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As The Wheel Turns
Transportation Newsletter

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Transportation Team –

As the crisp air and colorful leaves signal the arrival of Fall, **I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your continued dedication to safely transporting our students every day.** This season reminds us of change, preparation, and care – values that are deeply reflected in the work you do.

With the school year well underway, we are entering a critical phase in our efforts to ensure that our youngest learners – Pre-K through First Grade – are dropped off at their correct locations. As discussed during our Professional Development Day on October 2, we are rolling out Phase One and Phase Two of our enhanced drop-off procedures. These plans are designed to improve accuracy, accountability, and above all, safety for our students.

Please take time to review the details of each phase in this newsletter. Your role in executing these plans is vital. Whether you're behind the wheel, coordinating routes, or supporting logistics – your attention to detail and commitment to student safety make all the difference. Please speak with your manager if you have any questions.

Let's continue to be vigilant, especially as daylight hours shorten and weather conditions shift. Safety is not just a priority – it's a promise we make to every family who entrusts us with their children daily.

Thank you for your professionalism, your heart, and your service. Let's make this Fall a season of excellence!

Creating Endless Possibilities One Stop at a Time,

Mr. Vec Dunn
Executive Director of Transportation
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

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Transportation Plan of Action: Safety + Accountability

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Phase 1 – Immediate Safety & Accountability

Student Seating:

- All Pre-K thru first grade students will be seated in the first five rows of the bus.

Check-In/Check-Out (Driver Responsibilities):

- Drivers will be in their seats and ready for students to board.
- Drivers will check students off as they are received from school staff during dismissal, ensuring that the student is on the correct bus.
- Drivers will re-check students as they disembark at their assigned stops, ensuring that the student is at the correct location.

Seating Charts:

- An assigned seating chart will be on the bus and on file in the area office. This chart will be updated throughout the school year to ensure the correct students are on the correct bus.

Route Substitutes:

- Any substitute driver/driver covering an extra run will receive proper route instructions (TD-25) and a student list before leaving the school.

Uncertain Drop-Offs:

- When unsure of a student's stop location, drivers will radio the transportation office for guidance. When in doubt, the driver will return the student to their school's administrator or designee.

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Transportation Plan of Action: Enhanced ID + Tagging

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Phase 2 – Enhanced Identification & Tagging

Student Tags:

- Transportation will collaborate with CMS Graphic Productions to create tags for all Pre-K thru first grade students.
    - Tags will include: Student Name, Grade, and Bus Stop Location.

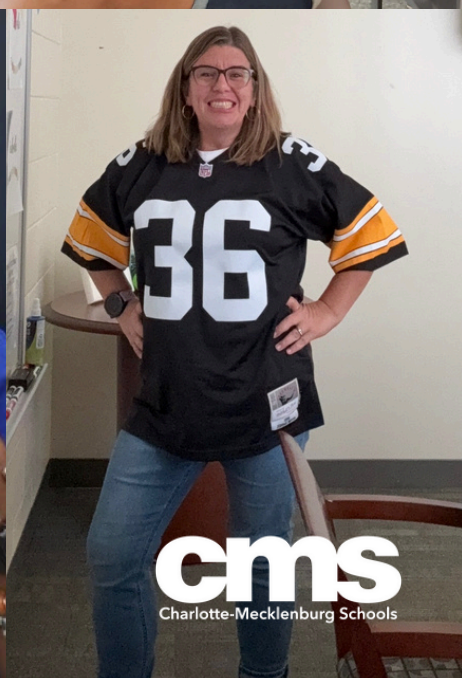
Distribution & Tagging:

- Transportation will distribute tags to schools for students in Pre-K through first grade.
- Schools will attach tags to student book bags.
- Tags will be easily identifiable and accessible for drivers to view and verify information.

Daily Walk-Out During Dismissal:

- Schools will walk students to the bus each day, and the driver will follow the safety steps outlined by CMS Transportation in Phase 1 (Check-In/Out Driver Responsibilities).

TRANSPORTATION SPIRIT: TEAM JERSEY DAY



Check out the CMS Transportation Facebook and Instagram pages for more photos and videos!

