

# The Voice and Vision for Pupil Transportation in Virginia



December

2012

## Season's Greetings!

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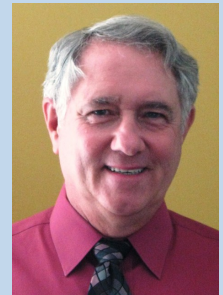
I would like to take this end of year opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for the role you take in keeping Virginia children safe and for the love and care you exercise in doing so. It is a grand thing you do. I feel privileged to be associated with each of you and with VAPT.

May you find some well deserved rest during the upcoming holidays and may they be filled with good food, better company and love. Enjoy the time you have off and best wishes for a New year filled with safety, peace and prosperity.

Happy Holidays!

Kermit Shaffer

President, VAPT



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## Love The Bus

The Virginia Association of Pupil Transportation (VAPT) in coordination with its partners will be hosting the state's second annual LOVE THE BUS celebration at 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM on Thursday, February 28th at the Capital Square Mall Bell Tower in Richmond, Virginia. Students and pupil transportation officials from across the Commonwealth will be gathering at the capital to celebrate the institution of the iconic yellow school bus, and highlight the vital contributions pupil transportation plays in Virginia's public education mission.



Organized in conjunction with the American School Bus Council, LOVE THE BUS festivities will be held by yellow school bus fans across the nation during the month of February. These events are designed to raise public awareness of the important safety, economic, educational, and environmental benefits provided to communities daily by the effective, cost saving school bus.

During the event, both state and national representatives will share their stories of affection for pupil transportation as well as the challenges currently facing the task of safely carrying Virginia's school children safely to and from school each day.

### VAPT Board Members

President: Kermit Shaffer, Spotsylvania Co.

Vice President: James Day, Arlington Co.

Secretary: Ann Pilson, Patrick Co.

Treasurer: David Pace, Virginia Beach City

Past President: Dwight Elam, Mecklenburg Co.

Region 1: Allen Buford, Hopewell City

Region 2: Lonnie Reavis, Suffolk City

Region 3: Margaret Hill, Stafford Co.

Region 4: Cheryl Fisher, Fauquier Co.

Region 5: Charmane White, Albemarle Co.

Region 6: Donna Carter, Franklin Co.

Region 7: Tom Williams, Washington Co.

Region 8: Bill Mayhew, Charlotte Co.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/58149516945/#!/VirginiansForBusLovers?fref=ts>

## Non-Sequential Lighting Systems on School Buses

Source:

VA Department of Education Pupil Transportation Services

Language in the Code of Virginia, Section 46.2-1090, regarding **Warning devices on school buses; other buses; use thereof, penalties** states:

*“For any new bus placed into service on or after July 1, 2007, such warning devices, at a minimum, shall include a non-sequential system of red traffic warning lights, a warning sign with flashing lights, and a crossing control arm such that when the bus door is opened, the red warning lights, warning sign with flashing lights, and crossing control arm are automatically activated.”*

Related Board of Education specifications state:

*“A non-sequential system for the traffic warning lights shall be installed that allows the red traffic warning lights to activate when the door opens. When the doors close all lights shall immediately deactivate.”*

*“The traffic warning light system shall be wired so that the amber lights are activated manually by a hand operated switch. When the door is opened, amber lights will automatically deactivate and red traffic warning lights, warning sign with flashing lights and crossing control arm shall be activated. When the door is closed, all lights shall be deactivated. There shall be a rocker style momentary switch that when depressed and released deactivates the red traffic warning lights, crossing arm and stop arm. The driver need not depress or reactivate the switch in any way for the continued operation of the non-sequential system. This feature will allow for railroad crossing operations and momentary deactivation in the case that the lights are activated and no stops need to be made. **There shall also be a control switch that would allow for deactivation of this feature during maintenance operation.** These switches shall be labeled according to their functions and shall meet standards of*

*FMVSS 101 (Controls and Displays).”*

It has been brought to our attention that some school buses do not have a separate control switch that would allow for deactivation of this feature during maintenance operation. On some buses, the “Cancel W/L” and “Master W/L” are on the same toggle switch. Please check this feature on your buses, and if there is not a separate control switch to deactivate the lights for maintenance, please notify the Pupil Transportation Office at (804) 225-2037 as well as notify the dealer from whom you purchased the bus(es).

