



THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Winter 2019-2020 Edition



410-751-3229

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Director

Michael Hardesty

Supervisor

Keith Shorter:

Out-of-County
Special Needs, &
Liberty, Century &
South Carroll High
Areas,

Area Supervisors

John O'Meally:

Manchester Valley &
Francis Scott Key High
Areas,

Scott Parsons:

Winters Mill &
Westminster High
Areas,

Kristin Ebert:

In-County Special Needs,

Operational Performance

Anita Stubenrauch

Driver Instructors

Scheneeka Weeden,
Angela Williams,
Chasity Foerster

Planner/Analysts

Kim Gold

Routing Associates

Pat Wall
Jill Fulton

Support Staff

Cindy Washick

The focus of this 2020 winter's edition of our quarterly newsletter is the recent rash of bus accidents. As was pointed out in the Carroll County Times article of January 15, 2020; "Police say bus driver at fault after 5th CCPS bus crash in past 11 school days, four students injured." Since the last day of school before the winter break, there has been a total of five major school bus accidents over the following eleven days of school, with four resulting in the school bus having to be towed from the scene. As of February 13, 2020, with over one-half of the current school year completed, we have had a total of 37 bus accidents; five of which have been determined to be major and preventable.

Ironically, for the previous 2018-2019 school year, there was a 12.5 % drop in total bus accidents from the preceding 2017-2018 school year (from 72 to 63 total accidents) and a 22 % drop in preventable accidents (from 50 to 39) and preventable major accidents (from 10 to 8). Over the previous seven school years, CCPS has had an outstanding record of preventable major bus accidents (1.5 -1.8 preventable major accidents per million miles traveled). Please recall that for an accident to be declared a "major" accident there must have been appreciable property damage (\$3,000 or greater) and/or personal injury. The damage or personal injury does not have to have occurred to or on the school bus. Anyone who is injured (requiring medical attention) in the accident or who's property incurs damage of \$3,000 or greater would classify the accident as major.

As to preventability, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) defines an accident as preventable if it is determined that the school bus driver did not do everything that reasonably could have been done to avoid the accident. In other words, the bus driver was not a defensive driver. A determination of preventable does not mean that the school bus driver was primarily or legally responsible for the accident. Preventability is determined by an Accident Review Committee (ARC) that meets quarterly throughout the school year. The committee, which is chaired by John O'Meally, CCPS Transportation Area Supervisor, with other members of the ARC being a representative from local law enforcement, a CCPS driver instructor, the CCPS Risk Manager, a school bus contractor and/ or a school bus driver. School bus drivers involved in an accident during the quarter year are invited to attend the meeting. The ARC thoroughly reviews the accident using the bus driver's completed accident report, the investigating police officer's report, and any additional evidence such as camera footage or witness statements. The bus driver is asked to present their account of how the accident happened and the ARC then makes a determination as to preventability using the strict MSDE preventability guidelines. Per COMAR 13A.06.07.06 and CCPS policy, any driver having two major accidents within a 24-month period that have been determined to be preventable is disqualified from driving a school bus.

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While the term accident can be defined in the dictionary as an unintentional or undesirable happening, one that could be attributed to chance or fortune, we know that 2/3 of all accidents involving CCPS buses over the past eight years have been determined to be preventable. Does this imply that 2/3 of all of our bus accidents could have been prevented? Possibly, if the bus driver truly practiced their defensive driving training. Statistically, it is a fact that experienced drivers generally have more accident occurrences than beginner drivers. This is most probably due to the experienced driver’s familiarity and over confidence with a bus route that they travel every day. The professional school bus driver always proceeds with caution, never take chances, and makes certain that they are a defensive driver each and every day they are behind the wheel. As the saying goes, patience is a virtue, and patience while driving will help prevent accidents. It is better to be late than to have hurried through your route which might result in an accident.

Please take the time to review your defensive driving training and to always treat every day and bus run as a unique experience. In other words, always expect the unexpected. We know that accidents happen, especially traveling 5.3 million miles annually. We also know that approximately 2/3 of all accidents are determined to be preventable by the Accident Review Committee. Let’s make it our goal to reduce the number of preventable accidents.

