



TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER HANDBOOK

Adopted April 26, 2011
Amended January 29, 2013



THE MISSION OF THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT,
"TO PROVIDE SAFE TRANSPORTATION FOR PINELLAS
COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENTS IN A TIMELY AND
EFFICIENT MANNER".

SCHOOL BOARD OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

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**PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

BUS DRIVER'S HANDBOOK

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SECTION 1

MISSION & ORGANIZATION OF PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

The Transportation Department is organized by three main functions: ***transportation operations, transportation services, and vehicle maintenance***. The information included in this section is intended to give the driver a basic overview of the roles each of the three main functions play in transportation, and how they work together to meet the department's mission.

1.01 TRANSPORTATION MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Pinellas County Schools Transportation Department is to provide ***safe*** transportation for Pinellas County Schools' students in a ***timely*** and ***efficient*** manner. ***Listed below are the major goals which guide the administration of transportation.***

- To provide safe transportation
- To deliver students on time
- To operate the transportation program efficiently and economically
- To foster a high performing work force by
 - ◆ Providing employees with opportunities to enhance their professional and personal development through in-service training programs
 - ◆ Striving to improve employee safety, recognition, and job satisfaction

1.02 TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

The administrators of the Pinellas County Schools Transportation Department provide overall supervision, direction, and management of the activities of the Department. The department's administrative offices are located at the ***Walter Pownall Service Center (WPSC)***.

- The ***Director of Transportation*** is the administrator in charge of the department. The Transportation Area Managers report to the Director of Transportation.
 - The ***Manager of Transportation Services*** works directly with the Director of Transportation administering the department. The Manager of Transportation Services also oversees dispatch operations, driver training & safety, plus budget & reports.
- The ***ESE (Exceptional Student Education) Transportation Liaison*** is a special administrator assigned to the department. The primary responsibility of the ESE Transportation Liaison is to work with the ESE Department and school staff to resolve transportation issues and problems involving special needs students.
- The ***Supervisor of Vehicle Maintenance*** is the administrator who oversees the vehicle maintenance function of transportation. The supervisor is assisted by a ***Vehicle Maintenance Coordinator*** and by the ***Foreman*** assigned to each maintenance garage.

1.03 TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS

Included under the transportation operations "umbrella" are ***Field Operations Supervisors, Safety Team, Coordinators of Routing & Scheduling, Drivers, Dispatchers, Training*** and ***clerical staff***.

A. ***Bus compounds***. The Transportation Department will operate six bus compounds which are located throughout Pinellas County:

- ***Tarpon Springs***
- ***Clearwater***
- ***Coachman Service Center***
- ***Walter Pownall Service Center (WPSC)***
- ***Lealman***
- ***49th Street***

1.03 TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS, cont'd

B. *Bus compound supervisory staff.*

- 1) The Transportation Department has three *Transportation Area Managers* assigned to oversee the operations of the bus compounds. The compounds are as follows:
 - *North County (Coachman, Clearwater & Tarpon Springs)*
 - *Central County (WPSC)*
 - *South County (49th Street & Lealman)*
- 2) *Transportation Field Operations Supervisors* are also assigned to each one of the bus compounds. *Transportation Field Operations Supervisors* work under the direction of, and provide assistance to, the *Transportation Area Managers* in overseeing the daily operations of the bus compounds and the direct supervision of bus drivers.
- 3) *Coordinators of Routing* are located at Walter Pownall Service Center. *Route Coordinators* are responsible for developing, coordinating, and updating the department's bus routes as required. Each Coordinator is assigned a group of schools for which they have responsibility. All changes to a bus route *must* be reviewed and approved by the appropriate *Route Coordinator* and/or *Director* or designee.
- 4) *Transportation Dispatchers* are responsible to ensure drivers have been assigned to cover all the school bus routes. They monitor the operation of the routes to ensure they run in a timely manner and make sure all students who require transportation are given a ride. *Dispatchers* ensure emergency assistance is provided to drivers when required.

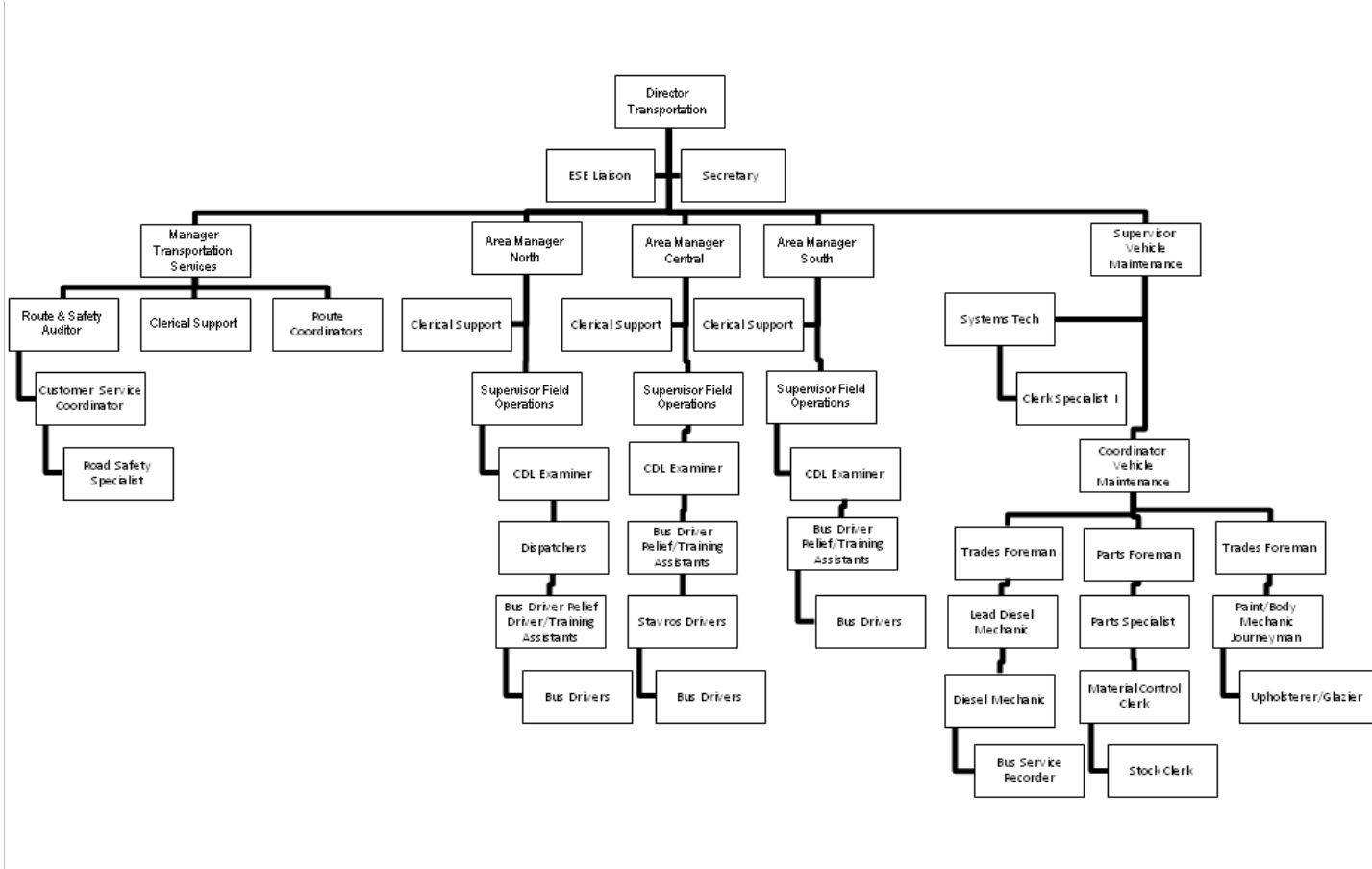
1.04 DRIVER TRAINING

- A. Driver training is organized into two units. One unit focuses on school bus driving skills, safety, and driver certification. The second unit focuses on student behavior management and special needs students.

1.05 SAFETY TEAM

- A. The Safety Team is comprised of six (6) members:
 - 1) Two (2) Route and Safety Auditors
 - 2) Two (2) Customer Service Coordinators
 - 3) Two (2) Road and Safety Specialists
- B. The Safety Team audits the routes, checks school bus stops and processes parent requests for stop changes due to safety issues.

PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION CHART



SECTION 2

DRIVER DUTIES

2.01 DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

- A. The school board shall assure that the driver of a school bus meets the following requirements:
- 1) Hold a valid commercial driver's license with passenger endorsement, not restricted for air brakes, and as of 9/30/05, "S" endorsement.
 - 2) Successfully complete 40 hours of the State mandated *New Bus Driver Training Course*.
 - 3) Be physically capable of operating the vehicle as determined by a *physical examination* as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education and given by a physician designated by the school board, and as determined by a *dexterity test* administered by the school district.
- B. ***Drug and alcohol test requirements for drivers.*** Requirements for drug and alcohol testing of drivers are established by *Federal Regulation (49 CFR 391.81 through 391.123 "controlled substance testing") and Rules of the State Board of Education (Rule 6A-3.0141)*. In accordance with these rules and regulations, drivers are required to be tested for drugs and alcohol as follows:
- 1) *Prior to initial employment.* All prospective drivers must take and pass a drug test.
 - 2) *Random testing.* Drivers shall be randomly tested for alcohol and/or drugs. If you have scheduled an appointment during your downtime (such as a doctor/personal appointment) you must notify the dispatcher before start of business that day.
 - 3) *Post accident.* Drivers who have an accident while driving a school bus which results in a fatality (regardless of fault) must be tested for drugs and alcohol. Also, drivers who have an at-fault accident while driving a school bus must be tested for drugs and alcohol when either of the following conditions apply:
 - A person had to be transported from the scene for immediate medical treatment.
 - Any vehicle involved had to be towed from the scene.

Any driver who refuses to take a required drug or alcohol test, or who fails to successfully complete a required drug or alcohol test without cause, will be recommended to the School Board for dismissal.

2.02 DUTIES OF THE DRIVER

Drivers are under the direction of the department's Field Operations Supervisor and Area Manager, and will follow all instructions and complete all work assignments.

Drivers will receive direction and instructions from the Transportation Dispatchers.

- A. Drivers will, at all times, operate their buses in accordance with the requirements of the Florida Traffic Laws, the requirements of the State Board of Education, and the procedures detailed in this Handbook. Drivers shall not leave the bus while students are on board.
- B. Drivers will possess the appropriate Commercial Driver's License (CDL) at all times while employed with Pinellas County Schools and will maintain their license in good standing. ***Drivers must have their CDL with them whenever they are operating a school bus or any other School Board owned/leased vehicle.***
- C. Drivers will possess a current, valid *Medical Examiner's Certificate* at all times while employed by Pinellas County Schools. ***Drivers must have their Medical Examiner's Certificate with them whenever they are operating a school bus or any other School Board owned/leased vehicle.***
- D. Drivers will be issued a photo identification badge ***which must be worn at all times when the driver is on duty.***

2.02 DUTIES OF THE DRIVER, *cont'd*

- E. Drivers shall not be required to operate a bus under conditions in which one or more
- students pose a clear and present danger to the safety of the driver or other students, or the safety of the bus while in operation. The district school board shall have measures in place designed to protect the bus driver from threats or physical injury from students.
 - Drivers will maintain a professional attitude - be patient, firm, fair, and friendly.
 - Safety comes first! When in doubt, do not take chances!
- F. In the case of a student having engaged in violent or blatantly unsafe actions while riding the school bus, the district school board shall take corrective measures to ensure, to the extent feasible, that such actions are not repeated prior to reassigning the student to the bus.
- G. Drivers will not deviate from assigned route and stops- no unauthorized stops are permitted, nor create any changes to the route or stops without receiving prior permission from a *Dispatcher*, a *Field Operations Supervisor*, or *Area Manager*. Requests for permanent changes to bus stops must be reviewed and approved by the *Routing Office*.
- H. ***Drivers will immediately report any hazards on the bus route or at bus stops which might offer an actual or potential threat to the safety of transported students to the Dispatch Office for their assigned compound and to their assigned Field Operations Supervisor.***
- I. If a driver discovers any defective, broken, missing equipment or a mechanical defect during the AM or PM pre-trip inspection of a bus, the problem is to be documented on the "Pre-Trip Inspection" form and turned into the Bus Service Recorder. Prior to leaving the bus compound the driver is responsible for taking the bus to the garage and completing a "Driver Request for Repair" form for any needed repairs.
- J. Drivers are required to keep the bus clean at all times. The floor of the bus will be swept twice daily, first in the morning after completing all morning trips and again in the afternoon after completing the last trip of the day. Trash from the bus must not be swept out of the bus onto parking areas - place all trash into the proper receptacle. The windshield and rear windows will be kept clean to ensure that visibility is not reduced.
- K. Loading and unloading of students from the school bus is an especially critical period of time for safety awareness.
- 1) Drivers will always follow established procedures for loading and unloading of student passengers as set forth in the Department of Education's *Basic Driver Training Curriculum*.
 - 2) Drivers will always directly supervise the loading and unloading of all student passengers. Drivers will be on their buses at all times while students are loading or unloading at schools. Drivers will supervise the activities of students leaving the bus until they have crossed the road safely, and will permit students to leave the bus only at their assigned stop.
- L. Under no circumstance will a driver allow a pre-kindergarten student to depart the bus when being dropped off at the designated afternoon stop, unless the student's parent or designated guardian is at the bus stop to receive the student. The same policy also applies to all special education (ESE) students who are picked up and dropped off at their home residence, unless the parent or guardian has an approved waiver on file with the transportation routing office. Upon arriving at a stop, when the parent or guardian is not present to receive the student, the driver shall follow the procedure outlined below:
- 1) notify the Dispatch Office via two-way radio
 - 2) complete remainder of run and then return to stop, if directed by Dispatch
 - 3) if parent/guardian is still not there, notify the Dispatch Office via two-way radio transport student to alternate location as directed by the dispatcher, field operations supervisor or area manager.

