

August 25, 2026

Dear Standish-Sterling Families:

As we prepare for the first day of school on August 31, we need to make you aware of a temporary change to transportation for some of our families.

Despite ongoing efforts to recruit additional bus drivers, Standish-Sterling Community Schools currently does not have enough qualified drivers to operate all of our regular bus routes. We recognize that changes to transportation can create real inconvenience for families, but our immediate priority is to find a way to continue providing bus transportation to all students with the drivers we have available.

To accomplish that, **Routes 7, 15, 16, and 17 will temporarily be consolidated into two routes using centralized pickup and drop-off locations.**

Rather than making individual stops along these routes, the affected buses will pick up groups of students at designated centralized stops. Reducing the number of individual stops will significantly shorten travel time and allow each bus to make two trips: the bus will collect one group of students and bring them to school, then return to the route to collect the second group. In the afternoon, the process will be reversed.

This allows two buses and two drivers to provide transportation that would otherwise require four drivers, while operating within approximately the same overall time period as our conventional routes.

We understand that this arrangement will require some affected families to travel farther to reach a bus stop, and we recognize that this is not as convenient as the service those families have received in the past. Unfortunately, with the number of drivers currently available, continuing all existing routes with individual stops is simply not possible. Centralized stops allow us to continue serving these students **rather than eliminating transportation on those routes altogether.**

Families on **Routes 7, 15, 16, and 17** will receive a text message with their student's assigned centralized stop and pickup information. The consolidated routes will operate both morning and afternoon and will serve students in all grade levels, just as our regular routes do. **These routes were not selected arbitrarily.** They are the routes most directly affected by recent, unexpected driver departures and, because they are among our shorter routes, they are the routes that can most practically be combined using centralized stops. This combination gives us the best opportunity to continue providing transportation to all students while working with the limited number of drivers currently available.

Most importantly, **this is intended to be temporary.** Standish-Sterling Community Schools continues to actively recruit bus drivers. As additional qualified drivers become available, we intend to restore the affected routes to their regular configuration as quickly as practical.

The driver shortage also affects more than our regular daily routes. With our current staffing level, we have **very limited ability to provide transportation for athletic events, field trips, and other school activities**. It also leaves us with little flexibility when a regular driver is ill or otherwise unavailable, which could result in a route being delayed or, in some circumstances, canceled for the day.

We are asking our entire school community to help us recruit additional drivers. If you, a family member, friend, neighbor, retiree, or anyone else you know may be interested in driving a school bus—even on a substitute or limited basis—please contact the Transportation Department at **[989-846-3387]**. Every additional qualified driver gives us greater ability to restore our regular routes and reliably provide the transportation our students and school programs depend upon.

Parents or guardians with questions about their assigned stop, pickup time, or the operation of the temporary routes may contact the Transportation Department at **[989-846-3387]**. **Please understand that individual or door-to-door stops cannot be added to these consolidated routes, even in cases where the bus travels directly past a student's home.** The purpose of centralized stops is not simply to reduce the distance the bus travels; it is to eliminate the time required for numerous individual stops. Those minutes, accumulated over an entire route, are what allow one bus and driver to complete the first trip, return for the second group of students, and still get everyone to school on time. For that reason, we respectfully ask families not to contact the Transportation Department to request an individual stop or an exception to the centralized-stop requirement. We will not be able to accommodate those requests.

We know this change will require additional effort from some families, and we sincerely appreciate your patience and cooperation. Our transportation staff has worked hard to find a solution that allows us to begin the school year transporting all of our students safely despite a very difficult driver shortage.

Thank you for working with us as we begin the new school year.

Sincerely,

Arthur Neumann

Transportation Director

Standish-Sterling Community Schools

cc: Darren Kroczaleski, Superintendent