

CARROLL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT



THE DRIVER'S SEAT

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

FALL

2013

EDITION

410-751-3229

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Michael Hardesty

Supervisor:

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Out-of-County Special
Needs & South Carroll
Area

Area Supervisors:

Byron Moore:

In-County Special
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John O'Meally:

North Carroll & FSK
Areas

Scott Parsons:

Westminster Area

Driver Instructors:

Dena Hozik

Rick Sommer

Angela Williams

Support Staff:

Pat Arnold

Kristin Ebert

Jackie Moore

Pat Wall

Cindy Washick

Congratulations to all for another very smooth school opening this year! While there were relatively few major route changes as compared to last school year, there were many first time drivers and drivers who were new to their routes. Kudos to all for a job well done!



October 21-25 is School Bus Safety Week and we want to take this opportunity to recognize the unsung heroes of transportation: the dedicated men and women who drive and assist on our over 300 school buses serving the students of the Carroll County Public Schools every day. Few can comprehend what it takes to safely drive a school bus with as many as 64 students sitting behind you. Few can appreciate what is required for a person to care for a child with severe disabilities on the school bus. Most would not want to work the hours: Up at least by 5 a.m., report to your bus in darkness, end your morning run by 10 a.m. and then go home for a few hours until it is time for your afternoon run, and finally, return to the bus yard by 5 p.m. or later and watch the sun disappear again in the afternoon sky as you drive home.

The requirements to become a school bus driver are many and only a few are willing and able to go through the process to become a certified school bus driver for our school system. Drivers may not possess more than two (2) current points on their personal driving record with no more than four (4) points assessed over the previous ten (10) years. Drivers must pass a pre-employment drug/ alcohol test and be subject to random testing throughout their driving career. In addition, drivers are required to pass a D.O.T. school bus driver physical examination every year, be subject to a thorough criminal background check, pass a comprehensive Commercial Driver's License exam with School Bus (S) and Passenger (P) endorsements, and attend thirty (30) hours of pre-service instruction and a minimum of six (6) hours of in-service training annually.

Our school system greatly values the service that our school bus drivers, assistants and bus contractors provide each and every school day for our students, parents and schools. Please take this opportunity to pat yourselves on the back for the tremendous job that you do, but always keep in mind that each day is a new and different day. Each day may bring about a new event or challenge that we have to be prepared for. Stay alert, focused and continue to provide the exceptional level of service that you do for our school system.

RAILROAD CROSSING PROCEDURES

REMEMBER TO TAKE RRX SERIOUSLY AND COME TO A COMPLETE STOP.

Activate the hazard lights at the RRX sign (yellow & black sign or RRX painting on road).
Turn off the master switch.

Stop 15—50 feet from railroad tracks or behind white stop line.

Turn off all noise making devices and quiet the students.

Open the door and window. STOP, LOOK & LISTEN.

When safe, cross the tracks.

Close the door after the front tires cross the tracks.

Turn off the hazard lights.

Reactivate the master switch.

Close the window.



If the railroad signal lights are malfunctioning, call the Transportation Services Department, and **DO NOT CROSS.**

SUBSTITUTE OBSERVATIONS will take place throughout the school year for those drivers that are due for an observation. Your contractor will inform you of the date and place to meet with a Driver Instructor.

BUSTER THE BUS

BUSTER the bus will be making his appearance again after a 10-year long hiatus. Dena Hozik and our newest Driver Instructor, Angela Williams will be taking BUSTER out to the elementary schools to speak to pre-k and kindergarten students about school bus safety. This program instills the proper way to ride a bus and the dangers of not sitting properly in the seat, how to safely cross the road, the importance of listening to their bus driver, using “inside voices”, and how to safely evacuate the bus.



These are just some of the things that the students will learn; they really love BUSTER and listen to his advice. Students learn the safe way to ride a bus as they begin their journey of bus riding. You may watch the video by clicking on the link below:

http://video.carrollk12.org/view/CETV_MEETBUSTER_10012013

MIRRORS

Learning the proper use of mirrors is vital to the safe operation of a school bus. Mirrors provide maximum visibility when they are free from defects, are properly adjusted and are kept clean. The adjustment of the crossover mirrors is still a major concern on many of the buses. Take time to use the mirror grids painted on the parking lots of the high schools throughout the county.

**CALENDAR****Carroll County Public Schools****October**

- 7 Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide; Professional Development Time available for Instructional Staff; Schools Closed for Pre-Kindergarten and Prep Students
- 18 Schools Closed for Students and 10-Month Staff – Professional Meeting Day
- 25 Special Education Route Manifests due in Transportation Services
- 28 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Century High
- 29 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Manchester Valley High
- 30 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.) Francis Scott Key High
Marking Period Ends. Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide; Teachers Work on End of Marking Period Items; Schools Closed for Pre-Kindergarten and Prep Students
- 31 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Winters Mill High

