STARS 》》

Student Transportation Aligned for Return to School

GUIDELINES, TACTICS AND TEMPLATES

A Reopening Plan Resource For School Transportation Professionals

NAPT
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
for PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

National Association
of State Directors
of Pupil Transportation Services

National School Transportation Association
2020 NSTA
IS OUR VISION

DEVELOPED AND WRITTEN BY

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CAPITALWORKS

DSG
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BETTER DECISIONS FOR A COMPLEX WORLD

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OUR WORK

YOUR WORK

RELATED WORK

The following attachments are documents that need to be downloaded separately

- Attachment A: List of Guidelines with Their Menu of Tasks

- Attachment B: Guideline and Task Gantt Chart

- Attachment C: List of URL addresses to: State COVID-19, School Reopening Plans and to a John Hopkins University e-School Initiative Master List of Reports by State

FOR QUICK ACCESS TO THE CORE DATA IN THE REPORT, FOCUS ON SECTIONS 3 - 4 as well as APPENDIX A

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER: These materials are for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal or regulatory requirements, nor are they intended as legal advice. Should you require further legal or regulatory guidance, please contact your state or local health, education, or transportation agencies with the appropriate authority or jurisdiction for these matters. It may also be necessary to contact an attorney who is, or can be made, more thoroughly familiar with the facts and issues of your specific situation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Transportation Aligned for Return To School (STARTS) Task Force (the "Task Force") was formed as a partnership of the three leading school transportation industry organizations; the National School Transportation Association (NSTA), the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) and the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS). The purpose of the Task Force was to develop materials that would be useful to the school bus industry as it works to respond to the unprecedented challenges of school reopenings in the context of COVID-19.

Uncertainty related to how schools will open, the presence of the COVID-19 virus in local communities, and expectations of state reopening plans has caused significant disruption to the normal planning schedule followed by transportation operations. The greatly compressed schedule demands a resource that will allow transportation organizations to quickly but comprehensively develop a plan to respond to the reopening guidelines established by policy makers and public health officials. To meet that need, the Task Force has developed resources that connect specific tactics and templates to the guidelines included in state reopening plans.

The Task Force believes sections Section 3 and 4 of the report will be the most useful for transportation managers. Using the 27 guidelines that were included in more than 30 state reopening plans, the Task Force developed more than 250 individual tasks for consideration when determining how or whether to implement the guidelines for their specific operation. Four guideline categories have been established:

- Governance -12 guidelines that generally apply to all school district departments

- Human Resources - 5 guidelines that deal with health, medical data, testing, and screening

- Operations - 9 guidelines that have a high impact on transportation

- Training - 1 guideline related to the training of all impacted populations

- Special Needs Student Management - 17 guidelines specifically focused on supporting this specific student group

Attachment A to the report provides a decision planning resource that will support the development of operational plans for 2020. A sample planning template and document to support the organization and development of individual reopening plans are included in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively.

Surveys of stakeholders across the school transportation industry and research of the activities in related industries informed the development of guidelines and tasks and are also included. The survey results indicated all groups were concerned about:

- The implications of physical distancing on buses

- Strategies related to supporting the health and safety of transportation staff

- Issues related to the management of regulatory concerns related to driver licensing, training, and other aspects of driver qualification

- Practices for ensuring the cleanliness and safety of buses

Links to state reopening plans and the data used in the development of the report are also available at startstaskforce.com.

ASSOCIATIONS' LETTER

July 13th, 2020

Dear Transportation Professional:

The **S**tudent **T**ransportation **A**ligned for **R**eturn **T**o **S**chool **(STARTS)** Task Force (the "Task Force") respectfully submits the following report to the school education community in general, and the members of the three (3) industry organizations in particular; the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), and the National School Transportation Association (NSTA). The intent of this report and its supporting documents is to support the local development and deployment of school transportation plans in a pandemic environment, and collectively prepare to transport 26 million students to and from the nation's schools to continue their education.

When school resumes, it may do so with new scheduling configurations that have added significant complexity and additional safety and health requirements for which all school district departments, including transportation, must find solutions. The guidelines and tasks found in this report are targeted to mitigate the risk that COVID-19 will spread during the transport of students or among student transportation employees. These recommendations set forth the consensus of the Task Force and outline guidance regarding protective measures to be used in developing a school district's transportation plan. Topics covered include student and driver safety, regular screening, diagnostic testing, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfecting equipment and work sites, and appropriate response should a student or employee contract COVID-19 or be exposed to it. Each guideline and task in this report reflects the commitment of STARTS to contribute to the safe, efficient reopening of schools and to building and sustaining public confidence.

The active participants in the Task Force, listed in the Appendix, include over one hundred (100+) school transportation industry professionals as well as advisors from the supporting fields of special needs, student health and school administration. In addition, the Task Force surveyed: all 50 state transportation directors on what each state's districts are requesting, over 150 school superintendents from across the country on how they made or are making their school scheduling decisions, over 75 local school transportation directors on the status of their readiness and their future requirements and over 100 school bus contractors on their preparations and how they intend to serve their client school districts. This reflects the additional input of over 375 stakeholders who have a vested interest in safe school transportation. It should be understood throughout this report that the term "safety" is used in its broadest sense, to include student and employee health and well-being.

While these guidelines and tasks address many elements of school transportation, transportation directors or site managers must consult applicable state and local public health orders as well as applicable state and federal agency regulations and guidelines.

This report offers guidelines and tasks that are intended to address the circumstances under which school transportation can safely operate. The Task Force recognizes that COVID-19 is a new disease and many of the facts surrounding the virus are still being determined. Several elements mentioned in the report including testing and the use of personal protective equipment are subject to further discussion and agreement between the relevant agencies, school districts, bus contractors and the unions representing school transportation workers. As circumstances change, and state governments, school boards or local public health officials issue new guidance, the guidelines and tasks under which school transportation can safely operate may be adjusted accordingly.

Sincerely,

Mike Martin
Executive Director, NAPT

Charlie Hood
Executive Director, NASDPTS

Curt Macysyn
Executive Director, NSTA

FOREWORD

The accompanying report represents the observations, findings, and suggested activities of the Student Transportation Aligned for Return To School (STARTS) Task Force related to the provision of student transportation services in the context of COVID-19 and the 2020-21 school year. The report and its associated resources are focused on the needs of student transporters but they are relevant to all those in the educational community who are working to safely reopen schools in 2020 and begin returning families and communities to a sense of normalcy. While many questions remain as to what the long-term impact of COVID-19 will be on educational and transportation practices, this report provides a starting point for all those who are concerned about ensuring that students continue to have access to the educational resources that are so vital to their individual development.

The financial impact of the COVID-19 economic shutdown and regional differences in student transportation models make it unreasonable to establish a single set of universal practices to accommodate all student transportation operations across the nation. However, there is a universal need to establish clear operating principles that will allow for the design and implementation of transportation systems that are capable of supporting the various models of education service delivery that will be in operation nationwide.

The 2020-21 school year will be an opportunity to reaffirm the critical nexus between the yellow school bus and educational service delivery. Providing that linkage will require the implementation of operating guidelines and tasks that continue the ever-present focus of the student transportation community on safety while encouraging flexibility and responsiveness in system design. The report is designed to provide practical guidance that allows student transporters of all sizes and types to bridge the often-substantial gap between the expectations of various stakeholders and the practical requirements of offering safe, reliable, and effective student transportation services.
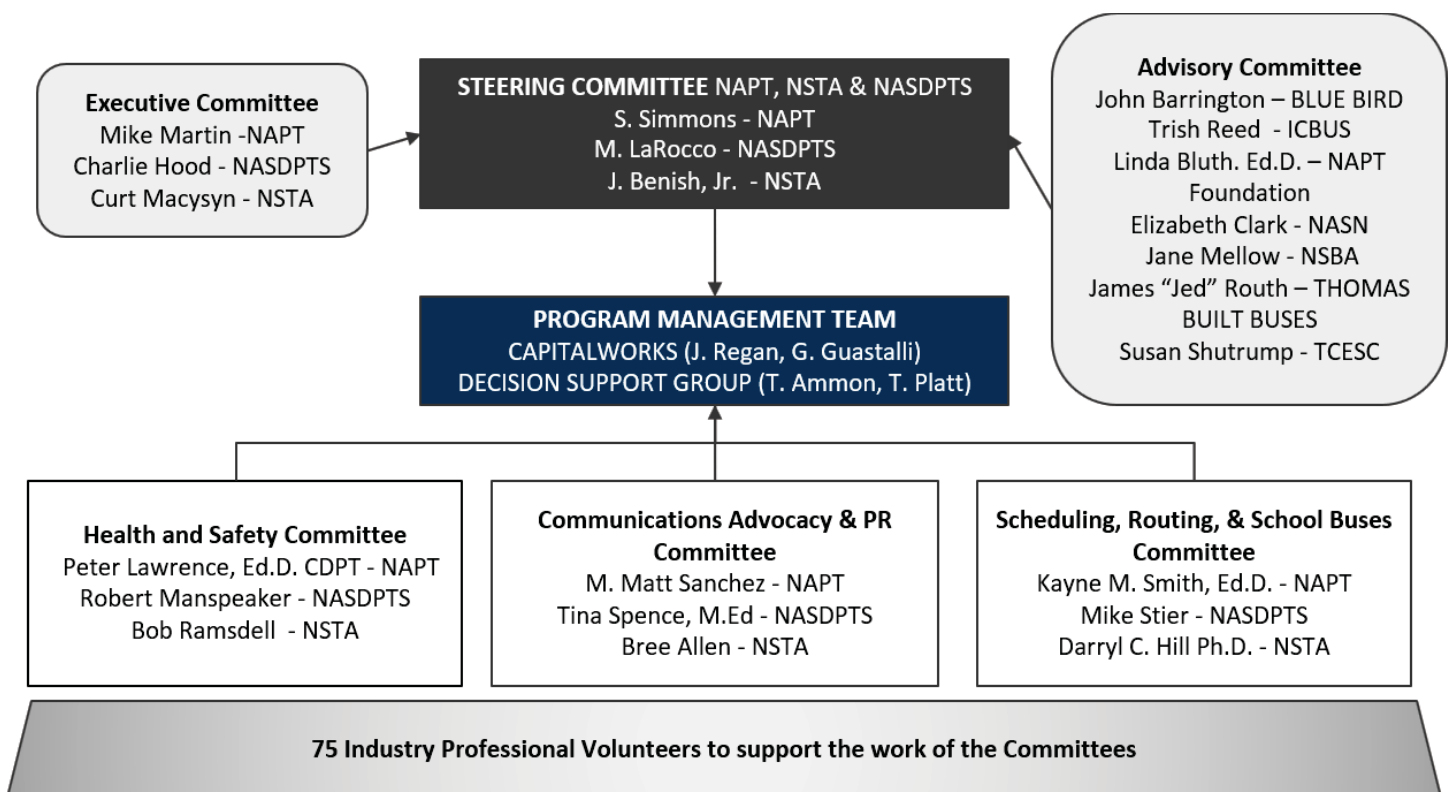
Section 1 of the report details the research and information collected by the Task Force through both surveys and reviews of available material from national and international sources. Sections 2 and 3 detail the specific guidelines and suggested activities that will allow transporters to respond to the expectations of the public health and educational communities. Section 4 provides a detailed user guide to the information contained in the report for transportation professionals in both public and private sector organizations. Section 5 provides details on expected implementation challenges and the creation of sustainable practices during the entirety of the 2020-21 school year and Section 6 provides information on how to best use the data generated by the project. Finally, the appendices and additional resources offer access to additional information and data that may be useful as schools, school districts, and public and private student transporters design their operational plans.

The STARTS Task Force was fortunate to have the participation of professionals from a wide range of disciplines, regions, operating models, and organizations. We are indebted to all those who participated in or supported the Task Force. We were extremely grateful for the generous commitment of time and resources from the Task Force members, the expertise and perspective offered by partner organizations and individuals, and the thoughtful deliberation of the Committee Co-Chairs and Task Force Steering Committee. We also appreciate the financial support provided by the organizations and companies representing the American School Bus Council, without which this report would not have been possible.

TASK FORCE LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

The STARTS Task Force (see the diagram below) was initiated by the Executive Directors of the three sponsoring associations: Mike Martin (NAPT), Charlie Hood (NASDPTS) and Curt Macysyn (NSTA). Then they formed a set of committees, each with a member from their respective associations. There was a Steering Committee and three (3) Sub-Committees: Health and Safety, Advocacy and Communications and Bus Routing and Scheduling. There were seventy-five transportation professionals who volunteered to support the Task Force. Their expertise was leveraged in the final development of the guidelines and tasks. Later an Advisory Committee was formed to expand the perspective of the Task Force to include vehicle original equipment manufacturers and Support for Students with Special Needs, as well as representatives from the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

Finally, the Executive and Steering Committees agreed that there needed to be a person to lead the Task Force, define its approach, structure and the deliverables, coordinate the research, manage the data collection and keep the effort moving on an aggressive timeline. They selected Jim Regan and Gabriella Guastalli from CAPITALWORKS Consulting Group. They focus on transportation projects and specialize in data analytics and solution engineering. They have extensive experience in multiple sectors of the transportation industry. When the scope and deliverables of the effort were understood, a risk emerged that the project might not meet its targeted July deadline. Enter Tim Ammon and Tom Platt from the Decision Support Group. They also have extensive school bus industry experience and industry networks that would prove valuable during the project. They specialize in school transportation operations and cost analyses. Together, they formed the Program Management team for the Task Force.

Executive Committee
Mike Martin -NAPT
Charlie Hood - NASDPTS
Curt Macysyn - NSTA

STEERING COMMITTEE NAPT, NSTA & NASDPTS
S. Simmons - NAPT
M. LaRocco - NASDPTS
J. Benish, Jr. - NSTA

Advisory Committee
John Barrington – BLUE BIRD
Trish Reed - ICBUS
Linda Bluth. Ed.D. – NAPT Foundation
Elizabeth Clark - NASN
Jane Mellow - NSBA
James "Jed" Routh – THOMAS BUILT BUSES
Susan Shutrump - TCESC

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT TEAM
CAPITALWORKS (J. Regan, G. Guastalli)
DECISION SUPPORT GROUP (T. Ammon, T. Platt)

Health and Safety Committee
Peter Lawrence, Ed.D. CDPT - NAPT
Robert Manspeaker - NASDPTS
Bob Ramsdell - NSTA

Communications Advocacy & PR Committee
M. Matt Sanchez - NAPT
Tina Spence, M.Ed - NASDPTS
Bree Allen - NSTA

Scheduling, Routing, & School Buses Committee
Kayne M. Smith, Ed.D. - NAPT
Mike Stier - NASDPTS
Darryl C. Hill Ph.D. - NSTA

75 Industry Professional Volunteers to support the work of the Committees

THE REASON, THE RESEARCH AND THE SURVEY SUMMARIES

THE REASON

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has created uncertainty, and that uncertainty creates risks. All of the published guidelines and reopening plans for companies and schools are, at their core, targeted at managing risk. The reason for this joint Task Force and the focus of its participants was first: to listen via our surveys and research, second: to identify the underlying concerns, issues and risks, then finally: develop and publish a set of guidelines and a menu of tasks for each guideline that can be used to develop a school transportation readiness and reopening plan that addresses and assists in managing the risks. The focus of the Task Force was reopening transportation at the district level.

The Task Force included the perspectives of the in-house transportation directors and others through the NAPT (National Association for Pupil Transportation), the state transportation directors through NASDPTS (National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services), and the school bus contractors through the NSTA (National School Transportation Association). The Task Force surveyed members of each group to better understand the needs and challenges they are facing. All of the people represented by these organizations share common risks and have their own unique risks to deal with.

The common transportation risks include:

- **Safety risks** having to do with contracting and spreading the virus. These risks exist for everyone involved in school transportation: parents, students, drivers, bus aides, technicians (mechanics) and office staff.

- **Operational risks** having to do with being able to have sufficient manpower and equipment resources to operate and manage the district's transportation system. The bus equipment risk is particularly high for

districts that strictly apply social distancing guidelines for students on the bus. These risks are focused on having the necessary resources, personal protection equipment and transportation staff. A sample risk is driver availability. Based on the average age of a school bus driver, the driver group as a whole may be in a high risk category for contracting the virus and may opt not to return. This is on top of an existing driver shortage across the country.

- **Financial risks** having to do with covering the cost impacts of the required changes due to pandemic. For in-house school transportation departments, this is a budget issue. For bus contractors, this is a pricing and contract issue as rates for services were likely established prior to the onset of the pandemic and would not include any pandemic related costs.

- **Compliance and legal risks** having to do with being able to fulfill the requirements of any federal, state, and local school district mandates is a challenge with this pandemic. Bus contractors specifically have to be concerned about the impact of not fulfilling the service level terms of their contracts due to pandemic related causes. All school transportation operations are concerned about complying with their state's requirements for driver certification and testing given the impact of motor vehicle agency closures and the reduction of in person training opportunities due to the pandemic.

The Task Force has worked to research and develop a set of guidelines (the what) as well a menu of tasks (the how) for a transportation director or bus contractor location manager to use in developing their pandemic readiness and transportation reopening plans.

THE RESEARCH

In addition to leveraging the considerable knowledge and skills of the Task Force committee members, its many advisors and the 75 professional volunteers, the Task Force conducted a research program consisting of:

- Surveys of **state transportation directors, District Transportation Directors, School Bus Contractors and School Superintendents**

- A review of all available **STATE SCHOOL REOPENING PLANS** to identify and extract all published school transportation related guidelines and tasks

- A review of all available **DISTRICT SCHOOL REOPENING PLANS** as a Quality Assurance step to ensure the work of the Task Force included those mentioned in this group of plans

- A review of available related **TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY REOPENING PLANS** from transit, airlines and rail companies to extract their respective guidelines and tasks

- A review of related **COMMERCIAL and CORPORATE REOPENING PLANS** from high customer traffic organizations like DISNEY, STARBUCKS, WALMART, and RETAIL FOOD CHAINS to extract their respective guidelines and tasks

- After an initial list of guidelines and tasks were developed by the Task Force, it was shared with **75 SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONALS** representing all facets of the school transportation community and they were able to add additional tasks they felt supported each of the guidelines.

The Task Force believes it captured and has built an extensive database of transportation industry guidelines and tasks.

SURVEY RESEARCH

The Task Force surveyed multiple constituencies that would have influence over and an impact on the strategies and tactics that would be required for transportation operations to support the reopening plans of school districts. The goal of these surveys was not to develop a statistically significant sampling related to any particular concern but to gain insight into the thought processes of policy makers, administrators, and operators as to the magnitude of the concerns, the range of possible options, and the expected challenges associated with a return to school. To that end, the Task Force surveyed:

- Individuals responsible for the oversight and administration of each state pupil transportation agency

- School district leaders

- Private school transportation operators

- District pupil transportation practitioners

The surveys addressed a range of issues of interest to the Task Force. Particular attention was given to the relationship between the type of daily school schedules contemplated by educational leaders and the preparedness for implementation support of the transportation operations. Additionally, concerns were addressed related to the interaction of state level policy, administrative staff and local service delivery staff. Major themes from each survey included:

- **Survey of Superintendents –** the primary focus of the survey was on gaining insights into the school scheduling options and tendencies that were being considered for the start of school in 2020-21. Additional questions focused on the key factors influencing decision-making on the reopening model and the expectations of changes for classroom and transportation service delivery practices.

