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This communication contains information on the following topics:

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### **1) Managing students and equipment on the school bus**

Trying to coordinate the transportation of students along with their book bags, musical instruments, and other items on the school bus has long been a challenge for our bus drivers. As districts begin to schedule buses with more students on them this problem can become ever more challenging.

Ohio administrative code (OAC) 3301-83-08 (C) (12) states: "Pupils may carry on the bus only objects that can be held in their laps." In OAC 3301-83-20 (J) the law further states: "Equipment such as music instruments, athletic uniforms, etc., which cannot be held by passengers in their seats, shall be stored in the rear of the bus; however placement of such items in the rear of the bus shall not displace students. When it is necessary to transport such equipment concurrently with pupils, space shall be provided to comply with this rule without having standees in the bus. Equipment required in the assistance of preschool and special needs children shall be safely and properly secured. A clear aisle to the exit door must be maintained at all times."

Students, parents and school administrators need to acknowledge the primary use of the school bus is to provide safe transportation for children. The design of the seats and aisles maximizes the safety of the students, but also accommodates as many students as possible on the bus. Extra items can only be taken on the bus if certain guidelines are followed. Each district should have transportation procedures that take into account the restrictions in the administrative code and also identify local procedures. Communicating these to all the parents, teachers and students at the beginning of the school year is important so that drivers are not left to manage the problem at the door of the bus.

Book bags are a very real part of every student's educational life, but they must be carried on and off the bus and held in a lap, and not worn on the back. The only way a student can safely sit in a bus seat is to maintain "back on back, seat on seat, and feet on floor". This keeps them fully protected by the seating barrier in front of them as required by law, and at the same time maximizes the space available on the seat.

Students also come to the bus with musical instruments and school projects. We can accommodate those that can be held on the child's lap, but must avoid transporting large objects that take seating space, displace students and can become uncontrolled projectiles in the event of a vehicle crash.

The equipment problem takes a whole new twist on field trips, especially for athletic groups that have substantial equipment such as ball bags, coolers, and team equipment. If space is available on the bus, equipment can be stored in the back as long as it is not in the aisle and does not block the emergency door. We specify the back seats for equipment--away from passengers and the driver--to prevent the equipment from falling out and striking a passenger or the driver in the event of a sudden vehicular maneuver.

### **2) School Bus Safety Week**

Annually the members of the national school bus industry join together to celebrate National School Bus Safety Week. This year the dates will be Monday October 20 through Friday October 24.

National School Bus Safety Week is a public education program. This is an excellent way for parents, students, teachers, school bus drivers, and school administrators to join together to celebrate the successes of our school bus transportation program. For many of the members of our communities the yellow school bus is taken for granted. They see our buses daily on the roadways, and often do not think about the safety these vehicles provide for our students, but more about the need to avoid being stuck behind the red flashing lights and stop sign.

This is an outstanding opportunity for us to reach out to parents and the community, and to educate them about school bus safety. Share with them some of the accomplishments of your transportation department—including safe miles travelled, number of students transported, and the many hours of training that your dedicated drivers participate in to ensure the safety of their passengers. Consider sponsoring a special activity this week to share school bus safety tips not only with your student passengers, but also with their parents and the motorists in your communities.

### **3) Administrator training required by law**

Did you know that training is required for all Ohio pupil transportation administrators? This requirement comes from section 3301-83-06 of the Ohio administrative code, and includes all school administrators who are responsible for pupil transportation.

The training falls into two areas – annual inservice training and initial training. For the annual training, administrators are required to participate in a minimum of four hours of inservice in school transportation-related training. One source for this is the OSBA Master Transportation Administrator training program.

For the initial training, all newly assigned administrators are required to complete the classroom portion of the Ohio preservice driver training program within one year of their appointment to the position.

### **4) Archived copies of newsletters and web access**

As an employee of a member school district, you have access to many resources on OSBA's website.

Portions of the website are public, but other sections are reserved for members only. If you have never accessed those before, go to our website ([ohioschoolboards.org](http://ohioschoolboards.org)) and select the logon button on the top right. Use your email address as your logon id, and then select “first time logging in” to establish your password. You will soon be ready to go!

Once you have gained access to the website – select the Products and Services option on the menu, scroll down and select Transportation Services. We have a number of subpages there for your use. One of those holds archived copies of previous newsletters.

On another subpage we have various calculations, including your cost analysis from FY13 and efficiency ratings. As soon as we receive the current data from ODE, we will add a cost analysis report for FY14 – look for that in the next month.

### **5) Training opportunities**

OSBA is again offering professional development opportunities in the Master Transportation Administrator series. You are welcome to attend individual classes or sign up for the entire series.

The first class for this year will be on Wednesday, October 15, and will repeat on Tuesday, October 21. This class will focus on personnel management – including labor relations, discipline, and managing changes in ‘practice’, the grievance process and arbitration. We finish the class with a review of driver qualifications and processes that need to take place when drivers are no longer qualified. You can sign up for the individual class by registering online or by contacting us via email at [mta@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:mta@ohioschoolboards.org).