

The Voice and Vision for Pupil Transportation in Virginia



July

2012

2012 Pupil Transportation Conference

The 2012 VAPT/VDOE Pupil Transportation Conference took place June 18-21, 2012 at the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center. The golf tournament, school bus rodeo, 2 day technicians' workshops, various informative classes for pupil transporters, the family night dinner, held high on a picturesque mountain top, and the awards banquet & dance on the final evening of the conference all contributed to the highly informative and fun filled four days.

None of this could have been accomplished without the support of our very generous vendors. The trade show is always a highlight of the VAPT conference.

Several new board members and committee members were elected to office during the VAPT business meetings. Kermit Shafer from Spotsylvania County will serve as the new VAPT President and David Pace from Virginia Beach City was elected Treasurer. We want to also thank past president, Dwight Elam for his excellent service to VAPT over the years.

The conference began with two very exceptional speakers. Ms. Alexandra Robinson, M.Ed., CDPT; Executive Director, New York City Schools Transportation gave a very memorable presentation entitled "Why I Bleed Yellow & Why I Love the Bus", while Mr. William Arrington, General Manager, Highway and Motor Carrier Division, Transportation Security Administration brought us back to "Ten Years After the 9/11 Attack" with an update on where America's efforts to improve security are today.

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Alexandra Robinson

William Arrington



Seat Belt Decision

Source: School Bus Fleet July 2012

David Strickland, NHTSA Administrator was interviewed in the July 2012 issue of School Bus Fleet magazine. Following is an excerpt from the main article entitled School Bus Defender.

Seat Belt Decision

NHTSA supported that safety contention last year when the Center of Auto Safety and other entities petitioned the agency to mandate three-point seat belts for all school buses. (They are federally required only on school buses weighing 10,000 pounds or less.)

NHTSA denied the petition, explaining that “for large school buses, we have determined there is not a safety problem warranting national action to require the addition of lap-shoulder belts to these vehicles. Large school buses are very safe due to their greater weight and higher seating

height than most other vehicles, high visibility to motorists, and occupant protection through compartmentalization.

Strickland said that NHTSA is constantly questioned about why it has not required belts on large school buses, but he reaffirmed that “the agency made the right decision in denying that petition.”

The administrator pointed to NHTSA’s analysis of the possible consequences of a national requirement for seat belts on large school buses. It found that such a requirement would increase the cost to purchase and operate the vehicles, which could reduce the overall availability and ridership of school buses..

Under those conditions, the agency estimated that the increased risk from students finding alternative, less-safe

means of getting to and from school could result in an increase of 10 to 19 school transportation fatalities annually.

But Strickland noted that not all school districts and communities are equal—some do have the resources to equip their buses with belts without reducing service. “If there is a community that can afford to maintain their school buses with belts, they are free to do so,” he said. “Because, ultimately, for us the question is safety. We want to keep the biggest number of buses on the road as possible. And we can talk about the margin of improvement after that.”

Portal to Portal Responsibility

Submitted by Fairfax County Transportation Dept.

Confusion arises occasionally regarding the responsibility that schools in Virginia have for students while they are on their way to and from school, sometimes referred to as “portal to portal” responsibility.

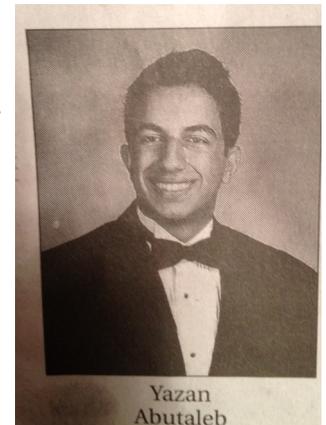
Virginia Code 22.1-78 does authorize School Boards to discipline students for their inappropriate behavior, including when they are going to, and returning from, school. This discipline authority can be imposed if the behavior of students directly impacts the operation of the school, or threatens the safety of other students.

Asserting disciplinary authority over behavior that directly affects the order and welfare of the school and its students is not the same as assuming a general responsibility for supervising students while they are on their way to and

from school. The reason is that there is no statutory requirement, or authority, to supervise generally, and school divisions in Virginia, so far, have not voluntarily undertaken to do so, except in very specific instances, e.g., providing bus transportation to some students. Equally important is the fact that most if not all schools lack the resources that would be necessary to assume this responsibility. This responsibility must fall to parents.

