



April 22, 2018

Greetings from the DeKalb County School District,

Both the safety of students and the support of its employee team are always important concerns for the DeKalb County School District (DCSD).

Given the recent activities regarding our bus drivers, this is an opportunity to share with you essential information regarding DCSD's efforts to provide proper compensation, benefits and growth opportunities for our Transportation teammates.

The following pages are a summary of the district's efforts to provide a safe, beneficial and attractive workplace for both current and prospective bus drivers alike. We are hopeful this information will not only inform your discussions with other community members, but demonstrate once again that your school district cares about the people who serve daily to provide the best education for our young men and women.

Please know we remain committed to work in collaboration with our bus drivers. I met with the at-large bus driver group on April 17, 2018 and a subgroup of bus drivers on April 19, 2018 and we are committed to ongoing meetings to address their concerns.

We stand ready to answer any follow-up questions you may have. Thank you for your continued support of the DeKalb County School District.

Regards,

R. Stephen Green, Ed.D.
Superintendent/CEO
DeKalb County School District



The Evolution of Support for DCSD Bus Drivers and Transportation Staff

HISTORY

The Driver and Monitor Advisory Committee (DMAC) was established by the Transportation Department leadership nearly 15 years prior to April 2018. Its purpose is to receive, review and act on concerns from bus drivers related to their employment as a group. Its outcomes include regular meetings with employees and relationship-building activities.

During the summer of 2017, the Chief Operations Officer and Transportation Team assisted the DMAC in formalizing written bylaws to help provide structure and organization to the committee. The bylaws were finalized last fall and copies were distributed to the full committee January 2018.

The current administration is committed to ongoing collaborative efforts to address bus driver and bus monitors' concerns.

ONGOING/RECENT MEETINGS

- Monthly – Chief Operations Officer meets with the DMAC Leadership (six individuals) and the DMAC Committee (34 individuals) in separate meetings monthly to provide updates and discuss employee concerns.
- April 17, 2018 – Dr. Green met with an at-large bus driver group to hear its concerns and committed to form a partnership with a subgroup of drivers to develop a plan of action for resolutions.
- April 17, 2018 - Dr. Green, through the Chief Operations Officer, extended an invitation to meet with the president of the Bus Driver Committee on Thursday, April 19. The president turned down the invitation.
- April 19, 2018 – Dr. Green met with the bus driver sub-group. The group selected issues it deemed as the highest priorities. An action plan is being developed that will outline the timeline and monitor the continuous progress.
- Thursday, April 26 – Next meeting of the driver sub-group.

Dr. Green is committed to continue ongoing meetings for status checks and completion of items.



COMPENSATION

- DCSD bus drivers are the second-highest paid school bus drivers among their peers Metro Atlanta school districts, including those in Cobb County, Gwinnett County, Atlanta and Fulton County. The highest paid county bus drivers work eight hours daily, compared to six hours in DCSD.
- DCSD drivers have the potential to earn additional income by taking on extra duty opportunities such as driving students to athletic and academic events, field trips, etc.
- DCSD drivers and transportation staff have received the following cost-of-living adjustments raises since 2014:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
2014	1.12%
*2015	2.0%
2016	2.0 %
2017	5.07%
2018	2.0 %

****In 2014-15, minimum wage increases were granted to special education bus monitors (14% increase), pre-K paraprofessionals (37% increase) and food nutrition assistants (10% increase). Bus drivers were moved from a 5 hour to 6 hour work day, which resulted in a 20% annual salary increase.***

BENEFITS

- DCSD bus drivers receive benefits as part-time employees. Benefits include: health, dental, vision, disability plans, long term care, retirement, sick leave, personal leave and vacation leave.

NEW POSITIONS ADDED

- Additional Field Support Supervisors/Liaisons to assist in managing daily operations
- Additional Mechanics to assist with repairing and maintaining school buses



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Transportation Leadership Academy

In partnership with the National Association of Pupil Transportation, the Transportation Leadership Academy was established and will provide opportunities for upward mobility and career progression. District funds will be utilized so drivers and monitors can obtain industry certifications.

<https://www.napt.org/certification>

UPCOMING PROJECTS

Bell Time Optimization Project

This project is designed to improve efficiency by developing uniform bell schedule(s) that support efficient and effective tiered routing, and to optimize on-time delivery of students to all schools.

Board recently hired a firm experienced in evaluating Pupil Transportation Operations to facilitate the modification of bell schedule(s) through the development, stakeholder engagement, and implementation. This will optimize the on-time delivery process throughout DCSD.

Board Item Link:

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=65558>

Here Comes the Bus: Parent Notification Pilot Program

DCSD will pilot a transportation app/online program designed to provide families, administrators, and district personnel with real-time information regarding bus location status.

In partnership with software-developer, Synovia Solutions, DCSD will pilot their GPS-based *Here Comes the Bus* application with a small group of students and families at five (5) elementary schools in May 2018. Parent and administrator feedback from this pilot will then be used to fine-tune technology, develop process and procedures, and determine the feasibility of a phased, district-wide rollout. Should the pilot program render positive results and adequate feedback, we anticipate initiating a phased launch of the program to accompany the start of School Year 2018-2019

A program overview, informational video, FAQ, and additional resources are located on the *Here Comes the Bus* website at <https://herecomesthebus.com>.