Holiday Greetings from the Department of Transportation!

As we enter our winter break, we will have completed 73 days of school with 107 days remaining this school year. Two bus inspections have been completed, two in-service training sessions have been completed, the hectic start of the school is behind us, the busy fall sports and fine arts season is over, and we look forward to the winter season and a great spring.

Over the next few months, we will have winter weather so please remember winter weather driving tips and to always be patient. Here are some reminders:

- Drive Defensively – Maintain safe following distance
- Anticipate possible poor road conditions
- Adjust your speeds to the conditions
- Keep windshield free of ice and snow
- Use caution at schools and at bus stops
- Dress properly – proper shoes and clothing
- Keep strobe lights on at all times

Please also keep in mind that additional school bus drivers are still needed to help drive regular routes, substitute on regular routes, and drive field trips. If you have any friends or neighbors who are interested in helping students in our community get to and from school safely, please have them contact the Department of Transportation for details on the next training class.

Thank you for the wonderful service this school year! Have a great winter season!

Jeff Thompson
### System Operational Calendar 2019-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 2019</strong></td>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Two Hour Early Dismissal - No School for Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten Students – End of 1st Marking Period (42 days) Professional Responsibilities – Head Start and PreKindergarten Parent Involvement Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 11</td>
<td>Holiday – Veteran’s Day – All Schools and Offices Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break - No School for Students and 10-11 Month Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>Holiday – Thanksgiving – All Schools and Offices Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>Two Hour Early Dismissal - No School for Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten Students - End of 1st Marking Period (42 days) Professional Responsibilities - Head Start and PreKindergarten Parent Involvement Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 29</td>
<td>Interim Distribution (Elementary Grade 5/Middle/High) Two Hour Early Dismissal – No School for Head Start and PreKindergarten Students – Professional Responsibilities/ Collaborative Planning – Head Start and PreKindergarten Parent Involvement Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 2019</strong></td>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>Two Hour Early Dismissal - No School for Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten Students - End of Interim Period - Staff Collaborative Planning - Professional Responsibilities - Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten Parent Involvement Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 17</td>
<td>Interim Distribution (Elementary Grade 5/Middle/High) Two Hour Early Dismissal – No School for Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten Students – Professional Responsibilities/ Collaborative Planning – Head Start and PreKindergarten Parent Involvement Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 20</td>
<td>Winter Break – No School for Students and 10-11 Month Employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December 25</td>
<td>Holiday – Winter Break – All Schools and Offices Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>January 2020</strong></td>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Holiday - Winter Break - All Schools and Offices Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 2</td>
<td>Two Hour Early Dismissal - No School for Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten Students - End of 2nd Marking Period (43 days) and 1st Semester (85 days) - Professional Responsibilities - Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten Parent Involvement Activities</td>
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<td>January 17</td>
<td>Holiday - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - All Schools and Offices Closed</td>
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<td>January 20</td>
<td>Holiday - Presidents’ Day - All Schools and Offices Closed (Possible Make-Up Day)</td>
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<td>January 29</td>
<td>Interim Distribution (Elementary Grade 5/Middle/High) Two Hour Early Dismissal - No School for Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten Students - End of 3rd Marking Period (48 days) Professional Responsibilities/ Collaborative Planning – Head Start and PreKindergarten Parent Involvement Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Approved 2-13-2019  Amended 4-10-2019  *Adjustment - 11-Month Employees

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**Newsletter 2**
### April 2020

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</tbody>
</table>

**Events:**
- April 6-9 ............. Spring Break – No School for Students and 10 & 11 Month Employees
- April 10 ............. Holiday – All Schools and Offices Closed
- April 13 ............. Holiday – All Schools and Offices Closed (Possible Make-Up Day)
- April 15 ............. Report Card Distribution
- April 17 ............. Professional Day - No School for Students
- April 20 ............. Collaborative Planning - Articulation Day - Professional Responsibilities - (Possible Make-Up Day)
- April 27 ............. Primary Election Day – All Schools and Offices Closed
- April 28 ............. 

### May 2020

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</table>

**Events:**
- May 8 ............. End of Interim Period
- May 19 ............. Interim Distribution (Elementary Grade)
- May 25 ............. 5/Middle/High Holiday - Memorial Day - All Schools and Offices Closed
- May 27 ............. Commencement – Great Mills High School
- May 28 ............. Commencement – Chopticon High School
- May 29 ............. Commencement – Leonardtown High School

### June 2020

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</tbody>
</table>

**Events:**
- June 12 .......... Last Day for PreKindergarten Students
- June 18 .......... Last Day for Head Start and PreKindergarten
- June 19 .......... Students Two Hour Early Dismissal - No School for Head Start and PreKindergarten Students - Last Day for Students
- June 22 .......... Grades K-12 - End of 4th Marking Period (50 days) and 2nd Semester (98 days) - Professional Responsibilities (including 3 inclement weather make-up days)
- June 30 .......... Professional Day/Professional Responsibilities for Teachers Last Day for Teachers - Professional Responsibilities
- June 30 .......... Last Day for 11-Month Employees (including 2 inclement weather make-up days)*

### Calendar Notes

**Appropriate Exercises**

Appropriate exercises will be held in the schools for the following days: Patriot Day; Constitution Day; Washington’s Birthday; Lincoln’s Birthday; Veterans Day; Columbus Day; Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday; Arbor Day; Flag Day; and any other day of national significance.

**Extended School Year Services**

Pursuant to Education Article 8-402, Annotated Code of Maryland, extended school year services will be provided to students with disabilities who are determined through the Individualized Education Program process to need specific special education services beyond the 180 school days.

**Inclement Weather and Emergency School Closing Alternatives**

Inclement weather and emergency school closing make-up alternatives include three days at the end of the year and other days noted as possible make-up days in the calendar. **Holidays, spring break, or days added at the end of the school year will be considered if additional days are needed.** The number of days for students will be a minimum of 180 and the number of days for teachers will be 190 duty days. The number of duty days for 11-month employees is 212. School buildings and offices may be closed on some professional days to permit all employees to participate. Notice will be given.
# 2019 – 2020

## IN-SERVICE CLASSES

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE IN ONE OF EACH IN-SERVICE CLASS SESSION

## 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS SESSION #</th>
<th>TIME OF CLASSES</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>DATES TO ATTEND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 1</td>
<td>8:30 am to 11:00 am</td>
<td>GMHS</td>
<td>Tuesday August 20, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 am to 11:00 am</td>
<td>GMHS</td>
<td>Monday December 09, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 am to 11:00 am</td>
<td>CHS</td>
<td>Tuesday December 10, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 am to 11:00 am</td>
<td>LHS</td>
<td>Thursday December 12, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:30 pm to 8:00 pm</td>
<td>LHS</td>
<td>Thursday December 12, 2019</td>
</tr>
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</table>

