Transportation and Early Childhood Programs

Michigan Department of Education
Office of Great Start
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Welcome

Amanda Menzies, Senior Consultant
Public Sector Consultants Inc.
Presenters

- **Melinda Johnson**: Executive Director, Blue Water Community Action
- **Elizabeth McClain**: Supportive Services Manager, Community Action Agency
- **Christie Cadmus**: Director, Lenawee Great Start
USING MASS TRANSIT TO TRANSPORT HEAD START CHILDREN

Blue Water Community Action
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Blue Water Area Transit Bus Unloading Head Start Children

Two of our buses with children unloading. The driver is hired through Blue Water Area Transit.
WHY?

- We specialize in Early Education – not transportation.
- Spent a lot of time dealing with transportation staff issues.
- Spent a lot of time dealing with vehicle issues and costs related to those issues.
- Funding for vehicle replacement was starting to become more difficult to obtain.
- It was becoming difficult to get drivers – our wages were not competitive.
- There was an opportunity to access non-federal share $$
- Did I mention we spent a lot of time dealing with transportation staff issues?
HISTORY

• Late 1990’s we started partnering with Blue Water Area Transit for some services and to obtain non-federal share match through the partnership.
• We then started working on ways to transition out of transportation business.
• It took about 10 years to find a manufacturer that could meet BWAT requirements and HS requirements.
• In December 2008, BWAT started transporting Head Start children on 11 new mass transit buses.
Primary Regulations

Head Start Performance Standards – 1310

- 1310.10(c) – When an agency provides transportation through another organization…, the agency must ensure the compliance of the transportation provider with the requirements of this part.

- 1310.12(a) – Effective December 30, 2006, each agency providing transportation services must ensure that children enrolled in its program are transported in school buses or allowable alternate vehicles that are equipped for use of height- and weight-appropriate child restraint systems, and that have reverse beepers.
Primary Regulations continued…

Head Start Performance Standards – 1310

1310.3 Definitions

**Allowable Alternate Vehicle** means a vehicle designed for carrying eleven or more people, including the driver, that meets all the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards applicable to school buses, except 49 CFR 571.108 and 571.13
Technical Issues

• We had to have a vehicle that met performance Standard and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard requirements.
• Mass transit agencies are not allowed to operate school buses.
• BWAT had funds with many requirements related to the use of those funds, including the use of compressed natural gas.
• BWAT did all of the research and compiled the list of requirements for a bus that would meet all of the requirements.
• A supplier was finally found that could build our bus and before we could place our order, they went out of business!
Win Win

• The buses are extremely safe – statistically safer than school buses!
• The back of the seat folds down, providing a small booster and safety restraints for the children. BWAT can use the bus in the summer and other times for the general population by just putting the seats back up.
• BWAT hires the driver, we hire the bus monitor and provide all of the training for both the driver and the monitor.
• We don’t have to worry about replacing or maintaining buses.
• The buses use compressed natural gas – environmentally friendly.
Fold Down Seats
Additional Information

• It took several years before they took over all of our runs. They now do everything throughout the county, including field trips.
• They hired most of our drivers. We kept a couple for the runs we were still doing and because they had been with us for so long.
• We have direct contact with their dispatcher for emergencies as needed.
• We give them an initial run list and then update it as changes are made.
• The bus monitor takes care of paperwork and all things related to the children and families. The driver – drives.
Counting Heads

This is our bus monitor, counting to make sure she has all of the children. They all wear fluorescent colored safety vests.
Questions?

• Please feel free to contact:
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Transportation &
Early Childhood

Elizabeth McClain
Supportive Services Manager
Community Action Agency
CAA Children’s Programs

• Funding
  – Head Start: 687 slots
    • Jackson – 349 children
    • Hillsdale – 52 children
  – Head Start/GSRP: 286 children
    • Jackson – 196 children
    • Hillsdale – 90 children
  – GSRP: 528 slots
    • Jackson – 96 children
    • Hillsdale – 32 children
  – Early Head Start: 168 slots
Transportation Waiver

- HSPS 1310.23
  - Head Start Transportation Regulation
- Cost analysis done in May 2000
Transportation Services

• Jackson County
  – Jackson Public Schools
  – Springport Schools
  – Hanover Horton Schools
  – Concord Schools

• Hillsdale County
  – Reading Area Schools
  – Jonesville Community Schools
  – Waldron Area Schools
  – Pittsford Area Schools
  – Hillsdale Community Schools
  – Camden-Frontier Schools
  – Litchfield Community Schools
Diagnosed Disabilities

CAA’s Collaboration

• Hillsdale and Jackson County ISD
• Based on IEP Recommendations
• All vehicles are in compliance with ADA regulations and equipped with safety devices and child safety restraint systems

Challenges that other HS Partner’s Face...

• Confusion between ISD/School Districts on funding for Special Ed. Students being transported
• Multiple buses doing similar routes for Gen. Ed. Vs. ECSE
Challenges

• Bus routing with transient population
• Mixed aged buses
• High turnover in bus drivers/sub drivers
• Continuous Training and Re-training
• Coordinating calendars/times
• Discipline
Keys to Success

• Communication
• Training (both State & Federal)
• Transparent Relationship Building
• Flexibility
• Respect of each others rules
(517) 784-4800
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Elizabeth McClain,
Supportive Services Manager
Lenawee County Preschool Camp
Lenawee CHILD's Preschool Camps are held one day a week for four weeks. Camps provide developmentally appropriate activities for children ages two to five years old. Each week has a theme and children from Lenawee County enjoy games, crafts and motor activities.

Camps are held on the same day and at the same location each week.
The ISD took the same concept that they had implemented with the migrant camps in Lenawee County. The ISD served the children in the Migrant camps until the immigration laws changed with a mobile classroom concept.

The ISD wanted to continue to serve families, provide summer opportunities, and wanted to find a way to get parents involved in their children’s education before starting school and provide parents with developmentally appropriate activities they can do at home.
Our targeted population did not travel to events held at the ISD or local locations. So the ISD wanted to bring the activities to the parents. A mobile camp very similar to the bookmobile made sense and serviced the needs of the ISD and parents.

They implemented the group meeting concept from PAT and began with those families receiving services through the ISD (home visiting, Early On and playgroups). It started slow and took time to get people interested.

Word of mouth and the fun activates kept families engaged and eventually it became bigger than expected.
Partners

• Local school districts and city administrators – host the camp
• Play group leader – trained in Parents as Teachers
• Special Ed staff – observe and screen children that they typically would not see.
• Our bus garage – help with repairs/updates at a lower cost
Challenges

• The need is greater than the services we can provide.
  – We only have 1 play group leader who takes on the entire endeavor.
  – Limited number of children who can sign up (35) and we will the first day registration opens.

• The repairs to the RV are getting very expenses and there are not funds to replace the RV.
Camp Information

- Free for 2 – 5 year old children (no older or younger siblings)

- Week #1--Tie-Dye Fun
- Week #2--Camp Out
- Week #3--Happy Hearts
- Week #4--On the Go

- MONDAYS in Adrian
- TUESDAYS in Madison
- WEDNESDAYS Britton/Deerfield Schools
- THURSDAYS Onsted