



the **YELLOW BUS** Newsletter

www.NYSBCA.com
info@NYSBCA.com

P.O. Box 268 • Latham, NY 12110
Phone: (518) 220-9905

Winter 2020

The Future of the State of the State Budget

What will the State of the State budget look like in 2021, 2022 and how will they address the deficit? These are decisions that have obviously not been made yet but NYSBCA's message remains loud and clear to all relevant stakeholders: Our school transportation system is vital to the state's public education system and it must be prioritized as such in the context of state budget negotiations (SB8262/AB10458). It is important to note that state financial aid to school districts for transportation expenses in a fiscal year is paid in the following fiscal year.

What is clear is that right now there are two options for dealing with the NYS Budget:

- ★ Do it now and close the \$15 billion hole with dramatic tax increases and cuts
- ★ Wait for Washington action and do the budget with federal funds

However, even with generous federal assistance, New York may still be required to make its own further adjustments in the short term, and has no choice but to do so in the long term. Cuts not only in the rate of growth, but actual reductions in outlays, are likely necessary under the circumstances. Additional revenues, however, are also sure to be on the table, and are already the subject of strenuous debate. Be they income tax increases, a stock transfer tax, mark-to-market treatment of capital gains, digital services taxes, sales tax base broadening, marijuana and gaming legalization and taxation, or any of a host of other proposals, policymakers will have much to consider.

With weeks to go until the 2021 state legislative session begins, Hill leaders are moving quickly, with hopes to pass a sweeping relief package by week's end. In a desperate plea, New York's elected leadership including Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Mayor Bill de Blasio and several labor leaders called on the state's congressional delegation to ensure the state receives its fair share of those funds if such a compromise is reached.

Thankfully, NYSBCA predicted that this would all come down to federal dollars back in the beginning of March 2020 (because without federal aid, there would be inevitable layoffs, budget cuts and tax increases). As a result, we immediately expanded our strategy to not only work the second floor, but engaged extensively with Senator Gillibrand and Senator Schumer. We are hopeful that IF a package is passed by the end of this week, the school bus industry will be specifically included in the 740-billion-dollar package based off of the latest version of the bill we received from Senator Gillibrand.

Nevertheless, in light of the NYSED Nov. 6 memo and NYSED's November 30th letter, we must remain steadfast in building our coalition to ensure that our industry is heard amongst the many voices and competing interests up in Albany during this year's budget process. Key to this is making sure that all of our members call their state elected officials and stress that the industry must stay solvent in order to run safe, smooth and timely operations for our students. On top of labor costs, school bus transportation systems still have essential operating expenses to meet every week and month including financing, insurance,

maintenance, real estate, parts, employee welfare/pension benefits, admin staff, training, inspections, etc. It's not as simple as the buses aren't running, services are not rendered and therefore we can remove it from the budget. This continuous funding stream is there to keep the engine tuned and oiled when the wheels on the bus are ready to roll.

Just this week the Board of Regents have advanced their legislative priorities for the upcoming session to provide relief and regulatory flexibilities for school districts while recognizing the realities of the State's fiscal constraints caused by the pandemic. Thankfully, the Regents is advancing a proposal to amend the education law that will allow school districts across NYS to be reimbursed for utilizing buses to deliver meals, needed educational materials, or acting as mobile hot spots so students could successfully engage in remote learning, as well as reimburse school districts and counties for costs incurred in maintaining the infrastructure necessary to have transportation services available to support in-person education for all students, including preschool special education students.

While we believe that an amendment to the education law is NOT necessary per the Gerstman Schwartz LLP memo that was sent to NYSBCA's membership, we believe this is a step in the right direction. However, this is only the first step in a long process to a final budget. We look forward to working with our partners at the state and federal levels to secure sufficient funding for the pupil transportation industry. Putting the brakes on school bus funding would have a disastrous impact on the industry and its school children.

We will continue to keep you posted on this issue as information arises.

NYS Sick Leave Regulations Released



New York released [proposed regulations](#) for its Paid Sick Leave law and the CDC issued new guidance adding to when it recommends people mask up.

Last week the Department of Labor added a section of "proposed regulations" surrounding the law to its website. Today, they were posted officially in the [NYS Register](#). The proposed regulations offer some insight, including:

When employers can request (limited) substantiating documentation. Employers can only request documentation substantiating an employee's need for sick leave when the leave lasts **3 or more consecutive days**.

A definition for "confidential information." Since the law was announced, employers were prohibited from requiring "confidential information" from employees as a condition of use of sick leave, but it did not clarify what that encompassed. The regulations propose "confidential information" means, "individually identifiable health or mental health information." This includes diagnosis and treatment records from emergency services, health providers, or drug and alcohol abuse prevention or rehabilitation centers.

Headcount calculation. To determine how much Paid Sick Leave an employer must provide in a calendar year, the employer must look at the highest number of employees employed at any point during the relevant calendar year.

Accrual calculation. While the law states employees must earn 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked, the proposed regulations go a step further by requiring employers also look at time worked in increments fewer than 30 hours and round the time earned to the nearest 5 minutes or nearest 1/10 or 1/4 of an hour.

Public Comments are now accepted for 60 days, which will mean the regulations will NOT be final before employers must implement the requirements. In light of this guidance, some updates to your Paid Sick Leave policy may need to be made.

For more information, visit <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-paid-sick-leave/new-york-paid-sick-leave#proposedregs>



This publication is a member service of

**New York School Bus
Contractors Association**

P.O. Box 268, Latham, NY 12210
(518) 220-9905 • (518) 220-9906 (fax)

www.NYSBCA.com

**2020-21 NYSBCA
Board of Directors**

OFFICERS

Corey Muirhead, President
Logan Bus Company Inc. & Affiliates

Nick Vallone, 1st Vice-President
Rolling V Bus Corp.

Lee Selby, Secretary
Selby Transportation Corp.

Tommy Smith, Treasurer
Suffolk Transportation Services

DIRECTORS

Kyle Albers, Huntington Coach Corporation

Nick Brega, Peter Brega, Inc.

Robert Brown, Upstate Transit of Saratoga, LLC

Charlie Bruce, National Express Corporation

Seth Corwin, Chappaqua Transportation

Todd Farber, Quality Transportation Corporation

Dan Higbie, Student Transportation of America

Patrick Kinane, Golden Sun Bus Service, Inc.

