

Carroll County, Maryland, Public Schools Transportation Services Department



410-751-3229

The Driver's Seat

SPRING 2018—2019 SCHOOL YEAR



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Happy Spring! As we listen to the sound of lawn mowers and birds chirping, it might be easy to forget the winter season that just concluded. With six school closings, six delayed openings and one early dismissal, while not bringing a major snowstorm, the 2018-2019 winter brought numerous winter weather events to Carroll County. As a result of the school closures, the last day of school for students will now be Tuesday, June 18th, with a 2 hour and 45 minute early dismissal.

With the warmer spring weather and longer days, please remember that there will be more afternoon activity in and around the neighborhoods that you travel with your bus. Please pay extra attention to the areas around your bus as you approach and leave each bus stop. As we all know, every day is a different day and we must be as alert as possible to expect the unexpected.

On Wednesday, April 24, 2019, the statewide "Fly-By" survey of school bus red light runners was conducted by every public school system. We appreciate every driver's participation in this annual survey that helps bring attention to this most serious student safety issue. The results of this year's survey can be found on page #8 in this newsletter.

As we near the end of this school year and begin preparations for next year, please understand the importance of the job that you do and the gratitude that we share for the job that you do for our school system. Becoming a school bus driver takes a great deal of courage and a commitment to excellence. It is a job that most find very rewarding, but is not a job that is well suited for everyone. In addition to having excellent driving skills, exceptional patience and understanding, and a willingness to be observed on a daily basis, school bus drivers must have and maintain their CDL with passenger and school bus endorsements, keep an exceptional personal and professional driving record, be subject to pre-employment, random, and post-accident drug testing, have no criminal record, pass an annual school bus driver physical and participate in annual in-service training.

If you know of any family, friends or other acquaintances that might be interested in joining this unique and respected profession, please encourage them to consider becoming a school bus driver for one of the Carroll County Public Schools' bus contractors. Persons interested in becoming school bus drivers can contact the Transportation Services Department at 410.751.3229 or the School Bus Contractors Association at: 410.848.4649.



Managing Student Behavior on the School Bus

Discipline on school buses is one of the biggest obstacles confronting school bus drivers today. Your response and related strategies will be key in effectively managing behaviors on your bus. There is no substitute for experience when dealing with student behavior. The following strategies can hopefully help:

- Do not threaten the entire bus for the wrongful behavior of a few.
- Avoid threats. Repeated threats are just that, and students know this.
- Avoid “Forever Land,” allow students to correct their behavior and regain your trust.
- Never lose your temper or use profanity; don’t be the worst behaved on your bus.
- When loading at a school, stand and face the students, set the tone before the ride home.
- Greet your students boarding your bus every day, KNOW THEIR NAMES as soon as possible.
- Set a good example for courtesy and be friendly but firm.
- Avoid vague and hard to follow directives, “Hey, sit down, why don’t you behave like everyone else,” instead try “John, sit in your seat now.”
- Positive reinforcement is the most powerful way of influencing behavior on your bus, “I like the way you are seated.” “I like the way you quieted down before crossing the railroad tracks.” “I like the way you guys were for the sub driver yesterday.”
- Review bus riding rules with your students on the first day and throughout the year.
- Rules should be simple and realistic for the age group on your bus, be consistent.
- Ignore behaviors that are not dangerous, some students try to get your attention, stay focused on the road.
- Punishment works only when it is part of a larger behavioral plan, talk to the administrator at your school, there is a plan in place for repeated offenders.

Many students bring “baggage” from either home in the morning or after a long day at school. By setting the tone on your bus, you can be the difference between a good day and a bad day.



Emergency Red Pouch

Now that the school year is ending, remember to remove all papers from your emergency red pouch and return them to the school office. The information contained on these papers is confidential and should not be left on the bus. You will receive new and current information at the beginning of the next school year if needed.

In-Service Classes

Save the date: June 20, 2019, from 7:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. at Manchester Valley High School. This in-service is for all assistants and drivers the entire day for CPR and First Aid certification/recertification.

Physicals


Physicals are due into the Transportation Office prior to their expiration.

Driver Hypnosis

As the school year comes to a close, many bus drivers feel as though they can drive their routes blindfolded. They have been driving their route two times a day for almost 160 days. Do not be complacent! The weather is nicer and statistics tell us that motorists tend to be a little more careless on the roadway. As a CDL holder and professional driver, you must make up for the inadequacies of other motorists. Student safety always comes first!