Steer Clear of Bad Driving

It is estimated that every two minutes the typical driver makes 400 observations, 40 decisions, and one mistake while driving. That is why it is important to never assume that other drivers will make the right decision. In fact, it is a good rule of thumb to expect the worst-case scenario and plan your movements knowing that the other driver will not slow down, yield, move out of your way, or let you merge. Another important way you can steer clear of bad drivers is to constantly observe and scan your surroundings. By using your peripheral vision and your mirrors, you can pick up on signals that a driver might make a dangerous decision. Some indicators to be aware of are the speed of the vehicle and the angle of its wheels as they might suggest the driver’s intentions. Also be aware of distracted drivers or drivers who are eating or drinking, using cell phones, grooming, reading, or are otherwise not focused on their driving. The earlier you notice roadway hazards around you and the bad driving of others, the more time you allow yourself to react and reposition yourself safely. While you can’t control the driving of others, you can control your own. Drivers who learn to expect bad decisions from other drivers and steer clear of trouble can often avoid dangerous last minute maneuvers. Always be prepared for the unexpected. Never rush through your routine. Slowly navigate through traffic lights, stop signs, loading zones and schools. Ask yourself, how safe is my driving? Hopefully the answer is SAFE.





Kids Have Changed --- So Have the Times



Recently, numerous conversations have occurred with bus drivers about how drastically student behavior has changed. The drivers are absolutely correct. To be fair, though, every generation feels that the behavior of the generations that follow have changed. This generation, however, now called **Generation "Z"**, has been exposed to an explosion of social media, digital technology, and smart phones for a majority of their lives. These technological changes have had a major impact on the social and emotional well-being of today's children. In a study published in 2018, the average age for kids to have their first smart phone was ten; the average age for their first social media account was 11.4, and by the time they were twelve, fifty percent of children ages eight to eighteen have had access to at least one social media account. Broken down further, twenty-three percent of children ages eight to twelve had a social media account and eighty percent of children ages thirteen to eighteen had at least one social media account.

In the thirteen to eighteen age group, ninety-five percent of all U.S. teens report owning a smart phone. By comparison, in 2015 sixty-seven percent in the same age group of U.S. teens owned a smart phone. The average teen today spends an average of over six hours a day on social media.

What is the impact of almost universal digital technology and social media on today's children? The studies show digital technology has had an extremely negative impact. Depression, anxiety and loneliness have increased significantly since 2012. In the same time period, teen suicide and depression have increased fifty percent. Another impact of smart phones has been less interaction with other children and teens, and reduced socialization skills.

As bus drivers, we know our students' behavior has changed. The smart phone is one reason for the change. Knowing and understanding this behavioral change is important. How do we manage these changes on our bus? It is more important than ever to establish firm, fair and consistent rules on our bus. Today's children are keen to being treated fairly and with respect. Model respectful and calm behavior in your dealings with children. Communicate with your school administrators and Transportation Area Supervisors if you notice risky or unusual behaviors on your bus or if the smart phone becomes a distraction, causes a disturbance, or if you notice a change in a child's behavior. Also, keep your school administrators up to date with ongoing behavioral concerns with students via the referral. The children of every generation do change, but the research shows that digital technology has had a significant impact on today's children. As with every generational change, it is our responsibility to manage and adapt to the changes in the best way possible.



SPECIAL NEEDS REMINDERS

Students who constantly create problems or unsafe practices during their ride time on a bus may be very challenging. Some students repetitively have referrals written regarding their behaviors. All referrals may not include the consequence of a bus suspension. School administrators do their best to apply meaningful discipline and have become very creative when dealing with students. The more severe and/or number of referrals would dictate a more severe consequence.

Here are some of the consequences that have been used:

- Student/administrator conference and/or student/parent/administrator conference
- Student/administrator/driver conference
- Take away recess, isolation lunch time, support room/time out lunchtime
- Student may not attend a special event at school
- Removal of "special jobs" student may have had at school
- Write letter to bus driver
- Have student watch the bus video of their behavior with administrator
- In school suspension



School administrators do take bus referrals seriously and they work closely with the Transportation Services Department on many of the issues. This year the Transportation Department has implemented more in-service sessions at schools for drivers and assistants to give tools for dealing with their particular student population. Please contact the Transportation Services Department if you need support in dealing with students' bus behavior.