## 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS SESSION #</th>
<th>TIME OF CLASSES</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>DATES TO ATTEND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 2</td>
<td>9:30 am to 11:30 am</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Monday March 23, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 am to 11:30 am</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Tuesday March 24, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 am to 11:30 am</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Wednesday March 25, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 am to 11:30 am</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Monday March 26, 2020</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9:30 am to 11:30 am</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Tuesday March 27, 2020</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6:00 pm to 8:00 pm</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Monday March 30, 2020</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6:00 pm to 8:00 pm</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Tuesday March 31, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 pm to 8:00 pm</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Wednesday April 01, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 pm to 8:00 pm</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Thursday April 02, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 am to 12 Noon</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Friday April 03, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 am to 12 Noon AND 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Tuesday April 14, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 pm to 8:00 pm</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Wednesday April 15, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 am to 11:30 am</td>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Friday April 17, 2020</td>
</tr>
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St. Mary’s County Public Schools
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2019 – 2020
PRE-SERVICE CLASSES
MANDATORY ATTENDANCE IN ALL CLASSES WITHIN EACH PRE-SERVICE CLASS SESSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLASS SESSION #</td>
<td>TIME OF CLASSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 5</td>
<td>6:00 pm to 9:00 pm</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 6</td>
<td>8:30 am to 3:30 pm</td>
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<td>8:30 am to 3:30 pm</td>
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<td>8:30 am to 3:30 pm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| PRE-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 7 | 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm | Monday February 10, 2020 |
| | 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm | Tuesday February 11, 2020 |
| | 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm | Wednesday February 12, 2020 |
| | 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm | Thursday February 13, 2020 |
| | 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm | Monday February 18, 2020 |
| | 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm | Tuesday February 19, 2020 |

<p>| PRE-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 8 | 8:30 am to 3:30 pm | Tuesday March 17, 2020 |
| | 8:30 am to 3:30 pm | Wednesday March 18, 2020 |
| | 8:30 am to 3:30 pm | Thursday March 19, 2020 |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
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<th>Times</th>
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<tr>
<td>PRE-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 9</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6:00 pm to 9:00 pm</td>
<td>May 05, 2020</td>
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<td>6:00 pm to 9:00 pm</td>
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<td>PRE-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 10</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>June 02, 2020</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8:30 am to 3:30 pm</td>
<td>June 03, 2020</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>8:30 am to 3:30 pm</td>
<td>June 04, 2020</td>
</tr>
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<td>PRE-SERVICE CLASS SESSION # 11</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td>July 08, 2020</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>July 09, 2020</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>6:00 pm to 9:00 pm</td>
<td>July 14, 2020</td>
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**ATTENTION BUS DRIVERS**

**USING A DIFFERENT BUS FOR YOUR ROUTE?**

- **USE** YOUR NUMBER PLACARD

**DOT PHYSICALS**
The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 11.19.05.01 requires all Maryland school bus drivers to have a new physical examination every 12 months. The physical must be in accordance with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations which requires a certified Medical Examiner to conduct the physical and for the examiner to use specific forms. COMAR also requires the certificate and the full report to be retained by the local Board of Education and the owner of the vehicle/employer (contractor).

Conversely, the Motor Vehicle Administration requires a new physical prior to expiration of a current physical for every licensed driver with a CDL. The maximum length of time a medical examiner can issue DOT physical to a CDL holder is 2 years. Therefore there are times when the Motor Vehicle Administration may only need a copy of a DOT physical every 2 years while the local Board of Education requires a DOT physical every 12 months.

SMCPS also requires drivers to submit a copy of their driver’s license when providing a copy of their physical certificate and report. If SMCPS does not have a current DOT Physical Report and Medical Examiner’s Certificate on file, a driver is considered **inactive/decertified** and cannot operate a SMCPS school bus transporting students.
At this point, almost every bus in our fleet has a camera system. They are an invaluable tool to capture student conduct on the bus, and support you when submitting Bus Conduct Reports. Cameras also aid in the investigative process for a wide range of concerns made by bus drivers, contractors, parents, students, school staff, and the general public. As a school bus driver, it is critical that you know your camera system is operating properly at all times. Please review the following items, which you should know about the camera system on your bus:

1. **What kind of camera system is on your bus?** All of our systems at this point are made by Angeltrax, however there are several different models throughout the fleet due to upgrades and improvements to technology that have occurred over time. This is important for you to know, so you are aware when your system is not recording properly. All systems should have a small indicator button somewhere in your driver compartment area. Unfortunately, there are slight differences with the indicator lights for the various models.

   - The new buses that have come in over the past two years, all have the new **Vulcan** system. These use the large 4" x 6" tan hard-drives. The indicator light is a green circle around the button that should remain on whenever the system is recording. These lights **DO NOT** blink or flicker like the older systems.

   - The majority of our buses still have the older **Quest** system. These use the small 2" x 4" black hard-drives. Some of these indicator lights are all red, and some have several colors (red/green/orange). Regardless of the color, these indicator lights **DO** flicker whenever the system is recording.

2. **How many cameras does your bus have and what do they capture?** The amount of cameras installed on each bus has increased over time. Knowing where your cameras are located and what they capture, is important for assigning seats on the bus. Students that tend to have more behavior issues, should be placed in seats that are well captured by a camera or two. There may be a few buses left that only have 3 cameras, but for the most part all buses have at least 4 cameras.

   1. There is a camera above the driver mirror that captures the entire bus (pretty much what you would see when looking up in the mirror).
   2. There is a camera that captures the door, steps and loading area.
   3. There is a camera in the middle of the bus that captures from the middle to the back.
   4. There is a camera in the very back that looks down on the back 3-4 rows of seats.
   *5. There is a camera pointed out of the driver windshield to capture outside, in front of the bus. (This is on all new buses for the past 3 years)*
   **6. There is now a 6th camera on brand new buses (Started this year). There is no longer a middle camera, but it has been replaced with 2 cameras (1 about a third of the way back and 1 about two thirds of the way back).
3. **When should your system be recording?** It is very important that your bus is recording whenever the bus is on and/or students are on the bus. Your system should start recording when the bus is started or when the key is turned to accessory. It should also record for several minutes after the bus is turned off. **If your bus is off while parked at a school, please make sure your key is turned to accessory whenever students are on the bus, loading or unloading.** Unfortunately, we often do not have video footage of incidents that occur while in the school parking lot, because the bus was off and the camera was not recording.

