. Otherwise, the cards are reviewed after their weekly submission.

Each year the Transportation Department conducts a Principal's Survey of all schools for which we provide transportation. One of the questions in the survey is: Are AM & PM bus routes timely? Attached are the results of that survey, (Attachment 6).

### V. Results

We reviewed the count sheets for each of the three garages and categorized them into two areas: less than 10 minutes late and more than 10 minutes late. We looked at the first 10 weeks of this school year when we compiled the data. What follows is a summary of those findings. A compilation of the data, (Attachment 7) and the actual count sheets are maintained at each of the respective garages.

	<b>Under 10 minutes late</b>									
	8/15	8/22	8/29	9/6	9/12	9/19	9/26	10/3	10/10	10/17
North Garage	2.76	3.78	4.61	3.96	4.06	4.70	5.35	5.25	4.15	4.15
Central Garage	1.85	5.54	5.23	7.08	7.69	6.77	5.69	6.62	4.62	10.15
South Garage	3.09	5.36	4.54	5.36	6.19	6.39	4.33	4.54	11.34	6.19

	<b>Over 10 minutes late</b>									
	8/15	8/22	8/29	9/6	9/12	9/19	9/26	10/3	10/10	10/17
North Garage	8.02	7.74	4.98	3.78	2.76	2.30	3.04	3.13	3.13	3.32
Central Garage	3.38	7.54	13.38	6.15	6.31	5.54	4.15	3.23	3.69	4.77
South Garage	4.12	3.51	1.44	.82	2.27	1.44	.62	1.24	.41	1.44

**Principal's Survey**

**Re: Timeliness – A.M. & P.M. routes are timely**

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied	Satisfied
Responses	45	29	9	4
Response %	52%	33%	10%	5%

190 surveys were distributed, 87 were completed and returned, while 103 surveys were not. As explained in Attachment 6, the first two categories, Very Satisfied and Satisfied, are considered "Acceptable." Traditionally, from a national perspective, surveys not returned tend to indicate that the school principal is satisfied with their service level.

**Strengths of Program/Service**

SSD began using a new school bus contractor, MV Transit in the north St. Louis County area during the 2004/05 school year. The remaining portions of St. Louis County were taken back in-house by SSD. To accomplish this, SSD purchased 177 new school buses to operate from their Central and South garages. This purchase minimized the frequency of mechanical breakdowns, which cause buses to be late.

100% of the drivers and aides, employed at the beginning of the evaluation period, at Central & South garages had previous experience with SSD transportation during the evaluation period. Additionally, eight members of the management team had previous experience with special needs transportation.

The router that was utilized also had over 15 years previous SSD experience and consequently was very knowledgeable of St. Louis County and the students that SSD serves.

**Concerns regarding Program/Service**

SSD resumed in-house transportation on July 1, 2004, and was dependent upon the previous contractor for sharing route information and their student database. Student data received from the previous contractor was marginally reliable and not supplied in a timely manner.

At the beginning of the 2004/05 school year, TransFinder, a new routing program was put into place. This system was new to the entire transportation team; consequently there was a learning curve that may have delayed some changes that would have effected timely transportation. At the time of implementation, there was a trainer from TransPar Group (consulting firm that employs the transportation management team), who was available to assist, but his abilities with the TransFinder program were limited. At the same time, there was only one router. Another router was added in November 2004, to assist in the workload and implement changes that would improve on-time performance.

MV Transit provided transportation from the north garage and for the north St. Louis County area. This was their first attempt with special needs transportation in the St. Louis area. It was necessary for them to interview and hire 100% of their workforce.

Frequently, schools would implement bell time changes or institute before school programs without notifying transportation. Consequently transportation was notified after the first days of school, when the buses arrived late.

## **VI. Program/Service Recommendations**

1. Improve communication between schools and Transportation to keep the department updated on late buses. When a bus is late, Transportation must receive notification so they may improve service. An example of this would be for the school to fax or e-mail arrival times to transportation managers on a daily basis. This is particularly important the first weeks of school, so immediate adjustments can be made to the affected routes.
2. Installing additional telephones, or upgrading the current telephone system, would be beneficial during the August – October time frame. One of the responsibilities of road supervisors is to visit schools and offer assistance with transportation problems. Having only three such supervisors and approximately 190 schools to visit, their ability to solicit information daily is very limited. Often at the beginning of the school year telephone lines are congested, so it is difficult to reach the road supervisors or Transportation office for assistance.
3. Include disciplinary measures toward drivers who fail to report late buses to dispatchers and managers.
4. Dispatchers must review trip cards for on-time performance at their arrival schools when submitted to the respective dispatch area. At the start of each school year, dispatchers and/or managers should review trip cards as drivers return from their routes, to review for on-time performance.

## **VII. Program Findings**

1. There must be increased/improved communication between schools and the Transportation Department regarding on-time performance. This should occur prior to the end of each school year in preparation for the upcoming session; just prior to the start of each session; and daily the first weeks of school to adjust routes for on-time arrivals.
2. At the end of each school year, the Joint Resolution and the Employee Handbook must be reviewed and/or revised. This is the appropriate time for additional disciplinary measures and procedures to be included in those documents.

## **VIII. Goals**

1. Devise methodology for improved communications between schools and Transportation Department.

### **Action:**

Survey schools regarding most efficient and convenient method for sharing information with Transportation, within hours of concern.

Expected completion date for this goal would be June 1, 2006.

2. Submit recommendation to the JR negotiations team to include requirement for drivers to promptly report late buses to the management team.

### **Action:**

Meet with negotiators outlining input for concern, stating consequences of late buses and reporting thereof.

Expected completion date for this goal would May 1, 2006.