

# Overview

## School Transportation

In this section of the Education Toolkit, you will find helpful information and resources concerning school transportation for both special education and general education students in the District of Columbia and in Maryland. You will discover how students typically get to school and how to get additional transportation services if the typical routes are not appropriate for your student. In addition to the Children's Law Center Tip Sheet on Transportation, you will also find the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and Prince George's County Public Schools transportation policies.

This section also references students who may qualify for transportation under the McKinney-Vento Act and Fostering Connections Act. If you have specific questions about these Acts and their effect on your student, please see the School Stability and School Transfers sections of this Education Toolkit.

# CLC Tip Sheet

## School Transportation

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

#### How Do Children Get to Public Schools and Charter Schools in DC?

- Walk—generally there are no school buses provided for students attending school in DC.
- Public Transportation—students in DC are eligible for the School Transit Subsidy Program, administered through the DC ONE card. Information about this program can be found at: <http://ddot.dc.gov/page/school-transit-subsidy-program>
- School Buses—students who are in special education AND the IEP team determines that the child needs transportation, either because of the child’s particular disability or because the child has been placed at a school other than their neighborhood school, will receive school bus transportation.

#### If A Child is Unable to Walk or Take Public Transportation to School, What Can You Do?

If the child is eligible for special education:

- First, determine if the child’s IEP includes transportation services.
- If the IEP does not include transportation and you think it should, request an IEP meeting to amend the IEP.
- Children in special education can be bused to public schools, charter schools, or non-public schools.

If the child is not eligible for special education or the IEP team has determined that transportation services should not be included in the IEP:

- Determine if the child qualifies under the McKinney-Vento Act and seek transportation services via that entitlement.
- Work with the child’s family to identify other transportation resources (*e.g.*, neighbors, other family members, etc.)
- If the child is a ward of the District of Columbia, you can seek transportation services through CFSA via the Fostering Connections Act, in limited cases. This can include students who are placed in a foster home in Maryland but continue to attend school in DC.

#### If a Child Needs to Have DCPS Special Education Transportation Services Set Up for the First Time, or Needs to Have a Bus Route Changed, What Can You Do?

- Contact the local education agency (“LEA”) representative at your child’s school and request the change.
- Follow up with the transportation office to ensure the child is routed on a bus and find out the child’s pick-up and drop-off time. To do this, call the Parent Resource Center Call number: 202-576-5000.

## What Do I Do if I Run Into Problems with Transportation in DC?

- Call the Parent Call Center: (202) 576-5000. They can tell you what bus route a child is on and the times and addresses for pick-up and drop-off. They can also tell you the status of a particular bus route where it is, if it's on time, etc.) on a particular day.
- Complaints: Call the Complaint Line at (202) 576-6860.
- The Transportation Handbook for Parents and Guardians of Special Education Students can be found at: [http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/Parent%20HandBook\\_Interactive\\_03.11.14\\_10AM.pdf](http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/Parent%20HandBook_Interactive_03.11.14_10AM.pdf)

## Important Transportation Changes to Note!

- In 2012, the *Petties* lawsuit was dismissed.
- The Division of Student Transportation has issued a policy that a school bus must pick up and drop off children at the same location. If other arrangements must be made, you should contact the Parent Call Center.

## Maryland

### How Do Children Get to Public School in Maryland?

- School Buses—each county in Maryland provides school buses for students to ride to and from their neighborhood school unless the student lives within walking distance of the school.
- Walk—students may walk to their school, if they live within walking distance.
- Public Transportation—students may ride public transportation if they choose; however, the school does not provide funding for this type of transportation.

### What if Your Student is Not Attending His Neighborhood School?

If the child is placed in another school due to their special education needs:

- The county will provide transportation to the student; contact the special education coordinator at the child's school to set up bus transportation.

If the child is attending another school under the McKinney-Vento Act:

- The county will provide transportation to the student; you should contact the Homeless Education Office in the child's county to set up bus transportation.

If the child is attending another school under COMAR 07.02.11.12:

- The student may ride any county school bus which is routed to their current school; however, the county will not route a bus specifically for the student.

### What Can I Do if I Run Into Problems with Transportation in Maryland?

- Contact the transportation office for the child's county of attendance.
  - Prince George's County: 301-952-6570




NOVEMBER 6, 2013

ACTION REQUIRED  
 INFORMATIONAL

**TO:** Local Educational Agencies  
Public Agencies (providing educational services to children with disabilities)

**CC:** Public Charter School Board  
Deputy Mayor of Education

**FROM:** Jesús Aguirre, Acting State Superintendent of Education 

**RE:** Special Education Transportation Services Policy

**CONTACTS:** Grace Chien, Director of Policy  
Division of Specialized Education  
Grace.Chien@dc.gov  
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AND

Ryan Solchenberger, Director of Transportation  
Division of Transportation  
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#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Memorandum is to establish a uniform system of standards and procedures for special education transportation services in the District of Columbia that is consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirement to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities. This purpose is accomplished through:

- Establishing state-level criteria that assist Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams in making appropriate eligibility decisions.
- Clarifying local education agency (LEA) responsibilities, and establishing documentation and procedural requirements that enable timely coordination between LEAs and OSSE's Division of Transportation (OSSE-DOT).
- Establishing a bi-annual LEA certification requirement that enables OSSE-DOT to prepare for the provision of extended school year (ESY) related transportation services during the summer months and special education transportation services at the start of each school year.





It is the expectation of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) that all LEAs adhere to this Policy. OSSE-DOT shall provide special education transportation services to students with disabilities when transportation is appropriately identified and documented on an IEP as a related service under the IDEA. With the exception of the pick-up and drop-off residency address requirement, this Policy is effective as of January 6, 2014. The pick-up and drop-off residency address requirement will become effective at the start of the 2014-2015 school year.

### **MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires that every state education agency (SEA) monitor local educational agencies (LEAs) to ensure compliance with Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A finding of LEA noncompliance by OSSE will result in corrective actions for each area of noncompliance and may result in the requirement to submit an improvement plan. OSSE may also recommend or require training and technical assistance for LEA staff when crafting corrective actions. All items of noncompliance shall, by federal law, be corrected within one year of the finding; sustained noncompliance by an LEA may result in sanctions that include potential withholding of Part B grant funding.<sup>1</sup> Consistent with the IDEA and its regulatory framework, all LEAs shall comply with monitoring requirements established annually by OSSE, which include the collection and submission of both quantitative and qualitative data that support monitoring for regulatory compliance and programmatic quality. Additionally, a subset of LEAs will be selected for OSSE's annual monitoring process. OSSE, in its role as SEA, ensures FAPE by meeting with other public agencies providing education services to children with disabilities to review and discuss the delivery of special education services. If any noncompliance is identified during OSSE's review, the public agency will be asked to take corrective action, as appropriate.

### **DEFINITION OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

In the context of special education, *transportation* is a related service<sup>2</sup> that includes: travel to and from school and between schools; travel in and around school buildings; and specialized equipment such as special or adapted vehicles,<sup>3</sup> lifts, and ramps, if they are required to provide transportation for a student with a disability.<sup>4</sup> Special education transportation services shall be provided in accordance with a student's IEP, and at no cost to the parents of a student.<sup>5</sup>

### **ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

It is the responsibility of the IEP Team to determine, on an individual basis, whether transportation is required to assist a student with a disability with accessing special education and related services, and if so, how the transportation services should be implemented. The intent behind special education transportation services is to ensure that children with disabilities receive transportation when it is necessary to enable the child to receive FAPE. It is inappropriate for IEP Teams to designate special education transportation services for the primary purpose of facilitating daily attendance or mitigating

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<sup>1</sup> 34 C.F.R. §300.600(a)(3)

<sup>2</sup> Related services means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education. 34 C.F.R. §300.34(a)

<sup>3</sup> The IDEA does not require transportation on special or adapted buses for all students with disabilities who are eligible to receive transportation. The use of special or adapted buses is only required where specified by the IEP Team. See 71 Fed. Reg. 46,576 (Aug. 14, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> 34 C.F.R. §300.34(c)(16)

<sup>5</sup> 34 C.F.R. §300.34(a); 20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(1)(A); 34 C.F.R. §300.101



the increased distance between a student's residence and a school location which results from non-FAPE related parent choice/enrollment decisions.

OSSE has established the following eligibility categories that IEP Teams shall use in making special education transportation eligibility determinations and supporting related services designations. An IEP Team shall find that a student meets the requirements under at least one eligibility category before determining that the student is eligible to receive special education transportation services. LEAs have the duty to reevaluate and document a student's changing needs over time.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the IEP Team shall review and determine a student's need for special education transportation at least once annually as part of the IEP process.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Eligibility Category 1: Medically Fragile Students (MFS) Requiring Transportation to Access FAPE**

Medically fragile students may be eligible for special education transportation services. In the context of special education transportation services, the term *medically fragile* applies to students who cannot travel safely without a specialized or adapted vehicle due to a documented medical condition.<sup>8</sup> In the context of special education transportation services, the term *specialized or adapted vehicle* refers to a vehicle that has specialized equipment such as a specialized seat or seatbelt, positioning device, or wheelchair lift/ramp. OSSE-DOT is responsible for providing specialized equipment when such equipment is deemed necessary by a student's IEP Team. OSSE-DOT is not responsible for providing assistive devices (e.g. wheel chairs, crutches, walkers), which constitute personal equipment belonging to the student. (More information on assistive devices is provided on page 8 of this Policy.)

