

ED COMMITTEE #2


February 1, 2016

Discussion

MEMORANDUM

January 29, 2016

TO: Education Committee

FROM: Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Discussion – School Transportation Safety**

Today the Education Committee will discuss school transportation safety. Representatives from the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) will be present to discuss this topic with the Committee.

On November 17, 2015, the Council held an overview briefing on youth pedestrian safety. The purpose of today's meeting is to have further in-depth discussion on several school related issues, including crossing guards. The Public Safety and Education Committee will meet immediately prior to this item to discuss school crossing guards. There may be overlap between this and the preceding Committee agenda item.

MCPS is responsible for student transportation and the safe and efficient operation of MCPS buses. A total of 1267 buses transport approximately 100,000 students each day. The Board of Education has established Policy EEA, Student Transportation (attached at circles 1-6), which is implemented under Regulation EEA-RA, Student Transportation (attached at circles 7-17). This policy and regulation establish the following:

- Walking distances are expected to be 1 mile for elementary schools, 1.5 miles for middle schools, and 2 miles for high schools. Bus transportation will be provided beyond these distances. (circle 2)
- Bus transportation may be provided within these policy distances if a safe walking route does not exist. (circle 2)
- The Director of MCPS Transportation works with MCPD and MCDOT as well as school principals to determine appropriate implementation of crosswalks, adult crossing guards, and other safety measures at the school or along walking routes. (circle 1)
- Students are expected to walk in residential areas with or without sidewalks, and to walk along primary roadways with sidewalks or sufficient shoulder width. Secondary students are expected

to cross controlled intersections where traffic signals, crosswalks, or other traffic control is in place. (circles 3-4)

MCPS reports that bus routes are frequently implemented within the policy walking distances to address safety concerns. It is illustrative that there are two high schools, three middle schools, and 12 elementary schools where all students are offered bus transportation as there are not appropriate walking routes available. There are also two elementary schools where all students are required to walk, and six where fewer than 60 students are eligible for a bus.

Councilmembers expressed interest in following up on several issues related to school system transportation policies and practices.

Communication/education/outreach: At the November briefing, there was some discussion of the extent to which pedestrian safety programs are provided in schools. Two questions arose in particular related to whether there is the staff and program capacity to conduct programs in all schools, and whether all schools would participate if capacity were available. The Committee may want to hear more directly from County and MCPS representatives as to the types of programming offered, staff capacity to provide the various types of programming, and how decisions are made for schools to participate.

School route review process: MCPS staff described the internal review process currently used to evaluate walking routes for safety and to determine if busing or other adjustments need to be made. Councilmembers expressed interest in discussing whether a more formal, standardized process would be possible or advisable. It may be helpful to discuss whether MCPS has any information on the practices of other nearby or similar jurisdictions. Are there standard models of route assessment processes that MCPS could adopt or work from? How are safe walking routes communicated to students and their families?

Assessment of walking routes: As noted in the Public Safety and Education Committee discussion of crossing guards, Councilmembers expressed interest in discussing to what extent assessments can be made farther along the walking routes to a school. Councilmembers also raised the issue of assessing informal walking routes that students may take to nearby locations such as shopping centers.

While full assessment of a 1-2 mile radius around each of 200 schools may be infeasible, it may be possible to identify and prioritize assessment of schools in areas of higher incidents or other traffic concerns. The Committee may want to discuss more fully today to what extent this type of targeted assessment is utilized or could be implemented.

POLICY BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: EEA-RA, EBH-RA, JEE, JEE-RA, JFA-RA, KLA
Related Sources: *Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §3-903(c); Code of Maryland Regulations §13A.06.07.09 Instructional Content Requirements; Montgomery County Code, Article II, §44-7 Denominational and parochial school students entitled to transportation; and Montgomery County Code, Article II, §44-8, Cost of transportation of students; levy and appropriation; charge to students.*
Responsible Office: Chief Operating Officer
 Department of Transportation

Student Transportation

A. PURPOSE

To establish safe, responsive, and accountable operation of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) student transportation system, in partnership with parents and students, and to delineate the services provided.

B. ISSUE

MCPS is authorized by the regulations of the State of Maryland to provide safe and efficient transportation to the students residing within Montgomery County. The Montgomery County Board of Education is responsible for establishing the operational expectations and eligibility criteria for its student transportation services. It is the responsibility of the Montgomery County Board of Education to work with other agencies when needed and to consider the safety of students when designing school site plans including pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns; assessing routes for walking to and from school and school bus stops; and, establishing bus routes and locations of school bus stops.

