

# The Voice and Vision for Pupil Transportation in Virginia

August

2016



## State Level Staff Changes

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Above: June Eanes giving a speech following a standing ovation for her years of work in Virginia Pupil Transportation.

The New State  
Director of Support Services  
**Vijay Ramnarain**



**Above:**

James Lash (right), new VAPT President honoring exiting VAPT President (2014-2016) Lonnie Reavis (Loudoun County) with Gavel Award.

### New 2016-2017 VAPT Officers:

President: James Lash (York Co.)

Vice President: Cheryl Fisher  
(Fauquier Co.)

Secretary: Donna Carter, (Franklin Co.)

Treasurer: Floyd Miles (Richmond City)



### VAPT Board Members

President: James Lash, York County

Vice President: Cheryl Fisher, Fauquier Co.

Secretary: Donna Carter, Franklin Co.

Treasurer: Floyd Miles, Richmond City

Past President: Lonnie Reavis, Loudoun Co..

Region 1: Edward Tucker, Dinwiddie Co.

Region 2: Steve Pappas, Poquoson Co.

Region 3: Heather Handschin, Spotsylvania Co.

Region 4: John Grubbs, Frederick Co.

Region 5: Jason Ferguson, Lynchburg

Region 6: Michael Stovall, Roanoke Co.

Region 7: Gary Adams, Scott County

Region 8: Tony Holmes, Prince Edward Co.

## National School Bus Safety Week

For the 2016-17 School year, the National School Bus Safety Week is scheduled for October 17th-21st. The theme will be **"My Driver, My Safety Hero!"** What a great campaign to spotlight our many Virginia Bus drivers—our great heroes transporting our students to obtain their education in the safest way possible. Plan now to involve your transportation department in scheduled events to encourage staff, students, and the public how important our drivers are and what role they have in the education of each of our students. We hope to see great artwork and content in the posters we receive!

## New State Leadership Team:



Drivers, start your engines! Soon, the State of Virginia will be abuzz with school buses everywhere. While it's exciting to be getting that new route or new bus, the critical part of it is: SAFETY. Drivers learning new names and new stops can become complacent in driving techniques and focus. EARLY is the name of the game for Transportation. The team above is here to serve your needs in Pupil Transportation Training throughout the state. Left to right is: Vijay Ramnarain (Support Services Director), Alice Matthews (Secretary); Jackie Herring (Associate Specialist); Kerry Miller, (Associate Director—Pupil Transportation).

## VAPT Poster Contest 2017

The slogan for this year is "My Driver —May Safety Hero!"

**Who May Enter** - Anyone enrolled in a public school. Five winning divisions that include: Division #1 -Grades K-2; Division #2 –Grades 3-5; Division #3-Grades 6-8; Division #4-Special Education; and Division #5-Computer Aided Drawing (CAD). The first place winner from each division will entered in the national poster contest.

**Deadline Date** - Completed poster designs must be post marked by **April 30, 2017**. All entries become the property of the State School Bus Safety Committee, and will not be returned.

**Poster Specifications** - Completed poster size must be 12" by 18" only, with a one-inch (1") blank border completely across the bottom of the poster. This space must be available due to printing requirements. If not provided, poster will be disqualified. Poster may be illustrated on the vertical or horizontal axis.

**Prizes** - Prizes will be awarded for the first, second, and third places in each division as follows:

1st Place Winner for each division	\$100.00 Check and Blue Ribbon
2nd Place Winner of each division	\$ 75.00 Check and Red Ribbon
3rd Place Winner of each division	\$ 50.00 Check and White Ribbon

**For complete instructions and entry form go to the VAPT website at [www.vapt.org](http://www.vapt.org)**

## President's Letter

It's hard to believe summer is almost over and schools are already beginning to open around the Commonwealth. As I begin each school year, in my current position overseeing school transportation, I take time to reflect on years past. I often think my career in pupil transportation actually began when I was a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader riding a bus to and from school about 10 miles each way.

As a result of riding the bus, I was afforded the opportunity for socialization with my peers, and watching the driver shift gears which prepared me for my future driving career. As I look back, the worst part of riding the bus was that I was notorious for losing my homework which resulted in my Mom often getting a call from my teacher. My mom will tell you today that I did my homework but just couldn't seem to keep track of it on the bus! It was my great experiences riding the bus that made me determine at such an early age I wanted to be associated with school buses when I grew up.

After graduating from high school in 1981, I was hired on as one of the youngest ever substitute drivers for Hampton City Schools. I drove many different routes in that capacity. Later I served as a contracted driver, then driver trainer, and finally as a supervisor before leaving Hampton in 1999 for a position as Manager of Transportation Services with York County School Division.