As the problem is being corrected, we encourage you to make sure your drivers are aware of this switch and that they are properly trained on the correct usage. The safety of the children being transported is our top priority.

## National School Bus Safety Poster Contest Winner

The National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) recently announced the winners of its 2012 national School Bus Safety Week Poster Contest.

The theme of this year’s contest was “Stand Back From the Yellow and Black.”

Kendra Diggs of Surry County High School in Dendron, VA took first place in Division IV.

The theme for next year’s poster contest is “At My Stop - You Stop!”

Application forms will be posted on the VAPT Website in the near future.



## Blue Bird Heroism Award

During the annual NAPT annual awards banquet the largest ovation was for Cathy Snow, a school bus driver for the Elk Grove Unified School District in Sacramento, Calif., who received the Blue Bird Heroism Award for attempting to save the life of a baby who was shot in the head by home-invasion robbers in 2007. The incident was depicted on the TV show "America's Most Wanted," which eventually led to the suspects' capture. But Elk Grove kept Snow's identity a mystery from the public until recently because of law enforcement's concern that she might be the target of retribution, even though she did not actually witness the attack.

On September 14, 2007, the baby's father had just pulled into the driveway of a friend's house and had gotten out of his car when the suspects forced him at gun point into his friend's house, leaving the baby strapped in his car seat. Once inside, the suspects

shot and killed the baby's father and fled, but not before shooting into the car. The owner of the house then emerged, grabbed the baby and ran down the street to seek help. That's when the man saw Snow driving in the neighborhood and flagged her down.

School bus video on board caught what happened next, as Snow pulled over and the man gave her the bloody baby before he ran off. For the next 10 minutes, the video captures Snow's efforts to save the baby's life while she calls dispatch and 9-11. The baby later died at a local hospital, but not before his mother was able to be at his side.

"We know our exposure is there for strange things," said Jill Gayaldo, director of transportation at Elk Grove, the state's fifth-largest school district. "But we also have outstanding supervisors who are all state instructors, and this incident upped our game to step

Source: [STNonline.com](http://STNonline.com)



up and be more creative. You never know what the emergency is going to be, but the key is to be prepared."

One of those supervisors is James Snow, Cathy's husband. He and Gayaldo were also present on Sunday night along with Dave Anderson, territory sales manager for Blue Bird dealer A-Z Bus Sales, Inc., which announced that it is sponsoring an annual student scholarship at Elk Grove in Snow's name.

## NAPT Continuing Education Award

Source: [Fredericksburg.com](http://Fredericksburg.com)

The Spotsylvania School Board recognized Heather Handschin, the Transportation Department's bookkeeper and secretary, for earning the Continuing Education Award at the National Association for Pupil Transportation convention in Memphis, Tenn.

Ms. Handschin successfully completed rigorous testing while in Memphis to become a Certified Supervisor of Pupil Transportation (CSPT) with concentrations in Operations, Safety & Training, Special Education, and Vehicle Maintenance. Nationwide, there have been

only 40 CSPT's certified since 1990.

In addition, Ms. Handschin received certification as a Certified Pupil Transportation Specialist (CPTS) with concentrations in Dispatch, Routing, Safety & Training, Special Education, and Vehicle Maintenance. Only 53 others nationwide have achieved this certification since 1993.

Finally, Ms. Handschin earned a Special Needs Training Endorsement, becoming only the 33rd person nationwide to do so since 1993.

Congratulations Heather!



## Laugh Often

### An Apology Letter to Spouse:

Hi Sweetheart,

I am sorry about getting into an argument about putting up the Christmas lights. I guess that sometimes I feel like you are pushing me too hard when you want something. I realize that I was wrong and I am apologizing for being such a hard-headed guy. All I want is for you to be happy and be able to enjoy the holiday season. Nothing brightens the Christmas spirit like Christmas lights! I took the time to hang the lights for you today; and now I will be off to the hockey rink.

Again, I am very sorry for the way I acted yesterday. I'll be home later.

Love you..

### Her Response-

Hi Honey,

Thank you for that heart-felt apology. I don't often get an apology from you, and I truly appreciate it. I too felt bad about the argument and wanted to apologize. I realize that I can sometimes be a little pushy. I will try to respect your feelings from now on.

Thank you for taking the time to hang the Christmas lights for me. It really means a lot. In the spirit of giving, I washed your truck for you and I am now off to the mall.