C. POSITION

1. Eligibility for Transportation
 - a) The Board of Education adopted attendance areas for each school are the basis upon which transported areas are defined. Students attending their home school who reside beyond the distances defined below will receive transportation services.

- (1) Transported areas surrounding MCPS schools are as follows:
 - Elementary Schools—beyond 1 mile
 - Middle Schools—beyond 1.5 miles
 - High Schools—beyond 2.0 miles
 - (2) The superintendent of schools is authorized to extend these distances by one-tenth of a mile to establish a reasonable line of demarcation between transported and non-transported areas.
 - (3) Transportation may be provided for distances less than that authorized by Board policy if a condition is considered hazardous to the safety of students walking to or from school, or to establish a reasonable boundary consistent with the safety criteria outlined in C.2.
- b) The Board of Education may establish transportation services for certain consortia schools, magnet, gifted and talented, International Baccalaureate, language immersion, alternative, or other programs based on the purposes of the programs, attendance areas, and available funding.
 - c) Enhanced levels of transportation services will be provided to those students, such as special education students, who meet the eligibility requirements of federal and state laws. Commercial carriers may be used to provide required services.
 - d) Students who attend denominational and parochial schools may be transported as specified under provisions of the Montgomery County Code. This service will be provided only on a space-available basis along established bus routes designed to serve public schools in keeping with the terms and conditions as set forth in this policy.
 - e) Under special circumstances, students may ride established bus routes across attendance boundaries for valid educational reasons.
 - f) Mixed grade/age level student loads are permitted.
 - g) Every effort is made to balance ride times and resources.
 - h) Buses may be used for educationally valuable purposes other than transporting students to and from the regular school day, such as field trips, extracurricular events, interscholastic sports, and outdoor education or

academic programs. Unless otherwise approved by the superintendent or his or her designee, use of MCPS buses is limited to MCPS and other governmental agencies. MCPS will establish criteria and rates for the use of MCPS transportation services for purposes other than transporting students to and from school on the regular school day.

- i) In exigent circumstances, the superintendent may apply to the Board of Education for a waiver to temporarily adjust transported distances. Board action on the waiver request can be taken after allowing at least 21 days for public comment following publication of the waiver request. If the Board deems an emergency exists, this notification provision may be waived without notice if all Board members are present and there is unanimous agreement.

2. Student Safety

- a) MCPS is responsible for routing buses in a manner that maximizes safety and efficiency.
- b) MCPS buses will not cross a main line railroad at grade crossing while in Montgomery County.
- c) MCPS is responsible for designing traffic control patterns for new and renovated schools prior to the completion of construction. MCPS will assess the safety of proposed traffic control patterns taking into consideration safe approaches by pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.
- d) MCPS is responsible for conducting safety evaluations of bus stops and recommended walking routes. The following criteria will apply to students walking to schools or school bus stops:
 - (1) Students are expected to walk in residential areas along and across streets, with or without sidewalks.
 - (2) Students are expected to walk along primary roadways with sidewalks or shoulders of sufficient width to allow walking off the main road.
 - (3) Middle and high school students are expected to cross all controlled intersections where traffic signals, lined crosswalks, or other traffic control devices are available.

- (4) Elementary school students may be required to cross primary roadways where an adult crossing guard is present.
 - (5) Elementary and middle school students are not expected to cross mainline railroad tracks unless a pedestrian underpass, overpass or adult crossing guard is present.
 - (6) Students are expected to walk along public or private pathways or other pedestrian routes.
- e) MCPS will follow an effective process for handling and investigating accidents so that injured students and staff are cared for promptly, further injury is prevented, and correct and timely information is disseminated to all necessary parties.
 - f) Student safety, security, and comfort depend on appropriate behavior on MCPS buses identical to that expected of students in school. The Board of Education affirms that, while riding the bus, students are on school property, and disciplinary infractions are handled in accordance with Regulation JFA-RA: *Student Rights and Responsibilities* and other related policies and regulations.

3. Community Partnerships

- a) MCPS will encourage a partnership of students, parents, and school staff to teach and enforce safe transportation practices.
 - (1) MCPS will implement a systemwide outreach and education program to teach safe walking practices en route to and from school, encourage safe bus-riding behavior, and reinforce appropriate student conduct while riding the bus.
 - (2) School staffs will encourage parents to teach their students safe walking practices en route to and from school.
 - (3) Bus operators and attendants are responsible for maintaining safe conditions for students boarding, riding, and exiting the bus. MCPS will provide preservice and in-service instruction to bus operators and attendants, consistent with COMAR 13A.06.07.09.
 - (4) Parents will be responsible for their child's safety along their walking route and at the bus stop. While waiting at bus stops, students should

observe safe practices, respect persons and private property, and stand well off the traveled portion of the road.