- **Survey of State Directors –** the survey was designed to identify the types of questions and concerns of local districts and the expectations and information provided by state-level administrators. Specific practices related to health screening, physical distancing, and policy and regulatory considerations were also highlighted to gain an understanding of the expectations on local education agencies.

- **Survey of School Bus Contractors –** the survey was targeted at understanding the challenges that bus contractors may have in synchronizing the procedural expectations of their customers with their contract terms. Identifying the expected source of information and guidance on service requirements, operational practices related to rider safety, and contractual concerns were issues of interest to the Task Force.

- **Survey of school district transportation directors –** the survey for this subgroup was similar to that of bus contractors in that it was operational in focus and attempted to identify the changes to practice that would likely occur in response to virus-related mitigation efforts. Key considerations included the health and safety practices for staff and students including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), bus sanitization, and physical distancing.

In all surveys, except for superintendents, questions were also designed to identify how districts and operators would communicate with the public. The tools and technologies available to describe the safety and risk mitigation techniques to be implemented and to receive feedback from external (to the school district) constituents were also identified as areas of concern.

More than 300 individuals were included in the survey distribution. Copies of each of the surveys are included in the Appendix B for review.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The most notable element of the survey responses is that as of June 30, 2020 a significant amount of uncertainty remained about the expectations of school openings and the scope of the challenges being faced by transportation operations. More than 75 percent of superintendents indicated that the decision related to the reopening model had not been made and nearly 40 percent of the transportation managers responded that they were unsure about expectations related to a transportation plan. This can be attributed to the dynamism associated with virus spread, release of state level reopening plans, fiscal concerns, and emerging parental preferences through district surveys. However, it is also clear that the later a decision is made the more difficult it will be for transportation providers to develop a clear and implementable response to the expectations. The need for districts to support transportation providers in the development of their plans is the driving force behind the structure and content of the guidelines and tasks tool detailed in Section Three (3).

While each of the surveys was designed for a specific target audience, there was a collection of questions that were of interest to all groups. From these questions it was possible to identify additional themes that emerged when reviewing the survey responses as a collective. These include:

- Questions and concerns related to the implications of physical distancing on buses

- Strategies related to supporting the health and safety of transportation staff both as they are providing service and in the transportation work areas

- Issues related to the management of regulatory concerns related to driver licensing, training, and other aspects of driver qualification

- Practices for ensuring the cleanliness and safety of buses

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SURVEYS ON THE DESIGN OF TASK FORCE TOOLS AND MATERIALS

The amount of uncertainty related to school opening strategies and mitigation strategies remains substantial. The Task Force was sensitive to the intense desire within the transportation sector for highly specific and directed guidance to support reopening plan development. This was clearly evident in the number of responses across all surveys that indicated plans were still under consideration. In an ideal environment where all of the service requirements were homogenized for all participants providing that type of guidance may have been possible. However, the requirements for individual school districts and their respective transportation operations will be as varied as the number of districts and schools across the nation. Consequently, the tools being provided are intended to guide a process of thinking about how to address the specific guidelines proposed without being prescriptive in their implementation. Providing the greatest degree of flexibility feasible to support implementation strategies while offering clear and understandable tasking necessitated providing as broad a set of considerations as could be gathered.

While the specific challenges faced by the different constituencies are highly varied, there is complete alignment in the guiding health and safety principles of all survey participants. Ensuring the health and safety of students and staff is paramount while maintaining maximum access to educational programs. To that end, the tools and resources provided by the Task Force are designed to allow districts and operators to frame a set of options that will allow them to address the major issues and operational concerns identified in the survey.

Finally, the Task Force was also highly attuned to the longer-term needs of school districts to be able to sustain their implementation strategies over the entire school year and to adapt them as conditions change. Consequently, the guidelines and tasks are arranged to allow users to model possible responses to changing conditions and determine how their operating practices may have to be revised. It is the hope of all Task Force participants that the information, structure, and flexibility provided by the tools and resources will allow transportation managers and all interested stakeholders the opportunity to evaluate how to best maximize the use of transportation resources to support access to educational resources.

SCHOOL REOPENING GUIDELINES AND PLANS

Over the last 30 days there has been a release of reopening guidelines and plans that reflect the shape of a pyramid. There appear to be four (4) layers to the pyramid:

1. At the top of the pyramid are the CDC school reopening guidelines

2. At the next level are the States' Departments of Health COVID-19 related guidelines for schools* along with the Governors' stage for reopening

3. In the middle of the pyramid are the individual state school reopening plans*

4. Most recently at the base of the pyramid are the local district school reopening plans incorporating many of the elements from the first three (3) layers

in the Appendix there are links to each state's COVID-19 information and school reopening plan.

The CDC is the lone agency at the top of the pyramid so there is no variance at that level.

At Level 2, there is consistency among state health guidelines and as we have seen in the news, there is a significant variance in the phases of reopening set by state Governors. In fact, the Governors' mandates in states are dynamic as we have seen reopening activities halted and even rescinded based on the spread of the coronavirus.

At Level 3, there is variance in the level of detail across the plans. As expected, the primary focus is in children's educational solutions with health being the other high priority focus. When you read the state reopening plans' transportation sections, there are some that again are highly detailed and some where it simply indicates that transportation will operate within the state's health

CDC

GOVERNORS &
STATE HEALTH
DEPARTMENTS

STATE SCHOOL
REOPENING PLANS
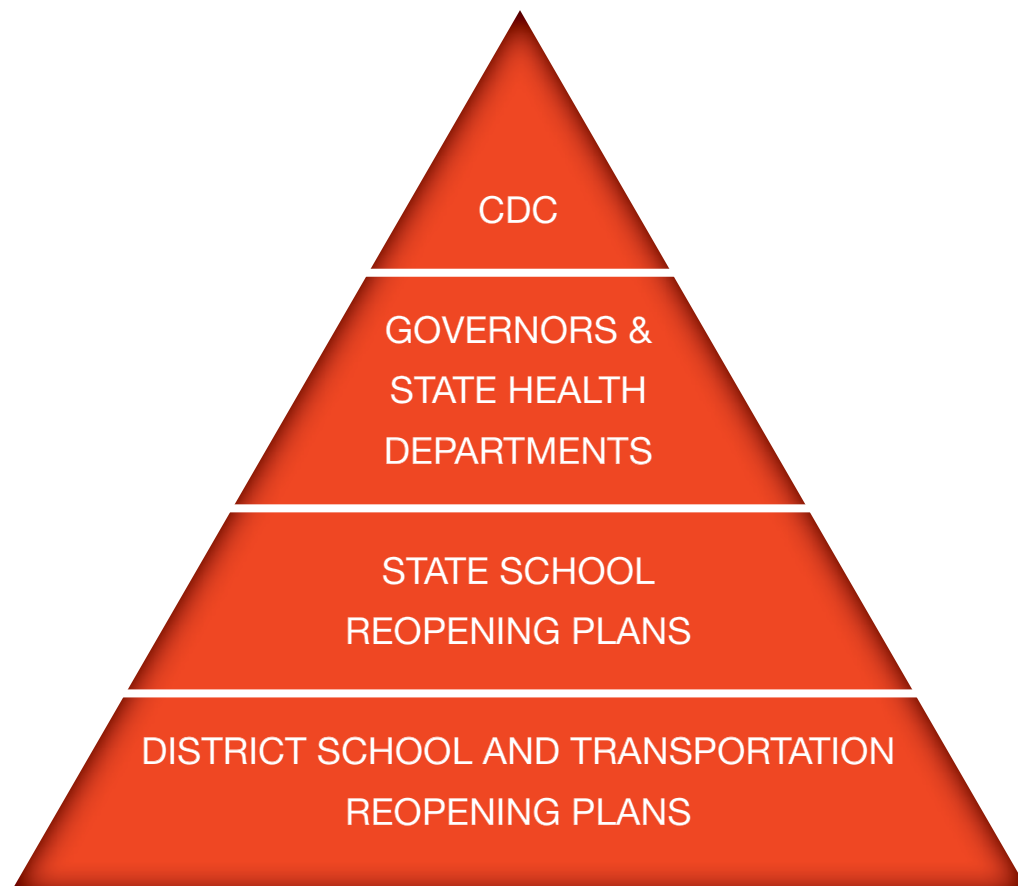
DISTRICT SCHOOL AND TRANSPORTATION
REOPENING PLANS

department guidelines. The lack of consistency in the transportation section of the state reports was a reason for forming this Task Force and developing a master set of school transportation guidelines and tasks.

At Level 4, the rubber hits the road. In most states, the ultimate decision making authority with regard to school reopening plans in general and transportation reopening plans specifically has been left to the local districts. The local districts must try to integrate the outputs from Levels 1, 2, and 3 and develop a local district reopening plan that balances the educational needs of the students, the concerns of the community and the safety of everyone within a set of budget guidelines that have been reduced in some districts. When faced with the practical application of guidelines and the operational and logistical challenges of building a new educational system, the local district reopening plans have variances primarily driven by their choice of educational schedule. These schedules generally fall into four (4) categories:

- Operating **normally** with contingency plans

- Operating on some form of **split or blended schedule**, forming two (2) student cohorts attending schools in person 2-3 days a week supplemented with online learning on the other days

- Operating a **hybrid schedule** where K-8 students have one form of schedule and the high schools have another schedule that usually involves greater amounts of remote learning

- Operating an **80%-100% remote online learning schedule** that leverages an enhanced technology infrastructure and required transportation 1 day a week if it is the 80% schedule

The underlying assumption appears to be that the initial schedule decision will be for the first half of the school year with a review in an October time-frame to determine what schedule will be used in the second half of the year.

The school schedule has the greatest impact on transportation. A review of each schedule type will highlight the transportation considerations.

OPENING NORMALLY WITH CONTINGENCY PLANS

This is the preferred schedule for districts with low local infection rates. The routes and their schedules will be normal. Social distancing will occur as needed but not be a requirement on buses or in the classroom. Mask use will likely be recommended but not required by transportation staff and students. A more aggressive bus and facility cleaning and disinfection schedule will be a part of this type of reopening plan as a preventive measure. The contingency element would involve having a defined scenario plan and response process for a number of possible situations, such as adjusting transportation services if there is an infection surge in a particular school or within the transportation department that impact route schedules, staff availability, route assignments and fleet allocations. It would be beneficial to have a contingency set of scenario plans each with the required lead-time, resources, and cost for a move to an overall split/blended schedule if there is a surge in the virus within or across the district.

OPERATING A SPLIT/BLENDED SCHEDULE

This schedule is for districts that have a moderate to high infection rate within the district or the region. It would involve creating a "cohort system" where the student body is divided into two (2) cohorts. In this schedule, each cohort would attend in person classes on a form of split schedule by days of the week. The cohort system potentially reduces the ridership by half which may allow routes to run as designed with 50% of the students. Districts now understand that 6' social distancing on a school bus is not financially nor operationally feasible. Current thinking is that a student at each window seat on a 72 passenger bus with 12 rows of 2 seats per row allows the bus to transport 24 students. If the normal route at 50 percent capacity has more than 24 students, districts can increase seating capacity by sitting family members together and if needed seating a student adjacent to an aisle. It is likely that students will be required to wear face masks when operating this schedule due to having less than 6 feet of social distance. In addition, a disciplined cleaning and disinfection schedule will likely be instituted. This report has a set of 29 guidelines and over 210 tasks that can be used to build a transportation reopening plan for a district operating under this schedule.

The transportation needs of students with special needs are not to be altered according to federal mandate and a separate transportation plan for this student population would be beneficial. This report has a separate set of guidelines for transporting students with special needs during the pandemic.

OPERATING A HYBRID SCHEDULE

The schedule is, once again, for districts that have a moderate to high infection rate within the district. The format for a hybrid system is that the K-8 student population has the cohort system similar to the split/blended schedule. It potentially reduces the ridership by half for the K-8 students which may allow routes to run as designed with 50 percent of the students for the elementary schools. Social distancing on buses will be limited as with the split/blended schedule and there will also be a disciplined cleaning and disinfection schedule that will likely be instituted. The 29 guidelines and 210 tasks can also be used to build a transportation reopening plan for a district operating under this schedule.

The difference in the hybrid schedule is that a selected student population, usually high school students, will be 80 to 100 percent remote, participate in distance learning (DL) and not require daily transportation, freeing up drivers and buses to support the K-8 transportation program if required.

The transportation program for the 100 percent remote students needs to be reviewed to accommodate students with special needs as their educational programs and services are not to be altered according to federal mandate, and a separate transportation plan for this student population would be beneficial. As mentioned, this report has a separate set of guidelines for transporting students with special needs during the pandemic.

OPERATING AN 80 TO 100 PERCENT REMOTE ONLINE SCHEDULE

This schedule requires little to no transportation for regular education students. However, transportation services for students with special needs will be required and a plan for this student population will need to be developed. The major challenge of this schedule is how to manage your workforce in the case where the virus recedes, and regular school transportation is reinstated. This schedule is not without transportation costs. The fixed costs of a district and/or contractor would continue. If the district needs to keep their drivers at the ready, they will need to continue to pay them or a district may not have the staff resources to operate transportation when the virus recedes.

RELATED TRANSPORTATION REOPENING PLANS

The Task Force reviewed reopening plans for rail, public transit, and paratransit operations. Our goal was to determine how related industries were addressing key issues identified in the surveys of various industry groups. Additionally, we focused on determining whether there were issues, concerns, or techniques these organizations were using that may be transferable to a school transportation context. Given the highly dynamic environment over the six weeks in which the Task Force was operating, we also were able to research the manner in which the corporate sector was addressing requirements and expectations for re-closings. This cycle of reopening, temporary or targeted re-closings, and reopenings was of particular interest in the event there is a significant resurgence of COVID-19 after school openings. A summary of the research is included in Appendix B.

SUMMARY

After a review of all the related industry research data, the story it told the Task Force was multifaceted and interesting.

We identified four (4) key insights

1. The school districts and their transportation departments are empowered and bear the responsibility to develop and implement a transportation pandemic response plan at the local level.

2. The customers of your transportation plan are your communities. Transportation supports the education of the students in that community and the reopening plan should instill confidence within the community to have their children return to school

3. You are fixing a plane in flight and you are not sure exactly where it is going. You are creating the "new normal" and there is not a model to refer to in developing your transportation reopening plan. You also do not know how long the "First" plan will be in effect given the nature of the pandemic. The content of this Task Force effort was designed to give you a basis for starting.

4. Every transportation professional is a "student of the pandemic" and after an initial three months of learning, you cannot stop and learning will be a fixed part of your day, every day.

The next section deals with the story of the GUIDELINES and how they were developed.

The Task Force did not want to reinvent the wheel in our process and create yet another list of guidelines and tasks. Rather, we collected and researched state reopening plans as they became available. Here is how we came up with our set of guidelines and tasks:

From each state and corporate reopening plan, we extracted **a list of action items which formed a master database.**

The action items were then sorted into two sub-groups:

- the content that was focused on the *"WHAT TO DO"* items, which became our first WORKING LIST of guidelines, and

- the *"HOW TO DO"* items which became our first WORKING LIST of tasks.

The team then cleaned the two (2) lists by removing the redundant guidelines and tasks and combining similar items. We also worked to ensure that they were formatted in a similar style.

The result was a **MASTER LIST** of reopening guidelines and tasks.

The Task Force focused on the guidelines first.

- The **MASTER LIST of GUIDELINES** was then opened up for review by the Task Force committee members. The result created our **FINAL LIST of GUIDELINES. The list contains 27 Guidelines.**

- The **FINAL LIST OF GUIDELINES** has been checked against recently released state reopening plans and the evidence of the integrity of the final list is that no new guidelines have had to be added.

INDUSTRY REOPENING PLANS	STATE SCHOOL REOPENNG PLANS
↓	↓

DATABASE OF REOPENING ACTION ITEM

WORKING LIST OF TRANSPORTATION REOPENING GUIDELNES	WORKING LIST OF TRANSPORTATION REOPENING TASKS
EDIT LIST	EDIT LIST
MASTER LIST OF GUIDELNES	MASTER LIST OF TASKS
COMMITTEE MEMBER REVIEW	COMMITTEE MEMBER REVIEW
FINAL LIST OF 27 GUIDELNES & SPECIAL NEEDS ADDEDNUM OF 19 ADD'L GUIDELINES	MASTER LIST OF 225+ TASK ALLOCATED TO GUIDELINES TO CREATE A "MENU OF TASKS"

TASKS FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

To build a **FINAL LIST OF TASKS:**

A. The Task Force allocated the tasks from its MASTER LIST to the FINAL LIST OF GUIDELINES creating a MENU of TASKS for each guideline

B. The Task Force had about 150 tasks on its Master List. The Task Force also had access to a list of 150 transportation specific tasks that were developed in a current COVID-19 Transportation Readiness project at TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS being conducted by consultants on the Task Force Program Management Team.

C. Redundancy within the tasks was eliminated and a common format for each task was added.

D. All tasks were allocated to the appropriate guideline adding to the MENU OF TASKS for each guideline.

E. The MENU of TASKS was then made available to two (2) groups to allow them to edit, add or recommend a task be deleted:

   a. All of the Task Force committee members

   b. A group of 75 transportation professionals representing a cross section of school transportation roles and responsibilities. This group volunteered to serve the Task Force and contribute their expertise.

F. The result is our FINAL MENU OF TASKS FOR EACH GUIDELINE

G. The tasks in each menu were placed in an ordered sequence to make reading and using the menu easier to the end user.

H. We could now develop the process to begin building the analytic and assessment elements of the reopening tool the Task Force has envisioned.

THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The responsibility for determining whether a task will be adopted by a district lies with the school transportation director, bus contractor and its school administration. The Task Force desired to develop two (2) assessments:

1. A Task Force assessment of the relevancy of a task to a guideline. (Highly or Moderately) The intent is to communicate which tasks have a high correlation to successfully implementing the guideline.

2. A district level assessment completed by the transportation director or bus contractor that is designed to have that person consider a number of feasibility factors before making a final decision. The assessment will identify and document the reasons why a task was or was not adopted. The assessment categories are in the section below.

TASK FORCE ASSESSMENT
Representing guidance from the Task Force

The Task Force will not be making recommendations given that this report is for school districts across the US and Canada and there are significant differences among the school districts. However, we feel that it is within the scope of the Task Force to identify the level of relevancy a task has to a guideline (Highly or Moderately). The Task Force has identified four (4) assessments it thinks will assist the end user in deciding as to whether a task will become part of their district's transportation reopening plan.

1. An overall relevance assessment

2. A task's relevance to possible school schedule options

3. A task's relevance to the district's geography

4. A task's relevance to the district's route structure

OVERALL RELEVANCY of the task to the guideline

- Overall task relationship to the guideline (How Relevant)

SCHEDULE RELEVANCY

- Task relevance to ALL Schedule Configurations

- Task relevance in Normal School Schedule

- Task relevance in Split School Schedule

- Task relevance in Hybrid Split/Remote Learning School Schedule

- Task relevance in a 100% Remote Learning School Schedule

GEOGRAPHIC RELEVANCY

- Task relevance to ALL Geographies

- Task relevance in Urban Environments

- Task relevance in Suburban Environments

- Task relevance in Mid-size Town Environments

- Task relevance in Rural Environments

ROUTE STRUCTURE RELEVANCY

- Task relevance to ALL Route Structure Configurations

- Task relevance in 3 Tier Bus Systems

- Task relevance in 2 Tier Bus Systems

- Task relevance in Single Tier Bus Systems

Relevance assessments reflect the opinions of the Task Force and are not recommendations. Each district should also make its own assessment of potential tasks based on the district's selected schedule, geography, and tier structure.

