Staffing is a challenge for many during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Springdale Public Schools Transportation Office is no exception. Hiring bus drivers is a monumental concern for the district, and the district continues to have personnel shortages that are impacting reliably getting more than 15,000 students to school daily.

Springdale Schools had as many as 10-15 district bus drivers absent per day at the height of the pandemic, resulting in an average of 10 routes per day that were unable to receive bus transportation for the 2021-22 school year. Driver shortages and route cancellations create unpredictable transportation for students, causing families to have to adjust last-minute to ensure safe transportation to school. The ripple effect in the community has a major impact.

The district Communications Office featured an innovative Bus Driver campaign to put a face to our drivers for the community and to allow them to tell their personal stories. While there was a substantial goal to share the advantages of driving buses and draw applicants to the district, there was an equally significant intent to acknowledge the hard work of our drivers and boost morale.

The mix media Bus Driver campaign included a series of graphics shared on our district website and social media platforms. The graphics featured current bus driver staff sharing why they opt to drive busses for the district, to include flexible hours for college students, retirees who are choosing to work part-time to offset their income and those who have a heart for serving students.

The Communications staff likewise renovated the district Transportation webpage on the district website to better serve applicants and district families. Modifications included creating a new page subheader with background graphics based on a shared visual style with print material, a department seal button for the page subheader and interactive animated navigation tile elements with information on zoning, road conditions, field trips, and driving a bus.

Communications staff also created online fliers and integrated multimedia items, such as a video and infographics, a "Drive a Bus" page with information on obtaining a CDL and a "Field Trip" page with documents to support teachers and families.

The campaign’s “Why We Drive” video was an integrated effort between the Communications Office and the district’s Springdale High School, Har-Ber High School and Don Tyson School of Innovation Video Production classes to encourage bus driver applicants and highlight the impact of the district’s bus drivers.

Downloadable informational brochures were designed in English, Spanish and Marshallese to bridge knowledge gaps for potential applicants. About 48% of the district’s students live in Hispanic or Latino homes. Some 12,000 Marshallese live in the Springdale
community, with about 14% of district students being Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Springdale Public Schools is the largest and most diverse school district in Arkansas.

The district Transportation Office has been experiencing a decline in bus driver vacancies since the campaign. The office has a total of 110 total positions and has been short as many as 47 drivers for the 2021-22 school year due to the pandemic. The district currently has about 30 position vacancies. Driver morale was significantly boosted due to the campaign as well, resulting in staff who feel appreciated and validated for the work they do in support of our students daily.

The complete campaign folder with original creations can be viewed here. Content samples are shared and linked below.

**Example One**

A “Why We Drive” video encouraged bus driver applicants and demonstrated the district’s appreciation for drivers through an integrated effort between the Springdale Public School Communications Office and district Video Production students, [https://www.facebook.com/events/399093208649169/](https://www.facebook.com/events/399093208649169/)
Example Two
Revamped Transportation webpages helped stimulate the Bus Driver campaign and shared valuable information for potential applicants and families, https://www.sdale.org/page/transportation:

Former Transportation Page, https://sites.google.com/sdale.org/transportation/home:
Example Three
Graphics were created for social media to help share the perks of driving buses and tell the personal stories of drivers, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VR36GeSjjQiiEBrcB7UgCmpwdfVwq9Ec?usp=sharing:

Example Four
Online informational brochures were created in English, Spanish and Marshallese to bridge language gaps, https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B7YKttpNDSCZm9NbVZhLVR3UEU?resourcekey=0-1C1MgtjAiRB8WWBhQXHfA&usp=sharing: