

THE DRIVER'S SEAT

SPRING 2021-2022 EDITION D I R E C T O R ' S C O R N E R



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As we head into the final weeks of the 2021- 2022 school year, I want to recap all that has transpired this year and thank our bus contractors, drivers, assistants, mechanics and transportation staff for getting us through challenging times.

We began this school year with the first ever "Summer Recovery Program (SRP)" that provided five weeks of instruction for participating students with approximately 2,200 students riding school buses to and from school. Fifty-seven school buses and drivers involving almost all bus contractors participated in the SRP. Transportation staff were responsible for determining the school times, bus tiers, number of buses needed, and all new bus routes. A tremendous job by all!

As we began the school year on September 8, 2021, we were still in the midst of the COVID -19 pandemic that affected driver and assistant attendance. Drivers were required to keep up to date seating charts in addition to adhering to the daily COVID protocols that required sanitizing bus seats and high touch areas prior to the morning and afternoon bus runs. Drivers and students were required to wear face coverings on the bus and contact tracing was a continuous process in identifying students who may have had exposure to someone testing positive for the virus. Drivers and assistants who tested positive, were exposed, or displayed COVID symptoms, were responsible for reporting this to CCPS and were then given appropriate direction for returning to work by our school nurses.

Beginning in late September and continuing until the Thanksgiving break, extended learning opportunities (ELO Program) were provided for selected students at all schools on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays after the normal school day. This again required new routing for the participating students and identifying the specific buses that would be used. Fifty-nine buses and drivers participated in this activity with additional compensation provided to contractors and drivers.

Beginning in late January and continuing through the end of March 2022, the ELO program was continued but for a different population of students. As with the fall ELO program, new after-school bus routes had to be created for the nearly 700 spring ELO students attending and needing transportation. Again, 59 buses and drivers participated in this task.

As the school year progressed and the incidents of COVID decreased, mask wearing in schools became optional for students but were still required to be worn on school buses by federal order. In early March, the federal mask wearing requirement for school buses was discontinued; however, our COVID sanitation protocols have remained in place.

Finally, the need for school bus drivers continues to be an on-going issue for CCPS as well as all other school systems. We appreciate the efforts of our bus contractors, current drivers, and CCPS in recruiting new driver candidates. We will continue to work towards obtaining greater salaries and incentives for our drivers and assistants.

Our thanks to all who do this important work for the students of CCPS.

School Bus Merry-Go-Round

Buses in the Carroll County Public Schools fleet are normally retired and replaced every 12 years with a few exceptions. For example, if bus XYZ is retiring in the summer of 2022, a new bus is ordered in the fall of 2021 and scheduled for delivery prior to the start of the 2022-2023 School Year.

At the end of each school year in June, all “after-market” equipment is removed from the retiring bus. This year the equipment removals will take place at the Ag Center during the week of June 14 – 17. “After-market” equipment often includes all interior and exterior cameras (other than backup cameras), the DVR used for recording video footage, the *First Net Radio System*, *Zonar* equipment, etc. This equipment is scheduled for removal immediately following the end of the school year so that the bus contractor can dispose of / sell the bus. The equipment is then placed in storage in preparation for reinstallation on a new bus in August.

When the replacement bus arrives in August, the bus acceptance process and the “after-market” equipment installation process are scheduled for a date, usually on or before bus inspection week, in August. This year, most acceptances and installations will take place at the Ag Center during the weeks of August 15-19 and 22-26. Twice as much time is needed for the installation of “after-market” equipment than was needed for each bus during the removal process. Ideally, all the “after-market” equipment is installed and tested prior to the first day of school.





SPECIAL NEEDS REMINDERS

As the 2021-2022 school year comes to an end, there are some special need bus transportation reminders that are important to share. Thank you for the superb job done by the drivers, assistants and contractors. Thanks also for all that you do for our students!

