

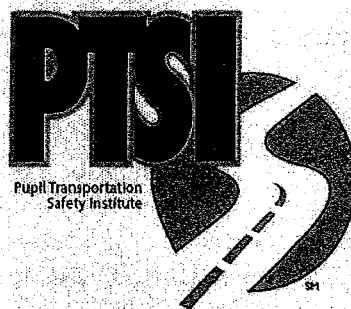
# **Gloversville Enlarged City School District**

P.O. Box 593, Gloversville, NY 12078

## **Pupil Transportation Management, Routing and Bus Stop Study**

Superintendent of Schools: Robert DeLilli  
School Business Official: Steven Schloicka  
Director of Operations: Bill Ferguson

Study Consultant: Dr. Richard R. Ahola, Senior Management Consultant,



*Moving School Transportation from Safe to Safer*

**Pupil Transportation Safety Institute**  
224 Harrison St. Suite 300, Syracuse, NY 13202  
Phone#: 315-475-1386, 800-836-2210  
Fax: 315-475-5033  
Web: [www.ptsj.org](http://www.ptsj.org)

## **Introduction**

The purpose of the study was to have the senior Management Consultant for Pupil Transportation Safety Institute (PTSI) work with the Gloversville Enlarged City School District Administrators to determine objectively the best locations for school bus stops.

As part of the study, Dr. Richard R. Ahola performed staff interviews, pertinent data review, and operational observation which resulted in the recommendations included in this report related to pupil transportation safety and program efficiency.

Cost comparisons were made for comparable area school districts.

## **Demographic Data**

As an enlarged City School District, Gloversville is required to provide transportation to pupils with special education needs and to certain pupils living in the school district outside of the city.

In the enlarged portion of the school district, transportation is provided to pupils in Grades K-8 who live more than 2 miles from school and pupil in Grades 9-12 who live more than 3 miles from school.

Gloversville transports 1,174 pupils (2006-07 data) out of a resident public and nonpublic school enrollment of 3,330 pupils, using 26 district-owned and operated buses. Total annual mileage in the 2007-08 school year was 282,947.

The district covers 89 square miles, much of which is rural with narrow country roads some dirt), and is sparsely populated in the enlarged portion. The district is poor in wealth and as a result, the state reimburses the district for 90 percent of its transportation expenditures.

The district operates a high school, middle school and five elementary schools. School buses are double-tripped with high school and middle school pupils on the first trip and elementary pupils on a second trip.

A double trip routing schedule has the advantage of efficient use of a minimum number of buses, but creates a transportation system that produces high mileage and corresponding fuel use, as well as the use of full-time drivers (over 30 hours a week) who enjoy significant fringe benefits, including health insurance.

District officials and the Board of Education are considering consolidation of bus stops, reducing route mileage and saving driver duty time. A 2-day trial of six routes using bus stops rather than door-to-door service produced parent protests and the need for a third-party evaluation of bus stops and routes.

## Staffing

Under the supervision of a Director of Operations and Facilities and the district's transportation coordinator, 19 full-time drivers (along with substitute and part-time drivers) provide to and from school transportation and other purpose transportation, including field and athletic trips. The transportation coordinator is a certified school bus driver instructor and an approved examiner under the provisions of Article 19A of the Vehicle and Traffic laws.

The transportation office provides clerical and dispatch service using one part-time position.

The garage facility is staffed with a head mechanic and two mechanics who service the district's school buses and vehicles and equipment used by the building and grounds operation. Staffing is consistent with the work load of servicing 26 school buses and maintaining 135 pieces of buildings and grounds equipment. (See Appendix A for a listing of school buses.)

## Financial Analysis

The following transportation data provides per pupil cost comparisons for Gloversville and comparable school districts. Gloversville's costs for the last 3 years are summarized below:

Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Total Expense	\$1,378,598	\$1,495,788	\$1,697,892
# of Pupils Transported	1,119	1,174	1,268
Cost/pupil	\$1,232	\$1,274	\$1,339

Per pupil cost comparisons with comparable school districts and for the 2006-07 year (the latest data for which SED has completed desk audits):

District	Total Transportation	Pupils Transported	Cost/Pupil
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	Cost		
Amsterdam City	\$2,967,018	2,323	\$893
Broadalbin-Perth	\$1,231,061	2,017	\$610
Burnt Hills	\$2,703,675	3,551	\$761
Gloversville	\$1,495,788	1,174	\$1,274
Johnstown	\$822,276	803	\$1,024

The cost comparison indicates that the Gloversville School District needs to improve cost efficiency. One high cost factor relates to the high percentage of special education pupils transported, over which the district has no control. In January, 2009, the district transported 1,070 pupils of which 281 (26 percent) were pupils with handicapping conditions.

