

The Voice and Vision for Pupil Transportation in Virginia



October

2012

President's Message

Dear VAPT Members:

Pupil Transportation is a dynamic industry. The laws, rules and regulations that guide us are perpetually changing. Best practices are continually refined and updated. We experience daily changes in stops, passengers, roads and conditions. In addition, we must deal with, and sometimes adapt to, the needs and desires of children, parents, school staff, motorists and pedestrians, to name but a few. It is a tremendous asset to have a wonderful organization such as VAPT to assist us in coping with all these issues.

Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation (VAPT) is a premier organization among premier organizations whose stated purposes include promoting pupil transportation at all levels and assisting pupil transportation personnel in advancing their individual professional standards. As such, VAPT is a valuable tool we can each use to gain knowledge and increase our effectiveness at our jobs. Professional growth, as promulgated by VAPT, is key to continued safety for our students and efficiency of our operations.

Along with the Virginia Department of Education, VAPT strives to provide useful and timely information that will help us perform our jobs better. This includes making us aware of new policies, regulations, laws and equipment. VAPT and DOE work to provide us with the most up-to-date training and to keep us abreast of changes in best practices.

As a member of VAPT, each individual plays a key role in its continued success. If you are not already a member, I implore you to become one. Get active; volunteer for a committee; support VAPT functions by your presence and participation. With your assistance, VAPT can continue and improve our service to our membership and the precious cargo we transport.



Kermit Shaffer
VAPT President.

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VAPT Board Members

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NEWS --- Revisions to the Regulations Governing Pupil Transportation were approved by the Governor on July 27, 2012. They will be published in the Virginia Register on August 27, 2012, for a 30-day comment period that will end on September 27, 2012. The revised regulations will become effective on September 28, 2012.

The proposed regulations can be found at the following Web site:

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/transportation/regulations/index.shtml>.

VAPT Partners With DMV In Support of “Troops to Truck”

Press Release

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles has joined with the military and transportation-related businesses to put former servicemen and women and National Guard and Reserve members to work in the transportation industry.

Through Virginia’s first-in-the-nation program, DMV is making it easier for personnel trained by the military to operate heavy vehicles to obtain civilian commercial driver’s licenses.

Partnering with the Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation, Virginia Motorcoach Association and Virginia Trucking Association, DMV also is providing potential transportation-

related employment opportunities for military members after service.

During an initiative held on Friday, September 7th at Estes Trucking Company headquarters in Richmond, DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb explained the state’s new program to an audience of transportation executives, military leaders and government officials, including VAPT President, Kermit Shaffer of Spotsylvania County.

“This is a solution to a problem, that, frankly, Washington has not been able to address adequately,” said Rep. Eric Cantor, R-7th. “If you look at how it is being solved, it is solved through a partnership, through coop-

eration between government and the private sector, and of course, through the willingness, bravery and commitment of our men and women in uniform”.

“It’s just common sense,” said Del. John A. Cox, R– Hanover, who is chairman of Cox Transportation Services Inc. in Ashland, “to make it an easier transition from the military into the private sector”.



Region IV Leadership Academy

The first annual Region IV Pupil Transportation Leadership Academy was held in Loudoun County, Virginia on July 23 - 25, 2012.

The academy was designed to allow school transportation personnel to share ideas and learn about best practices and new technologies in the field.

The training was a combination of round-table discussions and presentations. Topics for discussion were: GPS, State Reporting, Seat Belts, VAPT, Video Systems, Dispatch, Payroll, Field Trips, Routing - General Education and Special Education, Crash Investigation, Drug and Alcohol Testing, Performance Evaluations and much more.

Attendees were treated to breakfast & lunch all three days by our local bus vendors; Sonny Merryman Inc., Kingmor Supply Inc. and Bluebird.

Mr. Alvin Hampton, Loudoun County Transportation Director, and his staff did an outstanding job in putting the academy together as is evident in the following comments from those in attendance:

The first ever Leadership Academy for Transportation, hosted by Loudoun County, was a great success! It is something that should be done every year! I

am already planning to send at least two people next year.

Timothy Guill, Director of Transportation, Manassas City Public Schools

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Hampton and his staff in Loudoun County for the past three days. The Leadership Academy Training was wonderful, it gave me the resources that as a new director I need to be successful.



Throughout the three day sessions we were introduced to a dynamite team that Mr. Hampton has the good fortune to work with each day. We also were introduced to guest speakers that shared with us what is new on the horizon. I think one of the most valuable opportunities of the Leadership Academy was the ability to talk and brainstorm with others. Those who have the same problems, concerns, and positive outlooks as

we do. As a new director the academy offered me the chance to network with veterans in the field. To share thoughts and ask endless questions and get educated answers that have years of experience behind them. I hope the Leadership Academy will be available again next year, it is a valuable resource which I encourage everyone to attend.