If you have any questions, please call Dena in Transportation.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES PRE-TRIP INSPECTION POLICY



The Transportation Services Department requires that you pre-trip your school bus every time you take the vehicle off the bus lot. Federal and State laws require that drivers inspect their vehicles and Federal and State inspectors may inspect your vehicle at any time without advance notice. If they judge the vehicle unsafe, they will put it "out of service" until repairs are made.

Performing a pre-trip is the first step in ensuring safety for yourself, passengers and others on the road. It is the driver's responsibility to perform the pre-trip and to know the signs of something wrong. Always notify your contractor of any issues immediately.

All drivers are required to pass a rigorous pre-trip inspection in order to obtain their CDL licensing. Passing the pre-trip does not certify you as a mechanic; it certifies that you have the knowledge and ability to identify problems with your bus.

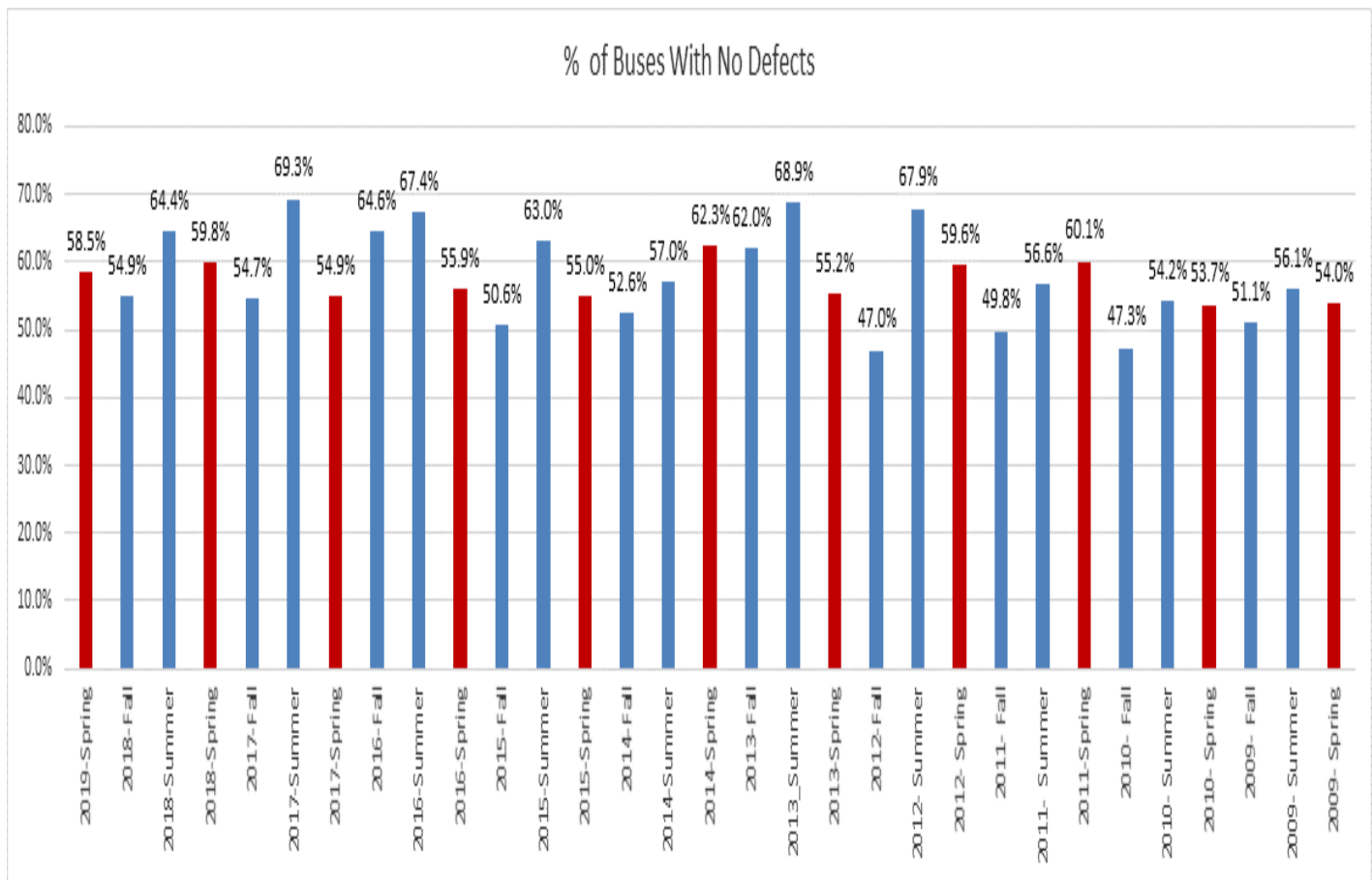


Spring Bus Inspection