DISTRICT LEVEL ASSESSMENT
To be completed by the end user

- Safety Impact (adds or detracts from the overall safety profile of the reopening plan)

- Health Impact (adds or detracts from the overall health profile of the reopening plan)

- Cost Impact (do the tasks associated costs add to or lessen the cost profile of the reopening plan?)

- Cost Requirement Considerations (list of areas of the cost impact driven by the task)

- Resource Availability (extent to which the required resources can be obtained to implement the task)

- Legal, Regulatory, School Policy & Contractual Requirement Considerations (does the task impact any existing legal or policy element?)

- Student Applicability (does the task apply to all students, regular education students or students with special needs?)

- Student with Special Needs Requirement Considerations (list of additional resources required by a task)

- Overall Difficulty to implement a task

Once the district level assessment is complete for each task a decision can be made as to whether that task will become part of the transportation reopening plan or not.

SUMMARY

It is important to reiterate that the goal was to provide transportation professionals with the data and framework to build their transportation reopening plans. The Task Force hopes that you will have confidence in using the data by understanding the overall development process that included extensive research, editing, sorting, peer review and a final group analysis.

INDIVIDUAL GUIDELINE LIST WITH COMMENTARY AND THE SPECIAL NEEDS ADDENDUM

A REVIEW OF THE 27 CORE GUIDELINES

The Task Force has sorted the 27 GUIDELINES into four (4) categories:

- **Governance - 12 guidelines** that generally apply to all school district departments

- **Human Resources - 5 guidelines** that deal with health, medical data, testing, and screening

- **Operations - 9 guidelines** that have a high impact on transportation

- **Training - 1 guideline** related to the training of all impacted populations

The **27 guidelines** are comprehensive and when tested against recent reopening plans, there have been no edits, additions, or deletions. The guidelines are accompanied and supported by over **210 tasks** to support the development of local transportation reopening plans.

GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE: Develop an infection level response plan based on predetermined threshold levels for the number of student and staff infections, with mitigation strategies consistent with your State Health Department's recommendation and by working with your local health department in following the CDC or state health department guidance.

COMMENT: *Districts will be tracking the virus and at various infection thresholds the district will likely implement different courses of action. This will apply to infection level increases or decreases. Transportation has to be prepared for both. Having "what-if" transportation scenarios planned in advance will increase the department's agility and decrease response time.*

GUIDELINE: Develop a transportation health supply inventory plan to ensure the department has the PPE and cleaning resources necessary to consistently clean and disinfect buildings, desks, buses, equipment, and other surfaces prior to staff returning and after return, using CDC, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines.

COMMENT: *Creating a PPE, cleaning and disinfecting material forecast, identifying suppliers, and agreeing to purchasing contracts prevents any break in compliance with other guidelines and sustains the application of health management tasks.*

GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE: Develop a risk management plan by meeting with school insurance carriers to discuss and understand specifics of liability coverage.

COMMENT: *Insurance carriers deal in risk and the provisions of their district coverage could impact the tasks you chose to implement. It would be beneficial to review your transportation reopening plan with the district insurance carriers to gain their clearance.*

GUIDELINE: Develop transportation plans with contingencies for changes in service by reviewing on-going district communication and the final published 2020-21 school year calendar and schedule.

COMMENT: *The district will start with communicating schedule options as they meet to make the final school schedule decision (normal, split, hybrid or all remote) based on the factors they view as critical. The published schedule could be significantly different than normal which will trigger many operational, routing and service changes. Keeping track of the most likely schedule scenario and briefing your management staff may increase your agility and decrease transition time when the final schedule is published.*

GUIDELINE: Develop an alternative/back-up organization plan if managers, administrative and/or key employees are unable to work.

COMMENT: *The COVID-19 virus is not selective, and anyone can be infected despite best efforts. Since infected staff will be out for an extended period of time, each key staff member should have a back-up person and that person will likely need to be trained and be kept up-to-date on position related matters. Even if an infected person can work from home, their health may not allow them to do so effectively.*

GUIDELINE: Develop a transportation department safety plan by reviewing and updating current transportation practices.

COMMENT: *This involves "walking in everyone's shoes." The safety plan must address two things: compliance and health risk. You can test how the department will comply with district guidelines, and health risks can be identified by walking through each position's day in detail. This starts from the time they leave their car in the parking lot until the time they leave. Look for points of congestion, common and high touch areas, points where staff will converse or meet; make sure those higher risk items are addressed in your safety plan in addition to the actions needed for compliance*

GUIDELINE: Consider and test the possibility of new technologies that minimize the spread of germs.

COMMENT: *The use of technology can reduce staff interactions or eliminate congestion points. A few examples: Using a mobile app to have drivers check in, develop online training sessions, have drivers communicate bus issues via email vs a meeting with a technician, and using new electrostatic sprayers for disinfecting. There are also low end technologies such as spray barriers, floor spacing decals and posters that should be considered.*

GOVERNANCE GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE: Develop a financial plan that captures COVID-19 related expenses and review and/or revise transportation budgets based on the district's selected educational model.

COMMENT: *There are current federal reimbursement programs for pandemic related expenses, and there will likely be more. Given that budgets may also be getting tighter, it is to the transportation department's benefit to set up a process to document and capture all pandemic related expenses.*

GUIDELINE: Develop performance metrics and a performance scorecard to demonstrate the impact that approved practices are having and to inform any revision strategy that could involve relaxing or a tightening of particular guidelines in response to conditions.

COMMENT: *The measurement of the success of your reopening plan is the focus of this guideline. Pandemic metrics to consider are driver attendance, number of drivers contracting the virus, staff turnover, compliance % to bus disinfection schedules. In addition, comparing pre COVID-19 and new school year traditional metrics like on time percentage (OTP), MPG, vehicle out of service levels, accidents and incidents would be ways to monitor the impact of the pandemic.*

GUIDELINE: Collaboratively develop **a Contractor Readiness and Reopening Plan.**

COMMENT: *Bus contractors are also preparing contingent reopening plans for all the districts they serve, and they understand that one-size does not fit all districts. Therefore. a district needs to communicate the guidelines and tasks they expect the bus contractor to implement with the understanding the cost and service profiles will be impacted.*

GUIDELINE: Develop a transportation services plan for students in special education programs to assist students to re-engage in school.

COMMENT: *The population of students with special needs presents a unique set of health and safety issues for both the students and the transportation staff that support them. This plan can either be separate and or integrated into an overall transportation reopening plan.*

GUIDELINE: Develop a transportation communications plan about how transportation is managing due to the virus to account for the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation.

COMMENT: *Parents need information to make the determination if they want their child to ride the bus. Your driver and bus aide teams need information to determine if they are going to return to work. An extensive transportation communication plan outlining everything the department is doing to protect the health and safety of students and staff will build trust and confidence in school transportation services.*

TRAINING GUIDELINE

GUIDELINE: Review and revise the district's and the transportation department's training plan to provide relevant training for drivers, technicians, bus aides, and administrative staff. Ensure drivers and maintenance/cleaning staff are professionally trained.

COMMENT: *Along with the "new normal" are new processes, procedures, and protocols. Parents, students, school staff and transportation staff will all require some form of training. Consistency in the content and messaging of the training materials would be beneficial. It is likely that with the change in a district's pandemic situation, the processes, procedures, and protocols could be changed, and the training updated and conducted.*

HUMAN RESOURCE GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE: Develop and maintain a transportation staff wellness program that deals with anticipated social, emotional, and behavioral wellness issues.

COMMENT: *These are stressful times and the transportation staff are not immune. Rather than wait for the issues to emerge, it could be beneficial to develop a proactive program in partnership with the HR department. Communicating the benefits of the district's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), possibly conducting a workshop for managers on the signs of stress and creating new channels for staff to communicate issues are elements that could be part of the program.*

GUIDELINE: Develop an illness root cause inquiry program given that Federal law has allowed more leeway to districts in making additional medical inquiries of staff than would otherwise be allowed.
www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws

COMMENT: *The district and the transportation department can now make additional inquiries as to the cause of illness if a staff member calls in sick. Asking questions about COVID-19 symptoms is a proactive way of managing the overall health of the staff. The same questions can be asked if a staff member at work mentions they are under the weather because of a COVID-19 symptom.*

GUIDELINE: Develop staff health diagnostic program that assists in identifying high risk staff that may require enhanced protection measures including the removal of staff from roles that put high risk employees in positions that make social distancing difficult to implement.

COMMENT: *There is sufficient research that has identified persons with certain conditions as being a high risk in relation to contacting or recovering from COVID-19. High risk staff need to be identified and in conjunction with district HR to determine if their position puts them in greater jeopardy. If so, staff reassignments or exemptions from certain tasks could be required.*

HUMAN RESOURCE GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE: Develop an enhanced recruitment program to prepare for an increased need for substitute staff in all positions due to higher absence rates.

COMMENT: *There was a shortage of drivers before the pandemic. The pandemic could increase the shortage of drivers. A driver retention forecast would be a start; a proactive retention program would also be a plus. In addition, the transportation department will need to allocate additional resources to source, hire and train new drivers and bus aides.*

GUIDELINE: Review district and collective bargaining agreement HR policies and procedures included in handbooks to provide more flexibility and remove punitive measures for absences when there is determined illness, a localized outbreak, or exposure of a contagious disease. Keep in mind any emergency laws that are in effect and are applicable to schools (for example, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act) override existing terms.

COMMENT: *All former policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements (CBA) were pre-pandemic. They will likely not have "pandemic provisions." A formal review and updating of HR policies and CBAs would be beneficial, proactive and contribute to problem prevention.*

OPERATIONS GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE: Develop a face coverage policy consistent with state and local guidelines.

COMMENT: *This is a core infection prevention method. This could involve all parents, students, staff, and visitors to the transportation facility. The district will determine the precise guidelines. Masks in lieu of strict social distancing is likely for everyone. Special notice should be taken of congested areas such as the clock-in area, technician locker rooms, boarding and unboarding times on a bus, bus stops, small group meetings and staff encounters at a counter or desk. Policy should cover who is providing the masks and contingencies for non-compliance or the lack of a mask.*

GUIDELINE: Develop a social distancing program consistent with state and local guidelines.

COMMENT: *This is a core infection prevention method. This could involve all parents, students, staff, and visitors to the transportation facility. The district will determine the precise guidelines. Social distancing, if enacted by the district, will impact the number of students on the bus and at the stops, driver rooms, how technicians work together on a bus, the movement through the facility and most staff interactions. It should also include a micro-training session on how staff can politely say to a colleague - "You are too close."*

GUIDELINE: Develop a work environment safety program following the CDC Guidelines, State/local guidelines for Schools and Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), May 2020, to the extent practicable. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

COMMENT: *The focus is on all equipment, tools, high touch and contact surface areas. It could include protocols such as "Protect Yourself - Clean Before Using," and "No sharing of equipment." Computers, tools, phones, route books, copy machines, pens, pencils, staplers, doors and even bus drivers' seating areas could be covered in the program.*

GUIDELINE: Develop a bus and student management program by reviewing and updating driver and student management procedures to consider social distancing and other protective measures related to preventing the spread of COVID-19.

COMMENT: *Areas include everything that happens on a bus from bus stop to school and back. It includes seat assignments, boarding procedures, student management, bus cleaning and disinfecting schedules, student registration for transportation, number of students at stops, use of PPE on vehicles, taking ridership attendance, sequential loading and unloading and how driver training and evaluations are managed.*

GUIDELINE: Develop worksite hazard assessments and transportation facilities usage program to identify COVID-19 prevention strategies based on recommendations from the CDC Considerations for Schools, and State/local guidelines as well as CDC, state, and local guidelines for businesses.

COMMENT: *The focus is on the facility infrastructure (air flow, desk locations, spray barriers). for this guideline. It could include, facility cleaning and disinfecting, staff one-way flow through the facility, occupancy management, and visitor and staff tracking while in the facility.*

GUIDELINE: Develop a health status reporting program by determining the content, metric, and frequency of a report to the superintendent or designee based on the district's established procedures.

COMMENT: *Reporting of all infection related data will likely be a district requirement. The infrastructure and processes have to be in place to support contact tracing by the local health department.*

GUIDELINE: Develop an extra-curricular transportation program based on the district's new athletic/field trip/ bus charter (for bus contractors) program requirements.

COMMENT: *For districts that are able to continue some form of extracurricular and sport programs. A subset of established tasks may be required as it could alter cleaning schedules, number of buses required if social distancing rules are applied, and special instructions for faculty who may use Multifunction School Activity Buses (MFSAB) for a trip. Also, bus contractors often charter their school buses commercially for community shuttle programs and special events and the district and the contractor should have an agreed cleaning and disinfection agreement to cover these situations.*

GUIDELINE: Develop and/or update your transportation program for students who are medically fragile, in foster care or covered under the McKinney-Vento ACT considering the use of custodial-arranged, reimbursable transportation services for this student population

COMMENT: *These student populations have legally mandated services, and it is beneficial to treat them as a defined segment of the overall student population with special requirements Thus a specific transportation plan for this group would be beneficial. It could include additional procedures or sub-contracting a service to a specialized vendor.*

GUIDELINE: Participate in IEP development meetings for students to provide input on a transportation plan that meets social distancing and student health recommendations (including pick-up, in-transit, and drop-off). It is also important to review cleaning and disinfection protocols.

COMMENT: *Student Services needs to understand the capabilities and limitations of student transportation during the pandemic. Involving the transportation department earlier in the IEP process can reduce potential issues and ensure the safety of students within this specialized student population.*

SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDELINE ADDENDUM

Considerations for the safe return of students with disabilities and special needs that receive the related service transportation may require modifications in the provision of the related service transportation, not required prior to the impact of COVID-19 on school bus transportation for these students.

In accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, related service transportation changes or modifications must be made in accordance with federal regulations and state mandates.

The information provided below is written to specifically support school bus transportation to and from school for students with disabilities and special needs and their families. The starting point is reviewing the guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These guidelines should be utilized in a manner that is consistent with an individual's special needs in accordance with a student's individualized education program (IEP) and Individual Transportation Plans (ITPs).

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM PLAN PROCESS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The IEP team reviews any school district requirements or recommendations to modify or change transportation on the current IEP for each student receiving the related service transportation prior to COVID-19. For example, decisions about the use of specific disinfectants not used prior to COVID-19 may have a significant impact on the health and safety of students with disabilities and special needs, specifically related to their disability.

As a point of reference, below is a link to a Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services Flow Chart that addresses the related service transportation and the IEP process.

bit.ly/2Of9BTl

Additionally, as a second point of reference there is a link to a Maryland State Department of Education PowerPoint zoom presentation (via Zoom meeting, May 19th, 2020) titled, "Transportation's Role in Recovery Planning."

bit.ly/3fm13pk
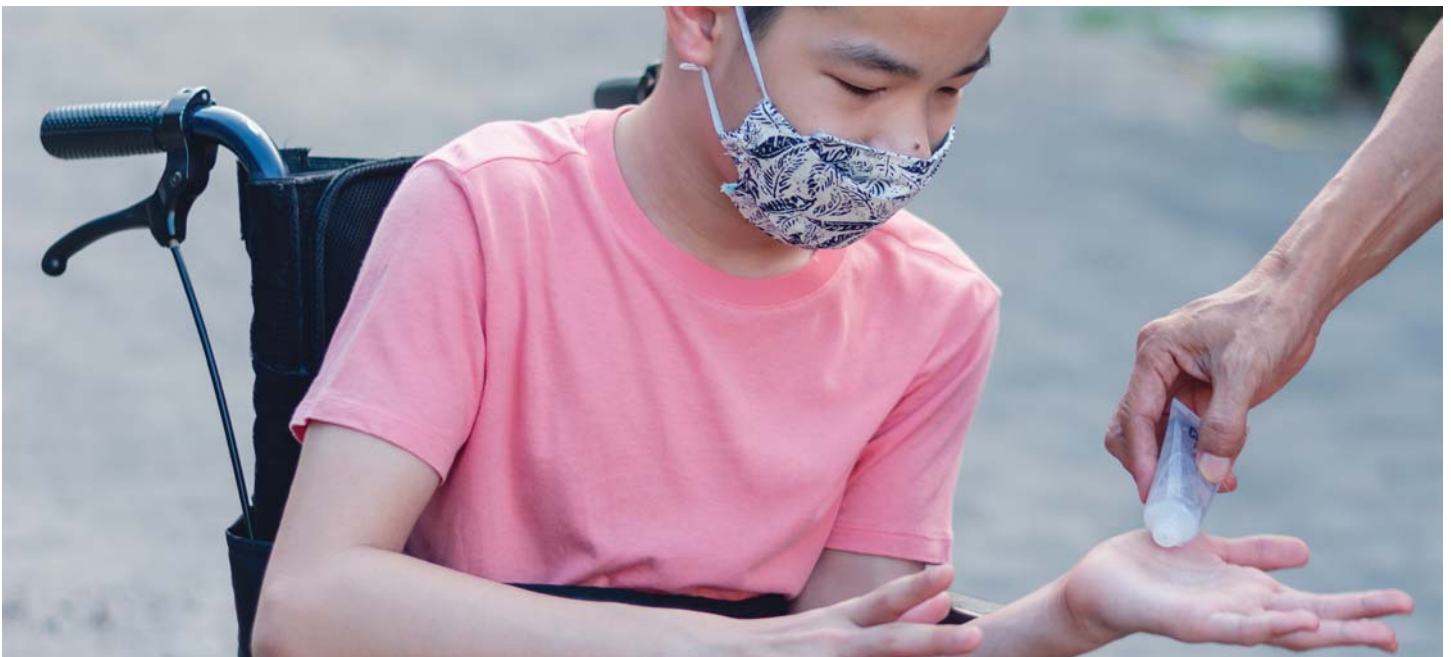
GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS PRIOR TO STEPPING ON THE SCHOOL BUS

GUIDELINE: A letter should be sent by the school district, specifically addressing policies and procedures about the return of students with disabilities and special needs to school.

COMMENTS: *This letter should consider detailed information about district-wide transportation options. Included in the letter should be information focusing on students with disabilities and special needs that may not have the capacity to adhere to COVID-19 policies and procedures to ride school buses or approved alternative transportation. The process for which these students will be assured the IDEA provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and least restrictive environment (LRE) to assure safe transportation in accordance with IDEA and Section 504 requirements, should be explained. A contact number should be provided to address parent questions. Prior to responding to parent questions, the school district should have in place a process for providing a consistent message.*

GUIDELINE: The required use of masks by students with disabilities and special needs, in accordance with school district policies and procedures, should be considered on a case-by-case basis after school district personnel are fully informed and knowledgeable about the capacity of each individual student to wear a mask.

COMMENTS: *No student should be excluded from transportation solely as a result of the inability to wear a mask. This decision would likely be a violation of the IDEA and Section 504 provision of FAPE. It is essential to develop a plan, when a mask is required to be worn for transport, that addresses an individual student's capacity to comply, in order to assure no IDEA or Section 504 procedural violations occur.*

GUIDELINE: Bus stop location and social distancing, that are approved by the district, should be shared with transportation, special education, relevant staff, and parents.