Not all students with medical conditions are eligible for special education transportation services under the MFS category. To determine if a student is eligible for special education transportation services under the MFS category, the IEP Team shall review the student's medical history to consider any data that substantiates the existence of a chronic or persistent medical condition. An IEP Team that finds evidence of a documented chronic or persistent medical condition shall assess the impact of the medical condition on the student's ability to travel safely without a specialized or adapted vehicle or specialized medical equipment. IEP Teams should consider factors such as:

- The severity of the student's medical condition (*i.e.* Does the student's medical condition require constant monitoring?);
- The student's reliance on specialized medical equipment that is not readily transportable in a standard or non-adapted vehicle (*e.g.* oxygen delivery device, tracheotomy tube, feeding tube);
- The student's need for health-related services (*e.g.* health-related assistance from an aide, nursing services);
- The student's mode of transportation outside of school (*i.e.* Does the student travel safely in standard/non-adapted vehicles or access public transportation during week nights or weekends?); and

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<sup>6</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.301 and 300.303

<sup>7</sup> 34 C.F.R. §300.324(b)

<sup>8</sup> Distance is not an appropriate factor of consideration under the Medically Fragile Student (MFS) eligibility category.





- The restrictiveness of student activity during the school day (*i.e.* Is it safe for the student to participate in common physical activities during recess or physical education without specialized equipment or the aid of additional school personnel?).

Students who do not have a chronic or persistent medical condition, or who have a medical condition that does not prevent the student from traveling safely in a standard or non-adapted vehicle, are not eligible for special education transportation services under the MFS category.

An IEP Team that determines that a student is eligible for special education transportation services under the MFS category shall provide a written justification for its determination using the appropriate eligibility worksheet in SEDS, indicate its decision in the student's IEP, and substantiate its decision by obtaining a physician's note or by reviewing current medical evaluation data from the past year. The IEP Team shall also determine if the student requires specialized equipment on the OSSE-DOT vehicle and/or any additional supporting related services (*e.g.* health services, aide assistance) on a case-by-case basis, and shall similarly document the need for such equipment and/or services by obtaining a physician's note or by reviewing current medical evaluation data from the past year and providing a written justification for the IEP Team's decision. The IEP Team must designate any specialized equipment and/or supporting related services in the student's IEP. The LEA shall upload all documentation into the Special Education Data System (SEDS) and the Transportation Online Tool for Education (TOTE), as appropriate, within five (5) business days of the eligibility determination.

In assessing students under the MFS category, the IEP Team should consider whether it is appropriate to transport the student at all. Although uncommon, it is possible that a student's medical condition is so severe that he or she cannot be transported without presenting a serious risk to his or her personal health and safety. Under such circumstances, it may not be appropriate to provide services in a traditional school setting, but rather the student may need to receive services at the family's home, a hospital, or some other facility. In these cases, an IEP Team may determine that the family's home, a hospital, or other facility is the appropriate least restrictive environment (LRE) for a student.

#### **Eligibility Category 2: Students Requiring Structured Transportation Supports (STS) to Access FAPE**

Students with intellectual/cognitive, emotional, sensory/communication, or physical needs significant enough to prevent safe travel without structured transportation supports may be eligible for special education transportation services. The phrase *structured transportation supports* refers to a non-medical accommodation and/or form of assistance that addresses safety concerns such as unsafe behavior, compromised decision-making, or impaired navigation resulting from the child's disability.<sup>9</sup>

To determine whether a student is eligible for special education transportation services under the STS category, the IEP Team shall review the student's most recent functional assessment and evaluation data. An IEP Team that finds evidence of documented intellectual/cognitive, emotional, sensory/communication, or physical needs, related to disability, shall assess the impact that the disability has on the student's ability to travel safely without structured transportation supports. The IEP Team should consider factors such as:

- The severity of the student's disability (*i.e.* Does the manifestation of the student's disability require constant supervision?);

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<sup>9</sup> Distance is not an appropriate factor of consideration under the Structured Transportation Supports (STS) eligibility category.





- The student’s documented deficit in assessing risk or advocating for personal safety;
- The student’s behavior as it relates to any history of the student being dangerous to self or others;
- The student’s ability to understand cues and instructions (*e.g.* ability to understand street signs/signals or navigate an established route); and
- The student’s need for structured transportation supports during travel outside of school (*i.e.* Does the student travel safely without structured transportation supports during week nights or weekends?).

A student who has a disability that does not prevent the student from traveling safely without structured transportation supports is not eligible for special education transportation services under the STS category. An IEP Team that determines that a student is eligible for special education transportation services under the STS category shall provide a written justification for its determination using the appropriate eligibility worksheet in SEDS, indicate its decision in the student’s IEP, and substantiate its decision by obtaining a note from an appropriate evaluator or summarizing the nature of the student’s disability that warrants the eligibility determination. The IEP Team shall also determine if the student requires specialized equipment on the OSSE-DOT vehicle and/or any additional supporting related services (*e.g.* aide assistance) on a case-by-case basis, and shall similarly document the need for such equipment and/or services by obtaining an evaluator’s note or by reviewing current evaluation data from the past year<sup>10</sup> and providing a written justification for the IEP Team’s decision. The IEP Team must designate any specialized equipment and/or supporting related services in the student’s IEP. The LEA shall upload all documentation into SEDS and TOTE, as appropriate, within five (5) business days of the eligibility determination.

### **Eligibility Category 3: Students Accessing Specialized Program (ASP) to Access FAPE**

Students, who are not eligible under the MFS or STS categories, may be eligible for special education transportation services if they are traveling to a school site for the purpose of accessing a specialized program due to an IEP Team placement decision. Students who elect to attend a school or program for non-FAPE related reasons (*e.g.* parent’s school of choice, out of boundary lottery) are not eligible for special education transportation services under the ASP category. District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is responsible for providing transportation to parentally-placed private school students receiving equitable services.<sup>11</sup>

The term *specialized program* refers to a special education instructional setting, within an LEA or nonpublic school, in which the student is instructed apart from the general education population for the majority of the school day (*e.g.* separate special education classroom, separate school designed specifically for students with disabilities). To determine eligibility under the ASP category, the IEP Team shall review the student’s special education record to ascertain whether the student’s current program is a specialized program that an IEP Team has determined is the appropriate least restrictive environment (LRE) for the student, as evidenced by prior written notice (PWN) documenting the change in placement.<sup>12</sup> An IEP Team that determines that a student is eligible for special education transportation services under the ASP category shall provide a written justification for its determination

<sup>10</sup> IEP Teams do not need to order a new evaluation if current evaluation data exists in the student’s record that can be accurately summarized.

<sup>11</sup> 34 C.F.R. §300.139(b); 71 Fed. Reg. 46,596

<sup>12</sup> Nonpublic placements should be located as close as possible to the student’s home residence. 34 C.F.R. §300.116(b)(3)







using the appropriate eligibility worksheet in SEDS, indicate its decision in the student's IEP, and substantiate its decision by uploading the applicable PWN. The LEA shall upload the PWN and, in the case of placement into a nonpublic program, the OSSE location assignment, into SEDS and TOTE, as appropriate, within five (5) business days of the eligibility determination.

Students eligible for special education transportation under the ASP category, who are over the age of twelve (12) years old, generally are not transported on an OSSE-DOT vehicle and will instead receive Metro fare cards for public transportation (rail or bus). An IEP Team may, however, determine that public transportation is not appropriate due to safety concerns or lack of feasible public transit options. An IEP Team that determines that public transportation is not appropriate for a student over the age of twelve (12) years old, eligible under the ASP category, shall justify in writing the need for OSSE-DOT transport.

### **TRAVEL TRAINING**

*Travel training* is specialized instruction<sup>13</sup> that enables students with disabilities who require this instruction to develop an awareness of the environment in which they live and to learn the skills necessary to move effectively and safely from place to place within that environment.<sup>14</sup> Both special education transportation and travel training are important services that IEP Teams shall consider when they plan for a student's postsecondary transition needs. IEP Teams must formally consider a student's secondary transition needs when the student turns sixteen (16) years old, or younger, if determined appropriate.<sup>15</sup> LEAs are responsible for providing travel training to a student as a part of FAPE if such services are designated on the IEP.