- b) Principals and the leadership of PTAs or parent teacher organizations at special programs located at special centers that operate in lieu of nationally affiliated PTAs will be notified in advance of routing changes that involve reductions of service, as described in Regulation EEA-RA.

4. Identification and Resolution of Transportation and Safety Issues

Members of the public are encouraged to address inquiries, concerns, or complaints regarding student transportation as set forth in Policy KLA: *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*. Complaints not resolved through the cluster transportation supervisor or other department staff, including the director of transportation may be appealed to the chief operating officer who will render a decision on behalf of the superintendent of schools, advising the appellant of the right to further appeal to the Board of Education consistent with the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Section 3-903(c).

5. Environmental and Economic Considerations

MCPS will balance environmental and economic factors when operating and maintaining its vehicles.

D. DESIRED OUTCOME

MCPS will have an efficient system of student transportation that provides an appropriate means of travel to and from school, is responsive to community input, and, in partnership with parents and students, coordinates effective community participation in the safe movement of students on a daily basis.

E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The superintendent will develop regulations to implement this policy as needed.

F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

EEA

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 89-78, February 13, 1978; amended by Resolution No. 219-78, March 14, 1978, Resolution No. 718-78, October 10, 1978, and Resolution No. 725-79, August 20, 1979; amended by Resolution No. 403-84, July 23, 1984; reformatted in accordance with Resolution No. 333-86, June 12, 1986, and Resolution No. 438-86, August 12, 1986, and accepted by Resolution No. 147-87, February 25, 1987; amended by Resolution No. 284-97, May 13, 1997; amended by Resolution No. 616-01, November 13, 2001; amended by Resolution No. 252-08, June 23, 2008.

REGULATION **MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Related Entries: EBH-RA, EBI-RA, EEA, EEB-RA, IGN, IPD-RA, JED, JEE, JEE-RA, JFA-RA, JHC, JHC-RA, KLA

Sources: *Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §3-903(c); Code of Maryland Regulations §13A.06.07, Student Transportation; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, as amended, Title I, Part A §602(26)(A); McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, as amended, Title VII, Subtitle B; 42 U.S.C. 11432 (g)(3); No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Part A, Subpart 1 §1116(b)(E); and Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 20 U.S.C. §794 (Section 504).*

Responsible Office: Chief Operating Officer
Department of Transportation

Student Transportation

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this regulation is to establish permissible uses of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) student transportation service and to delineate responsibilities for the safe movement of Montgomery County students to and from school or school-related activities.

II. PROCEDURES

The director of the Department of Transportation (DOT), under the direction of the chief operating officer, is responsible for student transportation and the safe and efficient operation of MCPS buses. DOT is in direct communication with police and other public officials who are charged with student pedestrian safety and control. The director of transportation coordinates with school principals on decisions regarding the safe travel of students to and from school and the effective operation of buses.

A. Transported and Non-transported Areas

Transported areas surrounding MCPS schools are defined by the Board of Education (Board) as follows:

Elementary schools—beyond 1 mile;
Middle schools—beyond 1.5 miles;
High schools—beyond 2 miles.

The distance will be measured from the nearest point of residential property to the curb in front of the nearest school door.

1. Transportation may be provided to students who live within the prescribed distances established by the Board if the director of transportation determines that an appropriate walking route does not exist.
2. In establishing the demarcation line between transported and non-transported areas, the director of transportation may extend these distances by one-tenth of a mile to coincide with breaks in the pattern of homes, such as street intersections, major roadways, streams, parks, walking easements, commercial property, vacant land, unusual contour variations, and other features.

B. Levels of Transportation Service

Students who reside in transported areas established by the Board or meet the eligibility criteria of federal laws may receive transportation services as follows:

1. Neighborhood bus service, defined as transport from neighborhood bus stops to school, will be provided to students residing within the home school area or areas eligible for transportation services to the consortia school they attend.
2. Centralized bus service, defined as transportation from a central location such as a neighborhood elementary school, to the program site, may be provided to students attending specific programs as identified in the MCPS *Options (Guide to Countywide Programs)* booklet, in accordance with Board action, attendance areas, transportation services, and funding levels. Parents are responsible for students' transportation to and from centralized bus stops, whether or not there is an appropriate walking route.
3. Bus service on established routes may be provided to students who live outside the transported area of the school they attend, on a space-available basis. Parents are responsible for students' transportation to and from an established neighborhood or centralized bus stop. Restrictions will be imposed when student safety is jeopardized.