2012 Scholarship Recipients

The 2012 **Clyde W. Morris Memorial Scholarship** in the amount of \$2,500 was awarded to Yazan Abutaleb. Yazan will be attending the University of Virginia this fall majoring in chemical engineering with career aspirations in this field. A graduate of Eastern View High School in Culpeper County, Yazan received all “A” recognition for every academic year since 8th grade. A member of the National Honor Society, the National Society of High School Scholars and his schools' academic team, he completed advance college courses through the Mountain Vista Governor School for Science, Math & Technology. Yazan participated in school soccer and served as captain of the soccer team his sophomore year. Active in a community service group, he has helped raise money for an SPCA, County Library and projects funding kids in Haiti and students in Uganda. His hobbies include playing the guitar and reading.



Virginia's 2012 **Buster Bynum Education Scholarship** in the amount of \$1,000 was awarded to Hanna Amireh of Fairfax County. Hanna has been accepted into Northern Virginia Community College where she plans to begin pursuing a career in the healthcare field. Her goal is to become a physical therapist. A “persevering student”, Hanna was active in school and extra-curricular activities including the Spanish Honor Society (President), national Honor Society, Foreign language Club, Book Club and Key Club. She was involved in a Tae Kwon Do martial arts program (Champion) and participated in Lacrosse. Hanna also plays an active role in her religious community assisting in important events, holiday celebrations and teaching children. She served as an after-school tutor in local middle and elementary schools. “I really strive” says Hanna “to make a difference in the lives of the children I encounter”.

Sonny Merryman Inc. sponsored five Virginia Tech scholarships this year. Five Virginia Tech students with ties to the state's school bus community have been awarded \$2,500 Public Pupil Transportation Scholarships at the university. The scholarships are made possible through an endowment established by longtime university benefactor, F.W. Sonny Merryman, Jr., of Rustburg.

The 2012 scholarship recipients are Rachel Estariz, Ashley Light, Crystal Deputy, William Browning, and Cody Anderson. Estariz is a graduate of Princess Anne High School in Virginia Beach and is a Virginia Tech junior majoring in Communication Studies. Light, an entering Tech freshman from Carroll County High School in Southwest Virginia is a Food Science and Technology major. Deputy, a senior majoring in Natural Resources Conservation, graduated from Turner Ashby High School in Rockingham County. A Tech senior studying Construction Engineering and Management, Browning, attended Menchville High School in Newport News. Anderson is a graduate of Cape Henry Collegiate School in Virginia Beach. She is a Virginia Tech sophomore majoring in Chemical Engineering.

VAPT Hall of Fame 2012

Being inducted into the VAPT Hall of Fame represents the highest honor in school transportation that the VAPT can bestow upon an individual. Nominees must be strong supporters of school bus safety. This year we are very proud to have two inductees to the Hall of Fame.

Our first inductee was born and raised in the Tidewater area and attended school there. He spent much of his life playing softball and coached his children for many years. He is a huge New York Yankees fan. He enjoys going to the Outer Banks with his family.

In the world of pupil transportation, this individual was Superintendent of Traffic for 12 years. He also held the positions of Transportation Supervisor, Senior Director of Transportation and Interim Associate Superintendent of Operations in a local school division. He was President of Safety City from

1980-1995 which provides field trip experience developed for school children to learn about safety, street crossing, school buses, and cars.

As a VAPT member he served as Secretary and rose through the ranks serving as Vice President as well as the first person to serve a two-year term as VAPT President. This individual served as chairman of the Hall of Fame Committee and remains a member of the committee. He continues to chair the Site Selection committee. He has worked many hours in negotiating reasonable conference rates for attendees.

At the national level, he served as the Region II Director of NAPT. He served as Virginia delegate to the National Standards Conference held in Warrensburg, Missouri and the Southeastern States Pupil Transportation Conference.

He has served as Chairman of the Frank Sellw Scholarship Auction, has been President of Pleasant Point Civic League since 2009; served as Chairman of the board at Faith Wesleyan Church, and was a choir member from 2000-2010. He served on the Harborfest Executive committee from 1990-2005 being responsible for all transportation and road closures. He is a lifetime member of the PTA and past member of the Optimist Club of Norfolk. He was selected Norfolk Public Schools Administrator of the year in 2000. Currently he holds the position of Senior Director of Planning.

