



# Transportation Director's Manual

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## Transportation Director's Manual

This manual was prepared by the Transportation Services Section at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and designed to provide quick references and resources to Transportation Directors and others involved in school bus transportation in the Public Schools of North Carolina.

Links to relevant web sites and resources are provided for more in-depth information. North Carolina general statutes (laws) are referenced along with State Board of Education (SBE) policies, where appropriate. For the most part, *local education agency (LEA) procedures and policies are not covered in this guide.*

The NC BUS FLEET manual covers some of the same topics in greater detail – particularly those topics related to the vehicle fleet itself.

The NC BUS SAFETY website offers a great deal of information pertaining to all topics in North Carolina school transportation.

[www.ncbussafety.org](http://www.ncbussafety.org)

Please contact NCDPI Transportation services with questions (919) 807-3570 or contact individual staff members referenced on the contact page:

[www.ncbussafety.org/contact.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/contact.html)

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## **FINANCIAL /REPORTING**

### **A. STATE ALLOTMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION**

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Transportation Services Section is responsible for the allocation of funds, from the state budget appropriation, to 115 local education agencies (LEAs) for school transportation operations. This block grant provides funds to pay for drivers, fuel, personnel, parts, tires, contracts, etc. needed to transport students in grades K-12 to and from school. The state allotment for transportation is calculated from the prior year's eligible expenditures, a budget rating and any necessary adjustments. The budget rating is, in part, a measure of efficiency of operation. Annual adjustments are made for increased enrollment and any adjustments required by General Assembly action. LEAs may supplement these state funds with local funds. Those funds are considered eligible to the extent that they are used to fund the transportation of students in grades K-12 to and from school.

Funds allotted through Program Report Code 056 are for the purpose of transporting students to and from school for the regularly organized school day. DPI Transportation Services calculates transportation allotments using a funding base and a transportation budget rating. The basic calculation is to multiply the previous year's funding base for each LEA by its budget rating to determine the current year allotment. (Adjustments are made for legislated salary changes, increases in enrollment, etc.)

**FUNDING BASE.** The funding base for a city or county LEA consists of actual, eligible, expenditures (see below) from the prior year for to- and from-school transportation. (For counties with 2-3 LEAs, if city driver salaries and salaries for city administrative work are paid by the county in a given year, those amounts remain in the county funding base for the following year.)

**BUDGET RATING.** The budget rating is, in part, a measure of efficiency and is calculated by examining the cost per student and the number of buses per 100 students for each county. A lower cost and a lower number of buses yield a higher budget rating. Site characteristics include the number of students transported per mile of roadway and the distance of student residences from school.

Because county LEAs maintain and fuel the city LEA buses, and because the geographic site characteristics used to "level the playing field" statewide cannot be distinguished between city and county, all data for city and county LEAs are combined before calculating ratings. The same budget rating is then used for the city and county LEA when figuring allotments as described above.

Each LEA's transportation basic allotment is calculated by multiplying its Funding Base by its Budget Rating. For example, a funding base of \$700,000 and a budget rating of 99% yields an allotment of \$693,000 in state funds. The funding base is the sum of eligible state and local transportation (Program Report Code 56) expenditures from the prior year. These are the expenditures for transporting students to and from school for the regularly organized school day.

Adjustments are made to this amount based on increasing enrollment and legislative action such as salary increases, benefits changes, etc.

A more detailed explanation is found in Appendix A "Transportation Allotments and Budget Ratings"

## B. ANNUAL REPORTS TO DPI

A number of reports of local operational data are required to support the state funding process. The following reports are to be turned in to NCDPI Transportation Services annually OR per occurrence as described. Thoroughness and accuracy are imperative as data is used not only by NCDPI but also by the legislature and other state/federal agencies. Please include all signatures when submitting finalized reports.

- a. TD-1 Annual Transportation Report-**Due-AUGUST 1**- This report provides statistics for bus operation and is vital to the funding formula. Be sure all required signatures are included on the final report. Reported data includes;
  - i. Fleet data including days and miles operated, cameras, GPS
  - ii. Local funds expended for transportation and personnel, positions
  - iii. Physical inventory (repair parts, tires and fuel)
- b. TD-2 Annual Student Count-**Due-OCTOBER 15**- Provides official ridership count for all passengers being transported by yellow school buses and is an integral part of funding formula. The count is performed during last full week in SEPTEMBER. (LEAs may request an alternate week if workdays or other types of leave days coincide)
- c. TD-2R Bus Driver Salary & Routing report- **Due-OCTOBER 15**-Report is used to determine future state appropriations and includes detailed driver salary data, driver leave data, route miles and hours, employee status'.
- d. TD-19 Monthly refund report- **Due-MONTHLY**-Reimbursements for state purchased items used for local purposes are included on this report. Fuel, Oil, Parts, Yellow bus mileage used for field trips.
- e. TD-24 Contract Transportation Report- **Due-OCTOBER 15**-Provides information about student transportation contracts including numbers of students involved, mileage, and number of trips.



- f. TD-25 School Bus Accident Report-For reporting injury and property damage arising from the operation of school buses. –Completed-**PER OCCURRENCE** – and provided to law enforcement and Attorney General’s office-Tort Claims section. A copy must be kept locally. If a fatality occurs a copy of the TD 25 along with the official police report must be submitted to DPI Transportation Services.
- g. TD-10 Bus Inventory Survey-**Due-Annually during SPRING**-For verification of total active yellow bus fleet operating over 91 school days. Also used to report variances such as; Loaner buses, Route buses operating less than 91 days, Number of Parked buses, Bus Credits.
- h. TDTIMS-Due-November 1- Includes data that are used in the transportation funding formula. Specifically students transported must be assigned to stops, runs and routes in order to calculate site characteristics such as the average distance to school for transported students.

Link to state reporting page- <http://www.ncbussafety.org/StateForms.html>

### C. INSURANCE/TORT CLAIMS FOR SCHOOL BUSES AND SERVICE TRUCKS

The State is self-insured with respect to damage to school buses and service trucks (the vehicles used to maintain and service those buses, such as technician pick-up trucks, fuel trucks and wreckers. When a bus is involved in a collision, it is up to the LEA to make the needed repairs to the vehicle. If the LEA receives funds resulting from an insurance claim when the other party is at fault, then the insurance settlement funds are used to offset the cost of the repairs. If the school bus driver is at fault or if there is no other “at fault” party, then the LEA must make repairs using funds from its block grant allotment.

If a bus is declared a total loss where, in the estimation of DPI Transportation Consultants, the cost to replace the bus exceeds its value, then the state replaces the bus. The same process applies to school bus damage caused by vandalism, fire, flood, storms or other natural disasters. Activity buses and other locally funded/operated vehicles are insured for property damage and liability by each LEA at local expense.

Liability coverage for school buses (and service trucks) is provided through the State Tort Claims Act. The State Tort Claims Act (STCA) is contained in G.S. 143-300.1 and covers the local board of education from all claims of negligent operations or maintenance of public school buses or school transportation service vehicles. For example, driver negligence is insured for such claims as hitting another car, destroying private property, or an accident causing students to be injured.

The STCA provides coverage in the following situations, provided the driver is employed and paid by the LEA and is operating a bus as allowed under G.S. 115C-242, consisting primarily of transporting students to and from school and for some other educational purposes.

- a. School Bus Driver-Must be a paid driver and operating in accordance of G.S. 115C-242.
- b. School Bus Mechanic-Must be operating a service vehicle in the course of their employment servicing yellow school buses.
- c. School Bus Monitor-Must be appointed by the school principal and acting in accordance with G.S. 115C-245(d).
- d. Transportation Safety Assistant-Must be employed and acting in accordance with G.S. 115C-245(e).
- e. Bus Driver Trainee-Must be under the supervision of an authorized employee of NCDOT, DMV training specialist.
- f. All student passengers are from “home to school” and “school to home”, or student passengers are being transported between schools or on a field trip designed to serve as an instructional program of the school.

Tort Claims does not cover a service truck responding to an “Activity bus” breakdown. An LEA should carry liability and collision insurance on state service vehicles to cover accident situations relating to local vehicles.

Link to information on the state Tort Claims Act -

[www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter\\_143/gs\\_143-300.1.html](http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_143/gs_143-300.1.html)

Additional information is provided in Appendix B – Tort Claims Questions and Answers.

#### D. REIMBURSEMENT TO PRC 056 TRANSPORTATION FOR EXTRA USE OF SCHOOL BUSES

The North Carolina General Assembly provides funding for transporting eligible school age (K-12) students to and from school. Funding is based on a 180-day calendar year. School buses may, however, be used for other uses that serve the instructional purposes of the schools and must be reimbursed at actual cost, cost per mile or a combination of the two. Depending on the purpose, there are different reimbursement rates that should be used to offset the cost of operation for non-funded purposes.

State transportation funds (PRC 56) that are used to provide transportation for students other than to- school and from-school should be reimbursed from the responsible program as indicated in the remainder of this document. Where possible, costs may be paid directly for the actual expense incurred. For instance, contracted transportation services for Pre-K students can be paid directly from the appropriate funding source. Similarly, the cost of a bus

driver for an instructional-related field trip can be paid directly by the school, the school district or other funding source. Those costs which can not or are not paid directly (e.g. fuel, oil, drivers' salaries if paid from PRC 56) must be reimbursed. There are four major categories into which this reimbursement falls, as indicated in the following table. Further, the reimbursement into these categories can be done on a per-mile basis or an annual per-student basis. The circumstances of the transportation will dictate which is most appropriate.

In general, most school transportation resources are paid with state funds. For instance, driver and technician salaries, fuel, repair parts, etc. are paid from PRC 056 – Pupil Transportation. From time to time, those state resources are used for local purposes. For instance, working on an activity bus, taking a tire from state inventory and putting it on that activity bus, or driving a school bus to transport students on an educational field trip, are local expenses that are initially paid with state funds. In such instances, those state funds must be repaid with local funds.

There are four major categories into which this reimbursement falls, as indicated in the following table. Further, the reimbursement into these categories can be done on a per-mile basis or an annual per-student basis. The circumstances of the transportation will dictate which is most appropriate.

<b>The categories of per mile and per pupil reimbursement are:</b>			
<b>CATEGORY #1</b>	<b>CATEGORY #2</b>	<b>CATEGORY #3</b>	<b>CATEGORY #4</b>
<b>Full Reimbursement Rate</b>	<b>State Programs Rate</b>	<b>Full Rate-Driver Pd. Separate</b>	<b>State Rate-Driver Pd. Separate</b>
• Trans.Personnel Salary		• Trans.Personnel Salary	
• Salary – Driver	• Salary – Driver	• Salary – Driver	
• Benefit costs	• Benefit costs	• Benefit costs	• Benefit costs
• Oil	• Oil	• Oil	• Oil
• Tires & Tubes	• Tires & Tubes	• Tires & Tubes	• Tires & Tubes
• Vehicle Repair Parts	• Vehicle Repair Parts	• Vehicle Repair Parts	• Vehicle Repair Parts
• Fuel	• Fuel	• Fuel	• Fuel
• Capital replacement		• Capital replacement	
• Tort (Insurance) cost		• Tort (Insurance) cost	

**The categories of per mile and per pupil reimbursement are:**

- The **per mile** cost reimbursement should be used when transportation results in extra mileage for yellow school buses.
- The **per pupil** cost reimbursement is used primarily when transportation to a separate program is provided for a pupil for a full semester or academic year.

Additional information and details are contained in APPENDIX C

## FLEET / MAINTENANCE

### A. FLEET CLASSIFICATIONS

Proper and legal use of school buses, activity buses, and service vehicles is regulated by state law, state BOE policy, and local policy. A system is in place using “vehicle status” to designate specific uses of vehicles and to keep track of replacement schedules.

**E1** – A school bus that has already been replaced but not designated for sale. Reserved by DPI for future use as needed for credit redemption or to be reinstated due to a crash, etc. Can be used as a spare bus by LEA until needed by DPI.

**E2RB** - A vehicle titled to the LEA and authorized for use as a regular route bus, subject to replacement by the state.

**E2RC** - A Capital Outlay vehicle titled to the LEA that has not been replaced by the state and is authorized for use as a regular route bus, subject to replacement by the state.

**E2LC** - A bus loaned to the LEA, authorized for temporary operation from state funds as a regular route bus due to additional transportation needs. Authorization is contingent on a commitment by the LEA to order a capital outlay bus or eliminate the need for an additional bus within 18 months.

**E2RR** - A vehicle designated for replacement by DPI Transportation Services due to age or mileage depending on funds available.

**E2NR** - A vehicle purchased from the state that is not on state replacement but is used as a regular route bus. Any such bus cannot be older than buses operating on the current replacement schedule and is allowed only as authorized by DPI Transportation Services.

**E3** – Wrecked. A vehicle titled to the LEA that has not yet been replaced, but which has been wrecked and is awaiting a replacement vehicle to be purchased or transferred

**E4** – For Sale. A vehicle no longer needed by the LEA and is designated to be sold as surplus. These vehicles are not to be used for any purpose and must be parked in a safe location that allows easy access.

**E6** - Sold Equipment. This status is assigned to any vehicle after it is sold or otherwise discarded.

**E8** - Local Vehicles (e.g. activity buses, administrative staff cars, driver’s education vehicles, local school buses, local maintenance vehicles, mowing/landscaping equipment etc.). These vehicles are typically not directly involved in the to/from school transportation for grades K-12. No state funds

may be expended for parts/labor/fuel for these vehicles. By convention, these vehicle and equipment numbers are 7000 and 8000 series.

**EOB** - A school bus that has been turned in for credit and is available for transfer to another county. This is a bus that has not yet reached the replacement criteria and can be used to replace a total loss bus or to redeem a bus credit. These vehicles are not to be used for any purpose and must be parked in a safe location. It is recommended that EOB vehicles be cranked every three months to help maintain mechanical integrity.

**EOS** - A service vehicle available for transfer to another county. This is a vehicle that has already been replaced and can be used on a temporary basis as a spare vehicle by another county, as coordinated by DPI Transportation Services.

**ESP** - A bus titled to the LEA and was once authorized for use as a regular route bus, but because of current demands is not being utilized on a daily basis. At such time that the fleet is reviewed for bus replacements, a status ESP “parked” buses will not be included in the replacement pool. It can be used as a spare and will count towards the 10% spare fleet.