2.02 DUTIES OF THE DRIVER, *cont'd*

- M. Drivers will coordinate seating arrangements for all students assigned to ride the bus with the school principal and/or the principal's designee. Drivers are required to prepare an up-to-date seating chart, whenever seating arrangements are changed. One copy of the updated seating chart, L/R sheet and route sheet should be left on the bus. One copy of the updated seating chart will be given to the school principal (or the principal's designee), and a second copy of the seating chart will be given to the driver's assigned **Field Operations Supervisor**.
- N. Drivers who are assigned to drive buses equipped with lap belts (2002 school buses and newer) will instruct their student passengers on the proper use of lap belts, and will always instruct the students they transport to "Buckle Your Lap Belts."
- O. Pursuant to **Rule 6A.3017 Section 3w. of the State Board of Education**, drivers will wear a seat belt at all times when bus is in operation.
- P. Drivers are required by Florida Statute and Rules of the State Board of Education to maintain order and good behavior by students on their buses. Rules for student conduct on school buses are set forth in the Pinellas County School Board's **Student Code of Conduct**. Drivers will make every reasonable effort to deal with infractions of the rules of student conduct and will, to the best of their ability, maintain order and good behavior by students on their buses.
- Q. Drivers will submit a "**Report of Student Misconduct**" as soon as possible, cases of repeated minor misconduct and/or any serious misconduct to the appropriate school. The administrator/supervisor or assistant must reply to the Student Conduct Report, even if no action is to be taken. There shall be no limit to the number of Student Conduct Report forms a driver may write within a school year.
- R. Drivers will not permit students to bring items on board the bus which could be disruptive or present a safety hazard. (**Refer to Section 7, page 23 for complete list**).
- S. Drivers will make sure a clear and unobstructed path to emergency equipment and emergency exits are maintained on the bus at all times.
- T. Drivers will **never** permit a student to:
- 1) Stand at the front of the bus or in the bus aisle while the bus is in operation
 - 2) Operate the service door handle
 - 3) Occupy the driver's seat
- U. Drivers will never permit children to hold on to the side or rear of the bus when skating, riding bicycles, etc.
- V. Upon completion of each run/trip, drivers are required to walk to the rear of the bus and return up the aisle checking each seat and floor area for **students**, and any variety of items. **Drivers will complete this check of the bus regardless of whether a bus assistant is assigned to the route.** Failure to fully comply with this procedure will result in disciplinary action
- **Any action which results in a child being unattended on the bus for any length of time will result in termination.**
- W. Drivers will report, as soon as possible, any damage to the bus or its equipment caused by student passengers. Driver will complete and submit to their Field Operations Supervisor or Area Manager a "Report of Vandalism of a School Bus" form immediately upon returning to the school bus compound. Additionally, if the driver is able to identify the student(s) who caused the damage, a "Report of Misconduct on a School Bus" form will be completed and submitted to the Field Operations Supervisor or Area Manager.
- X. Drivers are required to check their mail boxes and bulletin boards at their assigned bus compound at least once daily. It is the responsibility of the driver at off-sites to check in with the compound periodically during the week.
- Y. Drivers will complete, accurately and to the best of their knowledge and ability, all required reports. Drivers will comply with established deadlines for completing and submitting required reports. (**Refer to Section 12, page 41 for a listing of forms**).

2.02 DUTIES OF THE DRIVER, cont'd

- Z. Drivers will report all accidents/crashes and incidents at the time of occurrence while they are driving a school bus to the Dispatch Office no matter how minor and regardless of damage. ***An incident/crash is defined as any time a school bus comes in contact with another vehicle or object, regardless of damage.*** If the incident/crash occurs after normal working hours or at any other time when the Dispatch Office is closed, the driver will ***immediately*** notify Pinellas County Schools Police.
- AA. All citations for moving violations issued to covered employees shall be reported, regardless of the ownership of the vehicle being driven by covered employee. All citations for moving violations shall be reported, regardless of the location where the citation was issued. Covered employees shall be responsible to report the receipt of any citation for a moving violation to their immediate supervisor ***by 12 p.m. (noon) on the next work day.***
- BB. Drivers are expected to attend all Training Workshops, Safety Meetings, and other called meetings. Unexcused absences will be considered failure to perform required duties, and may result in disqualification to drive and/or disciplinary action, as circumstances warrant.
- CC. Drivers will not engage in private business arrangements while on duty. This includes but is not limited to, buying and selling personal property or items, or purchasing speakers and radios for buses. However, this provision does not prohibit drivers from purchasing items sold by students as part of a school connected fund raising project.
- DD. Drivers will ensure the Transportation Department always has current information on their home address, home telephone number, and emergency point-of-contact by filling out a new ***Employee Change of Name and Address PCS Form 3.1303*** whenever such information changes.

2.03 DRIVER ANNUAL RE-CERTIFICATION

- A. ***Dexterity test.*** Pursuant to ***Rule 6A-3.0141 of the State Board of Education***, drivers of school buses must be physically capable of operating the vehicle as determined by a dexterity test administered at least annually by the school district.
- B. ***Physical examination.*** Pursuant to ***Rule 6A-3.0141 of the State Board of Education***, drivers of school buses must be physically capable of operating the vehicle as determined by a physical examination given at least annually by a physician designated by the School Board.
- C. Drivers must possess a current, valid ***Medical Examiner's Certificate*** at all times while employed by Pinellas County Schools. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disqualification to drive a school bus and/or disciplinary action, as circumstances warrant.
- D. Successfully complete a minimum of ***eight (8) hours of in-service training*** related to the driver's responsibilities for transporting students annually.

2.04 USE OF BUSES OWNED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD

- A. Drivers will use school buses only for the purposes of transporting students to and from school(s) on an approved school bus route/run.
- B. Drivers ***will not*** use school buses for personal errands or for the conduct of personal business

2.05 EQUIPMENT NOT AUTHORIZED TO BE INSTALLED ON SCHOOL BUSES

- A. Only equipment authorized by the School Board and installed by the District garage is allowed.

2.06 AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS

- A. Students are required to ride the bus to which they have been assigned. No occasional riders are to be taken aboard without the ***school principal's written permission*** on "PCS 3-2421, ***Temporary Permission slip for Emergency Change of Bus Stop***" to the driver, or the approval of the driver's ***Field Operations Supervisor*** or ***Area Manager***.

2.07 DRESS CODE FOR DRIVERS

Shirts and jackets will be provided to the drivers and must be worn when operating the school bus or on official school board business. Shirts are to be kept clean and neat without tears or stains or modifications. Each year, returning drivers will receive three (3) uniform shirts.

- A. *Pants*** Jeans are acceptable to wear, so long as they are in good repair (no rips or tears). Tight fitting lycra/spandex type pants are not acceptable for wear.
- B. *Skirts*** Skirts must be long enough to touch the knee cap when standing. Tight fitting lycra/spandex type skirts are not acceptable for wear.
- C. *Shorts*** Shorts, (no shorter than three (3) inches above kneecap). Tight fitting lycra/spandex type shorts are not acceptable for wear.
- E. *Dresses*** Dresses must have sleeves and must be long enough to touch the top of the kneecap when standing. Tight-fitting lycra/spandex type dresses are not acceptable for wear.
- F. *Shoes*** Shoes must be worn which have closed toes and heel (no sandals or sling-backs). Heels may not be more than two (2) inches high. Shoes with platform soles are not acceptable for wear.
- G. *Undergarments*** All drivers will wear appropriate undergarments (includes bras for females)
- H. *Top Garment*** Uniform Shirts are to be properly worn at all times.
- I. *Jacket/Outer Garment*** The outer garment is to be the approved PCS Uniform Jacket/ Sweatshirt.

Note: Any driver who is found to not be in compliance with the shirt and dress code requirements outlined above, at the time they check in for work, will not be permitted to operate their bus.

SECTION 3

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, STAFF & PARENTS

3.01 TEMPORARY CHANGE OF BUS STOP PROCEDURES

- A. School Principals may authorize a ***temporary change*** to a bus stop under the following conditions:
- B. School principals who authorize a temporary change to a bus stop for a student will prepare a “***Temporary Permission Slip for Emergency Change of Bus Stop*** form, PCS 3-2421”. This form will be given to the bus driver when the student boards the bus.
- C. Drivers will give these forms to their assigned ***Field Operations Supervisor*** when they return to the bus compound at the end of the morning or afternoon runs; the driver must immediately notify Dispatch for any deviation from route requested.

3.02 DISCIPLINARY MEASURES FOR STUDENT MISCONDUCT

- A. In cases of repeated minor misconduct incidents or when a serious misconduct incident occurs, the offending pupil will be reported to the school principal or the principal’s designated representative. Drivers will submit a “***Report of Student Misconduct on a School Bus***” form on such students to the principal or designee for review and action, as appropriate.
- B. The school principal (or the principal’s designee) will determine appropriate disciplinary measures for the student’s actions based upon the driver’s report and any other input deemed necessary from the other students and/or student involved. Disciplinary measures will be in accordance with the requirements of the Pinellas County School Boards ***Student Code of Conduct***. The administrator/supervisor or assistant must reply to the Student Conduct Report, and notify the driver even if no action is to be taken. There shall be no limit to the number of Student Conduct Report forms a driver may write within a school year.

3.03 DUTIES OF THE SCHOOL BUS ASSISTANT

School bus assistants are assigned to ride on bus routes to ***assist*** drivers with the safe loading and unloading of special needs students, and to provide supervision of such students while the bus is enroute to and from the school. Drivers must be familiar with the duties and responsibilities of bus assistants and be prepared to assume them, should the assistant be absent from work or otherwise not available.

- A. The driver has the final responsibility for ensuring a safe ride for all students transported. School bus assistants work under the direction of the driver. School bus assistants are ***not*** employees of the Transportation Department.
- B. Pick-up and drop-off locations for all bus assistants will be determined by the Transportation Department’s ***Route Coordinators*** based on the needs of the student.

3.04 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

- A. In cases where the physical impairment of a student renders the student unable to get on and off the bus without assistance, parents shall provide the necessary assistance for helping their child get on and off at the bus stop.
- B. Drivers and transportation dispatchers will follow the procedures outlined below, when a parent or guardian fails to meet the bus, as required by Rules of the State Board of Education and School Board policy.
 - 1) ***First offense***. The driver will deliver the other students on the bus and then return to the stop or proceed to an alternate location (school, bus compound, police department, Department of Child and Family Services, etc.), as directed by their dispatcher.
 - 2) ***Second and third offenses***. Deliver other students on the bus, return to residence or school. The school will notify the ESE/Transportation Liaison upon return to the bus compound; the driver will complete a ***Driver’s Report of Incident*** form and submit it to their ***Field Operations Supervisor*** or ***Area Manager***.

3.04 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS *cont'd*

3) *Subsequent offenses.* transport student to alternate location (school, police department, Department of Child & Family Services, etc.) as directed by the dispatcher, field operations supervisor or area manager. The ESE liaison will schedule a mandatory meeting with the parent(s), school officials and Transportation.

SECTION 4

SCHOOL BUS CAPACITY/SCHEDULING

Note: Procedures for establishing and changing school bus routes and bus stops are in the Transportation Department's Routing Guidelines manual. Drivers will have a basic understanding of the criteria used by the staff of the department's School Bus Routing Office. Drivers shall promptly report any situation on their route which does not meet the criteria and procedures outlined in this section.

4.01 SCHOOL BUS CAPACITIES

- A. *Rule 6A-3.001 of the State Board of Education* requires school districts to plan and adjust school bus routes in such manner that, "insofar as practicable the full capacity of each bus will be utilized, without standees ..." The majority of the school buses owned/operated by the Pinellas County School District are "conventional" design buses with a rated seating capacity of 65 passengers. ***That means up to 65 passengers, plus the driver, can legally be transported on the bus.*** However, in order to hold a full load of 65 passengers, ***three (3)*** students must be placed in each seat on the bus, with the exception of the rearmost seat on the right side of the bus, which is shorter and therefore will hold only two students.
- B. The Pinellas County School District recognizes that it is not always practical or safe to place three (3) students to a seat on its school buses. While most elementary school students can be comfortably accommodated at 3 students per seat, the same is not necessarily true for middle school students or for high school students. For this reason, the Transportation Department has established the following ***suggested guidelines*** for its regular (non-lift) 65-passenger school buses:
- Elementary school: 60 - 65 students per bus (3 per seat)
 - Middle school: 50 - 55 students per bus (Smaller students 3 per seat; larger students 2 per seat)
 - High school: 44 students per bus (2 per seat)
- C. If the total number of students riding on the bus ***continually exceeds*** the suggested guidelines, then the driver will contact Dispatch and/or their ***Field Operations Supervisor*** and report the situation.

Note: These seating guidelines are just that - suggested guidelines - NOT requirements. Drivers can legally transport more middle school and/or high school students on their buses than called for in the guidelines, so long as they are not exceeding the rated seating capacity of the bus, which is 65 passengers for most our buses.

4.02 DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. ***School bus schedules are prepared, and changes made to them, only by the Transportation Department's School Bus Routing Office!*** Drivers who have requests for changes to their bus routes and/or bus stops will submit their requests ***in writing*** to their assigned ***Field Operations Supervisor***. Drivers will make notes on a copy of their ***Route Report*** of the change(s) they are requesting and the reason(s) for it, and then send the ***Route Report*** to their assigned ***Field Operations Supervisor***. The ***Field Operations Supervisor*** enters the change into the database and issues the driver an issue number. In the event of an emergency situation, drivers will contact their ***Field Operations Supervisor*** or ***Area Manager*** for immediate assistance.
- B. Drivers will ***immediately*** report any hazards on the bus route or at bus stops which might offer an actual or potential threat to the safety of transported students to ***Dispatch*** for their assigned bus compound, and to their assigned ***Field Operations Supervisor*** or ***Area Manager***.
- 1) ***Schedule Compliance***. Student stops should be made at the time indicated on the route schedule on file in the Transportation Routing Office. ***Drivers will try not to arrive at a stop ahead of schedule, even if it's only a minute or so early.*** If for some reason you fall behind schedule, notify your dispatcher by two-way radio if you are running more than fifteen (15) minutes behind schedule.

4.03 PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING DRIVERS TO BUS ROUTES, SHUTTLES, AND ACTIVITY RUNS

Procedures for assigning drivers to bus routes, shuttles, and activity runs are based on departmental seniority as per the contract with SEIU/ Florida Public Services Union. Each driver will bid on a specific route prior to the new school year. The procedures used to determine equipment assigned to specific routes are listed by priority:

- Needs of the students
- Departmental needs
- Documented physical requirements of the driver

SECTION 5

"OPPORTUNITY ROUTES", FIELD TRIPS, HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM PROCEDURES

5.01 "OPPORTUNITY" ROUTES

A. *Eligibility for pay incentive.*

- 1) Drivers assigned to school bus routes serving the schools/programs listed below will be eligible to receive the "Opportunity" Route Pay Supplement. Bus routes serving these schools/programs will be clearly designated *before* drivers bid for routes prior to the opening of school.

A. *ESE Centers:*

- Richard L. Sanders
- Hamilton Disston
- Calvin Hunsinger
- Nina Harris
- Paul B. Stephens

B. *Alternative schools/programs:*

- Bayside High School
- Clearwater Intermediate School
- Lealman Intermediate School
- Pinellas Secondary High School
- Pinellas Secondary Middle School

2) *All lift bus drivers*

- 3) Drivers assigned to bus routes other than those serving the schools/programs listed in paragraph B(1), above, will be eligible to receive the "Opportunity" route pay incentive when students with the following exceptionalities are being transported on the bus and there is *no bus assistant assigned* to ride on the bus:

- Emotional/behavioral disabilities (EBD)
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Wheelchair bound student
- Other physically impaired/orthopedically impaired students who require assistance getting on and off the bus (PI/OI)
- Pre-kindergarten students enrolled in an ESE program
- Infants and other pre-kindergarten students being transported in child safety restraints

B. *Review to determine eligibility for pay incentive.*

- 1) Drivers who believe they should be receiving the "*Opportunity*" route pay incentive may submit a request to their *Area Manager*. All drivers requesting the "*Opportunity*" route pay incentive because they believe they meet the criteria in paragraphs A (2) and A (3), above, must go through the review process for the pay supplement to be authorized.
- 2) *Area Manager* will review the driver's request and determine whether or not the route meets the criteria for the "Opportunity" route pay supplement. The determination of the *Area Manager* will be *final*.

5.02 TYPES OF FIELD TRIPS

- A. ***Trips operating during school days.*** Pick-ups for these trips will not be done ***before 10:00 a.m.*** Buses must be able to return to the school or other drop-off location ***no later than 1:00 p.m.***
- B. ***Night trips.*** Night trips are those trips which are scheduled to begin ***after 5:30 p.m.*** on school days.
- C. Trips operating on weekends, holidays, and other ***days when school is not in session.***
- D. ***Over-night trips.*** Trips that are more than 24 hours in duration (Special Olympics, etc.)
- E. ***Emergency trips.*** A trip is considered to be an emergency trip when any of the following conditions apply:
 - Transportation is notified that a driver is a no-show at the trip pick-up location.
 - A driver notifies transportation on the day of the trip they will not be able to work.
*Note: If a driver calls off **before 12:00 p.m. (noon)** for a P.M. trip, it shall not be treated as an emergency.*
 - Transportation receives a same-day request from a customer for field trip buses.

