

HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK OF OPERATIONS



FOREWORD

This Handbook of Transportation Operations is prepared and maintained in compliance with Hamilton County School Board policy 6.81-A (4), which states: “The Director of Transportation shall prepare a handbook of procedures which shall be known as the Hamilton County Schools Handbook of Transportation Operations. The Handbook will serve as a guide to amplify or set forth procedures for implementing and carrying out Board policies. The handbook shall be approved by the School Board.”

Nothing in this Handbook is intended to supplant or supersede Board policies or agreements within the Master Contract of the Hamilton County Educational Support Personnel Association.

Transportation Department employees are expected to read and maintain a copy of this Handbook as a guide in normal operations. The successful completion of tasks related to pupil transportation requires strict adherence to all rules and standards of procedure, coupled with the application of sound judgment in the event of emergency situations.

This Handbook supersedes the Transportation Directive booklet developed and distributed in July, 2002.

Submitted by: _____
Director of Transportation Date

Approved by: _____
Director of Business Services Date

Approved by: _____
Superintendent of Schools Date

MISSION AND PURPOSE

Our Mission: To safely and reliably transport students to their destinations in a frame of mind conducive to learning.

Our Purpose: To provide effective and efficient transportation for our children by utilizing our special training and positive values to help them achieve their objectives for a brighter and better tomorrow.

Our Core Values: Professionalism with all parties.

Dependability at all times.

Excellence in everything we do!

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PART I - TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVES

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #1 Use of School Buses

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to identify the acceptable uses of the school bus by employees assigned to utilize them and authorized riders.

- I. **Authorized Uses of Buses** - School Buses are assigned for use in route driving and are not to be utilized for personal business at any time, no unauthorized stops may be made.

- II. **Authorized Passengers of School Buses** - School bus drivers shall transport only those persons who are duly authorized under one of the following categories:
 - A. Students enrolled in Hamilton County Schools, on an assigned bus route or extracurricular trip.
 - B. Other students enrolled in Hamilton County Schools and permitted by the school Principal to ride the bus on a temporary basis with written authorization.
 - C. Any official sponsor or chaperone as designated by the school Principal or any other person authorized by the Principal to accompany students or others on the trip. The sponsor or chaperone must have completed the school board approval process.
NOTE: Bus drivers assigned as the driver of an extracurricular trip may not transport a child or adult companion, on any trip unless written permission is received in advance by the School Principal or his/her designee.
 - D. Any member of the Transportation Department staff or Hamilton County School official.
 - E. A law enforcement officer authorized to ride the bus by the Superintendent of Schools or the Director of Transportation or acting within the scope of his legal responsibility.
 - F. Drivers may transport their own children, from their assigned compound, to the first school they service in the morning and from the last school they service in the afternoon back to their assigned compound.

III. UNAUTHORIZED PASSENGERS ON BUS - Unauthorized passengers are NOT allowed in/on Hamilton County School Board vehicles for any reason unless Board approved or authorized by the Transportation Supervisor. If an unauthorized person tries to get on the bus, adhere to the following:

- A. Verbal command (inform unauthorized passenger to EXIT the bus);
Stand in/block the aisle.
- B. Call for assistance if they continue.
- C. Make a report.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #2 **Maintenance of District-Owned Vehicles**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to provide clear guidelines for vehicle maintenance scheduling and to identify responsibilities of appropriate drivers with regard to the vehicle assigned to them. Governs the maintenance of Board-owned vehicles, though this directive acts as an amplification of that rule.

Maintenance of Buses: [Legal Authority: F.S. 1006.25(1) and 6A-3.0171(1)(g), F.A.C.]

- I. **Monthly Inspections** - Each bus shall be inspected thoroughly at least every twenty-eight (28) school days. The Transportation Department will develop and distribute a monthly calendar to the mechanics which identifies the inspection due dates throughout the school year.
- II. **Emergency Maintenance** - When mechanical problems are identified on a bus, the driver shall immediately contact dispatch by radio and communicate with the garage regarding the problem. The driver will then respond to directions provided by dispatch/garage as to whether or not to continue driving the bus.
 - A. The driver shall be responsible for completing and submitting the Driver's Vehicle Report.
 - B. Drivers shall report immediately any dents, scratches or other forms of damage, which may be discovered on their buses, either inside or outside to the Transportation Supervisor, and also on the pre-trip inspection form. Intentional acts of vandalism, observed by the driver, shall be handled via a referral (School Bus Incident Report) and then communicated to the Transportation Supervisor.

III. Care of Bus/Cleanliness - Bus drivers are responsible for maintaining a clean bus and keeping the front and back of bus so all lights are clearly visible. Paper and loose dirt shall be swept from the bus after the a.m. and p.m. routes. You are not to sweep your trash and dirt onto the ground, regardless of your location. In the event that a student or other rider becomes sick on the bus, the driver shall clean the bus at the earliest opportunity, if possible, prior to next route. Follow guidelines for utilizing the bodily fluid clean-up kits (mess kit). Bus drivers are to not flood the bus with water such as using a hose to clean the bus. After cleaning the bus, the driver must ensure the bus interior is completely dried out to avoid the accumulation of mold or mildew on the bus.

IV. Other District-Owned Vehicles - Vehicles assigned to other cost centers (such as Facilities, Custodial Services, or Maintenance and vehicles assigned to Schools) shall be maintained on a scheduled basis.

A. Care of other District-Owned Vehicles - Because most service vehicles and others operated by District Office Staff or in driver's education programs are identified as property of the Hamilton County School Board, public perception requires that vehicles be appropriately cleaned.

1. All loose dirt and trash should be swept from the vehicle daily or as needed by driver.
2. All dents, scratches, or other damage discovered by a vehicle operator shall be reported to the Transportation Supervisor via a Driver's Vehicle Report. Damages caused by vehicle accidents shall be reported as per F.S. 3.0171(1)(g).

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #3 **Use of School Bus Garage Facilities & Equipment**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to identify restrictions applied to the use of school board garage facilities, tools and equipment.

I. Use of facilities and equipment- The use of Hamilton County School Bus Garage facilities, equipment and tools is restricted to inspections, servicing and repairing of vehicles and equipment owned by the school board. Other government agencies may use the bus garage facilities with prior clearance to make repairs or inspections which may be beyond their capability so long as it does not interfere with maintenance of school board vehicles.

II. Privately-owned items- No privately-owned vehicles, material, automotive accessories, or implements will be brought into or repaired in or upon the premises of the school bus garage at any time. All employees' privately-owned vehicles shall be parked in the areas designated for private vehicle parking only, or as designated by the Transportation Director.

III. Care of tools and equipment - Mechanics and others who are issued tools or equipment are to be responsible for maintaining it in proper working condition. Damage to tools and equipment shall be reported to the appropriate garage supervisor. If such damage renders the item unsafe for continued use, the item shall be red-tagged and removed from service until repaired.

- A. **Tool Inventory** - Each mechanic shall be issued a standard complement of tools as deemed appropriate by the Transportation Director, and shall be responsible for each tool issued. Lost or missing tools shall be promptly reported to the garage supervisor. Disciplinary action may be taken when such losses are deemed excessive and/or inexcusable. A complete tool inventory shall be conducted at intervals determined by the Transportation Director, but not less than annually.

- IV. **Removal of Items from Garage Facilities** - No items, including discarded or used items, may be removed from the garage facilities by Transportation personnel, unless such removal is authorized in advance by the Transportation Director.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #4 **Items Carried on Buses**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to provide clear guidelines for determining what types of items are not allowed on a school bus. Consideration for rider and driver safety represents the cornerstone of this directive.

I. **The following are not allowed on a school bus:**

1. Animals or insects; except service animals;
2. Glass containers;
3. Food items, other than normal bagged or packed lunches;
4. Weapons;
5. Skateboards or roller skates;
6. Items too bulky to be secured in the student's lap;
7. Balloons

If the need arises to bring one of the above mentioned items aboard the bus, contact your Supervisor immediately. Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** will weapons be approved or carried on the bus.

- II. **Exception to T.D. 4 - I - Band Instruments/Athletic Equipment** - On extracurricular trips where band instruments are required, the instruments shall be placed in the rear seats and shall be secured in such a way that they will not become projectiles in the event of an accident. This exception shall apply to athletic equipment, also.
- A. At no time shall instrument or equipment be stored in bus aisles or in a position which blocks access to emergency exits. Bus drivers are to check the bus for proper exit access before and during bus trips and are responsible for assuring that no items are placed in the aisle or in front of emergency exits.
- B. Baseball or Softball bats, tennis rackets, etc. are acceptable as long as the items are stored in the appropriate case.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #5

Parties on Buses

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to provide clear guidelines to drivers regarding the topic of bus parties.

- I. **Drivers are prohibited** from engaging in bus parties of any type which involve student passengers.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #6

Employee/Visitors Access to Transportation Facilities

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to clearly define limitations on employee and visitors' access at any Transportation Facility.

- I. **Employee access to Transportation Facilities** - In the interests of safety and security the following restrictions are to be observed and enforced by all transportation personnel at any transportation facility:
 - A. Only personnel who are employed at the garage or other transportation facilities will be allowed in work areas. Office personnel are to restrict their presence to those areas normally utilized by them. When necessary to venture into the shop areas, office employees and others should route themselves around and away from the bus lifts and other areas of routine maintenance as much as possible.
 - B. Bus drivers who have work to be done at the garage facility shall wait in the driver's lounge areas designated for such purposes, and will refrain from further unnecessary contact with the staff of mechanics and office personnel.
- II. **Visitors and Others at Transportation Facilities** - Visitors, salesmen and others who may enter Transportation Facilities shall be subject to the following restrictions:
 - A. Visitors are allowed only at the discretion of the Transportation Supervisor in charge of the facility. Those visitors who wish to contact employees at the facility shall be required to wait in the lobby area of the facility. Under no circumstances shall employees meet visitors or others in the garage work areas. Visitors waiting to pick up employees from the end of their shift should wait in their vehicle and not in the transportation facility.
 - B. Salesmen will be required to enter the garage through the office area. Those who need to visit the parts area or shop office are to be escorted to these locations, unless authorized by the Transportation Supervisor as exceptions to this policy.
 - C. Employees may not bring children or others to the transportation facility unless authorized to do so.
 - D. Children or others from the community who may wander onto the Garage property or into the facility itself shall be immediately instructed to leave, unless they are conducting transportation business at the facility.

- E. All garage employees normally stationed at the facility shall assist in enforcing this directive and insuring that only authorized persons are in the work areas.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #7

Pre-Trip Inspection Procedures

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to assure that drivers clearly understand the importance of the pre-trip inspection, and its relationship to passenger safety. One hundred percent compliance with this directive is imperative.

- I. **Specific Authority - Pre-trip inspections of school buses by the bus driver are required by Chapter 6A-3.0171 of the Florida State Board Rules.**
- II. **Frequency and Scope of Pre-Trip Inspection** - The pre-trip inspection shall be conducted by the driver each time the bus is to be used for the first time during a work assignment. This requirement applies to but is not limited to the start of morning routes, the start of afternoon routes, and prior to any trip which follows a period of non-use of the bus.
 - A. The requirement for the pre-trip inspection shall also apply to any parked bus which may be assigned to a driver, whether the bus is to be used immediately to transport students or not.
 - B. The bus driver shall inspect each item identified on the Pre-Trip Inspection Form. This will require an outside walk around as well as a complete check of the inside of the bus. At no time will a bus be driven away from a storage site until the driver completes the pre-trip inspection form.
- III. **Pre-trip inspection forms**- The pre-trip inspection form shall be maintained on the bus at all times and may be spot- checked to ensure compliance with this directive. Completed forms are to be turned into the transportation office on the last working day of the week as directed by the Director of Transportation. Late submission of forms or other paperwork will be reflected on the employee evaluation.
- IV. **Reaction to Bus Defects** - When an item on the bus is identified as defective, the driver shall promptly notify dispatch of the problem. The driver will not continue the assignment unless directed by dispatch/garage to do so. **Under no circumstances shall the driver continue to operate any bus when passenger safety will be jeopardized by such action.**

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #8

Radios, Tape Decks, Citizen's Band & Cellular Phones in School Board Vehicles

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to identify consistent limitations to the installation and use of accessory items on Board-owned vehicles, and to protect the interests of the School Board with respect to the property and the standards of the public.

- I. **Devices-** No employee may install any electronic device or modify current equipment on District maintained vehicles without prior approval from the Transportation Director.
- II. **Radio Music/Talk Radio on Buses** - No music or talk radio shall be played on buses which could be considered objectionable by parents or students. Drivers must use good judgment in determining what may be an acceptable station to tune in. A good rule of thumb would be to refrain from playing any station about which you have the slightest doubt. Complaints received by parents/students or others may result in the loss of the accessory radio on the bus.
- III. **Cellular Phones-** Under no conditions shall a cellular phone be used while the bus is being driven or while waiting in traffic. **Use of earphones or Bluetooth devices are not permitted while operating a school bus.** Use of **cellular phones** on buses is prohibited except for the below listed condition:

In case of an emergency the bus shall pull over to a safe place and the call may be made.

School Board policy 6.113 and Florida Statue 6a-3.0171

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #9

Dress Code

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to address proper dress code for transportation employees.

- I. **Attire-** As transportation professionals, the importance of appropriate attire cannot be overemphasized. Bus Drivers and monitors are the District's most visible ambassador to the general public and especially to parents. Decorations, symbols, mottos, or designs imprinted on clothing that depict drugs or alcoholic beverages, that are derogatory or offensive to individuals or groups of individuals, or that are otherwise offensive to good taste or the maintenance of good decorum are not permitted. Below, are some examples of acceptable and unacceptable attire. This list is by no means exhaustive.

Examples of acceptable attire:

- Slacks, skirts, dresses (at knee when sitting)
- Jeans (ragged or torn above the knee must have leggings or tights under them)
- Shorts or culottes of appropriate length
- Walking shorts (must be within 2" of the kneecap)
- Shirts with collar (long or short sleeve)
- School T-shirts
- Footwear with closed heel and toe and securely held on foot

Examples of unacceptable attire:

- Tank tops or muscle shirts
- Headwear that interferes with vision
- Footwear without closed heel and toe
- Footwear that interferes with safe vehicle operation

***Drivers will wear uniforms when provided by the district.**

- II. ID Badges**- Badges MUST be worn at all times while operating a school bus, while on a school campus, when at the District Office, or whenever acting as a representative of the District School Board of Hamilton County, e.g. when on a field trip. Only current badges provided by Transportation or the District Office are to be used. All others, including old Transportation badges, are not to be worn at any time and should be destroyed. If an ID badge is lost or it becomes illegible, immediately contact a supervisor for a replacement.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #10

Vehicle Repair Orders

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to guide employees in the proper reporting, documentation and follow up associated with vehicle defects or other vehicle maintenance needs.

- I. Transportation Repair Order**- All work performed on any Hamilton District Schools' vehicle shall be documented via the appropriate Transportation Repair Order. The work performed shall be identified along with the repair parts and/or fluids used, time spent on the job, and every other required aspect of the work order.
- II. Unscheduled Work Requests**- Work needed on vehicles outside of scheduled inspections shall be identified via the Drivers Vehicle Report. This form is to be completed by the employee assigned to the vehicle and submitted to the garage supervisor, who will then complete the work order after consultation with the driver (if needed). Except in emergencies and as directed by the Transportation Supervisor, no work shall be performed on vehicles prior to the completion of the work order.
- III. Review of Work Requests**- The lead mechanic shall be responsible for reviewing each request for work and the completed work order to assure appropriate documentation exists. Coordinator of Shop Operations will review and analyze monthly maintenance reports submitted by Transportation Supervisor.
- IV. Completed Work Orders**- After being reviewed by the garage managers, the completed work order shall be submitted to the parts personnel, who will determine costs for parts and labor and identify these on the work order. The work order shall then be placed in the permanent record file for the appropriate vehicle. The labor rate shall be determined and adjusted annually.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #11

Injuries to Employees and Students

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to provide guidelines for the reporting and appropriate response to injuries which may involve transportation employees or pupils under the care of supervision of transportation employees.

- I. **Injuries to Employees** - All injuries to employees of the Transportation Department which occur during the performance of their normal duties shall be reported promptly to the Transportation Supervisor, Compensation/Family Medical Leave Secretary (if after hours, to a supervisor). Appropriate workers' compensation paperwork shall be initiated by office personnel, and the employee shall be subject to all provisions and requirements of the Workers Compensation Laws and procedures of the Hamilton County School Board. Notifying the dispatcher will not meet the requirements of this directive.

In the event of serious on-the-job injury or death of an employee, the incident shall be reported immediately to the Superintendent of Schools, the Director of Transportation, the Transportation Specialist and the Coordinator of Insurance Activities.

- II. **Injury of Students on Bus** - Anytime a student on a Hamilton County School Bus is injured or appears to have suffered an injury, the driver shall immediately contact dispatch to report the incident. The driver shall respond as directed by the Transportation Department, and shall be responsible for completing the Student Accident Report Form, and submit the report to the appropriate school. The dispatcher will notify a supervisor immediately:
- A. In the event of serious injury, emergency rescue services shall be called to the scene of the incident. The driver should be instructed to render aide to the injured while awaiting the arrival of rescue personnel. If still at the school, the injured student should be removed from the bus (if appropriate) and parent contact should be initiated by school personnel.
 - B. For injuries which are not considered serious in nature, the bus driver should be instructed to continue the assignment. Route personnel or dispatcher will attempt parent contact by phone if appropriate, and the driver will complete the Student Injury Report at the school, or as soon as practical.
 - C. For first aid type injuries, the driver shall be instructed to assure that school personnel are advised of the injury (contact with bus loading zone personnel) and shall be responsible for the proper report. At no time should students be sent to the clinic unescorted if complaining of an injury which may need medical attention.
 - D. This reporting process shall apply to all injuries, including those which may have actually occurred off the bus but are reported to the driver.

- III. **Emergency Equipment at the Garage** - All garage personnel and drivers shall acquaint themselves with the locations of emergency equipment such as eye wash, emergency showers and fire extinguishers. Transportation Supervisor shall ensure that the emergency equipment at the garage is in working order at all times.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #12

Response to Medical Emergencies on Buses

PURPOSE: This directive is intended to define the actions and limitations to the response of Transportation Personnel who may be faced with a medical emergency on a bus.

- I. **Instruction**- The personnel of the Transportation Department who transport students shall receive instruction on first aid for minor emergencies that may occur on the bus, and shall retrain as needed to maintain basic skills.
- II. **Response**- When a medical emergency arises on a school bus the driver of the bus shall determine the scope of the emergency and respond in one of the following ways;
- A. If the bus is near the school or the child’s home, the child may be returned to that site for appropriate attention by the school clinician or parent at home.
 - B. The bus driver or the monitor on the bus will apply whatever first aid assistance appropriate for the situation and the employee’s level of training.
 - C. The bus driver or monitor will immediately radio the dispatcher.
 - D. The Transportation Department will contact the parent and call 911 to arrange further medical assistance.

Refer to training in blood borne pathogens prior to treating any medical emergencies.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #13

Vehicle Security

PURPOSE: This directive is established to assure that appropriate vehicle security measures are taken by all employees entrusted with the care of District-owned vehicles so that theft, vandalism, or other damage to the vehicle is minimized.

- I. **Vehicle Keys** - School bus drivers, mechanic, office staff and others who operate a District-owned vehicle are to secure the vehicle keys when leaving the vehicle unattended. This applies to all locations, whether at a school site or the garage.
- A. Buses shall be secured at the designated storage sites. All windows must be closed, roof hatches secured, and the entrance and emergency doors secured appropriately, but not locked, after the last trip of the morning and again when the day’s driving is completed.
 - B. Drivers may not change the storage site at the end of the morning or afternoon routes unless the change is approved by the Transportation Supervisor or designee.

II. Compounding of Vehicle - Buses will be compounded at locations designated by the Transportation Supervisor

- A. Bus Drivers shall not store or park their buses at any location other than the designated Depot site, unless authorized by the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee to do so. This applies to mid-day storage as well as end-of-day storage.
- B. Compounded buses shall remain unlocked.
- C. Private vehicle must remain locked at all times.

III. Reporting of Theft/Vandalism to District-Owned Vehicles - Employees who discover vandalism or theft of items from their assigned vehicle are to report such findings promptly via Property Vandalism/Theft/Incident/Other Loss Report.

- A. A police report is to be initiated for incidents of theft or vandalism involving a District-owned vehicle, except minor vandalism which occurs on buses in normal route or trip driving.
- B. Damage to seating material is normally reported via Student Incident Report if the culprits' identity is known.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #14

Security in Transportation Parts Area

PURPOSE: To identify appropriate security measure to assure that access to parts inventories is limited, in compliance with District auditing and inventory standards.

I. Unlimited Access- The following personnel shall be issued keys to the parts room and shall have unlimited access to the parts areas during normal working hours:

- 1. Transportation Supervisor
- 2. Parts Manager
- 3. Lead Mechanic

The employees above are responsible for maintaining all entry doors into the parts areas in the locked position and for properly securing the entries at all times. They are also responsible for enforcement of established rules of access in these areas and for reporting those who do not comply.

II. Other Access- The following personnel may be issued keys to the parts room when necessary to adequately supply the garage with needed parts: Other Mechanics as approved by the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee.

III. After-Hours Entry into the Parts Room - No employees shall enter the parts area after normal operating hours unless such entry is approved in advance by the Director of Transportation or his/her designee.

- IV. **Prohibited Entries into Parts Areas** - No bus drivers, mechanics, visitors or others shall be allowed into parts storage areas unless specifically authorized by the Director or his/her designee.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #15 **Restrictions on Backing of Buses**

PURPOSE: Because a large percentage of bus accidents involve backing maneuvers, this directive is intended to identify appropriate restrictions for backing of buses.

- I. **Backing of Buses**- Bus operators are not to back school buses unless absolutely necessary.
- A. Whenever it is necessary to back a bus, an outside ground observer is to be utilized. The observer is to be positioned at the rear and to the side of the bus being moved.
 - B. When there is a monitor assigned to the bus the monitor shall assist the driver in backing the bus when backing is performed by serving as a ground observer.
 - C. The only exception is when no adult is available to act as ground observer. This directive applies to backing of buses at all locations, including Transportation Garage Facilities and fueling sites.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #16 **Pupil Loading/Unloading Procedures at School**

PURPOSE: Every Bus Driver shall employ the established standards of safety in the school loading/unloading zones. This directive is intended to identify these standards.

- I. **Passing of Other Buses**- While students are boarding buses in the loading zones, no passing of buses are permitted. Late buses arriving after school has dismissed and students have commenced loading are to wait at the rear of the line-up and pull up to the loading area after all other buses have pulled away.
- A. **Exceptions** - Buses may pass others in the bus loop when directed to do so by a Transportation Supervisor or school administrator, or when a break-down requires such passing, though caution must be exercised. When the school administrator directs such action, assistance shall be provided to safely direct the bus past others.
- III. **Positioning the Bus** - Drivers should generally prepare to unload at the school by positioning the bus approximately five (5) feet away from the bus loop curb. This will allow students to empty the bus onto even pavement before stepping up to the curb. Whenever possible, make every effort to discourage students from jumping from the bus steps to the elevated sidewalk.
- When positioning the bus to load or unload at the school, never pull the bus so close to the rear of the bus ahead so as to block the rear emergency door of that bus. Sufficient space must be maintained to permit the free operation of the rear door at all times.

IV. Vacating the Bus with Students Onboard- Never vacate the driver's seat area when the engine is running and students are aboard the bus unless there is a bus aide present. If there is not an aide present, the bus must be switched off and the key placed in your pocket. He or she must stay in the vicinity of the bus as to not leave any kids on the bus unattended. If you must leave, call for help from nearby personnel to attend to the kids on the bus, or have them attend to the situation.

If students are not aboard the bus, you may conduct your post trip inspection with the bus engine running, so long as you close the entrance door first to prevent students from re-entering the bus.

V. Unloading Pupils at School - Drivers will require the students to use the handrail in the bus stairwell while loading and unloading. After the last student leaves the bus and before pulling away from the school campus, the bus will be inspected for vandalism, items left behind and passengers.

VI. Use of Signals/Lights While Loading at School - When pupils are being loaded onto buses in the school bus lanes, pupil loading/unloading lights are not to be activated.

VII. Loading of Students at School - Drivers will be on their buses prepared to receive students when they arrive at the bus in the afternoons. Failure to adhere to this directive could lead to disciplinary action. This will require the driver to be standing near the drivers' seat, interacting verbally with students as they load. The driver is to be actively involved in seating the children and reinforcing safety rules (such as the use of the handrail) while maintaining order.

A. Assigned seating is mandatory for all grade levels.

B. Drivers shall instruct students in proper use of factory installed seat belts.

C. Book bags, band instruments, lunch boxes, or other items cannot be permitted to take up needed seating space on a bus. Such items shall be held in the student's lap.

VIII. Exceptional Student Education Buses - Due to the lengthy unloading process involving many physically handicapped students, drivers of E.S.E. routes must utilize judgment in activating/deactivating the pupil stop arm and loading lights in the vicinity of the bus loading zones. When it is apparent that buses are being held up, the driver of the E.S.E. bus should temporarily deactivate the signals to allow other buses to pass.

A general rule of thumb is to display the lights whenever the actual unloading process is underway, but refrain from activating the lights when actual unloading is not taking place.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #17

Radio Procedures

PURPOSE: This directive is intended to guide Transportation Personnel in the proper use of the two-way radios which are installed in buses and other District-owned vehicles.

- I. **Policy Statement** - The 2-way radio system is installed and maintained to facilitate clear and immediate communication between Transportation personnel and dispatch, office or garage, and between individual buses or vehicles when appropriate. The chief goal in installing the system, is to provide efficient route operations and to allow prompt response to emergencies or adverse situations. Use of the bus 2-way radio is to be limited to that which is appropriate in relationship to the stated goals of the department.
- II. **Radio Operations** - The radio is designed to operate while the ignition switch is in the “on” or “auxiliary” position. The receiver is a push-to-talk, release-to-hear handset. Be sure to maintain steady pressure on the push-button while talking, so that your entire message is received. Some units have a built in delay requiring a pause before speaking.
- III. **Receiving Messages** - During normal operations you will hear radio messages intended for others. When a message is intended for you or others on your bus, you will be paged from the dispatcher. You are to maintain radio contact during working hours. If circumstances require you to be away from the radio, you must notify dispatch. Wait a few seconds before picking up the handset. Answer with your name and bus number.
- IV. **Radio Use** - Use of the radio is vital to the safe, efficient operation of the Transportation Department. As such, it is important to observe specific guidelines when using the radio.

Here are some tips for using the radio.

- Listen for other transmissions before keying the mic.
- Pause for 1-2 seconds after keying the mic before speaking.
- Hold the mic 2-3 inches from your mouth, and speak in a normal volume.
- Be short and professional in your message.
- Always clear the radio after transmissions.

- V. **After-hours Communications** - CONTACT SUPERVISOR
- VI. **Radio/Emergency Procedures** - Refer to School Bus Emergencies.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #18
Fueling Station Operations, Refueling of Buses & District-Owned
Vehicles

PURPOSE: The purpose of this directive is to identify appropriate restrictions and procedures for refueling of buses and other vehicles, including off-road machinery that may be utilized by schools. Duties and responsibilities of fuel attendants and vehicle operators are also identified.

- I. **Safety Precautions** - Due to legal restrictions and safety concerns for employee safety, no smoking or cell phone use is permitted at fueling facilities or within 50 feet of the pump locations. All passengers and the bus driver must disembark the bus during refueling. This applies to all refueling, whether at a District-operated refueling site or a privately-owned fuel station.
- II. **Accounting for Fuel Use** - Each gallon of fuel dispensed from a District-owned fuel facility and each gallon used in a District-owned vehicle must be accounted for. No fuel is to be obtained without documentation as outlined herein.
 - A. **Fuel Attendant Records** - Each fuel attendant is to utilize the Districts' fuel report form to identify fuel and oil dispensed for any vehicle or machinery, as well as mileage for the vehicle. All portions of the form must be completed.

When fuel is obtained at a District-owned fuel facility outside of normal fuel attendant hours, the person dispensing the fuel must utilize the Fuel Report Form to log the amounts dispensed and other required information. At no time is fuel to be dispensed without a record of the use.

- III. **Duties/Responsibilities of Fuel Attendant**- Minimum responsibilities include:
 - A. Check engine oil level at every refueling.
 - B. Check brake fluid level, power steering fluid level and radiator fluid level.
 - C. At least weekly, check transmission fluid level, battery fluid level, and belt tension pulleys.
 - D. Submission of fuel reports at intervals established by supervisors. Current requirements are to close out the fuel report on Friday of each week and the last working day of each month, with reports submitted weekly on Monday.
 - F. Other duties as defined on job description.
- IV. **Prohibitions** - No fuel will be dispensed into privately-owned vehicles. Attendants who staff the fuel pumps will be required to report others who may do so or those who misuse supplies and equipment in their custody.
- V. **Gas Cards** - Only when it is not possible or feasible to utilize District-owned fueling facilities will vehicle operators be authorized to purchase fuel from a privately-owned fueling station. If, by reason of route assignment or extracurricular trip duties, a driver anticipates that fueling at a District-owned facility is not possible or practical, the driver must obtain a fuel card for purchases at other sites.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #19

Smoking on Buses and at Work Locations

PURPOSE: To adopt a policy regarding smoking which complies with State Statute.