**ESS** - A vehicle titled to the LEA, having already been replaced by the state with a new bus, authorized for use as a spare bus when a regular route bus is not available due to mechanical failure or routine maintenance. ESS buses cannot be used for any other purpose.

**EZ** - A vehicle that has been rendered inoperable due to an accident or mechanical condition and is available statewide for cannibalization. EZ parts can only be used to repair yellow school buses. EZ vehicles should be clearly marked “EZ” in three locations on the side of the vehicle to assure a visiting LEA seeking parts can clearly identify which vehicle is available for “parts”.

More details about the above topics can be found in the VEHICLES section of the NC BUS FLEET manual at- [www.ncbussafety.org/manuals](http://www.ncbussafety.org/manuals)

## B. FLEET / MAINTENANCE RECORD-KEEPING

Each bus garage is responsible to keep track of school bus maintenance, inspections, and related repair expenditures. A system of paper files, electronic files, and the state computerized reporting system (BSIP) are to be maintained by school bus transportation employees.

- a. Vehicle files-A separate paper file will be kept for each vehicle. Each file will contain the following;
  - i. DPO2-Monthly Inspections (MI)
  - ii. DPO2-Preventive Maintenance (PM)

- iii. DP01-TD-18 work orders
- iv. Oil analysis records
- v. Original title
- vi. DMV tag registration
- vii. Line setting sheet
- viii. Warranty service
- ix. Vehicle recall information
- x. Major damage documentation
- xi. Other information deemed necessary by the LEA

The above documents can be kept in a single or multiple files as long as bus number is clearly indicated on file tab.

- b. Other files to be maintained separately
  - i. Vehicle accident file
  - ii. Discarded equipment file (vehicles, obsolete parts, scrap metal, tires, waste oil)
  - iii. Inventory received file
  - iv. Fuel received and issued file
  - v. School bus driver sign in sheet file
  - vi. Service call log file
  - vii. Bus inspector renewal information file
  - viii. Annual report file
  - ix. Monthly refund report file
  - x. Contract transportation file
  - xi. DPI email communications file
  
- c. Retention of documents-All office related documents must be stored for a period of time before disposal.
  - i. Accident & Tort claims files-7 years
  - ii. All other garage files-3 years

Exception-A file must be kept if involved in an active investigation.

More details of the above information can be found in the preventive maintenance section of the NC BUS FLEET manual at [www.ncbussafety.org/manuals](http://www.ncbussafety.org/manuals)

### C. SCHOOL BUS, SERVICE TRUCK, AND ACTIVITY BUS REPLACEMENTS

NCDPI is charged with the task of replacing state maintained school buses and service vehicles. Replacements are issued as prescribed by law and state policy.

Each LEA is responsible for properly maintaining vehicles for the entire life cycle.

- a. School buses are replaced based on years of services and mileage criteria. Effective 2013, general statute 115C-249: *“A bus is eligible for replacement with State funds based on its age and mileage when it is either 20 years old by model year or has been operated for 250,000 miles, except as follows:*

- (1) *A bus that has been operated for less than 150,000 miles is not eligible for replacement regardless of its model year.*
- (2) *A bus that is less than 15 years old by model year is not eligible for replacement until the bus has been operated for 300,000 miles.*
- b. In order for an LEA to add an additional school bus to its operating fleet, a new vehicle can be secured by several different avenues.
  - i. Purchase a new bus with local funds (Capital Outlay)
  - ii. A loaner bus can be operated for 18 months with agreement with NCDPI that the LEA will issue a purchase order for a new bus within 18 months.
  - iii. A bus credit (if available) may be cashed in. NCDPI will secure a used bus to be operated until mileage or age criteria is reached at which time a new replacement bus will be ordered.
- c. Capital Outlay (CO) school buses must be purchased new with local funds and must meet the specifications of the state term contract for schools buses in order to qualify for state replacement in the future.
- d. State replacement of eligible school buses using parked school buses (ESP)
  - i. If an LEA has an ESP bus not assigned to a bus route it can be reactivated in place of a route bus (E2RB or E2RC) that has met the replacement criteria. A bus credit will be issued to the LEA.
  - ii. If a bus must be replaced early due to crash, violent act of nature, rust, theft, etc., an ESP bus may be reactivated in its place.
- e. Activity buses are purchased with local funds. A new bus should be purchased from the state term contract, but is not required. The replacement policy (age, mileage) is a local decision.
- f. Service Trucks and Fuel Trucks-As with school buses, the initial purchase is a local responsibility. Replacement of these vehicles is coordinated by NCDPI Transportation Services using funds from the sale of surplus vehicles.
- g. Wreckers-The original unit is purchased using local funds. Replacement vehicle is funded partially by NCDPI and LEA. The chassis is purchased by the state. The body/boom is purchased by the LEA. Generally older wreckers can only be legally operated by permission of NCDMV through a Wrecker overweight permit –All single axle wreckers require an overweight permit which is linked from the web page at <http://www.ncbussafety.org/StateForms.html>

**D. BSIP– VEHICLE, MAINTENANCE AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The public schools of NC use DOT’s Business Systems information portal “BSIP” for fleet management. BSIP keeps track of all data pertaining to school buses, activity buses, and service vehicles. Entering data is required to ensure proper documentation of vehicle service history, parts inventory receipt/issuance, fueling, and employee time. Other vehicles maintained by the school transportation department may also be included within BSIP.

### BSIP Work Order codes

The following codes are used for generating all work orders in BSIP. Once initiated a work order number will be generated.

DP00 - Standing work order-Includes Fuel & Lubrication entry per vehicle.

DP01 - Corrective maintenance orders-Repairs performed to vehicles

DP02 - Preventive Maintenance orders-Strategic plans triggered automatically by time or mileage.

DP07 - New vehicle service orders-List of check items performed after receiving a new vehicle.

DP08 - Non wrench time and Paid time off (Only includes personnel directly involved with hands-on vehicle servicing) -Includes transporting vehicles, garage & vehicle cleaning, paperwork, Jury duty, sick leave, vacation leave, & holidays.

Below is a list of commonly used BSIP screens for checking various items pertaining to vehicles, inventory, employee time, vehicle expenditures. For a complete listing of BSIP transaction procedures click the following link-

<http://ncbussafety.org/BSIP/TransactionProcedures.html>

- a. Buses and Statuses (IE36- variant DPI-VI-NEW) – List of current vehicle data (VIN, plate, mileage, location, etc.) together with bus status information, help manage route, spare, and local fleets. Link to IE36 instructions-  
[http://www.ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP\\_DR4\\_IE36.ppt](http://www.ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP_DR4_IE36.ppt)
- b. Monthly Inspections and Preventive Maintenance orders. –These screens should be checked **daily** so work can be scheduled and completed before overdue date OR mileage.
  - I. MI's due -ZIP24-variant DPI-MI
  - II. PM's due-ZIP24-variant DPI-PMLink to ZIP24 instructions  
[http://ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP\\_OP1\\_ZIP24.ppt](http://ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP_OP1_ZIP24.ppt)
- c. Current Parts Inventory (ZMB21) – List of inventory currently on hand in the stock room and on service trucks. Link to Inventory List instructions-  
[http://www.ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP\\_DR10\\_ZMB21.ppt](http://www.ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP_DR10_ZMB21.ppt)
- d. Vehicle Expenditure and Mileage Data (MCIS) – Information on costs for each vehicle over a period of time. Link to MCIS report instructions-  
[http://www.ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP\\_DR12\\_MCIS.ppt](http://www.ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP_DR12_MCIS.ppt)
- e. Monthly Refund Report (MCIS) – Report used to determine reimbursement for costs associated with the maintenance and operation of local vehicles. Link to MCIS instructions-[http://www.ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP\\_DR12\\_MCIS.ppt](http://www.ncbussafety.org/BSIP/documents/BSIP_DR12_MCIS.ppt)



- f. Open Work Orders (IW38-variant DPI-IW38) - Run weekly to check for open orders over 45 days old. Be sure to technically complete “TECO” all open orders when work is completed. Exceptions include:
  - i. Vehicle waiting for parts on backorder
  - ii. Vehicle being repaired externally with extended service period.
  - iii. Vehicle being repaired externally under warranty with extended service period.
- g. Labor Hours Confirmation (IW47-variant DPI-PLANT)- Run monthly to verify each technician is documenting between 140-190 hours per month. This includes DP01, DP02, DP07, & DP08 hours.

E. SCHOOL/ACTIVITY BUS PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE / INSPECTIONS

In order to ensure safety and longevity, state law and state board of education policy requires school buses, activity buses, and service vehicles to be inspected and maintained as described in the NC BUS FLEET manual. Preventive maintenance activities of some type are scheduled every 5000 miles. Specific activities are generated thru BSIP via a DP02 work order in accordance with manufacturer’s recommendations.

In addition to these regular maintenance activities, N.C. state law requires school bus and activity buses be inspected every 30 days. Every 30 calendar days, each school bus (and activity bus) is required to be inspected for mechanical or safety-related defects. BSIP generates a DP02 work order which lists a set of items to be inspected on each school bus. Further, criteria that require a bus be placed “out of service until repaired” are provided in the 30 day manual so that each inspector has a consistent process by which to assess a bus during the inspection. SBE policy requires that inspections be performed by someone that has completed the training and certification requirements administered by DPI

The NC Bus Fleet Manual and the Inspection excerpt can be found at [www.ncbussafety.org/manuals](http://www.ncbussafety.org/manuals)

***EXCERPTS FROM GENERAL STATUTE § 115C-248. Inspection of school buses and activity buses; report of defects by drivers; discontinuing use until defects remedied.***

- (a) The superintendent of each local school administrative unit, shall cause each school bus owned or operated by such local school administrative unit to be inspected at least once each 30 days during the school year for mechanical defects, or other defects which may affect the safe operation of such bus. A report of such inspection, together with the recommendations of the person making the inspection, shall be filed promptly in the office of the superintendent of such local school administrative unit.....*
- (b) It shall be the duty of the driver of each school bus to report promptly to the principal of the school.....,*
- (c) If any school bus is found by the principal of the school, to which it is assigned, or by the superintendent of the local school administrative unit, to be so defective that the bus may not be operated with reasonable safety, it shall be the duty of such principal or superintendent to cause the use of such bus to be discontinued until such defect is remedied....*
- (d) The superintendent of each local school administrative unit, shall cause each activity bus .... to be inspected ....at the same time and in the same way and manner as the regular public school buses .... It shall be the duty of the driver of each activity bus to make the same reports to the principal of the school using and operating such activity bus as is required by this section..... Nothing in this subsection shall authorize the use of State funds for the purchase, operation or repair of any activity bus.*

## F. SCHOOL BUS INSPECTOR CERTIFICATION

Bus inspectors in N.C. must be state certified in order to inspect public school buses. Only a certified inspector is permitted to sign a DP02 30 day inspection sheet. Classes are scheduled frequently around the state.

Information about the certification program, including class schedules, are posted at [www.ncbussafety.org/BICert](http://www.ncbussafety.org/BICert)

The basic certification process is as follows.

- a. All bus inspectors must complete a 4 hour certification class and pass a written test based on the Inspection portion of the NC BUS FLEET manual.
- b. Once the test is passed with a score of 80% or better, the certificate is mailed to the Transportation Director.
- c. The Inspector certification is valid for 5 years.
- d. Inspector certificates must be displayed in a prominent place in the transportation department.
- e. Renewal tests are timed and open-book.

## G. ANNUAL DPI BUS INSPECTION / TRANSPORTATION REVIEW

Visits by a DPI Transportation Consultant are scheduled randomly to each of the 100 counties throughout the year to review the LEA Transportation operation. The purpose of the visit is to provide a third-party report to the LEA superintendent regarding the condition of the school bus fleet and fleet maintenance record-keeping. A numerical score is generated from the physical inspection to help the superintendent gauge the seriousness of defects found and to be able to compare reports from one year to the next.

- a. Approximately 10% of the yellow school bus fleet is physically checked. The DPI consultant performs the same 30-day inspection required of LEA staff. A few of the buses to be inspected are determined at random from the DPI Raleigh office. The rest are at the discretion of the consultant who will attempt to get a variety of bus models and age, as well as inspecting a few buses assigned to each technician. The Transportation director or designee should be prepared to accompany the consultant during the entire visit.
- b. Office and inventory processes are spot checked including; School bus inspection and maintenance files, BSIP reporting, fueling records, bus driver sign in forms, spare bus assignments, inspector certification / post certification training, yellow bus fleet inventory, service truck inventory, monthly refund reporting and parts room inventory.
- c. Service Trucks (Pick-up, Fuel, and Wrecker) can be inspected for safety and maintenance compliance.

## H. OIL ANALYSIS

Some DP02 preventive maintenance work orders generated by BSIP will include oil analysis sampling. This program required by the State Board of Education is a quick method to judge the health of an engine and the rate of internal wear. By measuring various metals, suspended contaminants, and the viscosity of the oil potential problems can be diagnosed before major damage occurs. Drain intervals can be extended, labor can be saved, and oil resources maximized by proper use of the oil sampling program.

Oil sampling procedures include:

- i. Contact an oil analysis vendor
- ii. Train all technicians to properly extract a good oil sample
- iii. Keep plenty of test kits in stock
- iv. If a returned analysis recommends an oil change or other procedures, generate a DP01 work order.
- v. File a copy of the analysis results with the PM requesting the sample

## I. TIRES

Due to the unit cost and the safety impact on each vehicle, school bus tires and the management of tire inventory is a critical part of the school bus maintenance operation. Major pieces of this operation include the acquisition of new and recapped tires as well as the disposal of scrap tires.

The Department of Public Instruction encourages LEAs to recycle school bus tires, having them recapped and used on the rear axle of school buses. New tires must be used on the front (steering) axle.

The Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Purchase and Contract, administers state term contracts for new and recapped tires. The DOA's State Surplus Property Agency administers a contract for the disposal of scrap tires.

Additional information about tire management can be found in Appendix D of this document.

## J. SURPLUS VEHICLES

Items purchased with state funds must be disposed of properly at the end of service life. The sales of these items generate funds for replacement service vehicles. The proper documentation must be used when disposing of surplus property. Contact DPI Transportation field consultant to initiate the sales process for School Buses, Service Trucks, and scrap metal.