I love you too!



Christmas Lights!

Truck being washed!



## Meet The VAPT Board Members

### James Day, CDPT, Vice President

Jim has been involved in Pupil Transportation for 33 years and has worked for Arlington Public Schools for 20 of those years. During those 33 years, he has served the Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation as Region IV Director, Board Secretary and Vice President.

In the Transportation field, Jim has held the position of Driver, Driver Trainer, Safety & Training Specialist, Special Needs Coordinator, Support Services Coordinator, Supervisor of Transportation, and Director of Transportation. He states "I did not plan to stay in Pupil Transportation when I was younger, but I sure have been blessed by a lot of wonderful people in Pupil Transportation, so

here I am".

Jim is very proud to have worked his way through the ranks. In 2010, he earned his Director of Pupil Transportation Certification through the National Association of Pupil Transportation.

Last year Jim and his wife, Lori, became parents for the first time, with the adoption of their 17-year old son, Ryan.

Shortly after this event, Jim returned to Arlington Schools as the Support Services Coordinator to be closer to home and to have more time with the family.

**Professional History:** Driver – Fairfax County Schools 1980-1989, Driver Trainer- Fairfax County Schools 1982 - 1988, Owner – Day's Transportation

Service 1988 – 1990, Safety & Training Specialist – Arlington Public Schools 1990 – 1998, Supervisor of Transportation – Manassas City Schools 1998 – 2004, Coordinator of Special Needs Transportation – Arlington Public Schools 2004 – 2008, Director of Transportation – Manassas Park City Schools 2008 – 2011 and currently Coordinator of Support Services – Arlington Public Schools.



## NAPT Updates

The 2012 NAPT Summit was held in October in Memphis, Tennessee. This was the place to be for anyone in the pupil transportation industry who was looking for the opportunity for professional growth and development. There were nineteen professional development courses offered and many seminars ranging from how to use Key Performance Indicators in an operation to numerous special needs topics.

Michael Eugene, the Chief Operating Officer of Orange County Public Schools in Florida, delivered a keynote address in which he challenged each pupil transporter to use data in their operation. He also emphasized that even though transporters are expected to do more with less, we need to strive for continuous improvement in our bottom line.

Distracted driving was also a topic at the Summit as the parents and sisters of Hunter Pitt, a six year old, who was killed by his own bus in Missouri, were

present to discuss this tragedy with attendees. A video produced by the Missouri Association for Pupil Transportation in conjunction with other state agencies was presented. This video may be found at [www.moapt.org](http://www.moapt.org) under "Distracted Driving." Please take the time to view this production; it is not your typical distracted driving story.

As always the Trade Show was a highlight of the Summit. Over 150 vendors displayed their products and services to those in attendance. The poster contest also took place at the Trade Show and Virginia was well represented. Kendra Diggs from Surry County High School made Virginia proud by bringing home the first place prize in Division 4 of the contest.

Several high achievers from Virginia gained their national certification as Supervisors of Pupil Transportation at the Summit this year. Congratulations to Heather Handschin of Spotsylvania County, William Deane from Albemarle

County, and Sharon Moore along with Beverly Young both from Newport News City. Heather Handschin also completed her Special Needs Training Endorsement along with Su Carlson of Loudon County and Ashley Fussell of Virginia Beach. Congratulations to all of you for your effort and dedication to professional growth in the field of pupil transportation.

Barry Sudduth, CDPT, NAPT Region 2 Director



Certification Recipients



Ashley Fussell

## Thomas Bus Announces Children's Choice Drivers of the Year Source: [thomasbus.com](http://thomasbus.com)

Thomas Built Buses has announced the winners of its 2012 Children's Choice Drivers of the Year Award.

They are:

**Winner:** Dawn Lemaster, Lake Orion Community Schools, Lake Orion, Mich.

Lemaster was nominated by Charlotte, a student at Carpenter Elementary. In a 2-page essay about the bus driver, she wrote, "Mrs. Dawn...is the most fun loving, caring and AWESOME bus driver I've ever had!"

Charlotte said that Lemaster plays trivia games and hands out tokens for prizes to the winners. Lemaster also

teaches a bus safety course to little children and keeps a library of books for kids to read.

**Runner Up:** Jim Crockett, Fairfax County Public Schools, Centerville, VA.

Crockett was nominated by Rahul, a sixth grader at Floris Elementary School.

