

Southeastern States Pupil Transportation
Conference (SESPTC)

joint conference with the

Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation (VAPT)

"Moving Forward 2025"



July 7 - 11, 2025

Richmond Marriott Hotel

500 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA

&

Greater Richmond Convention Center

403 North Third St., Richmond,

Virginia (across street from the hotel)

SESPTC Executive Committee

Kevin Harrison, *President*, North Carolina
Janet Clarke, *Vice President*, Arkansas
Alex Spann, *Program Chair*, Tennessee
Mike Bullman, *Secretary*, South Carolina
Heather Handschin, *Historian*, Virginia
Kerry Miller, *Host*, Virginia
Derek Graham, *Treasurer*, North Carolina

SESPTC Conference Coordinators

Crystal Staley, Thomas Built Buses
Exhibit Coordinator

June Eanes, Virginia
Conference Coordinator for Delegates

Jaime Gallego, Texas
Webmaster

VAPT Executive Board

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Deborah Coles, *Vice President*, Louisa County Public Schools
Lewis Armistead, *Secretary*, Salem City Public Schools
Lewis Armistead, *Interim Treasurer*, Salem City Public Schools
Heather Handschin, *Past President*, Prince William County Public
Schools
June Eanes, *Executive Director*, Retired, VA Dept. of Education

State Directors

Alabama	Chad Carpenter
Arkansas	Janet Clarke
Florida	Robert Manspeaker
Georgia	Michael Sanders
Kentucky	Roger Banks
Louisiana	Stephen Guccione
Mississippi	Jonathan Tillman, Sr.
North Carolina	Kevin Harrison
Oklahoma	Mat Luse
South Carolina	Mike Bullman
Tennessee	Alex Spann
Texas	Christie Hebert
Virginia	Kerry Miller
West Virginia	Jimmy Lacy

PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE AT ALL EVENTS AND SESSIONS.

Monday, July 7, 2025

2:00 p.m. **SESPTC and VAPT Executive Board Meeting**
Location: Salon A

3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Delegate Registration**
Location: Upper Level Coatroom

VAPT Shirt Sales
Coordinator: Tanya Deckard, Gloucester
County
Location: Top of Escalator

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. **State Directors' & Executive Boards'
Reception & Dinner**
Sponsored by BusRight
Location: Salons CD

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

***All events at Richmond Marriott except Trade Show which
will be held at Greater Richmond Convention Center.***

7:30 a.m. **Coffee – Grand Ballroom Foyer**

7:45 a.m. Shuttles will load for Technicians'
Competition at the 6th St. Hotel Entrance.

8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Technicians' Competition**
Location: Sonny Merryman, Inc.
11228 Hopson Road
Ashland, VA 23005

7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Delegate Registration**
Location: Upper Level Coatroom

VAPT Shirt Sales

Coordinator: Tanya Deckard, Gloucester
County
Location: Top of Escalator

8:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. **NAPT Course - #203 – Communications Skills
for Transportation Professionals – *This four-
hour course is about how to project self-
confidence, how to recover from mistakes, &
how to get ideas accepted & implemented.
This is an important class for transportation
personnel who want to give quality
presentations, hone communication skills &
enhance their careers.***

Moderator: David Benson, Chesapeake City
Instructor: Sharon Moore, Newport News City
Location: Salons AB

8:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. **Leadership Forum and Team Building**
This session is for directors & association leaders.

Presiding: Kevin Harrison, President, SESPTC
Speaker: Dr. Walter R. Clemons, Retired
Superintendent, Gloucester County Public
Schools, VA
Location: Salons CD

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. **Routing the Impossible: Dispatcher
Playbook for Coverage Strategies**
In a time of ongoing driver shortages & high operational demands, school bus dispatchers are the steady voice behind every successful route. This session plans to empower dispatchers to think outside the box when planning daily coverage, offer creative strategies to fill gaps when substitutes are unavailable & tools to collaborate effectively with routers in advance of known absences. Explore long-term mitigation techniques to reduce the impact of staffing shortages over time, from scheduling adjustments to proactive planning. The course also sharpens dispatcher ability to lead during real-time disruptions – such as weather events or on-road incidents – using calm, clear radio communication & quick problem-solving. Participants will leave with a practical playbook for managing daily uncertainty with confidence, clarity, & control.

Moderator: Nick Nycum, Augusta County
Speakers: Tanya Deckard, Gloucester County
Alex Spann, State Director, TN
Location: Salons GHJJ

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. **Route to Reunification: Transportation in Parent-Student Reunification After School Crises**

This session explores the vital role of school transportation teams in supporting safe & effective parent-student reunification after school emergencies such as active shooter incidents or natural disasters. Participants will learn how to prepare for & respond to crises through transportation-specific protocols, communication strategies, & collaboration with school & emergency personnel. Real-world scenarios & planning tools are included to equip transportation staff with the confidence and skills to act decisively when every minute counts.

Moderator: Erick Childs, Caroline County
Speakers: Tanya Deckard, Gloucester County
Alex Spann, State Director, TN
Location: Salons GHJJ

11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m. **Lunch on your own**

12:30 p.m. **Shuttle Buses leave for Bus Fire Evacuation Exercise**

Buses will load at the 6th St. Hotel Entrance.

- 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Bus Fire Evacuation Exercise**
Safe evacuation simulations aim to minimize panic during an emergency by familiarizing students with the operation and layout of school buses, focusing on the emergency exits & safety features.
Coordinators: Retired Chief Jeff Payne
Richmond City Fire Dept.
Location: Gov. Offices City Fire Training Academy, 5600 Beulah Road, Sandston, VA 23150
- 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **VAPT Business Meeting**
Location: Salons GHIJ
- 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **State Directors' Meeting**
Location: Salons AB

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Breakfast on your own

- 7:30 a.m. **Coffee – Grand Ballroom Foyer**
- 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. **Technicians' Sessions**
Location: Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
- 7:30 a.m. – 12 Noon **Delegate Registration**
Location: Upper Level Coatroom
- VAPT Shirt Sales**
Coordinator: Tanya Deckard, Gloucester County
Location: Top of Escalator

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Opening Ceremonies and Welcome

Presiding: Kevin Harrison, President, SESPTC

Darrin Wills, President, VAPT

Location: Salons EF

Welcome

The Honorable Dr. Danny Avula

Mayor, Richmond, VA

Presentation of Colors

Mechanicsville High School NJROTC

Pledge of Allegiance

Mechanicsville High School NJROTC

Invocation

Dave Preston, Kingmor Supply, Inc.

Roll Call of States

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Partnering for Success: Fostering Open Communications with Special Education Teams (Panel Discussion)

Communication is key for supporting the success of all students, but it is even more important when the students being supported have specific needs. Who is driving the communication bus, is it you or are you just a passenger along for the ride? During the panel discussion, we will discuss the importance of effective communication & information sharing between departments, & how the same opportunity can be viewed from a different lane, depending on the location of your seat.

Moderator: Paul Robertson, Floyd County
Panel: Herbert L. Byrd, Jr., Chesapeake City
Dr. Larry L. Frazier, Jr., West Point
Heather Handschin, Prince William Co.
Jackie Johnson, VA Dept. of ED
Barbara Lancaster, Stafford County
Sharon L. Moore, Newport News City
Location: Salons EF

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Lunch**
Sponsored by BusRight
Location: Salons EF

1:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **NAPT Course - #201 – Business Writing – A**
four hour writing skills workshop, focused on
practical tips to help you write clearly &
professionally. Learn how to present yourself
as a professional in writing to parents,
supervisors, staff, & school boards.
Moderator: Phillip Griffin, Smyth County
Instructor: Beverly Young, Suffolk City
Location: Salons AB

1:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **TSA Pupil Transportation Security**
Workshop
FBI – updates on current multi-state threat
risks; Cyber Security and Infrastructure
Agency (CCISA) – updates on current risks;
Training on basic cyber security beneficial for
drivers through all levels of management; TSA
Field intelligence updates on threat related
information, specifically on transportation.

Moderator: Mike Bullman, State Director, SC
Speaker: William D. Williams, Supervisory
Transportation Security Inspector, U.S.
Department of Homeland Security,
Transportation Security Administration,
Surface Operations Division Region 2
Location: Salons CD

1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**Supporting Students with Diverse Needs:
Tips from the Transportation Playbook**

You've met the team, now it's time for them to open their playbook to share real-life examples & tried & true strategies that will help you prepare to support your students. This will be an interactive workshop with no referees – one person's winner play may be just what you are looking for!

Moderator: Jay Strawser, Nottoway County

Panel: Herbert L. Byrd, Jr., Chesapeake City

Dr. Larry L. Frazier, Jr., West Point

Jackie Johnson, VA Depart. of ED

Barbara Lancaster, Stafford County

Sharon L. Moore, Newport News City

Location: Salons GHJ

2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

**Keep Calm and Evacuate On: Emergency
Exit and Evacuation Planning for Students
with Special Needs**

Bus evacuation training is a part of every driver's annual requirements, & planning for a successful evacuation while transporting students who require additional support while in our care is especially important. During this session we will discuss the

proper methods for preparing for an evacuation drill, & we will go through several mock scenarios to help answer the question: "What if something unexpected happened on my route today, & we needed to exit the bus quickly?" While we can never prepare for every emergency, remaining calm & having an evacuation plan that has been practiced & well communicated are the most important steps for keeping students & staff safe.