5.03 DRIVER SIGN-UP FOR FIELD TRIPS

- A. Drivers wishing to participate in field trips will sign-up during the in-service training workshop for drivers, conducted before school starts in August. Only full-time permanent drivers will be eligible to sign up to do field trips. Drivers who do not wish to sign-up for field trips shall be excused from doing them. New drivers completing the basic driver training class after the pre-school training workshop may sign up for field trips when they are appointed to full-time permanent status.
- B. Sign-ups for field trips shall be done by the following categories:
 - School day field trips
 - Night field trips and weekend/holiday/non-school day field trips
 - Emergency field trips
 - Overnight field trips (*see paragraph c, below, on special procedures for overnight field trips*)
- C. Sign-ups for **overnight field trips.** Due to the extremely small number of overnight field trips, sign-ups for them will be limited to only full-time permanent drivers with at least five (5) years departmental seniority. The sign-up window is open once every (5) years. Drivers may sign up on bid day and during the Compound meeting day. The sign up window will close at the end of the Compound meeting day.
- D. Specialized sign-ups for field trips (for example, two or three days of the week only) will not be permitted. The only exception to this shall be when a driver has a shuttle or activity run attached to their bus route, in which case the driver may sign up to do trips on days or evenings when they are not required to drive a shuttle or activity run.
- E. There will be a holiday sign up for those who would like to drive during Thanksgiving Recess, Winter Recess, and Spring Recess. First choice for Recess will be given to drivers on Trip List. These lists will be posted in each bus compound and drivers will be chosen by departmental seniority.
- F. If a driver calls off a scheduled trip, he/she cannot do a field trip in the AM or PM.

5.04 PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING DRIVERS TO FIELD TRIPS

- A. ***General Procedures.***
 - 1) All field trips will be assigned to drivers who have signed-up for them on a rotating basis, with the most senior driver at each bus compound (based on departmental seniority) being given the first trip and the next most senior driver being offered the next trip and so on until all drivers who have signed up to do field trips have been offered a trip. The number of hours per trip will be equalized as far as possible on a monthly basis by increasing or decreasing the number of trips assigned to drivers.
 - 2) At no time is a driver allowed to take a member of their own family on a field trip unless that person is a member of the group who contracted for the trip.
 - 3) Unless there is an emergency, shuttles and activity runs will not be covered so a driver can do a field trip.

5.04 PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING DRIVERS TO FIELD TRIPS, *cont'd*

- 4) Drivers who are absent from work for any reason other than **prior preapproved leave** will not be given field trips to “make up” the time they were absent. However, drivers who are on the overnight trip list and who are absent from work will be contacted by the field trip clerk to give them the opportunity to refuse or accept overnight trips.
- B. **Specific Procedures.**
- 1) A driver’s schedule must permit them to be available to do a trip in order for them to be considered for assignment. Drivers will not be assigned to a trip if the trip assignment would cause them to be unable to complete their assigned bus route, shuttle, or activity run. Shuttles and activity runs will not be “covered” in order to permit drivers to do a field trip. It is the driver’s responsibility to give their **Field Trip Clerk** a copy of their current schedule.
 - 2) **Specialized equipment needs.** Some field trips require the use of special equipment (for example, a bus with a wheelchair lift). Drivers must be qualified on the operation of such specialized equipment in order to be considered for assignment to such trips.
 - 3) Assignment rosters will be maintained for the duration of the school year.
- C. Drivers who have signed-up for field trips are required to complete all assigned trips. Drivers who have signed-up to do field trips, but who will not be available due to a personal commitment (doctor’s appointment, etc.), will notify their **Field Trip Clerk** or **Field Operations Supervisor, in writing**, on a form provided for such purpose. Drivers will, whenever possible, make this notification at least **three (3) working days** prior to the scheduled date for the field trip.
- D. Drivers participating in field trips who refuse more than two (2) field trip assignments without good and sufficient reason will be removed from the field trip list. Extenuating circumstances will be evaluated by the driver’s **Area Manager** and, upon proper documentation, will not be held against the driver.
- E. Schools and other organizations requesting school buses for a field trip are required, by policy of the Pinellas County School Board, to submit their requests to the Transportation Department at least ten (10) working days in advance of the trip. However, on some occasions, it may not be possible for the school to do this. When a last-minute request for buses is received by the Transportation Department, Transportation Management will make a reasonable effort to select a driver in accordance with the procedures set forth in paragraphs A(1) and B(1), above.

5.05 PAYMENT TO DRIVERS FOR FIELD TRIPS

- A. Drivers who participate in field trips on school days will be paid a minimum of two (2) hours pay or actual time worked, whichever is greater
- B. Drivers who participate in field trips at night or on non-school days will be paid a minimum of four (4) hours time or actual time worked, whichever is greater. Any trip that **exceeds the agreed minimum hours to be paid** will be paid an additional fifteen (15) minutes prior to and fifteen (15) minutes after completion of the assigned trip plus travel time. This additional time paid will be for the purpose of preparing and cleaning the bus assigned to the trip.
- C. In the event a field trip is canceled at the school, drivers shall be paid a minimum of two (2) hours or actual time worked, whichever is greater. Summer trips and non school days shall be paid a minimum of four (4) hours or actual time worked, whichever is greater.
- D. Drivers will be provided with a copy of a **Field Trip Request** form for recording of information regarding time worked and mileage traveled on the field trip. This form will be completed by the driver, in accordance with the following directions:
- 1) **Mileage information.** Drivers will take a count of the mileage traveled **one-way only** on the trip, and then double it. **(Be accurate - this is a must!!)**

5.05 PAYMENT TO DRIVERS FOR FIELD TRIPS, *cont'd*

- 2) ***Time worked.*** Drivers will record only **actual time worked**. Payroll clerks will make adjustments for compound/administrative time and other contractual requirements, as needed.
- D. Drivers will turn in their completed (***Field Trip Request*** form) to their compound ***Field Trip Clerk no later than the end of the next working day after the operation of the field trip.*** Failure to comply with this requirement will be cause for removal of the driver from the field trip list.

5.06 OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR FIELD TRIPS

- A. Newer buses will be assigned to night/weekend field trips when necessary and/or appropriate. Drivers who need a bus other than the one they normally drive will contact the ***Bus Service Recorder*** at their compound in order to get another bus to use for the field trip.
- B. Radio and maintenance coverage will be provided whenever buses are out on field trips.
- C. It is the responsibility of the driver to know where the field trip destination is, and how to get to it. Drivers must plan out the route they will take with particular attention to:
- Special situations or potential problems along route (low clearance bridges, road construction, etc.)
 - Required tolls (generally the teacher or chaperone is required to pay the tolls on a field trip). It is a good idea for the driver to have an alternate route planned, in case the teacher/chaperone does not wish to pay the tolls.
 - Parking at the field trip destination. (***Note: if there is a fee for parking, the teacher or chaperone is generally required to pay it.***)
 - Drivers must also be prepared to handle any emergencies along the route. If the field trip will take the bus outside of the normal area of operations, the driver may not always be able to use the two-way radio on the bus. Drivers should therefore have the telephone numbers of other transportation compounds near their destination, so they can call for assistance, if needed.
- D. The following ***DRIVER'S CHECKLIST*** shall be used prior to departure for each field trip:
- 1) The driver will introduce him/herself to the students/teachers/coaches/chaperones riding on the bus for the field trip.
 - 2) The driver is required to tell the passengers the rules for riding school buses. This is being done to help make sure everyone has a safe ride.
 - Direct the attention of the passengers to the sign posted in the front of the bus: ***Bus Safety Rules.*** Briefly review the items contained in the instructions.
 - Drivers are required to instruct their student passengers on the proper use of lap belts, and will instruct the students they transport to "Buckle Your Lap Belts."
 - Drivers are required to instruct their passengers on the emergency evacuation procedures prior to beginning a field trip (some passengers do not ride a bus daily and may have not been made aware of the safety procedures prior to riding your bus).
 - Direct the attention of all passengers to the ***EMERGENCY EXITS.*** Briefly explain how to operate the emergency exit doors and windows on the bus. Also, explain to the passengers how they would be expected to evacuate the bus, in an emergency situation.
 - Direct the attention of the adult passengers to the ***FIRE EXTINGUISHER.*** Briefly explain how to operate the fire extinguisher.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR FIELD TRIPS, cont'd

- E. DRIVERS WILL NOT LEAVE THE FIELD TRIP SITE UNLESS THEY ARE SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED TO DO SO BY THE PERSON FROM THE SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE TRIP. Drivers who fail to comply with these procedures will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with School Board Policy. If the person in charge gives a driver permission to depart the field trip site, the driver will not be away from the location for more than one-half (1/2) hour. A driver who wants to leave the field trip site for more than one-half (1/2) hour must get specific permission to be absent for the longer period of time from the person from the school or organization who is in charge of the trip.

Note: If the driver is on a mid-day field trip and takes a lunch break, driver must make a note on their time sheet that they "TOOK A LUNCH BREAK." While lunch breaks are normally unpaid time, in this particular case, drivers will be paid for the time.

5.07 PROCEDURES FOR EVACUATIONS DUE TO HURRICANE OR TROPICAL STORM

The Tampa Bay area is subject to hurricanes and tropical storms. In the event Pinellas County Emergency Management Officials order an evacuation due to an approaching hurricane or strong tropical storm, the Pinellas County Schools Transportation Department will be required to provide buses to assist with the evacuation of elderly/limited mobility persons to designated shelters. The number of buses and drivers the department will be required to provide to assist with an evacuation effort will depend on the specific areas of the county which are ordered to evacuate. The following special procedures will apply for evacuations due to a hurricane or strong tropical storm.

- A. Drivers *who are wheel chair trained* will be given the opportunity to sign-up to participate in hurricane/tropical storm evacuation duty. The hurricane/tropical storm season runs from June 1st to November 30th. (Driver sign-ups for hurricane/tropical storm evacuation duty will be done twice a year.)
(Note: Sign-up forms for this are to be submitted to the driver's Field Operations Supervisor, not to the Field Trip Clerk.)
- B. In the event an evacuation is ordered due to an approaching hurricane or strong tropical storm, drivers will be assigned to evacuation duty in accordance with the following criteria:
- 1) Departmental seniority
 - 2) Specific needs as established by evacuation orders (for example, in many cases the department will be required to provide buses equipped with a wheelchair lift)
- C. Should more than one evacuation be ordered during the course of a storm season, drivers who did not get the chance to participate in the first evacuation will be called before those drivers who previously had the opportunity to participate.
- D. Drivers who have signed-up to participate in hurricane/tropical storm evacuations will not be permitted to refuse.
- E. In the unlikely event that hurricane/tropical storm evacuation requirements exceed the number of available volunteer drivers, transportation management reserves the right, in accordance with provisions of the *SEIU/ Florida Public Services Union*, to require drivers to work in support of the evacuation effort. Drivers will not have the right to refuse such work, but may request to be excused. Drivers who are involuntarily called to work for hurricane/tropical storm evacuation duty and who wish to be excused from such duty will make their request to their *Area Manager*. Driver requests to be excused from involuntary duty will not be granted for reasons of personal convenience.
- F. Drivers who are called for hurricane/tropical storm evacuation duty will receive one and one half (1 ½) times their normal hourly pay for all hours worked regardless of the time worked that week. In no event will the driver receive less than two (2) hours of pay at their time and a half rate. It is not required that an employee work a minimum of two (2) hours if the task for which the employee was called to perform can be accomplished in less time.

SECTION 6
ATTENDANCE POLICY, PAYROLL PROCEDURES

6.01 ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Drivers are expected to be prompt and punctual in their attendance on all work days in accordance with the current school calendar and their assigned schedule and/or contract.

6.02 CHECK-IN/OUT POLICY

A. At the beginning of every school year, drivers will be provided with a (*Scheduled Hours Worksheet*) form to document the scheduled hours they will be paid on a daily basis. The scheduled check-in time for the driver will be included on this form. The (*Scheduled Hours Worksheet*) form will be updated as necessary throughout the course of the school year to reflect changes to the driver’s bus route and/or bus assignment.

- 1) Drivers are expected to report for work on time, every work day, for every scheduled shift (morning and afternoon).
- 2) *Morning clock-in.* Drivers must report for work at their assigned bus compound at their scheduled clock-in time in the morning, as noted on the “*Scheduled Hours Worksheet*” form. Drivers may not clock-in more than *fifteen (15) minutes* before their scheduled clock-in time. The only exceptions are the *satellite locations* which will follow the established check-in procedures.
- 3) *Afternoon clock-out.* Drivers will not be required to clock-out until the end of their scheduled work day. Drivers must clock-out at their assigned bus compound according to the designated check-out procedures at the end of each day. The only *exceptions* to this procedure are when a driver is on a night trip.
Compound/Administrative Time

- 1) Driver check-in (a.m.) and check-out (p.m.)
- 2) Pre-trip inspection of bus before departure in morning
- 3) Post-trip inspection and cleaning of bus at the end of morning and afternoon runs
- 4) Non-driving activities to include:
 - Preparation of all required reports
 - Meetings with and phone calls to/from transportation staff, etc.
- 5) A driver’s compound/administrative time will be based on the bus they are assigned:

Regular bus with no lap belts or wheelchair lift	40 minutes per day
Regular bus with lap belts* or a wheelchair lift	45 minutes per day
Bus that has both a wheelchair lift and lap belts*	50 minutes per day

**This applies only to buses that have factory installed lap belts (i.e., 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 buses).*

6.03 NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

The *Contract* between the Pinellas County School Board and SEIU Florida Public Services Union states: “Employees who can not report to work for any reason (illness, tardy, emergency, etc.) shall contact their administrator/supervisor no later than the scheduled start of their workday, or as otherwise specified by the school or department.”

A. Drivers must notify their assigned Dispatch that they will not be reporting to work in accordance with the timeframes specified below:

- 1) Morning absences. Drivers must notify their assigned Dispatch at the earliest possible time, but not later than one-half (1/2) hour prior to the driver’s scheduled reporting time, or by 5:30 a.m., whichever is earlier.
- 2) Afternoon absences. Drivers must notify their assigned Dispatch at the earliest possible time, to begin the afternoon runs, or by 11:30 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday.

6.03 NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE, cont'd

- 3) Even in an emergency, drivers must make every possible effort to notify their assigned Dispatch. If the situation requires you to leave the area and you can not make the call yourself, have a relative or friend contact your Dispatch in your place.
 - 4) Drivers must provide their assigned Dispatch with the reason for their absence (illness of self, illness of family member, etc.) and the date/time at which they expect to be able to return to work, if possible.
- B. Drivers must notify their assigned Dispatch that they will not be reporting to work, with a complete update of their situation. The only times drivers will *not* have to contact their Dispatch on a daily basis are as follows:
- Admission to a hospital as a patient
 - Driver has a doctor's work release for a specified number of days
 - Approved Leave of Absence
 - Driver out-of-town for an emergency
- C. For any and all absences, drivers will complete and submit to Payroll an *Employee Certificate of Absence Report* no later than the end of the next work day.

6.04 NON-EMERGENCY USE OF SICK LEAVE FOR PERSONAL REASONS

Drivers have the right to use up to four (4) days of their sick leave for personal reasons, every year. Drivers must request non-emergency use of sick leave for personal reasons *at least two (2) working days in advance*. Requests to use sick leave for non-emergency personal reasons will be made to the *Compound Clerk* for the driver's assigned bus compound and will be approved by the driver's assigned *Field Operations Supervisor* or *Area Manager*. The number of personal leaves granted on any given day will be 6 drivers per area.