The spring 2019 bus inspection was completed over five days in March and April. It was our first fully automated spring inspection with MDOT inspectors present. In accordance with COMAR, MDOT inspectors must be present and record the results of at least one of our “B” inspections. In Carroll County, the spring inspection is when MDOT inspectors participate. As an aside, even though the MDOT inspectors did cite our fleet for violations, they also commented about how thorough our inspections were; and, how impressed they were for the overall condition of our fleet compared to other jurisdictions that they visit. We should all be proud and continue to strive for the most well-maintained and cleanest fleet possible. The safety of Carroll County children is worth the effort.

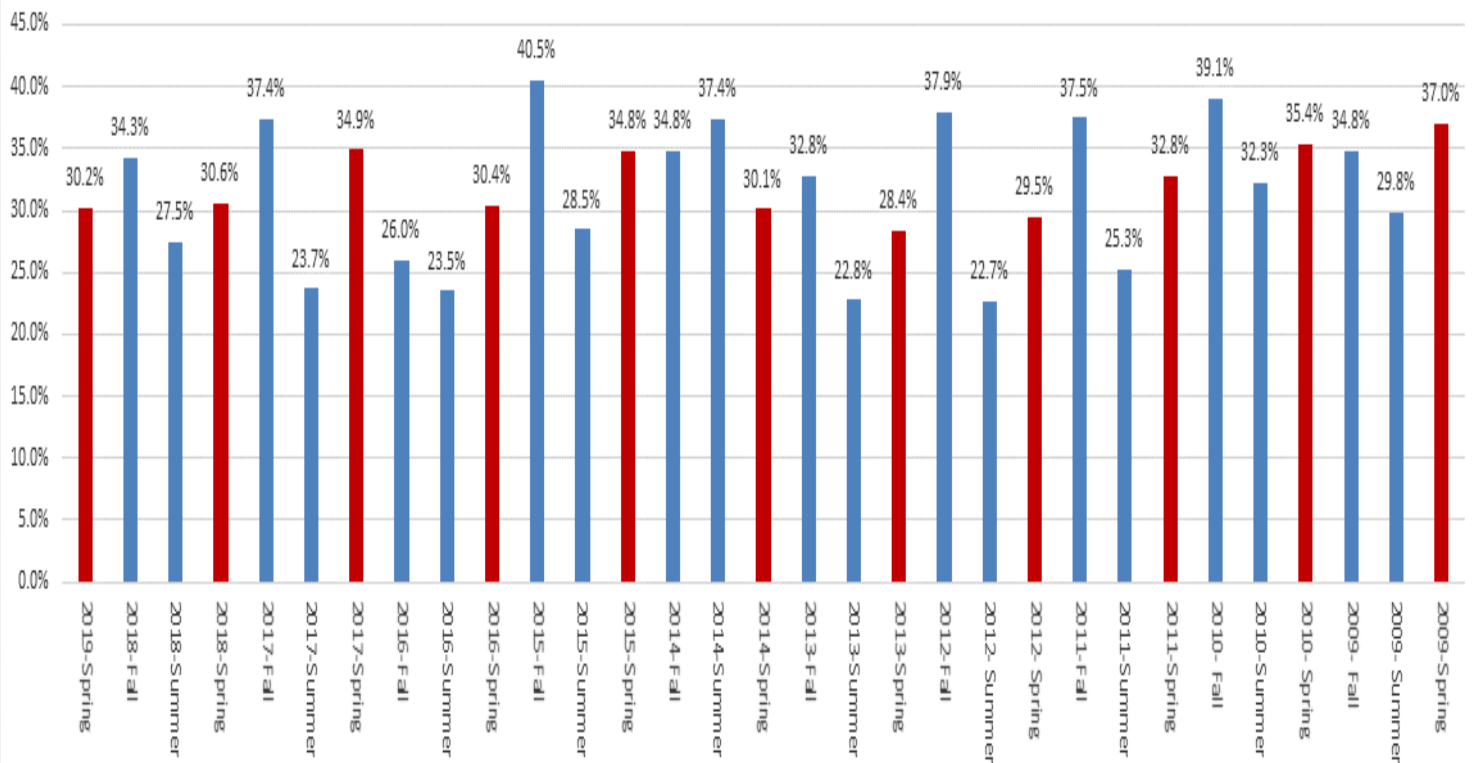
When a bus comes through inspection that is well-maintained and is clean inside and out, it reflects well on everyone. It is easily discernible those contractors that take the effort to regularly clean their buses and reinforce that expectation with their drivers. As a department, we are grateful for the effort and the pride that those contractors show in the fleet. Thank you again. For the minority of contractors that do not take the time and effort to keep buses clean and well-maintained, it is our expectation that they do so. The children of Carroll County are worth it.