### **ORDERED TRANSPORTATION**

**Court Ordered/IDEA Hearing Officer Determinations (HODs).** Special education transportation services that have been ordered by a District of Columbia court, a federal court, or by a hearing officer in an administrative due process case (HOD) fall outside of OSSE's eligibility category framework. Under these circumstances, an IEP Team is required to document in the student's IEP that the student qualifies for special education services through a court order or HOD. The order or HOD must be uploaded to SEDS to fulfill the documentation requirement. Once the court order or HOD expires or ceases to be in effect, an IEP Team shall use OSSE's eligibility determination framework to consider student eligibility for special education transportation services. LEAs are responsible for monitoring court orders and HODs to ensure that a valid court order, HOD, or IEP Team eligibility determination is in effect at all times. If the court order or HOD does not include effective dates or indicate the duration of time for which special education transportation services are ordered, an IEP Team's responsibility to review and determine eligibility for special education transportation services on an annual basis shall resume after one full year of court order/HOD implementation. LEAs are responsible for reimbursement costs related to the provision of special education transportation services that arise out of court orders or HODs that determine that the LEA has failed in its obligation to provide FAPE. If a court order or HOD finds that the student has been denied FAPE by the LEA which is attributable to a failure by OSSE-DOT to provide special education transportation services in accordance with the student's IEP, OSSE-DOT will be responsible for reimbursing the transportation costs in accordance with the order or HOD.

<sup>13</sup> Transportation is included as a related service under the IDEA regulations in 34 CFR §300.34(a) and (c)(16). Travel training is included in the definition of special education in 34 CFR §300.39(a)(2)(ii), and is specifically defined in §300.39(b)(4). Travel training is not a related service.

<sup>14</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§300.39(a)(2)(ii) and 300.39(b)(4)

<sup>15</sup> 34 C.F.R. §§300.320(b) and 300.43(a)(1)





**Settlement Agreements.** LEAs must include OSSE-DOT in all settlement agreement meetings that involve potential designation of special education transportation services. LEAs are responsible for costs related to the provision of special education transportation services agreed to by the LEA without input or approval by OSSE-DOT. LEAs will be invoiced for the costs of transportation arising out of settlement agreements which have been entered into by the LEA without OSSE-DOT's written consent. Any designation of special education transportation services that arise out of a settlement agreement must be based upon a determination that the eligibility criteria set forth in this Policy are met. In cases in which the Parties agree that parents should be reimbursed for special education transportation costs related to an LEA's violation of FAPE, LEAs are responsible for these reimbursement costs.

#### **APPROPRIATE DISCONTINUATION OF TRANSPORT**

**Health and Safety.** OSSE-DOT personnel will utilize lifts, ramps, or other mechanized equipment to assist students with wheelchairs. Drivers and attendants are not responsible for providing physical assistance to student passengers other than providing occasional non-intrusive assistance that does not require lifting or carrying the student. OSSE-DOT retains the right to assess a student's condition to determine whether the student can be transported safely. OSSE-DOT reserves the right to refuse to transport a student on the basis of health and/or safety concerns. In such cases, OSSE-DOT shall provide same-day written notification to the parent and LEA with information regarding the basis of its refusal to transport. Upon notification, LEAs have the obligation to reconvene the student's IEP Team to discuss and address the health and/or safety concerns. LEAs will be responsible for providing alternative instructional options in the interim period before the IEP Team reconsiders the student's needs.

**Chronic Student Absence from the Bus.** To effectively provide special education transportation services, OSSE-DOT relies upon student data from LEAs and reviews data regarding student rider attendance on the bus. After three (3) consecutive school days of student absence from the bus, OSSE-DOT will contact the LEA and parents in writing and request information regarding the student's absence. The requested information shall include, as appropriate, an explanation for student rider absence, and any appropriate updated information including any change in the parents' and students' contact information and address. In such cases, LEAs are responsible for communicating with parents to resolve student rider absence issues and, if appropriate, convene the student's IEP Team to discuss and address any absence/truancy or related service concerns. After seven (7) consecutive school days of student absence from the bus, and does not receive a sufficient reason for continuing daily transportation in light of the student's absence, OSSE-DOT shall send to the LEA and parents a written notification of its intent to cease special education transportation services including the proposed date of termination. Following such notification, if OSSE does not receive a response from the parent or LEA within the following three (3) school days with regard to continuing transportation, OSSE-DOT shall remove the student from the route roster, send a written notice of termination of special education transportation services to the LEA and parents, and cease transportation services.

The LEA is responsible for uploading all notifications into SEDS and TOTE within five (5) business days. The LEA must assess the student's continued eligibility for special education transportation services by convening an IEP Team meeting or completing an IEP amendment to update the student's eligibility status, as appropriate. If the IEP Team determines that the student continues to be eligible for special education transportation services, the IEP Team must maintain and upload documentation related to the reason for the student's continued absence from the bus. If appropriate, a student's IEP Team may reestablish special education transportation services through the IEP process. The process to reestablish





special education transportation services includes the same application of state-level eligibility criteria, documentation, and timelines as an initial request for transportation submitted by an LEA.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT ON THE BUS**

Repeated student misconduct on the bus may result in revocation of bus services. In such cases, DOT will send a same-day notice to both the LEA and parent describing the student's misconduct and the resulting consequence. Upon receipt of a notice advising of revocation of bus services or in cases in which similar behavior issues extend into the school day, LEAs are responsible for convening an IEP Team meeting to review the student's IEP to consider the use of positive behavioral interventions, supports, and strategies to address the behavior,<sup>16</sup> and to consider other appropriate disciplinary consequences in accordance with the LEA's code of conduct and the procedural safeguards under IDEA Part B.<sup>17</sup> DOT will provide alternative transportation in the form of parent reimbursement in any case of revocation from the bus that lasts longer than ten (10) consecutive school days or ten (10) cumulative school days in a school year. In cases of extreme infractions (*e.g.* possession of a weapon, repeated threats of violence, unsafe behavior that threatens the safety of others or self), DOT may revoke bus services for the remainder of the school year and provide alternative transportation in the form of parent reimbursement.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Assistive Devices.** IEP Teams shall indicate any assistive device that the student will utilize during transport on the student's IEP. The term *assistive device* refers to personal equipment such as a wheelchair, walker, or helmet that the student utilizes throughout the school day. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the student's wheelchair or other assistive devices that the student requires for personal use outside of school. This does not apply if the IEP Team determines that the student needs the assistive device to receive FAPE, and it does not eliminate the LEA's ultimate responsibility of providing assistive devices that are needed to provide FAPE.<sup>18</sup> OSSE-DOT is not responsible for providing assistive devices to students, and will not transport students without assistive devices if such a device is specified in the IEP.

**Pick-Up and Drop-Off Locations and Times.** OSSE-DOT will provide one round trip from each student's residence in the District of Columbia to the student's attending school per school day. The student's address provided to OSSE-DOT shall match the address used to establish District of Columbia residency.<sup>19</sup> OSSE-DOT will not change a student's route to accommodate the student or parent for personal reasons (*e.g.* accommodations of non-FAPE related child care, one-time or sporadic changes in pick-up or drop-off locations for the student's or parent's convenience). Parents are responsible for making their own arrangements for days that the student needs pick-up and drop-off services from locations other than the address on record with OSSE-DOT.

OSSE-DOT will not pick up or drop off students on official school snow days announced by the District of Columbia. When OSSE-DOT cannot transport due to poor or unsafe weather conditions, LEAs remain

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<sup>16</sup> 34 C.F.R. §300.324(a)(2)

<sup>17</sup> 34 C.F.R. §300.530; DOT personnel shall participate in manifestation determination meetings as appropriate.

<sup>18</sup> See *Letter to Stohrer*, 213 IDELR 209 (OSEP 1989). The LEA may access the student's public or private insurance for the purpose of procuring or seeking reimbursement for procuring assistive devices. See 34 C.F.R. §300.154(d) & (e).

<sup>19</sup> Exceptions and accommodations will be made on case-by-case basis to account for students who are in foster care or living in group homes.





responsible for making up, as appropriate, missed instruction for special education students just as they are responsible for doing so for general education students.

**Adult to Adult Transfer.** Students who are eligible for special education transportation services under the MFS or STS category and students twelve (12) years of age or younger who are eligible under the ASP category shall be accompanied by an adult at pick-up and drop-off times. If no adult is waiting at the residence identified for drop-off, the student will be transported to the intake center at the end of the route.<sup>20</sup> OSSE-DOT will attempt to contact the parent to notify him or her that the student can be picked up at the intake center. Students over the age of twelve (12) who are eligible for special education transportation services under the ASP category may be dropped off at the parent's residence without an adult present if the parent submits written permission in advance to OSSE-DOT. LEAs must ensure that the appropriate parental consent form is completed and uploaded in TOTE.

**Transportation Outside of the Daily School Route.** In addition to the daily school route, OSSE-DOT provides transportation for eligible students to activities that are necessary for the provision of FAPE as specified in the student's IEP (*e.g.* secondary transition activities, education-related activities). To initiate transportation to such activities, LEAs shall submit the appropriate completed special accommodations request within five (5) business days of the IEP Team decision and at least ten (10) business days in advance of the activity. If the activity occurs after school hours, LEAs are responsible for making arrangements for transportation from the activity to the student's residence, subject to reimbursement from OSSE-DOT. Just as LEAs are responsible for transporting general education students to field trips, LEAs are also responsible for transporting students with disabilities to field trips, unless the student is eligible for special education transportation under the MFS category and needs specialized equipment/vehicle. LEAs are responsible for providing accommodations, as appropriate, to students with disabilities in order to enable them to be transported with their nondisabled peers (*e.g.* behavioral assistance for students with significant behavior problems).

