



The Driver's Seat

FALL/WINTER 2023-2024

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

410-751-3229

Director

Michael Hardesty

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Supervisor

Keith Shorter:

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

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Area Supervisors

Kristin Ebert:

Manchester Valley &
Francis Scott Key High
Areas,

Kim Gold:

Winters Mill &
Westminster High
Areas,

In-County Special Needs

Chip Weaver

Operational Performance

Anita Stubenrauch

.....

Driver Instructors

Angela Williams
Scheneeka Weeden

.....

Planner/Analysts

Scott Parsons
Nick Chalk

Routing Associates

Pat Wall

Jill Fulton

Staff Support

Cindy Washick
Peter Oskam

As we transition from fall to winter, there are plenty of advance weather forecasts predicting a good chance of more snow than we have seen in the past few winters. While the function of the bus auto chains was checked during this most recent bus inspection, please make sure to check your automatic chains and FirstNet radios on a regular basis during this winter season so that you can be sure they will be ready if needed. You can be sure that our transportation team will be out early in the morning checking road conditions whenever winter weather is predicted or discovered.

This year's "snow watch" team will consist of Kristin Ebert (northwest or northeast areas), Kim Gold (northwest), Chip Weaver (northeast), Keith Shorter (southwest) and Mike Hardesty (southeast). On snow watch days, Kristin, Kim and Chip will alternate with one staying in the office working the 9-5 shift. On most mornings the snow watch team leaves their homes by 3:30 a.m. and follows a prescribed route driving mostly on county roads. A recommendation to the Superintendent for the decision to open on time, delay opening by 2 hours, or closing for the day will always be attempted to be made by 5:00 a.m. However, changing forecasts and weather conditions may cause a delay in our recommendation. A decision must be made by no later than 6:00 a.m.

Many times, an announcement may be made to delay schools with a re-evaluation. Most often this announcement will be made the evening before an anticipated weather event. In this circumstance, the snow watch team will be on the roads by no later than 5:00 a.m. with a recommendation to either stick to the 2 -hour delay or to close, made by no later than 7:15 a.m. Any decision to close or delay schools will be communicated to parents, school system employees, and school bus contractors by phone and email. The school systems' Communications Office is responsible for all notifications and includes the news media, social media, and the CCPS website.

On very rare occasions snow or ice begins during the school day causing schools to close early. CCPS have 1 hr., 2 hr., and 3 hr. early dismissal options depending on the timing of the storm and both real time and anticipated road observations. Every effort is made to make the best decision for safe travel; however, as most veteran drivers can attest to, there are circumstances where road conditions have rapidly deteriorated, and drivers must execute their winter weather driving training and use of the automatic chains. Always remember that the school bus is the safest form of passenger travel on the road. Should it be necessary, drivers must always use their best judgement as to whether they feel it is safe to drive in certain conditions. Please use your FirstNet push-to-talk communication devices to contact the Transportation Office if you are having difficulty driving and feel it is unsafe to continue.

There are a total of five (5) snow days in this year's school calendar. For these five days, we will follow our normal school closing policy should weather and road conditions dictate a closure. We are all hoping that the advance weather forecasts for a snowy winter prove false and we have clear road conditions through the entire winter season. Fingers crossed!



Please Welcome Our New Team Member

Please Welcome Mr. Chip Weaver

I am very excited to be joining the Transportation Department of CCPS. I have lived in Carroll County my entire life and was a 2004 graduate of North Carroll High School. I then attended the University of Maryland, graduating in 2008. Before moving into my current role with the Transportation Department I served as the Assistant Principal at Shiloh Middle School and East Middle School. I began my career with CCPS at Mt. Airy Middle School where I served as a Technology Education Teacher since 2011. I have sincerely enjoyed working at different schools and having the opportunity to meet and interact with the people that make CCPS such a phenomenal school system.

My wife Sarah and I have 2 children and still reside in Carroll County. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my family, sports, reading and woodworking.