Please join us in congratulating our 2012 inductee into the VAPT Hall of Fame—Mr. John W. Hazelette from Norfolk City Public Schools.



VAPT Hall of Fame cont.

Our second Hall of Fame inductee began his service in the local school division as a teacher and coach. He has served as Assistant Principle, Supervisor of Transportation and Director of Transportation. He served briefly as the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Administration Support Services. While overseeing the third largest school bus fleet in Virginia, he has advocated for and received funding to take advantage of safety technology on school buses, including two way radios, video cameras, and GPS.

Insuring that school bus drivers are ready to transport children, he implemented a mandatory Driver Awareness Training for any bus drivers charged with a preventable accident, a 3-D Driving Training Program for drivers convicted of a moving violation in either a school bus or their personal vehicle. He implemented a school bus driver incentive program to improve driver attendance by providing drivers with \$125 per nine weeks period if they do not use a sick day. He believes that recognizing school bus drivers for the

job they do is important, and began a recognition program and driver appreciation days.

A Transportation Advisory Committee was initiated that meets regularly to discuss transportation issues and make recommendations for improvement of the department and safety concerns. This committee is comprised of parents, school administrators and community leaders.

In working with the Sheriff's Department, a partnership program was initiated to offer a school bus wash program utilizing jail inmates. This has resulted in a significant savings of taxpayer dollars.

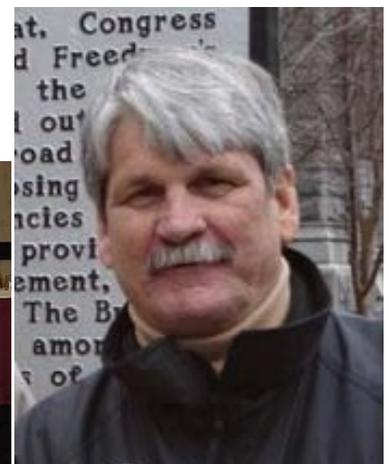
A new Platinum LEED transportation facility opened in March, 2011. This was due to lobbying by this individual and the receiving of CIP funding to replace old and deteriorating pupil transportation facilities. The school division received several grants to fund CNG buses and retrofit buses, as well as funding for a safe routes to school project.

He has been a VAPT member since 1984 serving in various positions. He has served as President for two terms, and serves as the IRS contact and submits the VAPT tax requirements annually. He revised the VAPT constitution and by-laws to include additional sections.

He has been a member of NAPT since 1986 and has attended these annual conferences. He served on the NAPT review team to assist in the development of anti-bullying training modules by the US Department of Education. He was named the NAPT Transportation Administrator of the year in 2009.

He has been a delegate to the Southeastern States Pupil Transportation Conference. He serves on the DOE Technical Advisory Committee, and successfully coordinated the first "Love the Bus" rally held at the Virginia State Capitol in February 2012.

Please join us in congratulating our second 2012 inductee into the VAPT Hall of Fame—Mr. David Pace.



Virginia Operation Lifesaver, Inc.

Virginia Operation Lifesaver and Norfolk Southern Corp. hosted Operation Lifesaver Train on May 23, 2012. Pupil Transportation representatives from all over Northern Virginia were invited to ride the Life Saver train on the route from Manassas to Front Royal and back.

Motor vehicle-train collisions and incidents involving trespassers are all too frequent, yet entirely preventable. This "Education and Enforcement Train" featured video monitors linked to a camera on the lead locomotive which allowed passengers to have an "engineer's eye view" and to see first hand how often motorists and trespassers risk

their lives by trying to beat the train or failing to comply with advance warning devices.

Mr. Melvin Jones, our state coordinator provided us with many examples and statistics specifically geared to school buses and rail road tracks. Mr. Jones and his co-workers are available to speak at Transportation In-Service Meetings and can be reached at va-operation-lifesaver@att.net



Happenings

Retiring this year, after serving many years as Transportation Directors, we say good-bye to Mr. Charles Puglisi, Frederick County Public Schools Transportation and Mr. Fred Rankin, Culpeper County Public Schools Transportation. We wish them well in their retirement with many more years of relaxation and less stress!

Replacements for these two positions have been hired. Please welcome to our Transportation Team Mr. John Grubbs—Frederick County and Mr. John Walsh—Culpeper County.