4. Enhanced levels of transportation service will be provided to students who meet the eligibility requirements of federal laws:

a) *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*

Transportation may be provided as a related service to a student with disabilities as specified in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

b) *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*

Transportation may be provided as an accommodation to a student with disabilities as specified in the student's Section 504 Plan.

c) *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*

Under the revised *Elementary and Secondary School Act of 2001*, MCPS students who attend an MCPS Title I school identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring may be eligible to receive transportation to a designated MCPS school until the Title I school is no longer identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

d) *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987*

Transportation will be provided to a homeless student as required by the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987*, as amended by NCLB.

5. Transportation on special education buses may be provided to siblings of special education students attending the same school. When transportation service for the special education student ends, transportation service for the sibling ends.

C. Non-MCPS Transportation Services

DOT staff will attempt to use MCPS-owned vehicles to the fullest extent possible to transport students eligible for enhanced transportation services as described in Section II.B.4. When enhanced transportation services for eligible students cannot be provided with MCPS vehicles, the director of transportation will consider the use of commercial transportation services and/or direct reimbursement to the parents or other individuals for the most economical transportation that meets the needs of the student.

1. Commercial transportation services will be negotiated by the director of procurement and must be preapproved by the director of transportation. Such contracts will require compliance with all elements of COMAR related to student transportation (13A.06.07) and applicable MCPS DOT guidelines. If transportation can be arranged on an MCPS vehicle at any time, the commercial service will be terminated.
2. Transportation and related expenses for which parents expect to be reimbursed must be preapproved by the director of transportation. The reimbursement rate shall not exceed the Board-approved mileage rate for staff travel. If transportation on MCPS vehicles can be arranged later, further expenses will not be approved.

D. Student Safety

1. The director of transportation or designee shall evaluate the safety and efficiency of bus stops, recommended walking routes, and traffic control patterns for schools. Questions concerning safety of students moving to and from school shall be directed to the cluster transportation supervisor, who determines whether a hazard exists and takes appropriate action where warranted.
2. Walking Routes
 - a) Appropriate walking routes are established through analyses that include the following:
 - (1) Commonly available Internet tools providing aerial views of neighborhood roadway configurations;
 - (2) Onsite visits by DOT staff trained in student safety;
 - (3) Review of comparable walking routes in other neighborhoods;
 - (4) Existing safety features as well as impediments to safety; and
 - (5) Observed pedestrian/vehicular use of the walking area.
 - b) An appropriate recommended walking route will be within the distances defined in Board Policy EEA, *Student Transportation*, but may not follow the shortest or most direct route.

- c) Transportation services will not be modified due to temporary conditions such as standing water after rainfall, snow and/or ice accumulation on sidewalks during inclement weather.

3. Crosswalks, Adult Crossing Guards, and Student Safety Patrols

The location of crosswalks, adult crossing guards, and student safety patrols is determined jointly by the director of transportation, the Montgomery County Police Department School Safety Unit, and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. Adult crossing guards are employed by the Montgomery County Police Department and are assigned at the request of MCPS.

4. Bus Routes

Buses are routed in a manner that maximizes safety and efficiency. DOT is responsible for establishing routes for school buses and the stops for loading and unloading students. The following will be considered:

- a) Buses only will be routed on roadways and bridges designed to accommodate the size and weight of the bus.
- b) Routes will be established in such a way that the walking distance from a student's home to an established bus stop is no greater than the distances identified in Board Policy EEA, *Student Transportation*:

- Elementary schools—1 mile;
- Middle schools—1.5 miles;
- High schools—2 miles.

- c) Regular education buses will be routed on through roadways. However, when compelling circumstances require deviation from the through roadway, buses may be routed on roadways without outlets (e.g. dead-end streets, courts, and cul-de-sacs) under the following conditions:
 - (1) There is space for the bus to turn around; and
 - (2) The turn from the through roadway and entrance back onto the through roadway can be made safely.

5. School and Parental Partnership for Student Safety

MCPS will encourage a partnership of students, parents, school staff, and DOT staff to teach and enforce safe practices for moving to and from school in all modes of transportation.

a) Bus Operator/Bus Attendant

The bus operator and attendant, if assigned, are responsible for encouraging safe riding practices, enforcing and addressing disciplinary issues, and instructing how to safely get on and off buses.

b) Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- (1) Providing classroom instruction on school bus safety rules, safe walking, and safe bus-waiting practices; and
- (2) Enforcing safe traffic practices on school property, including ensuring that school loading zones are adequately supervised, and restricting vehicles other than buses from school loading zones during loading and unloading activities.

c) Parents are responsible for their student's safety along their walking route and/or at the bus stop.

