

THE DRIVER'S SEAT

December 2025

410-751-3229

Director

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Director's Corner

As the leaves have turned and begun to fall, we know that winter is approaching fast. Please review your winter driving techniques and make sure that your auto chains are working properly.

The Transportation supervisors will be closely monitoring daily and weekly weather forecasts and will be out on the roads at 3:30 a.m. whenever the forecast calls for the possibility of wintry precipitation. Every effort will be made to make a school closing or delayed opening call by 5:00 a.m.; however, as we know, Mother Nature rarely cooperates with our bus and school schedules.

Through the first two months of the school year, a total of 41 school days, there have been 30 school bus accidents! Thankfully, most of these accidents have been very minor without student injury or appreciable property damage. However, this is a disturbing trend outpacing the number of bus accidents from prior school years through the same period of time. In analyzing the accidents, many involve backing and/ or improper judgement resulting in the bus striking fixed objects, i.e. mailboxes, poles, stop signs, and parked vehicles. Most of the accidents involve veteran drivers. Drivers are encouraged to slow down and carefully examine your surroundings. Report any areas along your route that present challenges to safe, accident-free driving.

Continued on page 6

Welcome, Michele Brown, Our Newest Team Member!

I am super excited to be working with all of the great people in the Transportation Department! I worked for Carroll County Public Schools during the 2015/2016 school year with the Judy Center Program and loved getting to know all of the families and kiddos.

I have lived in Carroll County since I was 2 years old, attended Charles Carroll Elementary, East Middle, and graduated from Westminster High School. After graduating from Salisbury University, I worked for a non-profit in Westminster for 10 years before marrying my amazing husband and starting a family.

We currently live in Taneytown, MD, and all of my children graduated from Carroll County Public Schools.

I am a Disney fanatic, who loves to spend time with my family. Family game night at my house can get a little rowdy. When I am not spending time with my family you can usually find me making cards, scrapbooking, or volunteering. Although all of my kids have graduated, I have a great appreciation for all the music program does for the kids and will continue to support them and other school programs.

Thank you to everyone for their warm welcome and patience as I learn my new role!



Thank You!

According to an article by the NHTSA school buses are one of the safest vehicles on the road. School buses are 70 times safer than all other forms of ground transportation. The Carroll County Public Schools Transportation Department would like to thank our drivers for being an integral part of keeping our kids safe on the bus!



Strategies for Managing Student Behavior

According to School Bus Fleet these 11 strategies will help you manage student behavior on the bus.

1. **Set up clear rules.**
2. **Keep the rules consistent.**
3. **Acknowledge positive conduct.**
4. **Maintain your composure.**
5. **Swiftly address issues.**
6. **Implement assigned seating.**
7. **Use non-verbal communication.**
8. **Listen actively.**
9. **Collaborate with school faculty.**
10. **Engage parents in the process.**
11. **Develop a reward-based behavior system.**

For more information read the full article at:
<https://www.schoolbusfleet.com/10204841/11-strategies-for-managing-student-behavior-on-the-school-bus>

A huge thanks to Schoolbus Fleet for giving us expressed written consent to reprint an excerpt from their article.

The Untold Story Of The American School Bus And Why This Icon Still Rules The Road

You could argue the real American dream isn't a Corvette or a Harley—it's a battered yellow school bus wheezing down a suburban street at 6:45 a.m. It doesn't look cool, it doesn't sound fast, and it sure as heck doesn't smell good. But for millions of kids, it was the first machine that swallowed them whole, carried them off, and set the rhythm of their lives.

Decade after decade, while the auto industry obsessed over tailfins, touchscreens, and Tesla updates, the school bus barely budged. Still big. Still yellow. Still loud enough to be heard before it was seen. And in that stubborn sameness lies the weird truth: the American school bus isn't just a vehicle, it's an icon. Buses for Sale examines the cultural significance of the American school bus.

A Color That Conquered Culture

Henry Ford gave us black. Ferrari gave us red. But the school bus gave us something stronger: "National School Bus Glossy Yellow." It wasn't chosen by an ad agency or a design guru; it was chosen by committees of safety wonks in 1939 who decided this one shade was bright enough to punch through fog and hangovers alike.

That yellow isn't just a color. It's a cultural trigger. Ask any American what they picture when they hear the word "bus," and nine times out of 10, it's yellow. Not sleek European commuter trains. Not futuristic electric shuttles. Just a lumbering diesel beast in traffic, glowing like a radioactive Twinkie.

The Shape of Safety

Reinforced steel cage. High-backed, padded seats that act like mini crash zones. Flashing lights and that unmistakable swing-out stop sign, which is a kind of mobile moat that freezes traffic. It's the one vehicle on the road that literally commands everyone else to stop, no matter how late they are.

Every generation of parents trusted it, sometimes reluctantly, to carry their kids. And it kept proving itself, year after year. The stats don't lie: Riding a school bus is still about 70 times safer than hopping in mom or dad's car.