- I. **Violation-** It is a violation of federal law to smoke on a school bus at any time. The penalty provided by law is a monetary fine on first offenses of up to \$100.00, and up to \$500.00 for each subsequent violation. Any employee found violating this law shall be responsible for any and all penalties imposed, and will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the Transportation Director.
- II. **Current Regulations-** All employees shall comply with current “NO SMOKING” regulations at Transportation facilities.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #20

Safety in the Workplace

PURPOSE: To reinforce the Department’s safety requirements related to working conditions and safe work practices.

- I. **Safety Gear-** Garage employees will utilize all safety gear provided to perform specific tasks. As a minimum, safety glasses to be used when grinding or underneath a vehicle, safety catches on all vehicle lifts, and proper protective gear while arc-welding or torch cutting.
- II. **Use of Handrail-** Bus drivers and others who must board a school bus shall utilize the handrail when ascending and descending the stairs of a bus. All employees shall utilize the handrails provided at all stairways at transportation facilities.
- III. Failure to follow these safety guidelines could affect an employee’s Workers Compensation benefits as provided under Florida Law.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #21

Reporting Physical Contact with Students

PURPOSE: To assure that incident of physical contact between students and B o a r d employees are appropriately reported and documented.

- I. **Report of Contact-** Aside from incidental contact between the student and the Board employee, all incidents in which a student hits, kicks or otherwise intentionally strikes the employee shall be reported in writing to both the Transportation Director and the school principal.

A Student Incident Report will meet this requirement in most cases. However, if the incident cannot be adequately described on the lines provided on the report, additional documentation should be provided.

When, in the course of their normal duties, drivers or monitors must initiate physical contact with a student (for example, in restraining a student), a written report of the incident shall be filed with the school principal.

- A. **Exceptions to this Directive:** When physical contact described in Directive 21. Part I is with an E.S.E. student whose exceptional condition normally would require some form of physical contact by the employee with the student, the driver or monitor is not required to file a written report. (For example, a child with seizures or Cerebral Palsy) However, whenever there is physical contact not normally associated with the student's exceptional condition, or when the physical contact by the student or employee is injurious, the reporting requirements apply.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #22

Proper Use of Strobe Light

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for bus drivers in the proper utilization of the bus strobe lights, head lights, and to promote uniformity in operation of the school bus strobe light.

- I. **Lights-** Strobe lights and head lights must be kept on at all times.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTIVE #23

Procedures for Calling in to Request Leave

PURPOSE: To establish the correct procedure to call in for leave.

- I. **Drivers and Monitors** - To ensure all routes are covered and students are kept safe, it is necessary that the Transportation Department be notified of leave as soon as possible.
- A. Spouses or others may not call in for you (unless individual is incapacitated or hospitalized).
- B. In the A.M. and P.M., you should call in at least 3 hours or more prior to your leaving time.
- C. For any planned absence, documentation in Skyward (or other board approved timekeeping system at the time) should be made at least 3 days prior to date of absence. You should also contact your Supervisor as soon as possible.
- D. For unplanned absences, contact your Supervisor as soon as possible. Document the absence in Skyward (or other board approved timekeeping system at the time) as soon as you can.
- E. For planned absences, the driver must return the bus back to compound. For unplanned absences, the bus will be picked up and brought back to the compound by the Transportation Department. Drivers will be responsible for picking bus back up upon return to work.

PART II - TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Section 1

HIRING/TRAINING OF TRANSPORTATION PERSONNEL

I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The hiring of Transportation personnel must be in compliance with established School Board policies and State Board Rules.

- A. Bus Drivers:** State School Board Rules require that all school bus drivers meet the following minimum qualifications as defined in rule:
1. Must have at least five (5) years of licensed driving experience.
 2. Must pass dexterity test administered by a Transportation tester and successfully complete D.O.E. form “Examiner’s Certificate” and the Physical Examination for School Bus Drivers, which is to be performed by a School Board approved physician.
 3. Must possess a valid and appropriate driver’s license in accordance with the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.
 4. Must successfully complete forty (40) hours of pre-service training consisting of at least twenty (20) hours of classroom instruction and eight (8) hours of behind-the-wheel training and receive a certificate of completion.
 5. Must demonstrate the ability to prepare required written reports.
 6. Must demonstrate physical and mental capabilities required to carry out all assigned duties as a school bus driver.
 7. Must submit an online application to the School District.
 8. School Bus Operators are covered under the rules of the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act (OTETA) for random drug and alcohol testing. Operators must be available for testing when called. A refusal to test is considered a positive test, and the individual is subject to termination.
 9. Must submit to and successfully pass a pre-employment criminal background check as required by the District.
- B. Driver’s License Checks:** Prior to completing training, all applicants will submit to a driver’s license check. Only those whose driving record meets the requirements of the Hamilton County School Board Safe Driving Plan will be accepted as bus drivers.

- C. **Bus Monitors:** Bus Monitors serve as attendants on E.S.E. buses and are not required to drive a bus. School Board policies require monitor applicants to complete the application with the same requirements for criminal background checks and drug screenings as for all applicants. The Transportation Department requires all monitor applicants to successfully complete a dexterity test to assure the applicant possesses all the physical skills necessary to carry out the assigned duties of the Bus Monitor.
- D. **Mechanics/Fuel Attendants/Clerical Personnel:** All applicants for these positions are required by Board Policy to complete the application process, including criminal background checks and drug screenings.
- E. **Substitute Bus Drivers:** Requirements for employment are the same as for contracted bus drivers.

II. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Bus Drivers and Monitors (both Full time and substitute), must receive specific instruction regarding their duties and responsibilities. Others within the Department are to enhance their skills through participation in in-service opportunities.

- A. **Bus Drivers:** The School Bus Drivers' Curriculum adopted by the State Board of Education shall be the basic text for all driver trainees. In addition to the minimum requirements established by Chapter 6A-3.0141 of the State Board Rules, the trainee will receive instruction in:
 1. Hamilton County Route Sheets.
 2. Required payroll and personnel paperwork.
 3. Proper radio procedure.
 4. Utilization of all pertinent information contained within this document, Transportation Handbook.
 5. FEFP processes & procedures.
 6. Blood borne pathogens & right-to-know policies.
 7. OTETA & local drug policies & procedures.
 8. The District Safe Driver Plan & accident management procedures.
 9. Passenger management techniques, including District-specific procedures.
- B. **Monitors:** All employees who work with exceptional students will be trained in proper wheelchair tie-downs, handling of physically handicapped students, recognition of medical emergencies, etc. Monitors are to be trained to handle E.S.E. students with a diversity of exceptionalities. Monitor trainees will also receive instruction in:
 1. Required payroll and personnel paperwork.

2. Utilization of all pertinent information contained within this document, Transportation Handbook.
3. Blood borne pathogens & right-to-know policies.
4. Passenger management techniques, including District-specific procedures.

Section 2

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

Duties and responsibilities of school bus drivers are listed in State Board Rules and School Board Policies. Additionally, bus drivers are required to comply with procedural guidelines and directives that are included in the Handbook of Transportation Operations.

I. BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

State Board Rule

Chapter 6A-3.017 defines the Bus Driver's responsibilities:

- A. To pass all required physical examinations and meet such requirements as may be prescribed by law or rules.
- B. To be clean and neat in appearance, and to refrain from wearing shoes which are not securely held on the foot. Shoes must be non-skid, closed toe and heel.
- C. To refrain from use of tobacco while operating the bus, and to use no profane language in the presence of students. Drivers shall not use or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or any substance which may impair the driver's alertness or performance while on duty. Drivers shall not carry firearms while on school board property.
- D. To prescribe, in cooperation with the principals, the seating arrangements of students on all buses.
- E. To report needed changes in school bus transportation to the Director or Supervisor of Transportation including bus loads, bus deficiencies, road hazards, routes and schedules.
- F. To study and observe all laws and rules of the State Board and the school board relating to the service of transportation.
- G. To attend and participate in conferences and training classes for school bus drivers and to be prepared at any time to pass successfully a reasonable examination concerning traffic laws, state and local transportation rules and driving skills.
- H. To ascertain and ensure that transported students observe all rules prescribed by law and by the state and local board.

- I.** To maintain order and discipline, under the direction of the school principal, on the part of every passenger.
- J.** To permit a student to leave the bus only at their assigned stop, except upon written authorization of the school principal or other district employee.
- K.** To observe all procedures incorporated in the FL DOE Basic School Bus Drivers Curriculum, as incorporated by reference in Rule 6A-3.0141(4)(b), FAC.
- L.** To instruct transported students in safe riding practices.
- M.** To require all passengers to remain seated, wear lap belts and to keep aisles and exits clear.
- N.** To participate in emergency evacuation drills at least once each school semester under the direction of the school principal or the principal's designee.
- O.** To use the bus, if it is publicly owned, only to transport students to and from school, except upon specific direction of the superintendent or from the principal upon written authorization by the superintendent.
- P.** To prepare immediately after every accident involving the bus or a school bus passenger and accident report to be filed with the Director or Supervisor of Transportation.
- Q.** To ascertain and ensure that all persons are off the bus before filling fuel tank.
- R.** To drive always at a safe speed and never in excess of the legally posted speed limit.
- S.** To cooperate with duly authorized school officials, mechanics and other personnel in the mechanical maintenance and repair of bus in overcoming hazards which threaten the safety or efficiency of service.
- T.** To inspect the bus at least daily prior to the beginning of the first daily trip or more often as required by the school district and to report any defect affecting safety or economy of operation immediately to authorized service personnel. The inspection shall include all items identified in the procedures related to the mandatory daily inspection in the Basic School Bus Driver Curriculum.
- U.** To keep the bus clean and neat at all times and not affix any stickers or other unauthorized items to the interior or exterior of buses. Exceptions: the first window on the passenger side, bottom window used for student's information such as school name and run numbers.
- V.** To prepare reports, keep all records required, and otherwise assist school officials in mapping bus routes, planning schedules and in obtaining information for a continuous study of all phases of transportation service.
- W.** To wear a seat belt at all times when the bus is in operation.
- X.** To use roof-mounted white flashing strobe lights (if equipped) at a minimum, whenever headlights are required to be used due to reduced visibility conditions pursuant to Section 316.217(b), Florida Statutes, except that insufficient light due only to the time of day or night shall not require use of the strobe light.

- Y. To report immediately to the Director or supervisor of transportation, school principal or other designated officials:
1. Misconduct on the part of any student while on bus or under the driver's immediate supervision.
 2. Complaints requiring attention of school authorities.
 3. Any hazards arising which would offer either an actual or a potential threat to the safety of students in the driver's care.
 4. Causes for failure to maintain school bus time schedule.
 5. Overloaded conditions on the bus which exceed the rated capacity of the bus.

School Board Policy

Hamilton County School Board Policy identifies the following responsibilities:

- A. To comply with State Board of Education rules as defined in 6A-3.017 of the Florida Administrative Code
- B. To assume responsibility for the discipline of pupils as delegate by the principal. Drivers may **NOT**:
1. Administer corporal punishment.
 2. Suspend a child from riding the bus.
 3. Let a child off the bus at any stop other than the assigned bus stop, except when authorized by the principal or his/her designee.
 4. Permit a child to ride a bus to which he/she is not assigned, except with written permission of the Principal.
- C. To operate the bus on extracurricular trips in compliance with state law and county board regulations related to speed limitations and other traffic considerations.
- D. To assure that emergency exits on buses used for all purposes are maintained clear and free of obstruction, and to maintain emergency equipment on the bus such as road reflectors, first aid kit and fire extinguisher.
- E. To report violations of the Student Code of Conduct as it relates to drug offenses and possession of weapons.

II. OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL BUS BY BUS DRIVERS

The School Bus Driver shall drive the bus in compliance with the following instructions:

A. Preparing to Drive

1. Have in his/her possession a valid and appropriate driver's license and Florida Medical Examiner's Certificate to drive a school bus.

2. Check the neutral start switch.
3. Have parking brake in “on” position before starting engine.
4. Start engine and allow air pressure to build to maximum PSI.
5. Perform pre-trip inspection utilizing ore-trip inspection form.
6. Adjust driver’s seatbelt and seat.
7. Turn on headlights (low beam) and clearance lights.
8. Check parking brake for holding.
9. Release parking brake.
10. Check brake pedal for proper operation.

B. Mirrors

1. Check all mirrors before moving the bus.
2. Check mirrors for traffic before making turns.
3. Check mirrors for traffic before and after lane changes.
4. Check traffic conditions using mirrors on a regular basis while driving straight ahead.

C. Speed and Following Distance

1. Not exceed the posted speed limit.
2. Not drive too fast or too slow for existing conditions.
3. Not exceed the posted speed limit in a school zone or on school grounds.
4. Not follow another vehicle closer than 100 yards on the open highway.
5. Not follow another vehicle too close in urban areas.

D. Turn and Hazard Warning Signal Lights

1. Use turn signals at least 100 feet prior to turning.
2. Use turn signals when changing lanes.
3. Check turn signal lever for “off” position.
4. Use turn signal before leaving curb or shoulder area.
5. Use hazard lights and set parking brake when stalled or disabled.

E. Steering

1. Not turn steering wheel while the vehicle is at rest.

2. Use steering wheel properly - hands position at 10-2 or 8-4 position while driving straight ahead.
3. Use push/pull steering.

F. Traffic Signs and Signals

1. At Red Light - Stop and remain stopped until the light turns green.
2. Yellow Traffic Light - Prepare to stop. Stop if it can be accomplished safely.
3. Green Traffic Light - Proceed with caution after visually checking traffic on other roadways or lanes.
4. Flashing Yellow Light - Proceed with caution and be prepared to stop.
5. Stop Sign - Stop at stop bar, crosswalk, or prior to intersection. Make a full stop behind the sign.
6. If necessary, make a second stop before entering the intersection.
7. Look left, right and left again before entering the intersection.
8. Place gear selector in neutral and pull parking brake when required to wait in traffic.
9. Not stop too close to the vehicle ahead so as to prevent pulling around in the event the vehicle stalls in the roadway.
10. Not signal other motorist or pedestrians, other than via turn signals and other vehicle signals.
11. Stop without causing a jerking or rebound motion.

G. Lane Usage

1. Drive as far to the right as practical at all times, staying within a traffic lane.
2. Observe traffic and road conditions far enough in advance to allow proper adjustments.
3. Merge and change lanes with the flow of traffic.
4. Stay in one lane on bridges and overpasses.

H. Turns

1. Position the bus to make turns without interfering with lane usage of others.
2. Approach turn from proper lane.
3. Use proper lane before, during and after turn.
4. Avoid curbs in turning.

I. Railroad Crossings

When at a railroad crossing, which involves a traffic light or stop sign, you must make certain that all vehicles ahead of you clear the intersection before committing to cross the tracks.

If you start following a vehicle across the train tracks and through a green traffic light, you run the risk that the light will change to yellow or red and the vehicle ahead of you may stop. This would cause your bus to come to rest too close to the nearest rail. (The law requires that you stop no closer than 15 feet from the nearest rail.)

Please take every precaution to assure you are not on or near the tracks at railroad crossings. If the stop bar associated with a stop light is located in a position that will not allow your bus to clear the tracks by at least 15 feet, ignore the stop bar to the degree necessary and prudent to provide the minimum separation required by law.