In his essay, Rahul recalls a day when he and some other students boarded the bus nervous about an upcoming test. But when Crockett greeted them with loud enthusiasm, "our spirits rose like a balloon rising in the sky...As long as we were inside of Mr. Crockett's

bus, we were free of any nervousness."

Rahul also wrote that Crockett was "very remarkable" and "always keeps us cheerful," he often asks students about school, initiates conversation, and quizzes them.

"Mr. Crockett doesn't just drive the bus for money," Rahul wrote, "He actually does his job well, by getting kids safely from point A to point B, while at the same time making the ride more fun for everyone, including him."

You can find the complete story at [thomasbus.com](http://thomasbus.com).

## Happenings

Fauquier County Public Schools, Virginia “**Stuffed the Bus**” on Tuesday, Nov. 13 in order to fill the Fauquier Community Food Bank. Eighteen schools and school-division departments **donated 6,750 pounds of food** in the benevolent effort. Two school buses made the rounds that day, one on the northern end of the county and one on the southern end, to collect the food and deliver it to the food bank.



Students came out to load all the food donated from their school onto the bus. Transportation employees were on hand to assist while having a great time. “Getting students involved and building community pride was one of our goals and it seems to have worked” said transportation director Cheryl Fisher. One student at Warrenton Middle School told a staff member, “I feel like I am really helping!”

Stuffing The Bus exceeded our expectations and we hope this will become an annual event in Fauquier County.



## Pupil Transportation Updates

Virginia Department of Education Pupil Transportation Services

### Pupil Transportation Updates

October 17, 2012

#### Regulations:

Approved changes in regulations became effective on September 28, 2012.

These regulations only affect actions and operations forward of September 27, 2012. (Full text can be viewed at <http://www.lis.virginia.gov/000/reg/TOCO8020.HTM#C0070>.)

#### \*\*\*Some notable changes include:

**8VAC20-70-40 Seating** - Removal of the 30 day allowance for standees.

**8VAC20-70-130 Maintenance inspection** - Change in days from 30 to 45 school days and from 2500 to 5000 miles. Change from two inspection forms to single form. At a minimum, vehicles must now have at least an inspection prior to the start of school, one in the first semester, another in the second semester that can be no more than 90 school days apart from the first semester inspection.

**8VAC20-70-140 Crash reporting** - Only crashes that have either injury or \$1500 (up from \$1000) worth of combined damages need be reported. Incidents no longer need to be reported to VDOE. A report of all crashes will be made available to the public at the end of this school year and forward.

**8VAC20-70-230 Required materials** - All vehicles used primarily to transport students to and from school or school-related activities shall carry reflective triangles, first aid kit, body fluid clean-up kit and fire extinguisher.

#### **8VAC20-70-280 Requirements for school bus drivers both for employment and continued employment:**

The physical form has been updated:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/transportation/resources/forms/bus\\_driver\\_physical.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/transportation/resources/forms/bus_driver_physical.pdf)

**8VAC20-70-350 Training** - A clarification of requirements and terms were added.

**8VAC20-70-380 Pre-trip safety inspection** - Procedural changes made. Please see the Preventive Maintenance Manual for Virginia School Buses

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/transportation/school\\_buses/preventive\\_maintenance\\_manual.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/transportation/school_buses/preventive_maintenance_manual.pdf)

**8VAC20-70-411 Driver trainers** - Behind-the-wheel driver trainers must meet the requirements of [8VAC20-70-280](#) and [8VAC20-70-350](#) and must have maintained a Class B license for two years prior to functioning as a behind-the-wheel driver trainer.

#### **Operations Assessments and Important Findings**

Below is a list of notable deficiencies as identified by VDOE during fleet inspections/operations assessments:

1. [Invalid employment agreements or driver contracts](#) - We have found that many school division are still using the old VDOE driver contract forms. This form is out of date and references regulations that are no longer valid. If your current form contains references such as 2.1 or 2.2 for requirements, it is invalid. Please revise your form to convey current standards. [8VAC20-70-50](#).
2. [Traffic Control Plans](#) - [8VAC20-70-160](#). We have found that some school divisions do not have this plan on file. This plan requires a yearly safety evaluation of vehicle travel on school grounds and of loading/

unloading zones for each of a division's schools.

