



CARROLL COUNTY (MARYLAND) PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT

THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Winter 2016 Edition

410-751-3229

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Director:

Michael Hardesty

Supervisor:

Keith Shorter:

Out-of-County,
Special Needs &
South Carroll Area

Area Supervisors:

Byron Moore:

In-County Special
Needs

John O'Meally:

North Carroll &
FSK Areas

Scott Parsons:

Westminster Area

Driver Instructors:

Dena Hozik

Scheneeka Weeden

Angela Williams

Support Staff:

Pat Arnold

Kristin Ebert

Anita Stubenrauch

Pat Wall

Cindy Washick

As we approach the midpoint of the school year, several thoughts/ topics of interest appear worthy of address. First, as we all have heard by now, the CCPS School Board has voted to close three schools beginning July 1, 2016. The three schools are North Carroll High, New Windsor Middle and Charles Carroll Elementary. I'm sure that if you are a driver, assistant or bus contractor serving these schools you are wondering how your current bus route(s) will be affected. Leading up to the School Board's decision and since, the Transportation Area Supervisors and Routing Analysts have been working diligently in designing the new bus routes that will be needed. Keep in mind that these school closures not only affect the routing within the current school boundaries for these schools, but also affect the redrawn boundaries of surrounding schools that will absorb the students from the schools designated for closure. Some current bus routes may be extended to service new school boundaries while some routes will be completely redesigned. This is a massive task to create new bus routes that will both minimize student ride time while maximizing the effective use of our school bus resources. Several schools will have their starting and ending times adjusted in order to make the best use of our buses. It is our plan to have all new bus routes completed by June 1 and distributed to contractors and drivers for review.

A second topic of considerable discussion is the recent endorsement by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation (NASDPT) of the use of lap/shoulder belts on school buses. While these endorsements do not translate to making lap/shoulder belts law, they do carry a great deal of weight in terms of enforcing an ever increasing opinion by the general public and other professionals that students should be provided and required to wear lap/shoulder belts on their school bus. It should be noted that the National Association of Pupil Transportation (NAPT) has not endorsed the use of lap/shoulder belts and has issued a position paper outlining the reasons for their position. Obviously, there are many factors to consider should lap/shoulder belts on school buses become law. Currently, Senate Bill 183 (School Vehicles – Seat Belts – Requirements) has been introduced in the current legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly. We will be providing comment on this legislation and expect that the Maryland School Bus Contractor's Association will do the same. Persons interested in reading the bill and other proposed legislation may do so by accessing the following link:

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?id=SB0083&stab=01&pid=billpage&tab=subject3&ys=2016RS>



Finally, as I write this on Wednesday, January 20, 2016, we have just been issued a "blizzard watch" from the National Weather Service for a major east coast snow storm beginning Friday afternoon and ending early Sunday morning. This "El Niño" winter has certainly been a strange one with floods in the Midwest, snowstorms in the Rockies, spring-like temps here in December and now a blizzard in January. With a significant snow event like this we can expect lingering effects from drifting and melting and refreezing for many days to come. Please review your safe winter weather practices and check to be sure your automatic chains are functioning properly. Stay safe and warm and let's hope for an early spring!

DRIVER REMINDERS

REMEMBER: Use the *override switch* when you are approaching another bus from either direction that is loading or unloading. Do not use your amber flashing lights prior to activating the override switch. Come to a complete stop before activating your override switch. When deactivating your override switch, you must wait until the bus performing the loading or unloading procedure deactivates its red flashing lights.



Activate your override

REMEMBER: You are not to *layover* or make an unscheduled stop for personal reasons on commercial property unless it is approved by the Transportation Services Department. An example would be going into Dunkin Donuts for coffee or to use the rest room or going to the bank.

REMEMBER: There is no *smoking* on or near a school bus—even if on a layover on the side of the road.



This Is A
No Smoking
Area

REMEMBER: During inclement weather —be mindful of road conditions.