COMMENT: *School bus stop location safety practices, prior to the school bus arriving, and when the school bus drops off students at the end of the school day, should be provided for families to review and practice prior to the opening of schools. Monitoring students with disabilities and special needs at school bus stops is an essential safety precaution in response to COVID-19 distancing recommendations. It is suggested that examples of age appropriate travel training support for safe distancing and no touching be shared with families. These transportation arrangements are best accomplished by qualified staff through age appropriate travel training instruction designed to accommodate the learning style and special needs of students with disabilities. When the IEP or Section 504 plan is the identified mechanism for addressing safe distance and no touching behavior, the IEP process should be utilized to document decision-making. For students not capable of following social distancing and no touching requirements, the school district and parent should work jointly to establish the best safety precautions that can be adhered to by an individual student. The inability of a student to follow school district safe distance and no touching directions is not an acceptable reason to deny FAPE. If the parent agrees to alternative transportation to provide the related service transportation specified on the IEP, options should be discussed and if approved documented on the IEP. The related service transportation should be offered to be provided at no cost to parents.*

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS PRIOR TO STEPPING ON THE SCHOOL BUS

GUIDELINE: Prior parent knowledge and approval is required to use hand sanitizers before entry onto the school bus or on the school bus.

COMMENT: *Many students with disabilities and special needs may have disability related health issues and/or behaviors, that could potentially cause harm to the student if sanitizer use is a school district requirement. Students that put their fingers into their mouth or try to lick off a sanitizer can be placed at risk. It is crucial to understand that some students with disabilities and special needs can have an allergic response to a sanitizer, resulting in a significant adverse health impact. The decision for a parent not to approve the use of a sanitizer should be discussed by the appropriate IEP team staff, including the parent(s) at an IEP meeting. The safety of each individual student with disabilities and special needs, should be well-thought out. The requirement to use a sanitizer when contraindicated for a student with a disability, may result in the failure to provide FAPE.*

GUIDELINE: The use of temperature checks by the school district for students with disabilities and special needs should be commensurate with those for non-disabled students riding on the school bus.

COMMENT: *When necessary, on a case-by-case basis, the resistance of a student to have their temperature taken should be considered, in order not to deny FAPE.*

GUIDELINE: The school district boarding rules for students with disabilities and special needs, should take into consideration the individual abilities of these students to follow rules and should be discussed with parents and the IEP team, if the change in boarding may result in a change in transportation service.

COMMENT: *Failure of these students to follow rules must assure that students with disabilities and special needs do not result in a denial of FAPE.*

GUIDELINE: Travel training is a viable option that should be considered by IEP teams prior to the return of these students to school.

COMMENT: *Additional "dry-runs" should be considered for students with special needs to increase their familiarity with new procedures.*

GUIDELINE: Changes in boarding practices need to be considered for students who use wheelchairs and passengers with special needs as a result of COVID-19.

COMMENT: *Sequential boarding will be the norm, but a review of where in the sequence students with special needs should be boarded is suggested as well as their seat location.*

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS PRIOR TO STEPPING ON THE SCHOOL BUS

GUIDELINE: All changes in school bus occupancy should be discussed with the appropriate school district personnel, to assure that students with disabilities and special needs will not be denied FAPE or LRE, previously provided.

COMMENT: *If occupancy changes ridership, it is essential that the IEP team, including parents, review the impact on each student on a case-by-case basis.*

GUIDELINE: Ensure safe seating arrangements for students with disabilities and special needs.

COMMENT: *Seating decisions should assure that students with disabilities and special needs are considered with respect to their capacity to understand seating policies and procedures, locating their seat and staying seated. It is feasible that individual students with disabilities and special needs will require more extensive assistance than prior to COVID-19.*

GUIDELINE: Planning or modifications for school bus ventilation, must take into consideration the relationship of ventilation choice, such as open windows, with relationship to the individual impact on a student with disabilities and their special needs.

COMMENT: *The decision to open windows, not previously opened, requires careful planning regarding safety and health. For example, this may not be a reasonable recommendation for students with certain respiratory conditions whose breathing difficulties can be triggered by fumes, temperature changes and dust or other factors more prevalent when the windows are open.*

GUIDELINE: The impact of specific disabilities if there are bus ridership changes requires careful consideration.

COMMENT: *All changes in ridership impacting the well-being or safety of a student with a disability receiving the related service transportation should be discussed by the IEP team, including the parent, to assure no decision will have a negative impact on the student.*

GUIDELINE: It is essential that only qualified trainers provide school bus drivers and attendants with pandemic related information and training required to safely transport students with disabilities and special needs.

COMMENT: *High quality and consistent pandemic information related to the transportation of students with special needs is essential and should come from persons knowledgeable and authorized to communicate the information.*

GUIDELINE: For students with disabilities and special needs that are unable to understand or follow a school district's new transportation policies and procedures in response to COVID-19, it is essential that drivers and attendants understand the needs of individual students in order to work effectively with them and make all necessary adaptations for safe transport.

COMMENT: *An assessment of a student's ability to comply with procedures would be beneficial and a contingency and support plan should be developed for students with limited ability to comply.*

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS PRIOR TO STEPPING ON THE SCHOOL BUS

GUIDELINE: School bus video use, when available, may provide excellent immediate feedback about safe transportation practices.

COMMENT: *It is suggested that school bus videos should be used for the purpose of education and not evaluation of riders with special needs.*

GUIDELINE: The school district should assure that all personnel talking with parents of students with disabilities and special needs are providing the same message.

COMMENT: *In order to do so, transportation, special education, and related service personnel, should receive training and written materials that afford consistency.*

GUIDELINE: Parents of students with disabilities and special needs should be informed about transportation arrangements well in advance of the provision of service and be provided the name and phone number of individuals to contact, if there is a question.

COMMENT: *Ensure the communication process is supported by accurate contact information for both school representatives and the parents. Sufficient lead-time should be built into the communication process to enable the transportation department to conduct a "dry-run" if requested.*

GUIDELINE: The school district should ensure that all parent communications comply with IDEA and Section 504 requirements for students with disabilities and special needs and be informed of their responsibilities in providing safe transportation by fully understanding the nature of transportation services during the pandemic.

COMMENT: *This will require an educational outreach program comprising participation at school open-houses, phone trees and direct mail activities.*

SECTION 4
USER GUIDE FOR STATE AND LOCAL TRANSPORTATION DIRECTORS AND BUS CONTRACTORS

Sections one through three of this document describe the efforts of the STARTS Task Force in developing and bringing to you a comprehensive list of school transportation tasks that fulfill the requirements of the guidelines that districts will likely operate under this coming school year.

The Task Force has endeavored to go beyond the publication of a reference list of transportation guidelines and corresponding tasks. In fact, this section is where the work of the Task Force ends, and your work begins. There are a number of supplemental tools that are available to the transportation professionals:

1. **A relevance assessment** of each task to its associated guideline to assist in prioritization

2. A list of **next steps** each constituency may want to consider

3. A **task assessment tool** to determine the viability of implementing a task

4. A **transportation reopening Gantt Chart** with all guidelines and tasks listed where a person can simply delete those tasks they have not selected and then assign responsibility and dates for the remaining tasks

5. A set of **sample reopening plans and presentations** that can be used as a reference in building your plan

6. A reference **guide for how to build a transportation reopening plan**

The content of this document is for transportation professionals to build a district's transportation reopening plan that can be a part of the district's overall reopening plan.

There are three (3) primary constituencies for this document:

1. **School district transportation directors** who manage transportation for districts which operate their own service

2. **Bus contractor location managers** who manage transportation on behalf of their client districts

3. **State directors of transportation** who assist districts in their state in complying with with federal, state, and district guidelines and requirements.

The Task Force acknowledges that other groups may find value and insight in this document such as school administrators and our transportation colleagues in the public transit and paratransit bus service sectors.

POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION DIRECTORS

The following list represents suggestions from the Task Force on what a district transportation director may want to consider doing next with the task Force results and tools.

1. There is a significant amount of data to take in. It would be beneficial for school district transportation directors to become familiar with the content and learn how to navigate through it and effectively use the data and the supporting tools.

2. The Task Force believes that all school transportation professionals should know about and have access to the data and the tools. Each industry organization (NAPT, NASDPTS, NSTA) will have a link to the report and the tools. The school district transportation director can communicate the existence and location of the Task Force report to the members of the school administration and use it as a platform for discussion and transportation plan development.

3. Although there are some "universal guidelines and tasks" that will very likely be part of the district's overall reopening plan (social distancing, use of PPE, cleaning and disinfecting), there are some guidelines and tasks that are contingent on the decisions the school board makes regarding school schedules and compliance levels to state and federal guidelines. The school transportation director will have to Identify the transportation plan requirements based on the district's decisions and identify the guidelines and tasks in this document that they can use to build their respective transportation plan.

4. In the interest of consistency for transportation reopening plans, the Task Force will compile a set of reference plans from districts across the country on a website that the school district transportation director can refer to when developing their reopening plans. Select a transportation reopening plan model that suits your district and construct your transportation plan by leveraging the Task Force's list of guidelines and tasks and the supporting assessment tools.

5. Ensuring the internal staff and external constituencies clearly understand what activities are being undertaken to promote health and safety will be critical to building confidence in any school district response. This should include regular use of district digital communications tools including website, social media, and local cable television to provide clarity on what the department is doing to mitigate the risk to students, drivers, monitors, and other staff. Specific emphasis should be placed on demonstrating to constituents wherever possible activities related to cleaning and other mitigation procedures. Regular communications to staff, parents, and students about the known issues being addressed and the uncertainty still to be resolved will promote confidence so long as the communication is clear, accurate, and complete to the extent possible.

6. If you have questions about the data or the tools, you may want to create a local "network group" with neighboring transportation directors and collectively contact the Task Force representative from the NAPT for training and support.

7. As the pandemic is dynamic, there could be a Version 2.0 of the report and the Task Force would appreciate it if you could provide feedback on the report and its tools to the Task Force representative from the NAPT.

POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS FOR BUS CONTRACTORS

1. The following list represents suggestions from the Task Force on what they may want to consider doing next with the Task Force results and tools.

2. There is a significant amount of data to take in. It would be beneficial for bus contractors to become familiar with the content and learn how to navigate through it and effectively use the data and the supporting tools.

3. The Task Force believes that all school transportation professionals should know about and have access to the data and the tools. Each industry organization (NAPT, NASDPTS, NSTA) will have a link to the report and the tools. The bus contractors can communicate the existence and location of the Task Force report to the members of the school administration and use it as a platform for discussion and transportation plan development.

4. Although there are some "universal guidelines and tasks" that will very likely be part of your client district's overall reopening plan (social distancing, use of PPE, cleaning and disinfecting), there are some guidelines and tasks that are contingent on the decisions the school board makes regarding school schedules and compliance levels to state and federal guidelines. The bus contractor will have to Identify the transportation plan requirements based on the district's decisions and identify the guidelines and tasks in this document that they can use to build their respective transportation plan.

5. As a bus contractor is in a matrix situation reporting both to the school district and to their company executive team member, the bus contractor should take the time to identify and address any conflicting provisions between what the school district wants and what the bus contractor feels is best to provide.

6. In the interest of consistency for transportation reopening plans, the Task Force will compile a set of reference plans from districts across the country on a website that the bus contractor can refer to when developing their reopening plans for their client districts. Select a transportation reopening plan model that suits the reporting requirements of your client district and construct your transportation plan

by leveraging the Task Force's list of guidelines and tasks and the supporting assessment tools.

7. Bus contractors will serve as a critical bridge between school districts and corporate partners. Managers must focus on coordinating both corporate and district efforts at mitigation to staff, students, and parents. Efforts should be targeted at ensuring that messaging on mitigation efforts are clear, consistent, and complete. Internal messaging to drivers and monitors should be focused on ensuring that there is an understanding of both the expectations and the rationale to promote compliance with the proposed guidelines.

8. If you have questions about the data or the tools, you may want to create a local "network group" with other bus contractors within your company and collectively contact the Task Force representative from the NSTA for training and support.

9. As the pandemic is dynamic, there could be a Version 2.0 of the report and the Task Force would appreciate it if you could provide feedback on the report and its tools to the Task Force representative from the NSTA.

POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS FOR STATE DIRECTORS

1. There is a significant amount of data to take in. It would be beneficial for state transportation directors to become familiar with the content and learn how to navigate through it and respond to basic questions about the data and the supporting tools.

2. The Task Force believes that all school transportation professionals in the state should know about and have access to the data and the tools. Each industry organization (NAPT, NASDPTS, NSTA) will have a link to the report and the tools. The state director of transportation can communicate the existence and location of the Task Force report to the districts, contractors, charter schools, and other student transportation providers within their state.

3. In the interest of consistency for transportation reopening plans, the Task Force will compile a set of reference plans from districts across the country on a website that the state transportation director can refer district representatives to when they want assistance with their reopening plans.

4. It is likely, since districts have been slow to announce their reopening plans and schedule, that there could be multiple districts having to complete their plans quickly. One suggestion for state directors is that districts form "network groups" and have them contact the NASDPTS Task Force representative for training and support.

5. State directors should continue to serve as an informational and educational resource to their local education agencies. Continuing to gather and organize information related to virus mitigation strategies and providing the resources to local districts for reopening plan development will be a key communications role. Facilitating the refinement and revision of local education agencies' reopening plans through access to and distribution of information as it becomes available will also be the key communications role of the state directors.

6. As a courtesy provide the link to the report to the district superintendents and district school business officials and refer administration questions to a NASDPTS Task Force representative.

7. Finally, periodically provide feedback on the Task Force report to NASDPTS as there could be a version 2.0 developed if needed.

CHALLENGES AND THE NEXT PHASE

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

School districts and school transportation professionals will be challenged as never before by the 2020 school start. The continuing uncertainty of how the COVID-19 virus spreads, to which populations, and how to mitigate the virus spread has upset the established rhythms of educators and school transportation providers in unprecedented ways. The research and analysis conducted by the Task Force has clearly indicated that the search for certainty in expectations and guidelines has also disrupted normal planning processes used by school transportation managers across the nation.

The release and on-going revision of state reopening plans coupled with the continuing guidance provided by federal, state, and local health authorities has begun to provide some clarity related to the expectations for transportation providers. The guidance provided continues to reflect the decentralized nature of the educational system and has resulted in at least 50 different specific models of service as each state and territory establishes its specific requirements and expectations. However, as the consolidated guidelines in Section 3 demonstrate, there is sufficient commonality between the guidelines that the student transportation industry can begin to consider the development of common strategies and tasks to meet the challenge of reopening. The key challenge for each individual transportation operation will be determining how they will evaluate and decide on the options available to them.

INSIGHTS AND THEMES OF THE TASK FORCE'S WORK

The student transportation world is about to enter a new era. The opening of school in 2020 represents the after point of the history and practices that have influenced education and transportation previously. The unprecedented shuttering of nearly all of America's schools and the need to develop highly localized reopening strategies will have profound impacts on how transportation organizations will support access to educational programs. Developing strategies that support the educational and economic recovery in communities across the nation will be a significant burden for transportation organizations, managers, and staff. While the challenges will be great, it is undoubtedly one that the industry can meet.

Uncertainty and the associated risks that have been identified throughout the Task Force's work will permeate every aspect of transportation services. Some of the impacts will be short-term and solely in response to mitigation efforts. However, other changes to both the purpose and role of transportation in supporting access are likely to be more systemic and long-term. Changes to the way organizations consider the use of availability capacity, how drivers can and should be protected, and what is necessary to keep vehicles safe and sanitary will be questions that will remain beyond any virus response period. The tools developed by the Task Force are intended to recognize that transportation organizations will have to review and revisit choices until greater certainty on the structure of the educational environment is realized.

The defining characteristic of the reopening strategies in light of the uncertainty is that strategies and approaches will be highly localized. It is highly likely that neighboring districts will arrive at different to very different conclusions about how best to meet the educational access needs of their communities. This should be considered a feature of and not a bug in the system. The diversity of operating environments across the nation provides a unique opportunity to assess the viability of different approaches to solving similar problems in different contexts. This should allow for the identification of practices that have proven effective to address questions related to safety, sanitization, and best

use of resources. The continuing collaboration of various industry groups that has served as the underpinning of this effort will create a structure to catalog and share the learnings and continuing questions that transportation operations will have as they reinvent their service models.

Communicating the challenges of student transportation will be a constant despite that it has always been difficult for an industry that has always been focused on quiet professionalism. Creating systems and processes that maximize the opportunities for students to access educational services within a competing web of statutory, regulatory, and operational constraints is the daily business of student transporters. However, the scope of change that will be necessary to respond to the current challenge will require that transportation departments increase the frequency, type, and clarity of communications they offer to their constituencies. Parents, students, administrators, and staff will have different and differing levels of anxiety associated with both the first day of school and every day thereafter. Transportation organizations must be able to clearly articulate what they are doing to mitigate the risk of virus transmission.

Development of an integrated communications plan that addresses what the transportation operation is doing to reduce the likelihood that virus transmission will occur on the bus needs to be an ongoing element of transportation planning. Additionally, it will also be necessary to explain why a district or operation has chosen not to pursue strategies or perform particular activities related to virus mitigation. The resources and tools included with this report are designed to provide transporters with a starting point for making and then detailing the reasoning for those choices. The following provides the basic outline of a planning approach that transportation providers can consider when determining how they will communicate with parents, students, staff, and other constituents.

1. Determine who your audience is - it is critical to know the group of individuals to whom you are targeting your communications. This will ensure that both the language used, and the messaging provided is delivered using terminology and perspective that will be relevant to those individuals.

2. Clearly establish what you want to communicate about - for a message to be received it must be clear and there should not be extensive mixing of ideas within the communications. Separating messages into those related to bus cleaning, physical distance, mask wearing and PPE, for example, will ensure that you can completely and clearly provide information about a specific topic.

3. Use the appropriate media to deliver the specific message to the specific audience - considering how to deliver the message is as important as developing the message itself. Digital, print, and telephone distribution should all be considered. Assessing the timeliness with which the message needs to be delivered, the number of individuals to which the message will be delivered, and the criticality of the message should all influence the media selected.

4. Identify whether a follow up to the initial message will be required and, if so, when - when communicating requests for action or to educate on a particular policy or procedure, among other options, it will likely be necessary to develop a series of messages to reinforce the ideas being conveyed. The follow up message should, to the extent possible, be developed with the original messaging to ensure consistency and completeness of the message.

5. Determine how you will know whether your target audience understood the messaging provided - the key to effective communications is ensuring that the message distributed was understood as expected and acted on as intended. Defining these expectations at the beginning of the process will allow for the early refinement of the messaging content and strategy if the intended actions do not occur.

This basic outline of communications planning will allow student transporters to play an active role in development of their organizational strategy. Coordinating with communications professionals to ensure that the efforts undertaken to mitigate the impact of the virus will be an increasingly important role of transportation professionals.

The likely scrutiny of the choices made by organizations underlies the need to establish a reasoned decision-making model to support the communications strategy of transportation organizations and districts.

DECISION-MAKING CONSIDERATIONS

Section 4 of the Task Force Report makes clear that the difficult work of implementation will remain the responsibility of local transportation managers. Determining exactly which operational practices will need to change and to what degree represents the core of the efforts that must be undertaken prior to the school start 2020. As transportation professionals begin to make the recommendations on service delivery practices to their local school authorities and making the difficult choices necessary within their own organization, the Task Force suggests that the development of a structured decision-making process will improve the prospects for successful implementation.

Education will be a new constant. Individual managers with significant expertise often rely on intuition and experience to make consequential decisions. Unfortunately, the current conditions and novel challenges faced by transportation providers across the nation are such that there is limited to no experience that can be relied on to ensure that managers are making the best decision possible for their individual operations. Recognizing this, the Task Force has provided the outline of a process that all organizations can consider to increase the likelihood that any decision made has fully considered the context and consequences that will impact the real and perceived success of the choices that are made.