1. Activate hazard warning lights before reaching the railroad warning sign.
2. Activate dome lights.
3. Turn off all noise-makers (including fans, heaters, radio) and open side window.
4. Silence passengers.
5. Stop behind stop bar, not closer than fifteen (15) feet or more than fifty (50) feet from nearest track.
6. Place gear selector in neutral, set parking brake.
7. Look and listen for approach of train closing door if train is approaching. Open door and look/listen again after train passes.
8. Put gear selector in drive, take parking brake off and close door before moving.
9. Re-activate necessary switches, accessories after crossing tracks.
10. Turn-off all warning lights after resuming speed.
11. All the above are to be performed in order.
12. Bus drivers shall operate the school bus at railroad crossings as required by Florida Statute 316.1575.
13. Railroad Crossings with malfunctioning barriers or signals:
 - a. Under no circumstances will a school bus driver cross a railroad track where the barrier is down or the lights are flashing, unless appropriate law enforcement or railroad personnel directs the driver across.
 - b. When a railroad barrier is stuck in the down position, the driver shall radio dispatch if the bus is going to be delayed in the normal schedule. The driver will be instructed by the dispatcher regarding reaction to the problem.

- i. The driver may be re-routed, if feasible.
- ii. Law enforcement personnel or rail operator may be called to the scene for assistance.
- iii. The malfunction will be logged for appropriate notification of rail operator.
- iv. The same procedure shall be followed when red flashing signals malfunction at a railroad crossing.

J. Pupil Loading and Unloading

1. Use side and rearview mirrors to check traffic before stopping.
2. Check on-coming traffic before stopping.
3. Activate pupil warning lights (amber) at least two hundred (200) feet before stopping. Pre-warning should be greater than two hundred (200) feet if appropriate.
4. Stop prior to intersections or driveways whenever possible. (Approximately one (1) bus length prior to intersection.)
5. Stop at a point short of waiting passengers; approximately 10 feet.
6. Come to a complete stop before engaging the stop arm.
7. Place gear selector in neutral, check traffic, set parking brake before opening door.
8. While loading or unloading, keep foot on brake pedal.
9. Cross students who must cross the roadway by using the proper hand signals.
10. Close the door while students are being seated.
11. Seat students according to assigned seats (as general guide, seat K and 1st grade up front).
12. Place gear selector in drive only after students are seated.
13. Visually check vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
14. Release parking brake and de-activate stop arm before moving.

K. Backing the Bus

Though the practice is discouraged and in certain cases prohibited, backing the bus is sometimes necessary. Drivers must:

1. Position the bus properly prior to backing.
2. Check traffic conditions before backing.

3. Back from primary roadway into secondary roadway, unless route sheet specifies otherwise.
4. Use hazard warning lights.
5. Complete a walk-around if the bus has been parked and unattended.
6. Use all mirrors, both inside and outside, in the backing process. Do not turn around in seat.
7. Utilize a ground observer (adult) located at rear of bus whenever backing, unless no other adult is present.
8. Avoid backing when possible by properly positioning bus while parking.

L. Leaving Bus Unattended

1. Turn off headlights.
2. Set parking brake and check for holding.
3. Place gear selector in neutral and pull parking brake.
4. Check bus and deactivate child check mate button.
5. Remove key from ignition.

M. Emergency Reflectors

1. Assemble reflectors properly.
2. Display for breakdown - two lane road, in roadway.
3. Display for breakdown - two lane road, off roadway.
4. Display for breakdown - four lane road, in roadway.
5. Display for breakdown - four lane road, off roadway.

N. Passenger Control

1. Supervise & direct the loading and unloading process according to current directives.
2. Maintain control of students throughout the route.
3. Respond to misconduct according to assertive discipline guidelines and current directives.

O. Driver Safety Considerations

1. Refrain from consumption of alcoholic beverages while on duty and within eight (8) hours of beginning of duty period.
2. Report to a Transportation Supervisor anytime a prescribed medication or any other factor inhibits the drivers' ability to drive safely. If in doubt, report it.

P. Post-Trip Procedure

After every route assignment or extracurricular trip on a school bus, the Driver must:

1. Walk from the front to the rear of the bus to ascertain whether or not all passengers have left the bus as appropriate.
2. Identify any problems that may exist with the seats or seating provisions as a result of vandalism or other damage.
3. Secure for proper return to the school office any personal property that may have been left by a passenger.

III. DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SUBMITTING REPORTS/DOCUMENTS

Drivers must complete routine paperwork for the District payroll and personnel considerations, and for D.O.E. reporting purposes. Those forms required and the proper procedures for these and other forms are identified as follows:

A. Normal Day Bus Driver Time Sheet

This establishes the basis for the drivers' pay, indicating the total number of duty hours in the normal day.

1. The Transportation Department will establish the drivers' normal day at the beginning of the year. Changes are to be approved by a supervisor.
2. Pre-trip inspections, bus sweeping or other housekeeping is included in the driver's normal day.
3. It is mandatory that all transportation employees must sign in in the sign in book on the Driver Time Sheet page at the following times:
 - Before and after A.M. route
 - Before and after P.M. route

For drivers who do not return to the compound in the evening or who do not leave from the compound in the morning, the book should be signed after the A.M. route for both shift start and end time, and in the evening at the beginning of said shift. End time will be documented the next morning, and ending time for Friday shifts on Monday A.M.

4. Supervisor assigns all buses and routes to driver. This can be modified at any time to meet the needs of the school district and to better accommodate students.

B. Transportation Substitute Driver Time Sheet

This form is to be submitted by substitute and intern drivers for all work and contracted drivers for work outside of the normal day.

1. Any work or assignment performed by a contracted driver which extends the normal day must be identified by authorizing the person's name.
2. For maintenance work which extends or shortens the normal day, the Lead Mechanic or Mechanic must initial the form.
3. Enter starting and ending times. Computation is to be made by payroll.
4. Substitute employees are compensated for all actual work hours. Documentation is to be included on the form to clearly indicate all work assignments.
5. Employees who intentionally falsify information relative to work assignments or hours of work are subject to disciplinary action in addition to monetary compensation to the District, if overpayments have been made.

C. Florida Education Finance Program (F.E.F.P.)

The F.E.F.P. report is the mechanism by which the State Department of Education determines how much money each county is entitled to for pupil transportation. We are compensated a percentage of our actual expenses for each eligible rider who rides during the count period.

IV. DUTIES OF SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

Drivers are under the direction of the Transportation Director, or his/her designee, and will follow all instructions and complete all assignments issued by the Director or his delegate. This does not change the relationship between the school principal and drivers who serve his/her school as defined in **School Board Rule 6.113**

- A. School bus drivers shall be familiar with the principles of first aid and be prepared to render aid in emergencies at any time anyone is injured on the school bus.
- B. School bus drivers shall maintain a uniform time schedule on all routes. The normal policy is to avoid early arrival at all stops, and if necessary, pull over in a safe location on the roadside if necessary to maintain the proper schedule. An accurate time piece must be used by every driver.
- C. School bus drivers cannot stop at locations for pupil pick-up or drop-off unless authorized to do so by the official route sheet or, in rare circumstances, by a transportation supervisors' verbal authorization.
- D. Drivers shall report defective or damaged equipment to the proper authority via the form provided for this purpose.

- E.** Drivers shall maintain a clean bus at all times. The floor shall be swept every morning. PM route if needed. The trash container shall be emptied as needed. The windshield and rear windows shall be kept clean to insure that visibility is not reduced. This policy applies to spare buses that are used instead of regular assigned buses. If you find a dirty bus prior to use, report it to the Transportation Supervisor.
- F.** Drivers shall report serious misconduct on the part of pupils to the appropriate authority.
- G.** Drivers shall notify the Transportation Supervisor any time the student load exceeds the number of seats available on the bus.
- H.** Drivers shall remain on their buses at all times while students are loading or unloading at schools. Before departing school, check and ensure ALL students on board are assigned and/or authorized to your route.
- I.** Drivers will be accessible via the bus two-way radio at all times while on duty. If, for any reason, a driver leaves the bus, contact is to be initiated with dispatch so that the drivers' whereabouts can be identified should further contact be desired.
- J.** Drivers will monitor students during loading at stops on the route and at schools in the afternoons to assure that no prohibited items are brought onto the bus.
- K.** Drivers are required to check their mailboxes before their PM routes and check email daily.
- L.** Drivers shall report to a Transportation Supervisor any traffic citation received while driving a school bus or a privately-owned vehicle.
- M.** Drivers are to inform the transportation office of any changes in phone number or other personal information which was required during the employment process, (Example: address, emergency contact persons, etc.)
- N.** The following information is to be maintained on the bus at all times (or, as appropriate, on the drivers' person):
 - 1. Current Route Sheets
 - 2. Pre-Trip Form
 - 3. Insurance Card
 - 4. Passenger Rosters
 - 5. Seating Chart
 - 6. Florida Medical Examiners Certificate & appropriate Florida Commercial Driver's License
 - 7. Valid Vehicle Registration Form

V. **DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MAINTAINING PROPER STUDENT CONDUCT**

School Bus Drivers are required to maintain order and proper behavior by students on the bus.

A. **The driver's control over students must be sufficient to assure that:**

1. Students enter and exit the bus at school loading areas and at student stops in an orderly fashion and in accordance with instructions. This requires students to proceed at all times:
 - a. Without haste and without loitering. Students are to be at their bus stops at least five (5) minutes prior to scheduled pick-up times.
 - b. Without shoving, crowding or pushing.
 - c. With proper respect for the safety of others.
2. Students will remain quiet enough so as not to distract the drivers' attention from the road. At all times, students must:
 - a. Refrain from shouting or other boisterous activities.
 - b. Refrain from unnecessary talking to the driver.
 - c. Refrain from all other conduct which may distract the driver.
3. Students will remain seated while the bus is in motion.
 - a. Each student must go directly to the assigned seat or seating area, and must sit down as soon as possible and fasten their lap belt.
 - b. Each student must remain seated until the bus is completely stopped.
 - c. Students must be in the forward facing position at all times when seated.
4. Students will keep all parts of the body and all objects inside the bus and out of the aisle.
5. Students will refrain from eating, drinking, and chewing of gum or use of any tobacco products on the bus. Drivers and monitors will refrain from eating while students are on the bus.
6. Absolute silence is maintained at railroad crossings.

B. **Bus Rider Rules and Instructions:**

You are required by State Board Rules (6A-3.017 (3)(I)) to instruct your passengers in safe riding practices. In that this is such a vital part of your role as a bus driver, and in an effort to confirm that students are, in fact, receiving this instruction, the following standards will be applied effective the start of each school year.

1. During the first week of each school semester, the driver will take the necessary time to discuss bus safety with all passengers. Preferably, this instruction will be conducted prior to off-loading students at the school, but may be conducted in the afternoon while awaiting departure from the school, if time permits.
2. As a minimum, the driver will perform the following instructional elements:
 - a. Identify the placard at the front (or, if appropriate, the rear) of the bus which lists bus safety rules.
 - b. Briefly summarize these rules, and the rationale for each rule. For example, this rule which requires all students to remain seated in a forward-facing position, drivers should explain that this provides protection for passengers in the event of a crash.
 - c. Explain the bus evacuation procedures, and what to do in the event of a real emergency.
 - d. Explain the consequences for misbehavior.
 - e. Encourage students to ask questions, if they are not sure they understand any of these elements.
3. Upon completion of in-service, complete the form that is provided to you, and forward it to the Transportation Department. This documentation is mandatory.
4. Rules and instructions for bus passengers are included in the District's Student Code of Conduct.
5. Rules for bus students are posted at the front or rear of all buses.

C. Video Cameras and Electronic Monitoring of Buses:

Florida Statute 1006.10 gives school bus drivers the authority to monitor and control the behavior of students when they are on a school bus, when they are being transported to and from school or school functions at public expense, or when a school bus is present at a bus stop.

1. Video Cameras on Buses: Video cameras with audio recording capability have been installed on all Hamilton County Public School Buses. Drivers and Students may be filmed at any time during their ride. The video recordings may be utilized to determine violations of the Student Conduct and Transportation Employee Handbook. Violations of these standards, the Student Conduct and Discipline Code, handbook of Transportation Operations or any action or behavior by a student(s) to substantially distract the driver and causes or has the potential to cause a safety hazard on a moving bus, or while stationary, may be the basis for suspension from bus/school and/or expulsion of bus riding privileges.

2. The video recording and GPS data may also be used to determine any corrective action which may be administered to any driver or transportation monitor which violates School District policies, and/or the handbook of Transportation Operations.

VI. DRIVER'S RESPONSE TO STUDENT MISCONDUCT ON THE BUS

The bus driver has a legal responsibility to maintain safe and orderly conduct by student riders. In responding to student misconduct on the bus, drivers will comply with the guidelines which may mandate the following actions:

A. Drivers' will appropriately document student misconduct via a notepad or pocket writing tablet. The minimum documentation includes:

1. First Incident - Driver will verbally warn the student and change seating arrangement if necessary.
2. Severe Incidents - When severe incidents occur (i.e. fighting, inappropriate touching, profanity, etc.) the driver will file a Student Incident Report. All reports must be turned into the Transportation Supervisor.

B. Completing the Student Incident Report:

1. All information must be in black or blue ink.
2. Complete entire Incident Form.
3. Write additional comments to explain what actually occurred. DO NOT use vague phrases such as "Johnny simply will not listen to me!" or similar generalities. Be specific in further explaining the misconduct observed.
4. Refer students for behavior that you observe. Do not refer students via for behavior which you suspect, unless the misconduct is acknowledged by the student in question. Always provide enough information for the principal so that he/she knows what happened and how you know it happened.
5. If you suspect serious misconduct by a student but cannot obtain verifiable evidence to prove your case, simply write down the details and provide the information to the principal as soon as possible. Then, cooperate with him or her, to reach an appropriate conclusion to the incident.
6. Remember the words that come back to haunt us: "I can't do anything about it - I did not see it." Do not dismiss a student with those words who alleges that another student has physically hurt or otherwise caused harm to him. If the allegation involves physical injury or any other factor which cries out for action, take action by recording the allegations and forwarding them to the school authorities. Do your part first, then let the principal do his/her part. Remember that NO ACTION is sometimes the only action that is not defensible.

7. Sign the form and turn it over to the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee.

C. Responding to a Physical Altercation Between Two or More Students:

1. Verbally instruct the students to stop.
2. Evaluate the situation and determine the immediate status of the safety and welfare of the involved students.
3. Notify dispatch of situation and possible need for additional assistance from law enforcement.
4. Use whatever means available to prevent harm to either student which will be evaluated by the criteria of “what would a reasonable person have done” in the same situation. (In other words, the no touch policy may or may not be appropriate based on the situation and safety of the students).
5. There is no one way to handle the situation. School Board personnel have a duty to exercise reasonable care when supervising students and the expectation is that transportation employees will strive to ensure the safety and welfare of all students under their supervision.