Patricia Hurley-Ritmour, Transportation Director, Manassas Park City Schools

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Loudoun County and the many people that worked hard to put together the Leadership Academy. It was a great opportunity to gather with colleagues, meet new people and review topics we all deal with everyday. I am hopeful we can do this again next year; this was great training for the 20+ year vet to the new person on the block finding their way. The networking aspect and how everyone handles the same situations was invaluable. We could have done five days!

Nancy Hendrickson, Transportation Supervisor, Falls Church City Public Schools



Laugh Often - It's Very Important

These are from a book called Disorder in the American Courts and are things people actually said in court, word for word, taken down by court reporters:

Attorney: What is your date of birth?

Witness: July 18th

Attorney: What year?

Witness: Every year!

Attorney: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Witness: Did you actually pass the bar exam??

Attorney: Were you present when your picture was taken?

Witness: Are you kidding me?

Attorney: You had three children, right?

Witness: Yes

Attorney: How many were boys?

Witness: None

Attorney: Were there any girls?

Witness: Your Honor, I think I need a different attorney. Can I get a new attorney?

Attorney: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

Witness: All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.



Williams & Quarta

School Bus Safety Week

The safety and well being of Virginia's school aged children are important to parents, family members, teachers and citizens.

School bus operators transport over 1 million students over 155 million miles throughout Virginia each year.

Student transportation administrators, operators and law enforcement personnel remain diligent in their efforts to ensure the safe and efficient transportation of thousands of students in Virginia on a

daily basis and their efforts are crucial to the operation of our public and private schools.

The highest standards of school bus safety are maintained through rigorous driver training and certification requirements. School buses meet necessary safety requirements and mandatory passenger safety training for students is required.

October 22-26, 2012 is School Bus Safety Week.

Sited: Portions of Certificate of Recognition-Gov. McDonnell

October 25, 2012 is School Bus Transportation Employees Appreciation Day in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Recognize your Transportation Employees-They do a great job!



State Directors: Why We Do It This Way

Source: SchoolBus Fleet Magazine

This is a very interesting article that sheds light on why we do things the way we do.

Visit a school bus manufacturing plant, and you will see that buses bound for different states have a wide variety of different requirements.

Of course, pupil transportation variations from state to state are not limited to bus specifications. States have many unique practices in operations, training, funding and other areas.

In this article some state directors discuss some of their states' specs and procedures that stand out.

Indiana Requires a Bus Buffer Zone:

An innovative safety measure in Indiana keeps students away from the very back of the bus. State director Michael LaRocco says that one of Indiana's school bus specifications is a requirement for a buffer zone behind the back seat.

For Type C and D buses, the spec states, "the distance between the rearmost portion of the seat backs of the rear row of seats and the outside rear of the bus body, measured at the floor line, must

be at least eight (8) inches."

For Type A buses, the distance must be at least 6 inches. LaRocco explains that the measure is to enhance protection for school bus passengers. In the event of another vehicle crashing into the rear of the bus, children sitting in the back seats will be farther away from the point of impact.

Seat Belts Stand Out in Delaware:

It is vital that school bus drivers buckle up - for their own safety as well as their passengers' safety. In Delaware, school bus driver seat belts are spec'd in florescent green or orange.

State director Ron Love says that these conspicuous colors make it easier for supervisors to see that their drivers are wearing their belts.

Delaware's school buses are also equipped with an outside public address (PA) system for important instructions. "The PA is used primarily to communicate to students when to get on the bus and when it is safe for them to cross in front of the bus," Love says.

Missouri Links Funding, Efficiency:

Missouri has an interesting funding formula that is based on efficiency.

State director Roger Dorson explains that the funding formula uses an algebraic equation to compare each school district's bus ridership, miles, days operated and costs to statewide data to determine the efficiency of the district.

"A penalty is applied to the district's transportation calculation if the district is determined to be inefficient," he says.

Also noteworthy: Missouri requires a second stop arm on its school buses, on the left side near the rear. The mandate went into effect for buses manufactured after June 30, 2007.

"There are no stats that display whether it has been effective," Dorson says, "but since the majority of student fatalities occur in the loading and unloading zone, the technical advisory committee for the Missouri Minimum Standards for School Buses determined it was an added safety feature that Missouri should have on our buses."

12 Tips for Effective Special Needs Training

Source: SchoolBus Fleet Magazine



Cheryl Wolf Special-Needs Transportation Specialist with nearly 30 years of experience

Transporting students with disabilities safely is a very complex procedure that requires, by federal guidelines, training for anyone providing the related service.