Every organization designing a reopening plan must acknowledge that a significant amount of uncertainty will remain the norm rather than the exception. As a result, building a process that allows for decisions to be made quickly while fully considering the consequences will be an important component of an organization's ability to sustain effective operations during the entire school year. The six-step process described below can be scaled to address both complex and simple decisions that an organization may need to make. Given the number of decisions and the range of issues that transportation professionals will need to address in the 30 to 60 days before school starts, establishing a model that supports this flexibility will be important for success.

A MANAGEMENT PROCESS MODEL

Below are a set of management process steps that transportation organizations could add to their current set of management practices to improve clarity, effectiveness, and efficiency:

Step 1: Be clear who is making the decision – One of the most common failures of decision-making is not knowing if one has been made. This results in a lack of clear direction on how to move forward. Establishing at the outset of the process whether a single individual or a group of individuals will be responsible for the final decision is key to ensuring clarity, direction, and accountability.

Step 2: Define what you are trying to accomplish – Given all of the competing interests and uncertainties, understanding what you are trying to decide on will be critical. Is the decision intended to reduce costs? Maximize options? Improve service? Clearly articulating what the objective of the decision-making is and how competing interests will be balanced will increase the likelihood of successfully deciding on an option.

Step 3: Develop options – There is almost always more than one way to accomplish an objective. Relying on historic practices and "what we have always done" is unlikely to be an adequate response to the present challenge. As a result, it is important to utilize as broad and diverse a set of viewpoints as possible to best inform the decision to be made. It is very likely that organizations will have to innovate and invent new approaches to service delivery to support the implementation of the guidelines and tasks and that can only be accomplished if there is an organizational and individual openness to new options.

Step 4: Address the issue of cognitive bias – There are a broad range of systemic roadblocks that impact effective decision-making. Seeking out information that confirms our initial viewpoint (confirmation bias), underestimating the likelihood that we might be incorrect (overconfidence bias), and an aversion to change generally (status quo bias) are three that often negatively impact an organization's ability to make effective decisions. Being aware of and actively seeking to determine if these and other issues have impacted any of the previous steps and determining how to minimize these systemic issues will allow for better choices to be available and ultimately a better decision.

Step 5: Decide, act and correct – The simplest thing seems to be actually deciding, but that would misread the process. Actually making a choice requires that you assess whether you have the information you need given the time available to decide, whether small changes in assumptions will have big impacts on the decision you might make, and whether you're clear on how you will select the "best-of-the-best" or the "best-of-the-worst" options available to you. Deciding is not easy, but it is necessary. It is also important to acknowledge that for many decisions you make the choices are not permanent.

Step 6: Create a feedback loop for your decision – Deciding is not the end of a process, but the beginning of one. When choosing an option, it is also necessary to create a method to see if your choice worked as expected. Creating a feedback loop that allows you to reassess and determine whether changes need to be made is an important part of putting an organization in a position to succeed. Beware of over committing to your choice when evidence suggests things are not working as expected (commitment bias). The sign of good decision making is the ability to adapt in light of changing information and evidence.

Despite the best efforts of any organization, it is unlikely that every decision that is made will be absolutely correct. The range of concerns, constituencies, and complexities in the current environment makes perfection an unattainable goal regardless of how desirable it may be. The use of a defined and structured process to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the potential upside of each choice you make when uncertainty is the dominant characteristic of the environment.

THE NEW NORMAL: A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

An obvious but necessary realization throughout the planning process is that the first day of school is not the last day of planning. The continued uncertainty associated with the scope of virus mitigation efforts will demand that transportation operations continue to engage in targeted and systemic planning processes throughout the school year. This is likely to place demands on organizations that are fundamentally different and more taxing than the existing daily tactical changes necessary to ensure students get to school safely and ready to learn. The Task Force has attempted to design its tools and resources to support frequent scenario planning by transportation providers to assess how particular events may change the way services are provided.

Commonly considered events that will reshape the way services are provided include the possibility of surges in virus outbreaks and the development and availability of a vaccine. These events begin to define the range of considerations that transporters must consider when thinking about the virus specifically, but do not encompass the full range of events that must be considered. For example, operations in the southeast may need to consider the impact that hurricane season will have on the strategies and activities used by their organizations. Transporters across the northern parts of the United States must be cognizant of how winter conditions will impact their individual approach to service delivery. The possibility of flooding and other general emergencies should be given consideration to determine how they may influence the proposed system designs. Preparing operations to meet multiple challenges at the same time will be an added burden for the 2020-21 school year and beyond.

CONCLUSION

State and local education and public health agencies have begun the process of reducing, but not eliminating, the uncertainty associated with what services must be provided and when with the release of state reopening plans. Transportation operations will serve as the critical link between plans for school reopening and the actual return to school for millions of students. Designing and testing routing strategies while also attempting to determine whether sufficient staffing will be available to implement the proposed approaches represents an unprecedented challenge to the industry. The Task Force has worked to increase the capacity of the industry by aggregating and organizing a substantial amount of data and information that can be used in the design of reopening plans. It was and remains our intention that this effort will allow student transporters to focus on how to continue to provide the safest, most reliable services available to students.

The development of this resource guide and the tools and additional resources attached to this effort represent a substantial achievement for the Task Force over an approximately four-week period. However, Task Force leaders, members, and managers all acknowledge that **this is the first step in the student transportation industry's response to COVID-19 not the last.** We believe that the on-going process of assessing the local environment and conditions; developing and deciding on response strategies and tasks; and evaluating whether the desired and expected impact occurred will be the overarching responsibility of all operations in the 2020-21 school year. NAPT, NASDPTS and NSTA will continue their joint efforts to ensure that school transportation remains the safest, most reliable, and most cost effective method for students to access educational services.

DATA SUMMARY

DATA ELEMENTS DESCRIPTION

The STARTS Task Force data package includes the following items:

- **27 Guidelines and an associated "Menu of Tasks" for school transportation** in an excel sheet format (the guidelines are found listed in Section 3 of the report)

- A **"Menu of Tasks for Each Guideline" developed using a master list of 210 School Transportation Tasks** which have been allocated to each guideline

- **Students with Special Needs Guidelines** and supporting commentary in an excel sheet format (the guidelines found listed in Section 3 of the report)

- A **Guideline and Task Assessment Template** with all Guidelines and Tasks in an excel format

- A **Transportation Reopening Gantt Sheet Planning Tool** with all the guidelines and tasks in a "SIMPLE GANTT SHEET" excel format

- An Appendix with **a link to each state's COVID-19 response website** as well as that **state's school reopening plan website** (if available on or before July 6th) as well as links to relevant federal websites

- An Appendix with a **Framework for Developing A Transportation Plan** to support school reopening

- An Appendix with **selected reading and research references**

- An Appendix with **survey questionnaires and results**

LINKS TO THE DATA

You will be able to access all of the STARTS Task Force data package documents using any of the following links:

- www.startstaskforce.com

- www.napt.org

- www.yellowbuses.org

- www.nasdpts.org

USER GUIDE TO DATA MANAGEMENT

The data is sorted by guideline. The work of the Task Force was focused on developing a master list of tasks that were then allocated and sorted by guideline. The result is that you have a "MENU OF TASK OPTIONS" for each guideline. Based on the requirements of your district, you can identify the guidelines that you will operate under and then select the tasks from the menu to operate in a manner that conforms to the guideline.

The following is a process all users may want to consider in using the data provided to build a school transportation reopening plan:

1. Begin with **SELECTING THE GUIDELINES THAT WILL APPLY** to your school district's transportation service based on the school board's direction and a shortlist of school schedule options.

2. **For each of the Guidelines that apply REVIEW AND SELECT THE POTENTIAL TASKS THAT YOU WISH TO IMPLEMENT.** You can identify tasks that will apply to all schedule options and those that may apply to an individual option. So, you now have a scenario plan for each potential school schedule.

3. **CONDUCT THE TASK FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT** for each scenario by assessing each task to validate that the task will be part of a potential transportation reopening plan.

4. *REPEAT STEPS 1-3 FOR THE SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDELINES* to develop a section related to students with special needs for your transportation reopening plan.

5. **REVIEW AND EDIT THE "FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A TRANSPORTATION PLAN"** to determine the format for your reopening plan document.

6. In the Transportation Reopening Gantt Chart, **DELETE ALL OF THE TASKS YOU WILL NOT BE USING IN THE GANTT CHART** and you will be left with a planning tool that allows you to add responsibility and dates to each task and add to your Transportation Reopening Plan.

7. **COMPLETE THE WRITING OF YOUR REOPENING PLAN** using the sample reopening plans provided by the Task Force.

8. **SUBMIT YOUR PLAN(S)** for review and inclusion into the overall district reopening plan analysis.

9. **ACTIVATE THE APPROPRIATE TRANSPORTATION REOPENING PLAN** based on the district's final decision.

10. **LAUNCH YOUR COMMUNICATION PROGRAM** to staff, schools, parents, and students.

11. **IMPLEMENT YOUR REOPENING PLAN** tracking progress and milestones.

Every district is unique, and the amount of information and the level of detail required will vary. Based on what the Task Force is seeing across the country, transportation reopening plans will be developed and managed locally.

The STARTS Task Force hopes that its report and the data provided will benefit you and your transportation team in meeting the challenges of operating in a pandemic environment.

SURVEYS AND RESULTS

SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY

The individual surveys were distributed to participating entities during June 2020 and respondents were provided approximately two weeks to submit results. The following summarizes the response rates from each of the survey subgroups:

- 60% of the State Directors

- 50% of the Bus Contractors

- 50% of the Superintendents

- 35% of the District Transportation Directors

The respondents across all surveys came from more than 40 states and represented operations from as small as 12 buses in a single tier system to as large as 1,200 buses in a three-tier structure. With an overall response rate of approximately 50% percent and a broad geographic and organizational type distribution within the results, the Task Force believes they provide reasonable insights into the concerns and challenges faced by school districts and student transportation professionals.

SURVEY OF SUPERINTENDENTS

The survey of superintendents focused primarily on the strategies and concerns related to the opening of school. At the time of the survey, 76 percent of the respondents had not determined the school opening strategy. This was likely a timing issue as the predominance of respondents indicated that determinations would be made between mid-July and early August. This coincides with the public release of many statewide reopening strategy documents in the last two weeks of June.

The responses demonstrated the four primary school scheduling options (full remote learning, a hybrid remote and split/blended in person, and full in person) continued to be the dominant options for districts. The figure below summarizes the alternatives being considered for districts that had yet to decide.[1]

Figure 1: Superintendent survey responses on reopening strategy
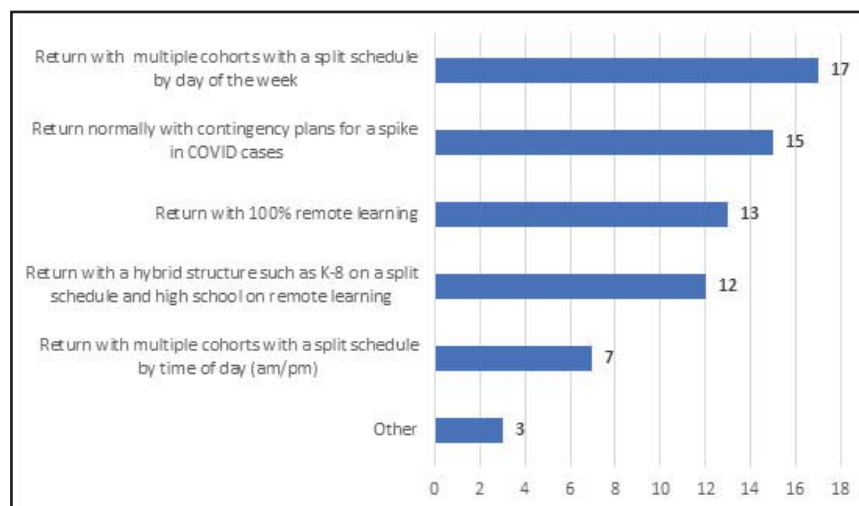
In determining the most favored model, superintendents indicated their top five criteria. The issue of transportation was clearly important to the respondents, but it is also clear that superintendents are attempting to balance a wide range of concerns in their approaches.

Figure 2: Top 5 school scheduling decision criteria
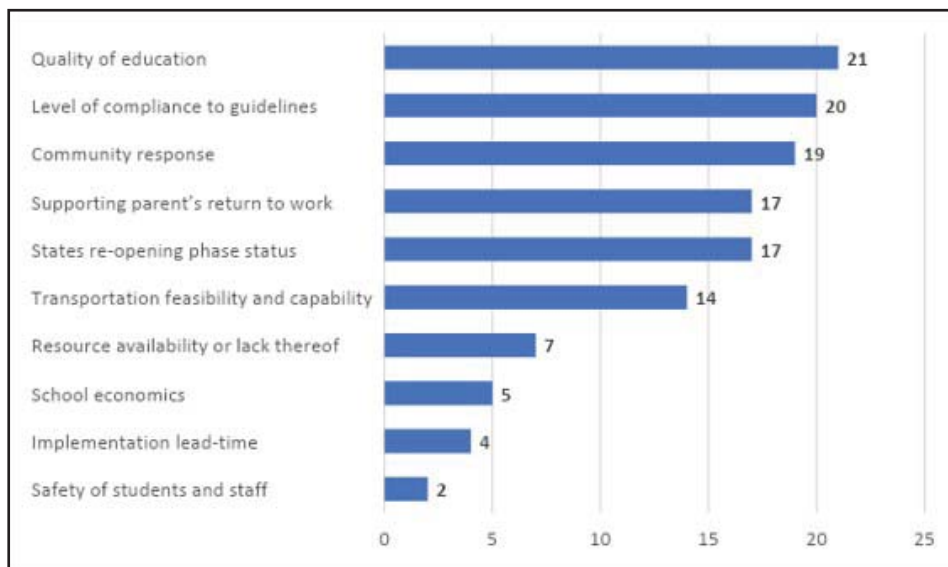
The practices that were identified as being part of the strategy to mitigate virus spread focused heavily on the use of social distancing in schools for students and staff (greater than 90 percent of the respondents, respectively) and on buses (68 percent of respondents). Temperature taking as part of a general, daily health screen and the optional use of masks were also common strategies. The key concern from a transportation perspective would be how the social distancing guidelines would influence both available capacity of school buses and school scheduling.

Specific transportation related concerns were identified by 14 of the 25 respondents. In those instances, the focus was primarily on creating demand management strategies that would clarify or reduce the number of students provided with transportation services. These responses included establishing an opt-in requirement for transportation (9 of the 14 responses) and either extending walk distances or eliminating services for older students (11 of the 14 responses). The Task Force has concerns about reducing transportation services for any student and the possibility that those strategies introduce additional risk beyond health concerns. Reducing transportation puts school children at risk of physical harm by having them take modes of transportation that are 70 times less safe than school bus transportation according to NHTSA. The surveys and other public reporting indicate that this is a strategy being pursued by districts.

SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION 1. SCHOOL SCHEDULE DECISION

Has your district made its scheduling decision for the new year? Yes / No

> If **YES**, When did the school district make its decision? Short Answer

> If **NO**, what is the target date for making your scheduling decision? Short Answer

What is your anticipated **first day of school in the fall**? Short Answer

SECTION 2: SCHOOL SCHEDULE CONFIGURATION

What scheduling structure has your district selected? Select one.

1. Return normally with contingency plans for a spike in COVID cases

2. Return with 100% remote learning

3. Return with multiple cohorts with a split schedule by day of the week

4. Return with multiple cohorts with a split schedule by time of day (am/pm)

5. Return with a hybrid structure such as K-8 on a split schedule and high school on remote learning

6. Other: _____

Please describe the other **scheduling options you have or are considering** in the order of your district's preference: Check those that apply.

1. Return normally with contingency plans for a spike in COVID cases

2. Return with 100% remote learning

3. Return with multiple cohorts with a split schedule by day of the week

4. Return with multiple cohorts with a split schedule by time of day (am/pm)

5. Return with a hybrid structure such as K-8 on a split schedule and high school on remote learning

6. Other: _____

Select the top 5 **decision-making criteria** that was or will be used to select a final scheduling option.

- States reopening phase status

- School economics

- Supporting parent's return to work

- Quality of education

- Transportation feasibility and capability

- Resource availability or lack thereof

- Implementation lead-time

- Level of compliance to guidelines

- Community response

- Other: _____

Who were the **members of your scheduling deci-sion-making group** by title?

What **sources of information** did you or are you us-ing in the school schedule decision-making process? Check those that apply.

- CDC guidelines

- State Health Department guidelines

- Governor or legislative guidelines

- State reopening phase status

- Internally developed business cases

- External specialist/consultant input

- Internal surveys

- Community surveys

- Transportation ridership and bus capacity data

- Neighboring district decisions or discussion results

- Other school district decisions

- Related organizations' decisions (airlines, public transit, tourist destinations)

- Published research or white papers

- Other: _____

What, if any, **additional information** would you have liked to have had to support your final decision? Check those that apply.

- Data on child infection risk

- Data on remote learning effectiveness

- Data on future school funding

- Data on staffing availability

- Data on parent intentions

- Other: _____

SECTION 3: POLICY AND TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Which of the following COVID and pandemic practices has the school district adopted or plans on adopting? Check all that apply.

- Staff social distancing

- Student social distancing in buildings

- Student social distancing on buses

- Staff taking temperature before coming to work

- Parents taking student temperatures before they leave for school

- Mandatory use of masks by staff

- Optional use of masks by staff

- Mandatory use of masks by students

- Optional use of masks by students

- Staff meetings with group size limitations

- Staff meetings online only

- District fund PPE equipment for staff

- District provide a stipend to staff for PPE equipment

- Staff provides their PPE equipment

- Closure of staff lounges

- Contact tracing for diagnosed staff and students

- Other: _____

Will the district refuse transportation service or school entry if a student is non-compliant with stated practices and guidelines? Yes, No, Under Consideration

Is your district considering any of the following transportation changes: Check those that apply.

- Expanding walk distances

- Eliminating high school transportation

- Requiring parents to register students for transportation

SURVEY OF STATE DIRECTORS

State directors of pupil transportation have the administrative responsibility to support and oversee transportation operations across their individual states. While the specific state mandates for these positions are varied, the individuals in these roles often serve as the primary resource for local transportation directors when it comes to questions or options related to transportation services. The survey provided to state directors focused on the role of the state and local agency planning and the concerns of local districts.

The 29 responses clearly demonstrated that district transportation managers were looking for guidance (96 percent of the respondents indicated that districts had sought guidance) and that guidance had not generally been made available prior to establishing broader reopening plans (75 percent of respondents indicated they would provide guidance). Figure 3 below provides a summary of the activities of the respondents as it related to updating transportation regulations and requirements.

Figure 3: State Director regulatory update status

22. Does your office intend or has it already begun the process of updating your state's Transportation Rules and Regulations to include COVID related practices?