C. Responding to Mass Misbehavior by Large Groups of Students:

1. If all other measures have failed to bring the students under control, the driver should seek a safe location to pull the bus off the roadway, to allow the driver to address the student misbehavior without the added concerns associated with driving. Radio contact with the dispatcher center should be initiated unless the action taken has not affected the schedule adversely. Roadside delays of this nature are to be limited to five (5) minutes except for extremely serious circumstances.
2. Make every effort to identify students who refuse to comply with your requests for order and proper behavior. These students should receive Student Incident Reports.
3. You are authorized to return the route to the school only after first attempting to regain control of the route through the methods identified above and only after requesting and receiving authorization from the Transportation Supervisor or designee to return the route. Obviously, it would be fruitless to return the route to an empty school. The Transportation Supervisor or designee must telephone the school to ascertain whether or not a school administrator is present to deal with the students. If not, or if the administrator advises that the returning of the route is not desired, then the driver will be instructed to continue the route and provide written Student Incident Report on the following school day.
4. You should not ignore misbehavior that could endanger students, (i.e. - failing to remain seated, hanging out of windows, etc.). Attempt to employ your assertive discipline techniques to maintain control over the passengers.

5. Remember that the best way to maintain control over the route is to first gain control. Make it a habit to insist an orderly conduct before leaving the school grounds. If students refuse to comply while still in the bus loop, you can expect that you'll have difficulties after you leave unless you bring them under control.
6. Consider your proximity to drop-off locations before deciding to return the route. If you will soon disembark a significant number of students, it probably would be better to proceed with the route.
7. Do not make threats to students that you cannot follow through. For example, refrain from threatening to return the route to the school when you have no way of knowing whether you will be authorized to do so. Your credibility will be questioned anytime you make idle threats. In assertive discipline training, you are urged to "Say what you mean and mean what you say!"
8. Drivers are not to physically punish students, nor are drivers allowed to suspend any student from ridership.

E. Misconduct Which Occurs Off the Bus

1. As a general rule, school authorities and bus drivers have no legal authority to discipline students for misbehavior that occurs off the bus. However, the following exception exists:
 - a. Failure to cross the roadway as instructed by the driver can lead to the death or injury of a student. Therefore, drivers are to make every effort to train students to cross the roadway at least 8-10 feet in front of the bus, and only after the driver signals that it is safe to cross. If repeated efforts to train a student in properly crossing the roadway are intentionally disregarded, a Student Incident Report may be appropriate. The driver should be prepared to show documentation supporting the efforts made to train the student.
2. Dangerous conduct in the vicinity of the bus danger zone or damage to external equipment. (Example: Students who intentionally place objects or push others into the bus or on the wheels, or who grab the pupil crossing arm, should be referred to the principal for disciplinary action.)

VII. DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARENT CONTACT IN MATTERS RELATED TO PUPIL DISCIPLINE

- A. **The Transportation Supervisor may contact by phone parents of students who are guilty of misconduct on the bus. However, such contact can be time-consuming.**
- B. **When parents initiate contact with drivers at stop locations,** the driver should politely inform the parent that discussions of any duration are normally conducted at official parent/driver conferences at the school. A second option available to the parent is advise them to contact the transportation office and request assistance from a Transportation Supervisor. Note: Parents are not to board the bus.

C. Parent Conferences

From time-to-time, a parent conference will be held at the school which requires the driver's presence. Parent conferences may be requested by the parent, the school administration, the driver, or the transportation department. The following guidelines are to be followed by drivers at a parent conference:

1. If you are asked by the school administration to attend a parent conference, notify the transportation office as soon as you are made aware of it. The presence of a Transportation Supervisor is mandatory. If you have a field trip scheduled during the prospective time of the conference, notify the Transportation Supervisor of this when you are initially contacted about attending a conference so that arrangements can be made to cover the trip and assign you a replacement trip.
2. Be prepared to discuss the factors in question. Bring any documentation, including your notes and copies of Student Incident Reports. Discuss factual details only.
3. Recognize the principal's authority as the leader in the conference. Answer questions as directed by the principal or the Transportation Supervisor.
4. Carefully choose your words to avoid unnecessarily inflaming the situation. If the parent becomes hostile, remain calm and allow the Principal to intervene. Do not allow the hostile parent to draw out an unprofessional or equally hostile response from you.
5. Be open to suggestions, even if they are not good ones. Make every effort to allow the parent some latitude in handling the child's problem; be a good listener. Even if your agreement in a small matter seems to be a compromise that you don't like, recognize that the conference and the attitude of a hostile parent may benefit if some concessions are made.
6. If you are wrong, do not be afraid to admit it. People make mistakes, but mistakes are often compounded by one's refusal to admit it. Your supervisor and principal should be aware of all factors in the conflict, and will assist you in reaching the best possible solution with the parent.

VIII. ROUTING AND SCHEDULING

- A. School bus drivers are required to follow the route sheets provided, and to report any errors identified or changes that are needed.
- B. Only a routing specialist or transportation supervisor may make a routing change on routes. Bus drivers may indicate a request for a change but may not implement the change unless authorized to do so.
- C. Student stops will be made at the times indicated on the official route sheet. **DO NOT** arrive at a stop earlier than the scheduled time, even if it is only a minute or so.

- D. If you fall behind on the scheduled pick-up times, do not attempt to get back on schedule by exceeding the posted speed limits or driving in an unsafe or reckless manner.
- E. Notify the Radio dispatcher anytime you are ten or more minutes behind schedule, either in the morning or afternoon.
- F. Every aspect of the route sheet is to be followed (turns, stops, instructions).

Section 3

I. **EMERGENCY EVACUATION FROM BUSES**

State Board of Education rules require the principal to oversee emergency evacuations from school buses during the first six weeks of each semester, and to instruct school bus drivers in procedures for conducting emergency evacuation drills. (6A-3.017 (2)(e)2d and e)

Proper evacuation procedures for drills are at the discretion of the Principal. However, both front and rear door evacuations are to be practiced, due to the likelihood that one or the other may be inaccessible in a real emergency. The following guidelines should be followed during evacuation drills at school sites:

A. **Rear Door Emergency Evacuation**

1. Stop the bus, set parking brake, place gear selector in neutral, turn off engine and remove key.
2. Stand, face the students and gain their attention.
3. Designate two older, more mature students to open the rear emergency door and instruct them to position themselves on the ground, one on each side of the door to assist others out the exit.
4. Instruct remaining students that this is to be an “EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILL” using the rear emergency door only. Instruct students to drop and sit, with their legs extending out the back door, and scoot out to the ground. Safety of the student is our utmost concern, if any student has a physical problem, they may be exempted from participating in the drill.
5. Beginning with the rear seats of the bus, have students move out of seats in an alternating fashion from right side to left side (or left to right) until all seats are empty.
6. Instruct students to proceed on the ground to a safe place approximately 100 feet from the bus and wait until the driver provides further instructions.
7. The driver will walk from the front to the rear of the bus checking the seats and assuring that the bus is emptied.

8. After reuniting with the students, the driver will dismiss the students or instruct them as guided by the Principal.

B. Front Door Evacuation

1. Stop the bus, set the parking brake, and turn off ignition; place gear selector in neutral and remove the key.
2. Stand, open the door, face the children, and get their attention.
3. Instruct students that this is an “EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILL” using the front entrance door.
4. Designate two students to act as helpers from the ground, with instructions to guide students to a safe place approximately 100 feet away from the bus. Helpers should also be instructed to assist in keeping all students at the designated location until advised otherwise.
5. Beginning at the front of the bus, have children stand and move out of the seats in all alternating left-to-right or right-to-left fashion, until all seats have been emptied.
6. Driver should walk to back of bus checking all seats before leaving the bus.
7. Driver should go to children’s location and dismiss the students or instruct them as directed by the Principal.

C. Combination Front/Back Door Evacuation

1. Stop the bus, set the parking brake, place gear selector in neutral, turn off engine and remove the key.
2. Stand, face the students and gain their attention.
3. Designate two older students to proceed out of the front door and rear emergency door to assist others out of the bus.
4. Instruct remaining passengers that this is to be an “EMERGENCY DRILL” using both the rear and the front door.
5. Designate which portions of the bus will use the front door and which will use the rear door. (Example: Rows 1-11 use front, Rows 12-22 use rear.)
6. Evacuate via rear door as you would for rear-only drill; (alternate right-to-left or left to right, starting from rear) Evacuate via front door as you would for front door evacuation.
7. Instruct students to proceed on the ground to a safe place approximately 100 feet from the bus.
8. The driver will walk through the bus to assure that it is emptied.
9. Instruct students as guided by the Principal.

D. Documentation

The Bus Evacuation Form is to be filled out and returned to the Transportation Department.

II. REAL EMERGENCIES/EVACUATION OF THE BUS

As a general rule, students are to be held on the bus during most emergencies. However, at least 2 exceptions to the general rule are:

A. Bus Fire or Possibility of a Fire

A bus should be stopped and evacuated immediately if the engine or any portion of the bus is on fire. Passengers should be moved off the bus at least 100 feet from the bus, remaining there until the driver advises otherwise.

1. As soon as the driver is aware of the fire, radio contact is to be initiated with the Transportation Supervisor. As calmly as possible, state your bus number, name, and location and extent of the fire/smoke. Then, place your radio volume switch up to enable you to hear questions that may be asked while you are evacuating the bus. Prior to leaving your bus, toss your radio mouth piece out the driver's side window to allow further communication, if the fire spread allows it.
2. Take the fire extinguisher with you as you evacuate. However, do not attempt to fight the fire until all students are safely off the bus and unless the fire can be quickly "knocked down" in one minute or so. If flames have appeared in the interior of the bus and appear to be spreading, do not attempt to fight the fire from inside the bus.
3. If radio contact is cut off due to electrical fire or other problems, make every effort to communicate with the transportation office as soon as possible. If radio contact was not possible or not successful prior to the evacuation, help must be summoned by other means. When notifying the fire department by phone, the driver should call 911 to report the blaze, then call the transportation office. If the problem is not an emergency, a telephone call to the transportation office should be sufficient.

B. Unsafe Position

In the event that a bus is stopped due to accident, mechanical failure, road conditions or other factors, the driver must determine whether it is safer for passengers to remain on the bus or to evacuate. You must evacuate if:

1. The final stopping location is in the path of any train or adjacent to any railroad track.
2. The stopping point of the bus is such that there is danger of collision. In normal traffic conditions, the bus should be visible for a distance of 300 feet or more. A position on a hill or in a blind curve wherein such minimum sight visibility does not exist should prompt the driver to initiate evacuation procedures.

C. Emergency Reflectors

Anytime a school bus is disabled for any reason along the traveled portion of a roadway, emergency reflectors must be placed on display as soon as possible. The driver must leave the bus to place reflectors in the following manner:

1. Disabled off two-lane roadway - reflectors located at intervals of 10 feet and 100 feet from the rear of the bus, even with the side of the bus closest to the road edge. A third reflector is placed 100 feet ahead of the bus, along the same line.
2. Disabled on two-lane roadway - One reflector 100 feet ahead of bus, one 10 feet from rear and another 100 feet from rear of bus. The last reflector at rear is placed in line with center of the bus. Others aligned along left side of bus.
3. Disabled off four-lane roadway - One reflector 10 feet from rear of bus, a second 100 feet from rear and third 200 feet from rear. All aligned along driver's side of vehicle.
4. Disabled on four-lane roadway - Reflectors located 10 feet, 100 feet and 200 feet from rear of bus, in staggered alignment.

D. Emergency Notification

The dispatch office must be advised anytime the bus driver anticipates a late arrival for students at school or to drop-off locations. The appropriate principals shall be notified by the dispatcher. The Principal is to be notified as soon as possible regarding emergencies which affect students who ride buses serving his/her school.

E. Evasive Action

A school bus driver should never swerve or make an emergency stop to avoid striking a small animal on the roadway. The safety and well-being of student passengers and motorists comes before the consideration of animal. If a bus strikes and kills or injures a small animal (dog, cat, etc.) the driver shall not stop. The first responsibility of the driver is the safety of the passengers. The driver shall report the incident to the dispatch office at the earliest opportunity.

Section 4

CRASH MANAGEMENT PLAN/RESPONSE TO VEHICULAR ACCIDENTS

The possibility exists every day in which District school buses, whether transporting students or not, may be involved in an accident with other persons, or property. Prompt professional response to such occurrences must be planned and carried out to minimize the long term effects of such an incident.

I. RESPONSE TO VEHICULAR ACCIDENTS INVOLVING HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOL BUSES

As required by State Board Rules, any school bus accident or incident involving property damage, no matter how minor, shall be reported immediately to the Transportation Supervisor on duty.

- A. The supervisor on duty will consider the reported circumstances in light of Florida Statutes (Chapter 316.027, Death or Personal Injury; Chapter 316.061, Damage to Vehicles or Personal Property; Chapter 316.063, Unattended Vehicles or other Property) and will determine whether to contact law enforcement officials to respond and file a report. A law enforcement report must be obtained in accidents involving:
 - 1. Injury or death to passengers, drivers or other persons.
 - 2. Vehicular damage, if accident or incident occurred on a public access roadway or parking lot.

II. DRIVER'S RESPONSE TO ACCIDENT

- A. In all instances where a school bus is involved in an accident, the driver shall remain at the scene of the accident. Failure to do so is a criminal offense and may result in disciplinary action in addition to penalties imposed by law.
- B. Emergency reflectors shall be displayed as provided by Florida Statute 316.301.
- C. Drivers should assist injured persons.
- D. Drivers (or other employees of the District) are to make no statements regarding fault to other parties involved in the accident. Drivers are to be courteous, and not argue with other parties involved or police officers. If asked to sign any statement other than that which may be required by the police, the driver is to decline and refer the statement to the Transportation Supervisor who responds to the scene. Upon their arrival at the scene, the driver is required to provide the investigating officer their driver's license, CDL Medical Examination card, vehicle registration and the District's vehicle insurance information.
- E. If charged in an accident involving the bus, the driver shall:
 - 1. Refrain from arguing with the police officer or refusing to sign the citation. (Either may result in arrest.)
 - 2. Bring the citation to the transportation office where a copy can be obtained and included with the accident report file.
- F. If students are on the bus at the time of the accident are uninjured, they are not allowed to leave the scene. Students may only be released from the scene to another bus, or to the custody of their parent or guardian, and only when given authorization to do so by the responding law enforcement agency. Prior to being released, the following information about the students will be required by the investigating officer and the driver will begin gathering this student data as soon as it is practical to do so:
 - 1. Student Roster which includes the student's name and address
 - 2. Students' location on the bus - use the seating chart.

- G. The driver’s chief concern in any accident is the safety and well-being of the student passengers. Drivers are to inquire immediately if any student is injured or feels any discomfort that can be associated with the accident. If a student complains of pain or is visibly injured, even slightly, the accident is to be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency as an “accident with injuries”. Students should be instructed to report to their school office if they feel any pain or discomfort later.