School bus drivers and attendants need to be trained and qualified in operating equipment, federal and state laws pertaining to transporting students with disabilities, loading and unloading procedures, securing procedures for students using a wheelchair, proper use of child safety restraint systems, behavior management and emergency evacuation - just to name a few.

How do we do this in a time of dwindling budgets and with the many time constraints we are under? There is a need to think of innovative ways to provide ongoing training for our drivers and attendants so they can transport our most vulnerable population in the safest possible manner.

There is a plethora of good training material out there that can be used in many ways, or you can build your own training program. Here are some tips for bolstering special - needs training:

1. To build your own program, Google “transporting students with disabilities,” and you will find many helpful websites that will start you on your quest for training material. For example, the Easter Seals Project Action site provides a list that will guide you to various publications.
2. Many states have their training manuals posted to their websites. These can be used as a starting point to design a training program specific to your operation.
3. Another key resource is the National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures manual, which can be downloaded at www.ncstonline.org.
4. Start with the basics of the federal and state legislation that governs the transportation of students with disabilities and your district policies and procedures. Giving this basic information helps the drivers and attendants understand why it is necessary to do what we do.
5. Identifying the characteristics of different disabilities and how they might impact transportation is also helpful for the drivers and attendants.
6. Equipment training, many times, will be provided by the manufacturer, such as the wheelchair lift and wheelchair securement companies.
7. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has training material for the use of child safety restraint systems on the school bus. Go to www.nhtsa.gov/school-buses.
8. Use local resources within your special-education department to train drivers and attendants in managing student behavior during the bus ride.
9. Involve your local fire department and emergency responders to plan emergency evacuation drills, and help educate them on how a student’s disability might impact how the child would be evacuated.
10. Some other key training topics that need to be incorporated into your training program are confidentiality, student-specific medical conditions, sensitivity training and district-specific policies.
11. All areas of training should be documented when given and put in the drivers’ and attendants’ files.
12. Another important aspect of building a training program is to draw from the knowledge of pupil transportation veterans as well as the new kids on the block. Ask them what they see for the future of special needs transportation and how to prepare and train our drivers for it. There is a wealth of information in our special needs transportation community, and many are more than willing to share.

Happenings

Big things are happening in pupil transportation throughout Virginia. To share your Happenings send your information to Cheryl Fisher at cfisher@fcps1.org.

Isle of Wight County Schools

In March 2012, during Edulog's National Conference and in their monthly newsletter, Edulog's President Jason Corbally, announced an essay contest where Edulog would award winners in two categories.

The first was for the best essay on how Edulog was used to save money and the second was how Edulog was used to provide better customer service.

They received many entries and while many of them were good, their staff felt that Marian Edwards' essay was the best in the cost containment category. As a reward, Marian will be provided with an airline ticket, hotel accommodations, and conference registration to attend our 2013 conference.

Congratulations Marian!



Calvin Bullock,
Director

Marian Edwards,

Katrise Perera,
Superintendent

Meet the VAPT Board Members

In future newsletters we will include a picture and brief bio of the VAPT Board Members. Our first member is Mr. David Pace. He is the VAPT Treasurer and the Transportation Services Director in Virginia Beach City Public Schools.



Education

Bachelor of Science – Guilford College

Master of Education – University of North Carolina Greensboro

Certificate of Advanced Study – Old Dominion University

Doctoral Studies – 30 hours – Virginia Tech

Professional Career

Teacher/Coach – 1973 to 1980

Assistant Principal – 1981 to 1983

Supervisor of Transportation – 1984 to 1986

Director of Transportation – 1987 to present

Also served briefly as the Interim Assistant Superintendent Department of Administrative Support Services.

Civic Activities

Chairman of Pungo Strawberry Festival for 14 years

Member of various committees on City of Virginia Beach school and school bus transportation issues

LYNCHBURG, VA

LCS bus driver Constance Davis has recently received recognition from Virginia Tech for her role the past 16-years in helping low-income and potential first-generation students receive a college education.

One Saturday a month during the entire school year, Davis, or "Ms. Connie" as she's known to the kids, drives a busload of seventh through 12th-grade students from Lynchburg to the campus of Virginia Tech for the Talent Search and Upward Bound program. This is a wonderful opportunity for students who may not go to college without the help of this program.

The visits are considered a field trip, and they are paid for by the program at Virginia Tech. Davis said she's had as many as 21 students on the bus with her, and while she usually has a chaperone, she has never cancelled a trip because a chaperone was unable to attend. She'd simply drive the kids herself. Davis even drove her own daughter in the past when she first took part in this program.