6.05 PROCEDURES TO APPLY FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- A. All School Board employees who need to be absent from work for an extended period of time are required to apply for a Leave of Absence. Specifically, if an employee needs to be absent for more than five (5) consecutive *unpaid* days, or for more than ten (10) consecutive *paid* days, the employee must apply for a Leave of Absence. Drivers may be granted a Leave of Absence for the following reasons:
- Illness of Self *
 - Caring for seriously ill child, spouse, or parent *
 - Birth of child to immediate family *
 - Adoption or foster care of a child *
 - Military duty

** Note:* Employees who need to be absent from work for these reasons may be eligible for leave under the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act (*FMLA*). The determination of whether or not an employee qualifies for leave under *FMLA* is made by the Personnel Department.

- B. Documentation must be submitted at the time the employee applies for a Leave of Absence to substantiate the need for the employee to be absent from work (doctor's note, copy of military orders, etc.). "*Request for Leave of Absence*" forms must be submitted to their designated *Compound Clerk* for processing and approval.
- C. *Requests for a Leave of Absence for Personal Reasons.* Drivers who need to be absent from work due to personal reasons for more than the four (4) days permitted by Union Contract and School Board Policy may request a Leave of Absence. However, the Transportation Department and the Pinellas County School Board has no obligation to grant such requests. Approved leave of absences for personal reasons are limited to no more than thirty (30) working days per year and are unpaid.
- D. After a driver has been out 45 work days for any leave, their route will be posted on the 46th work day of their absence.

6.06 ABSENCES, UNAUTHORIZED

- A. The ***Contract*** between the Pinellas County School Board and the SEIU Florida Public Services Union states: "Failure to call and report absence without good and sufficient cause as determined by the administrator/supervisor will be charged as an unexcused absence..." For an absence to be authorized, drivers must notify the Transportation Department as specified in Section 6.03, above.
- B. The ***Contract*** between the Pinellas County School Board and the SEIU Florida Public Services Union states: "Unauthorized absence shall be defined as any absence which is not properly chargeable to accrued leave, or which has not been approved under any of the other provisions provided for in this Agreement. Absence due to emergencies will be given full, fair, and equitable consideration." For an absence to be authorized, drivers must have accrued sick leave time available, and/or have requested and been approved for:
- Sick Leave, in accordance with the provisions of the ***Union Contract***
 - Approved Leave of Absence, in accordance with the provisions of the ***Union Contract***

Emergency circumstances shall be evaluated by the driver's assigned ***Field Operations Supervisor*** or ***Area Manager***, and, upon proper documentation, shall not be held against the employee.

Employees who are absent from work without authorization shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with School Board Policy and the ***Union Contract - Article 18, Sect. 3.***

6.07 PAYROLL PROCEDURES

Drivers are responsible for submitting all required paperwork used to process paychecks correctly and on time. The procedures listed below explain the process.

- A. When a driver is assigned to a route through the bid process or is assigned as a relief driver, their ***Field Operations Supervisor*** will complete a "***Scheduled Hours Worksheet*** form" for the driver and forward it to the ***Payroll Clerk***. Drivers should review the "***Scheduled Hours Worksheet***" form with their ***Field Operations Supervisor*** and make sure they understand what is on it, before the ***Field Operations Supervisor*** sends it to the ***Payroll Clerk***.
- B. Drivers must report all changes on their bus route to their assigned ***Field Operations Supervisor***, as soon as changes occur. The ***Field Operations Supervisor*** will then complete a new ***Scheduled Hours Worksheet*** form for the driver, in order to ensure the driver is correctly paid.
- C. Drivers who do field trips must submit a completed "***Field Trip Request***" form to their assigned ***Compound Clerk*** no ***later than the morning of the next working day*** after the completion of the field trip.
- D. If a driver has been ***assigned additional work and/or time during the day*** the driver will report to their designated work location/compound at the end of that work day to sign off on the (***Extra Duty Work Sheet***). This will help to ensure that the extra time the driver worked is approved for payment without delay.

SECTION 7

SCHOOL BUS OPERATING PROCEDURES

7.01 SCHOOL BUS OPERATION

Drivers must always operate their bus in accordance with the requirements of the Florida Uniform Traffic Control Law (Florida Statutes, Chapter 316) and the Rules of the Florida State Board of Education regarding Transportation of School Children (Chapter 6A-3).

7.02 SCHOOL BUS STOP LAW (Florida Statute 316.172)

Motorists who pass a stopped school bus which has activated the flashing red loading/unloading lights and stop arms have committed a serious violation of the law and have put the lives of school children in jeopardy. Drivers who observe this happen should do the following:

- A. If the motorist has violated the law, get a description of the vehicle (*must* include license plate number). Upon returning to the bus compound, complete a **Vehicle Passing Stopped School Bus** form and submit it to your assigned Operations Coordinator. Completed forms will be forwarded to the department's Driver Training & Safety Specialist, who will use the forms to prepare a monthly report on violations to local law enforcement agencies.
- B. Use of flashing amber and red loading/unloading lights. A school bus is a moving traffic signal. Drivers have the power, granted by law, to stop traffic. Accordingly, it is extremely important drivers know the legal and proper use of the flashing loading/unloading lights and stop arms.

7.03 LOADING AND UNLOADING OF STUDENT PASSENGERS

The procedure for loading/unloading students on highways and streets is outlined in *Figure 7-1 and 7-2*. **Drivers will follow this procedure without fail, whenever they are loading students on their bus, from a highway or street.** Drivers will comply with the following:

- A. No passenger will be picked up or discharged on an expressway, connection ramp, or shoulder on an expressway. Always load/discharge students on the extreme right side of the road. ***Never unload students into an open traffic lane!*** Loading/unloading will only be conducted at approved stops according to the route sheet.
- B. ***Keep kids in sight.*** Anytime the driver loses sight of a child when loading the bus, the driver must wait until the child is accounted for. The bus must ***never*** be put in motion until all children have been accounted for.
- C. Under no circumstances will a driver allow a pre-kindergarten student to depart the bus when being dropped-off at the designated afternoon stop, unless the student's parent or designated guardian is at the bus stop to receive the student. The same policy also applies to all special education (ESE) students who are picked-up and dropped-off at their home residence, unless the parent or guardian has an approved waiver on file with the ***Transportation Routing Office***. Upon arriving at a stop, when the parent or guardian is not present to receive the student, the driver will follow the procedure outlined below:
 - Notify your Dispatch Office via two-way radio
 - Complete remainder of run and then return to stop
 - If parent/guardian is still not there, notify the Dispatch Office via two-way radio
 - Transport student to alternate location (school, police department, Department of Child & Family Services, etc.) as directed by the dispatcher
- D. ***School loading/unloading zones.*** Drivers must be especially cautious at the school loading area. School locations are often especially congested with traffic and pedestrians. The scene is sometimes confused with kids getting in and out of private cars as well as buses.
 - 1) Approach the loading area very cautiously and at a slow rate of speed. The speed limit in school loading areas is ***five (5) miles-per-hour***.
 - 2) Drivers must be on their buses when students board the bus. Students will not be permitted on buses if the driver is not present. Drivers must also stay with their bus in the morning until the last student has unloaded.

7.03 LOADING AND UNLOADING OF STUDENT PASSENGERS, *cont'd*

- 3.) Flashing red or amber loading/unloading lights will not be used at school loading areas unless the bus is loading/unloading outside a designated bus circle.

LOADING STUDENTS ON THE HIGHWAY OR STREET

- Check mirrors and traffic
- Activate the turn signal, if a lane change is required
- Slow down
- Turn on amber loading/unloading lights **at least 200 feet** in advance of the stop location
- The bus will stop 200' from a controlled intersection where there is a traffic light, stop sign, etc., and 100' from an uncontrolled intersection.
- Pull as far to the right as possible, staying on the traveled portion of the roadway, and stop
- If possible, do not pull up any closer than 10 feet from the waiting students
- Apply the emergency brake, then shift to Neutral
- Cancel turn signal, if activated
- Cancel amber loading/unloading lights and activate red loading/unloading lights and stop arms
- Check all mirrors and traffic
- After traffic has come to a complete stop, open door as the signal for students to begin loading
- All student stops must be located a minimum of 200' from the railroad tracks.
- Load students in an orderly manner. Be sure all students are in the bus. Check mirrors to be sure.
- Close the door and check to see that students are seated
- Cancel red loading/unloading lights and stop arms
- Shift to Drive, then release the emergency brake
- Check all mirrors and allow traffic to clear before proceeding on route

FIGURE 7-1

UNLOADING STUDENTS ON THE HIGHWAY OR STREET

- Follow the same procedure which is used for **loading** as you bring your bus to a stop:
- Check mirrors and traffic
- Activate turn signal, if a lane change is required
- Slow down
- Turn on amber loading/unloading lights **at least 200 feet** in advance of the stop location
- All student stops must be located a minimum of 200' from the railroad tracks.
- The bus will stop 200' from a controlled intersection where there is a traffic light, stop sign, etc., and 100' from an uncontrolled intersection.
- Pull as far to the right as possible, staying on the traveled portion of the roadway, and stop
- Apply emergency brake, then shift to Neutral
- Cancel turn signal, if activated
- Cancel amber loading/unloading lights and activate red loading/unloading lights and stop arms
- Check mirrors and traffic before opening the service door. **Do not open the door to students until it is safe to cross the road.** This means traffic must have come to a complete stop!
- Students must remain seated until the door is opened
- When you have determined it is safe, open the door as the signal for students to begin unloading from the bus
- **Count** the students as they leave **and count them again** as they move away from the bus - especially those who must cross the road (**all** students must be accounted for!)
- **Check all mirrors again** to make sure all children are safely away from the bus
- Follow the **loading** procedure for getting underway:
- Close the door and check that all remaining students are seated
- Cancel red loading/unloading lights and stop arms
- Shift to Drive, then release the emergency brake
- Allow traffic to clear before proceeding on route

FIGURE 7-2

7.04 PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL BUSES EQUIPPED WITH LAP BELTS

Which school buses do these procedures apply to? For school buses owned/operated by Pinellas County Schools, all 2002 school buses and all school buses purchased thereafter (2003 and 2004 buses).

A. Instructions to student passengers.

- 1) ***Florida Statute 316.6145(2)*** requires that, "Each passenger on a school bus that is equipped with safety belts ... shall wear a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt at all times while the bus is in operation."
- 2) Drivers who will be transporting students on these buses will always inform their students to "Buckle Your Lap Belts." After drivers have instructed their students in the proper use of the lap belts, they will continue to remind students to "Buckle Your Lap Belts," as students board at bus stops and schools. They will also remind students to refasten the buckle on lap belts as students depart the bus at the end of the trip.

B. ***Non-compliance with procedures by student passengers.***

- 1) Any student who refuses to properly fasten their lap belt upon boarding a school bus will be given a second reminder to do so by the driver. If the student still refuses to comply after being given a second reminder, then the driver shall complete a ***Report of Student Misconduct on a School Bus*** form and submit it to the school administrator for follow-up and disciplinary action, as appropriate.

7.05 ITEMS NOT PERMITTED ON A SCHOOL BUS

Students are not permitted to bring items on board the bus which could be disruptive or present a safety hazard. The Pinellas County School Board has established a policy specifically prohibiting students from bringing the following items on board school buses (reference ***Student Code of Conduct***):

- 1) Animals, which includes, but is not limited to: dogs (***exception: service dogs***), cats, rabbits, hamsters/guinea pigs, birds, snakes, frogs, insects, etc.
- 2) Glass containers
- 3) Weapons or any dangerous object (includes firecrackers)
- 4) Facsimile of guns or knives
- 5) Alcohol
- 6) Cigarettes/tobacco products
- 7) Illegal/illicit drugs of any type
- 8) Large bulky items (or band instruments) which block the entrance ways, aisles or seats, or which deprive a student of a seat.
- 9) No sharp objects, balls, bats, hockey sticks, roller skates, skateboards, helium balloons, or cutting instruments of any kind are allowed.
- 10) In the event that a student attempts to board the bus with a prohibited item, the driver will ***immediately*** contact the Dispatch office for their assigned compound to report the incident and get instructions on how to proceed.

ITEMS PERMITTED ON A SCHOOL BUS:

- 1) Listed below are some of the musical instruments which meet the criteria permitting them to be carried on school buses:

<i>Piccolo</i>	<i>Flute</i>	<i>Clarinet</i>
<i>Alto Clarinet</i>	<i>Oboe</i>	<i>English Horn</i>
<i>Trumpet (Cornet)</i>	<i>Flugel Horn</i>	<i>Trombone (Tenor)</i>
<i>Alto Saxophone</i>	<i>Violin</i>	<i>Viola</i>

If band instruments are brought on the bus, they can not be placed on seats if it causes a student to have to stand.

- 2) Batons and drum sticks will be permitted on school buses only in their proper cases.
- 3) Tennis rackets with an appropriate case shall be permitted. ***Drivers must always make sure a clear and unobstructed path to emergency equipment and emergency exits are maintained at all times.***

7.06 SAFE DRIVING PRINCIPLES - EMERGENCY VEHICLES

- A. Emergency vehicles, such as fire trucks, police cars, and ambulances always have the right-of-way when they are giving warnings by means of a siren and/or warning lights. Upon the approach of such vehicles, drivers must pull their bus over as far to the right as possible, and stop until they have passed. If it is not possible to pull over to the right, then you should stop the bus, and let the emergency vehicle(s) go around you. If you are in the process of *unloading* students when approached by an emergency vehicle, leave your flashing red lights and stop arms activated, but immediately close the door to the bus and stop students from getting off. If you are in the process of *loading* students when approached by an emergency vehicle, leave your flashing red lights and stop arms activated, but immediately close the door to the bus and direct students to wait off the road until after the emergency vehicle has passed. You may also need to blow your horn, and/or wave at your students to get their attention to make sure they know they need to wait off the road.

7.07 SAFE DRIVING PRINCIPLES -- RAILROAD CROSSINGS

Drivers must carefully follow the requirements of the Florida Uniform Traffic Control Laws (Statute 316.159), and the Rules of the State Board of Education (Chapter 6A-3.0171) when approaching and crossing any set of railroad tracks.

The main reasons for train-motor vehicle accidents, as identified by federal safety officials, are:

- There are fewer trains than there used to be, so drivers are less alert.
- Radios and other noise (from students, etc.) distract drivers and drowns out the sound of train horns.
- Freight trains don't always run on specific schedules, so drivers are not anticipating them.
- Trains travel at high speeds. Buses accelerate slowly. It takes about ten (10) seconds for a bus to fully cross a typical set of railroad tracks.