4. **What should you do if your camera system is not working or you're not sure if it is working?** Please contact the Department of Transportation whenever you think your camera system may not be working properly. In most instances, someone from our office can typically resolve the issue. If it is something that we cannot fix ourselves, then we coordinate with Angeltrax to have service technicians come out at their earliest opportunity to check the system. Whenever a hard-drive is pulled and replaced on your bus, you should make sure the system is recording before allowing the school administrator or DOT staff member to leave. This ensures that the new hard-drive was installed properly, and the system is working prior to starting your next route.

We live in a world where people are quick to make accusations with limited information or any real concrete details. Even when people witness an incident themselves and do their very best to make an honest and truthful report, their perspective is often inconsistent with what actually occurred. The bus cameras are your greatest resource for documenting exactly what occurs on your bus. **Please make it a priority to know what type of camera system you have, where the cameras are located on your bus, and what the indicator light should be doing to ensure your system is recording properly.** A brief glance at your indicator button throughout the day is all it takes to make sure your best friend is there to back you up when needed.

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**SPECIAL NEEDS DRIVERS AND ATTENDANTS**

*Submitted by: Amy Downs, Special Needs Transportation*

With the cold weather, students will be wearing more clothing. Please remember safety equipment must be worn under the student’s jacket/coat.

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**BUS VISIBILITY**

*Submitted by: Terry Hoff, School Bus and Attendant Instructor*

The dark winter weather is here and all the more reason to use that STROBE light; as well as, other lights. **Please make your bus visible to all traffic.**
NEW FORMS IN TRANSPORTATION

SEE our website under Contractors and Drivers,

The BUS ROUTE INFORMATION UPDATE FORM 2019 is to be completed and submitted to our office by contractors or their managers only.
## 2019 – 2020
MSDE OPENING AND CLOSING DATES MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL SYSTEM</th>
<th>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</th>
<th>WINTER BREAK</th>
<th>SPRING BREAK</th>
<th>OTHER CLOSINGS AND HOLIDAYS</th>
<th>LAST DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Apr 9-13</td>
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<td>Apr 9-13</td>
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<td>Dec 23-Jan 1</td>
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<td>Howard</td>
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<td>Montgomery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prince George's</td>
<td>Nov 27-29</td>
<td>Dec 23-Jan 1</td>
<td>Apr 6-13</td>
<td>9/27, 11/11, 1/20, 2/17, 4/28, 5/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queen Anne's</td>
<td>Nov 27-29</td>
<td>Dec 23-Jan 1</td>
<td>Apr 10-13</td>
<td>11/11, 1/20, 1/28, 1/29, 2/17, 4/28, 5/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary's</td>
<td>Nov 27-29</td>
<td>Dec 23-Jan 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>Nov 27-29</td>
<td>Dec 23-Jan 3</td>
<td>Apr 8-13</td>
<td>10/17, 1/20, 1/27, 2/17, 3/13, 4/28, 5/25</td>
<td>June 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talbot</td>
<td>Nov 27-29</td>
<td>Dec 23-Jan 1</td>
<td>Apr 9-13</td>
<td>11/7, 11/8, 1/20, 1/27, 2/17, 5/25</td>
<td>June 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicomico</td>
<td>Nov 27-29</td>
<td>Dec 23-Jan 1</td>
<td>Apr 10-13</td>
<td>11/8, 1/20, 1/27, 2/17, 3/16, 4/3, 4/28, 5/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>Nov 27-29</td>
<td>Dec 23-Jan 3</td>
<td>Apr 7-13</td>
<td>11/8, 1/20, 1/27, 2/17, 4/6, 4/28, 5/25</td>
<td>June 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) was formed in 1949.
Today, MSBCA comprises 456 school bus contractor members representing 3000 school buses in 19 of Maryland’s 24 jurisdictions.

The MSBCA objective is to provide the safest transportation possible to the students of Maryland and they strive to improve the quality of student transportation.

Since 1939 the National Congresses (formerly Conferences) on School Transportation have been held periodically with the primary objective of ensuring safe, efficient transportation for school children. Since 1980, the 300-plus delegates from around the country who comprise the NCST have convened each five years.

The Specifications and Procedures are the primary purpose and product of the Congresses, comprising the delegates' formal recommendations for vehicles, equipment, and operational practices that contribute to the objectives of safety and efficiency. As stated within the introduction to the NSTSP, its intended use is that "the specifications for school buses and procedures for operation are available for states to consider when establishing their standards, specifications, recommendations, and guidelines."

The 2010 National Congress on School Transportation was the latest in a series beginning in 1939 and continuing in 1945, 1948, 1951, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1970, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010. All congresses (referred to as "conferences" before 2005) have been made up of official representatives of state departments of education, public safety, motor vehicles, and police or other state agencies having state-wide responsibilities for the administration of student transportation; local school district personnel; contract operators; advisors from industry; and representatives from other interested professional organizations and groups. Each conference has resulted in one or more publications that contain the recommendations of that particular conference.

The recommendation of specifications and procedures for school buses and their operation has been a major purpose of all conferences. The 1939 Conference was called for this sole purpose and formulated a set of recommended standards for school buses of 20 or more passengers. The 1945 Conference revised the 1939 recommendations and added standards for small vehicles of 10 to 18 passengers. Both standards were further revised by the 1948 Conference. There were additional revisions in 1959, and the 1964 Conference added standards for school buses to be used in
transporting students with disabilities. In addition to revising standards for larger vehicles, the 1970 Conference refined the standards for school buses designed to transport fewer than 24 passengers.

Other major issues in student transportation have received attention at these national conferences. On several occasions, recommendations concerned primarily with overtaking and passing of school buses were transmitted to the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances for consideration in connection with revisions of the Uniform Vehicle Code. The 1948 Conference made recommendations on uniform records and reports for student transportation. The major purpose of the 1948 Conference was the formulation of recommendations related to standards and training programs for school bus drivers.

These recommendations were revised by the 1959 Conference, and a new publication on the topic was issued. The 1954 Conference gave considerable time to the discussion of the extended use of school buses in the school program. The 1970 Conference also adopted standards for school bus operation (issued in a separate report).

The 1980 Conference updated the standards for school bus chassis and bodies, rewrote the complete standards for the specially equipped school bus, and included definitions for Types A, B, C and D buses. One of the major tasks of the 1980 Conference was to revise the standards to remove any conflicts with superseding federal regulations, many of which were mandated by sections of the Motor Vehicle and School Bus Safety Amendments of 1974 (Public Law 93-492).

The 1985 Conference updated the standards for school bus chassis, bodies, special education and operations procedures. A major project was completed in the adoption of a uniform school bus accident reporting form. This form was designed to standardize school bus accident data reporting throughout the school transportation industry.