3. [Pupil Rider Safety Training](#) - [8VAC20-70-110](#). Although some divisions will designate teachers to perform this, transportation offices should have a documented account that the requirement has been met. Also transportation should be aware of what safety information is being given and being promoted by the teachers (if they are required to do this task).
4. [Driver training records](#) - [8VAC20-70-350.2](#). Records should show an accumulation of hours totaling at least 24 hours classroom and 24 hours behind-the-wheel with 10 of those hours behind-the-wheel with students. Showing cumulative training time within the training documentation is advised.

#### **School Bus Maintenance**

If you have not already done so, please download and print the latest Preventive Maintenance Manual for Virginia School Buses

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/transportation/school\\_buses/preventive\\_maintenance\\_manual.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/transportation/school_buses/preventive_maintenance_manual.pdf)

Updates continued on page 8



## Pupil Transportation Updates Cont.

Virginia Department of Education Pupil Transportation

The new manual has been heavily revised. Below are a few of the changes. Each maintenance department should thoroughly go through the manual.

- Out of service criteria
- Maintenance cycles
- Service brake adjustments
- Revised Forms (a division may use its own maintenance forms provided those forms, at a minimum, contain the same items)

VDOE's pupil transportation office strongly encourages reports of any safety related mechanical problems on school buses. If your division finds that a particular school bus model or school bus part has consistently failed and thus compromised safety, please inform our offices. Please provide us with the part number, the manufacturer and a description of the failure.

### Transportation Reporting

The deadline for submitting your Pupil transportation report for the 2011-12 school year is November 1, 2012. If

you have questions regarding this procedure please contact us.

Virginia Department of Education  
Pupil Transportation Services  
PO Box 2120  
Richmond, VA 23218-2120  
Office (804)225-2037  
Fax (804)786-9417

## School Bus Drivers in Canada to Test Drunk Driving Technology Source: therecord.com

School bus drivers in Waterloo, Ontario, will be testing a new technology designed to prevent drinking and driving.

The pilot project will outfit three school buses with the technology for a test run that's being hailed as a first for North America.

The project is a partnership between local startups blueRover, a communications company, Sober Steering Sensors Canada and school bus operator Voyageur Transportation.

Sober Steering's sensors can detect if a driver is drinking and, if necessary immobilize a vehicle. The sensors can be adjusted to a desired standard, including zero tolerance for alcohol.

Software developed by blueRover can send that test result via email or text message to the bus driver's supervisor - and even tell them exactly where the vehicle is located.

The equipment is also sensitive enough that it can tell if the driver was drinking the night before, said blueRover chief executive Loreto Saccucci. It also can't be cheated by wearing gloves or using

someone else's hands to get a sober reading.

Perry Ferguson, president of Voyageur Transportation, said he lent several of his school buses for the testing as an extra level of safety for buses. "I don't think (impaired school bus driving) happens very often, I hope never, but it's always good to have a backup in place to ensure the person behind the wheel is not only qualified to drive but able to drive," he said.

Following two recent incidents involving intoxicated school bus drivers, New York State officials are calling for a new law to protect school children from such drivers.

The legislation would require ignition interlocks to be used on school buses as a way to prevent drunk drivers from getting behind the wheel. Ignition interlocks are breath test devices linked to a vehicle's ignition system that prevent it from starting if alcohol is detected on the driver's breath.

"School bus drivers literally hold students' lives in their hands. We have strong laws to hold bus drivers accountable after they have been drinking; now

we need to prevent them from even having the chance to drive drunk behind the wheel of a bus," said State Sen. Charles Fuschillo Jr., who is chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee and who is co-sponsoring the legislation.

In October, a school bus transporting five children crashed into a Syosset home after its driver passed out behind the wheel. The same month, a school bus driver was pulled over on the Long Island Expressway after reports that he was driving with a shredded tire and had trouble controlling the bus. He was found with a half-empty bottle of vodka in the bus and a blood alcohol level of .23 - ten times the legal limit. The driver told police he had just dropped off a group of middle school students.

Under the legislation, all school buses manufactured after July 1, 2013, for use in New York State would have to be equipped with an ignition interlock device. The proposed law would also allow local boards of education to adopt a resolution to install ignition interlocks into schools buses manufacture before July 1, 2013, according to the Long Island herald.

Source: liherald.com, 10/23/12