All accidents at railroad crossings could be eliminated through properly executed procedures for crossing the tracks. The vehicles which are most likely to be destroyed by a train are those driven by people who have used the fatal crossing hundreds of times. They have used it so often, in fact, that they have blotted it right out of their mind. The round advance warning sign, the big "X" painted on the roadway, even the red flashing signals have become invisible to these drivers. It seems that familiarity with the crossing has turned into contempt for it. Such contempt can be fatal. ***There are no "second chances" at railroad crossings!***

- C. ***General procedures for crossing railroad tracks.*** The general procedures for crossing railroad tracks are outlined in *Figure 7-3*. ***Drivers must follow this procedure without fail, whenever they must cross a set of rail road tracks.***
- D. ***Crossing railroad tracks where crossing is controlled by warning signals (red flashing lights/bells).*** Drivers will stop, look and listen at every railroad crossing at which there are in operation flashing red warning lights and/or bells. Drivers will not proceed across railroad tracks when such warning devices have been activated, regardless of whether or not an approaching train is visible, unless directed by a law enforcement officer.
- E. ***Crossing railroad tracks where crossing is controlled by crossing gate or barrier.*** The procedures set forth in paragraph b., above, also apply to railroad crossings which have crossing gates or barriers in addition to warning signals. No driver will drive his/her bus through, around, or under any gate or barrier at a railroad crossing while such gate or barrier is closed or being opened or closed. The driver must ***never*** interpret a lack of movement as an indication that a crossing gate or barrier is either in or out of order, but must always assume the crossing is dangerous. In a situation where a crossing gate or barrier is fully or partially closed ***and*** other warning devices (red flashing lights and bells) have ***not*** activated the driver will not proceed to cross the tracks until he/she has conclusively ascertained that no train is approaching.

7.07 SAFE DRIVING PRINCIPLES -- RAILROAD CROSSINGS, cont'd

F. *Multi-track railroad crossings.*

- 1.) The driver must first determine if the bus must be stopped for each set of tracks, or if it is permissible to cross all of them at once. If there is enough room between each set of tracks for the bus, ***plus fifteen (15) feet in front of and behind the bus***, you must stop for each set of tracks.
- 2) If the bus must be stopped for more than one set of railroad tracks, the ***complete crossing procedure*** (see ***Figure 7-3***) must be followed for each and every set of tracks.
- 3) If you will be crossing more than one set of railroad tracks all at once:
 - Make sure no train is approaching on any of the tracks
 - If a train is approaching, wait until it has cleared the crossing to the point that ***all tracks are completely visible*** (be sure another train has not been hidden from view by the first train)

E. *No-Stop conditions.* Drivers are not required to stop before crossing abandoned railroad tracks. In order for a railroad crossing to be considered abandoned, ***all*** of the following conditions must apply:

- 1) The tracks have been abandoned pursuant to State or Federal Law.
- 2) The tracks have been covered or removed.
- 3) All signs, signals and other warning devices have been removed.

F. *Emergency procedures.* If a school bus stalls while crossing a set of railroad tracks, or some portion of the vehicle is left on the crossing for any reason, and a train is approaching, drivers will ***IMMEDIATELY*** take the following actions: Evacuate the bus and direct passengers to move away from the vehicle ***in the direction the train is approaching***, to avoid being hit by flying wreckage.

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR CROSSING RAILROAD TRACKS (Figure 7-3)

- 1) Drivers should approach and cross railroad tracks from the ***right*** lane of traffic, whenever possible. If a driver must cross railroad tracks in the left lane of traffic due to the way the bus route is set up, the driver will immediately contact their assigned Operations Coordinator or Area Supervisor and request rerouting of the bus to eliminate the need to cross railroad tracks from other than the right lane.
- 2) Deactivate the ***master switch*** for the student loading/unloading lights. Neither the amber nor the red flashing loading/unloading lights on the school bus shall be used at railroad crossings.
- 3) Activate the hazard lights (4-way flashers) ***at least 200 feet*** away from the railroad tracks. (NOTE: Other vehicles may attempt to pass the bus when the 4-way flashers (hazard lights) are activated and the driver begins to slow down the school bus. Drivers must always be alert to this possibility and watch for vehicles abruptly pulling out to pass.)
- 4) Turn off all noise-making devices, or activate noise abatement switch if bus is so equipped. Turn on dome lights as signal to students to stop talking and remain quiet.
- 5) Open the driver window completely.
- 6) Bring the bus to a stop at least fifteen (15) feet, but not more than fifty (50) feet, from the nearest rail of the railroad crossing.
- 7) When stopped, apply the emergency/parking brake.
- 8) Shift to Neutral
- 9) Fully open the service door.
- 10) ***Look*** carefully in ***both directions*** and ***listen*** for approaching trains.
- 11) When it is clear to do so, close the service door, shift to Drive and release the emergency/parking brake, (Never let the bus sit in Neutral without the emergency/parking brake being applied!)
- 12) Noise abatement switch (if bus is so equipped) may be released at this time.
- 13) ***Look*** both ways and ***listen again***.
- 14) If the tracks are still clear, go. ***Drivers will not shift gears nor stop until the bus has completely cleared the railroad crossing. Always make sure there is sufficient space on the other side of the tracks for the bus to completely clear the crossing without any part of the bus being left on the crossing.*** Any time the route is designed such that the railroad crossing is immediately preceding an intersection, the driver must be certain the bus can proceed without the need to stop, ***before*** beginning to cross the tracks.
- 15) Turn off hazard lights (4-way flashers) and close window next to driver's seat.

7.08 SAFE DRIVING PRACTICES -- RESTRICTED CLEARANCES

Drivers must always be on the lookout for overhanging or projecting obstructions when driving near curbs or on narrow roads. Beware of low hanging tree limbs! If you encounter an unsafe condition, complete a *Driver Report on Road Hazards* form and give it to your assigned *Field Operations Supervisor* or *Area Manager*.

7.09 USE OF CELLULAR TELEPHONES

The use of cellular telephones while driving a Pinellas County school bus is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**. Cellular telephones may be used on a school bus only when the bus is parked.

7.10 COMPOUND TRAFFIC RULES AND STORAGE OF BUSES

- A. The speed limit within the bus compounds is *five (5) miles-per-hour*.
- B. Fueling of buses. The procedure below will be followed when refueling school buses:
 - 1) Set the emergency/parking brake, shift to neutral or park, and shut off the engine.
 - 2) All passengers must get off the bus and wait at least **50 feet** away while the bus is being refueled.
 - 3) Insert your pump key in the designated slot on the fuel pump. Follow the instructions to enter the mileage reading from the bus odometer.
 - 4) Never back the bus away from the fuel pumps unless the *Bus Service Recorder* or designated assistant instructs you to do so and someone is available to direct you.
- C. When returning from the morning or afternoon runs, or a field trip, drivers must park their bus in the designated parking space/slot for that particular vehicle.
- D. When returning from the morning or afternoon runs, or a field trip, drivers must complete the *post-trip inspection*.
 - 1) Check for adequate fuel. If there is any doubt that the amount of fuel is enough to complete the next trip, get the bus fueled. There can be **no excuse** for allowing your bus to run out of fuel!
 - 2) Check for vandalism of seats, interior paneling, and windows which might have taken place while you were out on the road.
 - 3) Collect any clothing or materials students may have left behind on the bus. Have them ready to give back to the owners the next time you see them.
 - 4) Clean up any mess and pick up any trash or refuse. Sweep the bus and place trash/refuse into the proper receptacle (do not sweep trash/refuse out the bus and on to the ground!).
 - 5) Make a note of supplies you might need (for example, items for the First Aid Kit or report/inspection forms). Be sure you remember to get what you need before departing on the next trip.
 - 6) Secure the vehicle.
 - Make sure the emergency/parking brake is engaged and the gear shift is set to Neutral or Park!
 - Remove the ignition key.
 - Close all windows, vents, and doors.
- E. Complete any necessary forms or reports and deliver them to your *Dispatcher, Field Operations Supervisor* or *Area Manager* before departing the compound.
- F. Always follow your *Area Manager's* procedures for turn-in of your bus keys. Put your bus keys back up on the compound's key board, unless instructed to do otherwise.
- G. Drivers who experience a mechanical problem with their bus while they are on a route or trip must make sure a *Driver Request for Repair* form is promptly completed and turned in to the *Bus Service Recorder* or *Lead Mechanic*, upon returning to the compound from a trip. Drivers are not permitted in the garage service bays and should stay clear of buses being serviced on the apron to the bays.

7.11 NO IDLING POLICY, ENERGY CONSERVATION and EMISSIONS REDUCTION

The cost of pupil transportation is a major item in the annual budget of the school district and the cost of fuel for school buses is a large part of that budget. The amount of money available to run our transportation system is not unlimited. It is imperative, therefore, that drivers make a reasonable effort to get the most miles-per-gallon out their buses. They do this by the way they operate the bus. *Saving fuel saves money and that can save jobs!*

A. ***No Idling Policy.*** As of the 2006/2007 school year. PCS has a strict “no idle” policy for all school buses in compliance with Federal Law. As a general rule, buses should be moving whenever the engine is on. The engine should be turned off after arriving at loading or unloading areas. The school bus should not be restarted until it is ready to depart. ***Federal Motor Carriers Rule 62-258.420, Heavy Duty Idling Reduction,*** effective December, 2008, prohibits idling of commercial vehicles, including school buses, for longer than five minutes except under certain situations:

- ***When a special needs bus is stopped and the lift door is open and lift is in use***
- ***When the bus is stopped at a railway crossing and a train is approaching, the bus is required to wait for the train until it passes.***
- ***There are large numbers of passengers at some bus stop location and the five minute time limit could be exceeded when the bus is stopped for either loading or unloading students.***

B. ***Stop and start smoothly and gradually.*** Plan ahead. Do not accelerate to an unnecessary speed when you can see ahead that soon you are going to have to stop again. When you can see that you are going to have to stop, take your foot off the accelerator sooner and coast so that you slow down more gradually. The sooner you get your foot off the accelerator, the more fuel you save. In starting up, acceleration should be moderate. A bus can only get under way so fast and so over-accelerating merely wastes fuel.

C. ***Maintain correct tire pressure.*** Low air pressure in tires causes higher rolling resistance and leads to increased fuel consumption. If a tire appears to be low or if the bus keeps pulling to the left or the right, have the tires checked.

D. ***Maintain smooth, steady driving at constant speeds whenever possible.*** It takes much less fuel to maintain a given speed than it does to accelerate up to that speed. The most fuel efficient way to drive is at a steady speed, avoiding constant changes up and down through acceleration and braking.

E. Whenever the bus is parked for a period of time which exceeds two or three minutes, turn off all lights and switches to conserve the battery. This includes stops made at schools while waiting to load or unload students, waiting in line for fuel, etc.

7.12 USE OF AM/FM RADIOS ON SCHOOL BUSES

A. School buses purchased by Pinellas County Schools are equipped with factory installed AM/FM radios. School bus drivers have the option to play the radio on these buses while they are transporting students. The use of a radio can provide drivers with an effective tool to help promote good student conduct on buses. School bus drivers need to understand, however, that some radio stations broadcasting in the Tampa Bay area have programming that contains obscene and profane language, and/or discussions of adult subjects which could be objectionable to some students and parents. Also, many radio stations in the Tampa Bay area have programming of a religious nature, which could be objectionable to some students and parents. Drivers must be sensitive to this issue, and must take care not to have radio stations playing in the presence of students that broadcast such programming.

SECTION 8
USE OF TWO-WAY RADIOS

8.01 GENERAL PROCEDURES

All school buses operated by Pinellas County Schools are equipped with a two-way radio. These radios are to be used primarily for emergency situations (accidents, incidents, and breakdowns). Transportation Dispatch also uses the two-way radios to assist drivers who are in need of immediate information in order to be able to complete their bus route.

- A. **Night/weekend field trips.** When a driver is out on a field trip which is operating when the transportation department's offices are closed (nights, weekends, holidays), the two-way radio on the bus must be set on **channel 3**. Pinellas County Schools Police monitors radio calls on channel 3 during these times and can contact transportation supervisory personnel to provide assistance in an emergency.
- B. All radio transmissions shall be made in a professional and business like manner at all times.
- C. No personal messages will be transmitted nor personal conversations between buses be allowed.
- D. When called, drivers will always answer with their bus route number, not with "go ahead" or a similar phrase. Likewise when you call Dispatch, you will be answered with your bus route number.

8.02 RADIO CODES

To ensure all two-way radio transmissions are understood and all messages transmitted uniformly, the code system detailed on the following table will be used for all radio transmissions.

CODE	WHAT IT MEANS
10-3	<i>All units stop transmitting until advised by Dispatch</i>
10-4	Yes/affirmative response
10-7	Unit is out-of-service
10-8	Unit is in-service
10-9	Please repeat your message/say again
10-20	Current location (as in: "What's your 10-20?")
10-22	Disregard last transmission
10-23	Stand-by (wait a minute while I check on something, etc.)
10-26	Last transmission was received and understood
10-45	Call me by telephone
10-51	I'm enroute (as in: "Are you 10-51 to ____?")
10-54	No/negative response
10-98	I have arrived/completed assignment
SIGNAL 0	Armed Student
SIGNAL 4	School Bus Accident (this code is to be used only for accidents involving a school bus!)
SIGNAL 13	Suspicious vehicle (as in: "Signal 13 following my bus...")
SIGNAL 13P	Suspicious person (as in: "Signal 13P at bus stop...")
SIGNAL 22	Disturbance at bus stop
SIGNAL 38	Assault/fight
SIGNAL 49	Injury on bus
SIGNAL 62	Disorderly conduct on bus

*** Note concerning requests for time checks: Dispatch will NOT respond to requests for time checks! A special time clock is provided at each bus compound for drivers and staff to use to set their watches with the correct time. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure their watch is set to the correct time. Drivers who abuse radio procedure in this manner shall be subject to disciplinary action.**

SECTION 9

SCHOOL BUS PASSENGER MANAGEMENT

At the start of every school year or when a new driver is assigned to a route, students should have each bus behavior expectation explained and demonstrated. Communication with students can be difficult, at times. Promote a positive bus environment. Drivers who have frequent positive interactions with students generally experience significantly better bus behavior than drivers who primarily emphasize reprimands and punishments.

Remember, having the students in their seats will encourage a safe bus ride. The school bus shall not depart the bus circle or bus stop until all students are safely seated.

TWENTY-FIVE (25) WAYS TO MAINTAIN STUDENT DISCIPLINE

(Reprinted from *School Bus Fleet Magazine*.)

- 1) Never give an order you do not mean to enforce.
- 2) Give one direction or instruction at a time to stimulate action, not to check it. Say, "do this," rather than "don't do that."
- 3) Give a child time to react.
- 4) Have a reason for what you ask a child to do, and when possible, take time to give the reason.
- 5) Be honest in what you say and do. A child's faith in you is a great help.
- 6) Be fair. It is not punishment, but injustice that makes a child rebel against you.
- 7) Be friendly and always show an interest in what they are doing.
- 8) Commend good qualities and actions.
- 9) Try to be constructive, not repressive, in all dealings with children.
- 10) Remember that a sense of humor is extremely valuable.
- 11) Never strike a child.
- 12) Do not judge misconduct on how it annoys you.
- 13) Do not take your personal feelings and prejudices out on the children.
- 14) Maintain poise at all times. Do not lose your temper.
- 15) Remember, the tongue is the only keen-edged tool which grows sharper with constant use. Do not nag, bluff, or be officious. Remember to watch not only what you say, but how you say it.
- 16) Look for good qualities -- all children have them.
- 17) Do not pick on every little thing a child does. Sometimes, it is wiser to overlook some things.
- 18) Bear in mind that misbehavior is seldom willful. There is usually a cause -- and it may sometimes be you!
- 19) Listen for suggestions and complaints from the children. Be aware of their body language, as well as what they say.
- 20) Follow-up on all cases which have been disciplined. Be certain you still have the respect and confidence of the child.
- 21) Be sincere in your work.
- 22) Set a good example yourself. Model the behavior you want from your students.
- 23) Intelligence in handling youth consists of thinking faster than they do. If they can out-think you, you are not using your maturity and the advantage of your larger education. You should see possibilities before they become results. This is one of the secrets of leadership.
- 24) Defiance to established procedure comes from failure to keep the situation in hand. If there is a danger of a direct break, the child should not be forced. An adult's will should never be pitted against that of a child. It is far wiser to give some simple directions that will be mechanically obeyed and pick up the reins of control in a quiet way.
- 25) Never hold a child up to public ridicule. It is the surest way of creating a discipline problem.

