

November 4, 2011

To: Smitty

From: Monty Aldrich

THOUGHTS FROM THE UNIT OFFICE...

I have an issue to address that has become larger each day within our school district. Almost on a daily basis, we have a vehicle who will pass one of our school buses that has the stop arm out. I'm sure that everyone knows that this is a violation of the law. On every test that is given at the DMV, it is emphasized that you **MUST** stop when a school bus has its stop arm extended. Yet, we receive reports of 2-3 violations on a weekly basis. The actual penalty is a hefty fine and the loss of your license for 30 days.

Our bus driver procedure is to radio in to the district and report this. Each driver tries to give a description of the vehicle and any license plate information they can capture. This is difficult as the driver is attempting to stop, use switches for lights and stop arm, and watch for traffic while children are preparing to get off the bus. Then our staff is to call police and report it. The difficult part is to get the entire license plate information and prove that the incident happened. **MY MAIN PLEA TO YOU IS TO PLEASE STOP AHEAD OF TIME AND WAIT! SINCE WE ARE HAVING THIS HAPPEN FREQUENTLY, THE LIKELIHOOD OF A CHILD GETTING HIT AND POSSIBLY KILLED IS GROWING.** I know it can be frustrating to get behind a school bus in the morning or evening and know you are going to have to stop several times. Our bus drivers have been instructed to stop, wait for a given time, honk, then go on. Most of our incidences have been from oncoming traffic driving through the stop sign. Most children "feel" safe when the bus arrives, and they just walk or run to the bus without observing traffic.

Some of our staff recently had the opportunity to visit a facility within the state that offers extended special education opportunities that do not exist in this part of the state. Since I have a special needs child, I have changed my tune to the purpose that exists to educate all. Years ago, we always heard of children being "institutionalized". Most of the time, it was a holding tank and a place for the state to house children who could not function alone. I was pleasantly surprised with the quality of the facility we visited, and with the care that is given on a daily basis. Now, kids aren't just institutionalized. They are "individualized" and given a real, true opportunity to be productive in society. The facility is modern and technology-driven, and each student is treated with individualized care. The staff to student ratio is almost 1:1, and the services provided are state-of-the-art and catered to help the specific needs of the child. It was extremely satisfying to see that there is a true attempt at helping all individuals now instead of just "housing" them.

OK, it's time for the cold weather again. Again I'm not sure why any of our ancestors settled in the northern part of this chunk of land. Anyway, we have changed vendors with our mass calling system in the event of weather, emergencies, closings, etc. Keep in

mind that our primary system of notification is radio station WNOI - Flora 103.9 FM. They also have a website where notifications are posted (www.wnoi.com) under the tab labeled "Cancellations". Please don't call the school ahead of time asking about cancellations. Once a decision has been made, we will immediately call you using the Alert Now system and we will post it on WNOI.

One more thing...whoever is responsible for the Welcome to Louisville sign improvements deserves a big "thanks". It looks great!