Matthew Kuhl, Student Bus Co.

Kyle Manfre, First Student, Inc.

Paul Mori, Huntington Coach Corporation

Neil Strahl, Pioneer Transportation

Carmen Tomeo, WE Transport, Inc.

Brett Wester, Durham School Services

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERS

Ed Arrigoni, NY Bus Service

Tim Birnie, retired from Birnie Bus Service

Kevin Clifford, Huntington Coach Corp.

John Corr, The Trans Group

John J. Corrado, Suffolk Transportation Services

Timothy Flood, The Trans Group

Robert Pape, Dell Transportation

Phil Vallone, Rolling V. Bus Corporation

R. Thomas Weeks, Ridge Road Express

STAFF

Jennifer Hickey Bruce, CMP, Executive Director

Brad Gerstman, Government Affairs Representative

Nicole Epstein, Public Relations Representative

Randy Kleinman, Legal Counsel

A Message from the President

Hello NYSBCA Members,

I hope you and your loved ones had a pleasant Thanksgiving. We have a lot to be thankful for. Our businesses are back in operation. Our family, friends and colleagues are all well and safe. The world may feel like it's moving at light speed, but take a step back and be grateful for what we have, and what we were able to get through.

The Board and the Association is hard at work over the past couple months. We are actively engaging with the NYSED department and the Governor's office regarding transportation aid to school districts for last year's COVID shut down. Simultaneously, we are strengthening our relationships with other associations in the industry. We share more similarities than differences, and it is always good for all facets of the industry to come together for the benefit of the industry.

While Washington is deciding on a stimulus package, we have been writing and engaging with our senators to make sure the school bus industry is included in this relief package much like the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services Act (CERTS). It was a pleasure teaming up with our neighbors, the New Jersey School Bus Contractors Association to send letters to the Problem Solvers Caucus and various other electeds. In Washington, we have also been working extremely hard to make sure that school bus drivers and attendants are at the top of the list and deemed essential workers for when the vaccine distribution will commence in New York.

I also want to take a moment with a special shout out to Mike Martucci, NYSBCA's Past President, who successfully rallied to become our newest Republican Senator in the State. Mike's main focus is to help small businesses through COVID and beyond. We look forward to working with Mike and having a school transportation ally in the State Senate. Please join me in congratulating Mike on behalf of the Association!

We have all seen the news, and understand there is a spike happening during the holiday season. I want to wish everyone a Happy Holidays, and please remain safe during these trying times. Thank you always for your support of the association and I look forward to a time when we can all get together again.

Sincerely,

Corey

Corey Muirhead
NYSBCA President

REICHENBACH

ENTERPRISES

LARGE enough to handle your needs....
small enough to CARE!!



****FINANCING AVAILABLE****

SCHOOL * COMMERCIAL * LUXURY * PARTS * SERVICE

We are proud to invite you to our new service facility on Long Island!

Bird Bus Sales and Service

155 Terminal Drive
Plainview, NY 11803
Sales: 516-767-2700 x122
Service: 516-506-0839

www.FactoryDirectBusSales.com



Westchester County
Parts and Service
1 Warehouse Lane
Elmsford, NY
914-592-2842 x106

www.BirdBusSales.com



Charging Ahead With Electric School Buses



Transitioning to electric fueled vehicles without charging expertise could prove to be disastrously costly if you don't understand the pit-falls and employ the proper charge management system. A fleet operator may spend

double (and even more) by not properly managing these charge protocols.

New York State has many local authorities and utilities that are legislating and incentivizing school districts and vehicle fleet operators to start the migration to zero emission vehicles. Many technologies have been tried from low emission to CNG, Hybrid, etc. However the only true "zero emission" technology is all electric. We are sure you are being approached by manufacturers of Electric School buses and you are learning that they are quite expensive, require rather costly infrastructure and that is only part of the equation. Even regarding the aspect of purchasing EV school buses, there are other options such as retrofitting an existing school bus to make it All- Electric; known as "Re-Powering" the bus, which can be more cost effective and equally effective.

We at Amply Power ("AmPLY") focus on providing EV charge infrastructure but do so in a very compelling and cost-effective way! An assessment is done of the projects EV fleet, number of vehicles, typical routes, time available to charge etc. We prepare an engineering analysis, suggestion of EV charging technologies, prepare all necessary site plans, engineering, and installation protocols. We deal with the utility to fully understand the rate and tariff structure and peak electrical load

management requirements, to determine the proper charge protocol needed.

We then build the infrastructure, install all equipment, connect to the utility and accomplish this with NO CAPITAL EXPENDITURE on behalf of your company. We are a pay-as-you-use-it service provider that will ensure the proper requirement, 99% assurance of charge readiness and full service and maintenance. Even if your company qualifies for infrastructure costs Amply work with it to further reduce your net operating costs.

A compelling case study into how Amply can help school districts 'charge ahead with electrification' involves one of your own members: Logan Bus Company (an innovative entity and industry mover) is just completing the installation of six charge stations at its Brooklyn Depot. This system consists of five AC chargers (for overnight) and one DC fast charger. Logan will be re-powering a number of Type-C buses to all electric assisted by grants from NYSERDA (NYS Energy Research and Development Authority) and will charge the electric buses at this new electric vehicle charging depot. Corey Muirhead, Exec. VP of Logan has become an instrumental partner in advancing the cause of the move towards EV School Buses.

AMPLY Power smooths the transition to electric fleets by providing Charging-as-a-Service to de-risk through our simple price-per-mile or price-per-kWh model. We provide a fully managed charging solution that enables fleet managers to deploy electric vehicles confidently. We handle all aspects of charging operations on behalf of fleet owners, and our charging systems are optimized for the lowest electricity costs.

Advertisement submitted by Roger Slotkin, Senior Advisor at Amply Power, Inc. If you have any questions, contact Roger at roger@amplypower.com or visit www.amplypower.com.

We handle all of the complexities of fleet electrification for you.



"NO SURPRISES" FIXED PRICING

No up-front costs, pay as you use, electric fuel for less than your fossil fuel budget.