#### **LEA DOCUMENTATION AND SUBMISSION OF APPROPRIATE FORMS TO OSSE-DOT**

LEAs shall complete and upload all documentation associated with special education transportation services to SEDS and TOTE within five (5) business days of the eligibility determination. The LEA shall document in SEDS its reasonable efforts to obtain completed documentation from parents. Reasonable efforts are defined as a minimum of three (3) contact attempts using at least two (2) different modalities (*e.g.* phone, mailed correspondence, and in-person visits) on three (3) different dates by the LEA.<sup>21</sup> IEPs with incomplete documentation in SEDS may be considered noncompliant for monitoring and auditing purposes.

OSSE-DOT will not begin to route a student or initiate transport until all of the required documentation is uploaded in SEDS and TOTE.<sup>22</sup> All data and supporting documentation must be completed and

<sup>20</sup> The intake center is identified in the OSSE-DOT Parent Handbook. After 6:00 p.m., students are released to the DC Department of Child and Family Services.

<sup>21</sup> 34 C.F.R. §300.322(d)

<sup>22</sup> LEAs are required to submit a completed administrative transportation form with completed documentation for every student determined eligible for special education transportation services. This documentation submission requirement is separate and apart from the bi-annual certification process required that enables OSSE-DOT to route students for the purposes of providing transportation during the summer months to support extended school year (ESY) services and transportation for the start of the school year.





accurately submitted at least seven (7) business days before the first day of school in order for transportation services to begin on the first day of school. Submissions with less notice than seven (7) business days before the first day of school will be processed on a rolling basis starting on the third day of the school year. LEAs will receive a final roster sheet five (5) business days before the start of school that will list all of the students who will receive special education transportation services starting on the first day of school. LEAs are responsible for contacting the parents of those students for whom transportation services will start after the first day of school, to inform the parent of the expected start date.

LEAs are responsible for any delays and expenses that result from failure to submit the necessary data and supporting documentation in a complete and timely manner. OSSE-DOT is responsible for ensuring that transportation services are implemented no later than three (3) business days after receiving a complete submission from the LEA initiating transportation or changing the student's school of attendance. After processing the initial transportation request, OSSE-DOT will implement any subsequent changes made to the pick-up or drop-off address within ten (10) business days. LEAs shall communicate any subsequent changes in student eligibility status to OSSE-DOT by submitting the appropriate documentation in SEDS and TOTE within five (5) business days of the eligibility determination.

OSSE-DOT will reimburse parents for mileage<sup>23</sup> for transportation provided by parents that results from untimely OSSE-DOT implementation after the three (3) or ten (10) business day processing period, as applicable. OSSE-DOT may reimburse expenses incurred by parents who opt to transport the student in the family vehicle, so long as the parent has obtained formal approval in advance from OSSE-DOT to transport the student under a reimbursement agreement.<sup>24</sup>

#### **BI-ANNUAL LEA CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

LEAs are responsible for certifying<sup>25</sup> special education transportation services for students to OSSE-DOT twice a year. LEAs shall provide certification to OSSE-DOT of all students eligible to receive special education transportation services for extended school year (ESY) services,<sup>26</sup> including those students attending nonpublic schools and programs, no later than the first Monday of May every year. LEAs shall provide certification to OSSE-DOT of all students eligible to receive special education transportation services for the upcoming school year, including those students attending nonpublic schools and programs,<sup>27</sup> no later than the first Monday of June of the current school year. Certification includes

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<sup>23</sup> Mileage rates set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).

<sup>24</sup> Bus transportation may not be the most appropriate means of transporting a student. OSSE-DOT offers reimbursable transportation methods such as Metro or direct reimbursement to parents who transport their children to school.

<sup>25</sup> The term "certification" refers to the requirement that LEAs provide adequate and timely notice to OSSE of services that result in state-level expenditures. The term "certification" does not imply that LEAs have unilateral decision-making discretion over IEP Team decisions.

<sup>26</sup> OSSE-DOT will transport to an extended school year (ESY) services program or to and from off-site programs that are necessary for the provision of FAPE as specified in the student's IEP. OSSE-DOT does not provide transportation for summer school.

<sup>27</sup> The LEA at which the student is enrolled is responsible for participating in all eligibility determinations and service designations associated with special education transportation services made in IEP Team meetings initiated and convened by nonpublic school personnel. LEAs may participate in IEP Team meetings held at nonpublic schools in-person or through designee of the nonpublic school. Regardless of mode of participation, the LEA remains responsible for being actively involved in all IEP decisions. 34 C.F.R. §300.325(b)(2)





formal confirmation of school calendars and bell times for all schools attended by students receiving special education transportation services, including nonpublic schools and programs, on a yearly basis.

Certification is an LEA-level responsibility; nonpublic schools may not submit certification on behalf of LEAs. OSSE-DOT will not transport students who do not have completed documentation in SEDS and TOTE (*i.e.* current eligibility determination and supporting documents). LEAs are responsible for the costs of transporting students for whom they have failed to properly or timely certify (*i.e.* students who have completed documentation in SEDS and TOTE).<sup>28</sup> An LEA that fails to properly or timely certify shall continue to be responsible for transportation costs until the LEA completes certification.

**ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE**

This memorandum supersedes all previous policy, memoranda, and/or guidance promulgated by the state educational agency (SEA) on this topic. Please direct any questions regarding the content of this document to Grace Chien, Director of Policy, at (202) 741-5089 or by email at [Grace.Chien@dc.gov](mailto:Grace.Chien@dc.gov).

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<sup>28</sup> LEAs will not be responsible for the costs associated with eligibility determinations that occur after the certification date due to feasibility issues (*e.g.* students who transfer to the LEA after the certification date).





DIVISION OF  
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

**Transportation Handbook**  
for **Parents** and **Guardians**  
of **Special Education Students**





Dear Parents and Guardians,

At the Office of the State Superintendent, Division of Student Transportation (OSSE DOT), we work closely with parents and guardians to provide the best possible service to students with special transportation needs. This handbook is intended to help answer your questions about transportation to school for your child.

In December 2012, the District regained control of special education transportation after 17 years of federal court oversight. This means that the District is now accountable for day-to-day student transportation operations. What doesn't change is the commitment to provide safe, on-time and efficient transportation services for the District's eligible students.

OSSE DOT's mission and vision underscore the commitment to provide a high level of service:

**Mission:** The mission of OSSE DOT is to provide safe, reliable and efficient transportation services that support and enhance learning opportunities for eligible students in the District of Columbia.

**Vision:** We envision a future in which all transported students begin and end their school day with the best-in-class transportation services.

OSSE DOT must have a strong partnership with parents and guardians in order for student transportation to be truly successful. That begins with good communication and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. The information in this handbook covers the most frequently asked questions that OSSE DOT receives from parents and guardians. The information also clarifies expectations, roles and responsibilities for both OSSE DOT and parents/guardians. Please take time to read this handbook and keep it as a reference guide throughout the year. If we all play our parts, students will benefit by receiving great transportation services.

As a regional transportation provider for District of Columbia Public Schools, public charter schools and non-public schools, we look forward to providing safe, on-time and efficient transportation services every school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Solchenberger". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Ryan Solchenberger  
Director, Division of Student Transportation



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 What is OSSE DOT?**
- 1 Contacting the Parent Resource Center
- 2 Contacting the Office of Audit and Compliance/Investigations
- 2 Who is Eligible for Student Transportation?**
- 3 How the School Bus Route Schedule Works**
- 3 Developing a School Bus Route
- 3 Ride Times on the Bus Route
- 4 Arriving at School On Time
- 4 Dropping Off Students at Home
- 4 The Beginning of the School Year: What to Expect**
- 5 Route Schedule Changes
- 5 Processing Route Changes
- 5 Parent and Guardian Responsibilities**
- 6 Effectively Communicate with Bus Drivers and Attendants
- 6 Keep Contact Information Accurate and Up to Date
- 6 Ensure Children Are Ready For Morning Pick-Up
- 7 Ensure an Authorized Adult is Present for Afternoon Drop-Off
- 7 Safety on the Bus**
- 7 Driver and Attendant Responsibilities
- 8 School Bus Rules
- 8 Student Behavior on the Bus
- 8 Bus Seat Assignments
- 9 Frequently Asked Questions**
- 12 Additional Resources and Contact Information**

## WHAT IS OSSE DOT?

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Division of Student Transportation (OSSE DOT) is a regional transportation system within the State Education Agency that transports eligible special needs students in the District of Columbia to school each day, safely and on-time. OSSE DOT provides its door-to-door services to traditional, public charter and non-public schools in DC, Maryland and Virginia. The division works collaboratively with parents, school staff, special education advocates and other OSSE staff to ensure safe, reliable and efficient transportation for students to and from school each year. These services may be provided on a school bus or through the distribution of Metro Farecards.

### PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

The Parent Resource Center (PRC) is the communication link between the Division of Student Transportation, parents/guardians, school personnel, advocates and social workers and can be reached at:

**202-576-5000 from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday**

The PRC is dedicated to providing quality customer service by promptly addressing student transportation matters both proactively and reactively. Customer service representatives make outbound calls to advise parents/guardians of bus delays of 20 minutes or more and to communicate route schedule changes due to inclement weather or other emergencies. When questions are directed to the PRC, customer service representatives use GPS technology, communicate with terminals and drivers and research using the student database to find real-time information, resolve concerns and answer questions.

In order to provide better customer service, OSSE DOT upgraded the call center phone system so that callers waiting for a customer service representative now have three options:

**1** Continue holding for the next available representative.

**2** Leave a voice message and a representative returns your call.

**3** Hang up, keep your place in line and the next available representative calls you back.

During school start up, callers may experience longer wait times. OSSE DOT's goal is to provide accurate information as quickly as possible. If information is not immediately available when you call, a call center representative will be able to call you back that day with the information.

## OFFICE OF AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE/INVESTIGATIONS

The Office of Audit and Compliance is available to receive complaints at **202-576-6860** from **5 a.m. to 7 p.m.** Monday through Friday. To fully understand complaints, compliance specialists resolve concerns by using a variety of tools that include GPS technology, student databases, employee and student interviews and field monitoring.

Complaints and incidents that are considered a priority and investigated immediately include:

- issues affecting the health and safety of students;
- failure to transport students;
- moving traffic violations; and
- improper or inadequate driver or attendant behavior.

Complaints that are safety sensitive will be responded to within 24 hours or one business day. All other complaints receive follow-up within three to five business days depending on the nature of the complaint.

## WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES?

OSSE DOT does not determine who is eligible for student transportation. After a student becomes eligible for transportation services, OSSE DOT processes the request, routes the student and begins transporting the student within three days of the request.

## THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) TEAM

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines whether a special education student requires transportation services in order to support that student's specific education goals. IEP teams may consist of teachers, healthcare specialists, advocates and parents/guardians.

Questions about eligibility for student transportation must be directed to staff at your child's school.

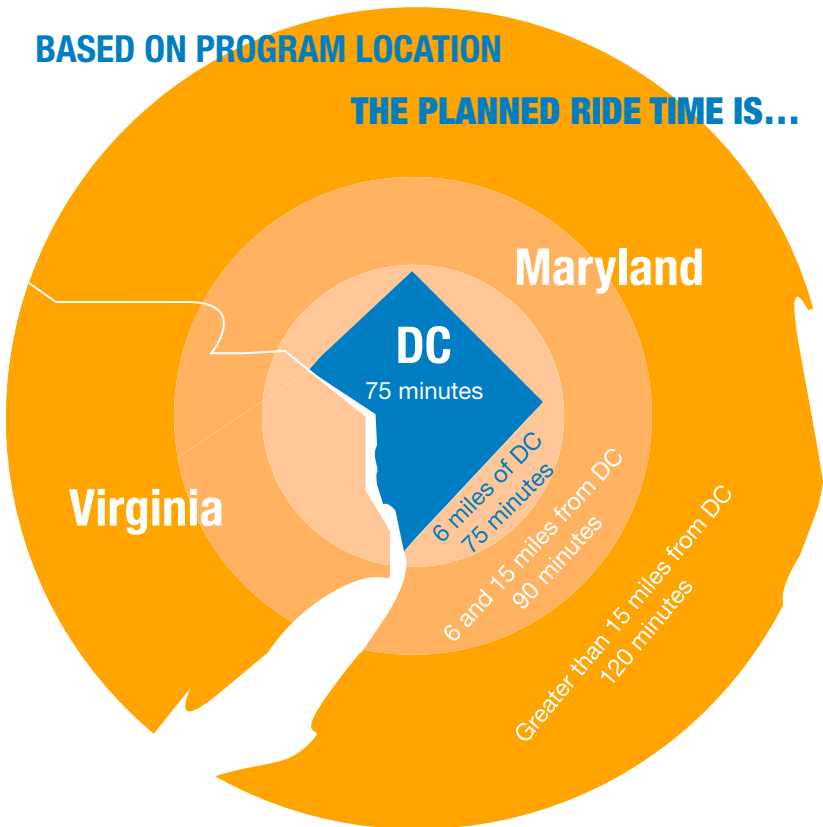
## HOW THE SCHOOL BUS ROUTE SCHEDULE WORKS

### DEVELOPING A SCHOOL BUS ROUTE

OSSE DOT develops school bus routes using a combination of routing software, GPS data and driver feedback. There are many factors that build a school bus route: the school's location, the number of students on the bus and traffic patterns for particular areas.

### RIDE TIMES ON THE BUS

Ride times are determined on a case-by-case basis to take into account the individual medical needs of students. Traffic and weather conditions may impact ride times on a given day. Throughout the school year, OSSE DOT monitors ride times and adjusts routes as needed. The current ride-time standards set by OSSE DOT are:



## ARRIVING AT SCHOOL ON TIME

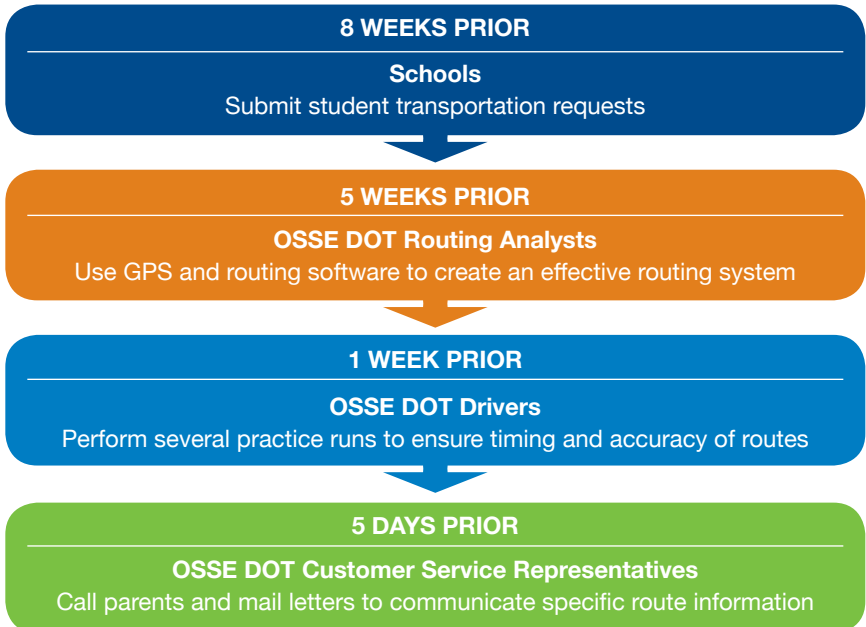
Arriving at school on time is one of OSSE DOT's main priorities. OSSE DOT's goal is to arrive at a school within a 20-minute window, no earlier than 30 minutes before the school bell rings and no later than 10 minutes before the school bell rings. For example, if a school's bell time is 8 a.m., then an on-time school bus arrival is any time between 7:30 a.m. and 7:50 a.m. During the first few weeks of school, OSSE DOT may adjust routes to ensure on-time arrivals. With GPS devices on every school bus, OSSE DOT tracks bus arrivals to school to ensure students arrive in time to be in their seats and ready to learn.

## DROPPING OFF STUDENTS AT HOME

At some schools dozens of buses try to leave the parking area at the same time, which can lead to delays if your child's bus has to wait in a line of buses. A customer service representative will call to notify you if your child's bus will be more than 20 minutes late arriving home in the afternoon.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR: WHAT TO EXPECT

The start of a new school year is a time of change and can become very busy for parents and guardians, teachers and other school staff as well as for OSSE DOT. Prior to the first day of school, OSSE DOT takes several steps to ensure that routes and pick-up times are as accurate as possible.



## ROUTE SCHEDULE CHANGES

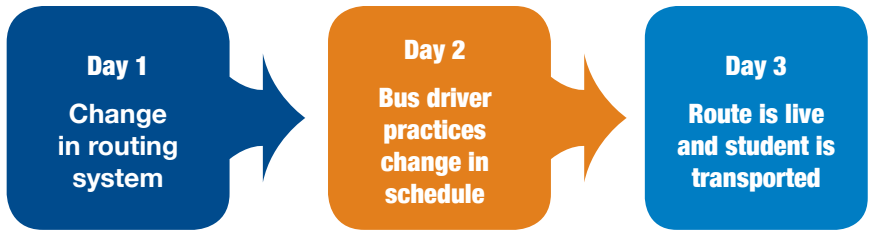
Route changes occur at the beginning of a school year for a variety of reasons, including:

- Late student enrollments;
- A change in a student's school placement;
- A change in the student's pick-up or drop-off address; or
- OSSE DOT may change a route to ensure better ride times, more accurate pick-up times or to improve on-time arrivals at school.