Figure 9-1

9.01 PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOL BUS SAFETY RULES

Rules for student conduct on school buses are set forth in the Pinellas County School Board's *Student Code of Conduct*. Each of the Transportation Department's school buses has a list of bus rider safety rules posted inside so students shall know what is expected of them.

YOUR RIDE IS ALL ABOUT "SAFETY"

<p>Sit and stay in assigned seat Act responsibly and respectfully at all times Feeet, hands, and objects kept to self and inside the bus Emergency and railroad tracks - voices off Talk quietly to your neighbor Your driver is the leader</p>

Drivers are to instruct students on the rules of acceptable conduct at the beginning of each school term and as frequently thereafter as necessary. Drivers will enforce, to the best of their ability, all rules, regulations, and instructions which prescribe proper behavior on the part of transported students. Section 1006.147, Florida Statutes, requires districts to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying and harassment of students and staff on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, on school buses, and through school computer networks.

9.02 DRIVER GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING STUDENTS

Drivers are required by Florida Statute and Rules of the State Board of Education to maintain order and safe behavior by the students on the school bus. Rules for student conduct on the school buses are set forth in the School Board's *Student Code of Conduct*.

- A. Assign seating for the entire bus. Assigning seats for all riders can help a driver learn student names more rapidly, set a tone of behavioral control, and turn student seating into a familiar routing rather than a daily free-for-all. At the start of the year, create a seating chart for the bus. The suggested procedure for arranging seating is to load window to aisle or back to front according to stops. An accurate seating chart is required to be maintained at all times. A copy of the seating chart will be given to the school *Field Operations Supervisor*, and a copy will be left on the bus.
- B. Drivers will make every reasonable effort to deal with infractions of the rules of student conduct. If a driver overlooks the misbehavior of the student(s) in their care, they will lose the respect of the well-behaved students.
- C. In cases of minor infractions, the driver should warn the student(s) involved without stopping the bus, if possible.
- D. Drivers will, if at all possible, stop the bus if the behavior problem is a serious one. Change the students' seats when possible to de-escalate the situation. Drivers will immediately contact the dispatch office for their assigned area via two-way radio and provide them with details of the situation. If there is a physical confrontation between two or more students, drivers may take tall reasonable measures necessary to separate the students involved in the confrontation to preserve safety and prevent injury.
- E. Except in situations of an extremely unusual or serious nature, drivers will not park buses on the side of the road for an extended period of time. Such action should be limited to no more than five (5) minutes in duration. The driver will not return a group of students to a school in the afternoon after reaching a point approximately one-half (1/2) the distance between the school and the last stop on the trip. It is acceptable to pull into a nearby school for assistance; provided dispatch has been contacted and the school is notified. If you do have to return to a school, contact dispatch so they can call the school and arrange for an administrator to meet the bus. The driver is required to obtain the names of students leaving the bus. The driver will notify the *Field Operations Supervisor* and dispatch upon returning to the compound that the students have been removed from the bus.

9.03 DISCIPLINARY MEASURES FOR STUDENT MISCONDUCT

- A. Drivers will make every reasonable effort to deal with minor infractions of the rules of student conduct. The driver will give the child a verbal warning, go over the bus rules, change the student's seat, and request a school administrator to talk with the student prior to writing a report of misconduct. When it is necessary to write a report of misconduct, it will then be given to the school principal or his/her designee.
- B. Drivers will fill out a ***Report of Misconduct on a School Bus*** form in cases of repeated minor misconduct incidents, or when a serious misconduct incident occurs on a school bus and is witnessed by the driver. If the driver did not witness the incident, they will complete a ***Driver's Report of Incident*** form and submit it to their ***Field Operations Supervisor***. The ***Report of Misconduct*** shall be given to the school in a timely manner.
- C. There are many reasons for a request for video to be pulled:
 - 1) Sexual contact of any kind
 - 2) Fight
 - 3) Theft
 - 4) Repeated misconduct/misconduct related to safety
 - 5) AccidentShould there be a request made for a video to be pulled, a ***Request For a Video Criteria*** form will be filled out with approximate time, school, incident, route number, driver name and student name(s), if known. If the police are involved, the Bus Service Recorder is to be notified and a Video ***Tracking Form*** will accompany the video/DVR hard drive.
- D. Drivers will not physically discipline, nor suspend the transportation of any student. The driver should instruct every student they are only allowed to disembark the bus at their assigned bus stop or at the students' school under proper supervision. Should a student leave the bus at an unassigned bus stop, the driver will immediately contact dispatch and write a ***Report of Misconduct***. Drop-off of a student at any other location must be approved, in advance, by a School Principal/or designee, ***Dispatch, Field Operations Supervisor***, and/or ***Area Manager***. (***Note: Transportation is responsible to transport all students until such time as the parents have been properly notified that their child's bus riding privileges have been suspended.***)
- E. The school principal or his/her designee, will determine appropriate disciplinary measures for the student's actions based upon the driver's report and any other input deemed necessary from other students and/or the student involved.
- F. In the event a driver does not feel the school principal, or the principal's designee, is not adequately supporting them in matters pertaining to student misconduct, the driver will seek assistance from their assigned ***Field Operations Supervisor***. If the ***Field Operations Supervisor*** cannot resolve the matter, it will be referred to the ***Area Manager*** and/or appropriate ***Transportation Administrator***.

9.04 EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

- A. ***Handling behavior problems with Exceptional Education Students.*** The information on student behavior management contained in this Section of ***Driver Handbook*** applies to all students, including Exceptional Education Students. However, drivers must recognize that Exceptional Education Students are ***different*** from the children they may have been used to dealing with. Students with disabilities may have shorter attention spans, low tolerance for frustration, and difficulty in adjusting from one situation to another. These problems can result in episodes of serious student misconduct, which can endanger the well-being of other students and the safety of the bus, if the driver and bus assistant are not prepared to handle such situations in an effective manner.
- B. ***Dealing With Health Problems.*** The health of students on the bus is another problem drivers may face, particularly when transporting Exceptional Education Students.

9.04 EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS, *cont'd*

Drivers should learn as much as they can on what to do when faced with health problems in general, and who to contact for dealing with specific health needs.

- C. ***Exceptional Education Program Codes used on Edulog route sheets.*** The special program codes listed on this page are used in the ***Edulog*** computer assisted routing system to identify students enrolled in exceptional education programs. This information is provided to drivers, so they will be able to better meet the special needs and requirements of these students.

CODE	MEANING
C	OI (Orthopedically Impaired)
D	OT (Occupational Therapy)
E	PT (Physical Therapy)
F	SI (Speech Impaired)
G	LI (Language Impaired)
H	HH (Hard of Hearing)
I	VI (Vision Impaired)
J	EBD (Emotional Behavior Disorder)
K	SLD (Specific Learning Disabilities)
L	GIFTED
M	H/H (Hospital/Homebound)
O	DSI (Dual Sensory Impaired - Deaf/Blind)
P	AUT (Autism Spectrum Disorder)
S	TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury)
T	DD (Developmentally Delayed)
V	OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRED
W	ID (Intellectually Disabled)
LY	ESOL (English Not Primary Language - Limited English Ability)

Special caution to Drivers: Information on student enrollment in exceptional education programs and information pertaining to a student's disability and/or medical condition is ***Strictly Confidential***. Such information provided to drivers is ***"For Official Use Only"*** and must not be disclosed to unauthorized persons and/or persons without a legitimate ***"Need to Know"***. Drivers who fail to maintain the confidentiality of such information shall be subject to severe disciplinary penalties and may also be subject to civil liability in a court of law!

SECTION 10

FIRE PREVENTION, EMERGENCY STOPS, INCIDENTS/CRASHES

10.01 **FIRE PREVENTION**

- A. ***Fire prevention safety rules.*** Drivers shall observe the following fire prevention safety rules.
- 1) The engine must be turned off when refueling. No smoking or open flame shall be permitted within fifty (50) feet of the bus. Students shall not be allowed on or near the bus while refueling.
- B. ***Using a fire extinguisher.*** During any fire, time is of the essence. There is no time to be fumbling around trying to find the fire extinguisher or figuring out how to operate it. It is important that drivers know the location of the extinguisher, how to operate it, and how to fight a fire. The response to fire must be almost automatic. Operating instructions for the type of fire extinguisher carried on school buses are detailed below.
- 1) Pull the pin. A twisting motion should be used because there is a small safety wire that must be broken. The wire will break easier if it is twisted.
 - 2) Hold the extinguisher upright. It should always be held in an upright position. There is a tendency to hold it sideways, so a conscious effort must be made to keep it straight upright.
 - 3) Squeeze the trigger in short bursts.
 - 4) Direct the chemical at the base of the fire.
 - 5) Use a gradual side-to-side motion to cover the entire burning area.
 - 6) Decide whether or not to evacuate the bus. A school bus should always be evacuated when:
 - There is a fire
 - There is a potential for a fire to occur
 - The bus has come to a stop in a dangerous position
 - 7) Drivers are to take no chances in fighting a fire which would endanger their personal safety or that of the passengers. ***When in doubt, evacuate!***
 - 8) Seats are fire retardant, not fireproof.

10.02 **EMERGENCY STOPS**

- A. Students must ***NEVER*** be left unattended on board a school bus! If the situation is such that the driver must temporarily leave the bus, arrangements must be made for another driver, supervisor, or school staff member to meet the bus at the stop location.
- B. Decide whether or not to evacuate the bus.
- C. Contact Dispatch. Drivers will give the Dispatch Office as many details as possible concerning the situation.
- D. A safe location must be identified to stop the bus.
- E. When a situation occurs where a driver is unable to continue driving their bus, due to illness or other reasons, the driver will immediately contact the Dispatch Office for their assigned bus compound and request permission to make an unscheduled stop.

10.03 **PLACEMENT OF TRIANGULAR REFLECTORS**

When a school bus becomes disabled upon the traveled portion of any highway, or shoulder thereof, emergency warning devices must be placed on display immediately. Reflectors shall be set out as detailed below.

- A. Placement of triangular reflectors on a two-lane and/or multi-lane roadway.
- 1) Place the first reflector on the traffic side of the bus approximately ten (10) feet from the rear of the bus.
 - 2) Place the second reflector approximately one hundred (100) feet behind the bus.
 - 3) Place the third reflector approximately one hundred (100) feet in front of the bus.
 - 4) On a multi-lane highway, place the third reflector approximately two hundred (200) feet behind the bus

10.03 PLACEMENT OF TRIANGULAR REFLECTORS *cont'd*

- B. ***Estimating required distances.*** Drivers should pace off the distances, using the following guideline: generally, 10 feet is about 4 paces; 100 feet would be approximately 40 paces.

10.04 BUS INCIDENTS/CRASHES

- A. In all instances where a school bus is involved in an incident/crash, the driver will remain at the scene of the incident/crash until they have been released by the law enforcement officer(s) and the ***Field Operations Supervisor***, or ***Area Manager***.
- B. Drivers will assist injured persons to the limits of their ability and training in first aid.
- C. Drivers will immediately notify Dispatch for their assigned bus compound by two-way radio when they have an incident/crash while driving a school bus. If the bus is in an area which is out of radio range, drivers will call their Dispatch or Pinellas County Schools Police by telephone if they can get access to one promptly, or they may obtain assistance from bystanders or other motorists to call on their behalf.
- D. Drivers will, without fail, report ***every*** incident/crash regardless of how minor and regardless of damage. An incident/crash is defined as any time the vehicle (bus) comes into contact with another vehicle or object.
- E. When reporting an incident/crash, drivers must be specific as to location, time, and extent of injuries and/or bus damage.
- F. Drivers will immediately ask if any student is injured or feels any discomfort which could be associated with the incident/crash. If a student complains of pain or is visibly injured, even slightly, the incident/crash will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and the Transportation Department as an "accident with injuries." Students will be advised that if they feel any pain or discomfort after leaving the bus, to report it to their school office.
- G. If students are on the school bus at the time of the incident/crash, they will not be allowed to leave the scene, unless they need to be transported for medical treatment. ***(Note: Drivers can not forcibly restrain any student from leaving the bus at any time; however, drivers are not to instruct students to do anything other than to remain at the scene. If the parent of a student refuses to allow their child to remain at the scene, the driver will ask to see the parent's driver's license or other photo identification before allowing a student to depart, unless the parent is personally known to the driver. Drivers will also make sure to note the apparent condition of the student.)***
- H. Any person who is injured in a school bus incident/crash or who complains of pain or discomfort will not be released from the scene of the accident without being checked by emergency medical personnel or other certified medical persons.
- I. Drivers are to make no statements regarding fault to other parties involved in an incident/crash. Drivers are to be courteous, to offer to give their name, license number and insurance information, but will not argue with other parties or police officers. If requested to sign any statement other than one requested by the police, the driver is to refer the statement to their ***Field Operations Supervisor*** or ***Area Manager***.
- J. If a driver is issued a traffic citation (ticket) in connection with an incident/crash involving a school bus, the driver will not argue with the police officer nor refuse to sign the traffic citation (either can result in arrest).
- K. ***Drug and Alcohol Testing Requirements.*** Under certain circumstances, Federal and State Law require drivers to be tested for drugs and alcohol after having an incident/crash. If any of the following conditions apply, the driver ***MUST*** be tested immediately for drugs and alcohol:
- the incident/crash results in a fatality (regardless of fault)
 - the driver was cited for a moving violation and any person involved had to be transported from the scene of the incident/crash for immediate medical treatment
 - the driver was cited for a moving violation and any of the vehicles involved in the incident/crash had to be towed from the scene

10.04 BUS INCIDENTS/CRASHES, cont'd

Any driver who refuses to submit to an immediate drug/alcohol test required as a result of an incident/crash meeting the criteria outlined above will be subject to dismissal from his/her position.

- L. If a driver is issued a citation for a moving violation in connection with an incident/crash involving a school bus, and a **Field Operations Supervisor**, or **Area Manager** is not present at the incident/crash scene when the citation is issued, the driver will **immediately** notify his/her Dispatch Office, or Pinellas County Schools Police if it is after normal working hours.
- M. If the bus is cleared to be driven (not towed) from the scene of the incident/crash, and the driver is not required to take a drug/alcohol test, the driver will immediately return the bus to their compound where it will be inspected and a damage/repair estimate prepared, unless instructed otherwise by the **Field Operations Supervisor** or **Area Manager**.
- N. If a child restraint system was in use at the time of the accident, they **must** be inspected or replaced if it is necessary. Drivers should check their **Bus Service Recorder** at their compound before transporting infants or toddlers after an accident, to make sure this has been done.
- O. **Incident/Crash Reports.**
 - 1) Drivers must always complete the **Driver's Report of Vehicle Incident/Crash** form when they have been involved in an incident/crash with a school bus. The completed report form must be submitted to the driver's assigned **Field Operations Supervisor** or **Area Manager by the end of the next working day** following the incident/crash.
 - 2) Drivers must also complete a **School Bus Seating Chart** form when students are on board the bus at the time of the incident/crash. This report form must be completed by the driver before they depart the scene of the incident/crash.