FULLY MANAGED SOLUTION

AMPLY can manage all electrical and charging infrastructure from design to installation to maintenance free operation.



GUARANTEED PERFORMANCE

Every electric school bus is charged and ready-to-go every school day and for school outings.

Making it easy for you.

Leonard Bus Sales provides customized support and solutions because we believe you should be able to focus on safely transporting children.

A glimpse of our customized support and solutions...

Our school bus experts work quickly to identify and meet your needs to keep your fleet running safely and efficiently.

We have comprehensive repair capabilities for all make and model school buses and full Cummins warranty, service and support.

Leonard Bus Sales makes sure you get the parts you need, when you need them.



Bergen | Deposit | Middletown | Rome | Saratoga Springs
(800) 554-4504 www.leonardbus.com



Leonard Family Scholarship Now Accepting Applications for the 2021-2022 Academic Year

Leonard Bus Sales is pleased to once again offer the Leonard Family Scholarship that provides children of employees of New York School Bus Contractors Association (NYSBCA) member companies with the opportunity to win a \$2,500 scholarship to pursue their education beyond high school.

The scholarship was created to recognize and assist students who are passionate about pursuing their careers and helping their community. Recipients receive a one-time \$2,500 scholarship paid directly to the educational institution of their choosing, with preference given to students with demonstrated financial need.

“Our family and the entire Leonard Bus Sales team are committed to the future success of children and hope the Leonard Family Scholarship provides an additional incentive for them to pursue their dreams,” said Leonard Bus Sales President, Jon Leonard. “We truly appreciate our partnership with the New York School Bus Contractors Association and look forward to awarding the scholarship next year.”

Scholarship application criteria include: (1) be a child of an NYSBCA member company employee, (2) financial need, (3) the student can be pursuing any course of study, but preference is given to those focusing on diesel or automotive mechanics, (4) generally meritorious academic performance, and (5) attendance at a 2 or 4-year college or trade school.

Applications are due by March 1, 2021, and will be evaluated by the Leonard Family Scholarship Fund Advisory Committee. The scholarship winner will be announced by the end of the current academic year.

You can download an application by [CLICKING HERE](#) or visiting www.NYSBCA.com.

For more information about the Leonard Family Scholarship please contact Leonard Bus Sales or the New York School Bus Contractors Association.

2020 Tax Highlights to Watch



The following is a list of some key tax updates and changes for 2020:

Net Operating Losses

- Losses for 2018, 2019 and 2020 can be carried back 5 years, possibly freeing up taxable income at higher tax rates.
- The 80% of taxable income limitation for applying net operating losses is suspended for 2020.

Sec. 179 and Bonus depreciation

- Sec. 179 deduction limit increased to \$1,040,000, with a phase out threshold of \$2,590,000.
- 100% first year bonus depreciation available for qualified property placed in service in 2020.

2020 Standard Mileage Rate

- 57.5 cents/mile (includes 27 cents for deemed depreciation). Note: unreimbursed employee business expenses are not deductible as a miscellaneous itemized deduction.

Employer Tax Credits

- The CARES Act provides two new employer payroll tax credits:
- Employee Retention Credit (not available to employers who received PPP loans)
- Paid Sick Leave and Family Leave Credits

Required Minimum Distributions

- Required minimum distributions are waived for 2020.
- Age requirement to begin required withdraws increased from 70 ½ to 72 (for individuals born after June 30, 1949).

Traditional IRA Contributions

The SECURE Act removed the age restriction to make a traditional IRA contribution. Individuals over age 70 ½, who worked and have earned income in 2020, can contribute to a traditional IRA.

Timing of Income and Deductions

Consider whether to defer income and accelerate deductions or accelerate income and defer deductions to take advantage of changes in tax rates/brackets based on your personal situation or anticipated government policies.

Other items that have not changed but should be considered:

Capital Gains Tax Rates

Capital gains tax rates currently range from 0% to 20%. If you anticipate tax law changes that will increase rates next year, consider selling investments before year end to take advantage of the current lower rates.

Like Kind Exchanges

Limited to real property used in a trade or business or for investment. The trade-in of business "personal" property, such as vehicles, creates a gain or loss at the time of trade-in.

Each of the items referenced above have additional caveats. Consult with your tax advisor or give us a call for more details. Many more items are discussed in our year end planner. If you did not receive a copy and would like one, please contact me.

Contact Rick Anastasia (RAnastasia@lutzseligzeronda.com) or Jeff Klahr (JKlahr@lutzseligzeronda.com) to see how our firm can help you and your business with planning to realize the most tax savings possible. Lutz, Selig & Zeronda, L.L.P. provides accounting, tax and consulting services to a wide range of businesses in the transportation industry and is a proud member of the New York School Bus Contractors Association.



Board of Regents Advances Budget and Legislative Priorities and State Aid Request for the 2021-22 School Year

The New York State Board of Regents outlined its State Aid Proposal earlier this week that calls for ensuring level state funding over a two-year period to continue to address the needs of school districts amidst the COVID-

19 pandemic, the State Education Department announced today. In addition, the Board advanced a comprehensive set of proposals to continue to allow districts to operate efficiently to focus resources on priorities that are vital to best meet the needs of all students.

State Aid Proposal

In the 2020-21 Enacted Budget, state support for schools was reduced by over \$1.1 billion in recognition of the availability of federal CARES Act funds. However, schools took on many additional unplanned costs associated with the pandemic this year. To help districts maintain services while educating students in a safe manner, the Regents call for level state funding for 2020-21 and 2021-22 based on 2019-20 school funding levels. To achieve this, the Regents propose that the CARES Act reduction be restored to school districts over a two-year period to allow for these funds to be used for their intended pandemic-related costs.

The Board's full State Aid Proposal can be found on the [Department's website](#).