Carroll County Public Schools Transportation Services Calendar 2019 – 2020

March

- 6 Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide; Schools Closed for Pre-Kindergarten and Prep Students-Regular Education Route Stop Sheets and Regular Education Route Manifests; Special Education Route Manifests due in Transportation Services
- 31 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Winters Mill High

April

- 1 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Manchester Valley High
- 2 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.) Francis Scott Key High
- 6 Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide; Schools Closed for Pre-Kindergarten and Prep Students
- 7 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Century High
- 8 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 9 Spring Bus Inspection Inclement Weather Makeup Day (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.)
- 10 Schools/Offices Closed – Good Friday
- 13 Schools/Offices Closed – Easter Monday
- 14 Schools/Offices Re-open
- 28 Schools/Offices Closed – Primary Election Day

May

- 25 Schools/Offices Closed – Memorial Day

June

- 11 Last Day for Pre-Kindergarten Students
- 12 Last Day for Students; Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide
- 14 Driver and Assistant In-Service (tentative date)

What Makes a Good School Bus Driver Great?

Being a great school bus driver is about more than just picking kids up and driving them to school! A great school bus driver has a sense of **Pride** in their job. They are the biggest factor in kids getting to and from school safely and will be proud of that fact. All of the qualities below combine to make up the **5 P's** of a great school bus driver. They are all important attributes that give families faith in the ability of the driver to keep their kids safe and on course.

Protects from Danger

Driving a school bus is much different than driving a car. A great school bus driver will have mastered the differences and drive their bus as though their own kids were in the back. Obeying the rules of the road and knowing how a bus needs to be handled in situations like snowy roads, high traffic times and in sub par lighting conditions really makes the difference. Nothing is more important than the safe transport of the children in your care. Not only in driving safe, but also things like keeping kids safe from possible bullies while on the bus, keeping them seated and facing forward and even ensuring they cross the street safely before or after riding the bus.

People Person

A school bus driver's face is often the first adult face a child sees each day other than his or her parents. It is vitally important that students be welcomed with a smile and **pleasant** greeting, in order to bridge the gap between home and school. A cranky bus driver will just start kids off on the wrong foot.

Patient

A school bus driver that is able to balance driving the bus while making sure the kids are not acting out takes quite a bit of **patience** and skill. A driver that gets frustrated easily is going to have trouble maintaining **patience** with excitable kids. A school bus driver will spend most of their workday surrounded by kids, so it is pretty important that a driver likes being around kids. A great bus driver means being able to value a wide variety of **personality** types.

Poised

When you have a couple dozen kids seated behind you and a schedule to keep, things are bound to pop up that might create **pressure**. Things like bad weather, cranky kids, road rage and poor traffic conditions all require calm responses to ensure maximum safety for everyone involved

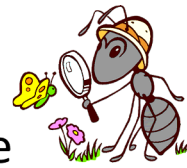
Punctual

It is a *given* that kids have to get to school on time. Not only that, but kids wait at their bus stops for their bus to arrive at a certain time. It is important for their school bus driver to make it to each stop on time, and especially important that they are not too early! This all starts with getting to the contractor lot on time, doing a thorough pre-trip inspection, and being settled into the bus for the day.





THE DRIVER'S SEAT



Be Aware – Show you Care

♥ AMBER ALERT ♥ INOBTR ♥ BOTL ♥ PSC ♥ NCMEC ♥ MHTTF ♥

Get the app for IOS or Android!

As part of our Be Aware-Show You Care Series, this article focuses on a great resource available to all of our drivers. If you have access to the internet, please take time to visit www.truckersagainstrafficking.org/ and read about their Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) program.

BOTL teaches bus drivers how to recognize and respond to signs of human trafficking. The Department of State, in their annual report on Human Trafficking, indicated that in 2019, **24.9 Million** people were victimized by the illegal trafficking industry that generates an estimated **\$150 Billion** in revenue according to the International Labor Organization.

In an effort to comply with new Maryland legislation and guidance for CDL training to include content “on the recognition, prevention, and effective reporting of human trafficking,” the CCPS staff is working to incorporate this critical information in our training program for the future.

But you don’t have to wait! You can visit their website today to learn more. In addition, The BOTL program currently has an app available for smart phones that will place helpful information in your hands during a suspected trafficking situation. The app will provide you with a connection to call or text the hotline with your report. It provides reminders of important information you should try to take note of to help law enforcement. And it also lists warning signs to help with awareness. If you are interested in downloading the app, search for Busing on the Lookout in the app store.



Make the call,
save lives.

⚠ Please do not
approach
traffickers.