- The Transportation Department will contact the bus staff if a student should keep their vest for ESY. All other vests should be collected by the bus staff and turned into your bus contractor on the last day of school.
- Please contact the school administration or the Transportation Department if a recommendation of the use or the discontinue use of equipment is needed for next school year. The decision is the I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan) team's decision. However the input of the bus staff is a great resource for the IEP team.
- If a student has not been riding for five consecutive days, please notify your contractor and the Transportation Department.
- If the information on the student's profile sheet is incorrect, i.e., phone number, contact information or equipment, call the Transportation Department so information can be corrected for next school year.



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR DRIVER INSTRUCTOR TEAM

Over the past two years our Driver Training Program has undergone significant changes. Some of these changes, such as online classes, and virtual instruction were a direct result of the pandemic. Our Driver Instructor Team worked dutifully to spearhead the transition required during the summer of 2020 to fully implement virtual classroom instruction along with in-person on the road instruction. This was no small task; but, our team completed it very quickly considering the amount of work that was required to accomplish this undertaking. In addition, as a direct result of the pandemic during the summer of 2020, our team implemented full online digital pre-service, a first for Carroll County. Then, as conditions slowly improved, our team transitioned back to fully in-person classroom instruction in September of 2021, while maintaining digital instruction in the classroom setting.

Further, to comply with FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) entry level driver training (ELDT) mandates, our team researched, planned, acquired materials, and was one of the few counties in Maryland whose Driver Instructor Program was in full compliance with the many additional ELDT requirements; classroom testing, strict, compliant curriculum, data entry, website registration, etc., as required by February 2022. Further, while navigating and managing all of these changes, our team was flexible and helped out in other ways. These included adding more special needs training sessions, and creating mid-day special needs sessions to accommodate currently employed drivers and assistance with special needs children and equipment.

We are all very proud of our Driver Instructor Team. We believe our team and self-testing system produces the best drivers in the state of Maryland. Over the past three years, (2020, 2021 and 2022) we have been gathering data on the efficiency of our self-testing Driver Training Program. We analyzed the information to ascertain key data points. Some of these data points include:

Driver pass rate per test attempted

Drivers not passing

Number of drivers attending class who complete Behind the Wheel Training

Number of drivers who attend class who do not complete Behind the Wheel Training

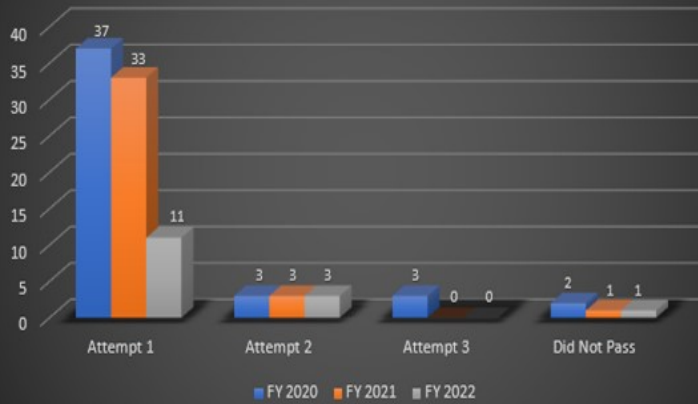
The data analysis through March 2022 shows that 95.4% of drivers who obtain a learners permit and complete their Behind the Wheel Training go on to pass their pre-trip and skills test and become certified to drive. A large majority of those drivers who pass, (an average of 81.5%) do so on the first attempt. On the other hand, one less encouraging data point is that an average of 32.2% of drivers who attend class fail to continue on to complete the Behind the Wheel Training. This is an area, as a team, we need to target for improvement. What this data highlights, however, is that when a driver candidate obtains their learners permit and completes their Behind the Wheel training, the candidate and our team are highly successful in passing the MVA requirements to be certified. This success, combined with the significant changes our driver instructors have spearheaded over the past two years, highlights the competency of our team. We are all extremely grateful for their efforts.