- a. Surplus School Buses and Trucks-The NCDPI Field Consultant will initiate school bus and service truck for sale listings. Prior to a sale, all school system markings should be blacked out. Stop arms and walk arms should be removed UNLESS BEING SOLD TO A SCHOOL. If school bus is sold to a charter school, the "North Carolina Public School" markings shall remain. The DPI field consultant shall generate a form TD-13 which

includes a description of the vehicle (including mechanical deficiencies) and the sales price. This information will be listed on the NCBUS SAFETY.ORG website.

Steps for completing a sales transaction;

- I. Buyer must pay with certified check payable to “NCDPI”
- II. LEA will issue the title to the purchaser
- III. The LEA will send the certified check and form TD-6B to NCDPI Transportation Services within FIVE days.

Link to school buses/service trucks for sale statewide –

[www.ncbussafety.org/Vehicles.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/Vehicles.html)

Link to bus/truck sale form-

[www.ncbussafety.org/documents/StateForms/TD-6B Bus Sale Form.doc](http://www.ncbussafety.org/documents/StateForms/TD-6B%20Bus%20Sale%20Form.doc)

- b. Fire Department Agreement-Occasionally a fire/rescue department will request a used school bus for extrication fire/rescue training. By signing this agreement certain **EZ** status school buses can be used for training by local, state, and federal agencies. The DPI field consultant must approve the bus before release to the training agency.

Link to Agreement form-

<http://ncbussafety.org/documents/StateForms/EmergencyTrainingSurplusBus.pdf>

#### K. NON-VEHICLE SURPLUS/SCRAP/RECYCLING ITEMS

There is a section of forms related to recycling, disposal and sale of surplus items on this page: <http://www.ncbussafety.org/StateForms.html>. Additional guidance on the disposal of property is shown in a January, 2015 memo shown in Appendix E.

- a. Tire casings - A contracted scrap tire vendor is available to dispose of scrap tire casings. For additional information about tire casing disposal see Appendix D
- b. Batteries – There is a statewide contract for disposal of surplus batteries. Generally cores are returned to the vendor in exchange for new battery. See link below.
- c. Waste Oil, Waste Coolant, Used filters, Sorbents - State surplus property administers the contract for the disposal of these materials. Link to recycling contracts-  
<http://www.doa.state.nc.us/ssp/recycling.aspx>
- d. Obsolete parts
  - I. Contact a vendor for possible credit if items are still of value.
  - II. Contact DPI field consultant to write up the “lot” of surplus parts to be placed for bid by State Surplus Property.
  - III. When surplus parts are gone, remove in BSIP.
- e. Scrap Metal – Scrap metal must be disposed of through a dealer offering current market price for metal. A weight ticket must accompany a certified check endorsed to NCDPI issued by the scrap metal merchant.

This form is also in the Surplus Sale Forms section on the web page

<http://www.ncbussafety.org/StateForms.html>

L. PURCHASING REPAIR PARTS

Purchases should be made from state contracts whenever possible. This provides the backing of the state purchasing office should there be any problems with the products. This is also the means by which the state competitively bids various items. In some cases repair parts and supplies must be purchased locally when planning for state contract purchases is not possible. Even though there are advantages in turnaround time, LEAs should ensure they are using tax dollars wisely. Following is a link to the website for the state office of Purchase and contract. [www.pandc.nc.gov/Default.aspx](http://www.pandc.nc.gov/Default.aspx)

- a. Buses, Tires and Brakes. SBE Policy TCS-H-008 states that LEAs shall purchase School Buses, Tires, brake pads, brake shoes and brake hardware that meet the safety specifications listed in the request for bids for the statewide term contract for these items. For additional tire purchasing information refer to Appendix D. Specifications are listed at [www.ncbussafety.org/StateContracts.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/StateContracts.html)
- b. Safety Related Components. SBE Policy TCS-H-005 (The NC BUS FLEET manual) requires that school buses be maintained in the condition, and with the same equipment as originally equipped. Examples include: mirrors, lights, brakes, tires, fire extinguishers, first aid supplies, seat covers – essentially the entire bus.
- c. Non-Contract Sources: The LEA may identify other vendors for replacement parts. In doing so the LEA should ensure the replacement part is appropriate for the model of vehicle being repaired.

M. SCHOOL BUS SPECIFICATIONS

North Carolina school buses are purchased from a state term contract issued by the Division of Purchase and Contract, North Carolina Department of Administration. The vehicle specifications (including activity bus specifications) are developed by the N.C. Specifications committee. Contracts and specifications (which are different documents) are listed at [www.ncbussafety.org/StateContracts.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/StateContracts.html).

The spec committee is comprised of school bus professionals from a variety of backgrounds and specialties from across the state. Members include:

3 DPI Field Consultants	From each of the 3 DPI regions:
Purchase and Contract Rep	1 Transportation Director
2 DMV School Bus/ Traffic Safety Reps	1 Shop Foreman or other Technical Staff
2 Recent School Bus Inspection Competition Winners	1 At Large (typically a second in one of the above categories)

Meetings are conducted by a staff member from the DPI office. An Executive Secretary of the committee – also from the DPI office – is responsible for taking input from the committee and preparing the specifications document. See current committee membership at [www.ncbussafety.org/SpecificationsCommittee/index.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/SpecificationsCommittee/index.html)

The committee considers specification revisions suggested by directors, bus drivers, technicians, manufacturers and others.

## N. SCHOOL BUS MODIFICATIONS

Because of the State's responsibility to replace school buses, no school bus is to be altered in appearance, color, lettering, or equipment unless authorized by the Department of Public Instruction, Transportation Services Section. It is permissible to update older model school buses to a later year school bus specification without special permission. Any safety item included in the most recent North Carolina School Bus Specifications may be added. However, the items must be of the same model and type of material as described in the specifications and also installed in the manner described in the specifications.

DPI Transportation Services maintains a list of approved alterations and modification, which may not be included in the state purchasing spec (e.g. cameras). See Appendix G for a list of approved list of alterations and modifications.

## O. EQUIPMENT PILOT TESTING

If an item not included in current vehicle specifications is to be added to a school bus, a pilot test may first be required by DPI Transportation Services in order to conduct a durability and safety evaluation. The pilot test must be approved and monitored by NCDPI. Generally a pilot test evaluation period will last for at least six months. It will be the responsibility of the Director of Transportation to gather accurate information to be reported to NCDPI.

Data must be gathered to evaluate:

- a. Feasibility - Is the product helpful in addressing a current need?
- b. Cost effectiveness - Will the product save time and money or achieve a significant safety benefit?
- c. Adverse effects - Does the product create safety and/or maintenance issues?

Once the evaluation period is completed, and the item is approved, the item can be installed on any NC school bus. If the item is to be considered as a standard on all school buses, data will be presented to the N.C. Specification committee.

## OPERATIONS

### A. USE OF SCHOOL BUSES AND ACTIVITY BUSES

Proper and legal use of school and activity buses is regulated by state law, SBE policy, and local policy.

- a. School Buses – According to North Carolina motor vehicle law, a school bus is a vehicle whose primary purpose is to transport school students over an established route to and from school for the regularly scheduled school day. It must have flashing red lights, a stop sign, plainly visible SCHOOL BUS lettering on the front and rear and be painted primarily yellow below the roof line.

The original bus shall be purchased by the local board of education. Thereafter, the state will replace each school bus provided all replacement guidelines are followed. Public school buses are to be used for instructional purposes only.

- b. Activity Buses-Shall be purchased (and replaced) by the local school system and operated using local funds. They are generally painted a different color from yellow. The primary purpose is to transport school students and others to or from a place for participation in extra-curricular activities. Activity buses cannot be “rented” to groups outside the school system, with the exception that school-age children can be transported by activity bus to or from programs of non-profit organizations (such as the BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS).

### B. EXTRA USE OF SCHOOL BUSES, INCLUDING SUMMER PROGRAMS

The North Carolina General Assembly provides funding for transporting eligible school age (k-12) students to and from school. Funding is based on a traditional (usually 180) day calendar year. School buses may, however, be used for other uses that serve the instructional purposes of the schools and must be reimbursed at actual cost, cost per mile or a combination of the two. The typical example is a field trip. Only route buses (No ESS Spares) may be used for these purposes. Depending on the purpose, there are different reimbursement rates that should be used to offset the cost of operation for non-funded purposes. Examples of these extra uses include:

- a. Remediation, including summer programs – Includes locally funded programs, grant funded programs, and state PRC 069.
- b. Instructional field trips
- c. Pre-K programs - Includes locally funded programs, grant funded programs, and state PRC 032.

### C. CONTRACT TRANSPORTATION

Private entities may be contracted to provide transportation for public school students.

- a. Contracting with a private bus company. §115C-253 allows an LEA to enter into a contract for the transportation of pupils. Buses should meet FMVSS regulations and equipped with safety features as provided in the North Carolina school bus specifications (such as a crossing control arm).
- b. Contracting for non-buses. Vehicles under 16 passengers are not required to meet school bus equipment requirements. LEAs should consult their attorney before contracting with a company using 12-15 passenger vans, since the federal government considers such a vehicle to be a BUS. (For more information go to [www.ncbussafety.org/vans](http://www.ncbussafety.org/vans))
- c. Contracting with Parents. Sometimes an LEA might find it impractical to provide transportation by yellow bus or contractor. At the LEA's option, and upon mutual agreement with the parents, the LEA may pay the parent on a per-mile basis to deliver the child to a school or other location. Link to information related to contract information-  
<http://www.ncbussafety.org/documents/StateForms/TD24Instructions.pdf>

### D. OPERATING PASSENGER VEHICLES FOR TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

As a result of a wide range of educational programs being implemented in our public schools, Local Education Agency (LEA) transportation departments are being faced with the need to transport small numbers of students that cannot be safely or efficiently transported by school bus. Examples include students with special transportation needs (perhaps involving special equipment), students experiencing homelessness being transported to their school of origin or students assigned to an alternative school. While a deviation from the traditional means of providing transportation to students, some LEAs have chosen to operate small (10 or less passengers, e.g. a mini van or SUV) vehicles in some special cases when just a few students need to be transported distances not covered by existing school bus routes.

Vehicles are listed in BSIP as 6600 series vehicles and must be inspected, insured and replaced by the LEA. Additional guidance is found in Appendix G.

### E. MOTORCOACH TRANSPORTATION FOR FIELD TRIPS

The use of private chartered buses is an optional method of transporting students to destinations of a greater distance than can be comfortably accommodated by school activity buses. Only "approved" charter bus companies are allowed to haul student passengers for school sponsored field trips.

An "approved" charter bus company list can be developed by;

- I. Single LEA developing an approved list using SBE criteria.
- II. Multiple LEAs joined together to develop a joint approved list.
- III. Individuals or companies contracted to provide recommendations of companies to be place on the approved list.



Before departure of a trip the following items must be checked by a school employee;

- a. Check for valid driver license-CDL class "A" or "B" with "P" endorsement
- b. Check driver for valid DOT medical certificate (expires two years after issuance)
- c. Be sure vehicle registration and license tag are current
- d. Check for current DOT vehicle inspection (either sticker or paperwork)
- e. Check drivers log book for current entry of vehicle pre-trip inspection
- f. Check driver log book for previous day's activities (11 hours per day maximum driving time)
- g. Accompany driver for a basic walk-around inspection of the vehicle. Driver should ensure school employee the vehicle is in safe and legal operating condition.

The following web page includes information about charter motor coach requirements and resources, SBE policy, state guidelines and links to additional information including the SaferBus APP from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

[www.ncbussafety.org/motorcoach](http://www.ncbussafety.org/motorcoach)

#### F. ROUTING AND TIMS

G.S. 115C-240(d) states that the SBE shall "require local boards to implement the Transportation Information Management System (TIMS) or an equivalent system approved by the State Board of Education..." Student ridership data from TIMS is used to help calculate annual transportation funding allotments for each LEA.

TIMS software and support are provided free to all LEAs by DPI based on a statewide license that was initiated in 1986. Having been upgraded several times since then, the software meets the routing and scheduling needs of LEAs. It is provided as an efficiency tool since funding is allotted to LEAs in part based on efficiency.

TIMS is a computer program to manage daily school bus routing and planning operations. It uses GIS maps, school attendance boundary files and data from PowerSchool. TIMS contains the location of every student enrolled in a school district and provides the transportation department with the tools to determine appropriate stop locations for all bus riders and effectively plan bus routes prior to the first day of school as well as better manage the day to day routing changes that occur throughout the school year.

TIMS allows the Transportation Department to analyze current routing operations and examine potential improvements to ease bus overcrowding, promote efficiency, reduce costs and improve student service.

In addition to Bus Routing and Planning, TIMS also allows School Districts to analyze Enrollment at the School Level and help plan potential School Boundary Changes to ease overcrowding and examine how enrollment numbers would change as boundary lines are shifted. TIMS contains a

wealth of student information that can be formatted and exported to meets the needs of transportation staff, teachers, bus drivers and school administrators.

**Implementation of the system includes a grade promotion of students in the spring, incorporating known incoming kindergarten students and the development of new school bus routes before school starts. State law requires school bus route changes to be documented within 10 days and TIMS should be updated with those updates on the same schedule or as soon thereafter as possible.** Every school bus driver (regular or substitute) should have a current student roster and a route description not only on the first day of school, but every day thereafter.

State reports (the TD TIMS) are due on November 1 each year and are cross-referenced to TD2 Student Counts to ensure that data are sufficiently complete to be used in the state pupil transportation funding formula.

TIMS support is provided by the Institute for Transportation Research and Education at NC State University ([www.itre.ncsu.edu](http://www.itre.ncsu.edu)) and the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute ([www.ui.uncc.edu](http://www.ui.uncc.edu)).

More information on TIMS can be found at [www.ncbussafety.org/TIMS](http://www.ncbussafety.org/TIMS).

#### G. ASSIGNMENT OF PUPILS TO BUS STOPS AND SCHOOL BUSES

General Statute 115-244 stipulates that only enrolled students and school employees are allowed to ride school buses. State funding only includes transportation to and from the regularly organized school day.

Others stipulated in the law as being allowed on the bus include Transportation Safety Assistants (paid school system employees) and Monitors (unpaid volunteers) which are on the bus to assist with student management or other special needs of students.