So far, the transition to my current role has been fantastic. I continue to enjoy working alongside my colleagues in various departments and schools. Additionally, I have had the pleasure to get to know and work alongside phenomenal Bus Contractors, Drivers and Support Staff. Daily, I witness the dedication and care by all stakeholders of the transportation and bus community of Carroll County Public Schools. I am very happy and excited to be here and am looking forward to a great year.





Cell Phones and Distracted Driving

Over the last several months, we have seen a surge in prohibited cell phone use by Carroll County Public Schools bus drivers. Over the past two weeks alone, there have been three accidents which occurred as a direct result of cell phone use. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries as a result of these accidents, but they could easily have been catastrophic.

According to the CDC, on average, 3,000 people die and 425,000 people are injured annually as a result of distracted driving accidents.

In Maryland, **it is against the law** to use a handheld telephone while operating a motor vehicle, and a conviction will result in a \$75 fine for the first offense, a \$125 fine for the second offense and third and subsequent offenses will result in a \$175 fine.

If a cell phone violation accident results in injury or death, additional penalties may be levied up to and including a \$5,000 fine and one year in jail. If a distracted-driving accident involves injury and includes a reckless driving conviction, and death results, the offending driver may be charged with vehicular manslaughter.

Under your Carroll County Transportation Services “***Driver Discipline Guidelines***”, a first time offense for cell phone use will result in suspension and any subsequent offenses shall result in decertification.

For the safety of drivers, the children on your buses and other motorists, please obey the law and understand the potential consequences of talking or texting while driving.

BUS PHONES: SOUND NOT WORKING?

Step 1: On the phone keypad, find the “red telephone” key, hold down until “SONIM” appears on the screen, then let go. Let phone sit for 2 minutes to reboot, then try a radio check.

-Phone Still Not Working?!?-

Step 2: Call Nick at Transportation (410-751-3229) WHILE ON YOUR BUS, either after your AM run OR before your PM run. Nick can provide a couple of trouble shooting steps over the phone.

