



bh communitywatch &lt;bhcommunitywatch1@gmail.com&gt;

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## Fwd: Subscription Bus Update

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**Margit Pedraza** [REDACTED]

Wed, Aug 9, 2023 at 8:41 AM

To: bh communitywatch &lt;bhcommunitywatch1@gmail.com&gt;

I would like to request an article be published in relation to subscription busing.

Content for the article is as follows:

On August 3, 2023, I, along with other parents, received an email informing us that subscription busing is being cancelled for CMS, MKM and MP for the upcoming school year. I was truly disappointed and frustrated by this decision given the added hardship it places on parents especially me as a single mom. I decided to reach out to Ms. Sheehan, Ms. Varley and the BOE to ask questions about the decision to cancel busing as well as the metrics around it. I am sharing my email as information for other parents asking the same questions. The decision to cancel subscription busing was made by the Finance committee. I hope parents find this information useful.

**From:** "Varley, Dr. Melissa" <mvarley@bhpsnj.org>

**Date:** August 8, 2023 at 9:08:05 AM EDT

**To:** Margit Pedraza [REDACTED] Angela Penna <apenna@bhpsnj.org>

**Subject:** Re: Subscription Bus Update

Dear Ms. Pedraza;

Please find the answers to your questions below:

Please explain how you determined that subscription busing should be eliminated specifically at CMS, MKM and Mountain Park. (Why these three schools, the metrics used and the model used).

The subscription bus program was set up to provide a value added service to families when there was a seat available on a bus along an already established route to "purchase" that seat for their child who did not qualify. For CMS, MP and MKM, there are not seats available on these routes this year. We are down one route at CMS due to a driver leaving and the MKM and MP students who applied were not along the established route and to change the route would make the bus late for school in the AM and PM.

Who made the decision to eliminate subscription busing for these schools? Was it approved by our BOE?

The finance committee was involved in the decision.

Please explain what options/alternate solutions were explored to not have to eliminate subscription busing for our students.

Being down one bus driver creates a difficult situation from the beginning. Our district drivers are dedicated to doing whatever it takes to make it work. We have rearranged various routes as well as having drivers take on additional routes, and are utilizing substitute drivers as well as

our Transportation Supervisor to cover the routes. Unfortunately, at CMS there is not a way to get coverage due to the tiering of our routes with other schools in the district.

How many students from each school were denied subscription bussing?

29 at CMS  
11 at MKM  
1 at MP

How many students from Hughes and Woodruff will be accommodated for subscription bussing?

39 from Hughes  
26 from Woodruff

We would need to run 2 buses regardless due to the number of students who qualified.

Is courtesy bussing still being offered to CMS, MKM and Mountain Park? If so, how many courtesy bussing students are there at each school?

This will take some time to pull as we do not note them in the system this way.

1. Note: I am not referring to the state mandated law that requires students to live a certain distance from the schools. I am referring to those students that are being bused for free which live less than 2 miles from the schools.

Thank you!  
Melissa Varley

On Mon, Aug 7, 2023 at 5:53 PM Margit Pedraz  wrote:

Good Evening Ms. Sheehan and Ms. Varley,

I am following up on the email (attached below) that parents received last week on the elimination of subscription bussing for three schools. As you can imagine, I, along with other parents, am disappointed and frustrated by the cancellation of subscription bussing to specific schools. It truly places an additional hardship on parents especially single parents like me. The intent of this email is to better understand the metrics and decisions that were made around bussing for the children in our district. Please advise on the following:

1. Please explain how you determined that subscription bussing should be eliminated specifically at CMS, MKM and Mountain Park. (Why these three schools, the metrics used and the model used).
2. Who made the decision to eliminate subscription bussing for these schools? Was it approved by our BOE?
3. Please explain what options/alternate solutions were explored to not have to eliminate subscription bussing for our students.
4. How many students from each school were denied subscription bussing?
5. How many students from Hughes and Woodruff will be accommodated for subscription bussing?
6. Is courtesy bussing still being offered to CMS, MKM and Mountain Park? If so, how many courtesy bussing students are there at each school?
  - a. Note: I am not referring to the state mandated law that requires students to live a certain distance from the schools. I am referring to those students that are being bused for free which live less than 2 miles from the schools.

Thank you!  
Ms. Pedraza

On Aug 3, 2023, at 9:52 AM, Sheehan, Kelly <[ksheehan@bhpsnj.org](mailto:ksheehan@bhpsnj.org)> wrote:

Good Morning,

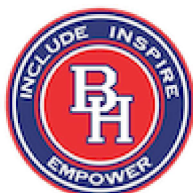
I write to provide an update on our Subscription Busing Program. Unfortunately, the District has not been successful in hiring the additional bus driver that is required in order to be able to offer a seat to all students who have applied for Subscription Busing.

Accordingly, we will not be able to accommodate your child who attends Columbia Middle School, Mountain Park, or Mary Kay McMillin with a Subscription Bus seat for the 2023-2024 school year. Refunds of seat deposits will be issued on or before October 13, 2023.

If your child attends Hughes or Woodruff, please expect additional correspondence next week with instructions on how to pay your balance and secure your seat.

Please know that we understand the inconvenience the driver shortage is causing families, and we deeply apologize for these circumstances. The District continues to work diligently to hire new drivers. As always, if you are aware of any individuals holding a CDL with Passenger, School and Air Brake endorsements, please direct them to contact the Transportation Department.

Thank you,



Kelly Sheehan  
Transportation Supervisor  
Assistant to Buildings & Grounds  
Berkeley Heights Board of Education  
908-464-2533

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Dr. Melissa Varley  
**Superintendent of Schools**  
**Berkeley Heights Public Schools**  
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