Next year’s NCST will discuss, debate and vote on the 2020 edition of the National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures (NSTSP) manual, which is updated every five years. The specifications manual is used by states, industry and others as a reference guide when drafting school bus legislation, rules, policies and procedures. It is organized into several sections, with each represented by its own writing committee:

- Activity Bus Operations Other than Home to School/Head Start
- Alternative Fuels
- Emerging Technologies in School Transportation
- General Operations
- School Bus Inspection
- School Bus Specifications
- School Transportation Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Students with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs
- Terms and Definitions
- Toddlers and Preschool Children
- Transportation for Infants
ABILITIES THAT MIGHT AFFECT A STUDENT’S BEHAVIOR ON THE BUS

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) OR ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER (ADD) What you need to know is that the criteria for ADHD and ADD are very specific and require that a child manifest in six or more specific behaviors. These are not just kids who do not want to behave- they have little control over the impulsive actions that occur.

According to the CDC, the number of prescriptions written by medical doctors to treat ADHD has increased 500% since 1991.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inattention:</th>
<th>Hyperactivity:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Doesn’t seem to listen</td>
<td>- runs or climbs on things excessively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Easily distracted</td>
<td>- can t sit still and is fidgety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Has difficulty paying attention</td>
<td>- has difficulty staying in seat and bothers those seated near</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impulsivity:</th>
<th>Emotional Instability:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- often acts w/o thinking &amp; then has remorse</td>
<td>- angry outbursts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- shifts excessively needs a lot of supervision</td>
<td>- social loner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- doesn’t wait turn climbing on bus</td>
<td>- blames others for problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bus personnel may tell the child where to sit and the child hears it and forgets it before they get there.

The child may throw their shoe across the aisle and not be able to tell you why they did it.

The child may bounce up and down and seem to be liquid lava in their seat.

The child may have an angry outburst if given a reprimand.

The bus personnel may tell the child where to sit and the child hears it and forgets it before they get there.

The child may throw their shoe across the aisle and not be able to tell you why they did it.

The child may bounce up and down and seem to be liquid lava in their seat.

The child may have an angry outburst if given a reprimand.

Use the “Incredible 5 Point Scale” [http://www.5pointscale.com/](http://www.5pointscale.com/) (It’s for kids with autism- but I like it for children with bi-polar, ADHD, ODD, and Asperger Syndrome)

Have written expectations:

(a) Be Safe
   - Sit with your bumper on the seat
   - Keep hands and feet to self

(b) Be Respectful
   - Use a six inch voice so you can hear the bus driver
   - Keep backpack on lap so no one trips on it

(c) Be Responsible
   - Be at your stop on time in the morning.
   - Pay attention for your stop in the afternoon.

A behavioral chart or something as simple as a loop of paper to make a chain for every day that these rules are followed will go a long way in helping the child to remember.

Have some self-stimulatory activities available like Velcro on the seat cushion or bus wall- Koosh ball on backpack- etc.

AUTISM means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, which adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autism:</th>
<th>Routines are very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Avoiding eye contact</td>
<td>- A different bus driver or route could be upsetting if there is no advance warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dislike of being touched</td>
<td>- Sensory issues are very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dislike of certain sounds</td>
<td>- Too hot and the child could strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Incontinence (urine &amp; defecation)</td>
<td>- Too cold and the child could scream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Incontinence on following a set pattern of behavior</td>
<td>- Too noisy and the child could have a tantrum and bite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insistence on a certain routine</td>
<td>- If someone touches them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insistence on being left alone</td>
<td>- They could have a tantrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preoccupied with parts (knob on window)</td>
<td>- They could injure themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Repetitive behaviors (hand flapping, rocking, finger licking)</td>
<td>- The long bus ride home with nothing to manipulate could:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rigid routines</td>
<td>- Mean they defecate or urinate in pull-ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Self-injurious behavior</td>
<td>- They tantrum out of boredom or too much incoming sensory stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Spinning objects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Temper tantrums</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Work with the school:

- Have Picture Exchange Communication cards that show upcoming changes
- PowerPoint relationship narratives can be very helpful

Have some self-stimulatory items available to reduce stress:

- Koosh balls on key chains attached to child’s clothing or bus so they can’t be thrown.
- Put loop and hook tape (Velcro) in a spot where the child can rub it for sensory stimulation.
- Battery operated fan with soft blade.
- Seat the child near the front of the bus- but not right behind the driver.

This lets you monitor noise, smells, and other changes that might require intervention.

ASPERGER SYNDROME Asperger syndrome is a pervasive developmental disorder that is characterized by the inability to

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understand how to interact socially. They may have limited interests, preoccupations with particular routines or rituals, speech and language peculiarities and non-verbal communication problems.

- Monotone voice output
- Little eye contact
- Not listening when others speak
- Obsession of a particular topic of interest to them
- Ritualistic behaviors- always tapping the top of three seats before sitting in the fourth
- Language is above level of peers
- Little or no empathy for others’ suffering

Children with Asperger syndrome do not “read” facial cues such as a mad face.

They take all language literally:
If you say “freeze” they will say- Well, according to the weather channel it will freeze on November 23rd at 3:00 a.m. when the temperature drops to 32 degrees; which is 0 degrees Celsius.

COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENT The capacity to use expressive and/or receptive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: speech, such as articulation and/or voice; conveying, understanding, or using spoken, written, or symbolic language. A child may include a student with impaired articulation, stuttering, language impairment, or voice impairment which adversely affects the student’s educational performance.

The child may not be able to vocalize that:
- Someone is bullying them on the bus.
- It may be too noisy on the bus for the child to hear their device and see if anyone is bothering them:

- All behavior is communication- we have to decode the message

DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY The learning capacity of a young child (3-9 years old) is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: receptive and/or expressive language; cognitive abilities; physical functioning; social, emotional, or adaptive functioning; and/or self-help skills.

A child with developmental delay may:

- Be incapable of following directions
- Have difficulty comprehending what you say
- Have difficulty maneuvering in the aisle if crowded
- Be unable to put seatbelt on if available
- Be unable to tie their own shoes
- Cry uncontrollably when unable to get their message across in words that you understand
- Just stare at you when you tell them to do something

The child may need more processing time when hearing a spoken command.

The child may not understand words spoken in anger- focusing only on the loudness of the words and not the actual words.

Two and three step commands may be too much for the child to handle.

Work with the school:

- PowerPoint relationship narratives are good tools to teach expected behavior on the bus.
- Incredible 5 point scales are great for showing the student where they are on the emotional scale and where you are on the emotional scale. (The school should know how to get you a copy and teach you how to use this simple bookmark size tool.)

