



August 23, 2023

Dr. David Lawrence
Interim Superintendent
Members of the Dayton Board of Education
Dayton Public Schools
115 S. Ludlow St.
Dayton, Ohio 45402

Dear Dr. Lawrence:

Thank you for attending the Executive Committee meeting of the Downtown Dayton Partnership on June 27. We appreciated learning about Dayton Public Schools' commitment to use RTA buses to transport high school students to and from school and the complicated issues associated with that decision. Ultimately, we all agree that the safety of students, downtown employees, residents, and guests is the highest priority for all of us.

We understand that the vast majority of students follow school rules and transfer to other buses immediately. However, as we all know, the use of RTA buses to transport students has created the opportunity for a large number of students to gather and, in some cases, to participate in criminal activity that has a cascading effect on the City of Dayton, Dayton Police Department, Greater Dayton RTA, and the downtown business community.

Since our meeting, we have collected the following information regarding the history of student transport on RTA, recent meetings with DPS Administration and Board members, and community investment to address student security.

In 2022, Dayton Public Schools began purchasing Greater Dayton RTA bus passes to transport Dayton Public School and Dayton charter high school students to and from public school buildings. This public transportation system was not designed for student transportation and therefore the RTA system includes a transfer point at the RTA hub in downtown Dayton.

To address this issue, downtown community stakeholders took the following actions:

December 8, 2022 - A group of approximately 30 community stakeholders met with Dayton Public Schools Superintendent Lolli, members of her leadership team, and Dayton Public School Board member Will Smith. At this meeting it was discussed that it was imperative that DPS not use the RTA as the sole DPS high school student transportation method. It is safer for the students and safer for downtown stakeholders if students are transported on traditional school buses and not transferred in downtown Dayton. At this meeting, stakeholders were assured

there would be an improved transportation plan, using yellow buses, for the 2023-2024 school year.

June 27, 2023 – A smaller group of community stakeholders reconvened with you as Interim Dayton Public Schools Superintendent. At this meeting, stakeholders were informed that DPS would again be purchasing RTA bus passes to transport DPS students and Dayton charter school students for the 2023-2024 school year and that DPS would once again provide resource officers to help keep the students safe on and off of RTA property with the expectation that resource officers are funded by another source.

Since DPS began using RTA to transport students, community stakeholders have proactively invested significant resources to protect their property, businesses, customers, employees, students, and others.

Community Stakeholder Investments - Fourth Street and Jefferson Street

- Dayton Police Department visibility posts (two-unit post for safety and effectiveness)
- An audio system installed to play calming music in the area
- Dayton Public Works installed LED lighting to provide better visibility in the area at night
- Buy/Bust narcotic operations conducted by the DPD Special Investigations Bureau
- Frequent DPD bicycle patrol deployments have been conducted targeting disorderly conduct
- Collaboration with Downtown Ambassadors to clear and clean (pressure wash) area
- 1,142 DPD hours per month dedicated to increased security
- A camera tower has been deployed
- Surveillance utilizing existing city cameras
- New landscaping to be installed to improve area and deter loitering
- 4 new RTA supervisor/management positions assigned to this area
- 12 Extra Board (Standby) RTA Drivers

In total, \$1,491,000 has been directly invested by community stakeholders in this area to address the security issues being caused by students. The community stakeholders have made substantial investments in this area and are now requesting that Dayton Public Schools make all future investments to secure this area and ensure the safety of students, businesses, employees, and individuals downtown.

It was our understanding that you have an operations plan which will place additional school resource officers (SROs) at this location, scheduling/routing coordination with RTA, and a plan to return students to traditional school buses by January 1, 2024. On August 16, 2023, we read in the media that the DPS Board voted on a plan to have the RTA fund the school resource officers through a three-year agreement. However, this plan has not been presented to RTA for input and feedback.

We would like to update the Downtown Dayton Partnership Board on the status of our discussions. Therefore, we respectfully request a follow-up meeting with you and your team no later than Friday, October 13, 2023, to discuss the details, timeline, and how we can work with

you to implement an operations plan that will return high school students to traditional school buses.

We look forward to meeting soon to address this issue.

Sincerely,



Shelley Dickstein
City Manager
City of Dayton

Sandy Gudorf
President
Downtown Dayton Partnership



Chris Kershner
President & CEO
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce

Downtown Dayton Partnership Executive Committee:

Edward Bentley, Treasurer, Downtown Dayton Partnership

Lainie Dean, Premier Health

Peter Haley, Gosiger, Inc.

Madeline Iseli, Sinclair Community College

Julie Liss-Katz, Dayton Business Committee

Dan Meixner, Co-Chair, Downtown Dayton Partnership

Jenny Michael, CareSource

Robert Ruzinsky, Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority

Ty Sutton, Dayton Live & Arts Center Foundation

Sam Warwar, Coolidge Wall Co. LPA