One of the cost factors to be considered is the savings which could be generated by substituting door-to-door service with consolidated bus stops and shorter routes which reduce travel on side roads that are narrow, hilly or have sharp curves with short sight distances.

### **Routing and Bus Stops**

As an enlarged city school district, Gloversville provides transportation in the city to Special Education pupils, pre-Kindergarten pupils, and students enrolled in Head Start. The in-city transportation is door-to-door because of the needs of those pupils.

Transportation outside of the city is provided under the provisions of Section 3635 of the Education Law and district policy to children in grades K-8 living more than 2 miles from school, and youth in grades 9-12 who live more than 3 miles from school. Currently, that transportation is door-to-door, requiring 65- and 66-passenger buses to travel on hazardous side roads.

An alternate to door-to-door transportation is the use of pick-up points or bus stops located at points that balance the issues of safety, convenience, routing efficiency and cost.

A school district may require a pupil in Grades K-8 to travel up to 2 miles and a pupil in grades 9-12 to travel up to 3 miles to reach a bus stop. Parents are responsible for pupil safety between home and the bus stop. Case law has established that bus stops on heavily traveled roads or those requiring pupils to travel on narrow roadways to reach the bus pick-up point are not necessarily unsafe.

In other words, opinions of SED Counsel, Commissioners' decisions and court cases have established that the front door of the school extends to the bus stop and that parents are responsible for getting the pupils between the bus stop and home.

In reviewing the attempt of the Gloversville School District to establish consolidated bus stops on main roads, the consultant concurs that pupils residing on the following roads could be assigned to bus stops that promote not only route efficiency, but also enhance safety of the pupils riding in the school buses.

**Roads that are candidates for consolidated bus stops include:**

- Burdick Road/bus stop on Rt. 122 for right side pick-up only
- Mountain Lake South Shore Road, bus stop on Rt. 309
- Woodworth Road, bus stop on Rt. 309
- Lilly Lake Road, stops on Rt. 309 and Rt. 145
- Bowler Hill Road, stops at Bowlers Corners and Lindsley Corners
- Pinnacle Rod, bus stop at Lindsley Corners
- Persch Road, bus stop on Rt. 112
- Gutha Road, bus stop on Rt. 112
- Burdick Road, bus stop on Rt. 101
- Old Peck Hill Road, bus stop on Rt. 101
- McGregor Road, bus stop on West Fulton Street
- North Bush Road, bus stop on West Fulton Street
- Kilmes Street, bus stop on West Fulton Street
- Spring Ave., bus stop on West Fulton Street
- Wheaton Ave, bus stop on West Fulton Street
- Wesskum Woods Road, bus stop North Main Street, right-hand pick-up only)
- Queensboro Manor, 2 stops on Rt. 122
- Washburn Hill Road, bus stop on Rt. 122
- West Bush Road, 2 stops, Rt. 122 and Rt. 309
- North Peck Lake Shore Road, bus stop at mailboxes off Rt. 29A
- Hemlock Drive, bus stops at mailboxes off Rt. 29A
- Peck Lake Road, bus stop on Rt. 29A
- Southshore Road, bus stop on Rt. 29A
- Willie Road, bus stop on Rt. 29A
- Skunk Hollow Road, bus stop on Rt. 29A
- South Pine Street, bus stop on East Fulton Street Extension at Cherry Street
- Cherry Street, bus stop on East Fulton Street Extension
- Lake Avenue, bus stop on East Fulton Street Extension

If the above changes were enacted, the consolidation of seven runs would have the following beneficial effects:

The Route 1 bus would not have to travel the Bleeker back roads which are narrow dirt roads with hills. In the spring and fall, the dirt roads become muddy, producing hazardous driving conditions for large buses.

Consolidation of runs for the Route 2 bus would change some of the pupils in the lower Bleeker area, splitting them with Route #16 in the afternoon.

Consolidation of runs for the Route 5 bus would reduce bus travel on narrow roads with limited turn-around areas and steep hills.

Consolidation of runs for the Route 8 bus would eliminate travel on Old Peck Hill Road, North Bush Road, Spring Avenue and Wheaton Avenue.

Consolidation of runs for Route 16 would change some of the students who ride the bus in Meco area, splitting them with Route 8. Also, some pupils from Route 2 (Rt. 309) would ride the P.M. bus.