Work with the school:

- Keep your hands and feet to yourself
- Good eye contact
- Keep children on their left
- Give children a visual aid

Example:
1. Sit here
2. Put your backpack on your lap
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself

Give time between each prompt to have the child comply.
EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENT - EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR DISORDERS/DISABILITIES - OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER - SEVERE EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR DISORDERS/DISABILITIES - CONDUCT DISORDER

Student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Behaviors may manifest as:

- Cussing
- Yelling
- Taking eye contact as confrontation
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Punching
- Flicking
- Screaming
- Spitting
- Jumping up and down
- “flying off the handle”

Even if you compliment them:

They may react with the above behaviors. This stems from their low self-esteem.

This child may take eye contact as “fighting words”.

The child may confuse their inability to have success with school and associate it with riding the bus and take aggressive action on the bus to avoid confronting academic problems.

These students will not have any outward sign of having a disability and yet they are the ones that will need the utmost care in verbal prompting.

Work with the school:

Use the one sentence intervention (www.loveandlogic.com) – This child has very low self-esteem.

Use choices whenever possible:

- Would you rather sit behind me in this seat or over in this seat? (Instead of saying, “Sit down and hold on.”)

Use “I need” statements:

I need a safe bus. I’ll be happy to drive the bus as soon as everyone is seated appropriately for safety.”

Instead of saying, “I’m not driving this bus until Joe Fabuloso sits his carcass down.”

HEALTH IMPAIRMENT – OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRED

A chronic or acute health problem such that the physiological capacity to function is significantly limited or impaired and results in one or more of the following: limited strength, vitality or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli resulting in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment.

This could manifest in these behaviors:

- Depression
- Anger
- Resentment
- Frailty
- Physical Clumsiness
- Vomiting
- Inability to breathe
- Sleepiness
- Lethargy
- Seizures
- Bloating
- Encopresis
- Incontinence

This could include:

- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Heart conditions
- Hemophilia
- HIV
- Lead poisoning
- Leukemia
- Nephritis
- Rheumatic fever
- Severe Allergies
- Sickle cell anemia

The child may need:

- Inhaler (Asthma)
- Injections (Diabetes)
- Sugar (juice- special candy- etc.)
- Epinephrine Pen (bee stings)

A child with ADHD might need to sit on a special cushion that provides more pro-prioceptive input or they might need some Velcro on the seat to rub for self-stimulation to assist with calming activities.
INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT – INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED OR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES – MENTAL RETARDATION (Non-preferred term) The permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following: a slower rate of learning; disorganized patterns of learning; difficulty with adaptive behavior; and/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts.

Behaviors may include what would be perceived as:
- Immaturity
- Obsessive compulsive behaviors
- Non response to verbal prompts
- Non response to non-verbal prompts

Inability to articulate thoughts may come out as:
- Tantrums
- Crying
- Pointing and crying/screaming
- Frustration behaviors

May not understand simple directions.

May need more time to process verbal prompts.

NEUROLOGICAL IMPAIRMENT - TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY TBI The capacity of the nervous system is limited or impaired with difficulties exhibited in one or more of the following areas: the use of memory, the control and use of cognitive functioning, sensory and motor skills, speech, language, organizational skills, information processing, affect, social skills, or basic life functions. The term includes students who have received a traumatic brain injury.

Certain areas of the brain, such as the frontal and temporal lobes, monitor and direct behaviors. When these areas are damaged, a child may have difficulty controlling temper, actions and feelings.

Common changes in behaviors after brain injury include restlessness, hitting, swearing, impulsiveness and difficulty following directions.

Many children and adolescents remember how they were before their brain injury. This also can result in emotional reactions that contribute to changes in behaviors as they struggle to gain a new sense of self.

These students may not remember the rules from day one to day two.

May have meltdowns if things don’t go as expected – for instance if the bus has to stop for a train or an accident, the child may have a tantrum.

They may not recognize their name.

Use PowerPoint Relationship Narratives about what the expected behaviors are:
- Keep your bottom on the seat
- Keep hands and feet to self
- Put backpack in box at front of bus
- Talk softly

Work with the school to help develop a:
- Picture schedule of what’s expected and the order that it’s expected will help
- A tape recording of calming exercises to help with the stress of riding on the bus.
  - Breathe in-2-3-4
  - Breathe out-2-3-4
  - Think happy thoughts-2-3-4

Breathe out 2-3-4
PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT – CEREBRAL PALSY – PHYSICAL DISABILITIES, MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY  The physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors that may manifest from physical disabilities:</th>
<th>Work with the school:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encopresis</td>
<td>• Make sure they take the child out of their wheelchair and stretch them before they get on the bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incontinence</td>
<td>o If a child is in a wheelchair, we typically take them out for a stretch every hour. If they were taken out at 2 p.m. and then get on the bus at 2:45 and have an hour long ride home, they could be in extreme pain by the time they reach their destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiff muscles from being in the same position for too long (60 minutes is the top limit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crying from pain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extreme changes in temperature can cause behaviors such as:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Prosthesis may become sweaty and itchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cold</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Inability to cover themselves when cold may cause behaviors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May not be able to bend over and pick up items that fall on floor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May need more time to get off and on bus.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>This may include cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, and similar.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertonic muscles- appear stiff and rigid (also called spastic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotonic muscles- chronically overstretched and weak (also called decreased muscle tone)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

1. HEARING - The capacity to hear, with amplification, is limited, impaired, or absent.
2. VISION - The capacity to see, after correction, is limited, impaired, or absent.
3. DEAF-BLIND - Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors may manifest as:</th>
<th>The child will be using sign language or assistive technology to communicate if unable to communicate. The child may have a cochlear implant. This device cannot get wet and should avoid static electricity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tantrums</td>
<td>The child may be using a cane to maneuver on the bus or a visual companion either in human or canine form. The cane may fold up or be a solid piece of plastic, metal, or wood. In the case of a young child, there may be a tennis ball on the end to avoid accidental poking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Due to inability to communicate and be understood</td>
<td>This child may be using a cane and a hearing device. They may be using sign language or an auditory output device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who are deaf:</td>
<td>1. Ask the school to print off sign language cards for words like:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Children may put their hands over their eyes when you are trying to sign to them.</td>
<td>a. Please sit down here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o This could be because they don’t like what you are saying; or it may be because you are signing and it isn’t making sense.</td>
<td>b. Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who are blind:</td>
<td>c. Here is your stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o May lie down flat on surface and refuse to move</td>
<td>2. This child may need assistance getting up the steps. It will be important to not have a child behind or in front of this child as they ascend into the bus. Sit the child by a responsible student who could help in the case of a bus emergency. Have a discussion about what that means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o This could be because it feels like the safest place.</td>
<td>3. This child would benefit from having a tactile map of the bus layout and possibly a tactile map of the route so they can follow along. They at least need something in their lap that can help them pass the time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY This is a general term meaning a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

According to the Center for Disease Control at least 50% of all children with ADHD have learning disabilities as well.

