



THE DRIVER'S SEAT



FALL/WINTER 2021-2022 EDITION

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The autumn leaves are beginning to fall from the trees that can only mean that winter is right around the corner. Most weather forecasters are predicting a fairly mild winter similar to last winter due to another "La Nina" (cooler ocean temperatures in the Pacific). Of course, we all know that predictions are never 100% certain, so let's be sure to review our winter weather driving tips and making sure that the automatic chains are working properly on the bus.

Since school opening on September 8 the Transportation Department staff have been busy helping bus contractors make daily adjustments to bus routes due to the driver shortage and driver absences. Almost all contractors have been affected by the driver shortage, some more than others, but we have successfully managed to meet our daily route requirements albeit many students are arriving home later than scheduled. For the most part, our parents have been understanding of the current driver shortage issues and the route changes that have become necessary.

Beginning on September 28, 2021, extended learning opportunities (ELO Program) were offered after the normal school day to selected students involving all CCPS schools. A total of 51 regular education buses participated in this program with participating drivers and bus contractors being provided additional compensation for their willingness to provide service for this most worthwhile program. Special needs drivers and assistants also participated in providing after school compensatory service learning opportunities for special needs students at various schools. The second phase of extended learning will begin on February 1, 2022 and continue through the end of March 2022. More details on this to come.

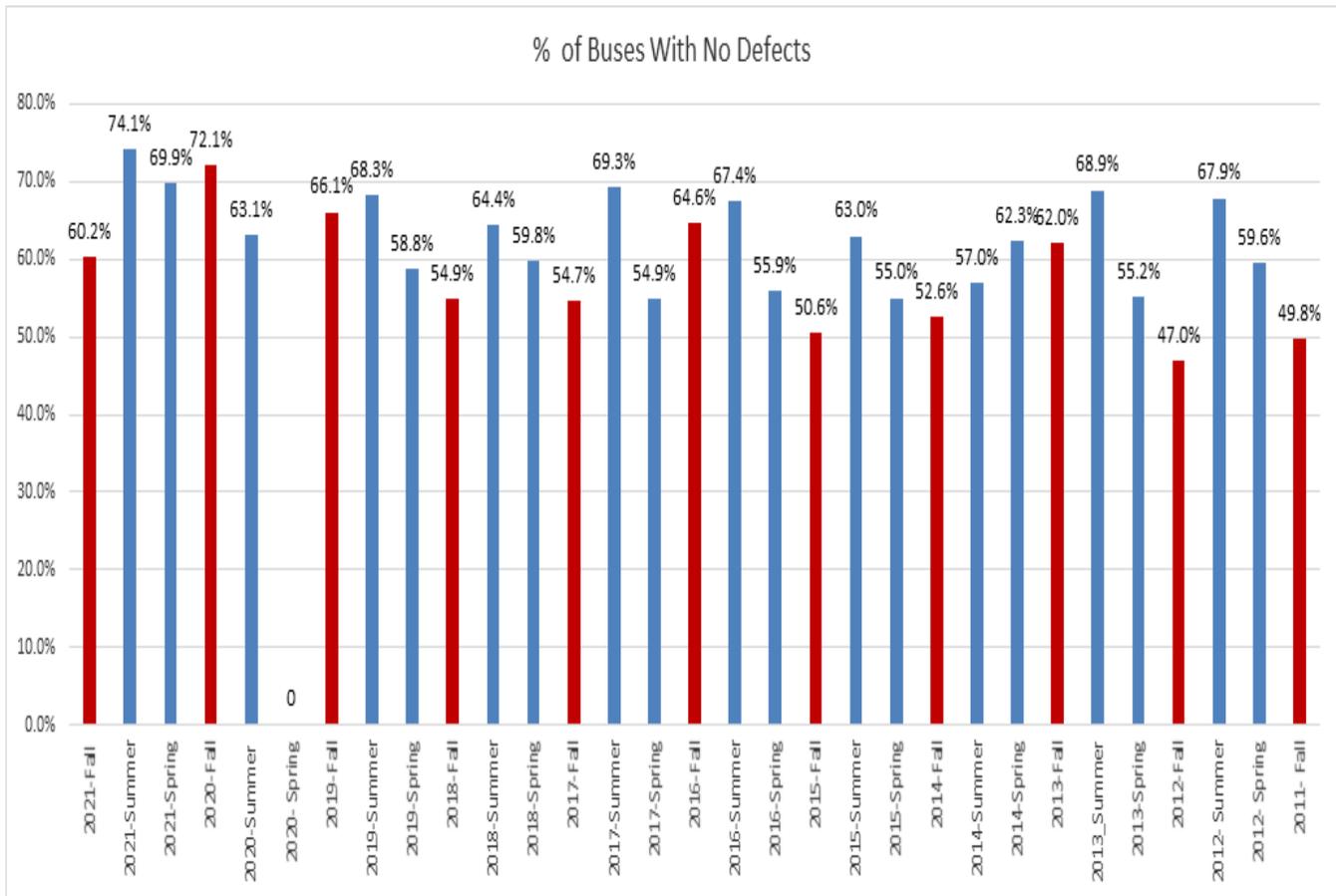
Obviously, the current COVID environment coupled with the difficulty in finding persons willing to drive a school bus continue to be our biggest concern in terms of being able to achieve our mission of providing bus transportation for all eligible CCPS students and families. As most drivers are aware, following organized driver work stoppages, several neighboring counties have made public the idea of hiring incentives and retention bonuses as a means of recruiting new drivers and providing additional compensation for existing drivers. Please be assured that the CCPS leadership is committed to do all that can be done within our budgetary constraints to attract new drivers and to show our appreciation for our existing drivers and assistants. At the School Board's November 10, 2021 meeting, the School Board approved recognition bonuses of \$1,000 for working drivers and \$500 for working assistants. Every effort is being made to provide these bonuses to qualified drivers and assistants prior to the winter break.