November

- 1 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 27 Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide; Professional Development Time available for instructional Staff; Schools Closed for Pre-Kindergarten and Prep Students
- 28-29 Schools/Offices Closed – Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- 2 Schools/Offices Reopen
- 6 Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal for Elementary Students; Professional Time for Elementary Teachers; Schools Closed for Pre-Kindergarten and Prep Students
- 23-31 Schools/Offices Closed – Winter Holiday

January

- 2 Schools/Offices Reopen
- 20 Schools/Offices Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
- 21 Schools Closed for Students – Teachers Work on End of Marking Period Items; Non-Work Days for Instructional Assistants

A “SPECIAL” THANKS

As we often say, we are so proud of our drivers and everything they do on a daily basis to ensure Carroll County Public Schools’ children get to and from school safely. From the safe operation of their buses to the care and concern they show for their children, we know that we are fortunate to have such an outstanding fleet of drivers . Today, however, we would like to take this opportunity to express our heart-felt thanks and appreciation to a small group of “special” people: our non-public, out-of-county drivers and assistants. Over the last several years, we have had the opportunity to work with many of them and have been thoroughly impressed with their professionalism, patience, caring , concern and empathy...the list goes on and on.

In most cases, the children on these buses are the most challenging to manage, and have some of the greatest physical, emotional and psychological needs of all the children in our system; hence, their assignment to out-of - county, non-public schools. Add to the needs of these children that we are transporting them longer distances in heavier traffic than we do any other students in the system, and you can only be impressed by the amazing job our drivers and assistants do in transporting these children.



Observing these drivers and assistants is a pleasure, as they learn the idiosyncrasies of their children, take special effort to address their needs, navigate the heavy beltway and interstate traffic, and overall perform their duties in an outstanding manner.

Again, many thanks to our “special” out-of-county, non-public drivers and assistants for the outstanding job they do.

THE DRIVER'S SEAT

FLY-BY HOT SPOTS

Children are endangered every time a motorist fails to stop for a school bus with its red lights flashing. To combat this ongoing problem, in 2004, a partnership with the local police departments targeting law-breaking motorists was started. Police on the streets have been on the lookout for drivers who do not stop for buses that are picking up or dropping off children.

The 'FLY-BY" grant was created to target drivers who fly past stopped school buses. Police patrol school routes in several ways; besides using marked patrol cars along bus routes, they also use unmarked cars to follow buses. Officers may also ride on school buses. To help make this initiative most effective, we need our bus drivers to communicate this information to the Transportation Services Department. As well as filling out the School Bus Stop Law Violation form, please notify this office, either directly or through your bus contractor, by transmitting the following information:

Bus number,

Date and time of the violation,

Frequency, and

Exact address or intersection where the violations occur.

Also, remember to pull over after picking up or dropping off students whenever possible to allow traffic to flow. This is an effective way to discourage motorist from becoming frustrated and attempting to pass.

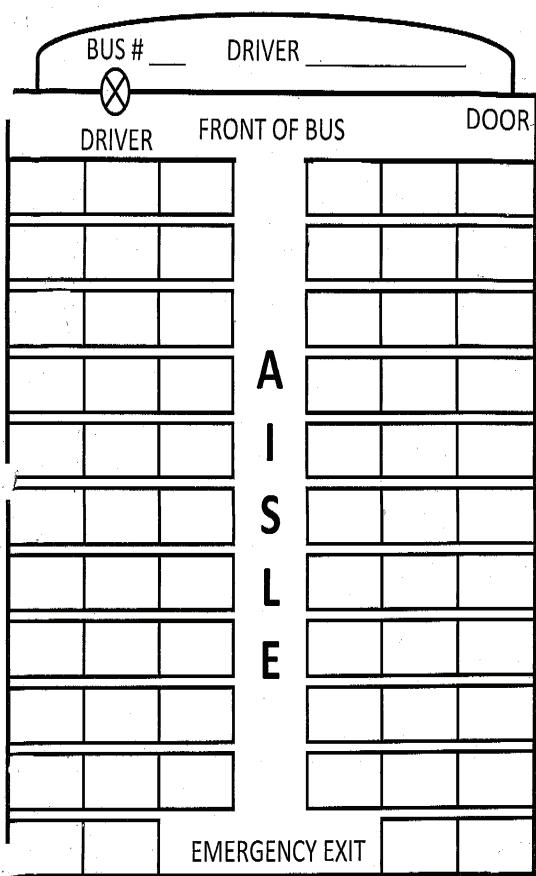
THANKS FOR MAKING THIS
GRANT PROGRAM A SUCCESS



SEATING CHARTS

SEATING CHARTS

Seating charts were due in to your schools' administrators after the second week of school. *It is your responsibility as the driver, to ensure that the charts are kept current and that the students are made to comply with their seat assignment.* If you have not submitted a chart, or it is not current, please correct this today. A few seating chart suggestions :



SUGGESTIONS:

- Have your youngest students sit near the front.
- If you do not have a full load of students onboard, **the last two seats should remain empty.** You can avoid a lot of arguments if you do not allow the back seats to be occupied.
- Once a student's seat has been changed for disciplinary reasons, you should allow students to reclaim their seat with good behavior.
- Remember each child's name. Study your seating chart and in a couple of days you will know each child's name by heart.