REMEMBER: Speeding is *speeding*—it should never be done in a school bus.



Q's and A's from Special Education

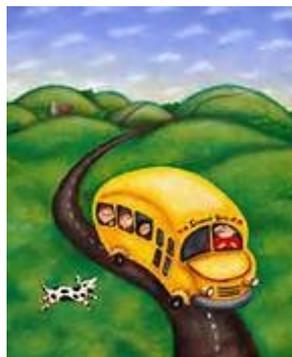
This can be a difficult time of year for many of our community/county families. Many of these families have problems within the home that cause the family to be divided and sometimes displaced or homeless. This scenario is difficult for all. The parents, guardians, small children, students and possibly others in this displaced household have unique and challenging days/weeks/months ahead of them.

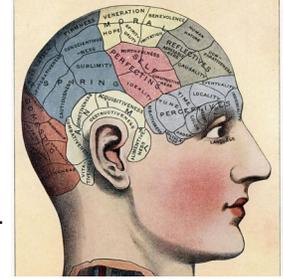


Q: What protections does a family/student have when facing a homeless/displacement situation?

A: The McKinney-Vento Act which came into federal law in 1987 set up the parameters for these families. The Act requires schools to enroll homeless children and youth immediately, even if they lack normally required documents, such as immunization records or proof of residence. The act ensures that homeless children and youth have transportation to and from their school of origin if it is in the child's or youth's best interest. The school of origin may or may not be in the district in which the student resides. Some of these families have relocated into other surrounding counties and even other states.

Once the decision is made that the best interest of the student would be to attend his/her school of origin, transportation is set up to accommodate this situation. Some of the routing for the homeless population is simple, but others it is not so simple. Many of these students must endure extended ride times and multiple tiers before getting to school or home in the afternoon. Some students ride a regular education bus, but many may ride a special education bus to and from the schools because of the more diverse routes the special education buses have during the course of the day.





Memories

Computer systems have at least one distinct advantage over us humans - MEMORIES!

As we age, our memory banks become very selective when storing new memories. Our capacity to remember things is reduced. Our memory banks are nearly full!

Computers, on the other hand, can be outfitted with additional memory. If the capacity is reached for storage of digital data, hardware can be installed to increase that capacity.

Like computer systems, our bus camera systems can also receive additional memory space. Memory space in our camera systems is provided by the removable hard drives. Those hard drives contain the video and audio files recorded by our bus cameras. Each hard drive has storage limitations which determine how many of those files can be stored before the oldest files are replaced by new ones.