It may appear that this child is not complying with commands and it is possible that the child has to process the language and put it in the right file in their brain before they can respond.

- If this child is around an adult who repeats instructions before they have time to process, it will disrupt the first filing system they had going and they will take even longer for the child to respond to the original request.

Frequently adults over talk and cause behaviors to erupt because the thought processes get over stimulated to the point of frustration.

This child may have difficulty expressing to the bus driver a problem or issue they are having.

This child may not listen or may remember things in a different order than they were told.

This child should be seated near the front of the bus. This will help them cue into the visual surroundings so they don’t miss their bus stop.

Extra time may be needed for the child to process verbal prompts.

- Only give the direction once
- Determine the amount of wait time before the student responds and make a mental note of this time.

Share with others who work with the child.

READERS REPORT AVERAGE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER COMPENSATION AMID ONGOING STAFFING SHORTAGE

The most read School Transportation News magazine article of 2018 was a controversial story that was printed in the October issue. By an almost two-to-one margin, compared to the article that came in second place, the No. 1 most popular article was a five-page review titled, “Tipping the Pay Scale: School Districts Seek Creative Salary Solutions for Low Driver Pay.”

Not surprisingly, last year’s research survey confirmed that the No. 1 reason for the chronic school bus driver shortage nationwide was the low average rate of pay. That especially seemed to be the case when compared to other commercial driver jobs, as well as positions outside of the driving field.

Last year, when STN conducted an emailed national survey of its readers in August, it reported that the lowest starting school bus driver pay rate was $8.26 per hour. Also, the average starting salary in 2018 was $12.62 nationwide, while the median wage was $16.

Today, the median introductory hourly rate for drivers with their CDLs has moved slightly higher to $17. That suggests that the introductory rate nationwide is reaching a new consensus point—to set starting wages at a higher level. However, the possible role played by inflation was not factored into the survey.

This school year, the current average maximum rate for drivers with a CDL is $22 per hour. Last year our survey found that nearly three-quarters of respondents reported their own operation had a driver shortage. This year, that rate was 80 percent.
For driver vacancies this year, the districts that have been hit the hardest by the driver shortage (with 51 or more vacancies), succeeded in shrinking that number. In other words, there are now fewer districts with major labor shortages than last year.

A new question in 2019 was whether or not respondents thought their own local drivers were paid too little, just right or not enough. About two-thirds (63 percent) agreed that local drivers were not paid enough.

**Top 10 Additional Positions Offered to School Bus Drivers**

1. Kitchen staff/food service, cafeteria  
2. Custodial  
3. Teacher (aide, substitute, kindergarten monitor)  
4. Maintenance  
5. Building aides/monitors/staff/student supervisor  
6. Secretary/receptionist/clerical  
7. Paraprofessional  
8. Garage/mechanic/fueling staff/parts runner  
9. Cleaner  
10. Miscellaneous/undefined  

(Source: STN survey; 266 total respondents.)

In fact, readers in 2019 think the hourly rate should be raised by an average of $4 per hour. That seems to be a recognition, in my opinion, that a raise of only $1 or $2 an hour just isn’t enough to make a difference anymore in retaining or attracting drivers.

Basically, that suggests that driver wages have fallen so far behind wages in competing industries or positions, that anything short of a substantial increase of around $4 won’t normally be enough to make a difference in retention or attraction rates.

Slightly more than half of the readers (56 percent) reported this year that their districts or bus companies are paying new applicants while they train. The survey also found that exactly half (50 percent) of districts do not pay for the applicant’s CDL test. And, almost nine out of 10 (87 percent) of districts do not offer a hiring bonus to new drivers.

Similarly, over eight out of 10 districts (84 percent) in 2019 do not offer employee referral bonuses.

In addition, three out of four districts (73 percent) in 2019 allow their drivers to work in other on-campus positions, in order to boost their overall work hours and total compensation.

Regarding benefits in 2019, five out of 10 school districts or bus companies currently offer partial or full health insurance coverage to drivers. But one out of four districts or companies do not offer any insurance coverage, because the drivers are classified as part-time employees.

Half of the readers reported their districts or companies offer additional “significant” benefits to drivers. Sick leave led this list, with retirement benefits of some kind in second place, followed by dental insurance, miscellaneous (minor benefits, such as coffee, donuts and periodic barbecues), life insurance, paid holidays, personal days off, vision insurance, state retirement pensions plans and vacation pay.

In the state of Ohio, it appears that the nationwide driver shortage is not currently as severe as in other states. For instance, Bruce B. Berry, director of transportation at Black River Local Schools in Sullivan, reports that at his district, there is no driver shortage. “All routes are covered with regular drivers and we have four regular substitutes to cover absences. In worst-case scenarios, I drive a bus route if no one else is available. So far this school year, I have only had to drive on three occasions.”
Berry is optimistic that his expected driver vacancies will be filled after the recent NAPT conference. “I currently have a new position for a special needs van driver that will be filled upon my return from the conference, and another special-needs van driver position that will also be filled due to retirement of a driver. I have internal candidates (substitute drivers) who will be hired to fill those vacancies.”

So, those two open positions “will be filled by Thanksgiving and most likely by Nov. 11, 2019,” Berry said.

Sharon L. Conley, who is a transportation supervisor and the south region director of the Ohio Association for Pupil Transportation, says her district is in a good situation with drivers. “While I would like to have additional substitute bus drivers as a cushion, all of my routes are currently filled. However, a couple of drivers calling off certainly pose a challenge.”

While she currently has several drivers in training, Conley remains “optimistic that we can operate efficiently throughout the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year and into the 2020-2021 school year.”

Elsewhere in Ohio, the story is similar. Jay Price, the transportation supervisor at Mohawk Local Schools in Sycamore, says “We are very fortunate to not have a shortage this year. What has helped our district with getting drivers is recruiting current employees from the school. The most recent drivers I have trained have children who attend this school. The two drivers are aids in the school who get seven hours a day. The morning route and afternoon route are one hour and 15 minutes long each. Both drivers were excited after they received their first check—their pay doubled by adding the bus driving pay.”

