

January 4, 2013

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I want to update you on the possibility of disruption in yellow bus service, which may impact your child. I am deeply concerned about the impact of a strike on our students and families and want to make sure you are prepared in the event one occurs.

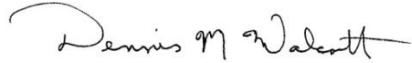
As I mentioned in my letter before the holiday break, we have issued a bid to secure new yellow bus contracts to transport children with disabilities for the 2013-2014 school year. Our current contracts for these bus services will expire at the end of June and competitive bidding will result in the best service at the best price for the City. Please be assured that the bid also will include the same safety provisions that are in place today. Safety is our top priority and will continue to be so under new contracts.

The bus drivers' and escorts' union has told us that if the bid does not include an Employee Protection Provision, which the court ruled is illegal to include in our bus bid, then they may strike. A service disruption or strike would affect our most vulnerable children with disabilities the hardest and their families. It also would affect all families and their children who rely on yellow bus service and especially those children whose education was interrupted due to Hurricane Sandy. If there is a strike or service disruption, the following protocols will take effect for families of students who currently receive yellow bus service:

- All students who currently receive yellow bus service may receive a MetroCard. MetroCards are being made available at the schools and should be requested through your school's general office. We have already informed the Metropolitan Transit Authority that it may need to accommodate additional riders.
- Parents of pre-school and school-age children with IEP's requiring transportation from their home directly to their school as well as parents of general education children in grades K-2 may also request a MetroCard for the parent or guardian to act as the child's escort to school.
- As an alternative to MetroCards for parents whose children receive busing from their home, or students in grades K-6 receiving yellow bus service from a school bus stop who live in areas where public transportation between home and school is not readily available, we are offering reimbursement for actual transportation costs. Parents who drive their children to school will be reimbursed at a rate of 55 cents per mile. Parents who use a taxi or car service to transport their child to school will be reimbursed for the trip upon completion of reimbursement forms that includes a receipt for provided services. Requests for reimbursements should be made weekly on forms that will be available on the DOE web site and in your school's general office. We encourage families driving or using car service to carpool with their neighbors whenever possible.

In the event of a strike, we will let families know as quickly as possible. This would include automatic calls to homes. Any information about disruptions to bus service will be posted on our web site at schools.nyc.gov. I urge parents and guardians whose children rely on yellow bus service to regularly check the web site for updates. The information will also be provided to the media and to 311.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis M. Walcott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor