

# Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

**M**ona Clifton and Jennifer Rieder love driving a bus.



Both women also like having an impact on children at the beginning and end of the day.

"I like to be the first smile and the last smile of their school day," Jennifer said.

"It's very rewarding," Mona said of her time with school children.

For both, this is a second – or third – career and their favorite, by far.

In her 22 years as a bus driver, Mona has always worked with children with special needs. A bus driver for Brooks Yates School, Mona said the crucial requirement is to love kids.

They are just two of Pickaway County's more than 80 school bus drivers who go through strict training before being given the responsibility of transporting children.

"I like to drive. That's part of it," she said of enjoying her job. "And you have to like kids."

But the payoff, if you ask Mona or Jennifer, is worth it.

"My kids are angels," Mona said.

Jennifer, who started driving this fall for Teays Valley Local Schools, agrees with Mona that liking kids and having a positive attitude is important.

"I love it. I've had a lot of jobs," Jennifer said. "Working for the district is awesome."

"You're in a big yellow box with the district's name plastered on it. You are a walking billboard. If you don't like what you do or have a negative attitude, it definitely shows."

Jennifer started working for the district as a substitute bus driver but in a very short time, she was offered a full-time route.

Many districts are in need of substitute drivers and the position can lead to a full-time job.



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If you're interested in being a school bus driver, contact any of the county school districts' transportation office.

For Jennifer, she may be starting a family tradition. Her father, Don Neff, retired in May, having driven a bus for Teays Valley since 2008.

That sounds good to Jennifer.

"I'm retiring from here. They'll have to kick me out."

*Ty Ankrom is the superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center. He can be reached at [ty.ankrom@pickawayesc.org](mailto:ty.ankrom@pickawayesc.org).*



Mona Clifton, far left, has been a bus driver for 22 years. Jennifer Rieder has been driving for Teays Valley since the fall. Both women say they love being school bus drivers.