27 responses

- Yes
- No
- Under Consideration

44.4%
18.5%
37%
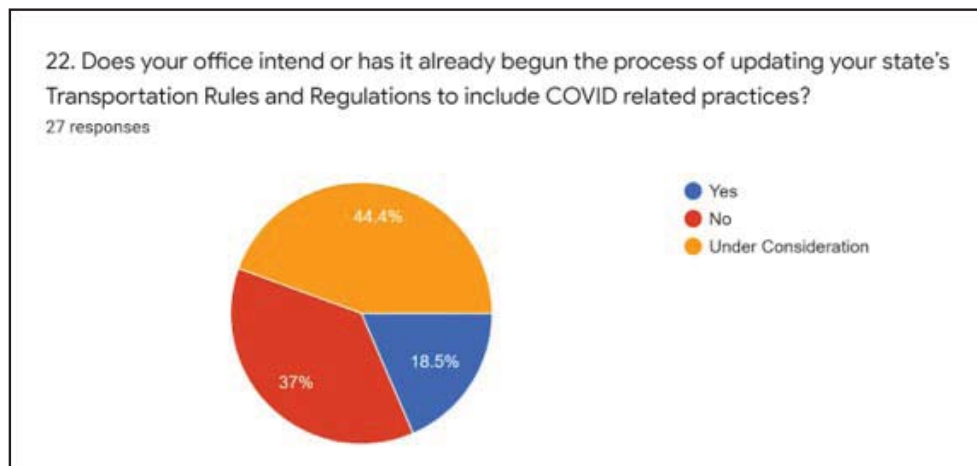
Of interest was the reliance on local control for the transportation plans. Almost 65 percent of respondents indicated there was no state requirement for the development of a transportation-specific reopening plan and no respondent indicated that they would have the responsibility for approving any local plans. It was also clear that there is some concern (approximately 45 percent of respondents) whether state offices would not have information needed to provide local districts with guidelines for service.

State transportation agencies often have a significant role in the regulatory oversight of local districts. Survey responses indicated that approximately 15 percent of state directors expected legislative changes and 33 percent of the respondents expected changes to that regulatory infrastructure that would impact transportation. When coupled with the responses related to the availability of state-level guidance, it becomes increasingly clear that local transportation managers (both contracted and district employees) will have the primary responsibility for developing the strategies and practices to mitigate COVID-19 related risks within the transportation services area for approval by the district.

The survey also highlighted that the three biggest concerns expressed by local districts included the cleaning requirements for school buses, the management of bus capacity, and whether it was possible to make modifications to buses presumably to provide a barrier either between students or between students and the driver. These concerns were identified in nearly 80 percent of the responses and were the only concerns identified by more than one-third of respondents.

These results support the need for a starting point for all districts and the Task Force has designed its guidelines and tasks tool to be resources for the design of a reopening plan customized to the specific conditions within a district. While the Task Force is unable to provide specific legal or regulatory advice in any or all local jurisdictions, the guidelines tool provides a framework for state directors to collaborate with local transportation managers to evaluate key concerns that will impact their ability to support the reopening strategy determined by their local districts.

NASDPTS SURVEY QUESTIONS

STATE NAME: Short Answer

STATE-WIDE QUESTIONS

1. How has the COVID situation impacted your state's driver training and certification process? Short answer

2. For the next fiscal year, what % reduction in Educational State Funding do you anticipate? Short answer - number

3. As of the date of this survey, what % of school districts (Local Education Agencies) in your state have announced their schedule and plan for the new school year? Short answer - percentage

4. Do you anticipate your state's legislature to pass any COVID/Pandemic related laws that would impact school transportation? Yes, No

5. If Yes to the above question, please describe:

6. Do you anticipate your state's Governor to pass any COVID/Pandemic related executive orders that would impact school transportation? Yes, No

7. If Yes, please describe:

SECTION 1: TRANSPORTATION READINESS PLANS

8. Will your office **collect or has your office already collected** COVID related transportation readiness plans from your school districts? Yes, No, Under Consideration

9. Will your office **review and identify best practices or has your office already reviewed and identified best practices** from the COVID related transportation plans you received from your school districts? Yes, No, Under Consideration

10. Will your office be required or have you already been required to **approve school district** COVID related transportation readiness plans? Yes, No, Under Consideration

11. Has your state established **requirements for transportation plans**? Yes, No, Under Consideration

12. If Yes, what are they? Short answer

13. Is your state considering **guidelines for temperature checks and/or masks** for bus drivers and students riding vehicles?

14. If temperature checks and/or masks are required for students, will the guideline recommend refusal of service for non-compliance?

SECTION 2: TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

15. Have your school districts **requested** COVID related transportation **guidelines** from your office? Yes, No

16. Does your office intend on **issuing or has your office already insured** COVID related transportation **guidelines** to your school districts? Yes, No, Under Consideration

17. If YES, what are you using as the basis for these guidelines?

18. If Yes, how will the guidelines accommodate based on a district's size, schedule structure and state of infections?

19. If NO, what is preventing you from doing so? Short answer

20. If required to do so, would your office have the **information needed** to develop and issue a set of COVID related transportation guidelines? Yes, No

21. If NO, what **additional information** would you require to develop COVID related transportation guidelines for your state? Check all that apply:

    ○ The tiered bus schedule structure for school districts based

    ○ The approved school, schedule structure

    ○ The local rate of infections

    ○ Health guidelines from the State Department of Health and/or the Centers for Disease Control

    ○ Best practice information from other school districts

    ○ Technical information on cleaning and sanitizing products

    ○ Legal review of guidelines

- ○ Legalities of bus equipment and modifications (for example, applicability of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards or state patrol inspection criteria).

- ○ Other: Please explain.

SECTION 3: STATE TRANSPORTATION RULES AND REGULATIONS

22. Does your office intend or has it already begun the process of updating your state's **Transportation Rules and Regulations** to include COVID or general pandemic related practices? Yes, No, Under Consideration

23. If Yes, what would be the areas for potential updates? Check all that apply:

- ○ School transportation driver physical qualifications rule

- ○ Pupil transportation management policies

- ○ Pupil instruction

- ○ Personnel training program

- ○ School bus inspections

- ○ Vehicle cleaning requirements

- ○ Safety procedures

- ○ School bus routes and stops

- ○ Records and reports

- ○ Emergency procedures

- ○ Nonroutine use of school buses

- ○ Authorized and unauthorized passengers

- ○ Passenger capacity

- ○ Authorized vehicles for transportation of pupils to and from school and school related events

- ○ Supplementary provisions for county boards of developmental disabilities

- ○ Vehicle maintenance

- ○ Legalities of bus equipment and modifications (for example, applicability of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards or state patrol inspection criteria)

- ○ Transportation Impracticality and Payment in Lieu

- ○ Parent reimbursement

- ○ Student Eligibility

- ○ McKinney-Vento (homeless/foster care)

- ○ Special Needs Transportation

- ○ Private and Charter School transportation

- ○ Other: Please specify.

24. If NO, what is preventing you from doing so? Short answer

SECTION 4: SCHOOL DISTRICT AREAS OF CONCERN

25. Regarding school district requests for support or clarification, from which categories are you receiving the most questions? Select the top 5 categories from the list below:

- a. Making "modifications/additions to school buses and on-board equipment"

- a. School transportation driver physical qualifications rule

- b. Pupil transportation management policies

- c. Pupil instruction

- d. Personnel training program

- e. School bus inspections

- f. Vehicle cleaning requirements

- g. Safety procedures

- h. School bus routes and stops

- i. Records and reports

- j. Emergency procedures

- k. Nonroutine use of school buses

- l. Authorized and unauthorized passengers

- m. Passenger capacity

- n. Authorized vehicles for transportation of pupils to and from school and school related events

- o. Supplementary provisions for county boards of developmental disabilities

p. Vehicle maintenance

q. Transportation Impracticality and Payment in Lieu

r. Parent reimbursement

s. Student Eligibility

t. McKinney-Vento (homeless/foster care)

u. Special Needs Transportation

v. Private and Charter School transportation

w. Other: Please specify.

SECTION 5: ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION

26. Does your office have an established communications professional? (Y/N)

27. Is that individual available to you to provide support for the transportation organization? (Y/N)

28. Do you have regular contact with local news media as an individual?

29. Do you have regular contact with local news media through the department?

30. Does your office have an established communication schedule with local districts? (Y/N)

31. Does your office have a dedicated web page that you manage content for? (Y/N)

32. If NO, do you have the ability to suggest and post content to the department web page? (Y/N)

33. Does your office have established social media platforms that are available to you for communications? Please indicate which ones:

a. LinkedIn

a. Twitter

b. Instagram

c. WeChat

d. Facebook

e. Other:_____

SURVEY OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTORS

School transportation contractors will play a vital role in the establishment of local school district response plans. For many districts, the local contracted service provider's manager is the key individual with knowledge and information about the transportation system and can both support the reopening plan and how it will be impacted by specific policy and practice expectations. These local managers also have a responsibility to their parent company to ensure that they are implementing corporate governance expectations related to COVID-19 mitigation plans. Given these substantial sets of expectations, the survey of contractors focused on both sources of guidance and information and expected implementation strategies in response to reopening plans.

The survey responses clearly indicate that contractors expect to respond to guidance that will be developed at the state and local level. This will necessitate that contracted companies operating in more than one state develop plans to support multi-state reopening strategies. This emerged most clearly when 80 percent of respondents indicated they would be developing new procedures for compliance in response to the COVID-19 mitigation strategies. This was particularly related to the availability and use of PPE by drivers and social distancing requirements on buses. Of particular note was that more than 60 percent of respondents believed that bus capacity would be reduced by 40 percent or more. Were this to occur it would result in the need for a significant increase in the number of buses, extensive changes to school times, and/or substantial reductions in the number of eligible students.

Two particular areas of note from the survey responses were the unanimous opinion that attempting to take the temperature of students at the bus was unsupported and the idea that current contracts are not adequate to address COVID-19 mitigation plans. The reasoning for the lack of support on temperature taking was varied but focused primarily on the idea that this requirement would place drivers or monitors in the inappropriate role of being interpreters of health data, that it represented a safety risk while driving, and it would have negative impacts on routing efficiency (70 percent of respondents indicated one or more of those concerns). Figure 4 below provides an additional summary of the reasons for opposing temperature taking at the bus.

Figure 4: Opposition to taking student temperature at the bus
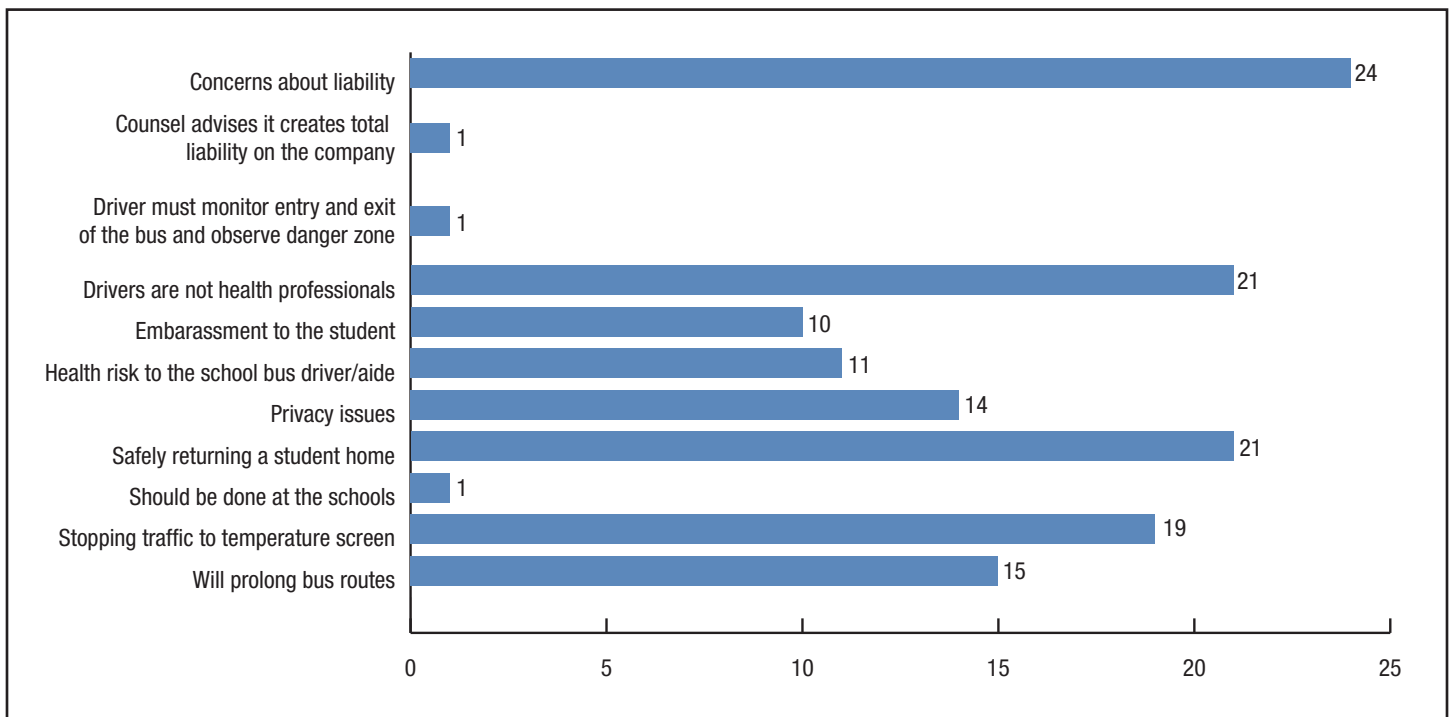
These results indicate it will be necessary for districts in states where taking the temperature of students has been suggested (e.g., California) to immediately begin discussions with their vendors to address those concerns.

The contractual concerns were focused on five key issues:

- Misaligned hours of service expectation (75 percent of responses)

- Undefined costs for the acquisition of PPE (88 percent of responses)

- Driver performance expectations such as taking temperatures and enforcement of mask policy (65 percent of responses)

- Lack of clarity on the enforcement of liquidated damages/performance standards, fleet age, equipment installation and other contractual provisions (55 percent of responses)

- Lack of clarity related to the provision of non-home-to-school services such as athletics, etc. (65 percent of responses)

While it is likely that as reopening plans are released by the individual states there will be clarity on some of these concerns, it is also evident that school districts and their transportation providers must begin a process of evaluating how temporary, semi-permanent, or permanent changes to service expectations will need to be reflected in the terms and conditions and compensation clauses of contracts.

NSTA SURVEY FINAL

BUS CONTRACTOR NAME: Short answer

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVED: (as of March 2020): Short answer

SECTION 1: POLICY

1. Where do you anticipate the source of the guidelines/edicts/mandates you will have to comply with will emanate from?

   a. Federal Government

   a. State Government

   b. State or Local Health Office

   c. School District

   d. Other: (Please State)

2. Will your company develop new SOP's for managing compliance to new COVID-19 related practices? Yes, No, Under Consideration

3. If a student is tested positive for COVID-19, will your company require the driver of the bus that child took to and from school be tested for COVID-19? Yes, No, Under Consideration

4. Will a mandatory 14-day stay day at home order apply to all staff who test positive?Yes, No, Under Consideration

5. Do you support the process of drivers taking student temperatures before boarding a school bus? Yes or no

6. If no, why not? Check all that apply

   ○ Will prolong bus routes indefinitely

   ○ Drivers are not health professionals

   ○ Safety concerns about returning a student to his/her home

   ○ Potential embarrassment to the student

   ○ Potential health risk to the school bus driver/aide

   ○ Concerns about liability of undertaking this process

   ○ Concerns about stopping traffic during loading to conduct temperature screening

   ○ Privacy Issues

   ○ Other: (Please name)

7. Do you believe that certain guidelines or edicts will have to be waived for special needs students? Yes or no

8. If yes, what are examples?

   ○ Wearing of facemasks

   ○ Taking of student temperature

   ○ Denying access to school bus for students with elevated temperatures

   ○ Social distancing protocols

   ○ Other: (Please State)

SECTION 2: VEHICLES/DRIVERS/ROUTING

9. What will be your anticipated bus cleaning and/or disinfecting schedule during the COVID-19 management period?

   a. Twice per day

   b. Every Day

   c. Every other Day

   d. Other: (Please state)

10. Will high touch areas, like entry handrails, be required to be cleaned after every run during the COVID management period? Yes, No, Under Consideration

11. Will you have staff temperature taken before coming to work or entering a building? Yes, No, Under Consideration

12. Will all drivers, sub-drivers and bus aides be required to attend a COVID-19 Safety Training Session? Yes, No, Under Consideration

13. Will your company provide a COVID-19 prevention kit (PPE) for drivers that includes gloves, masks, face shield and disinfectant wipes and the procedures for their use and replacement? Yes, No, Under Consideration

14. Will your company require accelerated driver virus testing and bus cleaning, if a student on a bus or a driver was diagnosed with the virus? Yes, No, Under Consideration

15. Will your company require a review of bus breakdown and bus accident procedures in light of social distancing and maintenance of cleaning protocols? Yes, No, Under Consideration

16. What percentage decrease do you expect in the number of students that can be transported on a school bus due to social distancing guidelines or edicts?

    a. Less than 10%

    b. 11% to 25 %

    c. 26% to 40%

    d. 41% to 65%

    e. 66% to 80%

    f. Over 81%

17. What area of your operation will be most affected by new guidelines/edicts put in place to address COVID-19?

    a. Having enough drivers

    b. Routing and scheduling

    c. Number of buses needed to transport students

    d. Potential costs associated with adhering to contract/RFP requirements

    e. Other: (Please name)

18. Do you plan to install physical barriers to separate the drivers from passengers? Yes or No

19. If yes, do you or have you received approval from your state agency/regulator?

SECTION 3: CONTRACTS

20. Do you believe that your existing contract structure allows you to provide services on the schedule the school districts have selected in response to COVID-19?

    a. Yes, in all instances;

    b. Yes in most instances;

    c. No in most instances;

    d. No, not at all

21. What are the most significant contractual concerns you have in providing service during the COVID-19 management period? Select all that apply.

    a. Misaligned hours of service expectation

    b. Undefined costs for the acquisition of PPE

    c. Driver performance expectations such as taking temperatures and enforcement of mask policy

    d. Lack of clarity on the enforcement of liquidated damages/performance standards, fleet age, equipment installation and other contractual provisions

    e. Lack of clarity related to the provision of non-home-to-school services such as athletics, etc.

    f. Other: (please describe)

22. How much do you expect the COVID-19 pandemic to increase your costs of providing pupil transportation?

    a. Less than 10%

    b. 11 to 20%

    c. 21-30%

    d. 31% - 40%

    e. More than 40%

    f. Unable to calculate

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATION

23. Does your company have an established communications professional? (Y/N)

24. Is that individual available to you to provide support for your company? (Y/N)

25. Do you have regular contact with local news media as an individual or through the company?

26. Does your organization have established social media platforms that are available to you for communications? Please indicate which ones:

    a. LinkedIn   d. WeChat

    b. Twitter   e. Facebook
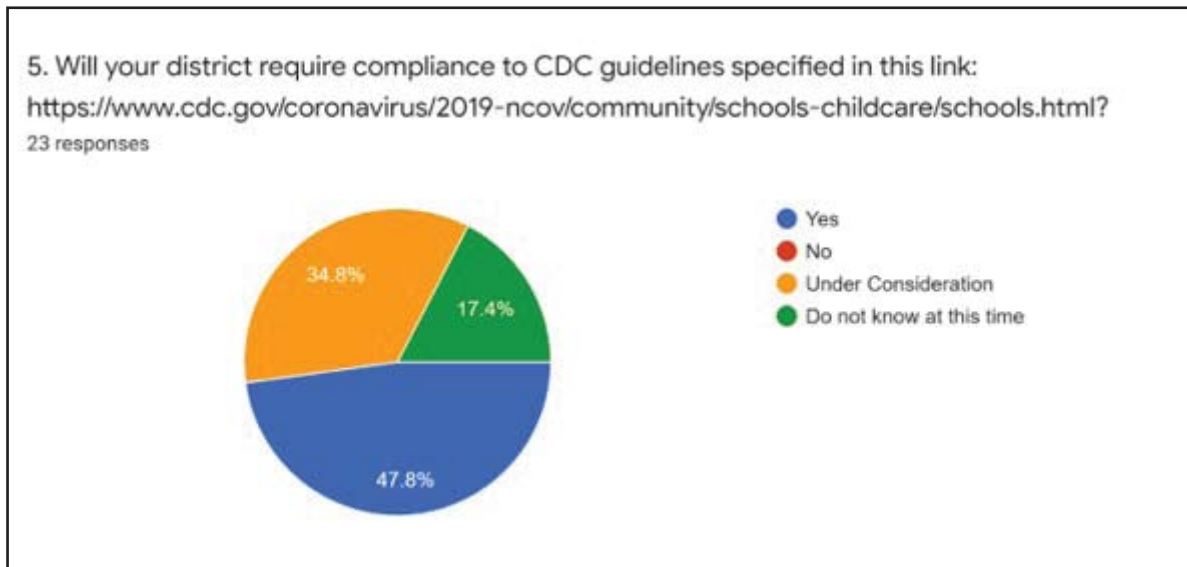
    c. Instagram   f. Other:_____

SURVEY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION DIRECTORS

School transportation directors have the primary responsibility for enabling access to school for millions of students across the United States. The burden of designing and implementing the return-to-school practices of many districts will find their origin in the transportation departments as will many of the key concerns about health and safety practices. The survey provided to district transportation directors focused on the operational challenges associated with district reopening and COVID-19 mitigation planning.