All of these situations can lead to a route change. During the first couple of weeks of the school year, parents may notice some variation in their child's route, such as early or late pick-ups or dropoffs. OSSE DOT will notify parents by phone about any route changes. Parents may also contact the Parent Resource Center with questions about a particular route.

## PROCESSING ROUTE CHANGES

If a school requests an address change for a student or some other type of route change, OSSE DOT will process that change within three business days. Processing a route change requires three days because OSSE DOT takes the following steps to ensure route accuracy:



## PARENT AND GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

A safe, reliable, efficient and on-time student transportation system depends on a strong partnership between parents, guardians, schools and the OSSE DOT team. It is very important that parents and guardians:

- Communicate effectively with bus drivers and bus attendants
- Keep contact information accurate and up to date
- Ensure children are ready for morning pick-up
- Ensure an adult is available for afternoon drop-off

## EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH BUS DRIVERS AND BUS ATTENDANTS

Two-way, effective communication is the key to building a good working relationship with the bus driver and bus attendant. It is also a good way to ensure that the driver and attendant understand the unique personality traits of your child. Please introduce yourself to the driver and attendant and do not hesitate to ask them questions. However, it is important to keep in mind that the school bus is picking up multiple students and can only spend a limited amount of time at each stop in order to keep the route on time. If you would like to leave a message for your driver or attendant, you can call the Parent Resource Center at 202-576-5000. A relationship of mutual respect between parents and the driver and attendant will foster a more positive environment on the bus.

## KEEP CONTACT INFORMATION ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE

Please ensure that OSSE DOT has your up-to-date phone number and backup numbers as well as your email address. OSSE DOT contacts parents and guardians over the phone to provide route information, bus status information as well as any changes to a route. Please contact the Parent Resource Center to verify your information. If the information is incorrect please contact your school to correct it.

## ENSURE CHILDREN ARE READY FOR MORNING PICK-UP

At the beginning of the school year, OSSE DOT provides parents with an estimated pick-up/arrival window of 30 minutes. It is important that your child is ready to board the bus during the entire 30-minute window. As routes stabilize and beginning-of-year route changes stop, OSSE DOT will provide a more precise pick-up time.

Preferably parents or children will look out the window to spot the bus as it arrives. The attendant will walk up to the outermost door, wait three minutes and knock if needed. Dogs and locked gates will prevent the attendant from coming to the door.

You must notify the Parent Resource Center if your child will not need transportation services due to illness, vacation, etc. Chronic student absences from the bus may result in the following: after three (3) consecutive days, OSSE DOT will contact you and the Local Education Authority (LEA) in writing asking for an explanation for the absences; after seven (7) consecutive days, you will receive a written notification of OSSE DOT's intent to cease school bus services with a proposed date of termination; after ten (10) consecutive days, your child will be removed from the bus route roster and will no longer be provided special education transportation services through OSSE DOT.

## ENSURE AN AUTHORIZED ADULT IS PRESENT FOR AFTERNOON DROP-OFF

For safety reasons, an authorized adult must be present at the designated afternoon drop-off address. (Exceptions are made for independent student drop-off. Please see the Frequently Asked Questions for more information.) If an authorized adult is not present at the designated afternoon drop-off address, OSSE DOT takes the following steps:

- The student will remain safely on the bus and the bus driver will notify OSSE DOT management;
- The Parent Resource Center will make repeated attempts to contact the parent or guardian;
- The bus driver will continue the route and drop off the remaining students;
- The bus driver will return to the address and attempt a second drop-off;
- If OSSE DOT cannot contact an authorized adult, we will transport the child to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) located at 200 I Street SE, 202-442-6100.

## SAFETY ON THE BUS

Above and beyond on-time arrival, transporting students safely is OSSE DOT's primary focus. Every driver has a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and is accompanied by a trained bus attendant on every bus route.

### DRIVER AND ATTENDANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Rigorous tests, both driving and written, must be passed by each driver in order to maintain their CDL. Additionally, OSSE DOT trains drivers and attendants in First Aid and CPR so that the team is prepared for an emergency while the bus is in transport. In the event of an emergency, drivers and attendants first ensure the students' safety and then contact dispatch who then contacts 911.

Drivers are responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle. In addition to actually driving the bus, drivers conduct pre- and post-trip inspections to ensure that the vehicle's safety features are operational. Lights, tires, oil and other fluid levels and many other bus components are checked to ensure they are in working order.

Bus attendants are responsible for ensuring that the students safely board the bus, that students are wearing their seat belts before the bus departs and that the students get off the bus safely at school. Typically, bus attendants monitor student behavior by sitting in a bus seat that is behind all of the students so that all activity is in front of them. Additionally, after dropping off students at school, bus attendants are required to look on and under every seat to ensure that students are no longer on the bus and that student belongings have not been left behind. Like bus drivers, bus attendants are trained in First Aid and CPR. Bus attendants are also trained to operate and secure any extra equipment necessitated by the students.



## School Bus Rules

- Students will not use profane language.
- Students will not bully or fight with others.
- Students will not talk on a cell phone or play loud music.
- Students will keep hands and feet inside the bus and remain seated at all times.
- Alcohol and tobacco use are prohibited.
- Students will not be allowed to eat or drink (unless indicated in the IEP).
- Students should not leave the bus prior to their authorized stop.
- Students must wear prescribed assistive devices, such as helmets, while on the bus as required by or specified in the IEP.
- Students are not allowed to deface, destroy or damage the school bus or behave in a way that interferes with the safe transportation of other students.



### STUDENT BEHAVIOR ON THE BUS

The driver and attendant team are also responsible for reporting student behavior that may compromise bus safety. When unsafe student behavior is reported, OSSE DOT is obligated to contact the family and school to discuss the student's behavior. The school is responsible for providing guidance on student behavior management and disciplinary actions. Student misconduct on the bus may result in revocation of bus services.

### BUS SEAT ASSIGNMENTS

In an effort to prevent potentially unsafe student behavior on the school bus and create an atmosphere of consistency for students, OSSE DOT may create seating charts for specific routes. The goal of seat assignments is to reduce the likelihood of conflicts between students and help set positive expectations for daily behavior.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### BUSING

#### **1** Where is my child's bus? Why does the bus arrive at different times during the week?

Traffic, weather and small changes in the route mean that the bus will not get to your house at the exact same time every day. For example, if children normally picked up before your child are out sick then the bus may be earlier, and if there is construction on the route then the bus may be later. If you have concerns about where your bus is, call the Parent Resource Center to find out when to expect it.

#### **2** Can my child's route be changed? Can I request a different driver or attendant?

Months of planning determines how routes look and who staffs them. Because many different children depend on the route, the route and staff must stay consistent. However, if there are major concerns call the Parent Resource Center to discuss options.

#### **3** When should my child be ready for the bus and where should they wait? Does the attendant have to knock on the door? How long does the bus have to wait for my child?

Children and parents should be ready for the bus for the entire 30-minute pick-up window and watch through their window for the bus' arrival. Once the bus arrives at your house, the bus will wait three minutes for your child and the attendant will knock on your door. In order to pick up all children on the route during their pick-up windows and get to school on time, the bus must keep to a strict schedule.

#### **4** Are there alternatives to the school bus?

Children who are able to ride the metro on their own are eligible to receive WMATA tokens or fare cards to ride to school and may receive travel training to do so. In some circumstances parents can transport their children to school and receive reimbursement, but they must get the permission of the director of student transportation before doing so.

### PARENT/STUDENT/SCHOOL INFORMATION

#### **5** Who do I notify if my child is sick?

Call the Parent Resource Center to notify us that your child is sick so that the route can be re-planned and the attendant will not knock on your door.

## **6** How do I update my contact information? What if we move or change schools during the year?

Call your school to update any and all information changes. OSSE DOT is not able to change information such as phone numbers and addresses unless notified by your school.

## **7** How long is a temporary address change? What's the process for getting this request granted?

Temporary address changes can last up to a week. Call the Parent Resource Center to request this service.

## **8** Can my child be dropped off at a child care center or different address in the afternoon?

OSSE DOT is not able to drop off a child in the afternoon at a different address than where they were picked up in the morning.

## **9** What if I am not at home in the afternoon when my child is dropped off?

You may authorize a different person to accept your child at your address by calling the Parent Resource Center. This person must be over 18 years old and show proper identification to the bus attendant. If no one is available to receive your child, the Parent Resource Center will attempt to contact you several times and a second drop-off will be attempted. Following these attempts your child will be dropped off at the CFSA until you are able to arrange transportation from there.

## **INCIDENTS**

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## **10** When will my complaint be resolved? When will I get a call back?

OSSE DOT processes your concern when you call. Resolution time varies depending on the type of complaint.

