



Krapf School Bus Successfully Overcomes Barriers in Virginia To Become the First Private Contractor in the Commonwealth

Mountain Valley Transportation, Inc. was formed in 2009, as a subsidiary of Krapf School Bus and as a result of the decision by the Roanoke City Public School Board to outsource their transportation services. Because this decision has proven highly beneficial for Roanoke City, they recently extended their contract with Mountain Valley for another five years.

It goes back to 1942, when businessman George Krapf, Jr. of Chester County, Pennsylvania, was approached to provide home-to-school transportation for local students. With two school buses he formed George Krapf, Jr. & Sons, Inc. – more commonly known today as Krapf School Bus – the award-winning pupil transportation company, with headquarters in West Chester, PA. Now in its third generation of family ownership, Krapf's operates over 2600 vehicles daily serving public, private and parochial schools across five states. It is important to note that Krapf's initial two customers are still with the organization – seventy-one years later!

As a privately owned family business, everyone at Krapf's is aware that the company's reputation is on the line every day, which strengthens their commitment to constantly improve our service to our customers. Fundamental to our business efforts are our four CORE Values of Commitment, Open Communication, Respect for Others and Excellent Service. These CORE Values impart our interactions with our customers, our employees, and our vendors.

Five years ago, when Roanoke City Public Schools undertook the process of outsourcing, they had many voices raised in alarm. Some of the sentiments heard were "No one knows and cares for our kids as much as we do", and "They have to be more expensive, they make a profit", and "They'll take our jobs and cut our pay". Listening to the concerns of their employees, yet knowing that they simply had to prioritize their spending, that Board barely made the controversial decision to outsource their transportation via a board-splitting 4-3 vote.

The Mountain Valley/Roanoke City conversion had a disruptive start-up due to some significant eleventh hour route changes and school changes. Roanoke City soon realized the need to work together to get past those challenges and to truly partner with Mountain Valley to succeed in the transition. Mountain Valley quickly addressed the primary issues, offered open and transparent and continuous communication with the employees, school staff, and administration, and drove a successful result for Roanoke.

In 2013, in a 7-0 vote, the Roanoke City Public School Board voted to extend the contract with Mountain Valley Transportation another five years. In the process, they spoke in glowing terms of the transformation; how there is now a strong dependability factor regarding on-time performance and safety, allowing the district's teachers to drive significant improvement in academic performance. Additionally, where once the morale of the drivers, mechanics and staff was low, there now is a complete reversal. Acknowledgment for their safe and on-time driving and respect for their daily efforts has made the group motivated and proud of their place in the transformation efforts.

Some people call it outsourcing, we call it Mission Focus, because partnering with Mountain Valley Transportation or its parent company, Krapf School Bus, allows the school system to focus on their mission-critical responsibilities while we focus on ours. Krapf's has been providing safe, reliable student transportation since 1942 – moving thousands of students back and forth to school and their extracurricular activities every day, safely and on schedule. It's what we do, and we have a rich association of school district partners who have come to rely on us to provide service excellence in student transportation. They, in turn, have been freed to focus on their mission of providing educational excellence. Krapf's fleet of modern vehicles, specialized driver training, attention to detail and high safety and maintenance standards have made us a respected industry leader.

Turning transportation requirements over to Krapf's can often solve many of the following challenges:

- Aging and/or out-of-compliance fleet with little funding available for replacement or upgraded vehicles
- Costs related to providing transportation surpass funds available
- School programs being considered for elimination due to funding shortfalls
- Difficulty in recruiting and retaining drivers and attendants
- Increasingly complex employment and driver certification requirements
- Overextended resources and scheduling difficulties
- Challenges in providing individualized services
- Increasingly complex routing requirements
- Customer service issues with parents or other community members

Some additional benefits brought specifically to Roanoke City Public School during the term of their first contract as a result of transportation outsourcing with Mountain Valley Transportation were:

- Saved Roanoke City wages
- Saved Roanoke City Public Schools administrative tasks
- Improved on-time delivery of students, supporting academic process
- Lowered average fleet age
- 10,000 Gallon Fuel tank installation which produced significant operational savings
- Enhanced professionalism of transportation operation
- Route efficiency greatly enhanced via collaboration with Roanoke City personnel
- Enabled Roanoke City Public School greater budgeting certainty
- Income generation
- Higher student achievement across the District due to greater academic focus as a result of increased allocations

Any change requires both an organized and systematic approach as well as the experience of prior transition/conversions to be successfully executed. Over the past several years, the Krapf organization has initiated several such transitions with excellent results. We focus exclusively on student transportation and we have over seventy years of experience doing so. We have loyal and satisfied customers. We have our CORE Values which have provided incredible guidance on how we conduct business and treat people. We have a talented and experienced staff of transportation experts who know how to successfully drive value not only to our customers, but to their students as well as their taxpayers, through safe, on-time, efficiently operated transportation systems.