According to Price, “The hardest part about recruiting drivers that I had was finding someone with the right temperament, and convince them of the school bus myths that the children run the bus. I have found in most cases, but not all, that women make the best drivers, due to their motherly instincts.”

From Price’s viewpoint, the reasons why schools have so many driver vacancies, “is the way society is and the lack of morals. No one wants to drive a bus with unruly kids who have no respect for anyone else. That is why it’s a parent problem.”

Price conceded, “Kids will be kids, just like I was growing up. But I knew the consequences were going to be unpleasant when I got home from my parents. I became a fast learner.”

He then asked, “Why don’t they believe school employees about their children’s behavior? I am not out to get their children in trouble. I believe in the saying ‘it takes a village to raise a child.’ I am part of the village. Step it up parents, it’s not all about you!”
TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION HIGHLIGHTS POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF FEDERAL SCHOOL BUS STOP LEGISLATION

Congressional representatives who are championing a federal bill that targets motorists who illegally pass school buses marked National School Bus Safety Week by attending a demonstration of the very technologies they want to implement.

One of the technologies that was demonstrated is a predictive stop-arm system from Safe Fleet that uses artificial intelligence to determine if other vehicles on the road will stop or not for the school bus. If it determines a vehicle is about to pass, it sounds an alarm to warn the students and emits visible signals to the school bus driver.

“As the industry’s trusted leader in school bus safety technologies for over 20 years, we are pleased to have participated in today’s live demonstrations,” said Chris Akiyama, vice president of school buses at Safe Fleet. “Earlier today, we showed the Predictive Stop Arm and Driver Alert solutions in action and how they can proactively keep students out of harm’s way. Our solution aims to save lives by gauging the risk of stop-arm violations, and notifying drivers and students before an accident occurs. We look forward to a future where the School Bus Danger Zone can become a safety zone.”

NSTA thanked the sponsors and cosponsors of the STOP Act for their leadership in advancing the legislation.

Curt Macysyn, NSTA executive director, told School Transportation News, “The precipitous growth of this illegal, and dangerous activity by distracted motorists, continues to highlight the need for immediate passage of the STOP for School Buses Act.”

The STOP for School Buses Act would order a comprehensive, nationwide review of efforts to prevent illegal passing of buses. Under the bill, USDOT would:

- Compile illegal passing laws in all states, including levels of enforcement and penalties.
- Review existing public safety measures and programs to prevent illegal passing of school buses.
- Issue recommendations on best practices for preventing illegal passing.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of various technologies that may help prevent illegal passing incidents.
- Review driver education materials in all states to determine whether more information about illegal passing should be provided to drivers.
- Research connections between the illegal passing of school buses and other safety issues.
- Create and execute a public safety messaging campaign to promote safe driving when children are present and highlight the dangers of illegal passing.

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School districts across the nation are reporting bus driver shortages.

Boarding the yellow school bus each morning ensures students arrive at school on time and ready to learn. In some cases, with fewer school bus drivers, boundaries are changing and students who once were eligible for transportation may no longer qualify.

It’s unclear if consequences aforementioned from a shortage are dramatically impacting Utah but last year the Alpine School District faced shortages. At one point, the Utah County district had an estimated 200 open positions.

Those openings included:

- Nutrition workers,
- Custodial workers,
- Special education paraprofessionals,
- Bus drivers.

The Utah State Board of Education states on its website that the state’s fleet of 2,987 school buses provides transportation to 195,000 children every day. Each bus replaces 36 vehicles and reduces traffic congestion, the site reports.

Here are additional school bus driver facts:

1. Bus drivers make an average of $16 an hour. The low pay might be a contributor to driver shortages.
2. **Best practices** upon hiring a bus driver include, but not limited to; DMV review, CDL written exam completion, FBI BCI background check and clearance, pre-employment drug test, completion of Physical Assessment Evaluation and state and local required instruction and certification.
3. The school transportation sector employs roughly 500,000 bus drivers, who transport nearly a third of U.S. students to and from school each day.
4. **Over $40 million are saved** annually by transporting Utah school children on school buses.
5. Most districts struggle to hire enough drivers to operate their fleets. Based on recent surveys, more than 90 percent of districts and school transportation contractors face some level of a driver shortage.
6. Utah’s low unemployment rate may contribute to school bus driver shortages that wanes and waxes across districts. **Data** shows that school bus driver shortages are higher when unemployment is low, suggesting that when more jobs are available, fewer people are willing to get behind the wheel of an iconic yellow school bus.
7. Some districts throughout the country are offering sign-up bonuses for school bus drivers and giving incentives to other school employees to fill the role. For example, in Lincoln, Nebraska, the local school district offered
The Lonely

By Kate Keller

The schoolyard was full of bright, shiny new buses all lined up in rows. Every morning, these buses would leave the schoolyard to pick up the children for school. In the afternoon, they would take the children home again.

At the back of the schoolyard, hardly noticeable at all, sat an old school bus. It was no longer bright and shiny. None of the bus drivers wanted to drive such an ugly old bus. So, every morning, the old bus sat there and watched as the other buses left to pick up the children. It was very sad that it could not go to pick up the children like they did.

One morning, one of the bright, shiny buses would not start. The mechanic told the principal that the bus was broken. It would take several days to repair it. The principal was very unhappy. “What are we going to do about the children?” he asked. “How are they going to get to school without a schoolbus?”

Herb, the bus driver, spotted the old bus sitting in the schoolyard. “Hey,” he shouted, “How about if I try that old clunker?” The principal said "OK", so Herb fueled up the old bus and tried to start it. It choked and coughed and sputtered. Finally, it started. The old bus shook as its engine came to life.

Herb drove to old bus out of the schoolyard to pick up the children. He was glad that the old bus had started. Herb liked his job of bringing the children to school. He had been doing it since he retired from the factory. He liked talking to the children every day. Herb had been pretty lonely since his wife passed away. He found that his job kept him busy and made him feel better.

Herb and the old school bus picked up the little boy who lived on East Street. Herb liked him, he always made people laugh. When he got on the old bus, the boy patted the seat and said to Herb, “I see they took ‘Old Faithful’ out of mothballs.” Everyone laughed.

Next, Herb and the old school bus picked up the boy who lived on Seventh Street. He always had nice manners and behaved well. When he got on the bus, he said hello to everyone before sitting down. Everyone liked him.

They stopped for the sisters who lived on Oak Street. They picked up all the children.

Next, Herb stopped for the little girl who used the wheelchair. He got out of the bus and picked up the little girl and carried her onto the bus.

Then he folded her wheelchair and put it on the bus too. The little girl, Becky, was embarrassed that she had to be carried onto the bus. She never looked up at the other children or tried to talk to them because she always felt like she was different.