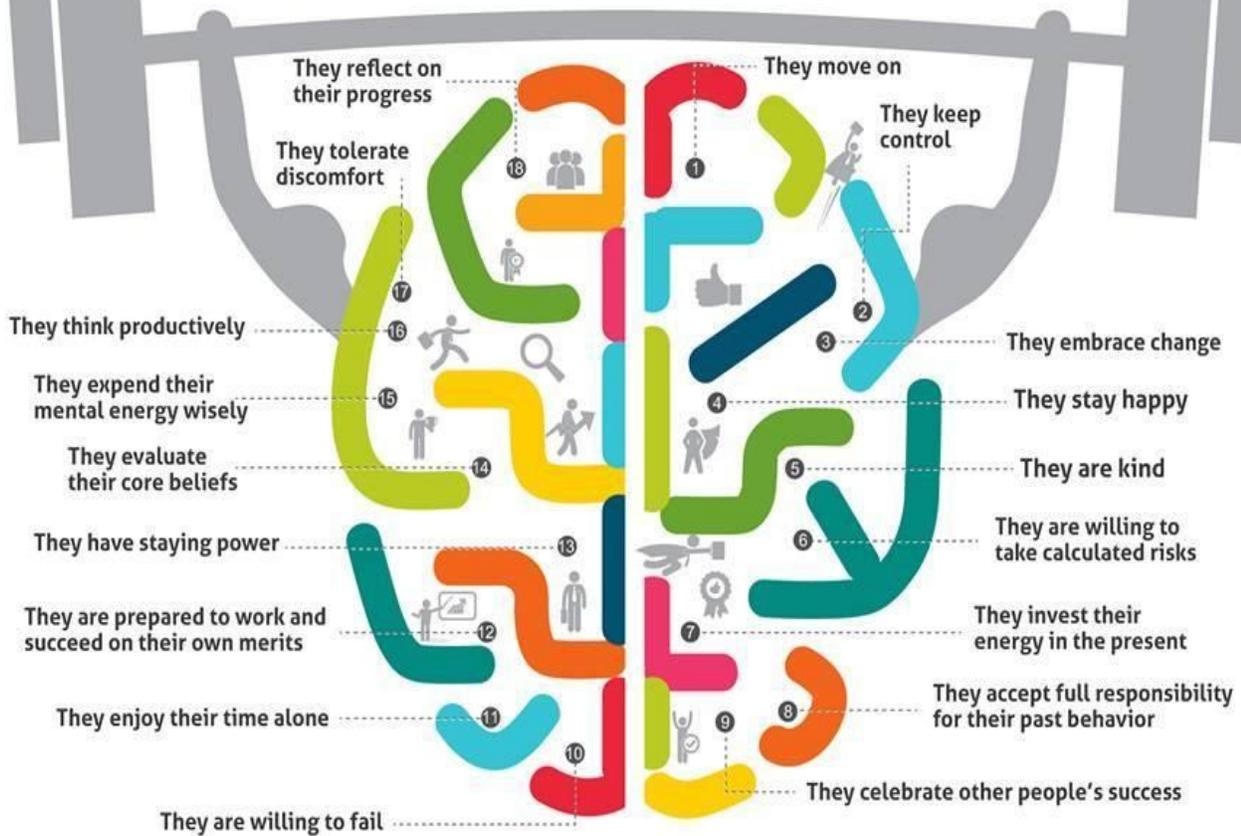
At CCPS, we are beginning to replace our oldest hard drives with newer hard drives. These new drives have two or three times the storage capacity of the old hard drives. Investigations that involve bus camera system footage will be less time sensitive because the audio and video files are available for a longer time period. Even more importantly, the new hard drives are Solid State which will last longer. The drive does not contain any "spinning" parts which become worn down with the bumps in the road.



Just before winter break, we installed 50 buses with these new hard drives with a plan of replacing all of the old hard drives over the next two years. The changes are inside the hard drive casing so you can't see a difference but you may notice that the system is quieter while recording. That will give you more opportunity to enjoy the sounds of your students. May you all have happy memories of your bus.



18 THINGS MENTALLY STRONG PEOPLE DO



SPRING 2016 BUS INSPECTION

The spring 2016 bus inspection is fast approaching. Our schedule is printed here:

Monday, March 14	8:45—11:30	Winters Mill High
Tuesday, March 15	8:45—11:30	Manchester Valley High
Wednesday, March 16	8:45—11:30	Winters Mill High
Thursday, March 17	8:45—11:30	Century High
Friday, March 18	8:45—10:45	Francis Scott Key



As a reminder, inspectors from the MVA will be present during this inspection; so please allot extra time for each bus. Buses that come through the inspection clean and in excellent mechanical condition with no defects will speed up the inspection process. Please ensure all of your buses have undergone thorough preventative maintenance checks, and make sure your drivers inspect the buses prior to bringing them through the inspection lines. The inspection process should not serve as your fleet's preventative maintenance program, instead it should confirm that your preventative maintenance program is effective.