Moderator: Deborah Coles, Louisa County

Panel: Herbert L. Byrd, Jr., Chesapeake City

Heather Handschin, Prince William

Jackie Johnson, VA Dept. of ED

Barbara Lancaster, Stafford County

Sharon Moore, Newport News City

Location: Salons GHJ

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

FMCSA – Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (DACH) & Regulatory Updates

Drug and alcohol testing requirements & how to use the DACH.

Moderator: Kerry Miller, State Director, VA

Speaker: Michael J. Lamm, Division

Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Virginia Division

Location: Salons GHJ

6:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Dinner and Entertainment

Sponsored by Thomas Built Buses & Sonny Merryman

The Boathouse at Rocketts Landing

4708 E Old Main St.

Richmond, VA 23231

Shuttles will leave at 5:30 p.m. at 6th Street Hotel Entrance.

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Continental Breakfast in Trade Show Area

8:30 a.m. – 12 Noon

Trade Show

Greater Richmond Convention Center
Coordinator: Crystal Staley, Thomas Built
Buses & Assistant Coordinator: James Lash,
VAPT

Location: Richmond Convention Center
Exhibit Room D

Cash drawings every half hour

11:30 a.m.

**Prize drawings including \$500 grand prize.
Must be present to win.**

12 Noon – 1:15 p.m.

**Box Lunch in Trade Show Area
(Must have a coupon to receive a box
lunch.)**

1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Technicians' Sessions

Location: Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Transportation Security Template Toolkit (T -Start)

*Developing a Pupil Transportation Security
Plan.*

Moderator: Lewis Armistead, Salem City
Speaker: William D. Williams, Supervisory
Transportation Security Inspector, U.S.
Department of Homeland Security,
Transportation Security Administration,
Surface Operations Division Region 2
Location: Salons GHJ

- 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **Illegal Passing of Stopped School Buses**
The problem of illegal passing has been well documented in the industry & the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has taken on a multi-pronged study of school bus illegal passing incidents. This session will dive into the new Planning Safe School Bus Stops toolkit & other project findings thus far & suggest appropriate actions to improve school bus safety.
Moderator: Janet Clarke, State Director, AR
Speaker: Derek Graham, Consultant, DGraham Consulting
Location: Salons ABCD
- 2:45 p.m.– 3:45 p.m. **FMCSA - Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (DACH) & Regulatory Updates**
Drug & alcohol testing requirements & how to use the DACH.
Moderator: Alex Spann, State Director, TN
Speaker: Michael J. Lamm, Division Administrator, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Virginia Division
Location: Salons GHJJ
- 2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. **You Keep Us Rolling! The Critical Role Pupil Transportation Plays for McKinney Vento**
This session will provide highlights regarding the McKinney-Vento federal legislation to support students experiencing homelessness, focusing on why pupil transportation staff are so important to the success of these students & exploring creative ways to address challenges.

Moderator: Deborah Coles, Louisa County
Speaker: Dr. Patricia Popp, William & Mary,
Virginia EHCY State Coordinator
Location: Salons ABCD

6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. **Banquet/Awards Ceremony/Dancing**
(DJ Sponsored by Kingmor Supply, Inc.)
(Drink Tickets provided by Edulog)

Presiding: Kevin Harrison, President, SESPTC
Darrin Wills, President, VAPT

Program:

Poster Contest Winners	Susan Bernstein
Road-e-o Winners	Beverly Young
Scholarship Winners	Heather Handschin
	Dean Farmer
	Derek Graham

BusRight Drawing Announcement

Location: Salons EF

Friday, July 11, 2025

Breakfast on your own

7:30 a.m. **Coffee – Grand Ballroom Foyer**

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **General Session**

**National Association of State Directors of
Pupil Transportation (NASDPTS) and
National Congress on School Transportation
(NCST)**

Speaker: Ronna Weber, Executive Director,
NASDPTS

Panel: Kerry Miller, VA Dept. of Education
Heather Handschin, Prince William
County
Kevin Harrison, State Director, NC
Alex Chandler, Dare Co. Schools, NC
Ronna Weber, Executive Director,
NASDPTS

**National Association for Pupil
Transportation (NAPT)**

Speaker: Alex Spann, State Director, TN

Presiding: Kevin Harrison, President, SESPTC
Location: Salons EF

10:00 am. – 11:00 a.m. **VAPT Business Meeting**
(At conclusion of General Session)

SESPTC Executive Board Business Meeting
Location: Apple Boardroom

Please thank these sponsors for their support!!

State Directors' Dinner & Wednesday Lunch

BusRight



Wednesday Night Dinner & Entertainment

Thomas Built Buses & Sonny Merryman, Inc.



DJ for Banquet & Awards Ceremony

Kingmor Supply, Inc.