Report suspicious activity

Trafficking red-flag indicators

About human trafficking

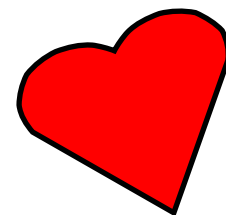
About Busing on the Lookout Mission

Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) exists to educate and equip all members of the busing industry with the information necessary to enable them to fight human trafficking as part of their everyday jobs.

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CCPS Drivers travel 5 million miles annually transporting students to and from school.

Be Aware and Show You Care





PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE
BUS DRIVER'S SAFETY BANQUETON
SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2020

6:00 P.M.

REESE FIREHALL



BEING A
SCHOOL BUS DRIVER
IS NOT JUST A JOB...



IT'S AN ADVENTURE!



2020 Employee Safety and Recognition Banquet

The Carroll County School Bus Contractor's Association, in cooperation with Carroll County Public Schools Transportation Services Department, will be co-hosting an *Employee Safety and Recognition Banquet* on Saturday, April 18, 2020, at the Reese Fire Hall located at Route 140 and Reese Road in Finksburg, MD 20148. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m. for appetizers. A buffet-style dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m., consisting of fried shrimp and roast beef at a cost of \$28.00 per person. All school bus drivers, assistants, contractors and their spouses/guests are invited to attend. The joint purpose of this banquet is to compliment and acknowledge our employees for their years of service and safe driving. There will be a presentation of certificates and awards. Safety awards will be presented to those in attendance. All reservations and payments must be received by **March 18, 2020**, in order to finalize our awards dinner. Please make your check payable to the Carroll County School Bus Contractor's Association and mail it to:

Dianne L. Grote

Carroll County School Bus Contractor's Association

218 Dutrow Road

Westminster, MD 21157

410-876-7530 or 410-848-4649



Don't miss this fun-filled evening with awards, door prizes, 50/50 drawing and more!



Dinner Reservations and Payments

Names of attendees: _____

(Please indicate your years of service after your name)

& Daytime phone #.: _____

Amount enclosed: _____

I would like to request seating with _____ my employer/contractor/friend.

For bus contractors attending the banquet, please list the date you originally signed your first bus contract with Carroll County Public Schools: _____

REPLACEMENT BADGES

If a driver or assistant needs a replacement badge, we ask that the contractor email the full name of the driver/assistant and reason for replacement to Angela at adwilli@carrollk12.org. Angela will follow proper internal procedures, and issue a "Badge Authorization Form", see example.



Carroll County Public Schools
125 N. Court Street | Westminster, MD 21157

**REPLACEMENT BADGE AUTHORIZATION**

This form authorizes John Doe to receive a replacement badge. This form and current badge should be surrendered to Human Resources prior to the issuance of the replacement badge. Human Resources staff are available between the hours of 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. for badge replacement.

Carroll County Board of Education
125 N. Court Street
Room 210
Westminster, MD 21157

Please notify Angela Williams of the day the driver/assistant will be coming for the replacement badge, so Human Resources can be notified, in advance, to expedite the process.

Angela D. Williams
School Vehicle Driver Instructor - Lead
410-751-3229

CONSENT AND RELEASE

Permission to Photograph, Videotape or Audiotape

Throughout the school year, the Carroll County Public School System frequently covers school activities and may use your child's photograph, video image, or voice for educational, informational, or public relations purposes, with or without identification by name.

If you do not wish to have your child's voice reproduced on tape or to have his/her image appear in such things as a video or a photograph, or on the school or school system website or social media, please notify the school principal in writing. It is assumed that parents and guardians consent to their children being audiotaped, photographed, videotaped, or having their image placed on a school website or social media by the school system unless such notification is received.

There are also occasions when the media cover certain school events (such as when a government leader visits a school). If you do not wish to have your child's name or likeness published by the media, you should address your concerns directly to the school involved so that the media is so advised. Please be advised that the school system has no control over the media when they are covering activities such as sporting events and musical programs that are open to the public.

Use of Student Work on Websites or in Publications

There may be times throughout the year when the Carroll County Public School System wishes to display student work on school websites, social media, or in publications. If you do not wish to have your child's art, poetry, writing, etc. appear on school websites, social media, or in publications, please notify the school principal in writing. It is assumed that parents and guardians consent to their child's work being displayed on school websites, social media, or in publications unless such notification is received.

CG/bb

Revised 6/30/17