The superintendent or designee has the responsibility for establishing school bus stops and assigning eligible passengers to school bus routes. School buses must be routed to pass within one mile of each student's home. Any appeal of bus stop location or transportation assignment is to the local board of education.

School districts may offer some school assignments where transportation is restricted. "Common stops" or "Express stops" which are further than one mile from the residence may be offered – typically for county-wide or regional program where more direct routing is impractical. In such a case, the parent must be informed in advance of the school assignment process that this is the case so that they have the option to select a school where standard transportation (within a mile of the home) is offered.

SBE Policy TCS-H-002 addresses the LEA's responsibility to parents and students to ensure that information is communicated:

“Parents and guardians of students assigned to school bus routes shall be informed of the scheduled school bus arrival time and their responsibility to make sure that students are at the school bus stop prior to that arrival time.”

Specific General Statutes dealing with student assignment and routing can be found in the North Carolina general statutes.

Routing: G.S. 115C-246

[http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter\\_115c/gs\\_115c-246.html](http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_115c/gs_115c-246.html)

Assignment of Pupils to Buses: G.S. 115C-244

[http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter\\_115c/gs\\_115c-244.html](http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_115c/gs_115c-244.html)

Relevant SBE Policies are TCS-H-002 (School Bus Routes) and TCS-H-006 (Passenger Safety).

<http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/Category.asp?pri=04&category=H&acronym=TCS>

#### H. PASSENGER SAFETY TRAINING / BUSTER THE BUS

Many resources are available for passenger safety training. SBE policy (TCS-H-006) requires school children to be instructed in school bus safety within the first **five** days of school and at least once during each semester thereafter.

- a. Several safety related items on NCBUSSAFETY.ORG webpage- <http://www.ncbussafety.org/safety.html>. In particular, students should be instructed in the following. Note that this is for ALL AGES, ALL GRADES although teaching methods and emphasis might vary among different ages.
  1. Basic pedestrian behavior walking from home to the school bus stop, including the use of sidewalks if available, walk facing traffic and be aware that too many drivers are distracted and the student must be aware and practice “defensive walking”
  2. Instruction on proper behavior at the school bus stop
  3. Instruction on boarding and exiting the school bus, including making sure that, at a minimum, the student makes eye contact with the school bus driver and looks both ways before stepping into each lane of the roadway.
  4. LEA expectations for behavior on the school bus. (NOTE: SBE policy requires each LEA to have a uniform system of discipline on school buses.)
  
- b. Buster the Bus is a robotic school bus designed for the purpose of educating children about bus safety. More information is available at the below link.  
<http://www.ncbussafety.org/TrainingRobot.html>

- c. Operation of emergency exits. NOTE: SBE policy requires ALL students – not just school bus riders to be trained and a description of emergency exit procedures must be described at the beginning of each activity bus trip. (Repeated trips, such as band or sports to not have to be repeated on each subsequent trip if using the same vehicles.)

## I. ACCIDENTS AND CRASHES

All bus collisions must be reported to the bus garage no matter how minor. Collisions resulting in at least \$1000 in damage or any injury must be reported to the law enforcement. A copy of the police report of any fatal crash must be submitted to DPI Transportation Services.

An on-line accident reporting form is available here:

<http://www.ncbussafety.org/documents/NCDMV/NCDMVfrontForm.pdf>

Following is a link to NC Motor Vehicle accident reporting law §20-166.1

<http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/statutes/statutelookup.pl?statute=20-166.1>

In order to obtain a crash report from NCDMV, follow the instructions on their web site.

<https://www.ncdps.gov/index2.cfm?a=000003,000014,000935,000936>

If the school bus driver is at fault or if there are student injuries, the transportation director must contact the adjuster from the North Carolina Department of Justice (Attorney General's Office), Tort Claims section.

When a school bus is involved in a collision, the LEA is responsible for the repair of the vehicle. If the other motorist was at-fault, the LEA must recover funds from the motorist's insurance company. Those funds are to be used to repair the vehicle.

If the vehicle is such an age and the damage is of such an extent that it might not be worth repairing the vehicle, the transportation director should contact the regional DPI field consultant for additional options. If the vehicle is not going to be repaired, any insurance proceeds must be sent to DPI Transportation Services with the check made payable to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

## J. TRANSPORTING SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The most straightforward part of transportation operations is transporting students to and from the school to which they live closest – the so-called “neighborhood school” concept. Even a county-wide high school requires fairly basic routing. The challenge, of course, is making sure it is as efficient as possible.

However, when a student attends a different school from the other students living in his general area, it is more complex. Put another way, when a school draws students from multiple attendance areas, the transportation gets more complicated.

### 1. Special Needs / Exceptional Children.

The two primary obstacles in transporting exceptional children are:

- They are often assigned to schools outside their “base” area.
- They sometimes need special equipment (e.g. wheelchair lift) or other kinds of assistance (transportation safety assistant).

The first is a routing problem and can result in some very light loads. The second is a resource allocation issue. However, except for dealing with these two issues, there is no need for children with special needs to be isolated on their own set of buses. Very simply, a bus is a bus is a bus. Some have wheel chair lifts and some do not. But two children living on the same street going to the same school should be able to ride the same school bus, even though one might have a special need.

There are multiple issues in transporting children with disabilities. Many of this issues along with some guidance and advice can be found in North Carolina’s special needs transportation manual “Special Needs Require Special Care II,” a hard copy of which should be in each LEA transportation office. It is also available online at [www.ncbussafety.org/SpecialNeeds.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/SpecialNeeds.html).

### 2. McKinney Vento Act – Children Experiencing Homelessness.

The McKinney-Vento Act is the only federal law dealing specifically with homelessness. It provides homeless children with the opportunity to finish school where they started, regardless of where they may be staying now. The school district has the responsibility of providing transportation to the school of origin upon request of the family. If the school of origin is in another school district, the requirement remains and the two LEAs must share the cost. If they cannot agree on how to equitably share the cost, each LEA is to pay half the cost.

There is no definition of how long this transportation services must be provided. The requirement does not end with the school year. Transportation directors are encouraged to work closely with their LEA McKinney Vento coordinator to balance these stringent transportation requirements with that which is in the best interest of the child – as determined by the family. Guidance on transportation requirements under the McKinney-Vento Act are online at:

<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/transportation.pdf>

### 3. Early College / Regional School Transportation

Early college programs offer high school students an opportunity to earn an Associate’s degree from a community college while earning their high school diploma. Classes usually take place on the campus of the community college. The degree to which daily schedules and yearly calendars can be coordinated largely determines the complexity of transportation

planning. The best situation seems to be that where students can ride their regular bus to a high school and then a shuttle run takes them to the early college. Even in such a case, buses end up running for a couple of weeks before the K-12 calendar begins in August.

When the SBE set up the early college program, they included a provision that LEAs should not be penalized in the funding formula process for providing transportation to an Early College School. The way DPI Transportation Services has addressed this is to reimburse for Early College transportation outside the funding formula. LEAs submit their additional cost for operation Early College transportation and are reimbursed for those costs. That amount is not included in eligible expenses for the LEA in calculating its budget rating – nor is it included in its funding base going forward.

If an LEA decides that it needs to operate additional buses, then those buses do count in the funding formula process.

At this writing there is only one Regional School – the NorthEast Regional School for Biotechnology and AgriScience. Transportation expenses for the counties impacted by this school are reimbursed and calculated in the same way as those for Early College.

#### 4. Alternative Schools

An alternative learning program is defined as a school or program that serves students at any level, serves suspended or expelled students, serves students whose learning styles are better served in an alternative program... or provides individualized programs outside of a standard classroom setting in a caring atmosphere in which students learn the skills necessary to redirect their lives. ALPs are limited to programs that also meet the following criteria:

- Provide the primary instruction for selected at-risk students outside the standard classroom,
- Enroll students for a designated period of time (not drop-in),
- Offer course credit or grade level promotion credit in core academic areas, and/or
- Assist the student in meeting requirements for graduation.

From a transportation perspective, alternative schools pose the same challenges as some EC programs or even homeless students. The population being served comes from all over the district, so it is hard to be efficient. Alternative schools that are housed separately from traditional schools have their own DPI school code. State transportation funds (PRC 56) funds can be spent to transport students to the alternative school.

# SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

## A. BUS DRIVER TRAINING / CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

School bus driver certification is issued to school bus drivers by the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) School Bus and Traffic Safety section (SBTS). The certification card is also signed by the Transportation Director. In coordination with the DMV bus driver trainer (DESP) a file is to be maintained of all current school bus driver certificates (SBTS-324) within the school bus garage. Once a bus driver has completed training, the certification card - “pocket card” (SBTS-338) will be issued to the transportation director who will sign and give to bus driver after all pre-employment conditions are met.

SBTS is responsible for conducting classroom training, classroom testing, physical performance testing and behind-the-wheel training. The transportation director (along with the SBTS trainer) should make sure potential candidates are aware of the physical performance standards. The recommended process for school bus driver certification is contained in Appendix H. It is the responsibility of the transportation director to coordinate training and certification activities with the SBTS staff assigned to the particular county.

A prerequisite to school bus driver certification is the Commercial Drivers License (CDL) required by federal law for drivers of any vehicles more than 15 capacity. The CDL must be supplemented by a P (passenger) endorsement and an S (school bus) endorsement. Training, licensing and certification information is linked from the following web page:

[www.ncbussafety.org/BusDrivers.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/BusDrivers.html).

## B. LAWS AND POLICIES

Every school bus driver should be mentally and physically competent to operate a school bus with ease. A bus driver must have a minimum visual acuity of 20/40 in both eyes, with or without corrective lenses. A good driving record is required and will be verified by NCDMV at time of bus driver training course. Once certified, a school bus driver must notify their employer after a conviction of any traffic violation.

### PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

School bus drivers are responsible for inspecting a school bus before each trip. Defects found by the driver must be reported on the TD-28 bus driver sign in sheet or by other verifiable means. It is often a responsibility of a school-based transportation coordinator to forward the TD-28 form to the bus garage each day after all of the bus drivers have returned. A sample TD-28 is contained on the following web page: <http://www.ncbussafety.org/StateForms.html>  
Laws pertaining to school bus drivers-

- a. Seat Belt - All bus drivers are required to wear seat belts during operation of a school or activity bus.
- b. Cell Phone-§20-137.4 School bus and activity bus drivers (public and privately contracted) are not allowed to operate a cell phone or other communication device while driving. This includes ANYONE transporting students to or from school for compensation. Following is a link to the law:  
[www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter\\_20/gs\\_20-137.4.html](http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_20/gs_20-137.4.html)
- c. Reduced Idling – Each LEA has adopted a reduced idling policing including the stipulation that school buses and activity buses are not allowed to idle for more than five minutes. This policy is a requirement to receive additional funds for mid-year increasing costs of fuel. Information to train drivers is contained on this following web page. [www.ncbussafety.org/idling.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/idling.html)
- d. Drug Testing-Federal law requires pre-employment and random drug testing for school bus drivers as well as other CDL drivers (e.g. technicians). Most collisions involving buses also require an immediate post-accident drug testing. Information is contained in the brochure linked at the bottom of this web page:  
[www.ncbussafety.org/BusDrivers.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/BusDrivers.html)
- e. Assault on a bus driver-(§14-33) is a misdemeanor as is trespassing on a school bus (§14-132.2). These laws are linked on the web page under Laws and Policies.  
[www.ncbussafety.org/NCLaws.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/NCLaws.html)
- f. Stop Arm law - §20-217  
The greatest danger to students is before they board the school bus in the morning and after they exist in the afternoon, in part due to motorists that disregard the school bus stop arm. Every effort must be made to enforce stop arm laws. Properly training bus drivers, use of stop arm cameras, and communicating with local law enforcement and the District Attorney can help assure motorists will be held accountable for passing a stopped school bus.

The local media can also be an asset for alerting motorists to the consequences of illegally passing a stopped school bus. The magnitude of the problem is highlighted by the annual stop arm violation count in which LEAs ask drivers to count how many times violations take place on a single day.

Resources on this subject are linked from the NCBUSSAFETY web page under “Illegal Passing” and “Stop Arm Violation Cameras.”

The stop arm law (also linked under Laws and Policies) designates when traffic must stop for school buses and stipulates that automated camera and video recording systems may be used to detect and prosecute violations. The transportation director is responsible for assuring bus drivers are aware when and how to report violations.



### C. SCHOOL BUS DRIVER PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

All school bus drivers must pass a physical performance standards test (PPST) to demonstrate their physical ability to operate a school bus and to carry out the evacuation of students. For information on the PPST see Appendix I. For new drivers SBTS staff will perform the PPST prior to issuing a North Carolina School Bus Driver's Certificate. Thereafter, bus drivers must complete the PPST in order to be re-certified, which takes place every three years. The PPST is included in Appendix I.

### D. MONITORS AND SAFETY ASSISTANTS

The superintendent or superintendent's designee may, in his/her discretion, appoint a monitor for any bus assigned to any school. It shall be the duty of such monitor, subject to the direction of the driver of the bus, to preserve order upon the bus and do such other things as may be appropriate for the safety of the pupils and employees assigned to such bus.

- a. TSA (Transportation safety assistant) - Can be a full time or part time school employee paid by local funds.
- b. Monitor - Unpaid volunteer such as a parent.

### E. PASSENGERS

Keeping student passengers SAFE while riding school buses is the number one priority of the entire school bus industry.

- a. Rules while on the bus- Should be posted on every school bus in a visible location. The bus driver should remind students of the rules often.
- b. Passenger Stop training-Students should be constantly reminded of the possible danger of loading and unloading at a passenger stop. SBE policy requires every student receive passenger safety training within the first five days of school and each semester afterwards. STUDENTS SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO BOARD THE BUS OR STEP IN THE ROADWAY WHILE TEXTING, OPERATING A CELL PHONE OR WEARING "EAR BUDS."
- c. Motoring public-The Director of Transportation should interact with local news outlets by providing information to promote the safety of the school bus, remind parents of the importance of safety rules and plead with the general public to obey the stop sign.

### F. BULLYING

Given the safety of the construction of the school bus and the passenger protection that is in place, the number one danger to students on the school bus is bullying. Far more students are injured emotionally than physically.