Hanover County Public Schools Transportation Department held their Annual Safe Driving and Awards Banquet at Atlee High School on May 23, 2012. During the event, nearly 200 school bus drivers and car drivers received recognition for safe driving practices throughout their career with Hanover County Public Schools.

The transportation department has been participating in the Department of Education’s “Virginia School Bus Driving

Award Program” for the past 30 years. Participation in this program requires drivers to operate a school bus 80 percent of the regular school year and to operate the vehicle without a preventable school bus collision or a proven violation of safe driving practices.

Josephine Battenfield, a bus driver with 37 years of service, was named the Transportation Department Support Employee of the Year. Dr. Steve Trexler, principal of The Georgetown School, made a special presentation to Heather Loving as the Georgetown School Support Employee of the Year. Loving has five years of service in the transportation department with Hanover County Public Schools.

The winners of the local Hanover County School Bus Road-E-O were also recognized during the banquet. The School Bus Road-E-O is a competition that shows off bus driver’s skills through obstacles and situations drivers may encounter while trans-

porting students.

Local winners in Hanover County this year are:

Conventional

- 1st Place-Beverly Hall
- 2nd Place-Susan McIntyre
- 3rd Place-Greg Dean

Transit

- 1st Place-Jennifer Maxwell
- 2nd Place-Lynda Orndorff
- 3rd Place-Randall Wyatt

Special Needs

- 1st Place-Heather Loving
- Attendant-Paula Hutto

Pictures from Hanover County



VAPT Poster Contest Winners 2012

The purpose of this contest is to deliver important school bus safety messages through art. Each year, schools are encouraged to participate in this contest by having students who are enrolled in art classes prepare posters depicting a specific message. This

year the message was **Stand Back from the Yellow and Black.**

Posters will now go on to the National level.

1st Place Winners received \$100.00,
2nd Place Winners received \$75.00
and 3rd Place Winners received \$50.00.

Division K-2

1st Place	Mulan Zeng	Prince William County	Pennington Elem.
2nd Place	Ryan Kiefer	Fairfax County	Fort Hunt Elem.
3rd Place	Sydney Ashworth	Fairfax County	Fort Hunt Elem.

Division 3-5

1st Place	Katie Hackney	Russell County	Elk Garden Elem.
2nd Place	Claire Holmes	Clarke County	Boyce Elem.
3rd Place	Mary Russman	Clarke County	Boyce Elem.

Division 6-8

1st Place	Virginia Walker	Fairfax County	Fort Hunt Elem.
2nd Place	Jailene Acevedo	Fairfax County	Fort Hunt Elem.
3rd Place	Gracie Hecker	Fairfax County	Fort Hunt Elem.

Division (4)

1st Place	Kendra Diggs	Surrey County	Surrey County H.S.
2nd Place	Francis Dildy	Surrey County	Surrey County H.S.
3rd Place	Cornelius Shears	Surrey County	Surrey County H.S.

Division (Cad)

1st Place	Adam Quick	Goochland County	Goochland H.S.
2nd Place	Hannah Carter	Goochland County	Goochland H.S.
3rd Place	Timothy McLaughlin	Goochland County	Goochland H.S.

We Need You!

VAPT is always looking for articles for the VAPT Newsletter. My goal will be to provide a newsletter every three months. Please submit your articles by the 15th of the previous month to Cheryl Fisher at cfisher@fcps1.org Our next newsletter should be ready in October so please send your articles by September 15th. Thank You!

Eye on Technology: Forward Collision Warning Systems

Source: School Trans. Director Newsletter; fmcsa.dot.gov

The fatal crash of two school buses, a tractor trailer and a pickup truck that occurred in Gray Summit, Mo. in April 2010 was the result of several factors, concluded a report by the National Transportation Safety Board last month. Texting at the wheel by the pickup truck driver, as well as inattentiveness by one school bus driver, and following at an unsafe distance by the other contributed to the accident, which killed the driver of the pickup, and a student on one of the buses.

But the report by the NTSB noted also that the crash could have been less severe had the two buses been equipped with forward collision warning systems.