Highlighted on the next page are the results of our inspections through the fall of 2015. As a basis for comparison over the past 5 spring inspections, dating back to 2011, our averages have been the following:

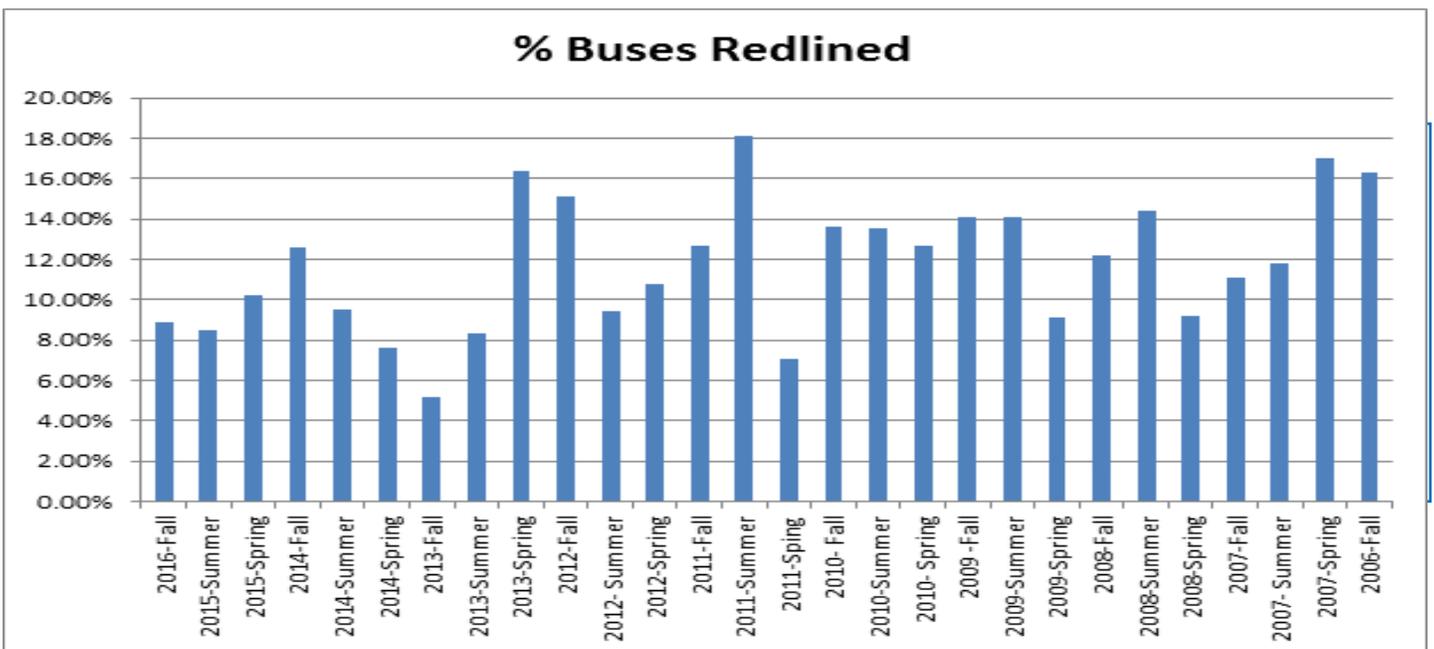
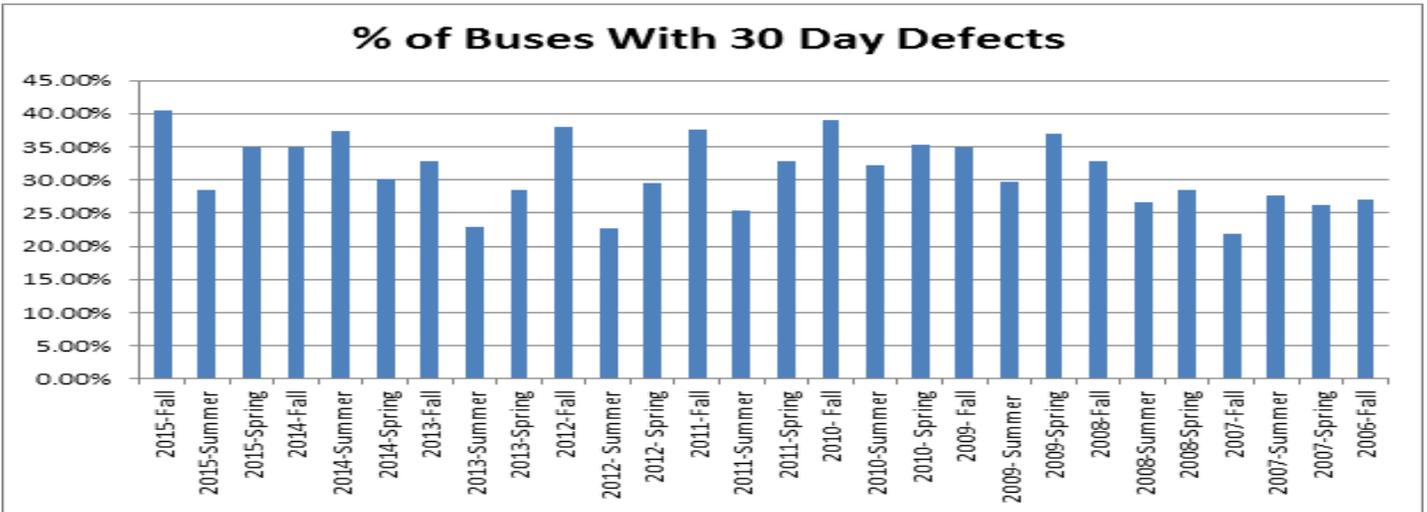
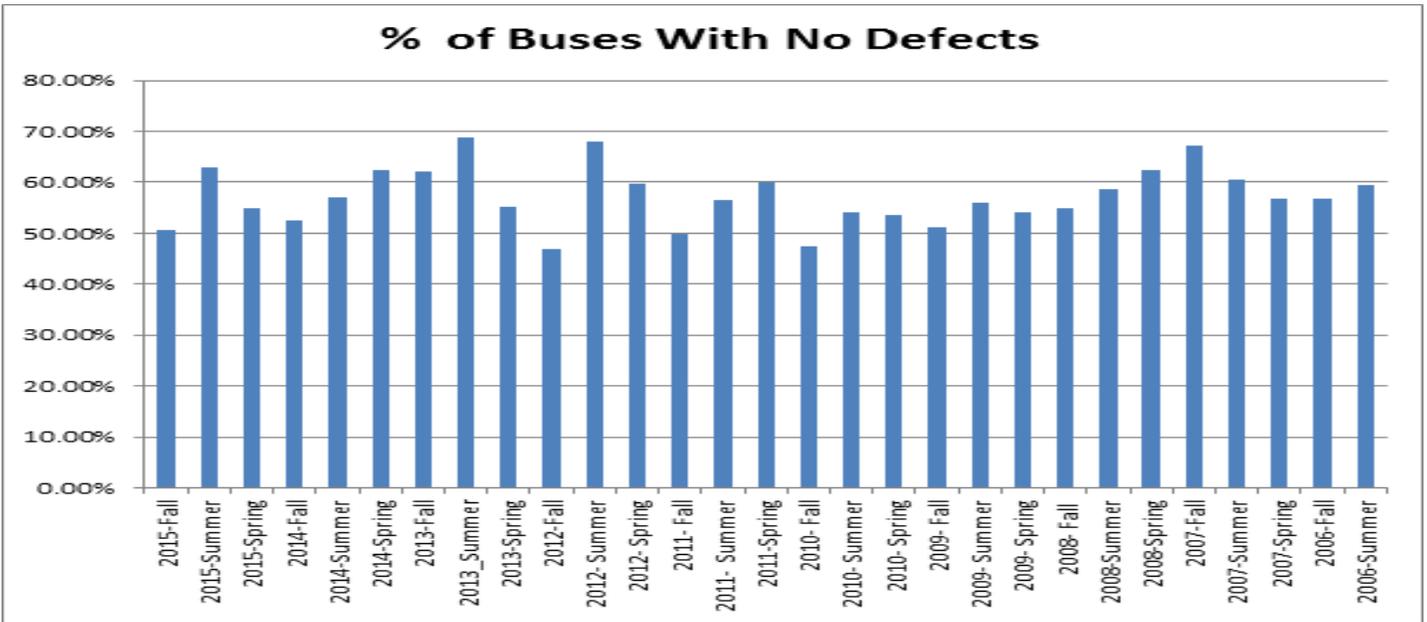
Pass: 58.18%