- (1) Parents are responsible for selecting their student's walking routes to and from bus stops and schools.
- (2) Parents are responsible for providing supervision along their student's walking route and/or at the bus stop that is appropriate to the student's age and maturity. Parents are responsible for supervision of students until they board the bus for school and upon exiting the vehicle after school.
 - (a) Parents are encouraged to walk daily to and from school bus stops or school with students, especially younger students, and to use this opportunity to teach safe walking practices, safe bus-waiting practices, and traffic awareness, and to model wellness by walking for exercise.

- (b) Students should arrive at the bus stop five minutes ahead of the scheduled arrival time of the bus.
- (c) Parents are responsible for meeting prekindergarten and Head Start students on mid-day buses and students on special education buses at their assigned bus stops. When these students are not met, bus operators will follow established procedures to ensure student safety until students and parents can be reunited.
- (d) So that children are prepared for those occasions when parents may be unable to meet the bus or are late, parents are encouraged to instruct their children what they are to do in their parents' absence, as bus operators are not able to ensure that each student is met by a parent except in those circumstances described in (c) above.

6. Denial of Bus Riding Privileges

- a) Students who violate the behavior and safety rules may have bus riding privileges denied temporarily or permanently by the school principal in accordance with the following procedures.
 - (1) The bus operator notifies the principal of details pertaining to a disciplinary problem with a student on the school bus using MCPS Form 555-3: *School Bus Disciplinary Report*. If action taken by the school does not resolve the disciplinary problems, the operator contacts the transportation supervisor for the cluster.
 - (2) The principal will warn the student of the possibility of denial of bus riding privileges and may have the student and parents sign a bus riding contract. If the disciplinary problems continue, the principal will confer with the parent/guardian and student prior to the suspension of riding privileges or, depending on the severity and nature of the behavior problem, suspend riding privileges immediately.
 - (3) The principal will notify the parent/guardian in writing of complaints received and the suspension of the student's riding

privileges, with a copy to the bus operator, DOT, and the appropriate community superintendent.

- b) The student's riding privileges may be restored by the principal after a conference with the student and/or parent/guardian and consultation with the cluster transportation supervisor. The principal will notify the bus operator and cluster transportation supervisor in writing of the reinstatement of the student's riding privileges.

E. Responsibilities and Priorities in Case of an Accident

1. DOT will provide training and maintain guidelines and procedures for handling accidents so that injured students/staff are cared for promptly, further injury is prevented, students are reunited with parents as quickly as possible and correct and timely information is disseminated to all appropriate parties. Accident scene responsibilities, notification, and reporting requirements will be consistent with state and federal requirements.
2. Accident scene responsibilities include the following:
 - a) The dispatcher, or if the dispatcher is not on duty, the bus operator ensures that emergency services and an MCPS DOT supervisor are called to the scene.
 - b) A bus involved in an accident or collision shall not be moved until released by a police officer or a Department of Transportation supervisor.
 - c) In compliance with federal transportation standards, MCPS operators must cooperate with drug testing following any accident resulting in injury or sufficient damage to necessitate a vehicle being towed.
3. Notification
 - a) Accidents must be reported to the dispatcher and police immediately.
 - b) The dispatcher will notify appropriate MCPS personnel, including the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCCO) when appropriate, in accordance with notification procedures.
 - c) DOT staff will notify the OCCO.

- d) Following notification of an accident involving students, the principal/designee should contact parents as soon as possible.
- e) If students or staff involved in the accident are hospitalized, administrative or supervisory personnel from the school and DOT will be sent to the hospital.
- f) The public information officer handles all news media requests for information.

4. Reporting

- a) DOT shall maintain and follow reporting and investigative procedures for all accidents.
- b) DOT shall comply with all MSDE accident reporting guidelines.