10.05 INCIDENTS

- A. An incident is any infraction that occurs on/or to the bus, the driver, students, or other passengers on the bus or at a bus stop. The driver will report the incident by two-way radio to Dispatch for their assigned bus compound or to Pinellas County Schools Police if after hours. If the bus is in an area which is out of radio range, drivers will call their Dispatch or Pinellas County Schools Police by telephone if they can get access to one promptly, or they may obtain assistance from bystanders or other motorists to call on their behalf. The telephone number for Pinellas County Schools Police (call when Dispatch is closed) is 547-7221.
- B. If emergency assistance is requested and dispatched to the incident location drivers will not leave the scene until they have been released by the law enforcement officer(s) and the driver's **Field Operations Supervisor** or **Area Manager**. If students are on the school bus at the time of the incident, they will not be allowed to leave the scene, unless they need to be transported for medical treatment. *(Note: Drivers can not forcibly restrain any student from leaving the bus at any time; however, drivers are not to instruct students to do anything other than to remain at the scene. If the parent of a student refuses to allow their child to remain at the scene, the driver shall ask to see the parent's driver's license or other photo identification before allowing a student to leave the scene, unless the parent is personally known to the driver. Drivers will also make sure to note the apparent condition of the student.)*
- C. Any person who is injured in a school bus incident or who complains of pain or discomfort shall not be released from the scene of the incident without being checked by emergency medical personnel or other certified medical persons.

D. *Incident Reports*

- 1) Drivers must always complete the *Driver's Report of Incident* form when there has been an incident. The completed report form must be submitted to the driver's assigned *Field Operations Supervisor* or *Area Manager* by the end of the next *working day* following the incident.

10.06 STUDENT INJURIES AND ILLNESS

- A. Drivers will complete a *Driver's Report of Incident* form whenever the following situations occur: a student becomes ill while a passenger on the bus, a student is injured as the result of an incident while on the bus, or when a student is injured while boarding or exiting the bus.
- B. In the event a student becomes seriously ill while enroute to or from school, the driver shall immediately park the bus in a safe area and render first aid up to the limit of their training and ability, if necessary. Drivers will *immediately* notify Dispatch for their assigned bus compound of the situation and shall seek prompt aid by the best possible means available. Drivers will not attempt to drive the bus with a seriously ill student aboard except in an emergency to get to the nearest place where help may be obtained (e.g. fire station or hospital).

SECTION 11

PRE- TRIP INSPECTION/MAINTENANCE

11.01 PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

The driver plays an important role in the school district's preventive maintenance program. Pre-trip inspections are required every time a bus is put into service. The driver must be alert for evidence of conditions which require attention. The inspection must be carried out in a manner which will allow the driver to detect any possible electrical, mechanical, or other condition which could prevent the bus from making a trip safely and on schedule. The driver need not be an expert mechanic to observe and report problems such as the following:

- Air brakes leaking
- Engine not idling properly
- Engine over-heating
- Unusual noise under the hood of the bus

Drivers who fail to properly complete the pre-trip inspection of their bus jeopardize the safety of the students they transport and other motorists!

A thorough pre-trip inspection consists of the following:

- The inside check
 - The walk-around outside check
 - The on-the-road check
- A. ***The inside check.*** Drivers shall check the operation of all gauges, controls, emergency exits and interior lights, and inspect emergency equipment, condition of seats, windows and the general interior.
- B. ***The outside check.*** Drivers shall check the operation of all exterior lights, check inflation and condition of tires, look for evidence of leaks, check the operation of emergency exits, inspect the exhaust system for loose tail pipes or leaks, and check the overall condition of the bus exterior.
- C. ***The on-the-road check.*** Drivers shall check brakes and steering for proper functioning, and mirrors for proper adjustment.

THE SUCCESS OF A GOOD PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM DEPENDS ON THE FULL COOPERATION OF DRIVERS TO PROPERLY CARRY OUT THE PRE-TRIP INSPECTION. DRIVERS SHOULD ALWAYS NOTIFY THEIR BUS SERVICE RECORDER OR GARAGE MECHANICS BEFORE OPERATING A BUS IF THERE IS ANY QUESTION ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE BUS.

GAUGES & WARNING LIGHTS & THEIR FUNCTION

- ***Air Pressure Gauge.*** This gauge should indicate enough air pressure to operate the brakes. Pressure should build up to 120 pounds per square inch (psi) when the engine is running. Do not operate the bus until the air pressure is at least 90 psi. Excessive loss of pressure overnight can indicate a leak in the air system.
- ***Low Air Pressure Warning Light.*** When air brake pressure falls below 60 psi a red warning light on the instrument panel will turn on and a buzzer will sound or the “wig wag” warning arm will drop down, depending on the model of bus you are driving. You must stop as quickly and safely as possible because when the air pressure reaches about 30 psi the emergency braking system will lock up the wheels.
- ***Oil Pressure Warning Light.*** This light indicates that oil pressure is too low for engine operation. If this light comes on and stays on you must turn off the engine and report the condition immediately to your Bus Service Recorder or (if you are on the road) to the Dispatch Section. Continued operation of the bus without adequate oil pressure can destroy the engine.
- ***Voltmeter.*** This should indicate in the green area, or over 12 volts, when the engine is running to show normal alternator/battery function. If the gauge is in the red area or is indicating less than 12 volts the battery will soon be run down, resulting in failure of the electrical system.
- ***Water temperature gauge.*** This gauge shows the temperature of the engine coolant. The gauge should be in the normal area or show a temperature of not more than 212 degrees. Overheating can ruin the engine, so the bus must be stopped until the engine is cooled down and the cause of the overheating corrected.
- ***Fuel gauge.*** The fuel gauge should indicate you have enough fuel for the trip to be undertaken, plus a comfortable reserve in case something unexpected occurs. There is no excuse for a driver ever to run out of fuel!

THE PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

Walk up to the bus:

- Look under bus for leaks
- Inspect service door
- Inspect steps (condition)
- Inspect handrail

Check interior of bus:

- Inspect fire extinguisher
- Verify that the vehicle registration and insurance papers are present
- Inspect 1st aid kit.
- Inspect body fluid spills clean-up kit
- Inspect belt cutter
- Inspect emergency marker triangles
- Inspect driver's seat and seat belt
- Verify that emergency/parking brake is on, then start engine and turn on head light switch
- Check step well light
- Check all gauges
- Turn on left turn signal
- Check horn
- Check two-way radio
- Check switches:
 - heater, defroster(s)
 - fan(s)
 - windshield wiper/washer(s)
 - dome lights
- Turn on Master Switch and check front amber student loading/unloading lights
- Put bus in drive and depress accelerator pedal to check emergency/parking brake
- Put bus in reverse, listen for warning beeper (if so equipped)
- Walk to back of bus checking that the seats are secure.
- Open emergency exit door and listen for warning buzzer
- Check reverse lights
- Check amber student loading/unloading lights
- Check left turn signal light
- Walk back to front of bus checking:
 - Seat cushions are secure
 - Seat condition
 - Student lap belts (if so equipped)
- Put bus into Neutral and turn on right turn signal
- Walk to back of bus again, open the emergency exit door and check the right turn signal light
- Walk back to front of bus checking:
 - Cleanliness
 - Decals
 - Wheelchair tie-downs (if so equipped)
 - Emergency roof hatches (if so equipped)
 - Emergency window exits
- With bus in Neutral, disengage emergency/parking brake, depress brake pedal and check air pressure gauge - it should not drop more than ten (10) pounds.
- Turn on red student loading/unloading lights and 4-way flasher/hazard lights

THE PRE-TRIP INSPECTION, *cont'd*

Outside Walk-around:

- ❑ Verify that all lights are working and that the lenses are secure and not cracked or broken:
 - ❑ Clearance
 - ❑ Turn signals
 - ❑ 4-way flasher/hazard
 - ❑ Brake (have another driver assist in checking the brake lights)
 - ❑ Strobe (if so equipped)
 - ❑ Student loading/unloading
 - ❑ Headlamps (low and high beam)
- ❑ Check general body condition
- ❑ Check fuel cap
- ❑ Check windows
- ❑ Check reflectors
- ❑ Check tires and lug nuts
- ❑ Check wheelchair lift (if so equipped)
- ❑ Check emergency exit door
- ❑ Check exhaust system
- ❑ Check stop arms
- ❑ Check battery door
- ❑ Check Super Stopper (if so equipped)
- ❑ Check windshield
- ❑ Check mirrors
- ❑ Check proper operation of "Child Reminder System" (CRS)

SECTION 12

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT FORMS

The importance of drivers submitting accurate reports on time can not be emphasized strongly enough. Many unnecessary hours and extra effort is spent by the Transportation Department staff in contacting drivers for additional, and/or missing information on routine reports. If a driver has a question about a form or is not sure which form to use, they should contact their assigned *Field Operations Supervisor*, or see the *clerk/secretary* at the bus compound.

Forms commonly used by drivers include:

- ***Pre-Trip Inspection Checklist.*** Used to record the results of the daily pre-trip inspection of the bus.
- ***Driver Request for Repair (DRR).*** Used to request repairs to school buses.
- ***School Bus Seating Chart.*** Used to record seating assignments for students riding the bus. There are two formats of this form available; one for a regular school bus (no wheelchair lift) and one for buses equipped with a wheelchair lift.
- ***School Bus Registration Form.*** Used to record information concerning students assigned to ride a school bus. This form is completed by the parent or guardian of each student.
- ***Temporary Permission Slip for Emergency Change of Bus Stop.*** Used by school principals to notify drivers that they have authorized a temporary change to a bus stop for a student.
- ***Driver's Report of Incident.*** Used to report situations affecting the safety of the bus or the safety and well-being of the driver, student passengers, or other persons on board the bus.
- ***Report of Misconduct on a School Bus.*** Used to report student misconduct to the school principal, or his/her designee.
- ***Report of Vandalism of a School Bus.*** Used to report damage to a bus caused by vandalism.
- ***Driver's Report of Vehicle Incident/Crash.*** Used to record details pertaining to an incident/crash.
- ***Driver Review & Certification of Bus Route.*** Used to document the driver's review of their bus route and to report any potential problems with the route and/or bus stops.
- ***Driver Report on Road Hazards.*** Used to record information on road hazards.
- ***Vehicle Passing School Bus Report.*** Used to report motorists who illegally pass a stopped school bus loading or unloading students.
- ***Locator Form.*** Used to ensure up-to-date information on drivers' home address, phone number, etc. is maintained in Transportation Department files.
- ***Scheduled Hours Worksheet.*** Used to document the daily route time for which the driver is to be paid.
- ***Employee Certificate of Attendance Report.*** Used to document employee absences for any reason.
- ***Driver Request to be Excused from Field Trips.***
- ***Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) Survey Reports.*** Used to record information on students riding buses during FEFP Surveys.
- ***Bus Stop Observation Form***

SECTION 13

SAFE DRIVER PLAN

I. 8600.01 - SAFE DRIVER PLAN

The purpose of the *Safe Driver Plan* is to establish a policy that promotes safe driving practices and specifies:

- A. which infractions of the traffic code shall deem an applicant for a school bus driver position to be unqualified for hire, and
- B. which infractions of the traffic code shall deem employees covered under this *Safe Driver Plan* to be subject to prescribed disciplinary actions in accordance with the School Board's *Progressive Discipline Plan*.

The objectives of the *Safe Driver Plan* are to:

- A. establish hiring guidelines for school bus drivers to ensure only qualified applicants are accepted;
- B. recommend disciplinary actions in accordance with the Board's *Progressive Discipline Plan* and the guidelines and criteria established in this *Safe Driver Plan*;
- C. establish retraining guidelines for covered employees who have not maintained an acceptable driving record;
- D. recognize drivers who maintain an exemplary driving record.

Applicant Eligibility

The driving history of all applicants for a school bus driver position shall be reviewed through a check of driving records with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to verify a satisfactory driving history. Driving records shall be forwarded to the Director of Transportation, or designee, for review.

Each applicant's *Transcript of Driver Record* shall be screened in accordance with the guidelines and criteria established in this document. The entire driving record shall be checked for the purpose of determining an individual's acceptability to drive a school bus for the District, with particular emphasis placed on entries for five (5) years preceding the date of the records check.

Screening of Applicants

"Safe Driver Points" shall be assigned for each entry on the applicant's *Transcript of Driver Record*, in accordance with the section titled *Distribution of the Safe Driver Plan* found in this policy.

- A. Applicants shall **not** be approved to drive a school bus for the District if they have:
 - 1. more than four (4) "Safe Driver Points" during the past twelve (12) months/one (1) year; or
 - 2. more than six (6) "Safe Driver Points" during the past thirty-six (36) months/three (3) years; or
 - 3. more than nine (9) "Safe Driver Points" during the past sixty (60) months/five (5) years; or
 - 4. more than twenty-five (25) "Safe Driver Points," total, on the entire driving record during the last ten (10) years.

- B. In addition to the "Safe Driver Points" criteria stated above, applicants for a position as a school bus driver shall not be approved for hiring if:
 - 1. the applicant has been cited for reckless driving at any time during the past ten (10) years; or
 - 2. the applicant has been cited for driving while impaired due to unlawful use of alcohol or drugs at any time during the past ten (10) years.
- C. Applicants who have been cited for reckless driving or driving while impaired due to unlawful use of alcohol or drugs more than ten (10) years ago must have a completely clean driving record (no citations for moving violations) for the past ten (10) years in order to be considered for hiring and must meet all other "Safe Driver Point" criteria and District hiring guidelines.

Current Employee Requirements

All Transportation Department employees who hold a position which requires them to transport students on a school bus shall be expected to be in compliance with the provisions of this *Safe Driver Plan* at all times. All other Transportation Department employees who choose to maintain a Commercial Driver License (CDL) and complete the necessary requirements to transport students on a school bus shall also be required to comply with all requirements set forth in this *Safe Driver Plan*. The employees described in this paragraph shall be referred to and considered as "covered" employees under this *Safe Driver Plan* and Board Policy 4162.

Florida Department of Education Requirements

All employees covered under this *Safe Driver Plan* shall be entered into the Florida Department of Education School Bus Driver Records Check System database.

The Transportation Department shall accomplish a complete check of driving records of all covered employees before the start of the school year in August of each year.

The Transportation Department shall also obtain a weekly update of new activity posted to covered employees' driving records via the *Weekly Exception Report* from the Florida Department of Education School Bus Driver Records Check System.

If the *Weekly Exception Report* indicates a covered employee's driver's license has been suspended, revoked, or canceled, the Director of Transportation, or designee, shall ensure immediate action is taken to prohibit such driver from operating a school bus or any other Board owned/leased vehicle.

Incident Reporting Procedure

While it is absolutely essential that all damage to a bus be reported, there are some very minor incidents that do not warrant the attention of the Accident Review Committee or the awarding of points unless, of course, an individual demonstrates a continuing problem with such incidents. Therefore, incidents that meet all of the following criteria will no longer be considered "accidents" for the purposes of this plan:

- A. The damage must occur between School Board vehicles or fixed assets belonging to the school board.
- B. The damage must have occurred while on School Board property (i.e., in a compound or at a school site);
- C. The amount of damage must not exceed \$250.00, and excludes labor.
- D. There are no passengers on board the School Board vehicles.

Incidents meeting the above criteria will require an accident report and must be reported immediately. In addition, if the damage could cause a safety problem when doing a route (e.g., cross-over mirror glass broken and out), then the repair must be made prior to using the damaged bus.

If data analysis on data generated from the incident reports shows any abuse of this policy, or if vehicle maintenance starts seeing a marked increase in unreported damage to buses, then this clause will be removed from the plan.

Employee Responsibility

A. Driver's License

All employees covered under this *Safe Driver Plan* shall be required to possess the appropriate Commercial Driver License (CDL) and CDL medical card at all times while employed with the District and to maintain their license and CDL medical card in good standing. Covered employees shall make sure information on their driver's license pertaining to their address is kept current at all times.