Consolidation of runs for Route 18 (Peck's Lake area) would eliminate travel on narrow back roads with limited turnaround areas.

Although not contemplated in the original plan, consolidation of Route 4 would eliminate travel on South Pine Street, Cherry Street and Lake Avenue, and set up stops on the East Fulton Street Extension.

### **Estimated Cost Savings:**

The school district's cost savings estimate for consolidating six routes is \$53,217. The cost estimate is based on saving 52 miles daily and 4.7 hours daily for both drivers' and aides' pay.

Adding the Route 4 estimated savings of 2 miles a day would add \$2,785 for a total savings of \$56,002.

Using a mileage-based estimate, the PTSI consultant used the 2008-09 Transportation Formula Aid Output Report to independently estimate savings based on total transportation expenditures and annual mileage data. The formula used was:

$$\frac{\text{Annual Miles Saved}}{\text{Total Annual Miles}} \times \text{Total Transportation Expense}$$

Or

$$\frac{9,882 \text{ miles saved}}{282,947 \text{ annual miles}} \times \$1,697,614 = \$59,290$$

The district's estimated savings for consolidation of seven routes is logical and valid.

## **Bus Replacement and Purchase**

Appendix A has a listing of the school bus fleet for the Gloversville School District. The fleet reflects a bus replacement schedule that ensures no school bus is older than 10 years.

School buses are purchased on state contract and, since 2004, the district has purchased International buses. The district's experience with the support provided by the state contract vendor has been good.

**Recommendation 1: School buses should continue to be replaced every 10 years.**

**Recommendation 2: The district should continue to use the State Contract for school bus purchase.**

## **Purchase of Supplies and Equipment**

Fuel and some parts are provided by state contract vendors. Brake parts, filters and tires are purchased locally. This combination serves the district well and eliminates the need for extensive parts inventory.

Fuel is monitored using software which allows the district to track use, level in tank and presence of water. The Director of Operations and the network administrator are working on a program to monitor parts and supplies.

## **Garage Facility and School Bus Inspectors**

The Gloversville School District transportation facility is 3 years old and houses both building and grounds and pupil transportation. The facility is world class and provides inside storage for all of the district's buses. Five work bays, two lifts and a wash bay support the school bus repair and maintenance program.

However, while the New York State Department of Transportation Bus Inspection System Operator profile indicates the performance of the school bus garage has improved in the past year, it does not quite meet the DOT goal of a greater than 90 percent pass rate.

For the period 4/18/07 to 3/28/08 buses passed regular inspection 87.8 percent of the time. Major defects were found on 6.1 percent of the district's buses during the DOT inspection process relating to braking systems.

## **Recommendation 3**

**The Gloversville School Bus Garage is encouraged to take corrective action to meet the State DOT goal for school bus inspection.**

### **Supervisor Dispatch and Office Operations**

Overall supervision is provided by the district's Director of Operations with dispatch and office supervision including driver instructions and Article 19A inspection provided by the district's Transportation Coordinator.

Dispatch and clerical support is provided by a part-time employee (5 hours a day). Computer assistance helps the office keep up with many address changes which occur on a monthly basis. The district does not use a computer routing software program and probably doesn't need one, since the majority of routes are rural and on roads where many options are not available.

If the district were to purchase a routing program, the consultant recommends Transfinder or VersaTrans. It should be noted that using a software program for routing would add to the clerical workload. If the district computerizes routing, the part-time clerical position should be made full-time.

### **Compliance with Laws and Regulations**

The school district complies with the requirements of the State Education Department for school bus drivers. Article 19A compliance as audited by the Department of Motor Vehicles uncovered only minor violations. DOT compliance is in conformity to regulations, except as noted in the section of the report relating to school bus inspection.

### **Review of Safety at Bus Stops and School Locations**

The school district has made changes at school locations which separate bus and car traffic. Bus stops are designed for right-hand pick-up where practical. Students who cross highways do so at the signal of the bus driver.

Commendation 1: Pupils and School Bus Drivers are commended for textbook perfect crossing procedures.

### **State Aid**

The Gloversville School District will receive \$1,403,730 in State Transportation Aid for a 2007-08 total expenditure of \$1,697,614.



The high aid is due to a 90 percent aid ratio for transportation expense and almost no deductions for non-allowable pupils and a small deduction for other purpose transportation.

