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SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

September 22, 2017

This issue contains information on the following:

1) K-3 safety training

2) Bus stop and route time approval

3) T-1 preparation

4) Master of Transportation Administration

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1) K-3 safety training

The start of each school year is a very busy time for all transportation offices. In the constant efforts to resolve bus stop, routing, and other logistical issues, it is important to remember that we have a statutory obligation to provide safety training for our bus riders in grades kindergarten through 3 during the first 10 days of school.

There are many options on how to provide this training for your drivers; including providing drivers with a script that they can review with students on the bus, addressing the students in assemblies or in their classrooms, or using a district's multimedia resources to show safety training programs. Regardless of what method you use to provide this training, the important part is to make certain that it is done. If the first 10 days have passed by in a blur, it is not too late to implement this training. Either coordinate this now or delegate the authority and responsibility to someone else to ensure that the task is completed and documented for the current school year.

There is also a requirement in Ohio administrative code to provide safety training for all students in grades Kindergarten through 12, but it does not have a time specified. You can schedule this later in the school year after the dust settles.

2) Bus stop and route time approval

Ohio law and administrative code both state that when transportation is provided for students, the schedule must be adopted by the school board within the first 10 days of school. Typically the easiest way to accomplish this is to provide a list of the bus stops and their assigned times for the school board at their August agenda, and ask for their approval. At the same time, it is important to ask them to approve a designee that has the authority to modify stops, times and routes throughout the rest of the school year as the need arises.

If you have not yet asked your board to approve your routing plan, work with your administrative team to have an agenda item added for the next board meeting to ask for their approval. Your routes may still be changing, as they will continue to do all school year as students move in and out, assignments change, and roads and railroad tracks are closed for construction. As long as your board action includes the approval of a designee to continue making changes, the action to approve the routes will

be valid and meet the requirements in law.

3) T-1 preparation

We are coming up on the annual T-1 report. This report is used by ODE to calculate your transportation funding, so it is very important to collect accurate data and report it through ODE's online system. Ohio law stipulates that this count is to be completed during the first full week of October. This year that will be October 2-6.

If your district has some closures scheduled during that week, or if you have a significant number of your nonpublic schools closed, you should consider counting in a different week so that you can report an accurate ridership count. If you need to change the week, ODE's transportation office asks that you send an email to schoolbus@education.ohio.gov and tell them what week you want to use.

Once you have your count week established, there are several critical steps to follow to succeed:

- Meet with your drivers to explain what they need to do, and provide them with forms to record the student counts and daily mileage. Make certain that they understand students are counted on the way to school, and not on the way home. Their vehicle mileage is recorded for the complete day - including morning and afternoon routes.
- After the drivers have counted for 5 days, collect their data forms and summarize the data. Make certain that the counts are only for students who actually ride, and that the mileage is accurate. You should then calculate the average daily ridership from those five days, and the average daily mileage for those five days.
- Update your bus roster in the SFPS online reporting system. You will report ridership and miles by bus, so the buses that you are reporting on need to be listed as route buses in the system. All other buses should be recorded as spare buses. In some cases you may use a particular bus in the afternoon only. There will be no students to report on that bus since they were already counted in the morning. You will have miles to report for the afternoon bus.
- Enter all of the data into the T-1 report in the SFPS system. Districts that are enrolled in OSBA's VTS program are entitled to a free review of the report to make certain that the data appears correct for your district. If you are one of these districts, contact OSBA's transportation staff to ask about the review procedure.
- After the data is entered into the T-1, the treasurer and superintendent are required to digitally sign the report. Finally, after the signatures are complete, submit the report electronically. You should print out a copy and file it in your office.

4) Master of Transportation Administration

We have started our 5th year of the MTA program. There are still seats available if you would like to join us. This year we are focusing on operations; and will review routing, personnel management issues, rules and regulations, transportation handbooks, public relations and media and designing an operational plan to keep you organized as you progress through the transportation year. These classes are a great opportunity to review the elements of transportation management if you are a veteran, or to learn the ropes if you are new to the game. An added benefit in attendance is the networking that occurs between folks that are doing the same thing that you are - transportation!

If you would like more information, or would like to register for the course, please contact Diana Paulins at (614) 540-4000 or by email at DPaulins@ohioschoolboards.org. We welcome your attendance.

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