III. ACCIDENTS INVOLVING OTHER DISTRICT-OWNED VEHICLES

- A. When involved in a vehicular accident involving any county-owned vehicle, the vehicle operator will:
 - 1. Contact the Transportation Department immediately to report the accident.
 - 2. Conduct themselves in the same manner as prescribed for bus drivers in Component 4-2, paragraphs A and D of this section.
- B. The department head or Principal who supervises the employee involved in an accident shall be responsible for assuring the Transportation Supervisor is notified immediately.
- C. The Transportation Supervisor will maintain vehicle accident records for all District-owned vehicles.

IV. DEPARTMENTAL DUTIES RELATED TO SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS

A. Transportation Supervisor or Designee

In most cases, the Transportation Supervisor will be the first employee besides the driver to hear of the accident. The Transportation supervisor, interacting with the driver via radio, must:

- 1. Determine the exact location of the accident.
- 2. Determine the extent of injuries and/or damage.
- 3. Notify the appropriate law enforcement agency and rescue or emergency response agency.

B. Supervisor on Duty

In most cases, the ranking Supervisor on duty will be the Transportation Director. In his/her absence, an on duty administrator will handle these responsibilities.

C. Responding Transportation Supervisor

Upon arrival at the scene, the responding Transportation Supervisor will:

- 1. Assess the situation and direct others to respond, if appropriate. If possible, a brief, but thorough message shall be communicated by appropriate means to the communications center, so that updates may be passed on to the Superintendent

2. Assist the bus driver and authorities on the scene as appropriate. If injured students are being transported to medical facilities, ascertain the identities and destinations of each. In such cases, the school principal or designee will be present at the scene. The Principal responds to the medical facility, while the supervisor on duty remains at the scene.
3. Issue no statements to the news media. It may be likely that “no comment” is appropriate.
4. Assure that uninjured student passengers are safely transferred to another bus, if appropriate, for delivery to their normal schools or drop-off points. This transfer will only occur when given clearance by the law enforcement officer at the scene that the students are free to be released.
5. Photograph the accident scene, including each of the vehicles involved, in order to document vehicle and property damage and provide a record each vehicle’s license plate information.
6. Initiate contact with the staff of the designated drug testing collection facility if Federal and/or District policies mandate a post-accident drug test. The Responding Supervisor shall assist the collection staff with coordinating the time/place of any urine and/or breath alcohol samples that may need to be taken after the accident and will escort the driver to the designated sample collection location.

V. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

In the event of an accident, parents of students who are on the bus at the time of the accident should be contacted by the affected school’s Administration and/or their staff to inform them of the crash and other information as appropriate. This function is necessary in order to allow the dispatch office to continue to carry out its regular duties and assist with the departmental response to the accident.

A. **The School Principal**

Because of his/her familiarity with students, the principal can be vitally important as a calming influence. By responding to the scene as quickly as possible, the principal can ascertain if additional school staff members are needed to help identify children who may be hurt.

1. After arriving at the scene, the principal will attempt to identify students being transported, and should respond to the receiving medical facility to deal with parents who may later arrive there. If more than one facility is involved, the principal must designate other school staff personnel as appropriate to assure that the school system is represented wherever students are being received.

2. The Principal will designate appropriate staff personnel to remain at the school to coordinate the response to inquiries from parents or others. The release of information from this designee will be limited to that which is directed by the Principal or Transportation Director.

B. The Transportation Specialist (Safety Officer)

The Transportation Specialist or other Transportation Supervisor will respond to the scene of accidents involving injuries to students. The main task of the Transportation Specialist or Supervisor is to assure that efforts between the various District personnel involved are of maximum effectiveness, and to critique the situation for later review. Upon arriving at the scene, the Safety Officer should:

1. Make contact with the District's command post, then the Transportation Director or Principal to assess the situation and determine if additional resources or personnel are needed.
2. Assist law enforcement or rescue personnel as appropriate.
3. Coordinate the development of the accident report. This will require collection of data necessary to track the report through the investigating agencies, and the compilation information for the official District report summary.

C. Coordinator of Insurance Activities (Risk Manager)

The Risk Manager should respond to any school bus accident involving student injuries to perform the following tasks:

1. Critique of the situation for later review.
2. Assure that District students and employees receive the optimal level of assistance with regard to insurance concerns.
3. Respond to the receiving medical facilities as soon as possible to assist in dealing with parents and medical staff.

Section 5

ESTABLISHING BUS STOPS/ROUTES

The Transportation Director is authorized to designate all transportation and non-transportation zones, and to establish school bus stops and bus routes as specified in F.A.C. 6A-3, subject to strict compliance with the criteria within this section.

I. ESTABLISHING BUS STOPS

Student safety must be maximized in the establishment of bus stops. However, in that no stop location is perfectly safe and due to the inability to stop at every student's front door, the balance between safety and efficiency must be maintained by adhering to the following standards.

A. Safest Areas

All bus stops should be located in the safest possible areas.

1. Avoid placing stops on steep grades, blind curves, near the crest of a hill or near large signs or buildings that obstruct the view. The State recommendation for unobstructed sight distance is 400 feet in either direction. The Hamilton County minimum standard is 500 feet in either direction.
2. Stops shall not be designated near railroad tracks or crossings, or within intersections on a roadway. When a stop designation identifies the stop at an intersection, the driver will stop at a point either 50 feet prior to reaching or 200 feet after the intersection.
3. Bus stops must provide sufficient roadside right-of-way to accommodate the students who will utilize the stop without the students standing on the road.

B. Number of Students

Care should be taken to assure that a reasonable number of students board the bus at any one stop, thereby reducing the traffic congestion and potential for problems at the stop. There is no magic number - some stops serving large numbers of students are necessary due to spur considerations.

C. Road-Side Considerations

When a bus stop is designated, consideration shall be given to the walking path to the bus stop.

1. The statutory criteria for Hazardous Walking Conditions shall be the general guidelines in determining whether or not the walking path to the bus stop is safe.
2. The District does not require students to stand on one specific side of a roadway to await the bus in the mornings. Students who choose to wait on the side of the road opposite of the bus door are to be instructed to wait for the drivers' signal before crossing the road to board the bus. The driver shall check all traffic and make sure it's safe before signaling the students to cross. When crossing the road, students should be instructed to cross at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus.

D. Safety Investigations

All traffic factors associated with a bus stop are subject to changes over time. A bus stop which is considered within the standards for safety one year may not comply with those standards later due to changes in the surrounding area. Accordingly, safety checks will be performed, if deemed necessary, to ensure that all bus stops are in compliance with the standards identified in this section.

1. Initial safety checks shall be required by a supervisor for all stops added to existing routes or new stops on new routes.
2. During the behind-the-wheel observations conducted for all drivers, the stops on routes will be safety-checked.

3. Whenever a safety concern is raised by a driver, a parent or any other person, the Transportation Supervisor will investigate the site in question and make appropriate response to the complainant.

II. **BUS ROUTES**

In accordance with School Board Policies, following restrictions and guidelines will be followed in routing of non E.S.E. buses.

A. **Walk Zones**

The Walk Zone boundaries and questions regarding a student's actual distance from school or a bus stop, shall be resolved in accordance to State Board Rule 6A-3.001(3), which states: "The distance will be measured from the closest pedestrian entry point of the property where the student resides to the closest pedestrian entry point of the assigned school building or to the assigned bus stop. The District shall determine the shortest pedestrian route whether or not it is accessible to motor vehicle traffic. The shortest traveled route does not necessarily mean the route of necessity would be open to travel by a motor vehicle. The shortest route might be a sidewalk or a footpath."

B. **Bus Stop Distance**

Generally, school bus stops will be no more than 1.5 miles from a student's private property. The distance shall be measured along the route the student would walk. Generally, this measurement shall start at the point where the private property upon which the student resides meets the public street or road right-of-way.

C. **Loading/ Unloading Stops**

As a general rule, pupil loading/unloading stops serving a school are to be separated by a distance of at least .2 miles (1,056 feet). Exceptions are permitted under the following circumstances:

1. To alleviate a hazardous walking condition that may exist between the student's residence and the nearest established pupil stop. Criteria used to determine hazardous conditions shall be the same as for students who must walk to and from school.
2. To alleviate overcrowding at established stops when such overcrowding cannot be alleviated through compliance with .2 miles' minimum separation guideline. Under such circumstances, stops will be located so as to comply as closely as possible to the minimum separation guideline.

D. **Alternative Stops**

Students who are eligible for transportation will be transported from the stop closest to their residence and back to the same stop, unless the Transportation Supervisor provides written authorization for alternative pick-up or drop-off arrangements and such is feasible when it meets State and Local requirements.

E. Day Care

Bus transportation will be provided to and from Day Care facilities.

F. Outside of Attendance Zone

Students attending a school outside the attendance zone of their legal residence will not be provided transportation.

G. Route Changes

School bus drivers do not have the authority to make changes in their assigned routes and bus stops. Requests for changes will be directed to the transportation office. Bus drivers must wait for office approval prior to alternating route.

H. Stops on Roadways

As deemed appropriate, bus stops will be established on both sides of major roadways to prevent students from crossing such roadways. At no time will a student be required to cross a four-lane road to a pick-up point.

I. Private Property

As a general rule, school buses will not be routed onto private roadways. Exceptions may be granted if the road owners complete a Hold Harmless agreement for the use of such roads, as outlined by the School Board Attorney.

1. When E.S.E. buses are performing “curb-side” pick-up of handicapped students on private property at the request of the legal guardians.
2. If, after establishing bus service on private roadways, the Transportation Department determines that road conditions have deteriorated to the point of being unsafe or damaging to the bus, services will be discontinued until proper road repairs are made.

J. Route Planning

General guidelines for routing of buses are defined in State Board Rule and Hamilton County School Board Policy. Among these guidelines are the following considerations:

1. Routes will be planned, so far as practicable, so that no elementary student shall be on a bus more than 50 minutes or a secondary student more than one (1) hour during the morning or evening, and so that no more than an hour-and-half will elapse between the time the student boards the bus and the time school begins, or the time school closes and the student leaves the bus in the afternoon.
2. Bus routes shall be planned and adjusted to make optimal use of all bus seats.
3. Spurs - A spur is defined as a side road off the main route, serving non-physically handicapped students whose homes are less than 1.5 miles from the main route, with such side road having only one way to and from the main route.

In determining the measured distance, the measurement will be made along the most direct walk path, whether or not by public access, between the private property where the student resides and the closest bus stop.

K. ESOL Students

Chapter 6A-6.0908 of the Florida Administrative Code (State Board Rules) states: “National origin minority or limited English proficient students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their use of a language other than English.”

Accordingly, bus drivers and monitors may not prohibit or attempt to prohibit ESOL students on the bus from speaking in their native language.

Section 6

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (E.S.E.) TRANSPORTATION

I. ELIGIBILITY

Students enrolled in a Hamilton County School who are staffed as “handicapped” in accordance with F.S. 1006.22 are eligible for transportation at public expense. The eligibility is without regard to the students’ residence within a walking zone which would exclude a non-handicapped student from eligibility.

A. Major handicapped classifications normally transported:

1. C - Orthopedically Impaired (OI)
2. F - Speech Impaired (SI)
3. G - Language Impaired (LI)
4. H - Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HI)
5. I - Visually Impaired (VI)

6. J - Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (EBD)
7. K - Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
8. L - Gifted (GIF)
9. M - Hospital/Homebound (HH)
10. O - Dual-Sensory Impaired (DS)
11. P - Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
12. S - Traumatic Brain Injured (TBI)
13. T - Developmentally Delayed (DD)
14. U - Established Conditions (EC)
15. V - Other Health Impaired (OHI)
16. W - Intellectually Disability (ID)

- B.** Following the staffing and proper notification by the E.S.E. Department to the Transportation Department, transportation will be provided as soon as possible. Proper notification to the Transportation Department generally means:
1. Receipt of the Special Transportation Request and the student’s IEP (Individual Education Plan) in complete form.

II. E.S.E. ROUTES AND PROCEDURES

- A.** The parents or guardians of every student, staffed as E.S.E who receives special transportation, shall be provided a copy of the document entitled “E.S.E. Pupil Transportation Guidelines,” which is incorporated into this Handbook.
- B.** E.S.E. students will generally be picked up as near to the residence as is practical and in the interests of all students who ride the bus. However, non-physically handicapped students may be grouped at a stop location to facilitate more efficient routing, when appropriate.
- C.** A bus driver transporting E.S.E. students must receive the child onto the bus and determine whether or not transportation can be safely provided in view of the child’s equipment condition (wheelchair, stroller, etc.) or medical condition. If the driver, teacher and/or nurse determines that a student is obviously ill or under the influence of strong medication, or if the equipment accompanying the student is obviously damaged or broken so as to render the securement system useless, then the driver should contact the Transportation Department requesting permission to refuse to transport the child. Only the Transportation Supervisor or ranking supervisor may authorize such action.

III. STAFFING THE E.S.E. ROUTE

In general, the E.S.E. route will be assigned to bus drivers who identify an interest in such routes, maintain good work attendance and who have skills compatible with the exceptional demands to be placed on drivers of such routes. These assignments will be at the discretion of the Transportation Director.

A. Minimal Training of Drivers of E.S.E. Routes

In addition to the required school bus drivers' curriculum and licensing requirements, drivers of E.S.E. routes will receive training in the following areas:

1. Wheelchair and equipment tie-down techniques.
2. Specific first aid instruction in dealing with seizures.
3. Review of exceptional student classifications and characteristics of behavior.
4. Transportation procedures as provided in the "E.S.E. Pupil Transportation Guidelines." (These are incorporated into the Handbook as standard operating guidelines.)
5. Emergency evacuation procedures.
6. Use of bus lift.

B. Drivers' Responsibilities on E.S.E. Routes

On E.S.E. routes, the bus driver will assume responsibility for all activities and a monitor will be on the bus to assist with student management. On all routes, the drivers' responsibilities include:

1. Driving the bus in compliance with State Traffic laws, State Board of Education Rules, and School Board Policies.
2. Maintaining proper schedule for student pick-up and drop-off.
3. Maintaining on bus the file containing student information relative to student's care and emergency contact.
4. Loading and unloading students appropriately, assuring proper utilization of the wheelchair lift and other safety equipment such as safety vest and lap belts.
5. Maintaining proper student control while driving, utilizing student incident reports when appropriate.
6. Interaction with parents of students as appropriate, both by personal contact and via telephone.
7. Providing updated route sheets corrections to the transportation office promptly following route changes (Not to EXCEED three (3) working days).

C. Assignment of Bus Monitors

The assignment of a bus monitor to an E.S.E. route is at the discretion of the Transportation Director. This decision will be based upon consideration of the following factors:

1. The number of students assigned to the route, and the type of exceptionality.
2. The special medical needs of the student riders.
3. Evacuation factors as influenced by #1 and #2.

