



SETTING THE STANDARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

STS EXPRESS

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June General Membership Meeting

The members of School Transportation Supervisors of New Jersey returned to the Old York Country Club in Columbus, New Jersey on June 3rd for the twice yearly STS General Membership Meeting. President Glenn Barry opened the meeting shortly after 10 A.M. with the salute to the American Flag, followed by the handling of some general organization business, including approval of the meeting minutes from the December meeting, the Treasurer's report, and reports from Area Directors and Committee Chairs.

Cathy Kelly reported that the Northern Area Meeting featured Michele Lockwood from the New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education. She spoke about successful collaborations among parents, administrators, and employees. Members were so impressed with Ms. Lockwood that she was asked to present at the STS Conference, Friday Focus. Bob Klein reported that the ever popular Dick Fischer was at the Central Area meeting, talking about handbooks. Sandy Hanson reported that Southern Area Directors are having difficulty finding a place to hold an Area Meeting.

Committee Chairs gave the following reports:

Gerry Oram gave dates for upcoming training events: Friday Focus on July 8th, a Driver Trainer Refresher Course on July 9th, and the 40 Hour Driver Trainer Entry Level Course July 11th through 15th.

Gretchen Biancone-Groff reported that the Roadeo held on April 30th was a success. Next year's Roadeo will be held on May 5th.

Sandy Hanson asked for ideas for next year's School Bus Driver Seminars. (shanson@nburlington.com)

Cathy Kelly reported that the Rutgers committee is developing test-out procedures for those people who took the former transportation training program. A

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review course will be offered for those who want to “test out.” She pointed out that Rutgers, not STS, would be setting the costs for the program, but that the Committee had warned University staff that the prices need to be kept low. None of the courses will be offered online.

The meeting’s featured speakers were Ms. Dot Shelmet, NJDOE Acting Director of Student Transportation and Shared Services, and Mr. Robert Leonhardt from the N.J. Motor Vehicle Commission, Inspection Bus Unit.

Ms. Shelmet said that Administrative Code for school bus advertising would hopefully be in place by August. Still being considered are the kinds of signs that will be allowed and the best way to attach signs to the buses to prevent having the buses put out of service for reinspection. Ms. Shelmet also tried to clarify some of the details affecting transportation issues with choice schools and resource family homes. (See the article on Page 6.) Anyone experiencing problems with busing foster children should contact her office with the information so she can pass the information up the chain. She pointed out how important it is for your own district people to keep you informed when students are moved from one placement to another.

Mr. Robert Leonhardt, Coordinator, Bus Inspection Unit, made his first STS appearance. The exchange between him and his audience was as lively as he had been warned it would be. Much of the discussion revolved around what members perceive as inconsistencies in the way bus inspections are performed.



Mr. Leonhardt, Coordinator, Bus Inspection Unit



Board Members: Rick Costanzo, Gretchen Biancone-Groff, Sandy Hanson, Kathie McDonald, Barbara Sargent and Glenn Barry at the June STS General Membership Meeting

If you missed Friday Focus:

Find handouts from the Speaker’s presentation on the STS website, including all “Sixty Tips in Sixty Minutes.”

<http://www.njsts.org/index.htm>

You are encouraged to contact your STS Board members with questions, suggestions, and concerns.

President, Glenn Barry gbarry@hcrhs.k12.nj.us
Vice President, Ray Keuhner rkeuhner@nbtschools.org
Treasurer, Rick Costanzo rcostanzo@glassboroschools.org
Secretary, Gretchen Biancone-Groff gbianconegroff@ebnet.org

North Region Directors

Cathy Kelly kellyc@washtwpsd.org
Pamela Nicholais pnicholais@woboe.org
Kathie Mac Donald kmacdonald@cliftonschools.net

Central Region Directors

Bob Cline bcline@branchburg.k12.nj.us
Al Olkowitz asolkowitz@jackson.k12.nj.us
Barbara Sargent Sarge0002@aol.com

Southern Region Directors

Dolly Cristaudo cristaudod@kingsway.k12.nj.us
Sandra Hanson shanson@nburlington.com
Patricia Lerch plerch@qcsssd.org

STS Packs A Lot of Learning Into Its One Day Conference

For the second year in a row, STS of NJ hosted a one day conference nicknamed Friday Focus. The Conference took place on Friday (of course,) July 8th at the Conference Center at the Holiday Inn of East Windsor.

