SCHOOL BUS SCHEDULING AND ROUTING

The Ouachita Parish School Board shall provide school bus transportation for all students living more than one mile from the school that they are assigned to attend. Students living within one mile of the school may be allowed to ride a school bus when the School Board determines that conditions exist to warrant such transportation. Middle and high school students may be required to walk a safe, pre-determined bus stop to be determined by the bus operator and the transportation director. Other students may be provided with school bus transportation in accordance with regulations of the Louisiana Department of Education.

A reasonable time shall be established for each route and the bus operator shall be expected to adhere to this schedule. By the same token, students shall be expected to be at their respective bus stop when the bus arrives. Once a bus route has been established, the bus operator shall not alter or change assigned routes without order of the Superintendent or his/her designee. Any bus operator who feels a road is unsafe or dangerous shall report such dangerous condition to the Superintendent or his/her designee, and the bus operator may be allowed not to travel the road with the prior approval of the Transportation Administrator, until the Superintendent or his/her designee determines said road is safe or improved, or the situation has been rectified.

Buses must be routed so that no more than one bus will travel the same route, except in cases of definite apparent necessity. Each scheduled route will be planned in full consideration of the established limits for individual schools.

During inclement weather, bus operators may make more frequent stops.

LOADING AND UNLOADING OF STUDENTS

The loading and unloading of students onto and from school buses being utilized to transport students shall be conditional on the following:

1. Bus operators shall be prohibited from loading or unloading students at school while the bus is in a traffic lane of any type of street as defined in state law and require that students be loaded or unloaded on a shoulder, in a school parking lot, or at other appropriate off-road location at the school as determined by the School Board. This requirement shall not apply if the shoulder of a municipal road is the only available alternative and the municipality has not made the shoulder available by designating that area for loading and unloading students during designated school zone hours.

2. Bus operators shall be prohibited from loading or unloading students at or near their homes while the bus is in a lane of traffic unless the bus is in the lane farthest to the right side of the road so that there is not a lane of traffic between the bus and the right-side curb or other edge of the road.

3. Bus operators shall be prohibited from loading or unloading a student in a location on a divided highway such that a student, in order to walk between the bus and his/her home or school, would be required to cross a roadway of the highway on which traffic is not controlled by the visual signals on the school bus. Four-lane highways shall be a prohibited location for loading or unloading a student as the bus operator can not control all lanes of traffic, and the general public awareness is limited. Any exceptions would have to be approved by the Director of Transportation.

Street or *highway* means the entire width between the boundary lines of every way or place of whatever nature publicly maintained and open to the use of the public for the purpose of vehicular travel, including bridges, causeways, tunnels, and ferries.

BUS TURNAROUNDS

Students who live 3/10 of a mile or more off the regular bus route could be included in the route if the road is adequately maintained by the parish and a **PUBLIC** turn-around is available. The road and turn-around should be free of trees, limbs, stumps, cars, potholes, and other obstacles, which would hinder the safe operation of the school bus and/or the passengers. Unsafe conditions are determined as; inadequate roads; sub-standard roads not maintained by the public, not wide enough for both bus and on-coming vehicles, dirt roads, private property roads and driveways. Once a public road is made safe by the parish public works, the Transportation Supervisor can re-evaluate the conditions and determine the road to be passable for a bus.

Less than 3/10 of a mile will require students to walk to and from the assigned bus stop. Severe weather (extreme cold, rain) may mean that these rules could be suspended when an adequate turn-around, as defined above, is available. However, these allowances shall be temporary.

Revised: August, 2010
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Revised: September 13, 2022

Ref: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:158, 32:1
Louisiana School Transportation Specifications and Procedures, Bulletin 119,
Louisiana Department of Education Board minutes, 10-13-15, 2-13-18, 9-13-22

Ouachita Parish School Board