D. Minimum Training Requirements for Bus Monitors

Monitors will receive training similar to the bus driver in the handling of exceptional students. Specific training requirements are as follows:

1. Wheelchair and equipment tie-down techniques.
2. First aid instruction in dealing with seizures.
3. Review of exceptional student classifications and characteristics of behavior.
4. Transportation procedures as provided in the “E.S.E. Pupil Transportation Guidelines.”
5. Emergency evacuation procedures.
6. Radio procedures and use of wheelchair lift.
7. Bus Monitors will receive additional instruction in bus familiarization and accident management procedures.
8. Proper use of the fire extinguisher.

E. Duties/Responsibilities of Bus Monitors

The Monitor is responsible for these duties:

1. Follow the instructions of the bus driver in emergency operations, child care, first aid and evacuation procedures.
2. Develop first-hand knowledge of the special needs of each child transported and the route information. Do not rely on the file - memorize important details.
3. Continually monitor student riders and attend to their needs, making them as safe and comfortable as possible. Avoid preoccupation with other matters.
4. Respond appropriately to students who may become loud, rowdy or anxious. Display an attitude of calmness to ensure the sense of well-being with the students.
5. Assist the driver in loading and unloading students. The driver is to perform off-the-bus functions while the monitor performs functions on-the-bus.

6. Secure the child or equipment to the seat or the equipment to the floor.
7. Remain on the bus while children are on board during the absence of the driver.
8. Maintain an incident log to document occurrences involving passengers which may later be questioned. As a minimum, this log should include incidents of misbehavior and records of medical importance related to a student's needs. (Ex: duration and severity of seizures.)
9. Report to the driver any incident or accident involving a student passenger.
10. Report to the transportation office any injury sustained while on the job.
11. Meet the bus driver at the assigned bus parking space and time daily.
12. Monitor to become familiar with route sheets, directions and times to assist.

F. Utilization of Bus Monitors

Monitors are assigned as needed to E.S.E. routes. As needs change, so do the areas of assignment. At the discretion of the Transportation Director, Monitors may be asked to work on various route.

G. Clarification of Employee Responsibilities in Loading Handicapped Students at Schools

Over the past few years, you have been instructed by Transportation Supervisors that you are not to lift students who are physically incapable of lifting themselves. The issue has been one of parental responsibility, and our instructions to you are guided by State Board rules, which state: "In cases where the physical impairment of a child renders the child unable to get on and off the bus without assistance, parents shall provide the necessary assistance for helping their child get on and off at the bus stop." (Chapter 6A-3.0121, paragraph 5c)

This requirement, however, does not apply to the loading of the child at the school in preparation for the trip home. School Board personnel must take appropriate measures to place the child on the bus. In the case of physically handicapped students, school personnel will generally be responsible for bringing the child to the bus, and Transportation personnel will be responsible for loading the child onto the bus. There is no interest in preventing school personnel from assisting you in loading a child, but you should understand that any assistance they may give is voluntary. You and your monitor on the bus must take responsibility for the child once he/she arrives at your bus, and secure him/her properly.

If you have a situation in which the child is rolled out to your bus in a wheel chair, then lifted out of the chair onto a bus seat, use the following rule of thumb as your guide:

1. If the child weighs 75 pounds or less, the driver and monitor will continue to physically lift the child, if necessary.

2. If the child weighs more than 75 pounds, the driver must initiate action with the school and the Transportation Department to obtain a device which can accompany the child on the ride home. In other words, we will not lift students whose weight exceeds the 75-pound threshold. Also, note that the driver is the catalyst in seeing to it that corrective measures are taken to better handle the child's needs. The driver must notify the Transportation Department any time the loading procedure cannot be performed safely and within compliance of these general guidelines.

IV. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

A. Meeting the Assigned Driver

The Monitor will be required to meet the driver of assigned routes in the compound, at the bus parking space. This officially designated location shall not be changed except at the discretion of the Transportation Director or his/her designee.

1. The Monitor's paid time begins when the bus is scheduled to leave the compound and ends when the bus returns to the compound at the conclusion of a.m. and p.m. assignments. The monitor is to meet the bus in the designated parking space. A "Sub Driver Form" will be submitted and updated as needed to identify work hours.

Section 7

USE OF SCHOOL BUSES FOR EXTRACURRICULAR TRIPS

Hamilton County School Board Rules covers the topic of Extracurricular Use of School Buses.

I. ASSIGNMENT OF FIELD TRIPS

- A. Field trips will be defined as any trip beyond the driver's normal day. If a trip is cancelled by the school prior to the scheduled trip, every effort will be made to assign a replacement trip before returning to the rotation. If the trip is cancelled after a Driver shows up, the Driver will be paid for two hours and will be assigned the next available trip meeting the timeline constraints without losing place in the rotation. Field trips covering multiple days will be counted as a single trip for the purpose of the rotation.
- B. Field trips and Activity route will be assigned according to seniority list on a rotation basis. If unable to attend the trip meeting due to an emergency or on another school related job, please send notification in writing to the Transportation Supervisor via email or text.
- C. On occasion, "last minute" trips need to be assigned by radio due to time restraints. When this occurs, only the date and times of the trip will be announced. Acceptance of these "last minute" trips will not be counted towards the rotation schedule, nor will any decline of the "last minute" trips be held against a driver.
- D. No swapping of field trips or activity route among drivers will be permitted unless authorized by Supervisor. Activity route must be applied for through personnel at the District Office.

- E. Stops at convenience stores or restaurants for as long as such stops do not interfere with other duty obligations and when no students are on board the bus. However, these stops must be approved by the Supervisor first. Care must be taken to assure that the bus does not unnecessarily block parking spaces. Always park the bus in such a way that backing will not be necessary if possible.

II. **BUS AVAILABILITY**

Because the demand for school buses for extracurricular trips has historically exceeded the available supply of buses and drivers, restrictions must be placed on such use. The primary mission of the District's transportation system is to provide safe and efficient transportation for eligible students to and from school. This mission cannot be jeopardized by unrestricted field trip demands.

- A. Exceptions to these restrictions, when deemed appropriate, may be authorized by cooperation with the Transportation Director.
- B. This schedule is subject to change. The Transportation Department will publish and distribute amended bus availability information as appropriate.

III. **SECURING THE FIELD TRIP BUS AND DRIVER**

School Principals must comply with existing Board Policies and Administrative directives in securing field trip buses and services of the driver. The following standards shall apply:

A. **Field Trip Information**

Every pertinent piece of information must be completed on the Trip Request Form online which should be received in the Transportation Office at least seven (7) days ahead of the scheduled departure.

1. The number of buses needed and the number of passengers (total) is critical.
2. At least one day ahead of your scheduled departure, have the trip sponsor telephone the Transportation offices to confirm that arrangements are in order for the trip. Do not assume that everything is taken care of - mistakes can be made on both ends, and the consequences are significant.
3. Along with the driver's copy of the bus requisition, the school shall provide a map (drawing) with narrative directions to the destination.

B. **Normal Costs for Drivers and Mileage**

The school utilizing a bus and driver will be charged for the driver's time (including overtime) and for every mile accounted for on the odometer. The mileage assessment is subject to change, as deemed appropriate by the Transportation Director and pending approval of the District Superintendent.

IV. **STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES ON FIELD TRIPS**

- A. Each bus carrying passengers on extracurricular trips shall include at least one teacher or sponsor to ensure that discipline is maintained and that all bus rules are obeyed.
- B. Passengers on buses used for extracurricular trips shall be limited to students participating in the activity, teacher, and other District employees supervising such activities. District approved volunteers.
- C. The school bus driver is required to check the bus prior to driving. The trip sponsor shares the responsibility of assuring that no items are placed in the aisle of the bus, or in a position that blocks access to emergency exits.
- D. The school bus shall be cleaned after each extracurricular trip. The driver shall be responsible for this cleaning, and shall report to the sponsor and Transportation Supervisor any extraordinary problems associated with passenger litter. Any damage to the bus attributed to the intentional acts of passengers shall be reported and investigated promptly by the proper authority.
- E. Eating/drinking is generally not permitted on buses at any time. However, if consumed on the bus, it shall be permitted only after the trip sponsor and bus driver have agreed upon clean-up arrangements.

F. **Clean-Up of Buses After Field Trips**

Board policy requires the driver to clean the bus, but you are to be compensated for this time. Do not drive to storage with a trashed bus without first confirming with the sponsor that you consider the trash to be excessive, unless you do not intend to add additional time to the sheet for cleaning the bus.

If a trip sponsor or coach provides food or beverage for the students to consume on the bus, you are within your rights to ask for cleanup assistance. This should not be a regular problem, because most trips do not require eating on the bus. However, there may be cases in which eating on the bus is a must, due to the length of the trip or time constraints that cannot be altered. I ask that you be courteous and cooperative, but that you be assertive enough to seek help if beverages or food items are consumed on the bus. If, in any case, you are not satisfied with the level of cooperation you receive on a trip the most appropriate avenue is to schedule a conference with the Transportation Supervisor, who will be glad to hear your case and respond appropriately.

G. **Requirement for Chaperones on Buses During Extracurricular Trips**

As required by School Board Policy, every bus carrying passengers on an extracurricular trip shall also carry at least one (1) teacher or trip sponsor to act as a chaperone on the bus. This chaperone is responsible for monitoring student conduct on the bus, and for enforcing the usual rules of conduct that exist for all bus passengers.

Your duty as the driver of the bus requires that you insist on adherence to this Board Policy before you start your trip. You are therefore, directed to transport passengers on extracurricular trips only when this requirement, and others that pertain to the safety of your passengers, are met. If these requirements are not met, you are to refuse to transport the passengers, unless emergency circumstances arise that call for deviation from these policies. Additionally, you are required to report to your supervisors any instances in which these requirements are not initially met by the trip sponsor.

V. FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES

- A.** When more than one bus is involved in the activity, the sponsor and drivers shall agree upon which bus will be designated as “lead bus.” All buses shall remain in a group en route to and from the destination, unless valid grounds exist for deviating from this procedure (i.e., emergencies).
- B.** All buses involved in extracurricular trips shall maintain radio contact by keeping the switch on the cradle in the “up” position. Bus-to-bus communication during all hours shall be limited to that which is necessary.
- C.** Drivers assigned to extracurricular trips are to stay with the group of students or with the bus, or in the designated waiting area. Drivers are not authorized to leave in the bus without the group, even to obtain food or refreshments, unless the Transportation Supervisor, group and sponsor approves such action. When approved, such personal use of the bus will be limited to short distances and for short durations. Provide a phone number to the sponsor in case they need to call the bus to return early.
- D.** If mechanical problems are encountered during after-hours field trips, the driver is to conduct himself/herself as guided in Section 3, Component 3-2 of this handbook with regard to emergency situations. General guidelines for obtaining help include:
 - 1. The driver always stays with the bus.
 - 2. Emergency flashers and road reflectors are to be employed, unless the problem occurs in an area well off the roadway.
 - 3. Attempt to obtain help by phone or radio.
 - 4. For incidents in or out of Hamilton County or a neighboring county, use the after-hours contact list.
 - 5. For in-county problems or those occurring in a neighboring county, attempt to reach the on-call Hamilton County Transportation Supervisor via telephone.
 - 6. Buses outside of radio range in areas where telephones are unavailable should wait for a law enforcement officer or passing motorist to stop to assist.

VI. USE OF PRIVATELY-OWNED VEHICLES FOR EXTRACURRICULAR TRIPS

A. Buses

1. Common Carrier-Type buses (Greyhound or similar) are available to schools and may be used at the Principal's discretion.
2. Privately-owned buses (for example; church buses or school buses operated by private contractors) may not be utilized for the transportation of Hamilton County students on an extracurricular trip, unless prior approval is granted by the School Board.

B. Passenger Cars / Vans / Mini-Vans

1. As prescribed by School Board Rule, "Field Trips utilizing Privately-Owned Vehicles," the Superintendent may authorize the use of private passenger cars for the transportation of small groups of students when the use of District school buses may not be practical or when they are not available.
 - a. Such authorization from the principal must be in writing, and requires that all student passengers obtain written permission from parents for the trip. Also, the Superintendent must inform the owner(s) of the vehicles in writing regarding the owner's liability as it relates to the School Board's liability.
 - b. The term "passenger car" or "passenger vehicle" refers to vehicles so designated by the manufacturer. The Principal may not authorize owners of privately-owned vehicles lacking this designation for the sanctioned transportation of students on field trips (i.e., vans, mini-vans, trucks).

C. Use of Vans

Only vans that are classified to meet the "Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards as a Multipurpose Passenger Vehicle rating of MPV" are approved for use for occasional transportation of students. The factory installed occupant crash protection system (Example: safety restraints, seat belts, shoulder-harness) must be utilized by all occupants!!!!

D. Use of School Board Owned Vans

School District-owned vans are to be used strictly for activities, which require the transportation of six (6) or less students. State Statute 1006.25 states that school buses will be used to transport students to and from school and other school-related activities. There are very few exceptions to this statute.

Only Hamilton County School Board employees may operate said vehicles and they must be part of the "Driver License Check" list. A copy of their driver license record must be on file. To check on driver eligibility, contact the Transportation Office.

The borrowing school will be required to verify the condition of the van prior to use and will be responsible for returning the van in the same condition.

Each driver will be required to sign for receipt of a copy of the rules for using district owned vans and complete the pre-trip inspection form.

Section 8

HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD SAFE DRIVER PLAN

I. INTENT OF SAFE DRIVER PLAN

The adoption of this plan is intended to ensure the safest possible means of transportation for the District's students and employees. This plan will serve to define the components of the Safe Driver Plan and to establish the Board's expectations for the careful and safe operation of motor vehicles by all employees whose job descriptions require the operation of district vehicles.

II. SCOPE OF THE PLAN

This plan shall pertain to all employees whose job descriptions require a safe driving record. Portions of the plan will also apply to those who operate district-owned vehicles on an occasional basis, such as athletic coaches and/or administrators whose jobs permit the utilization of staff vehicles. A key component of this plan is the monitoring of the driving records of covered employees. The disciplinary sanctions required or recommended within the plan apply only to those employees whose job descriptions required the maintenance of a safe driving record. Occasional drivers whose job descriptions do not require the maintenance of a safe driving record will be denied use of the district-owned vehicle if their driving record is deemed to violate the district's safe driving standards outlined within this plan.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

This plan shall become effective immediately upon Hamilton County School Board approval. All standards established by this plan and the consequences for violations of these standards shall apply only to occurrences after the effective date. Points accumulated by a driver prior to the effective date will not be counted in consideration of an employee's compliance with this standard.

IV. IMMEDIATE VIOLATIONS

Criminal traffic offenses shall be considered violations of safe driving standards, even for a single incident. Covered employees who are charged with a criminal traffic offense by law enforcement officials shall be immediately removed from their driving duties pending final disposition of the criminal case. Once the case is brought to closure, the employee's driving record shall be reviewed in light of the court decision and impact on the driver's overall record. Criminal traffic offenses include but are not limited to:

- A. DUI (Driving while Under the Influence of Alcohol or Controlled Substance).
- B. Leaving the scene of an accident involving property damage or injury.
- C. Fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer.
- D. Reckless Driving.
- E. Passing a stopped school bus while it is unloading/loading children while stop arms are displayed.
- F. Falsification of an accident report.