## **APPENDIX A**

# **School Bus Fleet**

#	Year	Make	Vin #	Body ID 1st 12	Used	Passenger
67	1999	FLTHOM	4UZ6CJAA3XOB97400	76603 9951788	SPARE	66 pas
68	1999	FLTBOM	4UZ6CJAA9XOB97398	76067 9951778	RT	66 pas
69	1999	FLTBOM	4UZ6CJAA0XOB97399	76068 9951799	SPARE	66 pas
70	1999	FLTHOM	4UZ6CJAA3XCB92441	77303 9951142	RT	3W/C 48pas
71	1999	FLTHOM	4UZ6CJPC2XC391095	77605 9950993	RT	30 pas
73	2001	FLTHOM	4UZ6CJAA91C577089	90509 9959914	SPARE	66 pas
74	2000	FLTHOM	4UZ6CJAA8YC378986	90301 9959473	RT	66 pas
76	2002	INT/AM	IHVBR/AAAN52J942146	942146	SPARE	66 pas
77	2002	INT/AM	IHVBR/AAAN92J942148	942148	RT	66 pas
78	2002	GMC/Cob	ICDUC31F021.47660		RT	1W/C 18pas
80	2004	IC	IDRBR/AAAN83J951975	3A951975	RT	66 pas
81	2004	Chevy	ICNFCG15X841.10772		SPARE	7 pas.
82	2004	IC	4DRBR/AAAN04J963341	4B963341	RT	4W/C 36pas
83	2005	IC	4DRBU/AAAN85J973289	5B973289	SPARE	66 pas
84	2005	IC	4DRBU/AAAN05J978728	5B978728	RT	4W/C 36pas
85	2005	IC	4DRBU/AAAN05J973304	5B973304	RT	65 pas
86	2005	IC	4DRBU/AAAN25J973305	5B973305	RT	65 pas
87	2006	IC	4DRBU/AAAN56J259461	6B259461	RT	65 pas
88	2006	IC	4DRBU/AAAN47J496319	7A496319	RT	48/2w/c
89	2008	IC	4DRBU/AAAN88J4501409	8A5014409	RT	65 pas
90	2008	IC	4DRBU/AAAN48J4501410	8A5014410	RT	65 pas
91	2008	IC	4DRBU/AAANX8J4501413	8A5014413	RT	65 pas
92	2009	IC	4DRBU/AAAN39J61872	N39661872	RT	65 pas
93	2008	FORD	1FD2E35L88D122538	064-NY-20-00WC-TTB	SPARE	20 pas
94	2008	FORD	1FD2E35LX8D122539	064-NY-20-00WC-TTB	RT	20 pas
95	2008	FORD	1FD2E35L68D122540	064-NY-20-00WC-TTB	RT	20 pas

Roads	Rt. #
Burdick Rd/bus stop on Rt.122 for right side pick up only	2
Burdick Road, bus stop on Rt. 101	2
West Bush Road , 2 stops, Rt. 122 and Rt. 309	2
South Pine Street, bus stop on East Fulton Street Ext. at Cherry Street	4
Cherry Street, bus stop on East Fulton Street Ext.	4
Lake Avenue, bus stop on East Fulton Street Ext.	4
Wesskum Woods Road, bus stop North Main Street, right - hand pick up only	5
Queensboro Manor , 2 stops on Rt. 122	5
Washburn Hill Road, bus stop on Rt. 122	5
Old Peck Hill Road, bus stop on Rt. 101	8
McGregor Road, bus stop on West Fulton Street/Cr. Rt. 101	8
North Bush Road, bus stop on West Fulton Street/ Cr. Rt. 101	8
Kilmes Street, bus stop on West Fulton Street	8
Wheaton Ave, bus stop on West Fulton Street	8
Mountain Lake South Shore Rd, bus stop on Rt. 309	16
Woodworth Road, bus stop on Rt. 309	16
North Peck Lake Shore Road, bus stop at mailboxes off Rt. 29a	18
Hemlock Drive, bus stops at mailboxes off Rt. 29A	18
Peck Lake Road, bus stop on Rt. 29A	18
Southshore Road, bus stop on Rt. 29A	18
Willie Road, bus stop on Rt. 29A	18
Shunk Hollow Road, bus stop on Rt. 29a	18
Lilly Lake Road, stops on Rt.309 and Rt. 145	1 --- 2
Bowler Hill Road, stops on Bowlers Corners and Lindsley Corners	1 --- 2
Pinnacle Road, bus stop on Lindsley Corners	1 --- 2
Persch Road, bus top on Rt. 112	1 --- 2
Gutha Road, bus stop on Rt. 112	1 --- 2