The charts are highlighted on the next page:

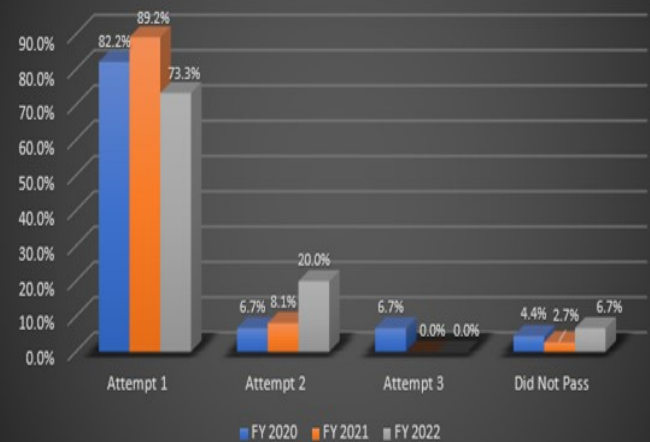
THANK YOU

THE DRIVER'S SEAT

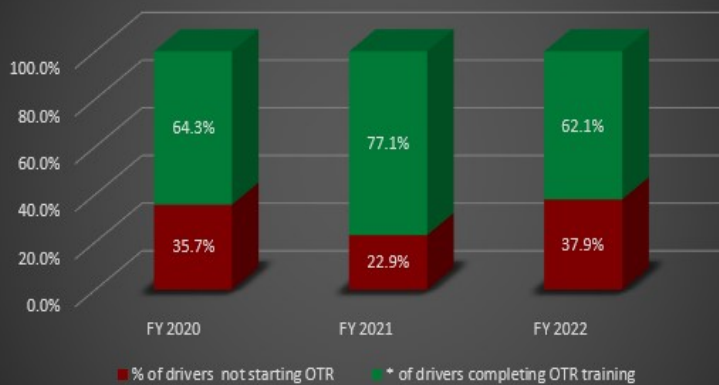
Driver Pass Rate (Count) Per Testing Attempt



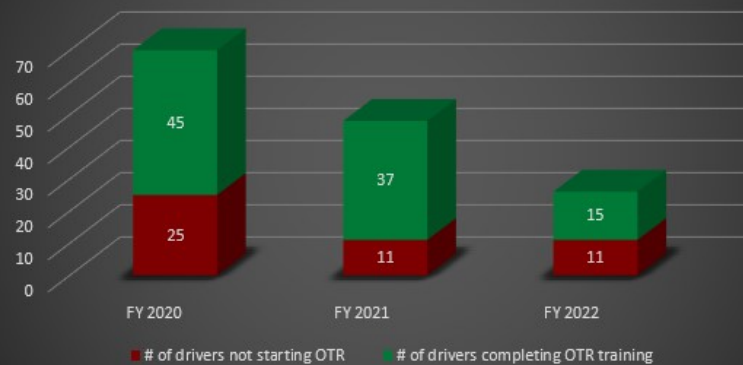
Driver Pass Rate (%) Per Testing Attempt



Drivers Completing OTR Training



Drivers Completing OTR Training



SPRING BUS INSPECTION

The spring bus inspection occurred March 28 through March 30 and April 4th and 5th. Although the weather was generally chilly and damp, we managed to complete the inspection as scheduled. As is generally the case, the spring bus inspection was the responsibility of the MDOT. The MDOT inspectors enter the mileage, inspection date, verify tag and registration accuracy, record defects and pull tags for major safety defects. As always, **our** inspection team generally is responsible for the full inspection of the bus, with guidance and input from the MDOT team.

As is usually the case, the MDOT inspectors were extremely complimentary about the efficiency and thorough nature of our inspection and about the cleanliness and condition of our fleet. As a team, we noticed the cleanliness also and overall good condition of the fleet during the inspection. We ALL appreciate the effort you put into maintaining the fleet. For the contractors who take the extra time to really clean the buses inside and out, we salute you.