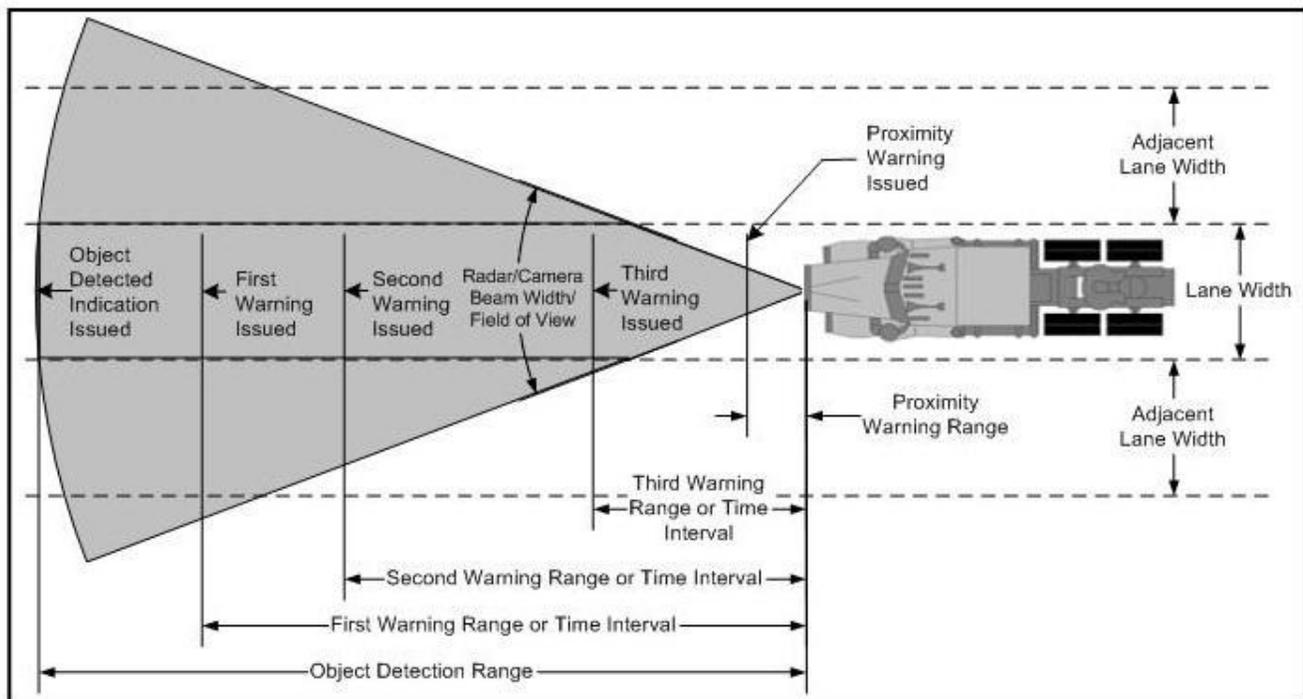
Through radars, laser sensors, cameras and onboard computers, these in-vehicle electronic systems warn the driver of a potential accident and better prepare the car and occupants for a collision.

Depending on the system, they may issue a warning to the driver, pre-charge the brakes, inflate seats for extra support, move the passenger seat, position head rests to avoid whip lash, tension seat belts and automatically apply partial or full braking to minimize impact.

The technology is becoming more readily available, though it has yet to be applied on school buses. Most commercial fleets are equipped with the warning systems and luxury car

manufacturers like BMW and Acura began including the technology in some of its models several years ago. Now, lower-priced cars like Ford are also beginning to include forward collision warning systems.

What are your thoughts, is the big yellow school bus headed in this direction?



2012 VAPT School Bus ROADEO Winners

Participants, judges and spectators all endured the heat and humidity to make the 2012 VAPT School Bus Roadeo a complete success.

The roadeo was held at Northside Middle School and a delicious bar-b-que lunch was provided by Virginia Truck Center.

Winners:

Conventional Buses:

1st Place - Tom Pittman, Virginia Beach

2nd Place - Mike Burroughs, Montgomery County

3rd Place - Ralph Crockett, York County.

Transit Buses:

1st Place - Josh Simpkins, Montgomery County

2nd Place - Jeff Long, Newport News

3rd Place - Karen Randolph, Richmond City

Special Needs:

1st Place - Russell Altizer, Montgomery County

2nd Place - Marie Ferguson, Chesterfield County

3rd Place - Elmer Bishop, Roanoke City