Q & A's on Special Ed.

Q: What are the requirements of a driver when a contractor borrows one of the County's four special ed. Buses (#207, 210, 215 and 216) that are under an extended-life waiver?

A: The Carroll County Board of Education has four spare special ed. buses. These buses are used primarily by the Board as spare buses for the five routed buses the county uses on a daily basis. There are times when these spare buses are loaned out to contractors for spares/field trips. Whenever any of the four spare buses are in use, there are some mandatory procedures that **MUST** be completed. The State of Maryland has granted a life extension for these buses. The Carroll County Board of Education must now follow some strict procedures to insure this extension. One of the requirements is that anytime any of these buses goes out on a route or is used in transporting students, a Pre and Post Trip Checklist **MUST** be completed. The checklist has 21 different areas that must be checked and then initialed by the driver. These areas are no different than what a driver should be checking during their regular pre-trip before each trip.

Each of the four buses will have a white notebook located near the driver's seat with these forms inside. All information **MUST** be filled out at the top of the form. Please leave the form inside the 3-ring binder. Each month the forms will be collected by TSD and will be used for the State's yearly evaluation.

As we begin the 2013-2014 school year, let us always keep in mind the safe transportation of our county's most prized possession: Our Children. We have done a fantastic job throughout the years and not enough "Thank Yous" are passed around to our drivers and assistants.

THE SAFEST RIDE EVER

We in the Transportation Services Department take great pride in having superior equipment for all of our pre-k and special needs students that are transported by school buses. State law requires that all car seats and vests be replaced every six years in order to comply with the established Safety Standards. Keeping our CCPS students safely secured is one of the best investments into their futures we can make.

DON'T GET COMPLACENT

You had a great start to the school year. You might have had a couple of issues with discipline here and there, but the kids have settled down and you have your times down pat. Avoid the temptation to relax too much and create the feeling that you are invincible. There's an old saying; "When life looks like easy street, there is danger at your door." It is true that, we as a team, should be proud of our record and performance; but to avoid complacency we must constantly look to improve. Here are some tips to avoid becoming complacent:

- Do a thorough pre-trip at the beginning of each run, morning **and** afternoon.
 - Keep track of the number of students on board the bus.
 - Know your students' names and use them.
 - Update your seating chart & give copies to the schools.
 - Control your students' behaviors—a small leak can lead to a flood.
 - Always remain alert while driving; you should never be in a hurry to get somewhere. There can always be a hazard on a road where there wasn't one earlier.
 - Check and double check the parking brake, **especially at school!**
 - Adjust your mirrors regularly (improperly adjusted mirrors have no purpose).
 - Check your bus at the end of each run

FILLING OUT STOP SHEETS

As we are all aware, stop sheets are a tedious but necessary part of being a bus driver and a contractor. You may ask what the Transportation Department does with the information that you supply on your stop sheet. During an emergency situation, such as a "lost" child, we can look at your stop sheet and determine where you are and if that "lost" student would have already been dropped off or would still be on board. Your school arrival times help with the timing of your bus runs and head counts alert us to any overcrowding that may occur. Particular attention should be paid to your Spring stop sheets for fifth and eighth graders who's stops will be transitioning to middle and high school the next year. This information is needed to help plan for the next year's ridership. It is vital that all information be filled in using the **original** form, which is found in your driver's handbook. Please make sure your bus number, bus cell phone number, signatures, arrival times, A.M. pick up AND P.M. drop off times and headcounts are all filled in and are **legible**. Thanks for your time and attention to filling out your stop sheets.

ATTITUDE TIPS AND DISCIPLINE

General Attitude and Approach

- Be friendly, but not familiar; your name is Mr., Mrs., Miss.....
- Be firm but not tough.
- Be consistent; don't be lax one day and tough the next.
- Treat all students equally; don't have favorites.
- Be fair.
- Always control your temper.
- Keep calm, don't yell.
- Pay attention to your appearance.
- Clearly establish your expectations—what the rules are and the reasons they exist.
- Set a good example, act the part of a person in a responsible position who follows the rules.
- Be honest in what you do and say.
- Remember your sense of humor.
- Don't hold grudges and don't take things personally.
- Watch your language.

Remember the simple pleasures.
They add up and help our mood.

Helpful Tips

- Greet students by name. Say good morning and smile.
- Show an interest in things that interest them.
- Compliment students on positive behavior.
- Sometimes it pays not to hear things.
- Make students feel that they have a responsibility in ensuring group safety.
- Listen to students—their suggestions, their complaints and their concerns.
- If you make a mistake, admit it.
- Give commands that stimulate an action: “Do this” instead of “Don’t do that.”
- Have a reason for what you ask a student to do and give the reason.



Discipline

- Save discipline for safety related behavior; don't nitpick.
- Don't get drawn into an argument with a student.
- Don't threaten something and then NOT do it.
- Don't discipline a whole group; take the ringleader aside.
- Handle negative comments away from other students.
- Don't let the situation get out of hand.

Carroll County Public Schools
Transportation Services Department

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Building the Future