One particularly hopeful aspect of the survey response was the inclusion of transportation managers on district-wide COVID-19 response plan teams. Nearly 80 percent of districts had established COVID-19 response teams. Of those districts that did establish a team, 80 percent of transportation managers had been included on the team. The inclusion of this group is a positive development to ensure that there is a fully integrated plan for access to school in the event of in-person learning.

The survey indicated, like the bus contractor survey, that there will be a heavy reliance on state and local guidance to design reopening plans. Figures 5 and 6 below show where district transportation directors expect guidance on the design of reopening plans and mitigation strategies to emanate from.

Figure 5: School district transportation consideration of CDC guidance

5. Will your district require compliance to CDC guidelines specified in this link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html?
23 responses

- Yes — 47.8%
- No
- Under Consideration — 34.8%
- Do not know at this time — 17.4%

Figure 6: School district transportation director use of state guidance

6. Will your district require State Health Department guidelines compliance within that state?
23 responses

- Yes — 73.9%
- No
- Under Consideration — 13%
- Do not know at this time — 8.7%
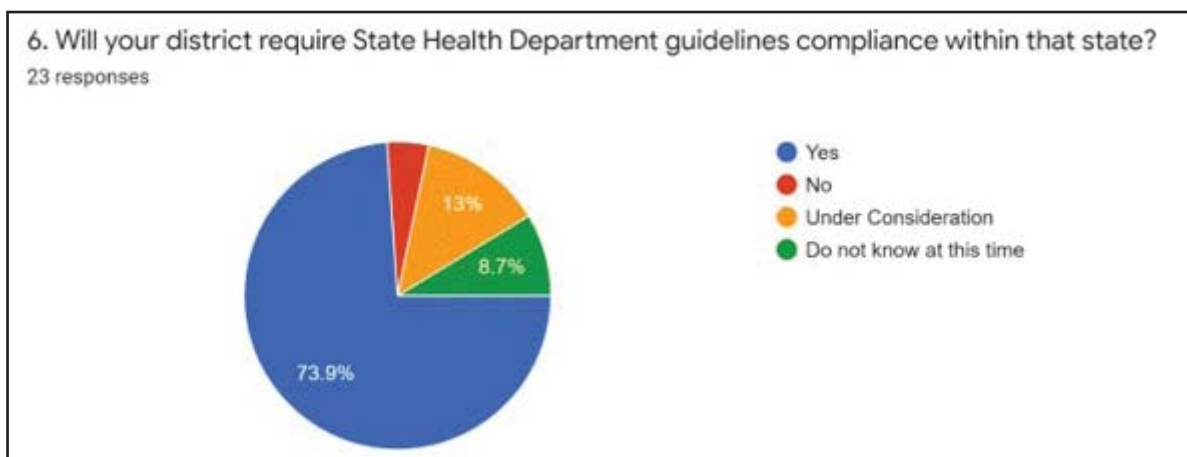
Early statewide reopening plans demonstrated significant incorporation of the CDC guidance. However, it is notable that plans released or amended later in June indicated additional flexibility beyond the original guidance. The impact of this on transportation and educational strategy is yet to be determined.

What is evident in the survey responses is that there is significant concern related to any reduction in school bus passenger capacity and the use and need for PPE and other health and safety management practices for staff. Approximately 80 percent of respondents indicated they would be conducting a variety of mitigation efforts including the review of physical space at the transportation facility as part of an effort to manage social distancing in the department. Limiting access to necessary and essential personnel, including reducing vendor access, will also be a common mitigation strategy.

This survey also focused on addressing the issue of social distancing and mitigation strategies in the maintenance facility. Nearly 80 percent of respondents indicated that their shops would implement social distancing where possible. Further, 65 percent of responses indicated that technicians would be responsible for cleaning their work areas on and around vehicles both before and after performing maintenance services. Key considerations in these and other maintenance-related responses will be their impact on turnaround time, safety, spare vehicle requirements, and shop capacity.

The operational concerns addressed in the survey had substantial crossover, not surprisingly, with those of the school bus contractor community. The use of masks by students and staff, bus cleaning schedules, and managing staff who became ill were all concerns for a majority of respondents. Interestingly, responses about the appropriate location for student health checks varied with those of bus contractors in that some districts appear to be instituting plans to temperature scan students before they enter the bus. The majority anticipated some combination of measurement prior to boarding the bus, which would necessarily have to be at home in the morning and at the school in the afternoon. The specific reasons for this divergence are not immediately evident in the responses, but it is clear that the district must consider the same safety and appropriateness considerations that were highlighted in the bus contractor survey, in particular the significant safety concerns regarding screening at the bus stops.

NAPT SURVEY QUESTIONS

DISTRICT NAME: Short Answer

NUMBER OF ACTIVE ROUTE BUSES: (as of March 2020):

SECTION 1: POLICY

1. Will there be a specific Transportation Readiness Plan required for reopening? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

2. How will your district validate the readiness of its transportation operations? Short answer

3. Will your district have a centralized team for COVID-19/pandemic management? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

4. If yes, are you on that team?

5. Will your district require compliance to CDC guidelines specified in this link: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html?

6. Will your district require State Health Department guidelines compliance within that state? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

7. Will your district develop new Standard Operating Procedures for managing compliance to new COVID related practices? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

8. Will your district develop a bus seating chart for contact tracing purposes? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

9. Will you use bus video to monitor compliance by students using assigned seats and to report contact tracing? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

10. If a student is tested positive for COVID-19, will your district require the driver of the bus that child took to and from school be tested for COVID-19? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

11. If a staff member is exposed to the virus, what will be your district's procedure? Short Answer

12. If a staff member tests positive for the virus what will be your district's procedure? Short Answer

13. Will your district be updating guidelines for the handling of wheelchair students and students with physical disabilities? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

14. If YES, what will the revised guidelines cover? Short Answer

15. Will your district provide new training related to virus issues? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

16. Does your district intend to conduct student temperature screening? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

17. If you will conduct temperature screening, where does the district anticipate the screening to occur? (select one)

    a. Prior to boarding the bus

    b. At the school entrance

    c. At the classroom

    d. Other: _____

SECTION 2: GOVERNMENT AGENCY BASED GUIDELINES

18. Will you have your staff take their temperature before coming to work (self-screening)? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

19. Will your district be screening employees at the workplace? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

20. Will staff at your district have to practice social distancing in the workplace as work duties permit? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

21. Will staff and students at your district be required to wear a face mask at all times when social distancing is not possible? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

22. Will your district require an employee to have a physician assess their symptoms before the employee starts back at work if the employee has a temperature? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

23. Will your district send employees home immediately if they become sick during the day? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

SECTION 3: FACILITIES

24. Will you be analyzing work space distances within your locations? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

25. What will you be doing to your driver lounge/room area? (select one)

    a. Closing it completely

    b. Keeping it open and re-aligning tables and chairs to be 6' apart

    c. Keeping it open and limiting the number of people at any one time with a social distancing requirement

    d. Keeping it open, as is

    e. Other: (please specify)

26. Which of the following practices will you apply regarding staff levels, vendors and visitors at the transportation facility? Check all that apply.

    a. Prohibit family and friends from visiting

    b. Limit the number of staff that can be in the building at one time

    c. Will all visitors have to sign in and sign out at a central location and indicate person whom they will be visiting

    d. Establish a waiting area for all visitors

    e. Conduct temperature checks for all visitors

    f. Schedule all visitor meetings at a time when the fewest people are in the building (when drivers on on their routes)

    g. Other: (Please specify)

27. If facilities access is limited to promote social distancing, how do you intend to provide access to restrooms and needed supplies? Short answer

28. Will your training and in-service activities be conducted via Zoom or other technology platforms offsite in a venue to allow social distancing? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

29. What will be your anticipated facility **cleaning** schedule during the COVID management period? Short answer

30. What will be your anticipated facility **disinfecting** schedule during the COVID management period? Short answer

31. Who will provide cleaning services? (Select one)

    a. District staff

    b. Private contractor

    c. Both

    d. Other: _____

SECTION 4: VEHICLES

32. What will be your anticipated bus **cleaning** schedule during the COVID management period? Short answer

33. What will be your anticipated bus **sanitizing** schedule during the COVID management period? Short answer

34. What method will you use and who will be responsible?Short answer

35. What types of training will be provided to staff regarding cleaning of buses? Short answer

36. Will high touch areas, like entry handrails, be required to be cleaned after every run during the COVID management period? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

37. If YES, what products will be used and are they allowed to be stored on the bus by your state regulations? Short Answer

38. Will wheelchairs/lift areas be required to be cleaned after each use and disinfected at the end of the day during the COVID management period? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

39. What PPE will your district be REQUIRING for d**rivers and staff**? Check all that apply.

    a. Masks

    b. Gowns

    c. Face shields

d. Long sleeve shirts

e. Full length pants

f. Gloves

g. Other: (Describe)

40. What PPE will your district be REQUIRING for **passengers**? Check all that apply.

a. Masks

b. Gowns

c. Face shields

d. Long sleeve shirts

e. Full length pants

f. Gloves

g. Other: (Describe)

41. What PPE will your district be PROVIDING for **drivers and staff**? Check all that apply.

a. Masks

b. Gowns

c. Face shields

d. Long sleeve shirts

e. Full length pants

f. Gloves

g. Other: (Describe)

42. What PPE will your district be PROVIDING for **passengers**? Check all that apply.

a. Masks

b. Gowns

c. Face shields

d. Long sleeve shirts

e. Full length pants

f. Gloves

g. Other: (Describe)

43. Will your district provide disposable disinfectant wipes so that surfaces commonly touched by the bus operator can be wiped down? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

44. Will your district require driver training on routine infection control precautions prior to and after operating a vehicle? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

45. Will your district provide employees access to soap, clean running water, and drying materials or alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol at the garage for cleaning? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

46. Will your district be installing or placing hand sanitizer dispensers on each school bus for the employees and passengers?

47. If yes, where? Short answer

SECTION 5: SHOP SAFETY

48. Will your district require shops to develop and apply "work distancing" guidelines for mechanics regarding their in-team interactions as well as for driver interactions? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

49. Will your district require mechanics to clean the driver area as well as any surface areas they may have touched inside the bus before and after conducting any bus services? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

50. Will your district require a "common shop tools" cleaning process whereby they are cleansed before and after each use? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

51. Will your district require the mechanic locker room to be disinfected and re-sprayed at required intervals? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

SECTION 6: LOCATION MANAGEMENT

52. Will your district require employee meetings (for interviews, orientation, 1-1 Coaching and Counseling Sessions or responding to staff inquiries) be held at desks or in offices with a spray barrier and use of masks? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

53. Will your district require that all departments have a designated individual responsible for virus related information and training? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

54. Will your district require that vehicles used by more than one person have cleaning and disinfection guidelines posted in the vehicle? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

SECTION 7: PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

55. Does your district have an established communications professional? (Y/N)

56. Is that individual available to you to provide support for your department? (Y/N)

57. Do you have regular contact with local news media as an individual or through the district? (Y/N)

58. Does your district have established social media platforms that are available to you for communications? Please indicate which ones:

    a. LinkedIn

    b. Twitter

    c. Instagram

    d. WeChat

    e. Facebook

    f. Other: _____

59. Does your district have a mass-communication system for all parents and staff? (e.g., School Messenger) Yes, No

60. Are school messenger communications controlled by the District Communications Department? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

61. If NO, do you as the Transportation Director/Manager have authority to send communication? Yes, No, Under Consideration, Do not know at this time

RELATED INDUSTRY DATA

For **national rail,** there is only AMTRAK. To view the current AMTRAK response to the pandemic you can visit their website which covers check-in, in-station, on the train and food service procedures. Masks are a requirement and they have limited their bookings for social distancing:

www.amtrak.com/planning-booking/policies/coronavirus

For **commuter rail,** we looked at many rail system links. Chicago's METRA rail service is typical: metrarail.com/coronavirus. You will find deep cleaning, masks required, one person to a seat and contactless ticket purchasing among other procedures. For the rail sector, ridership is down which enables these practices to be in place and they have added rail cars to a train to manage capacity. But as ridership increases, it will be interesting to see how these initial guidelines may change as we have seen with the airlines.

Airlines, like trains and school buses involve putting many people in an enclosed metal structure. You can visit any airline website to see their procedures. There are variances and similarities. Masks are now mandatory across most airlines; deep cleaning is standard and the use of PPE by flight crew is promoted as is airline ventilation. Earlier, social distancing was part of their plans as they were not selling middle seats. But as demand has increased, the "no-middle seat" policy is being phased out on a number of airlines as they have commercial considerations. Here is a link to UNITED AIRLINES as an example:

hub.united.com/united-coronavirus-covid19-health-safety--2645523004.html

In addition, on July 2nd, the DHS, DOT, and HHS Issued New Guidance for Airline Industry Partners to Facilitate Safe Air Travel. Here is the link to this very thorough report that has many additional links within the report covering boarding, cleaning, social distancing on planes all of which have some application to school transportation:

www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2020-07/Runway_to_Recovery_07022020.pdf

Overall ridership on **public transit** remains low. That enables more aggressive pandemic procedures. We note a couple of examples regarding public transit systems: the first is for Chicago's CTA system where they have limitations on capacity, adding buses on selected routes, and have cleaning programs and mask requirements as features: www.transitchicago.com/coronavirus In Boston within the MBTA, there is an interesting link about what they are and are not doing that compares the MBTA to other systems. It is noteworthy that in their paratransit sector, shared rides have been discontinued as many of these passengers are medically high risk. The link to the MBTA comparison is:

www.boston.com/news/coronavirus/2020/04/23/mbta-covid-19-response-study

There has been a pattern across the transportation industry. In the early days of the pandemic when ridership and demand were at a minimum, there were more aggressive pandemic procedures designed to emphasize safety and to bring back customers. The stories of 10 people on a plane, bus or train sent a message of low risk travel. Then, as demand and customers returned elements of the initial plan were discontinued, particularly social distancing elements. But what consistently remains is contactless ticket purchasing, aggressive cleaning and disinfection protocols, staff use of PPE, masks required for customers, limitations in food service and the elimination of non-essential elements like in-vehicle magazines. Many of these elements will carry over and be seen in school transportation as transportation industry sectors learn from one another.

CORPORATE SECTOR REOPENING PLANS

There have been interesting headlines recently:

- **McDonald's** hits pause on reopening dining rooms as coronavirus cases rise

- **AMC Theaters** pushes back reopening plans

- **DISNEY** postpones DISNEYLAND opening

- **APPLE** closing stores that it had opened

Then there is the banner on the **UNIVERSAL STUDIOS** website: **"Exposure to COVID-19 is an inherent risk in any public location where people are present; we cannot guarantee you will not be exposed during your visit."** Review Important Safety Guidelines at:

www.universalorlando.com/web/en/us/plan-your-visit/safety-faqs

The Task Force researched the corporate sector to review their opening guidelines and now we are reviewing how they are managing **re-closing** due to surges in the virus that require adjusting their plans. The commercial sector was and continues to be greatly impacted by each state's reopening phases specified by the Governor, particularly in the restaurant and entertainment sectors. In some states reopening phase authority has been delegated to counties or municipalities. Corporations themselves can have guidelines that are stricter than the state's reopening guidelines as they can have a corporate standard which can be adjusted by location in each state. The common elements across all the corporate sectors involve social distancing, adjusting facility seating, the use of spray barriers, staff use of PPE, mandatory or recommended customer use of masks, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, customer communications and as seen in the UNIVERSAL STUDIO example, the risk disclaimer to manage liability.

As seen by the headlines, companies adapt and can pull back, reset opening dates and the bottom line impact is revenue, staff income and in the case of small businesses, operating viability. School districts and their respective transportation operations do not have the same agility as they deal with the education of children and a host of federal, state, and local mandates. However, school transportation can still learn from corporations in how to manage local surges in the virus responsibly and quickly.

TRANSPORTATION REOPENING PLAN FORMAT

There are districts that have already completed a reopening transportation plan. The STARTS Task Force reviewed a number of them and thought it would be beneficial to provide a collective table of contents. This will provide a format for those districts that have not yet completed a reopening transportation plan. The information below is designed to be a reference resource as it is probable that each district's transportation reopening plan will have its unique characteristics.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

STEP 1: Establish Team Members: Create a Cross-Sectional Group to develop the plan that could include:

- Transportation Staff Representatives
- Special Education Representative
- Health and Safety Representative
- Human Resource Representative
- Union Representatives (if applicable)
- Site Principals

STEP 2: Establish Team Engagement Norms: Create ground rules for the plan development process such as:

- We acknowledge one another as equals.
- We try to stay curious about each other and the work.
- We recognize that we need each other's help to become better listeners.
- We slow down so we have time to think and reflect.
- We remember that conversation is the natural way humans think together.
- We expect it to get messy sometimes and we will learn through it.

- We own how we participate.
- We honor confidentiality, while adhering to applicable open government regulations.

STEP 3: Establish Plan Parameters: Set the specifications and requirements for the plan

- **Planning Categories/Elements:** What aspects need to be considered in any plan?
- **Essential Values & Features:** What are core values that must be addressed in planning this element? What are essential features that must be included in any plan? What is assumed to be essential (traditions) vs. essential? → surface structure vs. deep structure
- **Limitations:** What are some potential limitations to the essential features that could impede flexibility? What are some potential limitations for impacting subgroups?
- **Guiding Questions for Strategic Planning:** What are some guiding questions leaders should consider supporting planning?
- **Plan Scope and Limitations:** What are the possibilities for the plan given the conditions presented?
  - An emphasis on restoring, rebuilding, maintaining and establishing positive relationships with students, families and staff, especially to individuals and families in our most vulnerable groups
  - Recognize that different families are going to have different needs, frustrations, wants, access
  - An emphasis on creativity in how we engage and involve stakeholders
  - Be open-minded to different ways of being, different understandings, different needs

○ Actively challenging our assumptions about others

○ What are some potential limitations to the essential features that could impede flexibility?