We continue to actively recruit driver candidates and recognize that compensation is a major factor in helping to address the current driver shortage problem. As we all know, a school bus cannot move without a certified school bus driver behind the wheel. For all of the drivers and assistants who diligently report to work every day and who recognize their importance to making our educational system function, our school system thanks you.

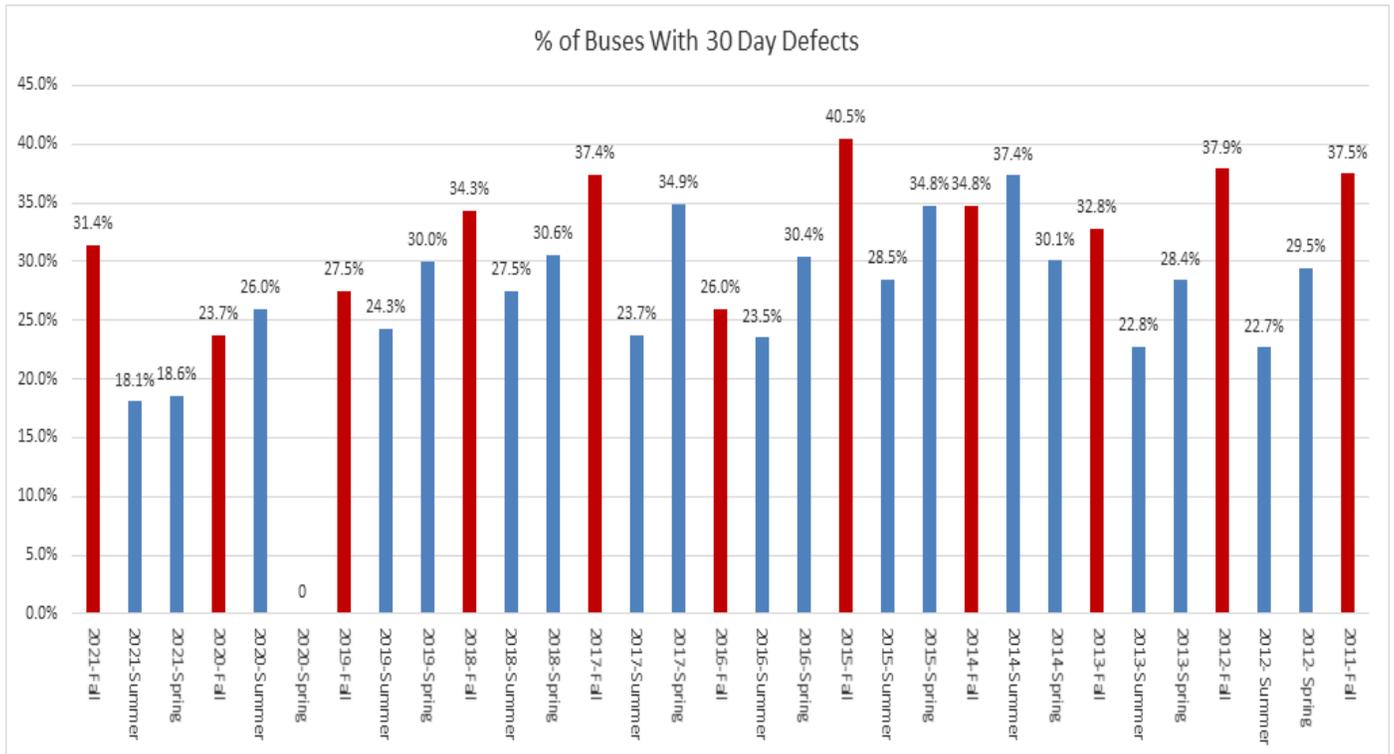


FALL 2021 BUS INSPECTION

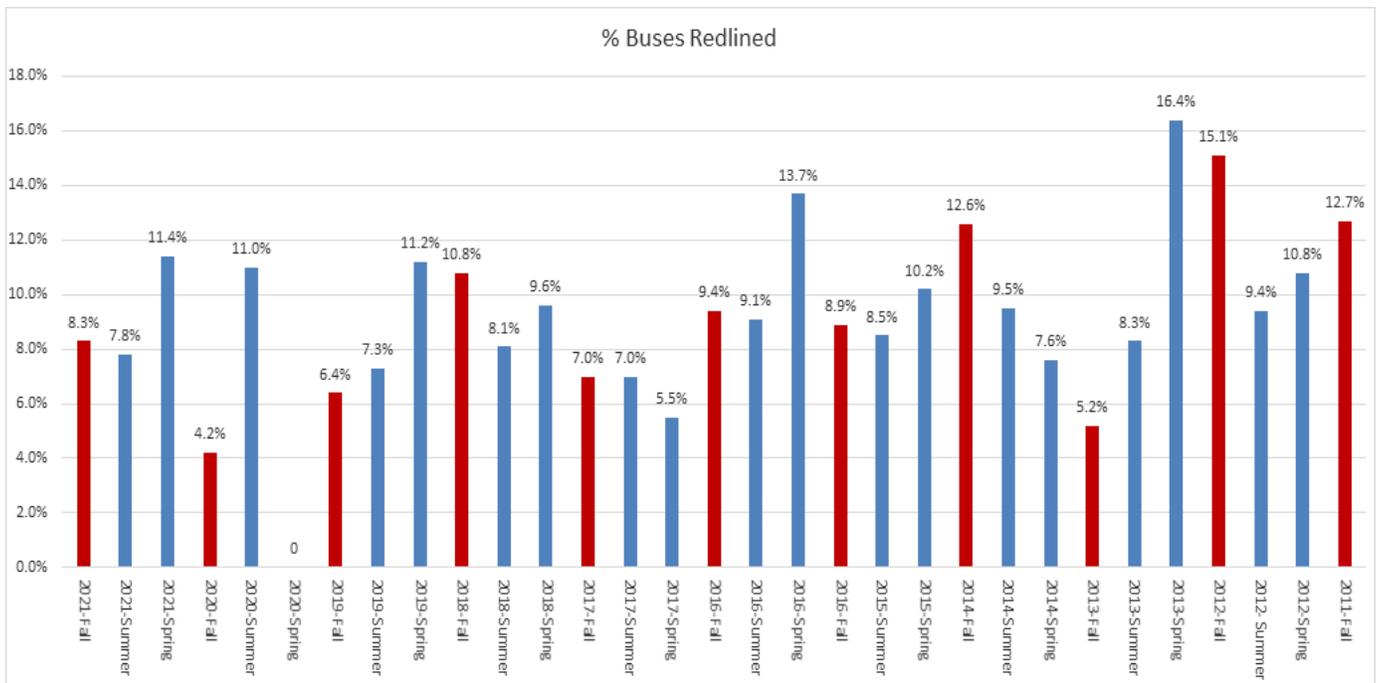
The fall 2021 bus inspection was completed on Wednesday, November 3, 2021. A total of 312 buses were inspected over the course of five days over a two- week period. Except for some light rain on Tuesday, November 2nd, and a cold start on Wednesday, November 3rd, the weather was generally pleasant. On four of the five days an MVA inspector was present to oversee and assist as needed. As is commonplace, the inspector commented on how efficient our inspection is and how our fleet is general-ly in great shape. In comparison to other fall inspections, the pass rate of 60.2% was the lowest fall pass rate we have seen in three years. The total is highlighted in the chart below:



The 30-day defect rate was 31.4%, the highest fall 30-day defect rate in three years. The results are highlighted in the chart below:



As might be expected, the fall redline rate was 8.3%, the highest since the fall of 2018. The results are highlighted below:



When examining the daily inspection results below, the Wednesday, November 3rd inspection rate stands out as the day with the most number and highest percentage of defects, and Wednesday, October 27th stands out as the day with the highest pass rate and lowest number of defects:

Daily Bus Inspection Results Fall 2021

Location/ Date	Pass		30 Day		Redline	
	# of buses	%	# of buses	%	# of buses	%
CHS: 10/26/21	47	61.8%	23	30.3%	6	7.9%
MVH: 10/27/21	36	67.9%	14	26.4%	3	5.7%
WMH: 10/28/21	45	62.5%	23	31.9%	4	5.6%
FSK: 11/02/21	33	67.3%	12	24.5%	4	8.2%
WMH: 11/03/21	27	43.5%	26	41.9%	9	14.5%
Total	188	60.3%	98	31.4%	26	8.3%



Happy Fall

*Cultivate the kindness within you
Pay it forward*



SPRING 2022 BUS INSPECTION

March 29th at Manchester Valley High 8:45 to 11:30 am

March 30th at Winters Mill High 8:45 to 11:30 am

March 31st at Francis Scott Key High 8:45 to 10:30 am

April 5th at Century High 8:45 to 11:30 am

April 6th at Winters Mill High 8:45 to 11:30 am

April 7th is the inclement weather makeup day

8:45 to 11:30 am



WHAT TO *KNOW* ABOUT DRIVING IN THE *SNOW*

We have all been looking at weather forecasts for this winter. Scientists measure sea ice coverage in Antarctica. Others look to the woolly bear caterpillar. If the rusty band is wide, then it will be a mild winter. The more black there is, the more severe the winter. The farmers almanac will have you measure the depth of burrowing animals. If the mole digs its hole 2½ feet deep, expect severe weather; if two feet deep, not so severe; if one foot deep, a mild winter. Either way, we need to be prepared for weather that does not mimic our clear dry day optimum driving conditions. A few things to prepare you for the winter months.