Herb tried to make her feel better. “Each of us is different in our own way,” he had told her one morning. “You aren’t different,” Becky had said sadly.

Herb smiled kindly at her, “Yes, I am. You see, every morning, I get up and brush my teeth and then I put them in my mouth.” He clacked his dentures together to demonstrate for her. Becky laughed right out loud at Herb. She didn’t feel embarrassed to talk to Herb anymore. She was still too shy to talk to the other children though.
The old school bus was very proud to be carrying children again. As the children laughed and talked to each other, it felt stronger. It didn't care if it wasn't bright and shiny any more. It was happy to be carrying children again. The old school bus wished that it could carry children every day.

In the afternoon, Herb and the old school bus gathered the children and carried them safely home. Every day, for the rest of the week, the old school bus and Herb carried them back and forth to school.

On the last day, the principal got a call from the school board. “We’ve hired a new driver for the bus when it’s repaired,” they told him. “But what about Herb?” the principal asked, "What will he do?"

“Well, maybe Herb is ready to retire,” the school board person said.

The principal didn’t want to fire Herb, and he didn’t think that Herb would want to retire. The principal thought for awhile, and then he had an idea. He called the school board. After talking to them about his idea for a few minutes, he went out to see Herb and the old school bus.

He told Herb that the broken school bus had been repaired. “But the school board has hired a new driver for it, Herb,” he said. Herb hung his head and was very sad. “I guess that means that I’m fired,” said Herb. Tears filled his eyes. The principal shook his head. “Wait a minute. Let me finish” he said.

“We are going to fix this old bus up and convert it so that the handicapped children can get on and off easier. We would like you to drive it for us, Herb, would you do it?” Herb’s eyes sparkled with delight, and he gave the principal a great big smile. “Yes sir! I sure will!” and he shook the principal’s hand.

After the repairs and changes had been made, Herb finally drove the old school bus out of the schoolyard for it’s very first run. The old school bus had a brand new paint job, and it no longer coughed and sputtered. It looked wonderful!

When they stopped at Becky’s house, Herb opened the door. This time, instead of getting out to carry Becky onto the bus, he lowered the special new chair lift. He smiled at Becky and asked, “Can I give you a lift?”

Becky’s grin lit up her face as she rolled her wheelchair onto the lift and then into the bus. “Now, I can get on by myself, just like the other children!” she said happily.

Herb drove the old school bus for a very, very long time.

Becky finally grew up and went off to college. But there were still lots of children still that needed a special ride, so Herb and the old school bus were never lonely, ever again.
SCHOOL BUS DRIVER HONORED ON GOOD MORNING AMERICA FOR COMFORTING STUDENT

AUGUSTA, Wis. — A school bus driver here was honored on Good Morning America after a photo of her comforting a frightened student on his first day of school was widely shared on social media.

As School Bus Fleet previously reported in September, Isabel Lane, a driver for Augusta School District, placed her hand behind her seat for 4-year-old Axel, a student starting a kindergarten program, to hold onto as he became upset when it was time to board the school bus. Axel’s mother was trying to take a photo of him happily riding the bus for the first time but managed to capture Lane’s heartwarming gesture instead.
Lane, who is also a special education teacher’s aide for the district, was honored during Good Morning America’s “Make Your Monday” segment, where she received the day off from work and a limousine ride to Lotus Spa in Eau Claire, Wis.

Ken Sigurdson, the dean of students and transportation director for Augusta School District, told Good Morning America that he was fortunate to have Lane as a student when he worked as a teacher for the district, and that she always brings the same positivity and enthusiasm to work as she did when she was a student.

Lane told Good Morning America that she feels overwhelmed by all of the support from the community and school district, and that it is satisfying to be able to make an impact on someone so young.

INCREASING SAFETY OUTSIDE THE BUS IN SPITE OF STOP ARM VIOLATION UPTURN

The last three years have seen steady increases in the number of preventable school bus loading and unloading accidents, with the 2017-2018 school year claiming five young lives in a single week.

The loss of these lives and the millions of near-accident misses documented each year have sparked widespread outrage and prompted increased interest in technology specifically designed to enhance student safety outside the bus.

This is why Derrick Agate, transportation supervisor for Hopkins Public Schools in Minnesota, began testing the Safe Fleet Predictive Stop Arm™, an innovative solution that proactively aims to keep students from stepping onto the road when a stop arm violation is likely to occur.

It didn’t take long for the system to prove its worth. Within months of the initial implementation, the System helped protect a student.

“The student got off the bus while looking at their cell phone,” explains Agate. “The stop arm was extended and an oncoming vehicle was approaching quickly. The PSA audible alarm literally kept this student from getting hit by the passing motorist.” The safety of this one student was an immediate return on investment as far as Agate was concerned.

The Predictive Stop Arm uses patents-pending and other advanced technologies to monitor oncoming traffic, measuring the vehicle’s speed and distance from the school bus. Analytics algorithms process the data from the radar sensors and determine whether the vehicle has sufficient time to slow down and stop, or whether a stop arm violation is probable. If the system perceives that students should not cross, audible and visual warnings are issued to the driver and audible warnings are issued to the students advising them to get back.

Within weeks of implementation, school bus drivers noted many instances where students were cautioned to stay back when risk was detected.

The Predictive Stop Arm doesn’t replace a bus driver’s responsibility, but adds another level of student safety and helps drivers remain focused on the task at hand. The driver as part of the safety system can see the PSA is predicting a likely stop arm violation, sees the car approaching and knows the system is predicting the very action the driver is about to witness. The driver can still honk the bus horn and follow established processes even as the PSA is
alerting the students to get back and not cross the road.

Many school bus drivers think of the students as their kids—not one driver wants to see an injury of any kind occur to one of their kids. And yet, drivers feel powerless when it comes to protecting students from injury outside the bus. Drivers have noted the Predictive Stop Arm helps alleviate some of this pressure.

Distracted driving is the reason for increased stop-arm violations and associated student injury and death. “Motorists don’t intentionally want to hit a child, but they get distracted, and not just with cell phones,” he says. “People do so much in their cars right now—there are more things to distract motorists when they are in their cars than ever before.”

“Who wants to be the person who says we had the opportunity to eliminate this, but we didn’t,” says Agate. “If I were talking to a transportation director who was considering the Predictive Stop Arm, I would tell them this technology is the best thing I’ve seen in a long time and if we are talking about keeping our kids safe, this is a tool that will keep the child from being in a position where they are going to get hit.”

SEE,  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tlcomr0noO4&feature=emb_title

FROM EVERYONE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

AND

HAPPY NEW YEAR!