F. Notification of Route Changes

- 1. The director of DOT will notify principals of any significant changes in bus service by June preceding the new school year or ten calendar days prior to significant changes during the year.
- 2. Principals will provide the school community with timely notification of bus stop changes made by the transportation supervisor. The principal, in cooperation with the transportation supervisor, will draft a letter of notification to appropriate parents. The letter, to be sent to parents by the principal, will include:
 - (1) The proposed change in service, along with the basis for action
 - (2) The date when transportation will cease
 - (3) Location of new bus stop, if applicable.
 - (4) Information pertaining to placement of new crossing guards or traffic control devices, if any
 - (5) Procedures for appeal of the proposed change

G. Uses of Buses for Field Trips, Athletics, and Functions Outside of MCPS

1. MCPS buses are available for field trips during the hours that do not conflict or interfere with the regularly scheduled runs.
2. Schools may use MCPS buses to transport participants to approved athletic activities.
3. Government organizations, such as Montgomery County, the City of Rockville, the City of Gaithersburg, the City of Takoma Park and/or educationally related non-profit organizations may use MCPS buses as approved by the director of transportation.
4. The chief operating officer periodically sets the fee schedule for school field trips and use of buses by other public agency programs. The schedule includes operational and bus operator costs. Refer to the DOT web page, *Web Trips: Field Trip Request System*, for details.
5. DOT, in cooperation with the Division of Procurement, is responsible for screening private motor coach carriers used for school-sponsored activities to ensure they meet the following standards:
 - a) The company carries the required levels of insurance;
 - b) All vehicles are inspected and pass inspections according to federal requirements;
 - c) Drivers hold appropriate licenses and receive all required safety training; and
 - d) The carrier meets all federally required drug testing and employment standards for motor coach operators.
6. Responsibility for Students
 - a) It shall be mandatory for a faculty member from the school group or a chaperone authorized by the principal to be onboard each bus used for student trips made on MCPS buses. A bus operator is not authorized to begin a trip without a faculty member or an authorized chaperone onboard the bus.

- b) The responsible MCPS staff member or chaperone shall adhere to the safety procedures outlined on the DOT web page, *Web Trips: Field Trip Request System*.

H. Resolution of Concerns from the Public

As set forth in Board Policy KLA, *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*, the Board of Education encourages the public to seek resolution through an informal process of cooperative agreement among the most immediately affected parties. Formal steps for resolving complaints only should be used after informal approaches have been unsuccessful in resolving the complaint.

1. A member of the public who has an inquiry, concern, or complaint regarding student transportation is encouraged to discuss the matter with the transportation supervisor for the cluster to seek an informal resolution.
2. A concern not resolved informally at the level of the transportation supervisor for the cluster should be addressed to the director of transportation for his/her decision.
3. The director of transportation's decision may be appealed to the chief operating officer who shall render a decision on behalf of the superintendent of schools, advising the appellant of the right to further appeal to the Board of Education consistent with the Education Article, *The Annotated Code of Maryland*, Section 3-903(c).

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 215-1, September 12, 1979; directory information updated January, 1983; revised December, 1984; reviewed April, 1988; revised May 13, 1998; revised April 21, 2010.

Establishment of School Zone Traffic Controls (GP-14)

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MEMORANDUM

April 2007

TO: Emil J. Wolanin, Chief, Traffic Engineering and Operations Section

FROM: Fred Lees, Manager, Traffic Engineering and Studies Team

SUBJECT: Policy for Establishment of School Zone Traffic Controls (GP-14)- Revised

APPROVED

Effective October 1, 1999, the State of Maryland passed a law which allows for doubling of fines for speeding in School Zones. In June 2002, the Traffic Engineering and Studies Team set general guidelines for establishment of School Zone traffic controls. Those guidelines are now being revised for:

- o Establishing School Zones along County streets;
- o Establishing Double Fine Zones for speeding in school areas;
- o Posting reduced speed limits in School Zones;
- o Establishing criteria for installing flashing school signs (advisory only or reduced speed limit signs).

[NOTE: The June 2002 Policy for Establishment of School Zone Traffic Controls superceded the previous School Flashers Policy, in the DTFS Technical Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines Book (TS-17). The 2002 policy was identified as GP-14. This 2007 revision will supercede the 2002 GP-14.]

DEFINITIONS:

School Arrival/ Departure Times	The period of time during which the majority of students arrive at or depart the school for classes.
School Area	The area, within a maximum of one-half mile radius, surrounding a school building or property and within which motor vehicle, pedestrian or bicycle traffic may be substantially generated or influenced by the school.
School Zone	The segment of a street within a school area that directly fronts the school property and is used by students for access to or egress from the school facility or grounds (generally not to extend greater than 2000 feet beyond the school property).
Student Walkers	Students who are not provided vehicular transportation to a particular school.