This is due in part to the numbers of students on the bus with, usually, a single adult. The limited oversight that can be provided by that one adult - that is facing the other way and charged with physical safety on the roadway and at bus stops – exacerbates the problem. School bus drivers should be trained to know what to do when they spot bullying behavior and even how to intervene. There is a national anti-bullying training program on the web site at this page [www.ncbussafety.org/BusDrivers.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/BusDrivers.html)

## **OTHER AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS and RELATED LINKS**

Several other state and federal agencies have a direct or indirect role with school bus transportation. A director of transportation will need to coordinate with these agencies for the various tasks and inspections to be performed.

1. Occupational Safety and Health Administration OSHA-Involved with inspection of paint booth and building/worker safety regulations-  
<http://www.nclabor.com/osha/osh.htm>
2. Fire Department-Can inspect buildings for potential fire hazard.  
[http://policies.ncsu.edu/sites/default/files/general/NC\\_FIRE35.pdf](http://policies.ncsu.edu/sites/default/files/general/NC_FIRE35.pdf)
3. Department of Agriculture (Fuel Dispenser Metering)  
<http://www.ncagr.gov/standard/Measure/>
4. State Surplus property  
<http://www.doa.state.nc.us/ssp/>
5. Emergency Management-Hurricane procedures  
[www.ncbussafety.org/documents/busdriverhurricaneevacuation.pdf](http://www.ncbussafety.org/documents/busdriverhurricaneevacuation.pdf)
6. State Highway Patrol - Accidents and Safety programs  
<https://www.nccrimecontrol.org/Index2.cfm?a=000003,000014,001841,000745>
7. Attorney General's office-Tort claims and insurance settlements  
[www.ncdoj.gov/About-DOJ/DOJ-Contact-Information.aspx](http://www.ncdoj.gov/About-DOJ/DOJ-Contact-Information.aspx)
8. FMVSS-Federal agency which regulate motor vehicle design, construction, performance, and durability compliance.  
[www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov)
9. NCDMV-Bus driver training and vehicle registration  
[www.ncdot.gov/dmv/driver/schoolbus/](http://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/driver/schoolbus/)
10. North Carolina Operation Lifesaver – Bus Driver Training for Rail Grade Crossings  
[www.ncol.org](http://www.ncol.org)
11. National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services  
[www.nasdpts.org](http://www.nasdpts.org)
12. National Association for Pupil Transportation  
[www.napt.org](http://www.napt.org)
13. National Congress on School Transportation  
[www.ncstonline.org](http://www.ncstonline.org)
14. North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association  
[www.ncbussafety.org/ncpta](http://www.ncbussafety.org/ncpta)

# **APPENDIX A – TRANSPORTATION ALLOTMENTS AND BUDGET RATINGS**

## **April, 2014**

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Transportation Services is responsible for the allocation of funds, from the state budget appropriation, to 115 local education agencies (LEAs) for school transportation operations. This block grant provides funds to pay for drivers, fuel, personnel, parts, tires, contracts, etc. needed to transport students in grades K-12 to and from school. The state allotment for transportation is calculated from the prior year's eligible expenditures, a budget rating and any necessary adjustments. The budget rating is, in part, a measure of efficiency of operation. Annual adjustments are made for increased enrollment and any adjustments required by General Assembly action.

### 1. Allotment Calculation – PRC 056 Allotments for City, County LEAs

Funds allotted through Program Report Code 056 are for the purpose of transporting students to and from school for the regularly organized school day. DPI Transportation Services calculates transportation allotments using a funding base and a transportation budget rating. The basic calculation is to multiply the previous year's funding base for each LEA by its budget rating to determine the current year allotment. (Adjustments are made for legislated salary changes, increases in enrollment, etc.)

**FUNDING BASE.** The funding base for a city or county LEA consists of actual, eligible, expenditures (see below) from the prior year for to- and from-school transportation. (For counties with 2-3 LEAs, if city driver salaries and salaries for city TIMS work are paid by the county in a given year, those amounts remain in the county funding base for the following year.)

**BUDGET RATING.** The budget rating is, in part, a measure of efficiency and is calculated by examining the cost per student and the number of buses per 100 students for each county. A lower cost and a lower number of buses yield a higher budget rating. Site characteristics include the number of students transported per mile of roadway and the distance of student residences from school.

Because county LEAs maintain and fuel the city LEA buses, and because the geographic site characteristics used to "level the playing field" statewide cannot be distinguished between city and county, all data for city and county LEAs are combined before calculating ratings. The same budget rating is then used for the city and county LEA when figuring allotments as described above.

Each LEA's transportation basic allotment is calculated by multiplying its Funding Base by its Budget Rating. For example, a funding base of \$700,000 and a budget rating of 99% yields an allotment of \$693,000 in state funds. The funding base is the sum of eligible state and local transportation (Program Report Code 56) expenditures from the prior year. These are the expenditures for transporting students to and from school for the regularly organized school day.

Adjustments are made to this amount based on increasing enrollment and legislative action such as salary increases, benefits changes, etc.

## 2. Eligible Expenditures and Funding Base

Eligible expenditures are state or local expenditures that are used for the purpose of providing transportation to and from school for students in grades K-12. Expenses for other transportation during the day that is needed in order for students to receive instruction (at a remote campus, for instance) is also eligible to be included in the state transportation funding base. At the LEA's discretion, this may also include the cost of providing transportation to students pursuing an Occupational Course of Study or receiving other specialized training off-campus, as stipulated in an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

These expenditures are restricted or limited to those costs that are applicable to the existing PRC 056 account codes in the current state Uniform Chart of Accounts. These expenditures include transportation personnel and driver salaries, office supplies, vehicle parts, tires, fuel and contract transportation.

For city school systems, since the county is responsible for maintenance of school buses and service vehicles, eligible costs usually are limited to salaries, benefits and contracted transportation – but not items related to maintenance and operation of the buses.

Specifically, Eligible expenditures are comprised of State Eligible Expenditures (charged to Program Report Code PRC56) and Local Eligible Expenditures (also charged to PRC 56).

- State expenditures may be charged to PRC 56 provided:

They relate directly to the transportation of K-12 students to and from school for the regular school year. Included in this is the maintenance and servicing of the vehicles used to provide that transportation.

They correspond to one of the object codes in the chart of accounts for PRC 56: bus driver salaries, transportation personnel, salaries, fuel, parts, tires, contract transportation, etc.

- Local expenditures recorded are reported on Annual Transportation Report TD-1 and are considered eligible (that is, recorded in local PRC 56) if they meet these two same criteria.

- Expenses must be to the transportation of K-12 students to and from school for the regular school year.

- Only expenditures related to one of the eligible state object codes may be reported on annual transportation report TD-1 as a local expenditure.

An LEA's **funding base** is comprised of the total of the state and local eligible expenditures. **This funding base of prior year eligible expenditures forms the basis for the current year allotment.**

## 3. Ineligible Expenditures

Ineligible expenditures include those that are related to transportation in some form, but not directly related to providing to- and from-school transportation, or those that are to be paid from other funding sources. They include but are not limited to the following:

- Transportation safety assistants or monitors salaries.
- Driver incentive or bonus pay
- Transportation director/supervisor salary (State funds must be charged to PRC02 – not PRC 056.)

- Personnel salary that is not directly related to yellow school bus, to-and-from school. (This could include overseeing activity bus scheduling). Any employee salary that is not 100% dedicated to to/from school transportation must be prorated based on the amount of time assigned to conduct to/from school transportation and other activities.
- Transportation employees assigned to maintain or schedule local vehicles (including activity buses, as described above).
- Driver salary for routes serving only local pre-k, Head Start, Summer School, Pre-K EC programs.
- Insurance benefits other than Social Security, Retirement and Hospitalization,
- Longevity pay.
- Maintenance and operation of activity buses and all other local vehicles.
- Equipment, computers and software which CAN be purchased through valid PRC 56 object codes (418, 461,462, 541,542) but not rolled forward into the funding base for the next school year.

#### 4. Budget Ratings

The basis for the annual transportation allotment is obtained **by multiplying the funding base of eligible expenditures by the county’s budget rating**. In very general terms, if an LEA’s budget rating is 95%, then the state will cover 95% of the transportation costs. It is then up to LEA to (1) generate savings or (2) to use local funds to make up the difference.

The budget rating is based in part on the efficiency with which the LEA uses its dollars and buses. The budget rating is actually made up of a Bus Efficiency Rating and Cost Efficiency Rating. The cost efficiency measures the **expenditures per student** compared with all other counties in the state. The bus efficiency measures the **number of buses per 100 students**, again compared with all other counties in the state.

**Site characteristics**, are considered through a linear regression process in order to level the playing field. This allows LEA data to be compared statewide. Site characteristics in the model that are beyond the control of the LEA transportation department include:

- pupil density (number of transported students per mile of roadway in the county)
- the average distance of student residences to the school they attend
- average elevation in the county
- percentage of students on vehicles transporting primarily those with special needs

Depending on the relative efficiency advantages resulting from any of these site characteristics, the model adjusts the number of students upward (for more efficiency-disadvantaged counties) or downward (for more efficiency-advantaged counties before calculating buses or cost per student.

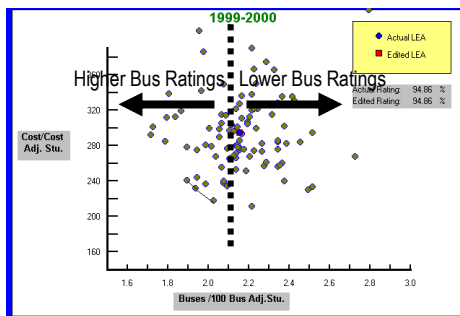
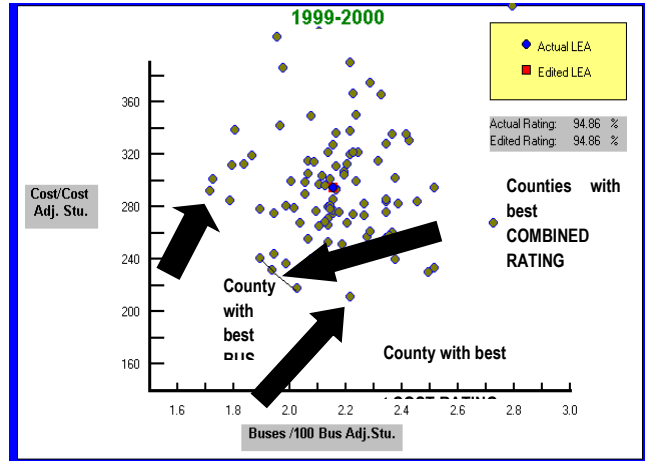
Once the efficiency rating is calculated, as shown below, an additional 10% “buffer” is added to produce the budget rating. The buffer acknowledges some counties have unique circumstances that make it more difficult for them to be efficient, that are not experienced by enough other counties to be statistically significant as a site characteristic.

$$\text{BUDGET RATING} = \text{EFFICIENCY RATING} + 10\%$$

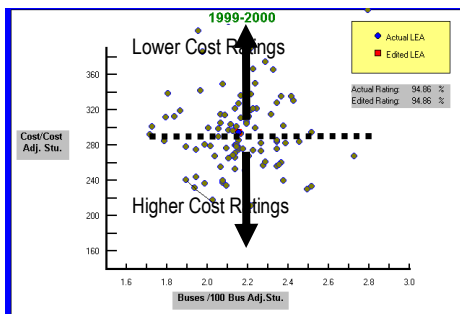
## 5. Efficiency Rating Methodology

Budget ratings are calculated using statewide data on expenditures, students transported and buses operated after adjusting for site characteristics to level the playing field. A graph showing each county's position relative to cost per student and buses per 100 students is depicted at right, where each dot represents a county.

The “westernmost” dot represents the county with the best BUS RATING – that county that uses the fewest buses per 100 students transported of all counties. The “southernmost” dot represents the county with the best COST RATING – that county that spends less per student of all counties in the state. The three counties connected by lines are those with the best COMBINED RATINGS in the state. The Combined Rating is the average of the cost rating and the bus rating.



rating.



This graph shows the relative location of “high” and “low” bus ratings. Essentially, the lower the “Buses per 100 Adjusted Students”, the higher the bus rating. A reduction in buses – all other things being equal – leads to a HIGHER bus rating, while an increase in buses – all other things being equal – leads to a LOWER bus rating. An increase or decrease in buses resulting from a corresponding increase or decrease in ridership may have little or no impact on the bus

Just the same way, the lower the “Cost per Adjusted Student”, the higher the cost rating. A reduction in cost – all other things being equal – leads to a HIGHER cost rating, while an increase in cost – all other things being equal – leads to a LOWER cost rating. An increase or decrease in cost resulting from a corresponding increase or decrease in ridership may have little or no impact on the bus rating.

## 6. Budget Rating Simulator

Each year, a budget rating simulator (the “Simulator”) is prepared to help LEAs evaluate potential changes in transportation plans and their impact on funding. For instance, if school starting times are changed so that a single school bus can make two runs instead of just one – thereby decreasing the number of buses needed – the bus efficiency will increase. The simulator allows LEA staff to determine the impact on ratings and funding by analyzing the tradeoff between fleet size and cost.

The following year, updated Student, Cost and Bus information are loaded into the Simulator to generate the budget rating used to calculate the allotment for that year.

At the same time, the updated Student, Cost and Bus information are also loaded into the funding formula to generate NEW budget ratings. This allows LEAs to benefit more quickly from most recently implemented efficiency-based changes.

## 7. Allotment Calculations

The rating generation process described above results in two budget ratings – (1) the *Simulator* rating in which the LEA’s latest data is measured against last year’s ratings and (2) the *New Model* rating in which the funding model generates the most recent set of budget ratings. Each LEA is funded base on whichever rating is higher. The New Ratings then form the foundation for the following year’s Simulator. A sample allotment data sheet is shown as Attachment A.

## 8. City and County LEAs

Many of the geographical site characteristics are hard to distinguish between a county LEA and a city LEA that may or may not lie completely within that county. Further, county LEAs are responsible for maintenance and fueling of city LEA school buses and, in some cases, pay the city LEA drivers. As a result, all budget rating calculations are done at the county level. Allotments, however, are distributed to each LEA (county and city) by applying the budget rating to the respective funding base for each LEA.