BEFORE YOU DRIVE

Do not park your bus in a compromised position the night before. Your long driveway may not be salted before the roads you will be traveling. Make sure you can get out if school is on time.

- Check the weather report. Wake early in case you need extra time to prepare your bus for the day.
- Check the roads yourself.
- Check that your windshield wipers are working properly. If not, replace them.
- Check that you have plenty of washer fluid.
- Check that window defrosters are working properly.
- Warm up vehicle for several minutes

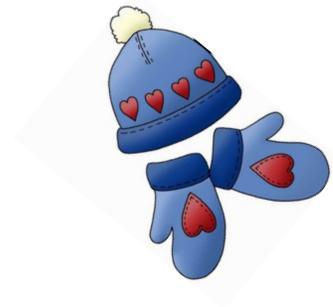


ON YOUR ROUTE

- Start your trip earlier than usual to be at the first pupil pick-up point on time.
- Slow down gradually. Signal stops by tapping brake pedal to make the brake lights blink.
- Drive slowly. Everything takes longer on snow-covered roads. Accelerating, stopping, turning – nothing happens as quickly as on dry pavement. Give yourself time to maneuver by driving slowly.
- Avoid aggressive braking or steering.
- Turn on headlights and strobe lights.
- Stop, get out, and check the road surface yourself (not w/students on the bus).
- Increase following distance. The normal dry pavement following distance of three to four seconds should be increased to eight to ten seconds. This increased margin of safety will provide the longer distance needed when you have to stop.
- Give others a lane.
- Practice defensive driving.
- Anticipate limited visibility. Watch snow banks along the side of the road. Remind students to stay off the snow banks when waiting for the school bus. Turns may be more difficult when snow banks limit visibility.
- Beware of snow drifts. Conventional buses may be able to go through a fairly good sized snow drift. A transit-style Type D bus may not be able to go through drifts. Watch for hazards in snow drifts (solid objects or previously plowed and now frozen snow).
- Slick surfaces exaggerate any movement. If you brake too hard or turn too hard or drive too fast, you can go into a skid.
- If you start to skid:
 - * Take your foot off the brake and begin turning in the direction of the skid.
 - * If you turn too far, the school bus may skid in the opposite direction.
 - * Turn gently the other way, again in the direction of the skid.

HOW THE SCHOOL BUS DRIVER SHOULD RESPOND TO LIMITED VISIBILITY

- Turn on your lights (low beams only).
- Turn on your strobe lights and/or your 4-way yellow hazard lights.
- Establish and maintain a safe following distance.
- Follow the center painted line and the painted lines on the side of the road.
- Sound your horn periodically.
- Use your radio to call into Transportation Services. You may be requesting help or you at least want to let them know what situation you are in and that you may be running late.
- Be alert to other motorists whose visibility may also be limited by snow on their vehicle or by undefrosted windows.



Remember to clean up any water in your bus at the end of your evening run; this will make your life a lot easier the next morning. It's easier to clean up water than to deal with ice .

DRIVER FATIGUE

Fatigue is the result of physical or mental exertion that impairs performance. This fatigue may be due to lack adequate of sleep, strenuous physical activity, extended work hours, or any combination of these.

Driver fatigue often results in impaired judgement, slower reaction times, and increased chances of having an accident. During the fall and winter there are often weather events, road conditions, and shorter daylight hours; therefore, it is imperative that you are well rested, hydrated, and healthy for your important job as a bus driver. Below are some helpful tips:

GET YOUR REST...BE YOUR BEST!