B. Accidents involving School Bus or Other Board Owned/Leased Vehicle

Covered employees shall immediately report any accident/crash involving a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle to the Transportation Department. If the accident occurs after normal working hours, or at any other time the offices of the Transportation Department are closed, the employee shall immediately notify the District Policy Department.

C. Reporting of Citations for Moving Violations (Traffic Tickets)

All citations for moving violations issued to covered employees shall be reported, regardless of the ownership of the vehicle being driven by the covered employee. All citations for moving violations shall be reported, regardless of the location where the citation was issued. Covered employees shall be responsible to report the receipt of any citation for a moving violation to their immediate supervisor by the employees next work day prior to beginning their first run.

"Safe Driver Points"

"Safe Driver Points" shall be assessed by the Transportation Safe Driver Committee for all preventable vehicle accidents/crashes involving covered employees driving Board owned/leased vehicles, in accordance with the guidelines established in "*Safe Driver Point*" *Assessment Schedule* of this *Safe Driver Plan*.

"Safe Driver Points" shall also be assessed for all moving violations appearing on a covered employee's *Transcript of Driver Record*, as obtained through the Florida Department of Education School Bus Driver Records Check System. The Director of Transportation or designee shall assess "Safe Driver Points" for entries on a covered employee's *Transcript of Driver Record* in accordance with the criteria established in "*Safe Driver Point*" *Assessment Schedule* of this *Safe Driver Plan*.

If an employee decides to go to court on a traffic citation, s/he shall have the right to request the assessment of "Safe Driver Points" be held in abeyance until the court renders a judgment. Such request must be made, in writing, to the Director of Transportation, or designee. The employee's letter making the request must contain the following information:

- A. name of employee, bus compound to which assigned, and bus route number;
- B. date of the citation and citation control number;
- C. nature of the citation;
- D. court date must be communicated as soon as a date has been set with the Clerk of the Court;
- E. statement describing the reason why the employee feels s/he should not have been given the citation.

"Safe Driver Points" shall not be assessed for moving or non-moving violations appearing on a covered employee's *Transcript of Driver Record*, while operating their personal vehicles as obtained through the Florida Department of Education School Bus Driver Records Check System except as noted in "*Safe Driver Point*" *Assessment Schedule*. The Director of Transportation or designee shall review the record for indications of driving behavior that could affect a covered employee's driving license (suspension/revocation/cancellation). When a driver's *Transcript of Driver Record* shows a

deterioration of driving performance on their personal vehicle that could jeopardize their ability to continue driving a school bus for the District, management will have documented conferences with that driver according to the following schedule:

- A. Within any Twelve (12) Month Period:
 - 1. If a driver receives six (6) points, a documented conference will be held with the driver to make sure they understand that any future citations/violations could jeopardize their continued employment.
 - 2. If a driver received nine (9) points, a documented conference will be held with the driver emphasizing how close they are to having their license suspended and the need to drive with extreme caution or they could be jeopardizing their continued employment.
- B. Within any Eighteen (18) Month Period:
 - 1. If a driver receives nine (9) points, a documented conference will be held with the driver to make sure they understand that any future citations/violations could jeopardize their continued employment.
 - 2. If a driver receives fourteen (14) points, a documented conference will be held with the driver emphasizing how close they are to having their license suspended and the need to drive with extreme caution or they could be jeopardizing their continued employment.
- C. Within any Thirty-Six (36) Month Period:
 - 1. If a driver receives twelve (12) points, a documented conference will be held with the driver to make sure they understand that any future citations/violations could jeopardize their continued employment.
 - 2. If a driver receives eighteen (18) points, a documented conference will be held with the driver emphasizing how close they are to having their license suspended and the need to drive with extreme caution or they could be jeopardizing their continued employment.

"Safe Driver Points" assessed under this *Safe Driver Plan* shall be deleted three (3) years following the date they were originally assessed.

Suspension/Revocation/Cancellation of Driver's License

Any covered employee who receives notification of a driver's license suspension, revocation, or cancellation shall be required to immediately notify the Transportation Department upon receiving such notification. After normal working hours, or any other time the offices of the Transportation Department are closed, the employees shall immediately notify the District Policy Department. Upon notification that a covered employee's driver's license has been suspended, revoked, or canceled, the Director of Transportation or designee shall take appropriate action to ensure the employee does not drive a school bus or any other Board owned/leased vehicle.

The Director of Transportation or designee shall hold a conference with the driver to determine the circumstances of the license suspension/revocation/cancellation and if the driver knowingly operated a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle with a suspended/revoked/canceled driver's license. If it is determined a driver has knowingly operated a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle with a suspended, revoked, or canceled driver's license, such driver shall be recommended to the Board for dismissal. Otherwise, "Safe Driver Points" shall be assessed and disciplinary action taken in accordance with the guidelines and procedures included in this policy.

Any driver who fails to get their suspended/revoked/canceled driver's license reinstated within ten (10) working days shall be recommended to the Board for dismissal.

Repeat Offenses

The procedures detailed above shall apply only to the first time a school bus driver's license is suspended/revoked/canceled. Additional occurrences shall result in the following:

A. Second Occurrence Within a Three (3) Year Period

So long as the driver has not knowingly operated a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle with a suspended/revoked/canceled driver's license, "Safe Driver Points" shall be assessed and disciplinary action taken in accordance with the guidelines and procedures included in this document. However, any driver who fails to get their suspended/revoked/canceled driver's license reinstated within ten (10) working days shall be recommended to the Board for dismissal.

B. Third Occurrence Within a Three (3) Year Period

All such drivers shall be recommended to the Board for dismissal.

Disciplinary Action

Covered employees who are assessed "Safe Driver Points" assigned in accordance with the guidelines and criteria established in this document shall be recommended for disciplinary action as detailed below:

"Safe Driver Points" Assessed	Time Period	Disciplinary Action
1-4 points	one (1) year	documented warning
5-7 points	one (1) year	letter of reprimand
8-11 points	one (1) year	three (3) day of suspension without pay
12 or more points	one (1) year	dismissal
15 or more points	two (2) years	dismissal
18 or more points	three (3) years	dismissal

NOTE: A year is defined as twelve (12) consecutive calendar months.

Retraining

All covered employees who have been determined to have had a preventable accident/crash while driving a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle shall be required to successfully complete refresher training under the direction of the Transportation Department's Driver Training & Safety Specialist.

Re-Employment

Dismissal as a school bus driver under this policy shall permanently disqualify that individual for re-employment as a school bus driver.

Transportation Accident Review Committee (ARC)

A. Objectives of the Transportation ARC

1. Review all vehicle accidents/crashes (preventable and non-preventable) involving covered employees driving a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle, in accordance with the guidelines and criteria set forth in this document and standards promulgated by the National Safety Council and the National Association for Pupil Transportation.
2. Recommend assessment of "Safe Driver Points" based on a review of all available information regarding accidents.
3. Analyze accident trends and make recommendations about accident prevention.

4. Review the *Safe Driver Plan* and make recommendations for revisions.

B. Committee Membership

The Transportation ARC shall be composed of the following representatives:

1. Voting

- a. Director of Transportation, or designee (committee chairperson, votes only as tie-breaker)
- b. Transportation Driver Training & Safety Specialist
- c. Central, North, and South Area Managers or their designee (designee must be a Supervisor - Transportation Field Operations)
- d. representative of Risk Management
- e. school bus driver representatives will be appointed by Certified Bargaining Agent

The Certified Bargaining Agent will appoint four (4) representatives from each area, North, Central and South. The appointed driver representatives must be equally divided between Certified Bargaining Agent and non-member. Two representatives from each area will attend each meeting. It shall be Certified Bargaining Agent's responsibility to ensure that both Certified Bargaining Agent and the non-member drivers are properly represented at each ARC meeting based on area representatives attending.

- f. A representative member from Vehicle Maintenance.

2. Non-Voting

Representative of the School Employees' union (Local 1220, Service Employees International Union).

C. Term of Office for School Bus Driver Representatives

School bus driver representatives to the Transportation ARC shall be rotated at the discretion of the Certified Bargaining Agent.

D. Meetings

Meetings will be scheduled on a biweekly basis throughout the regular school year. If there is insufficient work for the ARC to review, the meeting will be cancelled. No meeting shall be held unless there is an equal number of driver and management representatives present to make decisions on crash preventability. The Certified Bargaining Agent representative is not an active participant in the discussion/decisions of the ARC. The Certified Bargaining Agent representative's role is to ensure that the deliberations of and decisions made by the ARC are fair and impartial from an employee perspective.

E. Training

At the beginning of each school year before any meetings occur, all ARC members shall be thoroughly trained in the criteria promulgated by the NSC to determine crash preventability. No one may serve as a voting member of the ARC without this training.

F. ARC Review Process and Appeals of Decisions

1. All covered employees shall have the right to appeal "Safe Driver Point" assessment recommendations of the Transportation ARC.
2. If an employee elects to appeal the recommended points from the Committee, the employee must submit his/her request, in writing, to the Director of Transportation, or designee, within ten (10) working days of receiving notification of the Committee's recommendations. The Director of Transportation or designee shall review the appeal request form and schedule a meeting with the employee to hear the appeal. During the appeal process, assessment of "Safe Driver Points" shall be held in abeyance until such time as the appeal ruling has been made by Committee and/or the Director of Transportation.

G. Audit Process

The importance of operating a school bus fleet safely cannot be over emphasized. Therefore, the integrity of the processes and outcomes of the ARC are of paramount importance to the students, parents, District, and public at large to ensure such safety.

1. On an annual basis at the conclusion of the regular school year, the Manager, Transportation Services, will arrange for a statistical analysis and audit of ARC decisions for the past school year. The work will at a minimum include a review by an independent group of safety experts who will review statistics and a random sample of decisions reached by the ARC to determine if decisions are consistent with the National Safety Council Guidelines. Feedback and recommendations for process improvement will be given to ARC members at the annual training discussed in *Training* above.
2. In addition, if during the course of the school year a pattern of ARC decisions emerges that cause the Director of Transportation to question the workings of the ARC, s/he may at his/her sole discretion ask the Manager, Transportation Services, to have such decisions audited to ensure they meet NSC Guidelines.

Safe Driver Awards

A. Purpose

Safe Driver Awards are designed to recognize those drivers who have maintained an exemplary driving record. There shall be an annual award and also separate awards for multiple years of continuous safe driving.

B. Criteria for Annual Safe Driver Award

To receive this award a covered employee must:

1. have no citations, during the year, on his/her DHSMV Transcript of Driver Record; and
2. have maintained his/her driver's license in good standing; and
3. have no preventable accidents/crashes; and
4. have been employed with the District in a covered employee position for the preceding twelve (12) months (August through July). A covered employee who is absent from work for any cause for more than thirty (30) working days shall not be eligible to receive a Safe Driver Award of the school year.

C. Criteria for Multiple Year Safe Driver Awards

Multiple Year Safe Driver Awards shall be established as follows:

1. Drivers who meet the criteria to receive the Annual Safe Driver Award for two (2) or more consecutive years shall receive a Multiple Year Safe Driver Award in recognition of their accomplishment.
2. Drivers who meet the criteria to receive a Multiple Year Safe Driver Award for ten (10) or more consecutive years of safe driving shall be specially recognized by the Board during the annual National School Bus Safety Week in October.

Distribution of the Safe Driver Plan

Each year the *Safe Driver Plan* shall be printed and distributed to all employees which it covers either at the beginning of the school year (annual workshop), or upon initial employment (upon successful completion of the driver training class), or after any changes in the plan have been approved by the Board.

"Safe Driver Point" Assessment Schedule

- The Transportation ARC shall review the circumstances of all accidents/crashes involving a covered employee operating a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle. If the Committee's review determines that an accident/crash was preventable then "Safe Driver Points" shall be assessed.
- The Committee shall assess up to three (3) "Safe Driver Points" but not less than one (1) "Safe Driver Point," depending on the circumstances of the preventable accident/crash.
- Accidents/Crashes in which the accident/crash is **not** the fault of the P.C.S.B. covered employee, the accident/crash will be classified as a **Non-Preventable** accident/crash with **no** Safe Driver Points being assessed.
- If the Committee is "**unable to determine fault**" the accident/crash will be classified as **Adjudication Withheld** with **no** Safe Driver Points being assessed.

"Safe Driver Points" shall also be assessed for moving violations appearing on a covered employee's *Transcript of Driver Record*, as obtained through the Florida Department of Education School Bus Driver Records Check System, as set forth in "*Safe Driver Points*" of this *Safe Driver Plan*.

Moving Violations/Citations appealed to the Clerk of Court receiving Adjudication withheld will receive Safe Driver Points.

Moving Violations/Citation appealed to the Clerk of Courts receiving Dismissed will not receive Safe Driver Points.

"Safe Driver Point" Assessment Schedule - Moving Violations

Moving Violation	"Safe Driver Points"	
	SB	PV
1. Speeding:		
a. 15 mph or less over posted speed limit	3	0
b. 16 mph or more over posted speed limit	4	0
c. Speeding in a school zone more than 5 mph over the posted speed limit in a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle	9	0
2. Driving too fast for conditions	3	0
3. Following too close	3	0

4.	Failed to comply with traffic control device/sign/ Red Light Violation/ Camera	3	0
5.	Failed to yield	3	0
	a. To emergency/authorized vehicles	4	0
6.	Improper lane change/turning/passing	3	0
7.	Passing a stopped school bus loading/unloading students	9	4
8.	Improper backing	3	0
9.	Careless or improper driving - in a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle	4	0
10.	Reckless driving	12	4
11.	Failed to stop before crossing railroad tracks (in a school bus)	9	0
12.	Driving around/through railroad crossing gate or barrier without proper authorization in a school bus	9	0
13.	Seat belt violation - driver in a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle	3	0
14.	Special Hazard - failure to use due care - in a school bus or other Board owned/leased vehicle	6	0
15.	Driving a CMV without a CDL in the driver's possession (FMVCR 383.51)	3	0
16.	Driving while impaired due to unlawful use of alcohol or drugs	12	12
17.	Driving with open container of alcoholic beverage (operator)	12	3
18.	Fleeing or attempting to elude a police/highway patrol officer	12	6
19.	Failed to report/file report of moving violation/accident	4	0
20.	Failed to report/file report of moving violation/accident - school bus or other Board owned vehicle	9	0
21.	Left scene of accident before police/highway patrol arrived (driver involved)	9	0
22.	Citations for vehicle defects, vehicle not properly equipped, vehicle not properly registered or insured: one (1) "Safe Driver Point" shall be assessed for these citations, when reviewing driving records of applicants for a position as a school bus driver.		

"Safe Driver Point" Assessment Schedule - Driver License Suspensions, Cancellations, and Revocations

- A. Applicants for a position as a school bus driver:
 - 1. license suspended or canceled for any reason other than personal injury protection insurance (PIP) cancellation or financial responsibility judgment (FRJ): 3 "safe driver points"
 - 2. license suspended for PIP cancellation or FRJ: 1 "safe driver point"
 - 3. license revoked (any reason): 12 "safe driver points"
 - 4. driving while license suspended/revoked/canceled: 4 "safe driver points"
- B. Current employees covered under this *Safe Driver Plan*
 - 1. license suspended/canceled for any reason other than PIP cancellation or FRJ: 4 "safe driver points"
 - 2. license suspended for PIP cancellation or FRJ: 2 "safe driver points"
 - 3. license revoked (any reason): 12 "safe driver points"
 - 4. driving while license suspended/revoked/canceled: 8 "safe driver points"

F.S. 1001.32(2), 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43