30-day violations: 31.12%

Redlines: 10.42%

10%

A ten percent improvement over the five-year averages would result in scores of 63.4%, 28.3% and 9.47% respectively. This is a modest goal; but achievable. Please bring your buses to inspection clean and ready to be inspected so that we can again show the State of Maryland how outstanding our clean and well-maintained fleet truly is.



KIND WORDS

With or without saying, the driver's words and expressions have an effect on their student's attitudes and behaviors. Do your students know how you feel about them? We do not always verbally communicate this information to the students who ride our school bus; but, most students could respond to this question. They know where they fit in. Students gain the awareness that the bus driver respects them by how they speak to them. Frequently using courteous words with behavior challenged students as well as with appropriately behaved students allows us to convey a level of respect to all:

“Will you please pick up that paper”

“Thank you for keeping your voices low while crossing the railroad tracks.”

“Sorry I was running late this morning.”

Using courteous words and words of praise when developing a rapport with your students lets the students know that you are pleased and appreciate them and their good behavior. Try some of these phrases in the next few months and see how your students respond. You would be surprised how effective this could be with your older passengers:

“That was a nice bus ride, thank You.”

“I like the way you are sitting today.”

“Much better, thank You.”

“It's a pleasure to drive when you ride like this.”

“I appreciate your help.”

“Now you've got the hang of it.”

“How impressive”

HELPFUL TIPS

- Greet your students by name. Say good morning.
- Smile.
- Show an interest in the things that interest them.
- Compliment your students on positive behavior.
- *Sometimes* it pays to not hear and see things.
- Make students feel that they have a responsibility in ensuring group safety.
- Listen to the students — their suggestions, their complaints, their concerns.
- If you make a mistake, admit it.
- Give commands that stimulate an action: “Do this...” instead of “Don't do that...”
- Have a reason for what you ask a student to do and give the reason.



January

- 1-3 Schools/Offices Closed – Winter Holiday
- 4 Schools/Offices Re-open
- 15 Regular Education Route Stop Sheets and Regular Education Route Manifests due in Transportation Services
- 18 Schools/Offices Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
- 22 Special Education Manifests due in Transportation Services
- 29 Schools Closed for Students

February

- 15 Schools/Offices Closed – Presidents’ Day

March

- 8 Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide; Schools Closed for Pre-Kindergarten and Prep Students
- 11 Regular Education Route Stop Sheets and Regular Education Route Manifests; Special Education Route Manifests due in Transportation Services
- 14 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 15 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Manchester Valley High
- 16 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Winters Mill High
- 17 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Century High
- 18 Spring Bus Inspection (8:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.) Francis Scott Key High
- 24-29 Schools/Offices Closed Spring Break
- 30 Schools/Offices Re-open

April

- 12 Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide; Schools Closed for Pre-Kindergarten and Prep Students
- 26 Schools/Offices Closed – Primary Election

May

- 30 Schools/Offices Closed – Memorial Day

June

- 14 Last Day for Pre-Kindergarten Students
- 15 Last Day for Students, Two Hours and Forty-Five Minutes Early Dismissal System-wide

Emergency Closing Days:

If any of the five (5) emergency closing days are not used, schools will be closed for students in the following manner:

- One (1) day not used - June 14th
- Two (2) days not used - June 13th
- Three (3) days not used - June 10th
- Four (4) days not used - June 9th
- Five (5) days not used - June 8th

In the event that the school year is shortened due to unusual emergency closing days, the last student day will be a two-hour and forty-five minute early dismissal. If further emergency days are required, the School Board may shorten spring break, extend the school year, / request a waiver from the State Board of Education.