Today, some 35 years after becoming employed in the field of pupil transportation, I serve as the Associate Director of Transportation and Warehouse Operations for the York County Schools. When I think about this, I wonder where the years have gone. Most importantly I am amazed at how our industry accomplishes what it does in such a safe and efficient manner.

Here in the Commonwealth there are approximately 15,500 school buses transporting 861,000 students daily. For the average person, they can't fathom those numbers and what we do every day. Often times for many it appears to be a thankless job. I tell my staff at the end of the day when you have time to reflect, and you think of all the students who have been transported to and from school, on off-campus trips, etc., when all have arrived at their destination safely, that's the true reward for a job well done.

Because of the dedication of all those employed in the school bus industry, school buses are rated as the safest mode of transportation for getting children back and forth to school, by the U. S. Department of Transportation. This is quite an accomplishment everyone in our profession can be proud of.

No matter what your role is in our industry, you play an important one. Never forget the impression you make, on the students we serve, whether it is that of making a positive impact which like in my case, could lead to a future pupil transportation professional or just make a tough day better for a student riding your bus. Never forget the important role that you play in your precious cargo's life while driving that school bus. Thanks for going the extra mile!

I hope you all have a great, safe 2016-17 school year!

*James T. Lash*

VAPT President



## VAPT—Informative, Innovative, Interactive

The Virginia Association of Pupil Transportation held it's annual conference in June 2016 in Richmond, Virginia. There were many opportunities to learning: Crisis Communication, Understanding DOT Medical & Fit for Duty Requirements for government fleets or understanding the VA State Police Sex Offender Registry, The Do's & Don'ts of Using Registry Information Conjunction with a Pupil Transportation Operation, and Natural Disasters and Their Impact on Student Transportation were several of the class titles that were held. Many Pupil Transportation Staff from all over Virginia attended, networked with other individuals and learned valuable information that can be used daily in Virginia Pupil Transportation. Vendors in the Pupil Transportation Industry promoted their product and services at the trade show. Make plans now to attend in 2017. Keep looking at the VAPT website for updated information as it becomes available! Thanks to everyone who planned, coordinated and created an excellent conference for all Virginia Pupil Transportation participants. Look for Conference information on the website for Summer 2017 as it becomes available.

## 2016 VAPT Poster Contest Winners

and the  
**WINNERS ARE...**

Division Ranking	Name	Grade	School/County/City
<b>I (K-2) 1st</b>	Sophia Shi	K	Quarles Elem/ Winchester City
<b>I (K-2) 2nd</b>	Justin Gao	2	Bessie Weller Elem/ Staunton City
<b>I (K-2) 3rd</b>	Brianna Holland	1	Swansboro Elem/ Richmond City
<b>II (3-5) 1st</b>	Jessy Samy	4	Clover Hill Elem/ Chesterfield County
<b>II (3-5) 2nd</b>	Julia O'Conner	4	Quarles Elem/ Winchester City
<b>II (3-5) 3rd</b>	Raphael Adbulaev	5	A.R. Ware Elem/ Staunton City
<b>III (6-8) 1st</b>	Ma'at Ahmed	6	Albert Hill Middle/ Richmond City
<b>III (6-8) 2nd</b>	Daytyia Chisley	6	Shelburne Middle/ Staunton City
<b>III (6-8) 3rd</b>	Zanaisha Williams	6	Shelburne Middle/ Staunton City
<b>IV (Sped) 1st</b>	Amanda Aquilar	12	Surry County High/ Surry County
<b>IV (Sped) 2nd</b>	Marcus Lane	12	Surry County High/ Surry County
<b>IV (Sped) 3rd</b>	Brett Hyatt	10	Chatham High/ Pittsylvania County
<b>V (CAD) 1st</b>	Austin Hayley	9	Goochland High/ Goochland County
<b>V (CAD) 2nd</b>	Betty Abdelgelil	9	Goochland High/ Goochland County
<b>V (CAD) 3rd</b>	Madeleine Maniz	9	Goochland High/ Goochland County



**Congratulations to each winner and each school division represented!**

***See the VAPT.org website for the 2016-2017 School Year Poster Rules!***



## Region Directors Chosen at VAPT Conference



**New Regional Directors were chosen at the Conference in Richmond.**

**L to R:** Edward Tucker, *Dinwiddie County*; Heather Handschin, *Spotsylvania County*; John Grubbs, *Frederick County*; Michael Stovall, *Roanoke County*; Gary Adams, *Scott County*; Torey Holmes, *Prince Edward County*.

## Wellness Corner

“How to get motivated to start working out again” from the website, [caloriesecrets.net](http://caloriesecrets.net) states that there are five things we can do to become motivated to begin a work out program. It’s very difficult in starting a fitness plan; especially when you get away from the routine. So, to help get back to the swing of a fitness routine, how about using some or all of the tips from Calorie Secrets to aid in your motivation. Being fit to drive the bus is essential. Challenge all employees, including ourselves to be a healthier person at the end of the school year. Set a goal and begin to think of ways you can stay healthy.