Our team is reviewing this and will extract any information as it pertains to transportation, but two sections stick out in the moment:

Page 5 on pupil transportation reimbursement:

"school districts to be reimbursed through transportation aid for utilizing buses to deliver meals, needed educational materials, or acting as mobile hot spots so students could successfully engage in remote learning **as well as providing aid to school districts and counties in order to maintain school bus services and operations for all students, including preschool special education students, even when not in service during a pandemic or declared emergency, as there is still a cost in doing so**; and"

Page 23 on Mandate Relief and State Aid Claims Flexibility:

"Education Law provisions affect when adjustments to State aid payments are made, the timing of additional aid payments, and the recovery of aid overpayments. After an established date, if a school district owes money back to the State, it is collected immediately. However, if funding is owed to a school district, the aid claim is placed in a first-come-first-served queue that is funded by an annual appropriation. This queue is very long, and at present funding levels, districts are likely to wait years before the State returns the money they are owed. The Regents are proposing statutory changes

that would change the return process, so that when a district owes funds to the State due to an overestimated claim, rather than having those funds flow back into the general state aid fund to offset costs, the funds would be applied to any aid claims for the district that are in queue. Coupled with the annual State appropriation, the total funds available would significantly reduce the time that districts must wait to receive funds owed them by the State. Over time, this approach should fully pay off the queue of old claims owed by the State to school districts.”

Both of these items are encouraging. As new information arises, NYSBCA will send out the information.



TSA School Bus Transportation Security Initiatives

The Transportation Security Administration continues to support school districts and contract companies to provide a secure ride for students and employees. The TSA has recently developed additional programs specifically focused on supporting school bus transportation security:

Security Enhancement Through Assessment (SETA) – this activity consists of covertly placing unattended bags/suspicious bags on vehicles to simulate a coordinated terrorist attack. The goal is to gauge the effectiveness of pre-trip inspections. The SETA program will consist of five key elements that are completed in three phases: Identify, Assess, Mitigate, Reassess, and Sustain. The initiative occurs in three phases: initial test to identify a company’s posture, training to mitigate the vulnerability, and a follow-up test to assess improvement along with plan development to maintain an effective vehicle inspection program.

Exercise Information System (EXIS) – consists of discussion-based tabletop exercises, facilitated by TSA inspectors, that are intended to explore or evaluate coordination of preventative and protective actions related to a terrorist attack. These exercises afford valuable opportunities to better understand the role a company and their employees play in preventing a major security incident or responding after an event. will examine an operator’s implementation of transportation

security focusing on the mission areas of: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery.

Transportation Security Template and Assessment Review Toolkit (T-START) - a guide composed of five (5) separate sections that addresses highway transportation security issues. The five modules are designed to assist companies in developing effective security practices and in the construction of a Security Plan.

First Observer Plus - a security awareness training program designed to increase security awareness of frontline transportation professionals by providing training to recognize suspicious activity that may be related to terrorism, to assess what they see, and methods for reporting their observations. Its message is simple: “Observe, Assess, and Report suspicious activities.” First Observer Plus training is offered online or can be delivered by TSA personnel in a facilitated group or classroom setting.

Baseline Assessment for Security Enhancement (BASE) – a review developed to establish standards for security programs, identify strengths as well as potential vulnerabilities and assess progress with TSA recommendations. This process will examine a variety of topics ranging from emergency response plans, facility and vehicle security, employee training and emergency awareness programs.

These programs are voluntary, non-compliance initiatives that are available at **no cost**. If you would like further information contact Supervisory Inspector Lawrence King at lawrence.king@tsa.dhs.gov or (718) 917-3900.



Newest Members

-  **Amplify Power**
-  **Gallagher Bus Service**
-  **Goodbye Harassment**
-  **The Lion Electric**
-  **Unique Electric Solutions Inc.**

WELCOME ABOARD!



Paying for an Electric Bus, How to Make it Work

While many school districts and contractors are excited about the prospect of adding electric school buses to their fleet, apprehension regarding electric school bus and infrastructure costs cause some to take a step back. But surprisingly, when you take a look at the bigger picture—the total cost of ownership of an electric school bus—you may find that electric buses could actually cost less over their entire lifecycle than clean-diesel, gasoline, compressed natural gas or propane school buses, when funding and incentives are applied.

Electric school bus savings come in the form of fuel savings and lower maintenance costs. Although fueling and charging costs ebb and flow, recent reports show that electricity currently costs around 40 percent less than diesel. Plus, because electric school bus engines have as few as ten moving parts, maintenance is dramatically reduced, with the largest maintenance expense being battery replacement.

Even when you consider the higher purchase price, maintenance costs, power costs and possible battery replacement, an electric school bus could still save you nearly \$2,000 a year in fuel and \$4,400 a year in maintenance costs according to a study by the [Clinton Global Initiative](#). The study found that electric buses make up for their higher purchase costs within 13 years of operation and end up saving more than \$31,000 in operational costs over the lifetime of the bus.

Where to Find Funding

As part of our [Electric Bus Authority program](#), Thomas Built Buses partners with customers to identify funding opportunities, such as state incentives, vouchers, utility providers and private foundations that can help to offset the cost of procuring new electric school buses as well as infrastructure purchase and installation.

For instance, in New York, there has been funding options, special financing and rebates to cover the initial

purchase price of an electric school bus as well as charging infrastructure. Even more states and some utility providers are considering PAYING school districts for storing unused energy in school buses and supplying it back to the energy grid when the grid becomes overloaded.

After funding is identified, the Electric Bus Authority team will work alongside you to assist with funding applications and spec the best bus and charging infrastructure for the fleet. The team will also help to pull in the local utility provider into the conversation to assess electric rates and energy buy-back opportunities.

Keep in mind that funding options come and go, so even if there aren't any funding options in New York at this time, that doesn't mean that there won't be in the near future. Thomas Built Buses aims to keep tabs on future funding opportunities and can alert you when local funding becomes available.

Funding for initial capital costs decreases the total cost of ownership of an electric school bus. In addition, savings can grow even more as government funding and incentives continue to kick in. And, more good news: the cost of batteries continues to decline and revenue sources from utility companies are beginning to emerge.

In the end, running an electric school bus could cost a lot less than you might think and could even end up saving you money in the long run. To find out more, contact a [local Thomas Built Buses dealer](#) for more information or speak with someone at the [Electric Bus Authority](#).



