

Minutes for NCPTA Transportation Advisory Group Meeting
February 26, 2010
Davidson County Schools

The Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) met on February 26, 2010 in Davidson County. In attendance were NCPTA members and representatives from DPI and DMV. Don Byrnes, Chairman of the TAG presided over the meeting and thanked Jay Temple for hosting this event.

Billy Nixon, Chowan County led off the meeting with an invocation which was followed by a moment of silence in memory of George Douglas, former Transportation Director in Cabarrus County.

Mr. Billy Nixon will be retiring on June 30, 2010 and was recognized by Chairman Byrnes as being the only two time president of the NCPTA and thanked him for outstanding leadership provided this organization.

Lacy Jane Wolfe with the Triangle Clean Cities Coalition was in attendance at the meeting. She informed the group that grant writing is now available for alternative fuels and vehicles. If anyone needs more information, she may be contacted. She also mentioned that a meeting will be held in Raleigh on Tuesday, March 16 to provide updated information on Natural Gas Vehicles. Finally, she mentioned the need for volunteers to speak on behalf of idle reduction strategies. Lacy may be contacted at lacey@tjccog.org.

Scott Denton gave a brief update on NCPTA Conference activities. The conference will be held in Cabarrus County beginning on July 14, 2010. Along with many informative sessions that are scheduled, an emphasis will be placed on "hands on" training for technicians. Classes will be held at Cox High School; technician training will be held at the Cabarrus County School Bus Garage; the Trade Show will be held at the Cabarrus Arena. Transportation between venues will be provided by Cabarrus County Schools. It should be noted that anyone attending the Southeastern States Conference and the NCPTA Conference will receive a \$25 discount on registration for each conference for a total savings of \$50.

Rhonda Fleming updated the group on the 30-day inspection certification program. As many will recall, a committee was formed a couple of years ago to examine this issue. Certification for technicians that conduct 30-day inspections will be a requirement beginning this summer and training for facilitators will be conducted at the NCPTA Conference in July. Each county will have a facilitator. Training for technicians will last about 4 hours. Any technician that has at least 5 years experience may take the 40 question exam and if passed, will not be required to attend the 4 hour training.

Derek Graham updated the group on several topics:

- 1) LEA's will be required by the State Board of Education to have a policy for the use of Charter Buses. That policy will require LEA's to: Maintain a list of

qualified charter bus carriers; Maintain procedures for ensuring the selection and use of qualified carriers; and require safety and evacuation training for students before each charter bus trip. This recommendation was the result of meetings coordinated by ITRE involving NCPTA, several state/federal agencies/associations and the Motorcoach Association to discuss issuance of a statewide permit for Charter Bus Carriers. Instead of issuing permits, the recommendation was made for the State Board of Education to adopt a policy requiring action by LEA's as detailed above.

- 2) Technician Certification – see notes above
- 3) Requirement for activity bus drivers to have the same training required for school bus drivers in order to drive activity buses. The change will be effective for new drivers on July 1, 2010. Derek is checking with DMV on establishing a cutoff date for existing drivers to fall under the same requirement. As currently proposed, existing activity bus drivers without school bus certification would be required to update their licenses as they renew beginning July 1, 2013. It is not felt at this time that technicians would be required to have the "S" endorsement unless they transport students. It was noted that LEA's should give careful attention in the future to those driving the 14 passenger buses as they currently are not required to have CDL licenses. Under this proposed change, they will be required to have the same certification as all other activity bus drivers.
- 4) A question was raised regarding physical standards. There currently is no physical standard in place for school bus/activity bus drivers with the exception of the DMV medical review process. A few years ago, this issue was being reviewed by DMV, but has not been active for some time. Don Byrnes & DMV will research this issue and respond back to the group.
- 5) Cell Phone/Seat Belt Sticker program – DPI began a pilot program to place stickers on the interior of school bus with #'s for students to call if they observed drivers talking on their cell phone or not wearing their seat belt. If any county is interested in participating in this program, please contact Derek Graham.
- 6) Stop Arm Cameras – there are some prototype systems in place across the state at this time. DPI is currently monitoring results.
- 7) School Bus Replacements – it looks like there will be roughly 600 school bus replacements during the 2010-2011 school year (not the 1,000 or so originally planned). The 2009-2010 pilot models have been inspected by DPI and International is currently working on the "punch list". It is anticipated that these items will be resolved over the next 30 or so days. Buses will be built during the spring and should be delivered in time for school to open. It is likely that the current contract for buses could be extended for 6 months beyond June 30; if that happens, buses will likely be ordered from International this summer and delivery may begin early in the fall for 2010-2011.
- 8) Service Truck replacements should be in by April and delivered in May.

9) A suggestion was made to eliminate high cost items from the bus specifications. The group was reminded that bus specifications are determined based on safety. The group felt as though some parts, such as heated and adjustable mirrors, are not necessary and create a significant cost burden for LEA's. A suggestion was made by the group that DPI allow LEA's to buy replacement parts that may be substituted for OEM parts, so long as they meet minimum criteria and FMVSS standards. DPI agreed to look at this issue and report back soon.

10) Directors will be receiving some information from Kevin Harrison at DPI regarding activity bus information in SAP.

11) Bus inspections will continue in the East even though James Hawkins remains out on medical leave. (He appreciates hearing from everyone!). Not all LEA's may be inspected this year.

Extended Warranty – Carolina Thomas - the time period to perform warranty work and process paperwork by the LEA's has been reduced from 30 days to 15 days. The group was concerned about this reduction as it causes LEA's to forfeit reimbursement under that warranty agreement if the work takes longer than 15 days. Don Byrnes will check into this issue with Carolina Thomas and report back with the findings.

EGR Problems - International buses - the issue was raised that there are many IC buses that have had repeated EGR problems and the question was asked whether IC would consider extending the warranty as a result of these continued problems. Don Byrnes will check with IC and report back to the group.

Next meeting is scheduled for July 15 at the NCPTA Conference from 9:00 – Noon; more information to come.

Respectfully submitted:

G. Scott Denton