- **Get enough sleep before getting behind the wheel.** Be sure to get adequate sleep each night
- **Maintain a healthy diet.** Skipping meals or eating at irregular times may lead to fatigue.
- **Take a nap.** If possible, take a nap during the mid-day break.
- **Avoid medication that may induce drowsiness.** Check labels for side effects or warnings. Cold and allergy medications are the most common medicines that may make you drowsy.
- **Recognize the signals and dangers of drowsiness:** Frequent yawning, heavy eyes and blurred vision are common indicators of drowsiness.
- **Do not rely on "Alertness Tricks" to keep you awake:** Loud radio, coffee, and open windows are not real "cures" for drowsiness.

Bus drivers and assistants, by their level of communication and caring for all students, can create a positive impact on students, raising their level of self-confidence and pride. These positive influences on the bus can create a snow-ball effect and carry on into the classroom, where improved student achievement can occur.

WEATHER RELATED ANNOUNCEMENTS:

OUT-OF-COUNTY TRANSPORTATION

It is the policy of Carroll County Public Schools to look at the “worse-case” scenario when determining whether transportation is provided for students attending schools outside of Carroll County. In other words, the weather related announcement made by the local media for both the Carroll County Public Schools and the public school district where the “out-of-county” school is located must be compared. Transportation will be provided according to the most severe situation.

Here is a summary of how this “worse-case” policy is interpreted:

CCPS <u>Announcement</u>	Other School District <u>Announcement</u>	Transportation <u>Action</u>
Schools open 2 hrs. late	Schools open on time	Transportation provided 2 hrs. late
Schools open 2 hrs. late	Schools closed	No transportation provided
Schools closed	Schools open 2 hrs. late	No transportation provided
Schools open on time	Schools open 2 hrs. late	Transportation provided 2 hrs. late
Schools closing 1 hr. early	Schools open for full day	Transportation provided 1 hr. early
Schools closing 3 hrs. early	Schools closing 2 hrs. early	Transportation provided 3 hrs. early

Please realize that this is not an all-inclusive list of announcements. Also, please remember that if the CCPS will be open on time, no media announcement will be made. Every effort will be made to have weather related announcements broadcast by the media as early as possible. As always, should you have any questions about the transportation policy, please contact the Transportation Services Department (410-751-3229).

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/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.

Technology Update

Thank you to all our drivers and contractors who have been learning the new technology systems. We are starting to settle into routine operations with all the new technology and appreciate your efforts learning new procedures and how to operate the FirstNet Phones.

As we work through a few remaining issues, please know that our staff is here to support you. Drivers are encouraged to do radio checks as needed. If you don't think the system is working, give us a call in the office and we will work through some quick troubleshooting steps with you and help schedule a repair technician.

Please remember to keep the volume turned UP on your FirstNet system. This is important so you can hear emergency broadcasts. With the potential for winter weather on the horizon we want everyone to hear important notifications.

The stop-arm violation system is in full swing and violators are being held accountable for running the bus red lights. In the month of October, nearly 600 fines were issued to violators. Now that our buses are back on the road full time, the violation system data lets us see the extent of what our drivers have been experiencing for many years. We are hopeful that over time, drivers in Carroll County will change their behavior and comply with the laws designed to keep our students and drivers safe.

Here are a few tips for drivers related to the stop-arm violation system:

- The bus should be fully stopped before the red lights come on.
- Make sure to turn off the red lights when boarding and discharging students in the school bus loops.
- When you are on route and approach another bus with their red lights on and turn on your red lights, please remember to turn your lights off as soon as the other bus turns their lights off. Wait to proceed until you see the other bus's lights off. Buses are not exempt from stop arm violations and the system captures these incidents as well!



This is the time of year for sharing what you're thankful for. And our drivers and assistants are at the top of our list. Thanksgiving can be an expensive holiday to host. According to writer Nicole Spector here are some tips to cut corners on your Thanksgiving spending, without sacrificing the joy. We hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving.

**Make it potluck
Make a list and stick to it
Start shopping for ingredients early
Shop your pantry first
Pay attention to grocery store sales
Buy frozen instead of fresh veggies
Skip premade foods**

Happy Thanksgiving!

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.