January 19th - Board of Directors Meeting

March 11th - Commissioner's Advisory Committee for Pupil Transportation Services (NYSED)

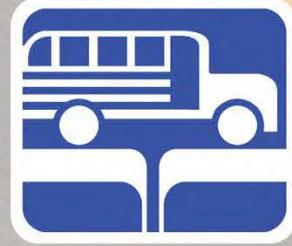
May 22th - NYS School Bus Safety Competition

June 10th - Commissioner's Advisory Committee for Pupil Transportation Services (NYSED)

October 15-16th - Annual Convention

October 16th - Annual Membership Meeting

NESCO



Your Thomas Built Buses Authorized Dealer
for New York City and Long Island



Mobile Climate Control

Largest MCC Distributor in the Northeast for your A/C Needs
Installation and Service and Complete Air Conditioning Parts Warehouse

Our Full Repair Shop Offers
Wheelchair Lifts - Braun & Ricon
Wheelchair Tie-Downs - Sure-Lok & Q'Straint
Conversions to Meet All ADA Requirements
Paint & Collision Repairs
Frame Straightening and Replacements

Fleet Appraisals, Maintenance Service at your Location!

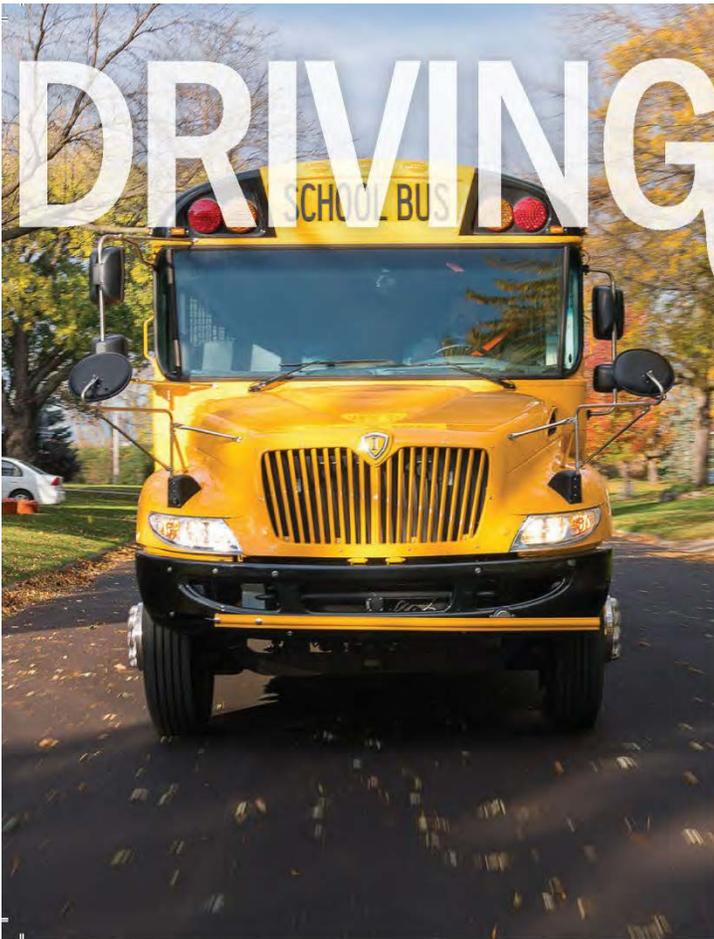
Your vehicle safety is our business!

202 South Fehr Way Bay Shore, NY 11706

631-243-4500 | info@nescobus.com

www.nescobus.com

facebook.com/nescobus



DRIVING QUALITY

TRUCK KING INTERNATIONAL
Bus Sales & Service
 Proudly serving the New York metro area and New Jersey.

NY Main Office: 9505 Avenue D Brooklyn, NY 11236 718-649-8400 www.truckkingintl.com

5001 2nd Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11232 718-492-8600	1370 Viele Ave. Bronx, NY 10474 718-328-1616	2222 Smithtown Ave. Ronkonkoma, NY 11779 631-981-1960
58-80 Borden Ave. Maspeth, NY 11378 718-894-4850	191 Cabot St. West Babylon, NY 11704 631-454-7888	46-100 Paris Street Newark, NJ 07105 732-495-0440

Mandatory Sexual Harassment Training in New York State

New York State law requires that every employee in New York State receive sexual harassment training yearly. But the benefits of conducting a properly designed sexual harassment training program go beyond “checking the box.” Such training actually helps prevent improper workplace conduct, which in turn minimizes your company’s liability and maximizes employee productivity.



So, every school bus contractor in New York State must provide annual sexual harassment training to all employees, including but not limited to drivers,

attendants, shop personnel, office staff, management and executives. The law only requires training on sexual harassment, but the better practice is to train your employees on all forms of illegal workplace discrimination.

Benefits of Training

Avoid Litigation

Nobody wants to face a lawsuit by a current or former employee. Defending even a meritless lawsuit is extremely expensive and time consuming. “The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) records a cost of \$195 million paid out in public penalties by private companies as a result of sexual harassment cases between 2010–2017. This figure does not include the cases settled privately. The average harassment claim settled outside of court will typically run an organization anywhere from \$75,000-\$125,000.”

https://medium.com/@OneYoungWorld_/the-cost-of-sexual-harassment-is-much-higher-than-you-d-think-e538cc962c89

One way in which training can help reduce litigation is by encouraging employees to report improper conduct when it first surfaces so that the company can put an end to it before it reaches the point of unlawful harassment or discrimination. Employees also learn that for their complaint to be protected, it must be made in “good faith.” If employees know their internal complaints will be taken seriously, they are less likely to complain “outside.”

Undoubtedly, training your employees in proper workplace conduct will help you avoid such claims. In the event litigation does occur, having conducted preventive training may serve as an “affirmative defense.”

Increased Employee Productivity

Employees who suffer illegal harassment in the workplace have more absenteeism. Even when they do report to work, they are less productive. If managers/supervisors are seen as being allowed to get away with harassment, that can create widespread morale problems. Employees who know that the company acts to prevent harassment will be more productive and have higher morale.

Further, providing harassment training to school bus drivers and attendants will also increase their sensitivity when interacting with students, parents and school personnel.

Avoid Employee Turnover and Reputation Problems

By requiring all employees to participate in harassment training you send a clear message to all employees that improper workplace behavior will not be tolerated. Employees who know that the company acts to prevent harassment are more likely to stay with your company, which saves the time and cost of recruiting, hiring and training new employees.