Technicians' Sessions Lunch

Blue Bird Bus Sales



Drinks at Banquet

Edulog



The SESPTC & VAPT Executive Committees want to thank the following exhibitors for their support & attendance.

ADROIT

Alan Tye & Associates L.C.

Allied Climate Technology LLC

AlphaRoute

AMF Bruns America

AngelTrax

Assured Specialty Transportation, LLC

Bay Compliance & Testing LLC

Bergstrom Inc.

Blue Bird Bus Sales

Bostech

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Pro-Vision

Q'Straint/Sure-Lok

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REI

RIDE

Safe Fleet/Seon

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Virginia Propane Gas Association

WheresTheBus LLC

World Resources Institute

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BIOS of Speakers

Dr. Danny Avula Mayor of Richmond City

Dr. Danny Avula took office as the 81st Mayor of the City of Richmond on January 1, 2025.

Before being elected Richmond's first immigrant mayor, Danny served the Richmond & Henrico Health Districts for 12 years, including as the Director for six years. There he championed efforts to address maternal & childhood health, access to reproductive care, community safety, & the root causes that shape health outcomes—especially poverty & race. In January 2021, Governor Northam appointed Danny to lead Virginia's COVID-19 vaccination effort. He jump started a struggling vaccine rollout & elevated the Commonwealth from 50th to one of the top 10 most-vaccinated states in the country.

After the pandemic started to recede, Governor Youngkin appointed Danny as Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services in 2022, where he implemented key changes to support families & to create more sustainable pathways out of poverty. He also expanded resources through successful legislative advocacy, began the process of replacing outdated IT systems, & ensured employees statewide had the necessary training to offer responsive, high-quality service.

Danny is a pediatrician and works as a hospitalist at Chippenham Hospital.

Born in Hyderabad, India, he immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1979. A father of five, Danny & his wife, Mary Kay, have lived in Richmond's East End for over 20 years. Mary Kay is a teacher with Richmond Public Schools.

Danny holds degrees from the University of Virginia, VCU, & Johns Hopkins. He was named one of Richmond's "Top Docs" each year from 2013-2022, a Richmond Times-Dispatch Person of the Year in 2019, & Style Weekly's Richmonder of the Year in 2020. In 2017, he won the Dancing With the Richmond Stars contest.

Dr. Walter R. Clemons
Superintendent; Educational Leader,
Advocate for Student Success

Dr. Walter R. Clemons, a veteran educator with 33 years of service, retired as Superintendent of Gloucester County Public Schools on July 1, 2023. Named the 2023 Virginia Superintendent of the Year, Dr. Clemons is recognized for his transformative leadership, commitment to student achievement, & his ability to lead by example, mentor others, & foster growth within the educational community.

Under his leadership, schools ranked in the top 15% of Virginia divisions, with improvements in academic performance, strategic planning, & staff compensation. Dr. Clemons built lasting relationships by encouraging collaboration & empowering individuals to reach their full potential, emphasizing mentorship & professional development as key pillars of his leadership style.

A lifelong educator, he previously served as a teacher, principal, & superintendent in Northampton County. Dr. Clemons holds degrees in Music Education from Norfolk State University, a Certificate in Educational Administration from Old Dominion University, & a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Virginia Tech.

Dr. Clemons has been commended for his involvement in several educational & community organizations, including the Urban Superintendents Association of America & the Norfolk State University School of Business Advisory Board. A life member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., he leaves a legacy of excellence, collaboration, & service.



Floyd Wilson Morris, Jr.

July 28, 1957 - May 31, 2025

Floyd Wilson Morris, Jr., 67, of Mt. Crawford, Virginia passed away on Saturday, May 31, 2025, at the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Born July 28, 1957, in Harrisonburg, he was the son of the late Floyd Wilson "Pete" Sr. and Merriam Allen Morris.

Floyd was raised on a farm in Massanetta Springs and graduated from Montevideo High School. He was devoted to his family and business. In 1987, he founded Kingmor Supply Inc. which later expanded to three locations across the Commonwealth. Some of his interests included boating, camping, motorcycles, ATVs, and hot rods. Floyd was a MOPAR enthusiast who loved to restore classic automobiles. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge.

Surviving are his wife, Brenda J. Morris; a son, Carl Higgins and wife, Jennifer; a daughter, Carrie Dennett and husband, Craig; two sisters, Deloris Ritchie and husband, John and Sandy Morris; six grandchildren, Brooke, Madison, Addison, Justin, Colin, and Lennon.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Bryan Morris, Sr., and sister, Joyce Bowers.

A celebration of life will be conducted at 2 p.m. Saturday, June 7, 2025, at Kyger Funeral Home in Harrisonburg with Pastor Dean Staton officiating. Interment will follow at Eastlawn Memorial Gardens with Masonic Rites by Rockingham Union Lodge No.27.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in his name to a local charity of choice.