Highlighted below are the daily inspection results and charts showing the percentage of buses that passed, had 30-day defects or had red-line defects. Thank you for the hard work and please continue the effort towards maintaining the safest fleet possible.

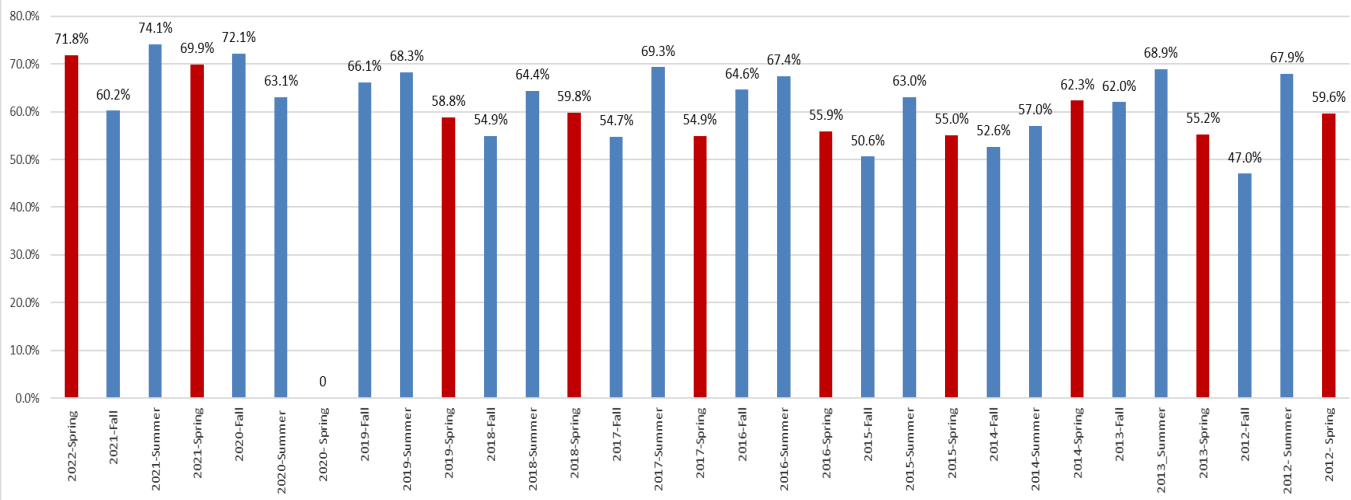
Thank you.



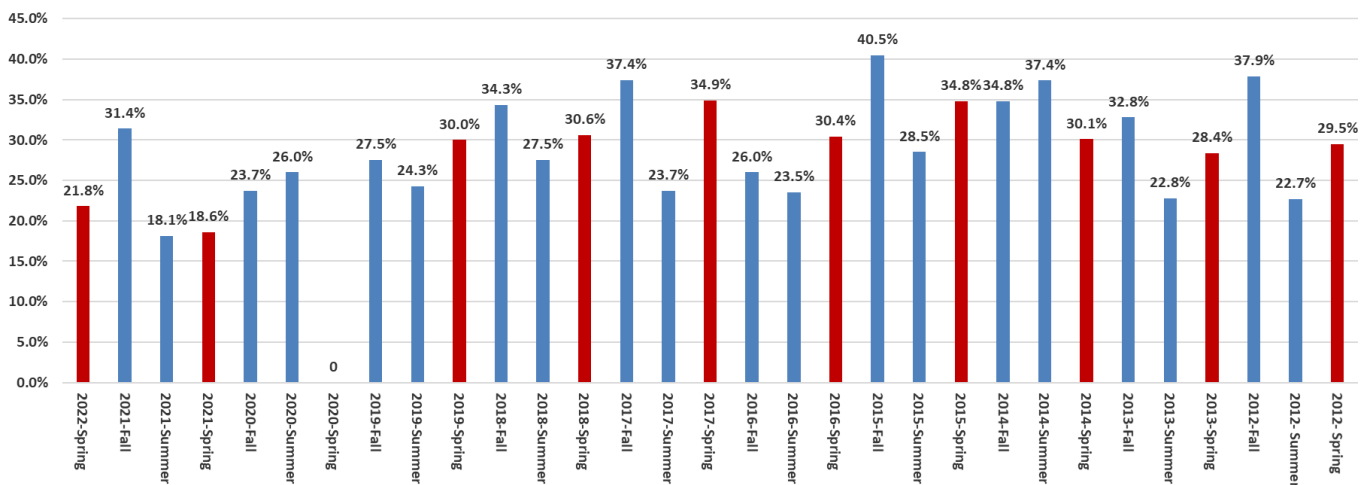
Daily Bus Inspection Results Spring 2022