## 9. Capped Expenditures

The appropriation from the General Assembly is approved as part of the state’s biennial budget, and assumes increased expenditures based on increases in students and legislated increases only. As such, each county’s funding base is assumed to increase or decrease in proportion to these changes. In cases where an LEA’s funding base has increased from one year to the next by an amount that could not be predicted by increases in enrollment, legislated increases or fuel costs, some of the local expenditures may be “capped” and treated as ineligible. It is easy to understand that if LEAs across the state collectively added, say, \$8 million in local funds expenditures to the statewide funding base (without corresponding enrollment increases or salary/fuel costs), such an increase could not be supported within the state appropriation. In such a case, only the local expenditures less the capped amount are considered in calculating cost.

When the funding data are sent to finance officers and transportation directors prior to generating budget ratings, this information is shown with the other data for review. (See Attachment B.)

## 10. Fuel Prices

When the price of fuel for the current school year is about the same as for the prior school year, the funding processes work as described. However, when fuel prices rise (or fall) significantly, there can be an unintended impact on funding. Consider a year when fuel prices rise by 50 cents per gallon over the previous school year. LEA transportation expense could increase by thousands of dollars. *ALL OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL*, such an increase in expenses would decrease a county's budget rating in the Simulator. For this reason, the expenditure increase due to fuel pricing alone must be deducted from the funding base before calculating ratings in the simulator. The same applies when there are significant declines in fuel pricing from one year to the next.

In generating *new* ratings, this adjustment need not be done because each county's current-year expenses including current-year fuel prices are being compared with all other counties' expenses including current-year fuel prices.

In either case, once ratings are generated, those ratings are applied to the actual funding base unless there are significant changes in fuel pricing that can be anticipated for current year funding. Note that necessary changes in expenditures due to fuel pricing are shown on the data review sheet sent prior to the generation of budget ratings.

## 11. Charter Schools

Charter schools receive funding based on their enrollment and, while they do not receive dedicated transportation funds, they do receive funds that are transferred from LEAs where their students reside – including funds in PRC 56. Funds for students that attended charter schools in previous years are transferred externally from the current year funding process. However, students moving from the LEA to a charter school for the current year trigger the transfer of some of the LEA's transportation allotment to the charter school. These funds are deducted from the annual PRC 56 allotment as shown at the bottom of attachment A.



## 12. Miscellaneous Transportation Funding

Limited transportation funding is handled external to the funding formula. This funding is for non-recurring current year expenditures that should not be compared with other LEAs in calculating budget ratings. These funds are not carried forward in the funding base to the next school year due to the non-recurring nature of the expense.

**Vehicle Use Tax.** When replacement vehicles (school buses or service trucks) are provided at state expense, a one-time allotment is sent to the LEA in order to pay the highway use tax on each vehicle. The amount of this allotment is deducted from total expenditures in calculating the budget ratings and the funding base for the next school year.

**Early College.** The State Board of Education has established that, in providing transportation for students attending an Early College program, the LEA is to be “held harmless” from the transportation funding formula. Essentially that means that funding for this kind of transportation is allotted separately. The amount of this allotment is deducted from total expenditures in calculating the budget ratings and the funding base for the next school year.

**Equipment Contingency.** Contingency allotments are provide to reimburse for unexpected repair expenses for major equipment failure (e.g. engines, transmission, wrecks) in small LEAs. Requests are received until April 15. The amount of this allotment is deducted from total expenditures in calculating the budget ratings and the funding base for the next school year.

## FUNDING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR/SUPERVISOR SALARY. Can the transportation directors/supervisor salary be paid from your state transportation (056) allotment?

A1. No. State Board of Education Policy, via that Allotment Policy Manual, states that, if state funds are used to pay for a transportation director, it must be via PRC 002 – Central Office Administration. So, since state PRC 056 is not allowed for this purpose, neither is Local 056.

Q2. PART TIME TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR. Can any portion of the directors/supervisor salary be paid from your state transportation (056) allotment if the position is assigned multiple duties?

A2. Usually not, but in the case of some small county and city LEAs, “maybe.” If the position is designated as a having multiple duties, the percentage of the transportation director/supervisor role must be paid from PRC 02 or local funds – not PRC 056. If the position has duties outside transportation (e.g. “Maintenance Director”), the percentage of that position must be paid from its funding source.

However, if that person also performs other non-director functions – such as operating TIMS, driving a bus, etc. – *that relate directly to providing to- and from-school transportation*, then the percentage of those other transportation responsibilities can be paid from PRC 056. Note that scheduling, driving, inspecting or otherwise administering the operation of activity buses does NOT relate to to- and from-school transportation. The percentage related to other responsibilities, including activity bus scheduling, must be paid from other funds.

Time allocation for transportation director or supervisor for city LEAs must be reported on form TD-1, the annual transportation report. NOTE: The portion allocated to the role of transportation director for small districts should be at least 30%. That portion of the position’s salary must not be paid from PRC 056.

Q3. CITY PAYING FUEL/MAINTENANCE. Can a city LEA reimburse the county LEA from its state transportation block grant for diesel fuel used to transport students to and from school?

A3. This question is most applicable in a situation where fuel prices are rising above the level funded by the state and local funds might be needed. Each LEA receives a “block grant” allotment for transportation, not a line item allotment, that can be used for allowable expenses for to-and-from school transportation grades K-12. This includes fuel for school buses and can be accomplished in one of two ways:

1. City LEA pays the vendor directly for an entire invoice for fuel or a partial payment for such invoice.
2. City LEA requests that DPI transfer PRC 056 funds from the city allotment to the county allotment and the county pays the fuel bill as normal. The next fiscal year, the city may request that this amount be returned to their funding base or leave it as part of the county funding base.

Q4. SCHOOL BUS EQUIPMENT – TECHNOLOGY. Can an LEA use state transportation funds to purchase cameras, GPS, time-keeping systems or other equipment for its school buses?

A4. Yes. Equipment object codes are allowable within State PRC 056 for equipment related to school buses that transport students to and from school for the regularly organized school day. HOWEVER, state funds spent for equipment do not roll forward as part of the transportation funding base for the next school year.

Q5. BUS ROUTES AND DRIVER PAYROLL. What information should be shared between the city LEA and the county transportation department regarding school bus routes, driver payroll, etc.?

A5. Because the county bus garage staff is responsible for maintaining and trouble-shooting all school buses for city and county LEAs, it is important that they be aware of all bus routes for each LEA. If the routing is done cooperatively between the city and county, then the bus garage staff will have access to all routes through a common TIMS system. If city LEA routes are done separately, then information on where each bus travels should be given to the county transportation staff on a regular basis.

Q6. SATURDAY OPERATIONS. May school buses be used on Saturday? What if the County LEA is not operating on a Saturday, but the City LEA is. Who pays the additional expense?

A6. If Saturday is an instructional day, then school buses may be used for to- and from-school transportation. The City and County LEA must work together to ensure a plan when schedules differ, due to weather-related make-up days, etc. If such a situation is rare, the county should provide someone on call for the day and provide affected staff a different day off to avoid overtime pay. If overtime pay is required, the City may be asked to contribute to the additional expense. Ultimately the LEAs will need to agree on how to handle this cost.

Q7. REIMBURSEMENT. What about reimbursement for extra use of buses, beyond to- and from-school?

A7. ANY additional use of buses beyond to- and from- school transportation must be reimbursed on a per mile or per student basis to the county transportation department (with the exception of the drivers, assuming that drivers are paid directly by the funding program). Regardless of whether the program is funded by the city LEA or the county LEA, reimbursement for the non-driver portion, on per-mile or per-pupil bases, goes back into the county's PRC056 Transportation Budget.

Q8. EFFICIENCY. What responsibility does an LEA have to operate efficient transportation?

A8. The degree to which a local board of education chooses to operate its transportation program efficiently is up to that local board. The state funding formula is designed to provide state funding only up to the level of efficiency of operations. Since all financial, as well as operational, data are combined before calculating budget ratings the operations of all bus routes in all LEAs impact the budget rating and, ultimately, the allotment. City and County LEAs must work together to ensure that costs are managed.

## ATTACHMENT A - TRANSPORTATION FUNDING INFORMATION

**LEA # XXX**

**Budget Rating 1 - Simulator Rating: 95.60%**

This rating was generated from the February, 2013 transportation budget rating simulator process that has been used by LEAs in projecting their budget ratings. It is based on the existing efficiency frontier that was established in the Fall, 2012, updated to reflect 2012-2013 expenditures, buses operated and student count.

State Average: 93.80%

**Budget Rating 2 - 2013 Model Run: 96.75%**

In order to allow LEAs to most quickly benefit from the implementation of more efficient operations, a new set of budget ratings was generated from the most recent set of data available. This process compares each county with each other county in terms of cost and buses per adjusted student.

State Average: 94.85%

### Transportation Funding Computations

All funding is based on the GREATER OF the two budget ratings listed above.

<b>LEA Funding DATA - (City/County Separated)</b>	
Base Data:	
Eligible State Expenditures :	\$2,280,760
Eligible Local Expenditures, allowing for total increased expenditures corresponding to (but not exceeding) growth in ADM, fuel cost for 2012-2013 and legislated increases.	\$120,215
(1) Total Eligible Expenditures: (1a+1b)	\$2,400,974
(2) Total Number of Buses:	93
(3) September, 2012 Student Count	4,622
(4) Budget Rating 1 (existing formula, simulator)	95.60%
(5) Transportation Simulator Funding (1) x (4)	\$2,295,332
(6) Budget Rating 2 (2013 Model Rating)	96.75%
(7) 2013 Model Run Funding (1) x (6)	\$2,322,943
<b>(8) GREATER OF - BASE FUNDING FOR 2013-2014</b>	<b>\$2,322,943</b>
(9) Growth Adjustment (Based on ADM growth up to 2%) (Allotted Growth Increase: 2.0%)	\$46,459
(10) Legislative Increases	<b>\$5,930</b>
Increase – Retirement \$ 3,430	
Increase – Hospitalization \$ 2,500	
(11) Legislative Reduction – Appropriation for Fuel (\$3.17/gal. appropriated vs. \$3.21/gal. actual for 2012-2013)	<b>-\$8,295</b>
<b>Total Funding for 2013-14 (8)+(9)+(10)+(11)</b>	<b>\$2,367,036</b>
* Funds diverted to Charter Schools (Note: Funds for existing charter schools have already been removed from the pupil transportation budget; reduction shown is only for new (2013-14) Charter School Students.)	-\$7,028
<b>Net Allotment:</b>	<b>\$2,360,008</b>
(less Charter School / Legislated Reductions)	

ATTACHMENT B TRANSPORTATION DATA FOR REVIEW

LEA NAME: XXX LEA NUMBER: XXX

**NCDPI Transportation Services**

<b>STUDENT DATA (October, 2012)</b>	
Students on Regular Buses:	4,511
Students on Buses Transporting Primarily EC Students:	98
Students transported via contract:	13
<b>Total Students Transported 2012-2013</b>	<b>4,622</b>
<b>BUSES OPERATED (2012-2013)</b>	
Regular Buses	81
Buses Transporting Primarily EC Students	12
<b>Total Buses Operated 2012-2013</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>TIMS DATA</b>	
2012-13 TIMS Data Complete for new Budget Ratings? (Yes/No) "Yes" indicates that all data were acceptable and will be included in the funding formula. "No" indicates that less than 90% of students were updated and assigned to stops/runs/routes and located. "Worst Case" data will be assigned in running the funding model.	Yes
<b>EXPENDITURES (FY 2012-2013)</b>	
(1) Total State Expenditures PRC 56	\$2,443,098
(2) Total ELIGIBLE State Expenditures (1) – (2a) Personnel (\$335,114), Drivers/Subs (\$1,101,078), Benefits (\$356,688) Contract Transportation (\$55,500), Fuel (\$469,345), Other (-\$36,968) (2a). Excluded Expenditures: Bio-Diesel Blitz (\$0), Early College (\$150,141) Equipment (\$0), Contingency (\$3,198), Use Tax (\$9,000)	\$2,280,759
(3) Legislated Increases (2012-2013) for retirement, hosp: \$28,489	\$28,489
(4) Total State Expenditures for <b>SIMULATOR</b> (2)-(3)	\$2,252,270
(5) Total Eligible Local Expenditures (Use in Simulator) Personnel (\$0), Drivers/Subs (\$4,712), Benefits (\$1,307) Contract Transportation (\$0), Fuel (\$120,234), Other(\$89,755)	<b>\$216,008</b>
<b>ALLOTMENT CALCULATIONS</b>	
(6) Funding Base for 2013-14 (2)+(5)	<b>\$2,496,767</b>
(7) Amount by which Funding Base Exceeds Projected Base. (Budget projections were calculated by increasing prior year Eligible expenditures by ADM growth and fuel cost increases. Legislative appropriations are not available for LEAs where transportation expenditures grow faster than enrollment and the cost of fuel. <b>Some or all of this amount may be deducted from (5) Eligible Local Expenditures and, therefore, budget rating calculation and (6) the Funding Base for 2013-2014.</b> )	\$95,793
(8) Budget Rating – <b>This must be calculated in order to determine the final transportation allotment, as indicated in the calculations in (9) below</b>	To be determined
(9) Final Transp. Allotment - 2013-2014 (6-7)x(8)-(2013-14 Charter Schools) – (Legislative Reductions)	To be determined

## APPENDIX B - THE STATE TORT CLAIMS ACT (STCA)

### WHEN IS IT APPLICABLE?

The State Tort Claims Act (STCA) is contained in G.S. 143-300.1 and covers the local board of education from all claims of negligent operations or maintenance of public school buses or school transportation service vehicles. For example, driver negligence is insured for such claims as hitting another car, destroying private property (e.g. mailbox), or an accident causing students to be injured. Specifically, negligence by the following personnel is covered under certain circumstances:

- School Bus Driver. The driver must be an employee of the county or city administrative unit and the salary of the driver is paid or authorized to be paid by that administrative unit. The driver must also be operating the bus in accordance with G.S. 115C-242. That is, the driver must be operating the bus for providing to/from school transportation or an allowable use, which serves the instructional purposes of the school.
- School Bus Mechanic. Maintenance personnel must be operating a service vehicle (that is, pickup truck/van, fuel truck or wrecker) in the course of their employment
- School Bus Monitor. Monitor must be appointed and acting in accordance with G. S. 115C-245(d). The monitor must be appointed by the superintendent (or designee) as a volunteer to assist the driver in preserving order and safety on the bus.
- Transportation Safety Assistant. The transportation safety assistant must be employed and acting in accordance with G.S. 115C-245(e). That is, the assistant must be employed by the LEA and assisting the driver with student safety.
- Bus Driver Trainee. The driver must be an unpaid school bus driver trainee under the supervision of an authorized employee of the Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles.