The workday schedule might not meet the needs of our families who need us, while also meeting the needs of employees.

- Parents/Guardians may have to return to work, which may cause issues with distance learning or modified schedules

- Planning and executing both distance learning and in class direct instruction might not be feasible for staff in a work week.

An inherent inability to understand what others are going through/have gone through during this time (as well as before.)

- Developing norms regarding communication between families/teachers that take into consideration differing schedules

- Avoiding throwing out the good with the bad, and not assuming that everything has to totally change

What are some guiding questions leaders should consider to support the plan?

- What are some ways we can advocate on behalf of our families/students who need us most? (What paths are there?)

- What can we do to address consistency and norms in regard to home/school communication in a potentially new delivery model?

- What from the way we did things do we want to keep/improve, and how do we want to utilize new learning to better complement what we have done successfully in the past?

- What resources will staff need to engage stakeholders moving forward?

STEP 4: Establish the Customers of the Plan. Assess the needs and priorities of the customer sub-groups:

Using an equity lens to prioritize our most vulnerable subgroups in our planning will allow us to test out change ideas and plans to transform marginalizing conditions and close achievement, opportunity, relationship, and expectation gaps.

CUSTOMER SUB-GROUP ASSESSMENT

MOST UNDERSERVED STUDENT GROUPS PRE-PANDEMIC

- Foster
- Homeless
- Socio economically disadvantaged
- English Learner (EL)
  - newcomer/refugee
  - Long Term English Learner (LTEL)
  - Dually identified
- African-American/Black students in the achievement or opportunity gap

- Students who struggled with in person learning to be on grade level/on standard
- Students in Special Education programs
- Students w/ language barriers/not EL
- Reclassified EL students
- 1st gen students
- Native American students
- Students with social emotional needs

DATA NEEDED FOR REVIEW

- Existing models/results of student led learning
- Review our existing survey data for trends
- Best distance learning models for different age groups & learning styles
- If current learning standards are applicable to distance learning
- Resources for accessing technology and platforms for parents and students
- District Surveys - targeted populations
- Best practice Social and emotional learning (SEL)
- New data sets/defined example: attendance
- Managing expectations for the amount of time spent doing schoolwork, time spent exercising, etc.
- Need to consider the new meaning of data sets in our virtual space. Do the datasets tell the same story?
- Engagement data from multiple perspectives (student, teachers, and parents)
- Protocols and training for clean schools/classrooms
- Student to student and student to teacher interaction data
- Standards for Distance Learning
- What are our key performance indicators (KPIs) for distance learning, measures of input, output and outcome?

DISPARATELY IMPACTED GROUPS WITH PANDEMIC

- Students in Special Education programs
  - Youngest students such as pre-k who cannot access technology for learning
- Students who are socio economically disadvantaged
- EL
- Geographically distant communities (internet access challenged)
- Students who are disengaged (dependent learners)
- Technologically inexperienced (Pre K, Transitional K, K, other Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED) groups, not exposed culturally, those opposed to technology, parents with lack of tech experience)
- Parents or households with multiple kids
- Working students, students charged with babysitting siblings
- Single parent households
- Working parents
- Families who speak a language in addition to English struggling to communicate with teachers/students/staff
- Families that are experiencing health/trauma issues themselves
- Families affected financially/, loss of job, lack of health insurance, etc.

- Students who are considered medically fragile
- Students of teachers that are technologically challenged
- Teachers that are technologically challenged
- Paraeducators
- Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) staff
- Students in foster or custodial care
- Other Servicers (resource teachers, mental health providers, etc.)
- Athletes, Future Farmers of America, Band, and other extracurricular/electives activity participants
- Gifted And Talented Education/Honor students
- Students identifying as LGBTQ
- Homes where education is not priority or families are unable to support
- Students who are medically fragile
- Families who need social emotional support
- Student with social needs
- Students of with First Responder/Essential worker parents or are in daycare
- Students who need personal, human interaction to motivate them to learn
- Students whose primary positive personal connection in their life is with their teacher

STEP 5: Establish the evaluation criteria for the plan: Identify the questions we will use to test the plan.

- To what extent does the plan meet state and public health guidelines?

- To what extent does the plan determine how the staff will be trained on updated procedures?

- To what extent does the plan consider those in the high-risk populations?

- To what extent does the plan establish a communication pathway with concerns of symptoms/positive COVID-19 cases on campus?

- To what extent does the plan establish protocols for cleaning while students are present?

- To what extent does the plan manage visitors to our facilities during school hours? During non-school hours?

- To what extent does the plan support what the district agreed to supply for students versus what they need to bring themselves?

- To what extent does the plan have a process to manage compliance by students, teachers, and parents

- To what extent does the plan provide guidance for students who don't understand guidelines (students with special needs who do not comprehend the protocols)?

- To what extent does the plan monitor on-going safety needs of staff and students?

- To what extent will the district accommodate peoples' varying levels of feeling safe enough to return?

    ○ Are there flexible options for individuals who determine the risk of exposure is too high?

STEP 6: Build the plan based on meeting the plan criteria in Steps 1-5

- Determine guidelines district will operate under

- Determine school schedule(s) district will operate under

- Develop school transportation operating plan or scenarios for the district school schedule(s)

- Select the tasks/practices that will be used by each department to conform with the guidelines

- Package all of the tasks/practices into a master list

- Determine the resource requirements for the tasks/practices

- Determine the implementation feasibility for each of the task/practices

- Develop an implementation timeline for each of the tasks/practices forming a master plan

- Present and gain approval for the plan

- Communicate and implement the plan according to the schedule

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 5: Resources and Procedures

Guidance resources

Centers for Disease Control (CDC),
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Response

CDPH, CAL-STA, CAL/OSHA, COVID-19 Industry
Guidance, Public Transit-intercity Passenger Rail

Sacramento County Health Department (SCHD),
Guidance

Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE),
Guidance

California Department of Education (CDE), Guidance

Maryland Guidance, Recovery Plan for Education

Parent-staff resources

SECTION 6: Transportation Plan Components

List of Guidelines that Govern Transportation

List of Tasks and Practices that will be Deployed

Impact Assessment for School Schedule(s)/
Service Options(s)

Resource Requirements for Operating the School
Schedule(s)/Service Option(s)

Implementation Timelines with Milestones the School
Schedule(s)/Service Option(s)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Charlie Hood, Executive Director, National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services

Charlie served as the Florida's Director of Student Transportation for 23 years. Following his retirement in 2014, he was appointed as the Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. NASDPTS is a non-profit, professional organization whose mission is to exercise leadership and provide guidance and services to members, government agencies, and others. NASDPTS promotes student transportation safety, cost-effectiveness, environmental responsibility, and equitable access of students to educational programs.

Curt Macysyn, Executive Director, National School Transportation Association

Curt Macysyn is the executive director of the National School Transportation Association, a position he has held since May 2019. In this role, Curt facilitates the activities of the organization that represents private school bus contractors nationwide. He is also the host of a weekly podcast called - NSTA: The Bus Stop that discusses student transportation issues and trends.

Michael J. Martin, Executive Director and CEO, National Association for Pupil Transportation & The NAPT Foundation, Inc.

Michael J. Martin is Executive Director and CEO of the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), a diverse community of people that share a passion for student transportation. Our non-profit organization and its affiliates offer school districts and their transportation and transportation-related service providers a variety of communication, leadership, education, advocacy and research services. To learn more about us, please visit www.napt.org

STEERING COMMITTEE

John Benish Jr., Chief Operating Officer, Cook-Illinois Corporation

John Benish, Jr., President and Chief Operating Officer, has more than 25 years' experience in the school transportation business. He started in the business as a teenager and has worked nearly every position in the family school bus business. He leads the second generation of the Benish family in running the company. Overseeing all operations, he works with customers and the management team to ensure that customers' needs are met. John pioneered Cook-Illinois Corporation's ground-breaking moves toward greener transportation. Under his leadership, the company was the first in Illinois to voluntarily switch an entire bus fleet to biodiesel fuel. He also created the Clean Air Bus, the first-ever clean air mobile museum for children. The Clean Air Bus is now used as a hands-on learning tool for all services by Cook-Illinois Corporation. Always encouraging the company to be environmentally conscious, John made sure Cook-Illinois was first in line to purchase the first hybrid school bus in the State of Illinois as soon as they became available. John is the current President of the National School Transportation Association (NSTA), the past treasurer for the Illinois Student Transportation Association (ISTA), an active member of the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the Illinois Association of Pupil Transportation (IAPT) and the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO). He also serves on the Board of Trustees for St. Xavier University. A Purdue University graduate, John also earned a Master's Degree in Management from St. Xavier University.

Michael A. LaRocco, President, NASDPTS and Director of School Transportation, Indiana Department of Education

Mike has more than 26 years of experience in school transportation. He is the Director of School Transportation for the Indiana Department of Education and the current President of NASDPTS.

Steve A. Simmons III, President, National Association for Pupil Transportation

Steve is currently the President of NAPT and an independent transportation consultant. Steve is the former Director of Transportation for Columbus City Schools, the largest school district in the state of Ohio with a fleet consisting of over 850 school buses and 250 pieces of support equipment. Steve supervised approximately 1200 bus drivers and staff. Steve spent over 35 years with both transportation and fleet services departments.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT TEAM

Jim Regan, Managing Partner, CAPITALWORKS Consulting Group

Jim is an executive and Consultant with over thirty years of global experience in all aspects of Corporate Development, Business Analytics and Solution and Process Engineering across all functions for transportation, IT and select services industries in the US, Europe and Asia. Demonstrated ability to develop and lead transformative programs and provide leadership in business growth and organizational performance. He has conducted corporate, organizational and contract evaluations/due diligence in support of acquisitions, alliances, stock valuations and performance improvement. Specifically, his transportation client list encompasses transit and paratransit services (National Express Transit Corporation) school transportation (Toledo Public Schools and the National Association for Pupil Transportation), automobiles (GM worldwide), airlines (British Airways and Swissair), trucking (Sodrel Trucklines), motor coaches (Anchor Transportation and Free Enterprise System) as well as suppliers to the transportation industry. Recently, Jim has taken his organizational analytics methods and partnered with the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) in the design and launch of their business intelligence portal: APOLLO.

Gabriella Guastalli, Consultant, CAPITALWORKS Consulting Group

Over five years of client service and program management experience in social, educational and transportation business environments. Core competencies include analytics, planning, project management, client management and communication, fundraising and sales. Her focus has shifted to helping organizations get healthy after successfully working in social services and nutrition. Since 2014, Gabriella has led the development team for the NAPT APOLLO PROGRAM. She is responsible for on-boarding new users, client training and customer support for users and clients in using the APOLLO business intelligence web portal. Also, she is responsible for client feedback management and tracking technical enhancements to the product. Gabriella is currently leading the design of a web based transportation vendor analytics tool.

Tim Ammon, Co-Owner, Decision Support Group, LLC

Tim has been providing consulting services to public and private sector clients for nearly 25 years. Much of his work has focused on routing efficiency and effectiveness, the implementation of technology to support transportation and evaluating school start times. Having worked with hundreds of customers in multiple countries, Tim has been able to collaborate with his clients to create real and measurable improvements in operational performance. He has also led the design and development of multiple statewide benchmarking reports in the field of student transportation. He has also been an active participant in the development of professional development materials and information for the industry through a broad array of industry groups. Tim holds an undergraduate degree in History and Education from Salisbury University, and a Master of Public Administration from American University.

Tom Platt, Co-Owner, Decision Support Group, LLC

Tom has more than 30 years of professional experience, over 20 of which have been providing consulting services to the pupil transportation industry. His work has focused on operations, logistics, and complex problem solving for hundreds of public and private sector clients. Tom worked extensively on designing decision-making strategies for many of the most complex problems in the industry including outsourcing, insourcing, funding strategies, technology acquisition, and operational design. He has led projects for

many of the largest districts in the nation including Fairfax County, Hillsborough County, North Carolina DPI, and the Province of Ontario. Tom holds a degree in Maritime Transportation from the Maine Maritime Academy, and a Master of Business Administration from the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Bob Ramsdell, Chief Safety Officer, National Express

With over 30 years of safety and security experience in the passenger transportation industry, Bob Ramsdell is the Chief Safety Officer for National Express LLC (NELLC), a leading provider of student transportation, public transit, and employee shuttle services in North America. Since joining NELLC in 1997 and prior to assuming his current role of Chief Safety Officer, Bob served in multiple roles including Chief Operating Officer for NELLC's school bus operations in the western United States, Senior Vice President of Safety and Human Resources, and Vice President of Safety. Bob is a board member for the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) and is the chairman of the NSTA's Safety and Security Committee. Bob also serves as a voting member of the Transportation Safety Administration's Surface Transportation Security Advisory Committee (STSAC) and in 2015 served on the FMCSA's Negotiated Rulemaking Advisory Committee on Entry Level Driver Training.

Peter Lawrence, Ed.D., Region 1 - Director, National Association for Pupil Transportation

Dr. Peter Lawrence is a nationally Certified Director of Pupil Transportation (CDPT), through the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT). He currently serves as the NAPT Region 1 Director. Dr. Lawrence has presented to transportation professionals in many states across the US, and internationally on multiple occasions in Belgium, Canada, China, Columbia, India, Russia, and Turkey. He works for Fairport Central School District and oversees a transportation department in a suburban school district located in Fairport, NY that utilizes district-owned buses and contracted busing. He has over 30 years or transportation experience serving at local, NYS, and national levels to foster safe school bus transportation.

Robert Manspeaker, State Director of School Transportation, Florida Department of Education

Robert has over thirty years of fleet management experience in automotive, heavy truck, and ground support equipment. He began his career as a fleet mechanic with United Parcel Service in 1990, worked into fleet management over package delivery trucks, road tractors/trailers and ground support equipment for two gateways and the second largest hub in the U.S. He is currently the State Director of School Transportation for Florida. He lives about twenty miles outside of Tallahassee Florida where he enjoys spending time with his two daughters.

COMMUNICATION, ADVOCACY AND PR COMMITTEE

Bree Allen, Director, Operational Improvement, National Express

Tina Spence, M.Ed, Director of Compliance, Monitoring & Transportation, Oklahoma State Department of Education

Matt Sanchez, Director of Transportation and Commercial Compliance, Elk Grove Unified School District

SCHEDULING, ROUTING AND SCHOOL BUSES COMMITTEE

Kayne M. Smith, Ed.D., Director of Transportation, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Kayne M. Smith, Ed.D. is the Director of Transportation for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, located northwest of Houston, TX. Cypress-Fairbanks ISD is the third largest district in Texas and the largest student transporter, providing bus service to 85,000 students daily. Kayne is also the President of the Texas Association for Pupil Transportation (TAPT) and has served as the Legislative Committee Chairperson for TAPT since 2015.

Darryl C. Hill, Ph.D. , Senior Vice President, Safety & Security, FirstGroup America, Inc.

Darryl C. Hill, Ph.D., CSP is Senior Vice President, Safety at FirstGroup America, Inc. He is a Certified Safety Professional. Darryl served as American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) President. He has received the ASSP Honor of Fellow and the National Safety Council Distinguished Service to Safety Award.

Mike Stier, Principal Consultant, Pupil Transportation, Illinois State Board of Education; Central Region Director, NASDPTS

Mike has 34 years of experience in the transportation industry with over 25 years in school bus transportation. His transportation career started on a riverboat in the tourist industry while in high school. He obtained a USCG 100-ton Master's Pilot License and continued working on the river while earning his bachelor's degree in business management at Maryville University in St. Louis. After college, he migrated to the school bus transportation industry as a substitute school bus driver while working in management at a private company. Since then, he has been a school bus driver, director of transportation at local school district, a state certified school bus driver instructor and served on the Illinois Association for Pupil Transportation Board of Directors. He is currently filling the role of state director of pupil transportation and the Central Region Director for NASDPTS.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

John Barrington, Director of Product Planning, Blue Bird Bus Company

John is a 29-year veteran of the school bus industry. He has held Sales, Marketing, and Product Development positions at OE manufacturers Mid Bus Inc. & Thomas Built Buses and prior to joining Blue Bird as the Director of Product Planning he spent the previous 7 years managing sales functions and operations at 2 Blue Bird dealerships. John lives in Macon, GA with his wife Nicole and has two children, Griffin and Emma.

Linda F. Bluth, Ed. D, Consultant, NAPT Foundation, Vice President

Dr. Linda Fran Bluth has more than 54 years of experience as a Special Educator including 39 years in special needs transportation. Her past experience includes work at the United States Department of Education (USDE); University Professor; School System Administrator; and Policy Specialist in the Maryland Governor's Office for Children Youth and Families. She is currently employed as a consultant at the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervention/Special Education Services.

Elizabeth Clark MSN RN NCSN FNASN

Elizabeth has over 25 years' experience in school health services as a school nurse, and school nurse administrator. She has a Master of Science degree in the Nursing Care of Children. She has authored chapters in the School Nurse, Comprehensive Text on funding and budgeting school health services and in Legal Resource for School Health Services on School Sponsored Before, After, and Extended School Year Programs. She currently serves as a Nursing Education and Practice Specialist for the National Association of School Nurses, (NASN).

James (Jed) Routh, VP – Sales, Marketing and Service

Jed Routh serves as Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Service for Thomas Built Buses, and has been with the company since 1996. During his 24-year tenure with Thomas Built, Routh has served in multiple roles in Sales, Product Planning, Business Excellence and Operations. Routh attended Appalachian State University, where he received his bachelor's degree in English Education. Additionally, he holds an MBA from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a Masters of Engineering Management from Arizona State University. Routh lives in Franklinville, N.C.

Trish Reed, Vice President, General Manager, IC Bus, LLC

Trish Reed is vice president, general manager of IC Bus and is located in Lisle, IL. Trish has been in the commercial vehicle industry for over 30 years serving in various roles within Navistar, working with bus dealers and customers throughout her career. Prior to her current role Trish worked in various roles at Navistar Financial, progressing to Vice President Business Operations then moved to the Navistar Parts Division as General Manager of UpTime Parts. Trish earned a Bachelor of Science degree in finance with a minor in Economics from Southern Illinois University in 1989.

Jane Mellow, Managing Director, Federal Advocacy & Public Policy at National School Boards Association

Jane is an experienced leader in government and education policy having served as a legislative director in both the House and Senate, as director of a Washington office for a governor, and as a political appointee at the U.S. Department of Transportation in the last administration. In addition to her work in Congress focusing on K-12 education, Jane also worked for a higher education organization.

Susan Shutrump, OTR/L, Supervisor of Occupational and Physical Therapy Services, Trumbull County Educational Service Center

Sue has more than 37 years experience in providing therapy services including coordinating the development of individualized transportation plans for students with special needs. She is the 2018 recipient of the Peter J Grandolfo Memorial Award of Excellence and the 2007 recipient of the NAPT Special Needs Award. She holds the SNT endorsement and was a member of NAPT's Special Needs Advisory Board from 2017-2019. Sue is tenured faculty and has served on the National Advisory Board for the Transporting Students with Disabilities Conference since 1994. She is a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician. She served on the NHTSA curriculum writing committee for "CSRS on School Buses", as well as all subsequent revision committees. She also has been a consultant on NHTSA's training video series. She has presented numerous seminars and authored articles in many publications as well as chapters, "Best Practices in Safe Transportation" in the first and second editions of AOTA textbooks, *Best Practices for Occupational Therapy in Schools*.