Inspection Location/Date	Pass		30 Day		Redline	
	# of buses	%	# of buses	%	# of buses	%
MVHS- Tuesday, March 29	38	55.9%	26	38.2%	4	5.9%
WMHS- Wednesday, March 30	48	69.6%	18	26.1%	3	4.3%
FSK- Thursday, March 31	35	85.4%	2	4.9%	4	9.8%
CHS- Tuesday, April 5	55	75.3%	14	19.2%	4	5.5%
WMHS- Wednesday, April 6	48	78.7%	8	13.1%	5	8.2%
Total	224	71.8%	68	21.8%	20	6.4%

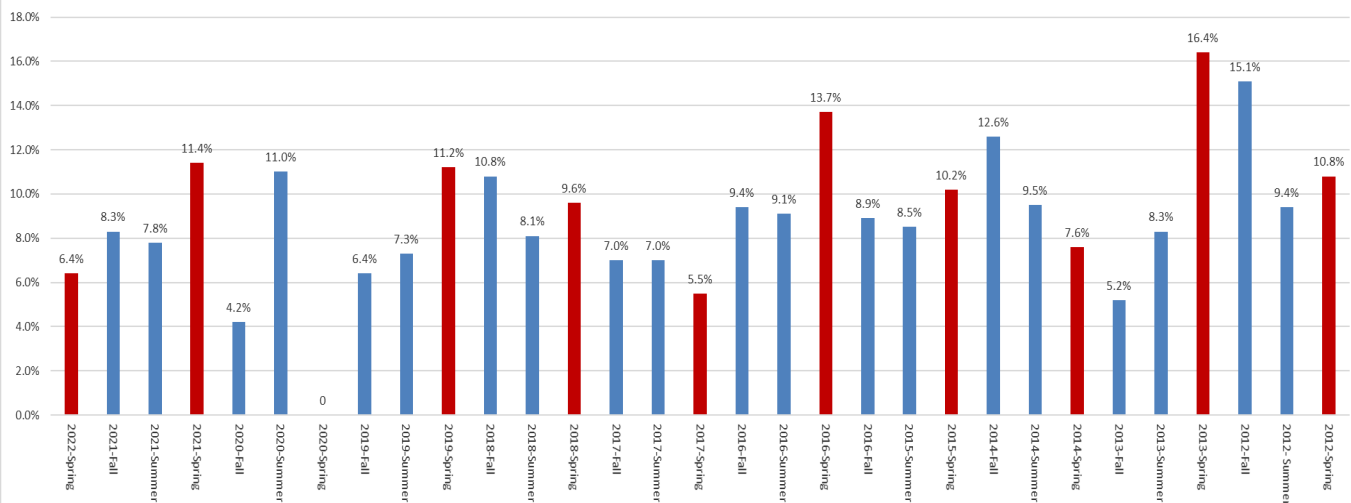
% of Buses With No Defects



% of Buses With 30 Day Defects



% Buses Redlined



FirstNet: Tips & Tricks

Drivers should routinely check to make sure their radio and lock box devices are working properly. If you realize, as you check the Push-To-Talk (PTT) *FirstNet* phone and lock box units, that they are not working correctly, what do you do? I am here to tell you! Below are some simple tips and tricks that you can use to quickly troubleshoot your *FirstNet* phone:

Mic Usage, Lock Box On/Off Switch and Volume Control

Using the mic correctly takes some practice, however if you notice that the mic does not beep or you are not getting a response as you try to make a PTT call to Transportation, here are a couple of things you can do:

1. **Bus On or in Auxiliary:** For the PTT lock box mic and speaker box unit to work, the bus must be turned on, or be in auxiliary mode.
2. **Mic Wiring:** Make sure the mic is plugged securely into the lock box.
3. **Loose Wires:** Check to make sure there are no loose wires around the lock box.
4. **Lock Box “ON/OFF” Switch:** Make sure it is in the “on” position and the lock box lights up with a blue light.
5. **Turn up the Volume:** Check to make sure the speaker volume on the lock box kit is turned up all the way. Often times, drivers miss important calls because the volume is turned down on the speaker box unit.
6. **Radio Check:** To make a test, call into Transportation at any time; say the following:

“This is Bus # (say the number) doing a radio check”. Someone from Transportation will respond. If no response is heard, try again at least two more times to be sure the mic is not making any outgoing calls. Always respond back to ensure Transportation knows you heard them and that the device is working both ways.

Who to Contact for Assistance?

If you have time after your run, or in between runs during a layover, please feel free to contact Farrah in the Transportation office; she will be happy to help you troubleshoot your phone or she will put in a service request ticket for *Bus Patrol* to send out a tech to fix the device.



Did your license renew?

NEW PHONE
NUMBER?

New email address

New home
address?



NAME CHANGE?

Have you changed contractors?

If any of your information has changed or has been updated, please notify Angela Williams at:

adwilli@carrollk12.org

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 these behaviors. Drivers need to keep in mind that anytime they interact with a student who has demonstrated unacceptable behavior on the bus, the goal is to change the behavior of the student. Focus must remain on the student's behavior not on the driver's response to the student's behavior. Referrals are not written to punish students but to change inappropriate behaviors to acceptable ones. The following strategies can hopefully help:

- Do not threaten the entire bus for the wrongful behavior of a few.
- Don't yell or berate the students, keep your cool in all instances.
- Never lose your temper or use profanity, don't be the worst behaved on your bus.
- Avoid threats, repeated threats are just that and students know this.
- Avoid "Forever Land," allow students to correct their behavior and regain your trust.
- When loading at a school, don't bury your face in your cell phone. 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.

PAUL RILL

Paul David Rill, 89, of Westminster, passed away on Sunday, May 8, 2022 at Carroll Hospital Center surrounded by his daughters. He celebrated Mother's Day with his beloved wife of 68 years, Annarebekah G. Rill, who passed away on December 7, 2020. He was born on March 5, 1933 in Clearfield, MD. Following his graduation from Westminster High School in 1951, he continued his passion for farming on the family farm near Carrollton with his wife and daughters. In addition, he began driving a school bus for a local contractor. In 1968, he was awarded his first school bus contract through the Carroll County Public School system and established his family business, Rill's Bus Service. He continued to increase his school bus fleet throughout the years adding motor coaches to the fleet in 1984. In 2017, he was awarded the "Top Gun Award" by Carroll County Public Schools for 51 years of accident free driving. He and his wife were honored to serve the transportation needs of Carroll County and far beyond for over 54 years, in addition to providing scenic tours throughout the United States and Canada. He has provided his daughters and their families the opportunity to continue the family legacy in the bus industry. He dedicated his daily life to his family and business and was a mentor to many friends and everyone that he met along the way. Funeral services were held at Fletcher Funeral Home this past weekend. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Ethnos 360, (formerly known as New Tribes Mission), 312 W. First Street, Sanford, FL 32771-1231 or to the Todd Comstock Ministries (Spanish ministry), 1239 Hoff Road, Hanover, PA 17331.





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.