

Teacher Assistant/ Bus Driver Employment

Program Goal

One of the main goals of New Hanover County Schools is to safely transport our students in a timely and efficient manner. To help us achieve this goal, we are proposing the implementation of a plan designed to increase our active bus driver pool by assigning each school a set number of teacher assistant/bus driver positions that are required to be filled with an employee who will work six hours as a teacher assistant and two hours as a bus driver during each school day. **This means that we will have both teacher assistant positions and teacher assistant/bus driver positions.**

Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, all teacher assistants hired in a **designated teacher assistant/bus driver position**, must either hold a North Carolina CDL with P and S School Bus endorsements and a NHCS School Bus Certificate or show evidence of enrollment in a CDL class within ninety (90) working days of their employment.

This program's implementation will require us to pay all 10 month non-exempt employees every two weeks rather than once a month. Transitioning from a monthly to a bi-weekly pay schedule, means all non-exempt employee's first pay check for the new fiscal year will be paid to them two weeks later than we currently pay them. We would ease this transition with an optional pay advance of \$1,000 (approximately two weeks' pay) paid to impacted employees on August 31, 2018. This advance would then be paid back to the school system through a \$125 payroll deduction in each of the next 8 pay periods.

Current Teacher Assistants Applying for the Position of Bus Driver

Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, teacher assistants **already employed** by the school system **may** apply for the additional position of teacher assistant/bus driver. In order to be considered, all teacher assistant/bus driver applicants must have a CDL with P and S Endorsements and a NHCS School Bus Certificate.

Incentives and Support

New Hanover County Schools will provide the following incentives and support:

- Pay all fees necessary for the employee to obtain a Commercial Driver's License with P and S Endorsements and pay license renewal fees as long as the bus driver is in good standing with the school system, both as a bus driver and in the primary assignment.
- Pay employee for hours driving a bus on the bus driver pay scale equal to the step the employee currently holds in their primary assignment.
- Teacher assistants, who either obtain their CDL or are in the process of obtaining their CDL, will be given priority status if the school system implements a Reduction in Force (RIF).
- Buses will be located at the employee's school. The employee will not need to drive to the bus garage or other location to pick up or drop off the bus.

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Exemptions

Teacher assistant positions exempt from being designated a teacher assistant/bus driver include but are not limited to:

1. Teacher assistant positions which were filled before July 1, 2018.
2. Special Education teacher assistant positions.
3. Temporary or time certain positions.

Exemptions from the CDL requirement for teacher assistants/bus drivers in designated teacher assistant/bus driver positions may be made under limited circumstances whereby a disability recognized under the Americans with Disabilities Act disqualifies a teacher assistant/bus driver from driving a school bus or the person cannot qualify for a DOT Medical Card. The exemption request shall be made to the Director of Transportation or designee. The Transportation Division will submit the form to the NC Division of Motor Vehicles for consideration by a Driver Education Specialist and will notify the employee of their decision. Appeals of denials shall be made to the Medical Review Branch of the NC Division of Motor Vehicles. Employees who have the extra position of bus driver, but are unable to continue their bus driving duties due to a documented medical condition will not lose their primary position but may be transferred to another position that does not require them to drive a bus.