THANK YOU

FALL 2023 BUS INSPECTION

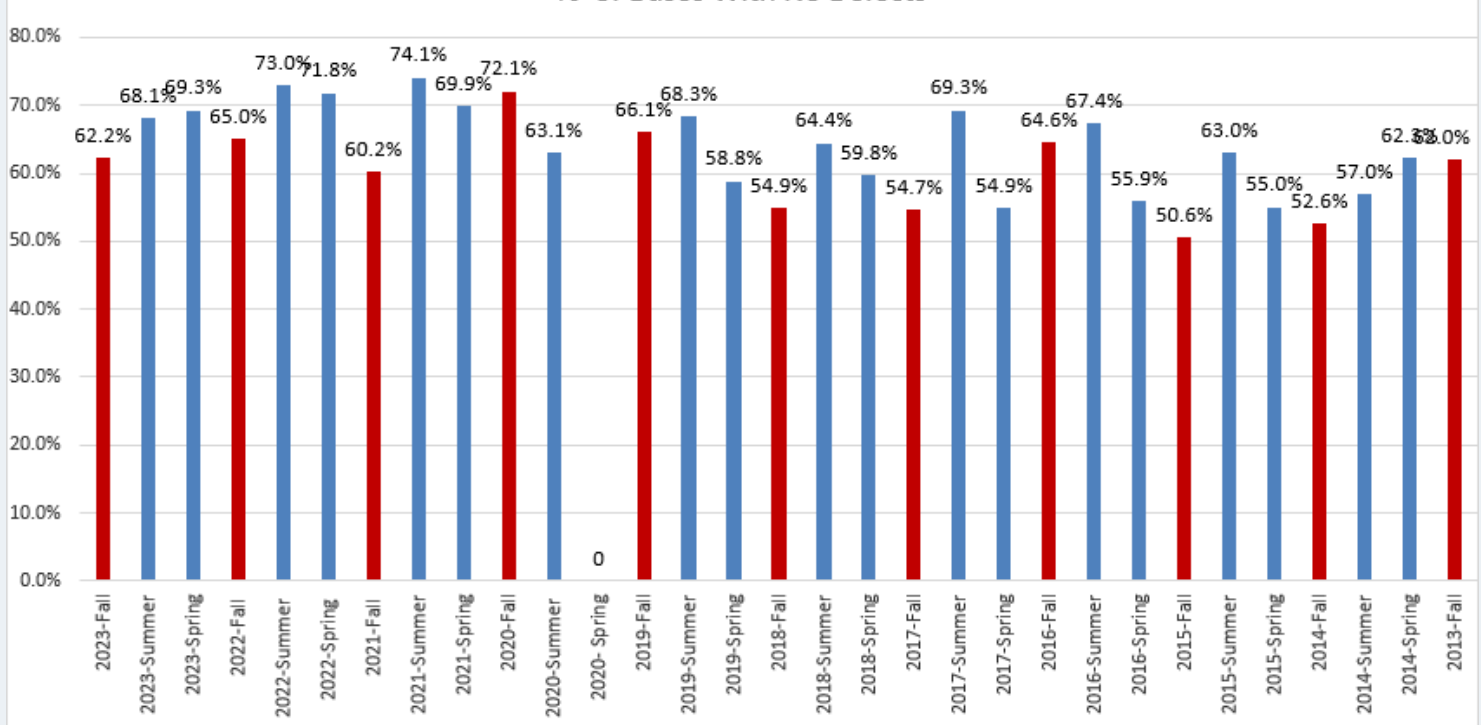
The 2023 fall bus inspection was held over the course of two weeks in early November. For a mid-November inspection, the weather was about as good as could be expected, with fairly mild temperatures and sunny skies. Century High, on Wednesday, November 8, had the highest pass rate of 66.1%. The lowest pass rate, 47.6% occurred at Francis Scott Key High on Wednesday, the 15th. The pass rate over the course of the entire inspection period was 62.2%. The daily results by location are shown below:

Daily Bus Inspection Results Fall 2023

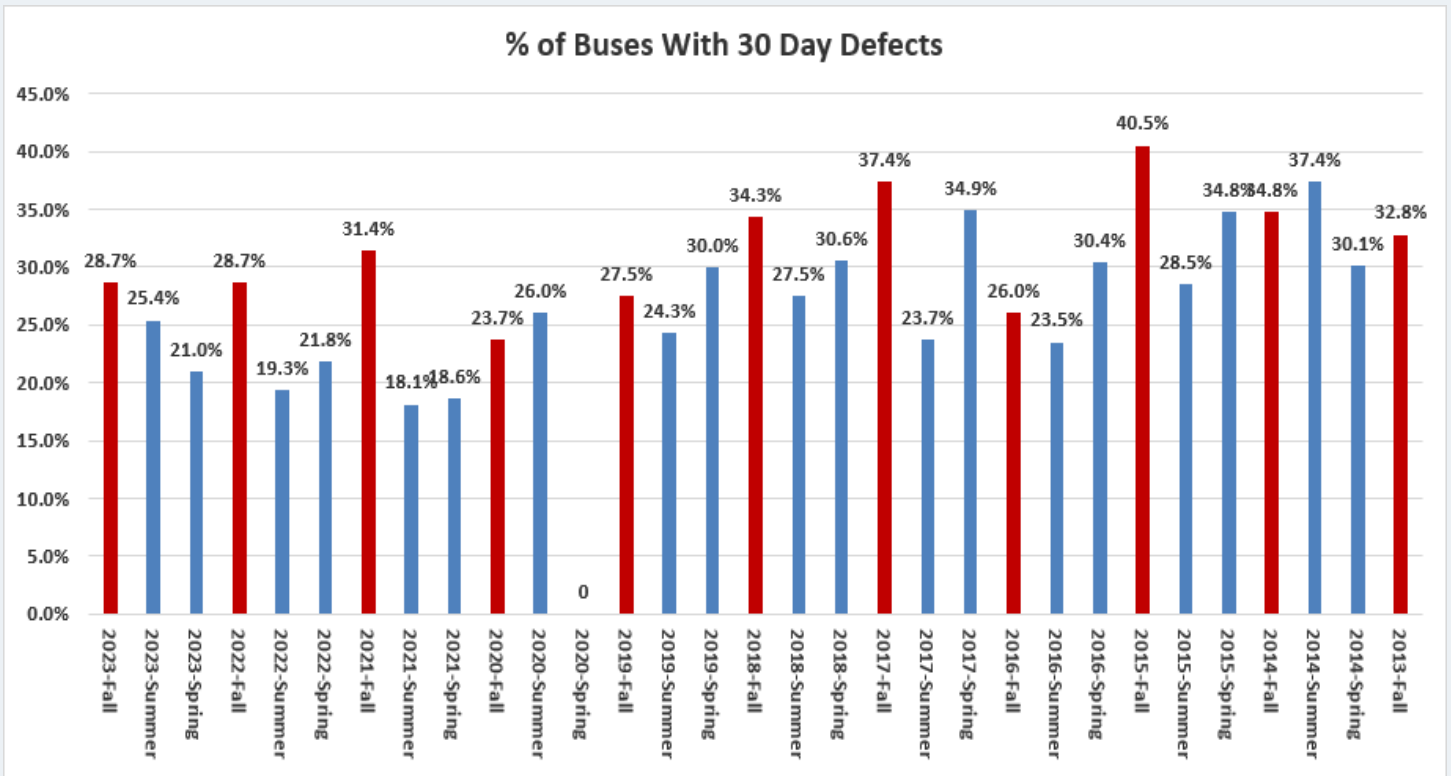
Inspection Location/Date	Pass		30 Day		Redline	
	# of buses	%	# of buses	%	# of buses	%
CHS- Wednesday, November 8	41	66.1%	17	27.4%	4	6.5%
WMHS- Thursday, November 9	41	63.1%	17	26.2%	7	10.8%
MVHS- Tuesday, November 14	38	64.4%	18	30.5%	3	5.1%
FSK- Wednesday, November 15	20	47.6%	17	40.5%	5	11.9%
WMHS- Thursday, November 16	44	64.7%	16	23.5%	8	11.8%
Total	184	62.2%	85	28.7%	27	9.1%

As mentioned above, the overall pass rate was 62.2%. Since fall of 2019, this was the second lowest pass rate. Improvement can be made. This historical result graph is posted below:

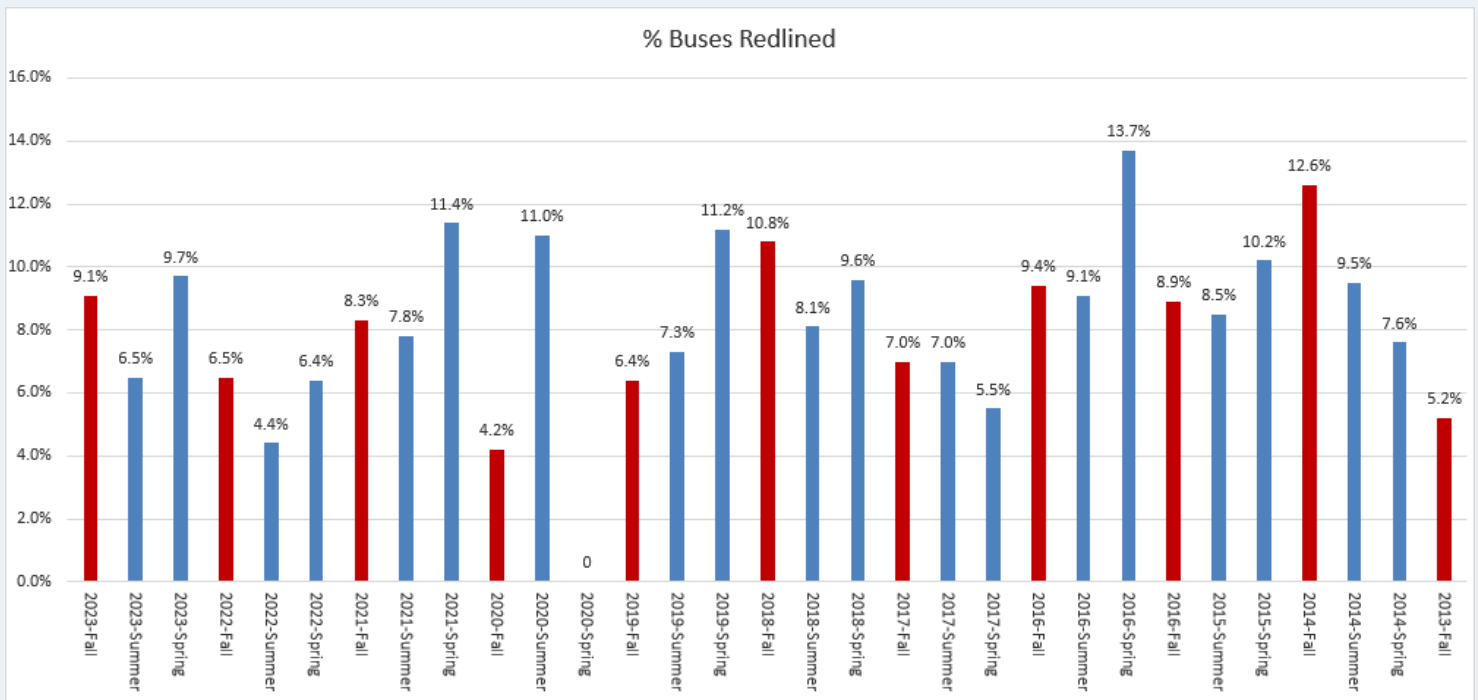
% of Buses With No Defects



The percentage of buses with 30-day defects was 28.7%; equaling the 30-day defect rate from fall of 2022, and the second highest since the fall of 2019.



The percentage of buses with redline defects was 9.1%, which was higher than any inspection since the fall of 2018. This chart is posted below:



2023-2024 Fall Bus Inspection

Overall, our bus fleet remains a standard bearer for the state; however, the 62.2% pass rate can not and should not be our standard and goal. Please make sure your drivers are performing thorough pre-trips and any defects noted are repaired. Please follow prescribed preventative maintenance standards on your buses and make repairs as required. During this inspection, there were a large number of fluid leaks. Forty-five buses received a 30-day citation for fluid leaks and 8 received redline citations. The majority of these were oil and coolant leaks.

As a reminder, please repair all 30-day defects prior to the expiration of the 30-day window. Once the repairs are complete, make sure they are cleared out of the MDOT portal. Thank you for all you do to keep our buses safe and clean; our students depend on your diligence and effort.

Driver Discipline Committee

The driver discipline committee, consisting of the Director of Transportation, all area supervisors, a driver instructor, 3 contractors and 2 seasoned drivers, met twice during the month of October to review the current guidelines. The document is being edited and reviewed by TSD staff and will be sent to the rest of the committee for review. The hope is that all changes and updates will be ready for discussion and presentation at the June in-service meeting. The new policies will go into effect at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. We thank our committee members for their time and efforts to improve these guidelines and helping to bring different perspectives to the conversation.

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HERE YE, HERE YE . . . TSD IS LOOKING FOR DRIVER IN-SERVICE TOPICS

To ensure that this year's driver in-service is beneficial and helpful for everyone, we are looking to current drivers and assistants to provide us with potential topics for instruction and conversation. If you would like to learn more about something, or have questions or concerns about something, email your suggestions to adwilli@carrollk12.org. We already have the driver discipline policy updates on our agenda, so think of other topics that might be of interest. Thank you in advance for your suggestions.