The STCA provides coverage in the following situations, provided the driver is employed and paid by the LEA and is operating a bus as allowed under G.S. 115C-242.

- Transporting students from “home to school” or from “school to home” where “home” refers to a student’s residence or other specific location designated on a bus route for a particular student.
- Transporting students on a “field trip” designed to serve the instructional programs of the school.
- Transporting children with special needs (pre-school handicapped program, ages three, four and five), receiving education in local education agencies and transported on school buses.
- Transporting Chapter I Pre-Kindergarten pupils receiving education in local education agencies and transported on school buses.
- Transporting eligible school age pupils participating in year round schools.
- Transporting State- funded At-Risk Student Services Program, program report code (PRC 69) such as Summer School, Safe School, Preschool Screening and Drop Out Prevention.
- Transporting eligible school age pupils participating in **non-state** funded summer school, year round school, and other remedial programs (e.g., local funded enrichment programs and migrant education) when the bus is operated exclusively for that purpose.
- Transporting Head Start pupils receiving education housed in a building owned and operated by local education agencies and transported by school bus.
- Transporting a “mixed load” of students, some participating in a **state** funded program and some participating in a **non-state** program for summer school, year round, Head Start and remedial programs.
- Transporting students participating in **non-state** funded enrichment programs in excess of the 180 days school year when the bus is operated exclusively for that purpose.
- Transporting students participating in North Carolina’s Smart Start program.
- Transporting mothers of infants enrolled in Mothers and Infants Educational or similar programs being operated by local educational agencies. Since infants are neither pupils nor enrolled in school, the language of this Article may makes them ineligible for Tort coverage. However, an LEA may incur liability in the case or an accident or injury to the infants while being transported. (LEAs should secure insurance coverage for infants in this instance).
- Transporting students enrolled in alternative school and extended day school programs.

**The following questions and answers may further clarify when the STCA provides coverage.**

- Q1.** Is STCA coverage applicable for pupils riding school buses being operated on non-state maintained roads?
- A1.** YES. The bus, bus driver, and all students are covered under tort claims provided that the driver is an employee of the county or city school administrative unit and the salary of the driver is paid or authorized to be paid by that administrative unit. However, General Statute 115C-246(b) states that "Unless road or conditions shall make it inadvisable to do, public school buses shall be so routed on state maintained highways." LEAs should obtain written permission from the owner to use the road before establishing a route on a non-state maintained road. The driver should be travelling such roads only when it is part of the route established by the superintendent or his/her designee.
- Q2.** Does STCA cover drivers of buses transporting students to attend:
- NC State Fair?
  - NC Symphony?
  - Special Olympics?
- A2.** YES. Provided that the driver is an employee of the county or city administrative body and the salary of the driver is paid or authorized to be paid by that administrative unit and *the board deems the trip necessary to serve the instructional programs of the school.* (G.S.115C-243 (5))
- Q3.** Are persons driving school bus service vehicles covered under the STCA year round?
- A3.** YES. Provided that the driver is an employee of the county or city administrative and the salary of the driver is paid or authorized to be paid by that administrative unit. Mechanics and other transportation staff may use service vehicles to service and maintain their school bus fleet on a year round basis.
- Q4.** Are persons being transported on school buses other than pupils and employees covered under the STCA?
- A4.** YES. The STCA covers the negligence of the driver, mechanic, safety assistant or monitor. All passengers injured as a result of such negligence are covered under tort claims, provided that the driver is an employee of the county or city administrative unit of which that board is the governing body and the salary of the driver is paid or authorized to be paid by that administrative unit and the vehicle is being operated as specified in state law. The Attorney General's Office reserves the right to recoup any claims paid for unauthorized persons injured while on the bus resulting from driver negligence.
- Q5.** Is the STCA applicable when school buses are contracted for use by senior citizen groups?
- A5.** NO. Adequate liability insurance must be purchased and maintained from sources other than the state to protect the property of the local board of education by the agency contracting for the use of the bus, either directly or through the fee established by an agreement. (G.S. 115C-243)
- Q6.** Is STCA applicable for buses used by State Guard or National Guard?
- A6.** NO. Adequate liability insurance must be purchased and maintained by the Guard. (G.S.115C-54)
- Q7.** Are school buses owned by a local board of education and used for emergency management purposes in any state of disaster or local state of emergency declared under Chapter 166A of the General statutes covered under STCA?
- A7.** NO. Neither the State Board of Education nor the local board of education shall be liable for any tort claims resulting from such use of the school buses.

- Q8.** When are activity buses covered under STCA?
- A8.** NEVER. Adequate liability insurance must be purchased and maintained by local boards of education from other insurance providers. The North Carolina School Board Association (NCSBA) offers insurance protection to LEAs needing liability insurance coverage for local vehicles.
- Q9.** Is the STCA applicable when bus drivers allow their pre-school or school-age children not assigned to the route to accompany them on the bus during their bus route?
- A9.** NO. Neither the State Board of Education nor the local board of education shall be liable for any tort claims resulting from such unauthorized use of the school bus.
- Q10.** Is the STCA applicable when public school buses are used to transport students enrolled charter in schools?
- A10.** YES. The STCA covers the negligence of the driver, mechanic, safety assistant or monitor. All passengers injured as a result of such negligence are covered under tort claims, provided that the driver is an employee of the county or city administrative unit of which that board is the governing body and the salary of the driver is paid or authorized to be paid by that administrative unit and the vehicle is being operated as specified in state law.
- Q11.** Are buses owned by a charter school covered under the State Tort Claims Act?
- A11.** No. A charter school must acquire its own insurance from sources other than the state. They are subject to insurance requirements set forth by the State Utilities Commission and/or the Department of Insurance.
- Q12.** Is the STCA applicable for injuries sustained by students from fighting, horseplay, or similar acts while boarding, exiting or being transported on school buses?
- A12.** Generally, recovery has been **denied** in claims alleging injuries as a result of such acts. The facts and circumstances usually show that a bus driver is operating the bus with no notice that fighting, horseplay or other similar acts are about to occur and no reasonable opportunity to prevent it from occurring. In such cases there is usually no finding of negligence on the part of the bus driver and liability is denied. However, in a few cases the driver has been found negligent for the failure to reasonably monitor the activities on the bus as part of his responsibility to maintaining “good order and conduct upon such bus” as set forth in G.S. 115C-245(b). A monitor or safety assistant will have at least the same responsibility. (Note: Therefore, in certain cases the State Tort Claims can be applicable in actions for injuries arising out of fighting and horseplay by students on the public school bus). The STCA only covers the negligence of the driver, mechanic, safety assistant or monitor. Only passengers injured as a result of such *negligence* are covered under tort claims, provided that the driver is an employee of the county or city administrative unit and the salary of the driver is paid or authorized to be paid by that administrative unit and the vehicle is being operated as specified in state law.
- Q13.** Is the STCA applicable if a yellow school bus travels out-of-state, either as part of its route or for any other purpose, and an accident occurs in which the driver is at fault?
- A13.** NO. The North Carolina Industrial Commission has jurisdiction to hear and determine tort claims against any county or city board of education resulting from an alleged negligent act of the driver in the state of North Carolina. If an accident occurs in another state there is no guaranteed protection under the Tort Claims Act. The school board and the driver could be liable if they are sued in an out-of-state court and are subject to the laws of that state’s court system. It is recommended that if a yellow school bus is taken out of state, the LEA should purchase a supplemental insurance policy to cover instances when this occurs. The North Carolina School Board Association offers such coverage for school districts that purchase their vehicle fleet insurance.



## APPENDIX C REIMBURSEMENT

The categories of per mile and per pupil reimbursement are:			
CATEGORY #1	CATEGORY #2	CATEGORY #3	CATEGORY #4
<b>Full Reimbursement Rate</b>	<b>State Programs Rate</b>	<b>Full Rate-Driver Pd. Separate</b>	<b>State Rate-Driver Pd. Separate</b>
• Trans.Personnel Salary		• Trans.Personnel Salary	
• Salary – Driver	• Salary – Driver		
• Benefit costs	• Benefit costs	• Benefit costs	
• Oil	• Oil	• Oil	• Oil
• Tires & Tubes	• Tires & Tubes	• Tires & Tubes	• Tires & Tubes
• Vehicle Repair Parts	• Vehicle Repair Parts	• Vehicle Repair Parts	• Vehicle Repair Parts
• Fuel	• Fuel	• Fuel	• Fuel
• Capital replacement		• Capital replacement	
• Tort (Insurance) cost		• Tort (Insurance) cost	

The following chart indicates which category of reimbursement should be used.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting Pre-Kindergarten handicapped children ages three and four receiving special education in local education agencies               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State-funded Programs</li> <li>- Non-state funded Program</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	#2 or #4 #1 or #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting eligible school age pupils participating in state funded summer school / remediation programs</li> </ul>	#2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting eligible school age pupils participating in <b>non-state</b> funded summer school, and other at-risk remedial programs (e.g., local sponsored remedial programs and migrant education)</li> </ul>	#1 or #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting mixed busloads of <b>state funded</b> program and <b>non-state funded</b> program pupils participating in At-Risk Student Services Programs (i.e., Summer School, Safe Schools, Preschool Screening, and Drop out prevention, etc.).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State-Funded Programs</li> <li>- Non-state funded programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Prorated #2 or #4 #1 or #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting Head Start pupils receiving education housed in a building owned and operated by local education agencies</li> </ul>	#1 or #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting pupils participating in the Even Start Program</li> </ul>	#1 or #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting pupils participating in the State's Smart Start program</li> </ul>	#2 or #4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting pupils enrolled in non-state funded enrichment programs, such as 21st Century grants</li> </ul>	#1 or #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting infants enrolled in Mothers and Infants education programs being operated by local education agencies. <u>(Local insurance coverage is recommended for infants that may sustain injuries from an accident that may occur while being transported on the school bus.)</u></li> </ul>	N/A

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting pupils to attend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– NC State Fair?</li> <li>– Special Olympics?</li> <li>– NC Symphony?</li> <li>– Other Instructional Field Trips</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	#1 or #3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting pupils attending: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Alternative Schools? (Serves students who are at risk of school failure or dropping out of school. Their school assignment)</li> <li>– Extended Day School Programs? (Serves students who school day began and ended at times different from the regular established school day)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	No reimbursement required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of school buses by senior citizen groups.</li> </ul>	#3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of school buses by State or National Guard?</li> </ul>	#3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of buses by Emergency Management in any state of disaster or local state of emergency declared under Chapter 166A of the General Statutes covered under STCA?</li> </ul>	#3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transporting students enrolled in a residential institution under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Instruction (NC Schools for the Deaf and Blind).</li> </ul>	#2 or #4

## **APPENDIX D – SCHOOL BUS TIRES (updated Dec 2015)**

The following pages contain explanations/reference locations for Tire related questions in relation to North Carolina School Buses

### **1. NEW TIRES**

Steer axle tires on all North Carolina School Buses require “New tires” that meet the same specification as the tire received on the bus when new. The specification for North Carolina school buses contains multiple tires approved by DPI based on pilot test period and the bus OEM’s.

Tire manufacturers’ specification sheets were used to compare all tires approved in bus specifications to confirm compatibility.

New Tire Contract # 863A administered by the Division of Purchase and Contract contains tires by size that meet the specification of tires required on North Carolina School Buses. Not all tires listed in the North Carolina School bus specification are on the state contract but listed tires are approved for use on school buses based on the individual tire specification confirmation.

### **2. TIRE OPERATION**

Load range requirements for new and retread tires are specific to the chassis as delivered from the OEM and specified on the bus identification label and must be maintained as specified for proper tire/ vehicle performance and operational safety. Load range is an inspection criteria in the 30-day inspection performed on each school bus and activity bus.

Tread depth must be maintained on steer axles tires to insure safe operation as specified by the US DOT and the field inspection by NCDPI Consultants during annual inspections. Minimum allowable steer axle tread depth is 4/32 inch. This depth should be monitored by LEA certified inspectors during required 30 day inspections and action taken once the tread depth reaches the required minimum for continued tire operation.

### **3. RECAPPED TIRES (Retreads)**

The Department of Public Instruction encourages the practice of recapping tires as a means of recycling. Rear Drive axle tires on North Carolina School Buses are allowed to operate with retread tires that have met a build specification as determined in Tire Retreading contract # 928A administered by the Division of Purchase and Contract. The latest specs are listed at [www.ncbussafety.org/StateContracts.html](http://www.ncbussafety.org/StateContracts.html).

Retread tire contract # 928A contained tires certified by vendors that met the listed requirements and specifications of the contract. Vendors were awarded portions of the contract based on section of the state where the vendor can supply services. The contract contained tires by tread design, tread depth, multiple sizes and competitive prices. As of this writing the state term contract has expired (December 3, 2015) and the Division of Purchase and Contract has no plans for this contract to be extended or rebid. The specifications, however, remain in effect.

Tread depth must be maintained on rear drive axle tires to insure safe operation as specified by the US DOT and the field inspection by NCDPI Consultants during annual inspections. Minimum allowable rear drive axle tire tread depth is 2/32 inch. This depth should be monitored by LEA certified inspectors during required 30 day inspections and action taken once the tread depth reaches the required minimum for continued tire operation.

Casing Maximum Age: Casings which are more than six (6) years old shall not be retreaded.

Maximum Allowable Number Retreads on A Casing: Casings may be retreaded a total of three (3) times during the life of the casings.

#### 4. NON Contract Tire Purchasing

North Carolina State Board of Education Policy TCS-H-008: *“LEAs shall purchase school buses, school bus tires, brake pads, brake shoes, and brake hardware that meet the safety specifications listed in the request for bids for the statewide term contract for these items.”*

#### 5. Tire and Wheel Inspection / Out of service Criteria:

North Carolina State Board of Education Policy EEO-H-005 Adopted March 3, 2011

Pages 68 - 69 of North Carolina Bus Fleet Manual contains Inspection and out of service criteria pertaining to wheels and tires.