Moreover, in today’s digital age word that a company allows sexual harassment and/or does not take allegations of harassment seriously can spread instantaneously. Likewise, word that the company does in fact take such matters seriously will also spread and will therefore help with recruiting and retention.

Manager/Supervisor Training

Managers/supervisors are the first line of defense in harassment prevention. At the same time, they are also the biggest point of exposure. Managers/supervisors must know what to do in the event of harassment, but equally important they must also know what not to do. Properly educating your managers and supervisors allows them to recognize potentially harassing conduct and prevent or correct it.

Legal Requirements

Under the New York State law, harassment training must:

1. Be “interactive”
2. Include an explanation of sexual harassment consistent with agency guidance
3. Include examples of conduct that would constitute unlawful sexual harassment

4. Include information concerning the federal and state statutory provisions concerning sexual harassment and the remedies available to victims of sexual harassment
5. Include information concerning employee rights of redress and all available forums for adjudicating complaints
6. Include information addressing conduct by supervisors and any additional responsibilities for supervisors.

The Shortfalls of Most Training Resources

Throughout the years (even before the State and City passed their respective laws requiring harassment training), many clients – including many school bus companies – complained about the available training resources. Clients felt that in addition to teaching their employees about sexual harassment, they were also “teaching my employees to sue me.”

The clients were also concerned that every video seemed outdated, canned and/or forced. These two complaints certainly apply to the free trainings that are currently available.

The Solution

The solution was to produce my own harassment training videos that quite simply are better than any other training videos available.

Our training, unlike any other, draws a clear distinction between things that are illegal (e.g. gender harassment) and things that, while not illegal, are against company policy (e.g. the boss who always yells).

Equally as important, our training teaches employees that they cannot sue the company over things that are only against company policy, e.g. because the boss yells at you.

To make the training enjoyable, [Geoffrey Cantor](#), an actor, best known for his portrayal of Mitchell Ellison in Marvel’s *Daredevil*, had full creative control. Geoffrey wrote, produced, and directed the entire series.

Our training satisfies both New York State and New York City requirements for sexual harassment training, and is available in Spanish and with closed captioning, Spanish or French subtitles.

Many school bus companies are already using our harassment training for their employees because of how simple the platform is and no need to add additional training taking away from the 19-A requirements.

Conclusion

Employers should conduct harassment training not just because it is required and not just because it is the “right thing to do”, but because it actually prevents improper workplace behavior and improves employee productivity. Our training accomplishes this without “teaching your employees to sue you.”

This article was submitted by Jeffrey D. Pollack. Jeff Pollack has provided in-person harassment training to over 10,000 employees during his 30 years as a labor lawyer and is the founder of Goodbye Harassment. www.GoodbyeHarassment.com. This article does not constitute legal advice; always consult an attorney for your specific circumstances.

School Bus Exhaust Systems: Going Factory-Direct

School bus transportation personnel rarely have the luxury of taking a bus out of commission, let alone have an emergency backup bus when these situations arise. So, that is why when it comes to repairs for exhaust systems, radiators and more, it needs to be handled as quickly as possible. After all, in New York City alone, over 2.3 million students depend on the bus system for daily transportation.

In searching for a new school bus exhaust system, it is important to note that in addition to working with OEM dealers to purchase replacement parts, there are several aftermarket suppliers that may be a great option.

Determining the top considerations for an exhaust system is not so different than any other major purchasing decisions you face. That is, determining your top three considerations: price, quality and customer service.

Finding a Supplier

When looking for a supplier, first and foremost, ensure the supplier specializes and is experienced in school bus exhaust systems. There are many variations of school bus exhaust systems and working with a specialized supplier will help get the bus up, running and out on the road as soon as possible.

With just a little research, you will be able to find if the exhaust system supplier is trustworthy and possesses all three of the characteristics you are looking for.

For many school bus mechanics, it is the attention to detail that puts the top suppliers a cut above the rest.

**WE REALLY DO MEAN
FULL SERVICE**

With radiators, DPFs, EGRs
and more than 30,000
exhaust parts, it's no wonder
Auto-jet is the choice of
school bus systems
coast to coast.

John Rapp
President

AUTO-JET.COM
800-247-5391

Auto-jet
MUFFLER CORP.

From having parts in stock and the ability to deliver ahead of schedule, to continuous after-sale support, you will want to make sure you are partnering with a reputable provider.

1. Affordability

Like many things, price is always a major factor in any buying process. When it comes to price for school bus parts, you can potentially find savings by partnering with an authorized, aftermarket supplier. Finding the right aftermarket supplier is typically a simple process, and in some cases, customers can anticipate up to a 60 percent cost savings for the exact same part when compared with OEM dealer pricing.

2. Quality

A price difference of 30 to 60 percent off an identical part is great, but means very little if the part is not up to par with quality.

From the year it was built to the make and model, the major bus manufacturers have many different exhaust configurations. As an example, there could be two buses lined up next to each other identical in appearance. When looking at the exhaust system, it would tell a different story when the mechanic goes to replace it.

Questions on what parts are needed are a phone call away from a specialized supplier.



For quality, not to mention the price you pay, you want the part to be long-lasting. When it comes to aftermarket exhaust, all-steel construction is safe, reliable and will get you back on the road and operating for years to come.

The quality not only comes from the craftsmanship, but the flexibility of the supplier. In replacing the exhaust system, it is so important that the exhaust system fits, which, due to the numerous bus models, can be a challenge for dealers to have the right part on hand. Specialized companies have more control over their production and can customize certain aspects to make sure the part fits to the exact specifications it should.

Look for a supplier who uses CNC (Computer Numerical Control) technology. CNCs process material to the precise specifications without an operator directly controlling the machine operation. CNCs help get the parts right each and every time without the threat of a user error, therefore, if a part is not already in stock, it can be produced and shipped quickly.

Additionally, a good supplier will be ISO 9001:2015 certified, which keeps quality top of mind. This certification maintains documentation to help the company organize processes, improve efficiency, strive to continually improve, and ensure customer requirements are met.

