

# Brighton buses hit first-day hiccups

## New bus routes, construction snarled traffic

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The first day of school in Brighton saw an unusual amount of hiccups and snarled traffic Tuesday as the district started new bus routes during road construction.

Some Brighton families waited between 20 and 45 minutes for buses to pick up children in the morning or drop them back at homes or bus stops in the afternoon.

The bus dropping off Barbara Johnson's 7-year-old daughter Dagny from French Road Elementary was 45 minutes late to the neighborhood after school, and then drove right by the neighborhood's new bus stop by accident.

"I expected it to be late, but not that late," said Johnson, who lives on Bonnie Brae Avenue, about two miles from French Road Elementary. She called the district's transportation office about the bus stop mix-up, and Dagny made it home safely, she said. Wednesday's morning bus was 15 minutes late.

The district runs a tiered bus system, meaning buses go from one school to the next, which called for changed bus routes after all four Brighton schools added an extra 30 minutes to their instruction schedules this year, said Brighton Superintendent Kevin McGowan in an email.

The district also picked up both high school and middle school students on the same bus routes and had a new contract with its transportation provider. All measures were implemented to increase efficiency while keeping safety as the top priority, said McGowan. "Everybody was transported to and from school safely, though at a different time than we would've hoped," he said. "Because of our concern for safety, we took it slower to make sure we got it right." Summer road construction on South Winton and Westfall roads upped the ante on an already chaotic day. Westfall Road was down to alternating onelane traffic Tuesday morning during rush hour because of a resurfacing job that's part of a large county road project in Brighton, said Terrence Rice of the Monroe County Department of Transportation.

"Unfortunately we happened to be right there on the first day of school," he said. He asked contractors to hold off on resurfacing Wednesday until after morning rush hour, which seemed to soothe traffic issues, he said.

Work on Westfall Road should be largely finished by Friday, he said. The road hasn't been resurfaced since the 1990s and the latest treatment should last up to 10 years. Resident Jeannie Glanville lives in a neighborhood adjacent to Westfall Road and said both her daughters were at least 30 minutes late home from Council Rock Primary School and French Road Elementary. "Between the first day, the construction, adding the 30 minutes and rerouting the buses," most people didn't expect the buses to be on a perfect schedule, Glanville said.

When buses are delayed for more than 15 minutes during the school year, parents can receive automated phone messages alerting them to the tardiness. Glanville said she never got a message at that time, but McGowan sent an email and phone message to Brighton families Tuesday evening apologizing for the day's confusion.

"Were there things that went wrong? Yes, normally we're notified," she said. "But I think Brighton responded very well." Both her daughters' buses arrived on time Wednesday.

The district mitigated some of the problems Wednesday by only dropping off high school and middle school students on the South Winton Road side of the school buildings, which it hoped would cut down bus traffic in the Twelve Corners area, said McGowan in a statement Wednesday. He announced letters will be sent to Brighton families addressing pickup times, mostly for Council Rock students. "The change in procedures we made this morning seems to have improved outcomes," he said in an email Wednesday. "We will continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as we analyze today's service level."

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**A school bus stops on Bonnie Brae Avenue in Brighton to pick up a student for Council Rock Primary School on Tuesday.**

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