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Lamorinda's New Buses - Working Out the Kinks

By Jean Follmer

After a competitive bid process, the Lamorinda School Bus Program (LSBP) contracted with a new school bus provider this year. First Student replaced Durham School Services for the 2009/10 school year. Durham drivers were given the opportunity to sign on with First Student and LSBP Manager Juliet Hansen says at least half the drivers stayed on.

Hansen said LSBP is making progress with the transition. "First Student is a new company for us and the change, overall, has been positive," she states.

However, LSBP was not without its challenges in the first couple weeks of school. Hansen says there were a number of calls from parents complaining about drivers not knowing the routes. "We had quite a few late buses, especially in the afternoons," she acknowledges.

A Lafayette parent shared that she had to flag the bus down to stop for her daughter on the first day of school. Hansen says bus operations have improved considerably. "We're confident that any remaining problems will be resolved," states Hansen. (We attempted to contact First Student for comment and were advised that they do not issue statements.)

The new buses are equipped with seatbelts and Hansen says that feature has drawn a positive response from parents. Hansen said bus drivers instruct the students on how to use the belts and direct them to buckle up when they are seated.

For more information on LSBP, visit www.lamorindaschoolbus.org. For late buses and emergencies, contact First Student dispatch at 925-926-0375.

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