3. Customer Service

Honesty from the manufacturer should always be first and foremost. If the supplier has a bad reputation of over-promising and under-delivering, it is typically pretty easy to find out through online reviews. You want a supplier who can answer tough questions and keep you updated and informed from the purchase all the way to the shipment arriving to you.

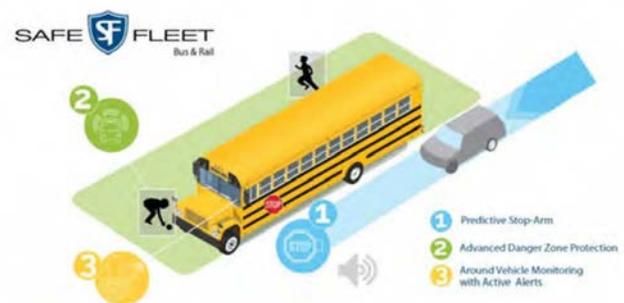
Expertise is part of good customer service. You want your customer service representative to know about the make and model of bus you are working on. This helps speed up the process instead of having to wait for answers. This expertise should make you, the customer, feel confident in who you are purchasing from.

Lastly, when it comes to buses, timing is everything. You want a supplier who either has stock of the parts in need, or who can produce things quickly.

You should have a positive experience with your supplier throughout the entire process — from the moment you initiated contact to the time your new exhaust system is installed. A good supplier understands the importance of every step in the process, including how it is packaged and shipped. It is critical for the package to be shipped without getting bent or damaged.

Often times, we think we need to pick two of the three priorities, between affordability, quality and customer service, and sacrifice the third. But, why settle for anything less than all three? At the end of the day, going straight to the source can get you back on the road fast with the right part and big savings for your school.

This article was submitted by Auto-jet, a Des Moines, Iowa-based team that has been manufacturing exhaust systems since the late 1950s, and they have decades of experience serving the school bus industry. To learn more, head to the Auto-jet website at www.auto-jet.com/school-bus, call: 800-247-5391 or e-mail: sales@auto-jet.com



Increased Safety in the Danger Zone – Keeping Students Safe Now and Changing Long-Term Driver Behavior

Danger Zone Safety - We need to Change our Approach

We've been trying to tackle this critical issue as an industry for years. Stop arms, crossing gates and cameras have each helped to reduce the number of danger zone injuries and improve safety. However, to get the number of children injured or killed in school transportation-related crashes over the next decade closer to zero, we need to acknowledge that any reactive tool or technology that relies on human attention can really only accomplish so much and will not save a life in the actual moment.

More than Driver Distraction

Driver distraction is said to be the underlying issue for the increase in the number of school transportation related accidents occurring nationwide. It takes a long time to change a behavior. It takes even longer when the owner of the behavior isn't aware their behavior must

TranSubro, INC.
FLEET & TRANSPORTATION SUBROGATION



**Auto Accidents Putting a Dent in
Your Budget?**

WE CAN HELP

**TranSubro, Inc. specializes in
AUTO ACCIDENT CLAIMS COLLECTION
for the transportation industry.**

**Loss of Use
Diminished Value
Towing & Storage**

www.TranSubro.com - 516-341-7256

claims@transubro.com

change. Some experts say the situation is even worse; that we've gone beyond driver distraction into a mode where we are less concerned about observing rules and regulations. We've stopped caring.

That generalization doesn't refer to the outcome — keeping children safe is something we all care about. But the behaviors that cause the risk and the tragic results: if we have become less rule/regulation conscious, how do we protect students?

We have to Approach the issue from Multiple Directions

Education, awareness and accountability have long been part of ongoing efforts to address the issue of risk to students outside the bus, but on their own are not effective at bringing about immediate change. Proactive, advanced technology is the prime tool aiding in the immediate reduction of risk to students outside the school bus. **The key to keeping students safe today is proactive technology.**

Short-Term Risk Reduction to Reduce Harm to Students Immediately

Ongoing awareness and education for the driving public and students helps continually reinforce expected behaviors to the point where they become ingrained. But as this approach has a longer uptick, keeping students safe today in the face of increasing accident rates requires a completely new approach.

Technology like Safe Fleet's Predictive Stop Arm™ uses radar and predictive analytics to monitor oncoming vehicle traffic for probable stop arm violations. The Predictive Stop Arm (PSA) aids bus operators in not initiating a stop if the system deems a violation is likely and alerts both the bus operator and students of potential risk.

Students are alerted to stay back, through speakers mounted on the outside of the bus. The Safe Fleet inView 360HD™ also helps ensure student safety outside the bus. This around vehicle monitoring system eliminates blind spots by providing bus drivers with a real-time 360° view around the vehicle during low speed maneuvers — no child remains unseen.

Long-Term Risk Reduction and a lack of Concern for the Rules of the Road

Ongoing awareness campaigns and technology are also part of a long-term approach to reducing risk to students outside the bus.

The focus here is still on keeping students safe in the here and now, but there would also be a concerted effort to alter driver behavior for the greater, long-term good of students and the motoring public.

In this case, awareness and education campaigns and advanced technology would also be coupled with, for example, a stop-arm camera solution.

We should not overlook that we can never account for the truly distracted motorist, or those under the influence. This group, representing a smaller percentage of Danger Zone accidents pose the most significant and ongoing risk to students outside the bus. Further still, the behavior of this group cannot be addressed through education, advocacy or any other safety product.

How it all Works Together

Public awareness and training campaigns to help educate the public and students alike would remain a constant practice: covering both best practice announcements and warnings of citations when laws are broken.

The most effective, comprehensive approach to reducing risk in the Danger Zone and curbing unsafe behavior that stems from distraction, a lack of awareness and/or a disregard for the rules then is an approach that encompasses three measures:

1. Education and Awareness: We must continue to take every opportunity to train and refresh ourselves and those in our communities, on safe driving best practices and our state driving laws, specifically those related to sharing the roads with school buses.
2. Advanced Technology: Research and invest in advanced technology that proactively and immediately helps to keep students safe in the face of increasing driver distraction and lack of concern.
3. Accountability: Implement products that aid in driver accountability to further prevent ongoing instances of illegal pass-bys, whether from distraction or lack of concern.