The results of the spring 2019 bus inspection are summarized below. The first three charts show the results compared to previous inspections.

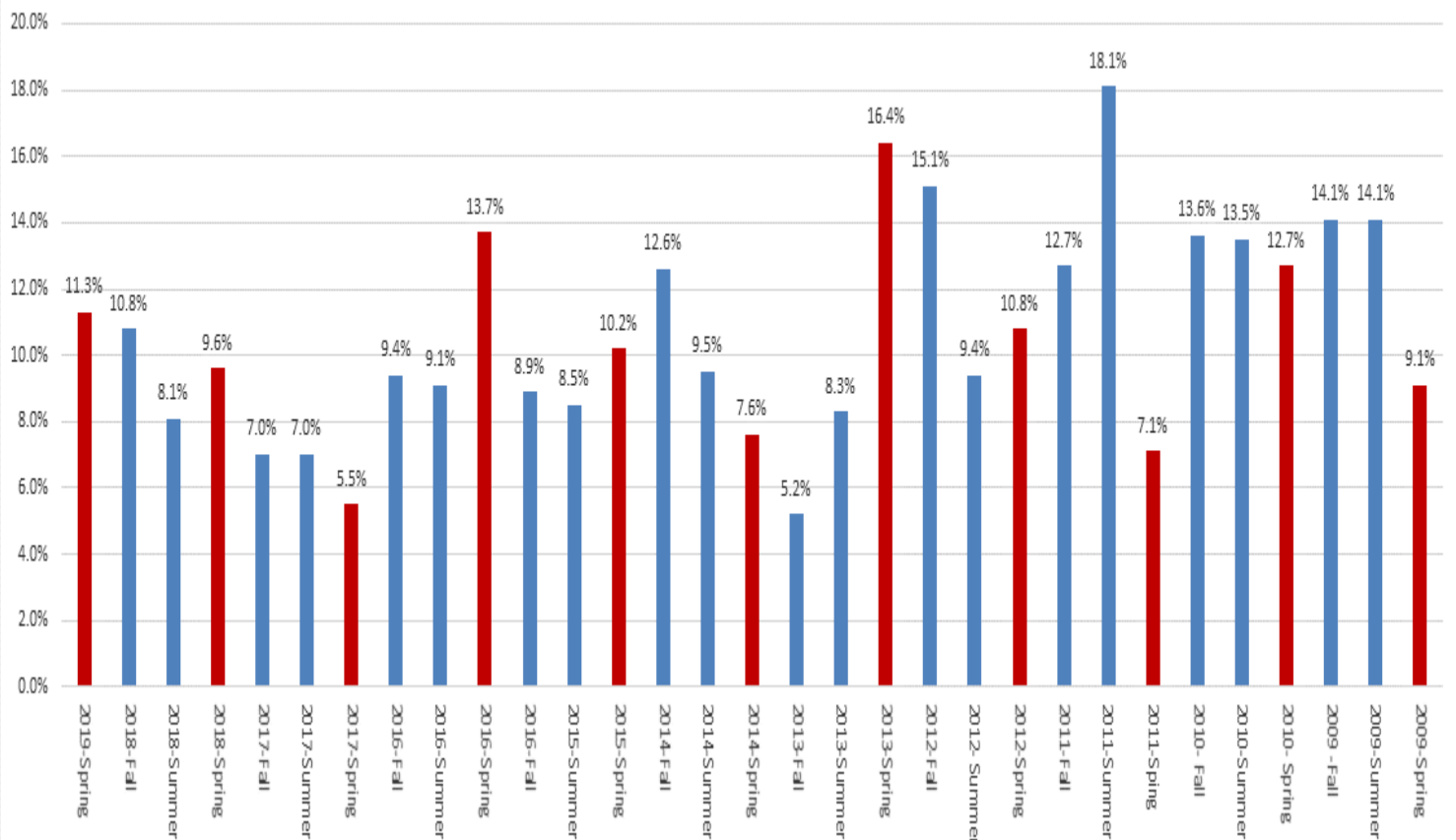


THE DRIVER'S SEAT

% of Buses With 30 Day Defects



% Buses Redlined



Spring 2019 Bus Inspection

The chart below highlights the top ten defects in the order which they most frequently occurred:

Spring 2019 Bus Inspection: Most Frequently Occurring Defects

Type of Defect	Total # Cited	Majors Cited	30 Day Cited
Fluid Leak	35	9	26
Body Paint & Condition	25	2	23
Air Brakes	15	14	1
Exhaust System	11	0	11
Tires, Wheels	10	2	8
Drive Line	8	2	6
Belts	7	1	6
Shock Absorbers	7	1	6
Emergency Door, Exits	5	0	5
Service Door	5	1	4

The final chart shows our inspection results by day. Obviously, some days were better than others. Let's continue to strive to be the best fleet possible, for the safety of Carroll County children.

Spring 2019 Daily Results Summary

Location-Date	Pass(#)	Pass(%)	30 Day (#)	30 Day(%)	Red Line(#)	Red Line (%)	Total Inspected
MVHS 3-26-2019	35	58.3%	19	31.7%	6	10.0%	60
WMHS 3-27-2019	39	56.5%	25	36.2%	5	7.2%	69
FSKHS 3-28-2019	23	54.8%	8	19.0%	11	26.2%	42
WMHS 4-2-2019	36	52.9%	24	35.3%	8	11.8%	68
CHS 4-16-2109	49	68.1%	18	25.0%	5	6.9%	72
Total	182	58.5%	94	30.2%	35	11.3%	311

ROLLOVER TIME!

It is that time of year when transportation staff are busy preparing the routes for next year. The routing crew takes all the information from your spring manifest and plans the routes you will be running next school year. **Now** is the perfect time to talk to your supervisors about any concerns you have about your routes. If there is something that you would like them to consider changing about your route, give them a call or send an email and start the conversation! The staff will be working on routes for the next several weeks and tasks include the following:

- Adding and removing stops
- Promoting students and ensuring if they changed from elementary to middle school or middle to high school, they still have a stop.
- Redrawing stop boundaries
- Reviewing routes for opportunities to make them more efficient
- Checking routing directions

Remember, we are here to support you and your feedback about the safety and efficiency of your routes is important to us.



Rising Temperatures

As temperatures rise outdoors, anxiety levels seems to rise as well. The end of the school year often brings new levels of anxiety to parents, students, and even bus drivers. Parents develop increased stress resulting from planning summer vacations, camps, day care, etc.; and, students worry about their grade changes, school changes, summer plans, and job prospects. These factors combined can create an environment conducive to flaring tempers and volatile student interactions.

As bus drivers, you are asked to report improper student interactions and threatening statements made by students toward other students, drivers, or the school staff. Be alert for interactions between students and report your observations that could lead to fighting on or off the bus. Report the incident to the school via the referral system in place.

Remember, you are the eyes and ears of the community and ambassadors for Carroll County Public Schools. Students, parents, and school personnel rely on you to make observations and report those observations for the benefit of everyone involved.



STATEWIDE SCHOOL BUS “FLY-BY” SURVEY

On Wednesday, April 24, 2019, Carroll County school bus drivers participated in the statewide stop-arm violation survey. A total of 257 school bus drivers participated in the survey with the results revealing the following:

- **Total stop arm violations: 113**
- Total a.m. violations: 51
- Total p.m. violations: 50
- Total midday violations: 12
- Total passing on left: 107
- Total passing on right: 6
- Total passing from front: 97
- Total passing from rear: 16

We thank all of the drivers who participated in this year’s survey. The survey is critical in helping to draw attention to the severity of this nationwide problem.



SPECIAL NEEDS**What is ESY?**

ESY (extended school year) services are not the same thing as summer school. They are specialized individualized instruction or related services that are required as part of a student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan). ESY services are provided in the summer when school is not typically in session. The services are individualized to each student's specific needs in order to help them maintain their skills and not lose the progress they have made toward their goals. For some students, this may mean one-on-one tutoring, for others it may be a few sessions of occupational therapy or speech therapy each week. These services are essential for a student to be successful.

Thank you to all the drivers and assistants who provide transportation during ESY!

**2018 – 2019 Transportation Services Calendar****May**

27 Schools/offices closed – Memorial Day

June

17 Last day for Pre-Kindergarten students

18 Last day for all other students; two hours and forty-five minutes early dismissal system wide