STS President Glenn Barry thought Friday Focus was a great training opportunity for STS members. "The speakers' presentations were on diverse topics and the workshops were relevant to the everyday functions of our jobs," he said. Mr. Barry noted that the evaluations reflected very positive feedback on two sessions in particular: those offered by our own members. "Using Microsoft Excel in Your Day to Day Operations" was presented by Jerry Ford and "Resources for Your Day to Day Operations" was presented by Gerry Oram. Mr. Barry wanted to pass along a special thanks to Gerry Oram. "Mr. Oram put together a program that succeeded because it provided information relevant to both our new members and our industry veterans."

Another popular session was "60 Tips in 60 Minutes," a panel composed of STS Supervisors offering tips acquired from years of experience in school transportation. Mr. Barry was joined on the panel by Past President Ingrid Reitano and Supervisors Rich Cushinotto, Amanda Ferrington, and Cathy Kelly.

Other speakers at the conference were Mr. Dick Fischer and Ms. Michelle Lockwood.



Donna Heater, Nancy Szymanski, Diane Gormley (r), Rene LeFevre and Nancy Roskiewicz (f) used lunchtime to share experiences.



Michelle Lockwood explains how to implement inclusion

Mr. Fischer of Trans Consult, Peyton, Colorado covered two topics, "Record Keeping and Documentation/Lawsuits and You" and "Why Have a Driver Trainer?" One of Mr. Fischer's interesting suggestions was to make your newest bus the spare bus, a comment that definitely got a reaction from his audience. He predicts the outcome will be that your drivers will be doing more frequent and thorough write-ups on their own buses! He also suggested the use of codes when drivers are reporting collisions to dispatch so everyone on the same radio frequency does not know what's happened, and gave a good argument for giving written tests after safety meetings.

Michelle Lockwood talked about the relationship between IEPs and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA.) Ms. Lockwood works with The New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education (NJCIE) which is a 501(c) nonprofit dedicated to the inclusion of students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools. Inclusion implements the federal law's "least restrictive environment" requirement under IDEA. Schools are required to design and bring supplementary aids, modifications and services to the student's home school and general education classroom before any removal is considered. A serious IEP review should be done annually to see if a student has become a candidate for inclusion. When asked to make a special accommodation for a student with an IEP, you should ask, "Can you explain where in the IEP this is reflected so I can understand this request?" Ms. Lockwood said that regular transportation should always be considered first and

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Ken Schwartz offered everyone Wolfington wall calendars

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suggested pairing students with disabilities with regular students as bus pals.

Ms. Lockwood told her audience that in practice, the interpretation of what constitutes a free and appropriate education in New Jersey is far more liberal than it is in Maryland, where she once held a similar position to the one she has now.

Attendees were very satisfied with the day's programs. Doug Guillen of Hillsborough BOE finds STS training opportunities informative and worthwhile, even after years as a transportation supervisor. He commented that hearing "60 Tips in 60 Minutes" reminds you of a lot of information you already know, but that the real value of the session is gaining insights from other professionals on how they approach the job.

Doug, like many other participants, said the one-day conference was good, but that he would prefer a two day conference with more workshops and more time for networking.

Friday Focus also featured a Vendor Show which was held in the banquet hall where lunch was served. The extended lunch period allowed for lots of interaction between supervisors and vendors.

Bill to Extend School Bus Life Passes Both Houses

Legislation introduced in February to extend the service life of certain school buses passed the Senate on June 29th after passing in the Assembly earlier in the month.

The new law allows school buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2007 and school buses manufactured prior to January 1, 2007 that have been installed with closed crankcase technology, to remain in service for 15 years. Transit style school buses whose gross vehicle weight exceeds 25,000 pounds and "Type S" school buses are not included in the extension.

In 2006, the New Jersey Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public School noted in its report "Finding the Road: Selected Issues in New Jersey Pupil Transportation," that the twelve year use limit on most school buses was outdated, as advances in design and construction of school buses now allow for their safe and effective use over a longer time period.

Hours-of-Service Rule

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) reported that it would not meet the court imposed deadline of July 26, 2011 to issue new hours of service rules for drivers of property-carrying vehicles. They now intend to publish a final rule by late October.