## **11** How do I report and/or stop bullying?

Call the OSSE DOT Department of Audit and Compliance to report bullying on the bus. An investigator will be assigned to your case and he/she will interview the driver, attendant and other children on the bus to get an understanding of the situation and to find a resolution.

## **12** What happens if my child is involved in a school bus accident?

The Parent Resource Center will notify you immediately if your child is on a school bus that is involved in an accident. The bus terminal will send a “rescue bus” to the scene of the accident to resume the route and take the children to school. The police and EMS will also arrive on the scene and if there are any injuries the attendant will ride along in the ambulance.

### **OTHER**

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## **13** Can a bus driver or attendant deliver medicine to school for my child? Can a bus driver or attendant administer medicine on the bus?

Medicine cannot be transported or administered on the bus unless it is done so by a certified nurse. IEP teams must request a nurse.

## **14** How do I recover items left on the bus?

Call the Parent Resource Center and they will call the terminal to find out if the item was recovered. The item will be brought to our offices at 810 First St. NE where you can pick up the item.

## **15** How can I request a form for independent student drop-off for my child?

If your child is determined eligible for independent student drop-off by his/her IEP team, you may request a sign-up form from your child’s school. The school must submit written permission in advance to OSSE DOT in order for your child to be dropped off without an adult present. Only students twelve (12) years of age or older in the Accessing a Specialized Program (ASP) transportation category are eligible for independent student drop-off.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Division of Student Transportation Central Office .....	202-576-6228
Parent Resource Center .....	202-576-5000
Office of Investigations .....	202-576-6860
Office of the State Superintendent of Education .....	202-727-6436
Office of the State Superintendent of Education Division of Specialized Education .....	202-727-6436
DC Public Schools Special Education .....	202-442-4800
DC State Board of Education .....	202-741-0888
Child and Family Services Administration .....	202-442-6100
CFSA Hotline (to report allegations of abuse) .....	202-671-SAFE
District of Columbia Government Service Request .....	311



**Office of the State Superintendent of Education  
Division of Student Transportation (OSSE DOT)**

Government of the District of Columbia  
810 1<sup>st</sup> Street, NE, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, DC 20002

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Phone: 202-576-6228 • TTY: 711 • Email: [osse.dot@dc.gov](mailto:osse.dot@dc.gov)





Office of the State Superintendent of Education

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
EDUCATION LICENSURE COMMISSION**

**COMPLAINT FORM**

**PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY IN BLACK OR BLUE INK**

**ACTIVITY THAT OCCURRED OUTSIDE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE APPROPRIATE STATE IN WHICH THE ACTIVITY OCCURRED.**

Investigation and resolution of complaints take varying amounts of time. If the Education Licensure Commission (“ELC”) takes formal disciplinary action, you may obtain a copy of that final order from its website at [www.osse.dc.gov](http://www.osse.dc.gov). If the ELC closes your complaint with a finding that there has been no violation committed, the ELC will notify you of such in writing. Complaints to the ELC made on this form must be signed and dated by the individual making the complaint.

Complaints are made available to the institution or facility so that he/she may file a response to the allegations with the ELC.

**The ELC will not accept any anonymous complaints.**

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:** Complaints may be filed against postsecondary educational institutions operating in the District of Columbia. Consumers who have experienced legal or ethical problems should complete this form and submit all supporting documents. Documents should include copies of all signed or agreed to certificates, or any other legal documents used to support your complaint. Additional sheets may be attached if necessary.

**DATE OF COMPLAINT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE RECEIVED:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Office use only)

**COMPLAINT IS SUBMITTED BY:**

Name of Person Submitting Complaint:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax # \_\_\_\_\_

**COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST:**

Alleged Violator: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Include Full name, Alias, and Company name)

Alleged Violator's Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you followed the institution's procedures regarding this complaint? What was the outcome?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NATURE OF COMPLAINT:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

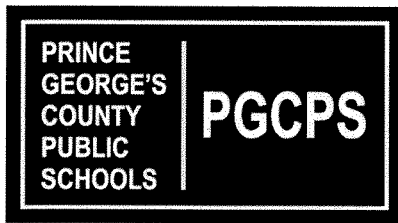
**I hereby declare and affirm under the penalties of perjury that the matters and facts set forth in the foregoing complaint are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Complainant**

**Mail Complaint To:  
Ms. Dorothy Thomas  
Education Compliance Specialist  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)  
Education Licensure Commission  
810 First Street, NE  
9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20002**





## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



#### Transportation

*Last modified: 8/6/2013*

#### Frequently Asked Questions

##### **Could the bus stop change?**

Possibly. As we receive new data from the student information system we will change bus routes to accommodate changes of address, new enrollments and program assignments. Therefore

we expect that while bus stop locations will remain relatively constant, bus numbers and stop times will change whenever a route is adjusted. Based on past experience, we expect a great deal of change during late August and early September. This web site always has the most up-to-date information.

##### **How does the system place bus stops?**

The locations of bus stops have been optimized by the computer taking into account the traffic safety issues of the streets in the area and the location of the children. In most cases bus stops are at corners. The stops are designed to be within approximately 1/2 mile of the student's home.

There have been no changes in the maximum walking distances, which remain at 1.5 miles for elementary schools and 2 miles for secondary schools.

##### **What if I don't find my stop?**

All of the bus stops are based on student addresses provided by each school. If you do not find a stop we may not have the right address. Contact your school to be sure they have the correct address on file, including any daycare addresses. The Transportation Office does not input address changes. Your child's school must input the information into the Transportation Module of SchoolMax. If the address is right call us at (301) 952-6570 and we will investigate the problem.

##### **When will I be notified about the bus stop?**

Parents of students registered at schools by July 31, 2013 will receive a letter from Transportation a week before school starts. The letter states the bus stop location, the route number and the pickup/drop off times.

##### **The bus didn't show up on time for my child. How long should he/she wait at the bus stop?**

Your child should arrive at the bus stop at least ten minutes before the arrival time of the bus. If

there is a substitute driver, the times may not be consistent with the regular time period. Wait 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up then contact the Bus Lot Foreman at the area bus lot.

\*Remember to note the 4 and 5 year-old children.

**What should be done if there is a transportation-related problem after office hours?** If there is a problem after regular office hours, call School Security at (301) 499-7000. School Security is on duty 24 hours – 7 days a week. School Security will contact the Transportation Supervisor to handle any type of school bus issue(s).

**My child's bus is overcrowded. Can some children be placed on another bus?**

Refer the call to the Supervisor to investigate. If the bus has three elementary students or two middle or high students in each seat, it will seem crowded. However, it will not be over capacity. Our goal is to fully utilize all the space on all the buses in our fleet.

**I see buses all the time with only a few children on them. What are they doing?**

Prince George's County Public School Buses make two to four runs to a school each day. We transport 100,000 students each day. When transporting special needs students, it is sometimes impossible to utilize the capacity of the bus. Examples of special programs are:

- Contextual Learning Environment
  - Alternative Schooling
  - Homeless
  - Title I
- Boundaries also impact the number of children eligible to ride as a result of school system enrollment.

**We live very far from the school and there is not a bus stop for my child. How do I arrange transportation?**

Prince George's County Public Schools regulations provide transportation for elementary students living in excess of one and a half miles of school; for middle and high school students, the distance is two miles. Both the pickup and dropoff addresses must be within the boundary of the school. Student's address will upload to Transportation each night based on the addresses provided by the parent to the school. If there is a discrepancy, the caller must call the school to make an address change.

**I drove it in my car, and we live more than that distance from school.**

Notify the school principal about your concern and then contact the Department of Transportation to talk with the Transportation Supervisor of the school. Supervisors measure all distances with a walking wheel over the school route between the property line of the home and the property line of the school.

**The walking route is not safe. To whom should I speak about that?**

If you believe an unsafe situation exists, address your concern to the Transportation Supervisor of that school.

**I can't see my child's bus stop from my house. How can I get the bus stop moved closer?**

Bus stops are placed in safe and efficient locations. The Transportation Supervisor will determine the appropriate action to accommodate the majority of students to minimize the time and length of the run. If you have concerns about your child's safety, you are encouraged to accompany your child to the bus stop or arrange a neighborhood buddy to walk with your child.

**We live within the walking boundary, but very close to a bus stop for my child's school. May my child ride the bus from the stop?**

We do not permit a child to ride a school bus if you are within the walking area.

**Is approval of transportation for a walking student permanent?**

The area Transportation Supervisor will address this. If approved for the current year, it must be resubmitted each year (includes: Disability Act Research, 504 Plans, etc.)

**My child goes to a daycare provider in an area with bus service. May my child ride the bus?**

If the daycare provider is in the boundary for that school, bus service will be provided. The parent must provide to the school the address for the daycare center. If the address is not placed in the Transportation Module of SchoolMax it could cause your child to not have transportation.

**My child is a special education student. To whom should I speak concerning his/her transportation?**

Transportation is responsible for transporting all special needs students whose addresses are within the boundary for their placement program. Parents with students requiring lift buses should contact the Special Education Office for assistance.