This article was submitted by Safe Fleet. To find out more about this topic and solutions, contact Randall Soutter at rsoutter@safefleet.net or 1-877-630-7366. Safe Fleet has a vision to reduce preventable deaths and injuries in and around fleet vehicles, with a goal of ZERO accidents.

Bus Guardian: The COVID-19 student transportation solution

Contact tracing for student and drivers & hygiene verification solutions



Bus Guardian delivers digital solutions designed to improve school bus safety. The package delivers contact tracing capability to help schools better manage the potential of ill students and drivers. Bus Guardian also provides instant hygiene verification alerts and reports available on desktop, tablet and mobile device.



Bus Guardian

busguardian.com

AMF-Brunns Announces Winner of 3rd Annual *National Special-Needs School Bus Driver of the Year Award*

Hudson, OH - AMF-Brunns of America, global leader in wheelchair & occupant securement since 1958, is pleased to announce Elaine HERNBERGER, Special Needs Bus Driver, as the winner of the 3rd annual *AMF-Brunns National Special-Needs School Bus Driver of the Year* award. She works for the Hays CISD in Uhlard, Texas.



Elaine improves the riding experience of her special-needs students by reaching out to parents when she sees their children having difficulty adapting to riding the bus. This collaborative approach, combined with her always-positive attitude, helps these students take a positive outlook to their bus rides to from school. In addition to her responsibilities as a special-needs school bus driver, Elaine trains new bus drivers and monitors about providing outstanding customer service, proper wheelchair securement, wheelchair lift operations and proper CSRS installation for the students.

“Special-needs school bus drivers are the true unsung heroes in the school bus community. They go over and beyond the call of duty helping those with the greatest needs,” said Peter Haarhuis, AMF-Brunns CEO. Elaine was recognized for this achievement and received her award at a special ceremony held at her school district. AMF-Brunns received a tremendous response from candidates across North America. As Peter noted: “Choosing one winner amongst this extraordinary group of candidates was a difficult undertaking. Each nominated bus driver could have easily won the award. We thank everyone for their nominations.”

Nominations are now being accepted for the 4th annual *AMF-Brunns National Special-Needs School Bus Driver of the Year Award*. For more information, including criteria and application deadline, go to www.amfbrunnsamerica.com/award.



PUT OVER 100 YEARS OF INSURANCE EXPERIENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS TO WORK FOR YOU.

At Hilb Group, we share a passion for service and creative problem solving. We offer a wide range of insurance solutions to meet the coverage needs of both businesses and individuals, including products specifically designed for the public transportation industry. Hilb Group helps protect you against the complex challenges in today's environment so you can minimize risk and achieve new heights of success.



Mahwah, NJ | Stamford, CT
Phoenixville, PA | Annapolis, MD | Aurora, OH

877-727-6959
www.papost.com

Maximize your Budget with Improved Fuel Economy Tips from Matthews Buses

Unexpected and costly Covid-19 safety measures have put real financial strains on transportation budgets and more focus will be spent on how to optimize your annual budget. And, given the fact that fuel costs represent more than two-thirds of the typical school bus fleet's annual operating expense, improving the fuel economy of your fleet could save you dividends even if you make only a few tweaks this year.

Key Drivers of Fuel Economy

Driver Behavior – One of the easiest ways to increase fuel economy in your fleet is through driver training. Surprisingly, drivers can impact fuel economy by as much as 30 percent by making small changes in how they drive. In your driver training, stress avoiding sudden stops, sudden acceleration, and excessive idling. To help, you can even enable an idle shutdown feature, which will stop the engine automatically after a set period of idling time. This feature, along with improved driver behavior, will minimize idling and reduce your emission and aftertreatment issues. As a bonus, better driving practices will also result in safer driver practices – a win/win all around.

Tires – Keeping your tires properly maintained is crucial to increasing the fuel economy of your fleet. While fuel-

efficient tires, commonly used for commercial trucking applications, are not viable for school buses, you can still increase your fuel economy by keeping your tires properly inflated and your axles aligned. Under-inflated tires reduce your fuel economy and misaligned axles not only decrease your fuel efficiency but also reduces the life of your tires. Plus, consider ribbed drive axle tires, which provide better fuel economy than lugged tires.

Lubricants — When possible, use of synthetic lubricant in your axles and transmissions. Since engine oils can affect fuel consumption, choose synthetic options that are more efficient and flow better at lower temperatures.

Consider Fuel Economy When Spec'ing Your Next Bus – Did you know a school bus can be spec'd in a thousand different ways? There are literally hundreds of different features that will influence the safety, performance, and efficiency of a new school bus. And even some seemingly inconsequential specs can have major impacts in your fleet. For example, if you live in a colder climate, spec'ing a heated driver seat will actually cause drivers to start their routes sooner, thereby decreasing idle time during bus warmup, which will improve your overall fuel economy. **Thank you from Team Matthews!**

School Bus Financing & Leasing "Specialists"



- School Bus and Coach Financing
- Terms up to 84 months
- Balloons and Skip monthly payments available
- 100% Financing available to qualified credits
- Low fixed rate equipment financing
- Fleet refinancing
- Used equipment financing
- Trac leases available

Tel: 732-842-2828 • Fax: 732-389-7505
www.shorefundingltd.com
info@shorefundingltd.com



Shore Funding Ltd.

1161 Broad Street, Suite 214, Shrewsbury, NJ 07702



HAVING ENOUGH VEHICLES ON THE ROAD IS HARD. WE CAN HELP.

It's our mission to serve you with the best selection of safe, high quality vehicles. We offer financing, accept trades, and have full body and chassis shops.

Tom Hays, Business Development
 (518) 332-7489 | buscrazy.net



Value...a simple word, yet so hard to attain. For many firms, it's become an afterthought. **Not here.**

PKF O'Connor Davies is a new breed of accounting and advisory firm that holds itself to a higher standard — going beyond passive value calculation to active value creation for leading business owners, organizations and individuals in the United States and abroad.

With unmatched client focus and connections, we continually drive efficiencies, uncover opportunities and manage risk — delivering value where others can't.

That's why we're not the typical accounting firm. Our clients know greater service. They know greater connections. PKF O'Connor Davies — **Know Greater Value.®**



Wayne L. Martin, Partner
 845.567.3600
 wlmartin@pkfod.com

www.pkfod.com