Out-of-County Inclement Weather Bus Policy

Currently we have 15 buses serving 74 out-of-county students and 17 schools. These buses pick up and drop off in all areas of Carroll County from Keysville Rd (northwest), Lineboro Rd (northeast), Prospect Rd (southwest), and Marriottsville Rd (southeast). The schools serviced by these buses are located in Frederick County, Howard County, Baltimore County (west and north) and Baltimore City. The drivers of these buses leave earlier (as early as 5:15 a.m.) and get home later (as late as 5:30 p.m.) than most of their in-county peers. As can be imagined, during inclement weather, these buses might experience entirely different conditions traveling from the far reaches of Carroll County into Baltimore City. What might be snow or ice in Carroll County many times is rain as the bus enters Baltimore County, typically with the county line as the dividing point for precipitation to change over from frozen to just plain wet. For the past several years, we have been fortunate with very little snow and ice, but forecasters are expecting more snow and ice this winter. For our out-of-county drivers, the varying conditions and county school closing decisions can be confusing to determine what they should be doing on their individual bus runs.

What policy should these drivers be following?

Put as simply as possible, this decision follows the worst condition in any of the counties the bus travels in. For instance, if Carroll County Public Schools are closed, and the out-of-county schools are open, those buses will not run. The reverse is also true, (even though this rarely occurs), if Carroll County schools are open, but the jurisdiction that the school is located in is closed, the buses will not run. The chart below describes this policy.

OUT OF COUNTY SCHOOLS WEATHER IMPACT

IF YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL:	AND CCPS:	THEN THE CCPS BUS TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL:
IS ON TIME	IS DELAYED	WILL BE DELAYED
IS ON TIME	IS CLOSED	THERE WILL BE NO TRANSPORTATION
IS DELAYED	IS ON TIME	WILL BE DELAYED
IS DELAYED	IS CLOSED	THERE WILL BE NO TRANSPORTATION
IS CLOSED	IS DELAYED	THERE WILL BE NO TRANSPORTATION
HAS EARLY DISMISSAL	HAS NORMAL SCHEDULE	WILL HAVE EARLY DISMISSAL
HAS NORMAL SCHEDULE	HAS EARLY DISMISSAL	WILL HAVE EARLY DISMISSAL



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. Know the weather report for the next few days.

- Check your radio. Do a MIC check if in doubt.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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. 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. Use your AUTOMATIC CHAINS when needed.

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.
- You need to be able to measure 4 seconds following distance to proceed at a speed of 40 mph or less.
- If you can only measure 2 seconds, slow down.
- Follow the center painted line and the painted lines on the side of the road.
- Sound your horn periodically.
- Call into Transportation Services. You may be requesting help or you at least want to let them know what situation you are in and 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 in the morning.

WHAT
TO
KNOW ABOUT
DRIVING IN
THE SNOW





We Say Goodbye and Best Wishes in their new life chapters to Pat Wall, Transportation Routing Associate, Chasity Foerster, Driver Instructor and Peter Oskam, intern.

Peter Oskam—you probably don't know his face, but you have surely heard his voice over the radio. Peter is a student who has had a tall presence interning in The Transportation Services Department. After the holiday break, Peter will transition to being a full time student. He has been a great asset to us.

Chasity Foerster has moved on for a career-changing opportunity with a private employer. Chasity was a driver for F & S Transportation before joining The Transportation Services Department as a Driver Instructor in 2019. Though she will be leaving us, we won't forget the heart & soul she put into her job and the significant difference she made to our department. We wish Chasity well in her new career.

Pat Wall will be retiring from CCPS after 23 years in the Transportation Office and a total of 30 years with CCPS. Her friends and colleagues are innumerable. We wish Pat well in her retirement as she plans to spend more time with her children and grandchildren. It's been an honor knowing her and working with her for so many years. Her commitment and dedication have not gone unnoticed.