#### 6. Surplus Tire Casing Disposal

G.S. 130A-309.09A. Local government solid waste responsibilities. (a) *“...Each unit of local government shall implement programs and take other actions that it determines are necessary to address deficiencies in service or capacity required to meet local needs and to protect human health and the environment....”*

Once the director of transportation declares tires to be no longer useful to the LEA, designate the casings to be surplus and contact the State Surplus Property contractor to pick up the tires. The contract is written such that only tires that have value to the contractor because they can be retreaded are the designated responsibility of that contractor. There is nothing that requires nor prohibits the contractor from offering to discard other “scrap” tires as a service to the LEA. Revenue from the sale of surplus tires goes to the service truck replacement fund.

If an LEA has more recappable casings than needed, these tires are declared surplus. Choose one of the options below.

- Contact your DPI field consultant to write up a lot of tires for sale through state surplus. Revenue goes to the service truck replacement fund.
- Provided the original tire was purchased with state funds, transfer the casings to another county school bus garage for the purpose of being recapped. This may only be done with the written approval of a DPI Transportation Services staff member. A copy of the approval must be maintained in the files documenting the transaction.
- Sell the casings as surplus State law permits several types of sales. (See Appendix E – Disposal of Property.)

Reference Materials:

New Steer Tire requirement: US DOT Regulation 393.75 (d)

Tread Depth: US DOT Regulation 393.75 (b) (c)  
NC Bus Fleet Manual page 68

New Tire Specification sheets:

Goodyeartrucktires.com, Michelintruck.com, Bridgestonetrucktires.com, Hankooktireusa.com

New Tire Contract # 863A: NC Division of Purchase & Contract

Retread Tire Contract # 928A Specifications December 2013: NC Division of Purchase & Contract

Load Range Requirements: NC School Bus Type C Specifications page 10  
NC Bus Fleet Manual page 69 Item # 4

NON Contract Tire Purchasing: NC Bus Safety Website / Policies

North Carolina State Board of Education Policy TCS-H-008

Casing Maximum Age: 6 Years (specs for Tire Retreading Contract # 928A)

Maximum Allowable Retreads on A Casing: 3 (specs for Tire Retreading Contract # 928A)

Scrap Tire Casing Disposal: NC Bus Fleet Manual page 30

Scrap Tire Certification Form: NC Bus Safety website in Surplus Sale Forms  
This form required for free disposal at Public Collection facilities. DENR 3733(9/12)

Scrap Tire Pickup Form TD-6T: NC Bus Safety website in Surplus Sale Forms

Tire and Wheel Inspection / Out of service Criteria:

North Carolina State Board of Education Policy TCS-H-005 Adopted June 4, 2015 Page 61 of North Carolina Bus Fleet Manual contains Inspection and out of service criteria pertaining to wheels and tires.

## APPENDIX E – DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY



### PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., State Superintendent  
WWW.NCPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG

November 20, 2015

#### MEMORANDUM

TO: All Transportation Directors

FROM: Derek Graham, Section Chief  
Transportation Services

Handwritten initials "DSG" in blue ink.

SUBJECT: Disposal of Property

When an LEA transportation department determines that property is no longer needed, the LEA may use one of several means to dispose of that property. Processes for the sale of yellow school buses are well defined and coordinated through DPI Transportation Services. There are several options for other kinds of materials.

The most straightforward way to dispose of materials (e.g. surplus tires, scrap metal, batteries, antifreeze, etc.) is through the State Surplus Property (SSP) agency which has several convenience contracts and will list other items for bid. DPI field consultants are available to list items for bid with SSP. [General Statute 143, Article 3A](#) authorizes SSP to sell LEA property.

According to public school law, General Statute [115C-518](#), when property owned by a local education agency (LEA) is deemed unnecessary or undesirable for LEA purposes, the LEA may also dispose of such according to the procedures prescribed in General Statutes, Chapter 160A, Article 12. This article refers to the disposal of property by a North Carolina city. When applying [Chapter 160A, Article 12](#), the "city", "council" or any specific city official are deemed to refer, respectively, to the LEA, the board of education and the LEA official who most nearly performs the same duties. Options for disposal of personal property include:

- (1) Private negotiation and sale; (requires local board action)
- (2) Advertisement for sealed bids;
- (3) Negotiated offer, advertisement, and upset bid;
- (4) Public auction;
- (5) Exchange. (requires local board action).

In addition to the state surplus contracts mentioned above, LEAs most often use the public auction ("local auction") or private negotiation and sale. LEAs may sell scrap metal (including authorized buses), surplus tires or other surplus material to a private party (e.g. scrap metal or tire dealer) for a negotiated price. Any such sale requires that the local board of education have an approved process for such sales or the board must approve any individual sale in advance. When a surplus bus is taken to a scrap metal dealer, the proceeds check, made payable to NCDPI, must be sent to DPI Transportation Services.

RELEVANT LINKS: G.S. 143, Article 3A [http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/byarticle/chapter\\_143/article\\_3a.html](http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/byarticle/chapter_143/article_3a.html)  
G.S. 115C-518 [www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/byarticle/chapter\\_115c/article\\_37.html](http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/byarticle/chapter_115c/article_37.html)  
G.S. 160A, Article 12 [http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/byarticle/chapter\\_160a/article\\_12.html](http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/byarticle/chapter_160a/article_12.html)

#### SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS SUPPORT DIVISION

Benjamin J. Matthews, Ph.D., Director | ben.matthews@dpi.nc.gov  
6319 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6319 | (919) 807-3501 | Fax (919) 807-3502  
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

## **APPENDIX F – ALTERATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS TO NC SCHOOL BUSES**

Because of the State's responsibility to replace school buses, *no school bus is to be altered in appearance, color, lettering, or equipment unless authorized by the Department of Public Instruction, Transportation Services Section*. It is permissible to update older model school buses to the current year school bus specifications. Any safety item included in the most recent issue of the North Carolina School Bus Specifications may be added. However, the items must be of the same model and type of material as described in the specifications and also installed in the manner described in the specifications. The following list includes safety items that may be added to update older school bus without specific written approval. Items that have been added to bus specifications in recent years are listed below. (Note: the following is for example purposes, but is not an all-inclusive list)

- Air dryer
- Automatic slack adjusters
- Backup alarms
- Broom holder (non-metallic)
- Driver fan
- Exhaust pipe extension turn down
- Extended Life Coolant
- H range tires
- Integrated Child Restraint Seats
- LED Lighting
- Parking brake interlock
- Passenger Advisory System
- Polyurethane paint
- PowerPoint
- Premium Quality FF Friction Rated Brake Linings
- Pro-form fire block seat material
- Rear Scope lens
- Reflective lettering
- Reflective stop sign material
- Right side hand rails
- Roof hatches
- RRX/No Right Turn License Plate
- Strobe lights
- Strobe Stop Signs
- Synthetic differential lube
- Vandal Locks (requires electronic interface to ensure emergency exits are unlocked before the bus will start)

Items not included in specifications, but approved for addition to school buses at local expense are listed below.

- External Motion Detection System
- Two-way Communications
- Global Positioning Devices
- Electronic Control Module Monitoring Devices
- Exhaust Braking System
- Secured trash can
- Fold down arm rest on National 2000 Driver seat
- Gardian Angel School Bus Lighting System
- Video Cameras (internal and external)
- Crash barrier cover with pocket
- Fifth brake light

Other safety or cost efficiency items not included in the school bus specifications may be installed on your school buses. However, Transportation Services must receive a written request and approval granted prior to actual installation on a bus. Any item added would be considered a pilot test and must be reviewed by Transportation Services prior to the bus being put in service.

NOTE: Some items that have been updated in the specifications through the years should not be changed on older model buses to ensure the integrity of the bus configuration. For instance, tire sizes must not be changed because of the internal odometer and speedometer calibrations. Mirror configurations are certified by the manufacturer and can only be changed with written approval from DPI Transportation Services, to ensure appropriate measures that the new configuration meets FMVSS #111.

# **APPENDIX G - PASSENGER VEHICLES FOR TO/FROM SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

## North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Transportation Services Using LEA Passenger Vehicles for To/From School Transportation

### INTRODUCTION

As a result of a wide range of educational programs being implemented in our public schools, Local Education Agency (LEA) transportation departments are being faced with the need to transport small numbers of students that cannot be safely or efficiently transported by school bus. Examples include students with special transportation needs (perhaps involving special equipment), students experiencing homelessness being transported to their school of origin or students assigned to an alternative school.

Students being transported to or from school for their regularly scheduled school day may be transported at state expense – specifically using funds allocated to LEAs in Program Report Code (PRC) 056. Usually this is done on a school bus where the driver and maintenance is paid directly from PRC 056 funds. Sometimes this is done by contracting with a 3rd party for transportation – either in a (usually small) school bus or a smaller passenger vehicle. Again, PRC 056 funds are used - charged to the CONTRACT TRANSPORTATION object code 331.

A third option, which traditionally has not been widely used in North Carolina, is for the LEA to operate its own passenger vehicles. This document addresses questions and answers about this process.

### VEHICLES

1. What kinds of non-school bus vehicles (owned or leased by the school district) can be used by the LEA to provide to and from school transportation?

Passenger vehicles built to a capacity of 10 or less, including the driver, may be used. This includes passenger cars, SUV's and mini-vans.

2. Why can't I use a 12-15 passenger van to transport students?

According to federal definition, a BUS is any vehicle built to transport 11 or more, including the driver and a SCHOOL BUS is any BUS used to transport students to or from school or school related events. State law (G.S. 115C-249 says that any school bus operated by an LEA must meet state specifications.)

3. Is a DMV safety inspection required? What about a 30-day inspection?

The annual DMV inspection is required on these vehicles. While the "30-day" inspection required in public school law for school buses and activity buses is also not applicable to these vehicles, DPI Transportation Services will set up a maintenance plan for these vehicles that requires them to be inspected every 30 days. A 30-day inspection will be generated in BSIP for all of these vehicles

4. How should passenger vehicles be numbered?

LEAs should request that DPI assign a number between 6600 and 6699. In this series, the costs associated with maintaining and fueling this vehicle will not be flagged for local reimbursement since the cost of operating is eligible to be paid from PRC 056.



## INSURANCE and REIMBURSEMENT

5. Are these vehicles insured by the state?

No. The State Tort Claims Act is only applicable to school buses. The LEA must obtain local insurance for any non-school bus vehicle used to transport students.

6. Is the driver of this vehicle covered by the State Tort Claims Act?

No. Tort Claims only apply to drivers/technicians/transportation safety assistance in the maintenance and operation of school buses.

7. Who can drive these vehicles?

The Local Board of Education must adopt policies regarding the requirements for its drivers of passenger vehicles used for transporting students. Those policies must be available for inspection by DPI Transportation Services upon request.

8. What covers the liability of the driver and damage to the vehicle?

Complete insurance coverage must be obtained by the LEA.

9. What can be paid from PRC 056 funds? How are costs of operation assigned to these vehicles?

The 6600 series is flagged in the fleet maintenance system as one that is operated from state funds – like most yellow school buses, for instance. So, as indicated above, fuel and maintenance costs will be charged directly to the vehicle. As such, it will not be included in the report of local vehicle fuel and maintenance costs that must be reimbursed on a monthly basis.

Drivers – when transporting students to and from school – can also be (but are not required to be) paid from PRC 056 (object code 175).

10. What can NOT be paid from PRC 056 funds?

The initial purchase and insurance are a local responsibility, as is the cost of a replacement vehicle. Further, cost of operating the vehicle for purposes other than to- and from-school cannot be paid from state PRC 056 funds.

11. What if the vehicle is used for purposes other than transporting students to and from school?

When a 6600 series vehicle is used for other purposes (activities, staff use, etc.) then the cost of operation must be reimbursed the same as for extra uses of school buses. The rate to be used is the standard mileage rate from the IRS: <http://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates> . The “medical / moving” rate is the applicable rate since it is based on the variable cost of operating a passenger vehicle.

The “fixed costs” such as depreciation/replacement and insurance are local responsibility. The amount will need to be prorated into fuel, parts, etc. Contact DPI Transportation Services for further instructions.

Note: In these cases, the driver should not be paid from PRC 056. If it is necessary to pay the driver from PRC 056, that salary must be reimbursed dollar-for-dollar from the sponsoring program to PRC 056.

## **APPENDIX H – SCHOOL BUS DRIVER CERTIFICATION**

**NC Division of Motor Vehicles  
School Bus and Traffic Safety**

**NC Department of Public Instruction  
Transportation Services**

### **Recommended Process for School Bus Driver Certification June 18, 2013**

To ensure that prospective school bus drivers are fully qualified and physically able to perform the functions required of North Carolina School Bus Drivers, the NC Division of Motor Vehicles and the NC Department of Public Instruction, Transportation Services have established a recommended process for Driver Training and Certification. It is recommended any entities seeking to employ school bus drivers follow the process defined below.

**Before allowing a prospective employee to attend DMV School Bus Driver Classroom Training, the Local Education Agency (LEA) with assistance from the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) as needed, should complete the following:**

- Obtain a copy of the prospective employee's current Driver's License
- Provide a copy of the Physical Standards Testing document to the prospective employee
- Perform a DMV License Check to ensure candidate meets criteria
- Obtain authorization and optionally conduct criminal back ground check and obtain results to ensure eligibility
- Provide an opportunity for prospective employees to practice the Physical Standards Test if requested by prospective

**Once prospective employees are enrolled in the classroom portion of DMV School Bus Driver Training, the following steps will be completed *before being scheduled* for DMV School Bus Driver "Behind the Wheel" Training or *concurrent with* "Behind the Wheel" training:**

- DMV will schedule and conduct Physical Standards Test
- Prospective employee must successfully pass a Drug & Alcohol Test
- Prospective employee begins LEA employment application process
- For prospective employees that pass the Physical Standards Test, DMV works with LEA to schedule prospective employees "Behind the Wheel" Training

**Prospective employees that successfully complete the "Behind the Wheel" Training and pass the Physical Standards Test administered by DMV, will complete any additional steps required by the LEA in order to complete the employment process and receive a School Bus Driver's Certificate ("Pocket Card").**

# **APPENDIX I – SCHOOL BUS DRIVER PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

Physical Performance Standards Testing (PPST) for North Carolina School Bus Drivers

Refer to <http://www.ncbussafety.org/BusDrivers.html>