



NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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NYAPT

Our future is riding with us!

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

2022 State Budget and Legislative Priorities

NYAPT supports the enclosed legislative and budget priorities that enhance the safety of our student passengers while balancing efficiency of operations and will work with the Governor, the State Legislature, and to the Board of Regents to ensure they are given every consideration.

NYAPT
1764 Route 9, PO Box 356
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2022 School Transportation Legislative Priorities

School Transportation Safety

Criminal Trespass & Security on a School Bus

- NYAPT supports legislation that establishes a crime of criminal trespass in the third degree to address unauthorized boarders on a school bus to protect our bus drivers, students and property.

Passing Stopped School Bus Legislation

- NYAPT will support an increase in 1174 passing stopped school bus fines for repeated offenses.
- NYAPT will support legislation to establish a crime of vehicular homicide for instances where the death of a child is caused by a motorist while in the act of passing a stopped school bus.

Lap/Shoulder Belts on School Buses

- NYAPT supports the installation of three-point seat belts on school buses under reasonable implementation conditions and timelines.

Article 19-A Disqualification

- NYAPT supports ongoing review of new crime legislation in order to provide for the continuous update of the Article 19-A listing of disqualifying crimes for school bus drivers.

School Transportation Mandate Relief

55 mph speed limitation

- NYAPT will support legislation that permits school buses to follow posted speed limits under New York State Vehicle and Traffic law.

Strobe Lights on School Buses

- NYAPT supports the removal of operational restrictions from the Regulations of the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles regulation, 15CRR-NY 56.12 regarding strobe lights on school buses.

Shared Services

- NYAPT will support legislation that will remove financial penalties for “shared services” among school districts to promote transportation efficiencies.

Civil Service Portability

- NYAPT supports the portability of the Civil Service titles of Transportation Supervisor or Transportation Director across state civil service jurisdictions.

Ignition Interlock Systems

- NYAPT will oppose legislation related to the mandatory use of ignition interlock systems on school buses.

2022 School Transportation State Budget Priorities

Transportation Aid

Continue to provide sufficient funding for school transportation services.

- NYAPT urges that the State continue the current ‘expense-based’ aid model and aid levels for school transportation. Under this funding approach, the State reimburses districts for the costs of transportation at levels between 6.5% and 90% of actual approved costs. In recent years, school districts have taken significant steps to become more efficient and the expense-based approach is working as it was intended. We urge the continuation of the ‘expense-based’ aid formula for school district transportation services which recognizes the volatility of transportation costs to districts and local taxpayers.

Provide funding in support of transportation services for Universal Pre-Kindergarten students.

- NYAPT recommends that funds be appropriated in the State budget to support the delivery of transportation services for students enrolled in Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs. It has been several years since the State enacted Chapter 244 of the Laws of 2012 that allows school districts to provide “Pre-K” transportation. Currently, the cost of pre-kindergarten transportation is placed entirely on the local school district.

Allow expenditures for school bus monitors to be eligible for transportation aid reimbursement.

- NYAPT proposes that the State provide transportation aid reimbursement for costs related to employing school bus monitors (aides, matrons) on school buses. The need for additional adult assistance has increased due to ongoing COVID-19 related student management requirements such as ridership attendance along with managing student behavioral and bullying issues on school buses. As the State begins to advance early childhood education and expanding pre-kindergarten programs, there will be an increased need for additional adult supervision aboard the school bus. Informal surveys of bus drivers show that student management is one of the primary reasons

that people do not choose the school bus driving profession. State assistance in the cost of providing bus monitors will help ease the bus driver shortage issue.

Transportation Aid During School Shutdowns

- NYAPT recommends that transportation aid be paid for school bus operational expenses that are incurred during Executive ordered school shutdowns or school closures caused by natural disasters. Certain school transportation operations must continue during extended school closures to guarantee continuity of service when schools reopen for in person learning. Those include maintenance of buses, insurance and rent payments, bus driver recruitment and training, and the retainment of transportation staff to name a few.

Transportation Equipment Aid – Pathogen Risk

- There are new and emerging technologies that are available for installation on school buses to protect children from transmission of the COVID-19 virus and other pathogens. All school districts should have access to these technologies to protect students regardless of district wealth. NYAPT recommends state transportation aid be paid on expenses for proven technologies that will promote a healthy environment within the school bus.

School Transportation Safety

Increase funding to the State Education Department for the School Bus Driver Training program to the level of \$600,000.

- The State Education Department School Bus Driver Instructor program is currently funded at \$400,000 to provide annual mandated training to the State's more than 50,000 school bus drivers. This funding has not increased since the early 1990's. There are existing training materials that need attention as well as new training materials that need development to meet the needs of the ever-changing environment our school bus drivers operate in. NYAPT strongly recommends an increase in this funding to maintain the exceptional safety record of the school transportation industry in our State.

New York State Tax Credit to address school bus driver shortage.

- The school bus driver shortage is reaching critical levels in our state. The initial cost of becoming a licensed school bus driver in New York State is significant. NYAPT proposes the adoption of a NYS Tax Credit for prospective school bus drivers who are hired by a school district or private contractor operation provided they have completed a full year of service. NYAPT proposes a first-year credit of \$2500 for new hires, and \$500 for each subsequent year for all school bus drivers employed with a school district or contractor. This incentive is designed to off-set the initial

qualification and training expenses incurred by a newly hired school bus driver and to retain those currently in the profession.

Earnings Cap

Elimination of earnings cap for retired state, city, police and fire retirees who return to public service as a school bus driver. There are many retired state employees who are receiving state retirement benefits who drive school bus as a second career. In many cases they are forced to pause their driving career when they reach the earnings cap of \$35,000. NYAPT proposes to eliminate the cap indefinitely to address the school bus driver shortage in our state.

School Bus Electrification

Electrification of state school bus fleet

- New York State has embarked on an aggressive goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our state. The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act enacted in 2019 establishes goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and 85% by 2050 from 1990 levels. School bus fleets are targeted for conversion to electric power to assist in achieving those goals. Acquisition costs for electric powered school buses are significantly higher than costs for those powered by diesel or gas. Sufficient funding is the main roadblock for school districts to overcome in order to convert their fleets to electric powered buses.

NYAPT suggests two options to address the funding issue. First, provide for full funding of the differential cost between a clean diesel or gas-powered bus and an electric powered vehicle.

Option two, allow for extended leasing terms for school buses from the current five-year term to a 10-year lease term. NYAPT supports this policy change only if the proposed law includes provisions that would require a school district to follow the state's Vehicle and Traffic Law, Section 415 and require school districts to lease from New York State registered school bus dealers.

Lastly, funding to school districts is necessary for infrastructure upgrades to provide charging stations for electric fleets. Infrastructure costs are significant and school districts are unable to implement an electric fleet program without appropriate electric charging infrastructure in place. State funding is recommended for infrastructure projects for electric bus fleet powering stations.