### 5 Motivation Tips for Success :

- Keep a Fitness Journal
- Get Others Involved
- Announce your goals—no candy bars, please!
- Avoid Negativity and those who tell you it’s impossible!
- Listen to Uplifting Music and Read Motivational Quotes

One bus driver posts sticky note on her dash every day which encourages others to “Be the Best Person You Can Be” for today and strive for better food choices and has an exercise program that fits her needs. Let’s strive for a healthy 2016-2017 school year!



[www.caloriesecrets.net](http://www.caloriesecrets.net)

## A Scholarship Moment.....

*Congratulations*

**The VAPT 2016 Clyde W. Morris Memorial Scholarship recipient is**

**BRIAN DAVID SCHOORENS**

from Hampton City. He is a 2016 graduate of Kecoughtan High school. He is enrolled at UVa this fall; he has plans of becoming an attorney.

See all of his accomplishments on our website: [vapt.org/Scholarships.htm](http://vapt.org/Scholarships.htm)



**The 3rd Annual VAPT 2016 Sonny Merryman Memorial Scholarship recipient is:**

**YEA IN AHN**

From Fairfax County. She is entering UVa this fall enrolling in international Studies with plans to study abroad.

See all of her many accomplishments on our website: [vapt.org/Scholarships.htm](http://vapt.org/Scholarships.htm)



*Congratulations*

**Southeastern States Pupil Transportation Buster Bynum Education Scholarship recipient is:**

**Mattie Ruth Stanley**

From Dickenson County. A graduate of Ridgeview High Schools, her plans is to enroll in the Communications & Education program at UVa this fall.

See all of her many accomplishments on our website: [vapt.org/Scholarships.htm](http://vapt.org/Scholarships.htm)

*Congratulations*



## 2016 Virginia's "Best" School Bus Technician Competition

Congratulations to the 2016 Virginia's "Best" School Bus Technicians! Fourteen technicians from all over the state traveled to the annual conference held in Richmond, VA to see who had the skills to win. The winners are:

**1<sup>st</sup> Place – Donald Ertel, Virginia Beach City Public Schools**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Carman Fedeles, First Vehicle Services (Richmond City Public Schools)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Steve Fidler, Montgomery County Public Schools**

***A big thanks to the vendors for sponsoring this years competition:***

Alan Tye & Associates

Henrico County, Central Automotive Maintenance

Kingmor Supply, Inc.

Sonny Merryman, Inc.

### **Sonny Merryman 2016—2017 Public Pupil Transportation**

#### **Scholars at Virginia Tech**

\$2,500 Scholarships awarded to:

Taylor Anderson – Hampton City

Rylee Haynes- Carroll County

Melissa Powell – Hanover County

Ivan Wong- Fairfax County

Bryant Cook – Pittsylvania County

Sarah Burroughs – Warren County

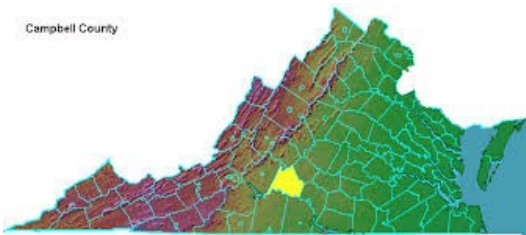


Photo source: [virginiaplaces.org](http://virginiaplaces.org)

## Spotlight On...

According to the Campbell County, VA webpage ([www.co.campbell.va.us](http://www.co.campbell.va.us)), in 1781 it became incorporated and "is located in Virginia's south central Piedmont region in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains." It was named for General William Campbell, the Revolutionary War hero famous for his leadership. Home to Red Hill—Patrick Henry National Memorial and Avoca Museum, the Staunton River flows through Campbell. This Pupil Transportation Department covers Campbell's 511 square miles and is bordered by Lynchburg to the north and includes the Town of Altavista in the southwest and the Town of Brookneal in the southeast. Campbell is 115 miles from Richmond and has a population of 55,235. Campbell County Public School Division has approximately 8000 students and its Pupil Transportation Department transports nearly 5,500 students on 83 regular routes and 15 Special Needs routes along with 6 vans for special transportation. Dr. Tim Hoden has been the Director of Operations for 7 years now. Their first day of school begins on Monday, August 15th with their projected end date being on Friday, June 2, 2017. According to the school division's website ([www.campbell.k12.va.us](http://www.campbell.k12.va.us)), their mission is "To provide a world-class education that enables every student to choose and pursue any post K12 endeavor". A big shout-out to Campbell Transportation Department for the extraordinary job they do!