V. POINT SYSTEM

This plan is based on a point system, under which points are applied to traffic offenses. The accumulation of a prescribed number of points within a specified duration may result in disciplinary action against the employee. For the purposes of this plan, it does not matter whether the points were assigned for violations involving the District's vehicle or the employee's personal vehicle. Covered employees shall be responsible for reporting to their immediate supervisor all traffic citations received and/or traffic-related arrests. This reporting must be initiated as soon as reasonably possible if the citation/incident occurs in the District's vehicle, and no later than the next working day (immediately upon reporting to work) if the citation/incident occurred in the employee's personal vehicle. Failure to report as required may result in the assessment of additional points against the employee's driving record. Points will be assessed in accordance with the following chart. For moving traffic violations resulting in citations, the points appropriate for the offense (per current standards of the Division of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles) will be applied when there is a conviction or a no-contest plea. Some incidents/offenses do not require the issuance of a citation or involvement of law enforcement for the assessment of points.

A.	<u>Violation</u>	<u>Points</u>
1.	At-fault incident driving a District vehicle, involving any other vehicle and/or physical property resulting in damage of less than \$500. (No citation required.)	1
2.	At-fault accident driving a District vehicle, involving any other vehicle and/or physical property resulting in damage of \$500 or more. (No citations required.)	3
3.	Any moving traffic infraction for which a citation is issued. (*Points assessed in accordance with DHSMV guidelines.)	*
4.	Failure to make a timely report of an accident/incident or citation received involving a District vehicle. “Timely” means: as soon as reasonably possible, given all circumstances, but no later than the END of the work shift in most situations.	6
5.	Failure to make a timely report of an accident or other traffic violation involving the employee (as driver) and his/her personal vehicle when a citation is issued. In this instance, “timely” means: not later than the next work day before assuming driving duties. (**Points assessed will be in accordance with DHSMV guidelines plus 2 for failure to report.)	**
6.	Knowingly operating a District and/or personal vehicle without a valid driver license or with an improper license (suspended or revoked.)	10
7.	Failure to stop a school bus at railroad crossings in accordance with District procedures and/or State Law. (***)Minimum of 1 point for stopping too close or too far from tracks; maximum of 10 points for failure to stop at crossing. No citation required.)	***
8.	Passing a stopped school bus while the bus is loading/unloading passengers and stop arm is displayed. (No citation required.)	6
9.	Criminal traffic offenses, if convicted or in no-contest plea is entered. (DUI excepted.)	7
10.	Conviction or no contest plea for DUI.	10

VI. REVIEW

An employee who has assessed points may request a review of the alleged violation by an official Safe Driving Review Committee. The Committee shall be convened as needed and shall consist of representatives from the supervisory and support employees from the affected department.

VII. ” STACKING OF POINTS” FOR A SINGLE INCIDENT

For a single incident involving an issued citation or traffic accident, points will either be assessed by the DHSMV or the District, but not by both. When determining which of the points will be applied against the employee, the greater of the points assessed will be accepted and applied. The only exception to this rule will be points assessed by the District because of an employee’s failure to report a traffic citation or traffic accident or incident. In those situations, points may be applied against the employee both as a result of the citation or accident and for “failure to make a timely report,” as defined in this Plan. Employees who avoid points for a citation by attending driving school or by challenging a citation may still be assessed points by the District for at fault accidents or incidents, in accordance with this plan.

VIII. DELAYS IN POINTS ASSESSMENTS AS A RESULT OF TRAFFIC CITATIONS

Employees who are cited by law enforcement officials and who choose to challenge the citation will be subject to the minimum and maximum disciplinary action listed in this Plan, if points are finally assessed, on the basis of the date the citation was issued as opposed to the date the points were assessed.

IX. CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATIONS OF SAFE DRIVING STANDARDS

# of Points	Time Period	Minimum Discipline	Maximum Discipline
2 - 3 Points	24 Months	Verbal Warning	Verbal Warning
4 - 5 Points	12 Months	Written Reprimand	Written Reprimand
6 - 7 Points	12 Months	Written Reprimand (if single incident)	1 Day Suspension Without Pay (if multiple incidents)
8 - 9 Points	18 Months	Written Reprimand (if single incident)	3 Day Suspension Without Pay (if multiple incidents)
10 - 13 Points	24 Months	5 Day Suspension Without Pay	Termination Recommended
14 or more Points	24 Months	Termination Recommended	Termination Recommended

X. OCCASIONAL DRIVERS

District employees who operate a district-owned vehicle in the course of their duties but whose job descriptions do not require the maintenance of a safe driving record shall be deemed occasional drivers. All such drivers must cooperate with the district by providing a copy of their valid driver license to the Transportation Department. The Transportation Department shall maintain the driver license database and shall include these occasional drivers in their regular search of records. No occasional driver shall be permitted to utilize a county-owned vehicle if the driving history reveals a total of more than eight (8) points assessed against the driver in any 12-month period within three (3) years of the record search or a DUI conviction within the seven-year period preceding the record search.

XI. SCHOOL BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT’S DISCRETION

Implementation of this plan does not preclude the Board from taking disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for violations not specifically listed in this plan, or, for violation of any expressed work rule, order, or procedure. Employees who are facing termination as a result of the implementation of this plan, may, at the Superintendent’s discretion, be permitted to seek transfer to open and available non-driving positions for which the employee is qualified.

Former employees who were discharged due to driving infractions may be permitted to reapply for non-driving positions. However, there shall be no obligation on the part of the Board or the Superintendent to provide employment in another position.

For your information only, this is the point system breakdown currently in the Florida Driver’s Handbook distributed by the DHSMV:

Points Assessed	Traffic Offense
6	Leaving the scene of an accident involving property damage > \$50.
6	Unlawful speed resulting in an accident.
4	Reckless Driving.
4	Passing stopped school bus.
4	Unlawful speed greater than 15 MPH over posted speed.

Points Assessed**Traffic Offense**

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 | Unlawful speed 15 MPH or less over posted speed. |
| 3 | Any other moving traffic violation. |
| 2 | Improper equipment. |

Critical offenses like DUI, fleeing/attempting to elude Law Enforcement Officer, etc. - result in revocation of license. Points are not assessed.

Section 9

I. STOP ARM VIOLATIONS

Florida traffic law requires motorists to stop behind the swing-out stop sign when displayed by school buses. However, motorists in Hamilton County and throughout the state violate this law from time-to-time and place students in grave danger. The standard policy in Hamilton County for response to stop arm violations is established in this section.

As defined previously in this document, drivers must train students who must cross the roadway to wait for the appropriate signal and to cross at least ten (10) feet ahead of the bus.

- A. The driver must scan the traffic ahead and behind the bus while slowing to a stop, and shall not disembark and cross students unless all traffic is stopped.
 - B. The driver must report immediately via the Stop Arm Violation Report, any stop arm violation, noting the location, time, and the vehicle tag and description, if possible.
 - C. If frequent and regular stop arm violations occur at one location, the driver shall also meet with a Transportation Supervisor to go over the situation and provide any additional information that may be necessary so that the appropriate law enforcement agency can be contacted to further address the situation.
-

Section 10

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

I. DEPARTMENTAL DUTIES

The Hamilton County Schools' Emergency Procedures Manual identifies the Transportation Department as a support entity in the overall Disaster Response plan. Specific elements of the plan, which involve the Transportation Department, are identified as follows:

- A. The Transportation Director will maintain and update annually a roster of volunteer bus drivers whose duties in a natural or man-made disaster (i.e., hurricane, flooding, school violence, etc.) would include:
 - 1. Assigned volunteers who will respond in a school bus to the emergency evacuation shelter as directed.
 - 2. The bus driver who will utilize the bus as directed to transport citizens from areas to be evacuated to the appropriate shelter.
 - 3. The bus driver volunteer who will agree to stand-by at a designated location in order to respond to transportation needs that may be identified by Emergency Management officials.
- B. The Transportation Director will maintain and update annually a list of mechanics who agree to act in the following capacity during a natural or man-made disaster:
 - 1. To be "on-call" during the disaster, ready to respond to mechanical problems involving school buses or other vehicles involved in the disaster response.
 - 2. To man the service trucks and assure that they are well stocked to address emergency breakdowns affecting school buses or other vehicles involved in the disaster response.
- C. The Transportation Director will distribute the updated rosters to department personnel as appropriate.

II. SEVERE WEATHER /TORNADO

A. Severe Weather

Anytime a bus driver finds himself/herself caught in high winds, heavy rain and/or lightning while transporting students, contact should be initiated with dispatch to determine if continuation of the route is prudent. Off-loading of students, in some cases, could endanger students during severe weather.

B. Tornado Sighting

Bus Drivers transporting students during a tornado sighting shall:

1. Stop at the closest available building suitable as a shelter and enter with students until the threat passes.
2. Advise students to seek cover near interior walls in the north and east areas of the building, if known, and to place themselves in a protected position covering their heads and faces with their arms.
3. If caught in the open, away from suitable buildings, disembark students from the bus and have them lie flat in the lowest area available, such as a ditch or ravine.
4. **DO NOT** stay in the bus!

Section 11

ASSIGNMENT OF NEW OR OPEN ROUTES

Routes and daily work assignments by **TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR**

I. REGULAR BUS ROUTES

After reviewing the open route, the Transportation Director or designee will determine which driver will be assigned the open routes. Factors to be considered include:

1. Seniority
2. Attendance
3. Job Performance Issues

NOTE: The driver with the most seniority will not necessarily be awarded the open route assignment.

II. E.S.E. ROUTES

A. Eligibility for on open E.S.E. routes will be determined by the Transportation Director, based upon the following factors:

1. The training status of the driver (any E.S.E. training or experience?).
2. Absenteeism.
3. Physically capable of managing additional requirements pertaining to E.S.E. students.
4. Compatibility with the exceptional students to be transported.

Section 12

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSIBILITIES RELATIVE TO PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

I. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RULES

Under Chapter 6A-3.017, Principals' responsibilities regarding student transportation include:

- A. To assume responsibility under the direction of the superintendent for all student disciplinary cases which arise in connection with transportation.
- B. To plan the program of the school so that transported students who arrive early or remain late will be under school supervision at all times.
- C. To plan and assign places for students to get on and off school buses at the school, and to ensure the safety of the loading/unloading zone and to provide supervision of students.
- D. To direct school bus emergency evacuation drills on each bus serving the school during the first six (6) weeks of each semester, and to maintain documentation for all students.
- E. To provide instruction for all transported students in safe practices on and off the bus during the first six (6) weeks of the first semester of the school year.
- F. To request authority in writing for transportation of students on field trips and activity trips, or other special trips, and to plan such trips in accordance with policies approved by the school board.

II. HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RULES

Under School Board Rule, Principals are assigned responsibilities relative to student transportation as described below:

- A. The Principal is responsible for transported students from the time the student boards the bus at the bus stop in the morning, until the student leaves the bus at the bus stop in the afternoon.
- B. The Principal, in cooperation with the Director of Transportation, shall plan and assign places for pupils to get on and off the bus and for orderly parking of school buses at the school in such a way that backing of buses will not be necessary.
- C. The Principal shall assign school staff members to be on duty in the bus loading and unloading zone during the times when buses are loading and unloading students.
- D. Students who become ill while at school should not be placed on the school bus to be transported home in such condition. Rather, the Principal is responsible for making the necessary arrangements to assure that such student(s) are transported home safely by other means.

Section 13

SCHOOL BUS EMERGENCIES

I. BUS ACCIDENTS

- A. All School Bus Emergencies will be reported using the following procedures:
1. Call dispatch on radio, state your name and bus number and that you have an **EMERGENCY** and have been involved in an accident. **STAY CALM!!**
 2. Give exact location (street and nearest cross street).
 3. State if there are injuries or no injuries.
 4. Give the appropriate number of student on board and what school they attend.
 5. DO NOT talk with anyone concerning the accident except Law Enforcement and School Board personnel.
 6. **STAY CALM AND TEND TO YOUR STUDENTS! DO NOT LEAVE THEM UNATTENDED!!!** Follow the procedures set out in Section 4, Part II of this handbook.

B. Emergency Color Coded System

CODE WHITE (Drugs) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actually saw or smelled drugs in use on the bus
CODE BROWN (Weapons) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actually saw a gun, knife, etc.
CODE GREY (Suspected Weapons) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reasonable belief that a weapon exists
CODE PURPLE (Extremely Violent Student) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires immediate Law Enforcement response
CODE BLUE (Medical Emergency) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In need of ambulance and medical attention
CODE ORANGE (Hostage) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In case of a hostage situation

1. Always STAY CALM!!!
2. State the Code.
3. Give exact location.
4. If continuing travel, state destination (school, etc.)
5. Give as much supporting information as possible without upsetting or alarming students.

EXAMPLE: Driver to Dispatch: “This is Bus #325; I have a Code Green. I am at Highway 17 and Highway 16 West and proceeding to Hamilton High School. Dispatch will contact the proper authorities.”

C. Dispatcher Instructions

1. Immediately notify:
 - a. Transportation Director or designee.
 - b. School involved.
2. Wait for further instruction from Transportation Director or designee.
3. Relay instructions to the driver.

II. HOSTAGE SITUATIONS

In the event that your bus is taken hostage, remain calm. Your students will be watching you and looking to you for guidance. Cooperate with the hostage taker.

The “UNIT 24” Code: A code word was created to help you to notify dispatch in the event that your bus is taken hostage. Only you can determine if you can safely use the code.

The following is an example of a dialog that you could use in a hostage situation:

“They are going to notice that I am not where I am supposed to be. I need to radio in to dispatch and let them know that I am running late. I can tell them that I am on the side of the road with a discipline problem.”

If the hostage taker allows you to call in, say the following, using your own alpha number and your own compound. “3-02, UNIT 24 to Base.” (Transportation this is UNIT 24 bus 3-02.) (The key phrase is **Unit 24**.) I am pulled over at County 218 and Green Rd with a discipline problem. “Base.” “This is 3-02, UNIT 24. I am on the side of Moog Rd with a discipline problem.” “10-4 UNIT 24. We have received your transmission. Base clear.” The key phrase here is “**UNIT 24**.”

Add whatever information you are able to without alerting the hostage taker. Make sure you use your alpha number and “UNIT 24” in every transmission that you are able to make. Try to give your location at least once.

If the hostage taker will not allow you to call in, comply with the demands, and continue to remind him/her that your bus and your students will quickly be missed. Repeat the following. “They are going to notice that I am not where I am supposed to be. I need to radio in to dispatch and let them know that I am running late. I can tell them that I am on the side of the road with a discipline problem.” If you hear someone use the code “UNIT 24”, stay off the radio, and stay away from that location.

Some other suggestions include:

1. Bring attention to the bus without being noticed
 2. Key the microphone
 3. Turn the flashing lights on, etc.
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