Cameos in Pop Culture

The school bus didn't just haul kids; it crept into our imagination. From "The Simpsons" dented ride with Otto at the wheel to "Magic School Bus" blasting off into space, the bus became a recurring character in America's cultural screenplay. It's shorthand for innocence, for chaos, and sometimes for menace. Just see any horror movie where the school bus sits abandoned in a cornfield.

That ubiquity cements its status. Cars change trends every five years. The school bus? It's timeless enough to cameo in 1950s Warner Brothers cartoons, '70s sitcoms, current music videos, and Stephen King novels without ever needing a redesign.

Continued on the next page.



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Exported Americana

Like denim jeans and Coca-Cola, the yellow bus went global. Many of those second-life buses now surface through resale marketplaces, where fleets and individuals alike, worldwide, buy and keep the yellow icon rolling long after retirement.

Countries from Canada to Saudi Arabia imported them, sometimes used, sometimes brand-new. Because nothing else screamed “reliable child-mover” quite the same way. In some places, old American buses got second lives ferrying workers, athletes, and even goats. And yet, wherever they go, they stay yellow. It’s brand recognition that rivals McDonald’s arches.

Why It Still Rules the Road

Electric vehicles may nibble at its future, and TikTok kids may roll their eyes, but the school bus isn’t going anywhere. It remains a practical, safe, and cost-effective way to move millions of kids daily. That, and it’s a symbol we’re not ready to retire. In an age of endless disruption, there’s something almost comforting about its stubborn refusal to change.

Because in the end, the school bus isn’t just about transport. It’s about memory, safety, and community. It’s a kind of gritty Americana that’s still alive in a machine that rumbles through every neighborhood, twice a day, rain or shine.

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Director's Corner continued

The FirstNet push-to-talk radios have been a tremendous success in allowing drivers to communicate with their bus contractor and the Transportation office when needed. Drivers are reminded to clearly state their bus # and keep the talk button depressed until you are finished speaking. The Transportation office will make every effort to return your call on a private line as quickly as possible. Many times, phone calls and other FirstNet call-ins are happening at the same time in the office. Thank you for your patience with the return call to you.

Finally, just a word of appreciation for the tremendous job that our school bus drivers and school bus assistants perform for Carroll County Public Schools. We understand the daily challenges of safely driving your school bus with as many as 64 students on board while keeping the students seated and managing student behavior. Please let your transportation area supervisor know of any problems you are experiencing on your bus route or with student behavior. Thank you for the essential job you perform each school day! - Michael Hardesty

**Riddle: Why did the bus driver get an award?
Find the answer on page 12.**

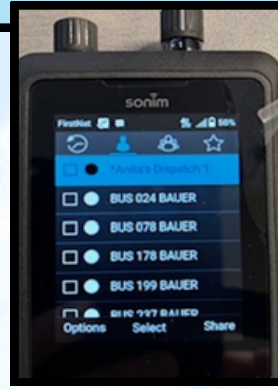
SPECIAL NOTE FOR CALLING TSD ON THE FIRSTNET SYSTEM

BEFORE CALLING TSD, PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR FIRSTNET PHONE IS ON THE HOME SCREEN (SCREEN WITH THE CLOCK). IF YOU SEE A SCREEN THAT LOOKS LIKE THE "LIST SCREEN" BELOW, PRESS THE "TURNAROUND" ARROW KEY UNTIL YOU GET BACK TO THE "HOME SCREEN/CLOCK" SCREEN.

TURN AROUND
ARROW KEY



HOME SCREEN/CLOCK



LIST SCREEN

FIRSTNET RADIO NOT WORKING? RADIO CHECK NOT GETTING A RESPONSE?

RESTART YOUR PHONE AND WAIT FIVE MINUTES AND THEN TRY YOUR RADIO CHECK AGAIN

1- PRESS THE "RED PHONE" KEY ON THE KEYPAD

2- PRESS AND HOLD THE "RED PHONE" KEY AGAIN UNTIL THE SCREEN CHANGES.

3- PUSH THE SELECT KEY UNDER "RESTART".

(SELECT KEYS ARE THREE NARROW RECTANGLES WITH DASH LINES DIRECTLY UNDER THE SCREEN)



SELECT KEYS

IS IT HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHAT SOMEONE IS SAYING ON THE FIRSTNET SYSTEM?

THE VOLUME MAY BE TURNED UP TOO LOUD. USE THE TWO BUTTONS ON THE LEFT SIDE CENTER OF THE PHONE TO TURN THE VOLUME DOWN. SET VOLUME TO ABOUT 50% AND THE SPEECH SHOULD BE MUCH BETTER.



BUSTER THE BUS

Buster the Bus, the robotic bus that children love, has been appearing at the elementary schools throughout the fall. Led by our Driver Instructors, Angela Williams, Scheneeka Weeden, and Shana Clark, Buster traveled to many of Carroll

County's elementary schools, bringing his school bus safety message to our youngest, most inexperienced riders. Buster, led by our Driver Instructor team has been teaching pre-k and kindergarten students the ins and outs of school bus safety. The students are mesmerized by the little animated bus and love learning from him. Buster and the DI team present an interactive, entertaining show that is chocked full of learning and fun. In addition, at the end of the presentation, the students are provided a coloring book with more reminders about school bus safety rules.