What Makes a Good School Bus Driver Great?

Being a great school bus driver is about more than just picking students up and driving them to school! Great school bus drivers have a sense of pride in their job. They are the biggest factor in students getting to and from school safely and should 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 children 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 children 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 a difference. Nothing is more important than the safe transport of the children in their care; not only in driving safely, but also in things like keeping students safe from possible bullies while on the bus, keeping them seated and facing forward and even ensuring they cross the street safely before and after riding the bus.

Is a 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 students off on the wrong foot!

Is Patient

A school bus driver that is able to balance driving the bus while making sure the students 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 students. A school bus driver will spend most of their workday surrounded by students, so it is pretty important that a driver likes being around children. A great bus driver means being able to value a wide variety of personality types.

Is Poised

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

Is Punctual

It is a given that students have to get to school on time. Not only that, but they 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.

LOADING AND UNLOADING STUDENTS AT SCHOOLS

REMINDERS

- ◆ NEVER PASS OTHER LOADING OR UNLOADING BUSES IN SCHOOL BUS LOOPS.
- ◆ Only pass buses in the school bus loops that have their hazard lights flashing.
- ◆ Maintain distance from other vehicles so you can exit without backing up.
- ◆ Check mirrors for students, traffic & pedestrians before leaving unloading area.
- ◆ Use turn signals to communicate intentions when leaving unloading area.
- ◆ Move to the end of unloading area for conversing with others, post trip and/or layover.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES CALENDAR 2023-2024

December

22 Schools/Offices Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide; Closed for Prep and ½ day Pre-K Students
 25-29 Schools/Offices Closed – Winter Holiday

January

1 Schools/Offices Closed – New Year's Day
 2 Schools/Offices Re-open
 12 Regular Education Route Stop Sheets and Regular Education Route Manifests due in Transportation Services
 15 Schools/Offices Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
 26 End of Marking Period; Schools Closed for Students

February

19 Schools/Offices Closed – Presidents' Day

March

8 Regular Education Route Stop Sheets and Regular Education Route Manifests; Special Education Route Manifests due in Transportation Services
 19 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.) Francis Scott Key High
 20 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) Century High
 21 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Winters Mill High
 26 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Manchester Valley High
 27 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Winters Mill High
 28-29 Schools/Offices Closed – Spring Break

April

1-2 Schools/Offices Closed – Spring Break
 3 Schools/Offices Re-open; Spring Bus Inspection Inclement Weather Make-up Day (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.)
 9 End of Marking Period; Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal/System Wide; Closed for Prep and ½ day Pre-K Students

May

14 Schools/Offices Closed – Election Day
 27 Schools/Offices Closed – Memorial Day

June

12* Last Day for Pre-Kindergarten Students
 13* Last Day for Students; Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide

Carroll County Public Schools Transportation Services Department**2024-2025 Bus Inspection Schedule****August**

- 19 Summer Bus Inspection (7:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Manchester Valley High
- 20 Summer Bus Inspection (7:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 21 Summer Bus Inspection (7:15 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.) Francis Scott Key High
- 22 Summer Bus Inspection (7:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Century High

November

- 12 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) Century High
- 13 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Manchester Valley High
- 14 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 19 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.) Francis Scott Key High
- 20 Fall Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 21 Fall Bus Inspection Inclement Weather Make-up Day (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.)

March

- 18 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.) Francis Scott Key High
- 19 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) Century High
- 20 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 25 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Manchester Valley High
- 26 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 27 Fall Bus Inspection Inclement Weather Make-up Day (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.)



SEASONS GREETINGS FROM THE STAFF IN
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES



Keith Shorter

Mike Hardesty



Chip Weaver

Scheneeka Weeden



Kristin Ebert

Nick Chalk



Scott Parsons



Cindy Washick

Anita Stubenrauch

Pat Wall



Jill Fulton

Angela Williams



Peter Oskam



Kim Gold

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.