PROCEDURE

Following receipt of a written request from the school principal, MCPS Transportation Office or school PTSA president, the Traffic Engineering and Operations Section will evaluate whether establishment of school zone traffic controls is warranted for a specific school. School zone traffic controls available for consideration include establishment of doubled fines for speeding in a School Zone, reduction of posted speed limits in a School Zone, installation of school flashers, or any combination of the above measures. The request should include information on school walking routes, the number of student walkers, and the number of buses and other vehicles related to school arrival/departure times.

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL ZONE

Requires written request from the school principal, MCPS Department of Transportation, or the school PTSA president for establishment of a School Zone for any accredited elementary, middle or high school. The proposed School Zone shall be adjacent to the school property.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF DOUBLED FINES FOR SPEEDING IN SCHOOL ZONE

Establishment of doubled fines for speeding within a School Zone shall only be considered on streets that front school property. The following criteria shall be met in order to justify the establishment of doubled fines for speeding within a School Zone:

A. On a street with a posted speed limit of 25 MPH, the 85th percentile speed should be at least 30 MPH (5 miles per hour above the posted speed limit) **OR**

B. On a street with a posted speed limit of 30 MPH or greater, the 85th percentile speed should be at least 7 MPH over the posted speed limit.

III. ESTABLISHMENT OF REDUCED SPEED LIMIT IN SCHOOL ZONE

Per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, any speed limit established (either normal or within a School Zone) shall be in multiples of 5 miles per hour. Per Montgomery County Code, the minimum speed limit for any County-maintained street is 25 mph, so no reduced speed limit shall be below 25 mph. In addition, no School Zone speed limit shall be greater than 20 mph below the existing posted speed limit. If School Zones for two (or more) different level schools are located contiguously, the lower level school would determine the speed limit of both zones (provided that reduction of the speed limit is justified per this policy).

Establishment of School Zone Traffic Controls (GP-14)

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A. **Elementary and middle schools:**

1. Location: The street under consideration directly fronts the school property, AND

2. Speed Limit: The normal posted speed limit must be 30 mph or greater, AND

3. Vehicular Volume:

a. For a non-divided roadway, the vehicular volume exceeds 150 vehicles per hour in one direction or 250 vehicles per hour combined for both directions during school arrival/departure times, OR

b. For a divided roadway, the vehicular volume exceeds 400 vehicles per hour (combined for both directions) during school arrival/departure times, AND

(For roadways with both divided and non-divided cross-sections within the School Zone, the values for non-divided roadways control.)

4. School Crossings: School is a Walking School and at least one crossing guard has been assigned to assist crossings. OR

5. Visibility Conditions: Limited sight distance or approach visibility as defined by AASHTO such that a reduced speed limit within the School Zone would provide acceptable conditions.

B. **High schools:**

1. Location: The street under consideration directly fronts the school property, AND

2. Speed Limit: The normal posted speed limit must be 35 mph or greater, AND

3. Vehicular Volume:

a. For a non-divided roadway, the vehicular volume exceeds 250 vehicles per hour in one direction or 400 vehicles per hour combined for both directions during school arrival/departure times, OR

b. For a divided roadway, the vehicular volume exceeds 800 vehicles per

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hour (combined for both directions) during school arrival/departure times,
AND

(For roadways with both divided and non-divided cross-sections within the School Zone, the values for non-divided roadways control.)

4. School Crossings: At least one school crossing of the street exists and at least 10 students utilize the crossing, OR

5. Visibility Conditions: Limited sight distance or approach visibility as defined by AASHTO such that a reduced speed limit within the School Zone would provide acceptable conditions.

IV. INSTALLATION OF FLASHING SCHOOL SIGNS (without reduced speeds/advisory only* or with reduced speeds)**

A. For streets with a posted speed limit of 25 mph:

1. Prevailing Speed: The 85th percentile speed must be at least 10 mph greater than the normal posted speed limit, AND

2. Vehicular Volume: The vehicular volume exceeds 200 vehicles per hour in one direction (300 vehicles per hour combined in both directions) during school arrival/departure times, AND

3. Pedestrian Volume: A substantial number of student walkers either cross the street within two blocks or 1000 feet (whichever is less) of the school (at uncontrolled crossings with no signals, but a crossing guard may be present) or walk along the street or within close proximity (20 feet) to the traveled roadway during school arrival/departure times.