The agency says the delay is necessary due to its need to collect additional public input on several studies being used in the rulemaking process.

NSTA Executive Director David Hobson, in a letter to FMCSA, recommended that school buses be exempt from the proposed Electronic On-Board Recorders (EOBRs,) because they would be financially burdensome for private contractors and result in little if any safety benefits.

NSTA estimated that the EOBRs could cost its members \$14 million to purchase. Monthly service fees and maintenance costs could be as high as \$6.3 million each year.

To read more go to:

<http://www.stnonline.com/home/latest-news/3399-nsta-to-fmcsa-exempt-school-buses-from-eobr-hours-of-service-proposed-rule>

New Supervisor's Courses Set to Start This October

You will soon be able to register for the first course of the new Transportation Supervisor's Training Program. The exact date has not been determined, but the program is scheduled to start this October.

Cathy Kelly, who has worked on the program for the three years it took to be developed, shared details of the new program during a recent luncheon discussion at Friday Focus, the STS Conference.

Management Supervision will be the first course offered because it is a prerequisite for the following seven courses. It is the longest of the eight classes being offered, consisting of 21 hours of instruction and an additional three hours for review and testing. The other courses will last between nine and eighteen hours and the cost of the courses will vary based on their length. Classes will meet once a week from 6 P.M. to 9 P.M. Plans are to hold the program at one location in each of the three regions of the State, but will depend on registration.

Instructors for the courses will be experienced transportation professionals who received training from Rutgers staff. Representatives from STS and Rutgers are currently working together to put the finishing touches on course handouts and manuals.

The program was developed in cooperation with Rutgers University and will be administered by officials from Rutgers. All questions about the program should be directed to the University. There will be a link on the STS website to Rutgers with course information, applications, and the locations of classes.

STS members will be receiving an email announcing that registration for the courses is open. School districts will also be receiving notification. Cathy asks that you pass information about the program to anyone who might have an interest in attending the classes.

While one person hesitates because he feels inferior, the other is busy making mistakes and becoming superior.

Henry C. Link

Renewing Your License: The Archive Submission Process

To renew a CDL license with "S" and "P" endorsements, DOE drivers must pass a background check.

Applicants that were LiveScan printed after February 21, 2003 and have had the state fingerprint image retained by the State Police and Education Keep (EDK,) are eligible for the Archive Submission Process and will not be required to go to a site to be LiveScan printed again.

To complete the Archive Submission Process, the district or school bus contractor must submit a Transmittal form, Employee Roster form, the required fee (\$36.30,) which may be paid with a credit card, debit card, or prepaid card, and an Applicant Authorization and Certification form. The AA&C form must include the most recent Process Control Number (PCN) obtained from the driver's [MorphoTrak](#) receipt. The Archive Submission Process should be started at least 4 weeks before renewing the license.

DOE background check disqualification will result in suspension of your school bus endorsement. A clearance letter from DOE is required for restoration.

The following link will take you to the beginning of the fingerprint renewal process:

https://homerom3.state.nj.us/chr/ssn_lookup.jsp?uacc=1311180600203&pt=2

Annual Certification of School Bus Drivers Transmittal Form

New Jersey law requires districts and school bus contractors to submit the following information to their respective county superintendents in each year prior to assigning any driver or substitute driver to a school bus:

- the driver's name,
- social security number and certification
- certification of a valid school bus driver's license and
- criminal background check.

For a copy of the form, go to

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/finance/transportation/procedures/>

Charter School and Choice School Transportation

Districts are required to notify nonpublic school parents that they have transportation or will receive aid-in-lieu of transportation by August 1st of each year. Out-of-region charter school and choice school parents must receive a transportation notice as well. The charter school and choice school notifications are different than nonpublic notifications.

A charter school student that lives within the charter school's approved region of residence must be provided transportation by the student's resident district, similar to any other public school student, regardless of cost. If the charter school student resides outside the charter school's region of residence, then he or she is treated similarly to a choice or nonpublic school student, that is, the nonpublic maximum cost applies. The nonpublic cost for the 2011-2012 school year is \$884.

Choice and out-of-region charter school students are provided transportation if the cost per student at the outset is less than \$884. If the cost is more than \$884, those choice and out-of-region charter school parents must be contacted and asked if they want to pay the difference between the \$884 and the cost of transportation. Parents have seven days to reply to your inquiry, after which you can assume they do not want the extra cost transportation and you can schedule them for the two school year semester payments of \$442 each, totaling \$884.