**My child left an item (coat, glasses, instrument, retainer, books, etc) on the bus. How does he/she get it back?**

Drivers and substitute drivers check their buses after each run. Contact your child's assigned bus lot. Items left will be taken back to the school or turned in to the office where the bus is assigned if not claimed. You may help by labeling all of your child's belongings with the child's name and school.

**What are the different types of school buses?**

Prince George's County has several types of school buses. Commercial is a traditional with the long frontal hood. Special Education buses have a short nosed co axle, and the Orthopedic buses are equipped with a wheelchair lift. All buses are diesel fueled and equipped with radios and GPS.

**Why are school bus seats spaced so closely together?**

Seats were re-designed to specific spacing, with full padding front and back, and increased back height for maximum impact protection. The newer designed seats provide a padded cavity for passenger compartmentalization. Crash tests prove this to be the most effective protection on impact.

**Why aren't seat belts required on school buses?**

Seat belts are not required on school buses because research by the Department of Transportation has determined that compartmentalization was a better solution. Compartmentalization is more manageable, works well for one, two or three students per seat, and is most affordable.

**Why are 39" seats on school buses rated for three children when they only will accommodate two?**

The rated capacity of a 39" width passenger seat was devised many years ago. In determining seating capacity on a bus, an allowable average width standard was established. Accordingly, 13" was suggested with three students per seat (three students if elementary; for middle and high school students, loads are adjusted).

**Do state regulations for school buses supersede federal requirements?**

State Laws do not supersede Federal requirements. If states add requirements for safety, they are additional to the Federal requirements.

**Why are buses sometimes late?**

School bus drivers can have the same reasons for being late as any commuter, i.e. traffic delays, weather conditions, accidents or driver's illness resulting in substitute drivers. It also includes:

mechanical breakdowns, and red light malfunctions. Additionally, when a bus is late, it will continue off schedule whether it is on its first or fourth run.

**Why aren't buses always available for field trips?**

The first priority is to provide transportation to and from school. The fleet does not contain a separate set of buses designated for field trips?

**Why can't all high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools start at the same time?**

In order to maximize the use of our school bus fleet and provide an efficient operation with as few buses as possible, schools start at staggered times.

**How can the number of students transported increase more than the total number of students enrolled?**

Nearly 64% of the total number of student enrollment is bused to and from school, and the most common reasons are students being reassigned to schools, moving residence, or to assigned schools other than the base neighborhood school.

**Why are spare replacement buses needed?**

Buses operate throughout the day with one-way trips, shuttles, community-based exercises, and field trips, as well as to the normal to and from school transportation requirements. In order to have the required number of operational buses each day a group of back-up or spare buses must be retained in case of mechanical failure or accidents.

**What is the definition of a school bus?**

A school bus is a vehicle that is sold or introduced for interstate commission for the purpose to include carrying students to and from school or related events. It does not include a bus designed and sold for operations as a common carrier in urban transportation.

**How can my child get picked up or dropped off at a daycare provider's location?**

The daycare address has to be within the attendance area of the school, and outside of the walking area for that school. The parent must provide the school with the daycare provider's address.

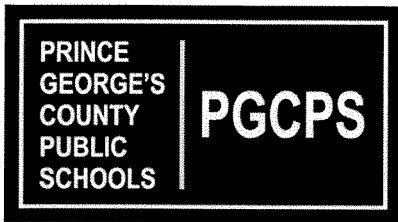
**How can I arrange to have my child ride a different bus home from school for one day?**

The child's parent or guardian must send a written request to the school principal. If approved the principal will provide authorization to the driver or the bus lot.

**Why is there not an attendant on every bus?**

Attendants are used for Special Needs students. It would be cost prohibitive to provide an attendant for every bus.

**What if the bus is overcrowded?** See Administrator at the school who will in turn contact the Department of Transportation



## BUS STOP SEARCH

**Need transportation help? Call the Transportation Phone Bank daily Monday - Friday from 6:00 am to 5:30 pm at (301-952-6570); Aug 24 from 11 am to 3 pm.**

<p><b>Search Bus Stops by Address</b></p> <p><b>List Bus Stops by School</b></p>	<p>The link at left will connect you to our bus routing system. You will be able to find the bus stop for a particular address. Searches can be limited to an individual school or include all schools. To protect the privacy of personal information no student names or addresses are included.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Stop information displayed may not indicate address entered is eligible for bus service. Addresses on the fringe of the walk zones may show stop location, which exist, outside of the walk zone. <b>Please check final status for bus service with your local school or the Transportation Office.</b></p>
<p><b>We need drivers</b></p>	<p>Check this page to learn how to become a bus driver.</p>
<p><b>Bus lot phones</b></p>	<p>This link gives the phone numbers and bus route numbers for each of our 12 bus lots.</p>
<p><b>School Finder</b></p>	<p>Use this link to see the school assignments for a particular address. It also includes magnet and special programs.</p>

### Bus Stop Tips:

Since there may be several buses picking up children in the same area, we recommend ...

- Before the school year begins, you and your child visit the arranged bus pick-up location.
- Be sure your child knows the safest way to the exact location where the bus will stop.
- When taking your child to the bus stop on the first day, it is important to be at the pick-up location at least five minutes early.
- Your child should know the route number and the name of this year's school. This will insure that your child will board the correct bus. Each bus will have a sign located on the side of the bus in the second window on the door side for your convenience.
- You and your child should become familiar with your bus driver, but be aware that a different driver may substitute when needed.

On line bus stop lookups will be available approximately August 15th.  
Thank you for your support and best wishes for a successful school year.

**Scroll down this page for additional important information.**

Need Assistance? This office has established a phone bank of staff members waiting to take your call. All calls are logged and given reference numbers for tracking. Due to the number of calls that can occur at this time of year, we ask for your patience. Please call (301) 952-6570.

### **Could the bus stop change?**

Possibly. As we receive new data from the student information system we will change bus routes to accommodate changes of address, new enrollments and program assignments. Therefore we expect that while bus stop locations will remain relatively constant, bus numbers and stop times will change whenever a route is adjusted. Based on past experience, we expect a great deal of change during late August and early September. This web site always has the most up-to-date information.

### **How does the system place bus stops?**

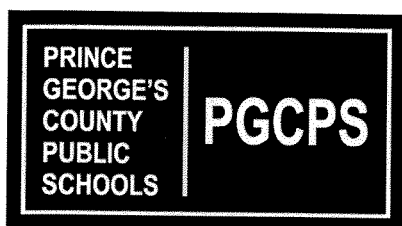
The locations of bus stops have been optimized by the computer taking into account the traffic safety issues of the streets in the area and the location of the children. In most cases bus stops are at corners. The stops are designed to be within approximately 1/4 mile of the student's home. There have been no changes in the maximum walking distances, which remain at 1.5 miles for elementary schools and 2 miles for secondary schools.

### **What if I don't find my stop?**

All of the bus stops are based on student addresses provided by each school. If you do not find a stop we may not have the right address. Contact your school to be sure they have the correct address on file, including any day care addresses. If the address is right call us at (301) 952-6570 and we will investigate the problem.

### **When will I be notified about the bus stop?**

All parents will receive a letter approximately August 17th. with the location of the bus stop, the bus number and the pickup/drop off times.



## STAFF CONTACTS

### Administration

	Phone
Lori Carter-Evans, Director	301-952-6570
David Hill Jr., Operations Supervisor North	301-952-6570
Kimberly Wilks, Operations Supervisor South	301-952-6570

### Bus Lots

Supervisor	Lot	Routes Served	Foreman	Bus Lot Phone
Jacob Anderson (301) 780-5819	Goddard	241-305 and D	DeSean Dock	301-918-8553
	Greenbelt	G	Louis Hunt (A)	301-513-5059
Dawn Byrd (301) 780-5809	Bladensburg	306-370 and B	Anna Krouse	301-985-1870
	Fairmont	121-240 and R	Francine Parks	301-386-6121
Everett Edmond (301) 952-6585	John Hanson	731-810 and H	Judy Ford (Acting)	301-749-4201
	Surrattsville	811-870 and T	Michael Geris	301-599-2550
Anthony Pace	Crossland	661-730 and C	George Fleming	301-449-4995

301-952-6579	Friendly	871-940 and F	Rhonda Tuck	301-449-4798
Bernard Palmer (301) 952-6589	Douglass	001-120 and X	Mary Salcetti	301-952-7713
	Forestville	531-595 and V	James Melton	301-817-0320
Tony Spruill (301) 952-6582	Laurel	596-660 and L	Brenda Stewart-Adams	301-497-3665
	Mullikin	371-455 and K	Phyllis Harris-Cole	301-390-0210

### Central Garage (Fleet Maintenance)

	Phone
Mark Dreszer, Supervisor	301-952-6530
Dave Burgess, Assistant Supervisor	301-952-6530
Mike Sweeney, Automotive Maintenance Foreman	301-952-6530
Thomas Lewandowski, Automotive Maintenance Foreman	301-952-6530