B. For streets with a normal posted speed limit of 30 mph or greater:

1. Prevailing Speed: The 85th percentile speed must be at least 10 mph over the posted speed limit, AND

2. Vehicular Volume: The vehicular volume exceeds 300 vehicles per hour in one direction (500 vehicles per hour combined in both directions) during school arrival/departure times, AND

3. Pedestrian Volume: A substantial number of student walkers either cross the street within either two blocks or 1000 feet (whichever is less) of the school (at uncontrolled crossings with no signals, but a crossing guard may be present) or walk along the street or within close proximity (20 feet) to the traveled roadway during school arrival/departure times.

Specific Signing Guideline for School Flashers:

-- * Where the speed limit within the School Zone is NOT reduced but where installation of school flashers is justified, the advisory-only school flashers should be installed as part of the typical School Warning Sign Assembly per MSHA Guidelines and Typical (Figure 1).

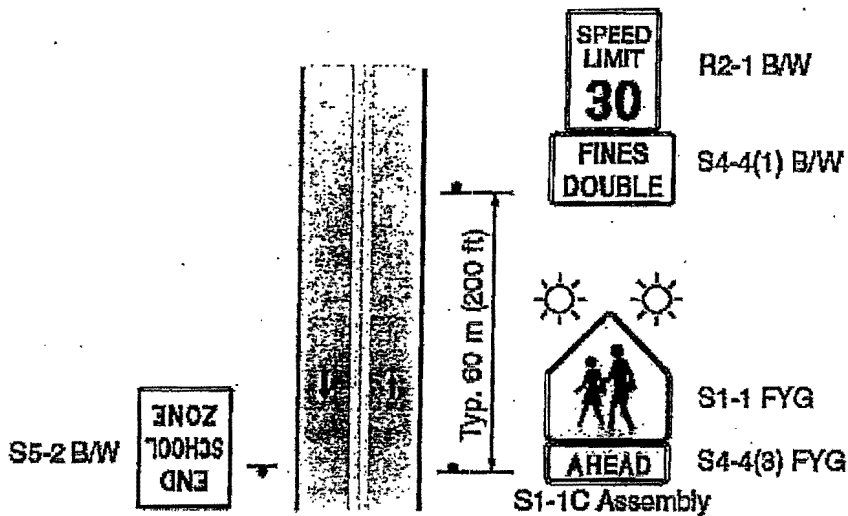


Figure 1

School flashers which indicate a specific speed limit generally lead the motorist to think that the speed limit is different when flashing as opposed to when it is not flashing.

-- **Where there is justification to install a reduced speed limit within the School Zone, the school flashers shall be installed per MSHA Guidelines and Typicals (Figure 2).

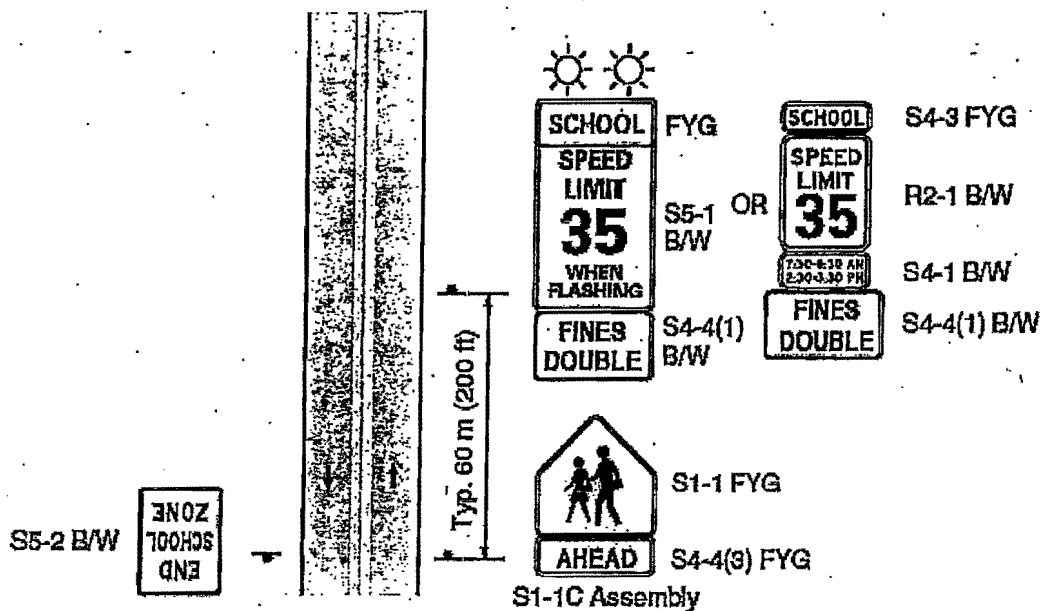


Figure 2