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CMS Transportation Spirit Days

Friday, October 3	**Jersey Day**
Friday, October 10	**College Day**
Friday, October 17	**Breast Cancer Awareness (Wear Pink)**
Friday, October 24	**Graphic T-Shirt**

Let's bring some fun and unity to our Fridays this October with CMS Transportation Spirit Days! Each week features a different theme to celebrate together: On **October 3**, show your sports pride with your favorite team jersey for Jersey Day. **October 10** is College Day, so represent your favorite college or university. On **October 17**, wear pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Day to show support and raise awareness. Then on **October 24**, express your creativity with a fun or unique graphic tee for Graphic T-Shirt Day.

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NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN CMS TRANSPORTATION

As our department continues to grow and expand, we are constantly seeking new opportunities to maximize our mission and vision! Our commitment to serving the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools community remains unwavering, and we are excited to announce new job openings that reflect our growth. Openings include:

- **Bus Driver** | Responsible for driving a school bus to provide safe, efficient, and on-time transportation of CMS students to and from assigned schools on a daily basis.

- **Technician I** | Responsible for performing routine preventative maintenance on vehicular equipment including gasoline and diesel-driven vehicles to maintain a safe economical fleet.

- **Technician II** | Performs complex duties in the operation, repair and maintenance of buses and other vehicles in the school transportation program. Most work is performed based on prior experience. The employee is expected to troubleshoot and resolve problems of varied complexity and difficulty with little assistance. Significant problems may be referred to a supervisor. Most errors are expected to be resolved by the employee. The employee receives general supervision and work is occasionally reviewed while in progress.

- **Director, Fleet** | The Director of Fleet Services provides leadership in managing, directing, and coordinating safe, efficient, and economical maintenance of school buses, activity buses and fleet vehicles. This position is responsible for ensuring total compliance with all aspects of legal, financial, preventive maintenance and safety regulations relating to the maintenance and repair of school buses and transportation fleet vehicles.

- **Quality Support Technician (Central Office)** | Provides transportation-specific information, quality customer care and service to district staff, parents and the public. Assures that customers receive efficient and courteous services. Assists the area office with daily operational tasks, researches, analyzes, resolves and responds to customers' questions, issues and/or concerns.

To learn more about open positions, please visit cmsk12.org/careers to learn more, apply, and share with your networks! (Links will remain active until the position closes).

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MEET SHENEQUA THOMAS
CRC, LCMHC, LPC

CMS Transportation has partnered with Atrium Health to provide social and emotional well-being support to all Transportation employees. This service, whether virtual or in-person, will be available at no cost for all transportation area offices and central office support staff.

We understand the importance of mental health, and this partnership is a significant step toward ensuring the well-being of our CMS Transportation family. **Learn more about the offerings here.**

What concerns can the behavioral health services address?

You are encouraged to contact the behavioral health provider for whatever may be causing you any level of emotional distress. Feel free to reach out to discuss any of the following: Relationship and parenting issues, overcoming feelings of being stuck, developing coping strategies, goal setting and making action plans, anger, grief and stress, anxiety and depressed mood, substance use and additions, managing life's changes.
To schedule an appointment, call **704-275-1666.**

Shenequa Thomas, a Winston-Salem State University graduate with a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling, is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. With over a decade of experience in mental health, wellness, and community leadership & advocacy, she is dedicated to making a positive impact. Shenequa has experience in providing individual, couples, and group therapy to diverse populations.

On-Site Schedule:

- Mondays: 3901 Craig Avenue
- Tuesdays: 3101 Wilkinson Boulevard
- Wednesdays: 11751 Downs Road
- Thursdays: 4400 Northpointe Boulevard
- Fridays: 6520 Orr Road

2025–2026 WILDLY IMPORTANT GOALS

1. **Maintain or exceed an on-time arrival average of 93–95% in the morning, and 88–89% in the afternoon.**

2. **Decrease the annual DPI inspection score to 40–42 points.**

3. **Achieve a 3% increase in new hires and reduce separations by 3% year-over-year.**

4. **Install and implement a new GPS system by August 2026.**

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2025–2026 Early Release Dates

Early release days provide staff with additional time to participate in professional development workshops. These workshops can enhance instructional knowledge and skills, improving student learning. **Schools will dismiss three hours earlier than their normal time, and buses will drop students off three hours earlier than their usual time.**

2025–2026 Early Release Dates

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OCTOBER CALENDAR UPDATES

Wednesday, October 1: Early Release Day
Thursday, October 2: Teacher Workday
Friday, October 31: Last Day of Quarter

SUMBIT YOUR NEWS AND UPDATES!

Want to be featured in the CMS Transportation Newsletter?

Email Tom Miner for more details and information!
ThomasA.Miner@cms.k12.nc.us