Thank you, Buster Angela, Scheneeka, and Shana for providing an entertaining way to teach our younger students about school bus safety.



STOP SHEET COMPLETION REMINDERS

While we acknowledge that completing stop sheets multiple times a year can be challenging for drivers, it is integral to our department to ensure that our routes are up to date and accurate for the schools and the public. We appreciate the time that many drivers and contractors take to ensure legibility, accuracy, and completion. We would like to highlight some important reminders that will ensure that stop sheets are as complete and accurate as possible before they come into our office:

- 1. Print legibly.**
- 2. Make sure to use the correct stop sheet (the one marked March should only be used in March-it indicates the number of students moving up to the next school level).**
- 3. Complete all information in top section.**
- 4. Ensure bus number is present (if using a spare bus, please indicate).**
- 5. Clearly indicate the school's name for each trip.**
- 6. Include AM and PM arrival times at each school level (this is very important in determining layover times on routes).**
- 7. Write the main road name first, followed by the address # or crossroad, in the second column. You can use ("") for repeating road names to save time and make more legible.**
- 8. Indicate the number of students who ride from each stop in the appropriate column (H—high school; M—middle school; E—elementary school). On March stop sheets, indicate the number that ride on the top of the box and how many of those students are moving up to the next school level, or will graduate, on the bottom of the box. These numbers help with our summer planning.**
- 9. Include accurate AM and PM pickup times for all stops. Make sure they are both listed as we use this for routing checks and ensuring directions are accurate.**
- 10. Include accurate AM and PM student counts for each level, along with the last drop-off time.**
- 11. Verify accuracy of all information and that the document is complete.**
- 12. Ensure both the contractor and driver signatures are present.**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THESE REMINDERS AND IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR AREA SUPERVISOR!!



Reminders

The next Contractor Meeting, at Carroll Community College, will be February 9, 2026 at 10:30 am in room L287. We look forward to seeing our contractors for the first meeting of the calendar year.

Riddle Answer: Because he was always driving his students to success!

RECYCLED BUSES

Were you able to find all of the recycled buses in this issue of The Driver's Seat?

- Green House
- Book Store
- RV
- Art Studio
- Trailer
- Farm Vehicle
- Bus Stop
- Diner

Please print the next page (it will print well in either black and white or color) and hang in your office as a reference! The back page has been left blank to make this possible.

FROM THE DRIVER INSTRUCTOR'S DESK

WE HAVE OBSERVED SEVERAL SAFETY PROCEDURES THAT HAVE NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED:

- BE SURE TO SECURE VEHICLE AND TAKE THE KEYS EVERY TIME YOU LEAVE THE BUS.
- HEADLIGHTS:
 - UTILIZE YOUR HEADLIGHTS WHILE THE BUS IS RUNNING AND IN ROUTE.
- TURN SIGNALS:
 - UTILIZE YOUR TURN SIGNALS WHERE APPLICABLE.
- OVERRIDE SWITCH:
 - USE OF THE OVERRIDE SWITCH MUST BE UTILIZED TO SUPPORT OTHER SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS THAT ARE LOADING AND UNLOADING AT THE BUS STOP.
 - AVOID USING THE OVERRIDE SWITCH FOR ROADWAY COURTESY TO STOP OTHER MOTORISTS

2026 PRE-SERVICE CLASSES

REGULAR CLASSES

JANUARY 13-14TH 8:30AM-4PM & 15TH 8:30AM-12:30PM
FEBRUARY 10-11TH 8:30AM-4PM & 12TH 8:30AM-12:30PM
MARCH 10-11TH 8:30AM-4PM & 12TH 8:30AM-12:30PM
APRIL 14-15TH 8:30AM-4PM & 16TH 8:30AM-12:30PM
MAY 5-6TH 8:30AM-4PM & 7TH 8:30AM-12:30PM
JUNE 2-3RD 8:30AM-4PM & 4TH 8:30AM-12:30PM

SPECIAL NEEDS

JANUARY 21ST 8:30AM-4PM
FEBRUARY 18TH 8:30AM-4PM
MARCH 18TH 8:30AM-4PM
APRIL 22ND 8:30AM-4PM
MAY 13TH 8:30AM-4PM
JUNE 5TH 8:30AM-4PM

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- PRIOR TO CLASS A COMPLETED APPLICATION MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH ALL ACCOMPANIED DOCUMENTS WITHIN 3-5 BUSINESS DAYS.
- ACCOMPANIED DOCUMENTS INCLUDE MVA RECORD WITH COMPLETE SATISFACTORY DRIVING HISTORY IN ALL STATES, COPY OF DRIVER'S LICENSE (FRONT AND BACK)
 - IF YOU ARE A CURRENT CDL LICENSE OR PERMIT HOLDER A COMPLETED D.O.T. PHYSICAL - 1 YEAR.

SAVE THE DATE: IN SERVICE JUNE 17-18, 2026

Building the Future