Unlike nonpublic transportation, it is not necessary to bid to determine the cost for choice or out-of-region charter student costs. A district that operates its own buses and would provide service in one of its own vehicles can determine the cost. Otherwise quotes from a vendor, CTSA, or other district that can provide transportation is sufficient to establish a cost. The key is that should the parent decide to pay the extra fee you must be able to provide the transportation at the cost stated.

This must all be accomplished by August 1st of each year.

Reference NJAC 6A:27 subchapters 2, 3, and 4.
<http://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap27.pdf>

Proposed School Bus Regulations Posted in NJ Register

Robert Leonhardt, Coordinator, MVC Bus Unit, reported at the STS June General Meeting on extensive proposed regulatory changes to N.J.A.C. 13.20, which deals with school bus equipment and inspection. The proposed changes were posted in the August 1st New Jersey Register. The public is invited to comment during a sixty day period which will end on September 30th. Details and information on how to submit comments can be found at the following link: www.state.nj.us/mvc/About/rulemaking.htm.

New Jersey Contractor Gains National Post

Todd Monteferrario, general manager of First Student's operations in North Haledon, N.J., was named Secretary-Treasurer of NSTA at the organization's annual meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. He was also awarded the NSTA Golden Merit Award for his commitment to excellence in service, safety, and to his community, and for his extensive knowledge of the school transportation industry. Mr. Monteferrario has been a long time member of the New Jersey Bus Safety Committee.

New Jersey Drivers Compete in the School Bus Drivers International Safety Contest

This year's Rodeo winner, Laurel Shauger of First Student, represented New Jersey at the International Competition in the conventional bus category. Tina Richardson, Ruth Foster, and Gina Palmieri, all from Rockaway Township Schools, competed in the Transit category. Lucy Van Dunk of Jordan Transportation – STA competed in the small bus category.

The top scorers at the competition were :

Conventional Buses

Larry Hannon, Centennial School District (PA.)

Transit Buses, Mark Miller of Bellingham Public Schools (WA.)

Small Buses

Russel Altizer, Montgomery County Public Schools (VA.)

Mark Miller also took top honors at the 2010 competition and Larry Hannon recorded his eighth overall rodeo win.

Members of NSTA Lobby in D.C.

On May 4th and 5th, NSTA members visited Capitol Hill and met with more than 100 congressional members. They also heard presentations by eight members of Congress who serve on key transportation committees.

Discussions focused on three broad areas: maintaining a level playing field for contractors, keeping the cost of school transportation down, and growing yellow school bus ridership.

NSTA members spoke with federal legislators about maintaining the protections that currently prevent federally funded public transit systems from unfairly competing with private contractors for home to school transportation and student activity trips.

They encouraged the application of all FMCSA safety regulations to public school bus operations, reasoning that all school children riding in yellow school buses deserve the same level of safety.

Legislators were encouraged to maintain the federal fuel tax exemption that school buses get because they reduce congestion, pollution, conserve fuel and alleviate roadway wear. \$50 million in funding for the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA Program) was also urged for fiscal year 2012.

To read more, go to <http://content.yudu.com/A1s866/0611/resources/18.htm>



Presenter Dick Fischer and Friday Focus Chair Gerry Oram

Two Districts Merge Transportation Operations

The transportation departments of Readington Township in Hunterdon County and Branchburg Township in Somerset County have joined forces to effect efficiency and cost savings. The districts border each other.

Annual estimated savings of \$70,000 for each district will be realized through sharing one supervisor and one dispatcher, sharing maintenance, and eliminating Readington's nearly \$60,000 annual rental fee for a maintenance garage. There will be some onetime costs, such as upgrading the communication system.

Additional savings could come from eliminating bus routes when the two operations merge. Both districts will benefit from having a joint pool of substitute drivers and spare buses.

Bob Kline, Branchburg's Transportation Supervisor, will now serve in that capacity for both districts. The dispatcher will come from Readington. The joint management operation will be housed in Branchburg's facilities.

Maintenance of buses will be shared. Readington will move one person to Branchburg, increasing the maintenance staff to three.



Ingrid Reitano and Doug Guillen at Friday Focus

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!