

TANGIPAHOA PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM
School bus Driver's Advisory Committee
May 16, 2006 Meeting

Members Present: Kim Notariano, James Rimes, Edwin Puls, Jimmy Sparacello, Albert O'Connor and Robbie Gomez

Guest Present: Louis Joseph (Superintendent), Bret Schnadelbach (Transportation Supervisor), and Ella Williams (Secretary)

The meeting began with Mr. Schnadelbach's discussion regarding the TPSS's Support Employees' Salary Study. He informed the Committee that he would be requesting their assistance very soon in the completion of an online survey concerning school bus drivers' job duties.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

- 1.) **Elimination of 20-Mile Minimum Route Mileage** – This item was submitted to the Committee by Mr. Eddie Puls who was concerned about the possible elimination of the 20-mile minimum program. Mr. Schnadelbach explained to the Committee that the recent article appearing in the Daily Star written by Mr. Don Ellzey was incorrect concerning the recommended changes to the 20-Mile Minimum Program. He informed the Committee that the only change was what was discussed at the previous Advisory Committee meeting. The recommended change was to use driver's actual mileage amount in determining their Fuel Price Adjustment component only. All other Operation Allowance components will remain the same.
- 2.) **Substitute Drivers** – Mr. James Rimes submitted this item to the Committee because he wanted to discuss the pros/cons of hiring two or more full-time drivers to be used as permanent substitute drivers. These positions would not be required to purchase a school bus. Mr. Schnadelbach informed the Committee that the Transportation Department is working hard at resolving the shortage of substitute bus driver problem. Actions such as a Lease Bus Option for all drivers, the availability of Northwood Drivers to become floating substitute drivers on Fridays, the recruitment of school janitors as emergency backup drivers, and the creation of Certified Behind-the-Wheel Trainer could all assist in correcting this problem. It was expressed that some substitute bus drivers have expressed concern regarding their current wage. These drivers feel that once they achieve the \$55 per day level having to drop back to \$45 per day the following school year is a reduction in pay. Mr. Jimmy Sparacello suggested that the Transportation Department contact Coastal College in Hammond in an attempt to recruit more drivers. Ms. Kim Notariano suggested that we consider hosting a "Job Fair" where multiple departments could be represented. Current employees could be on hand to discuss the duties and benefits of working for the school system. Mr. Schnadelbach stated that both ideas were good suggestions and will look into the possibility of doing both.

- 3.) **School Bus Discipline** - This item was submitted to the Committee by Mr. Al O'Connor who was concerned about how some schools were not adhering to the uniform discipline program for school transportation. He cited a school that allowed one student to be written up for eight separate incidents but was still receiving warnings. He was very concerned that this action would create an unsafe situation for students and drivers. Mr. Schnadelbach stated that some Principals delegate this responsibility to their Assistant Principal and if the Assistant Principals' actions are not satisfactory with the driver, they should report it to the Principal. However, many schools are reluctant to suspend a student from the bus because, in many cases, school transportation is that student's only means to and from school. So a bus suspension amounts to a school suspension and is reflected in the School's overall performance score. It was suggested by the Committee that there needs to be some consistency throughout the parish regarding school bus discipline.
- 4.) **Supplemental Check for Support Personnel** – Ms. Notariano took the opportunity to express her appreciation and that of her fellow Committee Members and School Bus Operators to Mr. Joseph and the Board Members for their approval of the Support Workers' Supplemental Check. She stated that there was a lot of good feedback from bus drivers and she encouraged all Committee Members to contact their board representative and express their appreciation.
- 5.) **Fuel Price Adjustment for Summer School Routes** – Ms. Notariano was inquiring about whether there would be an increase in summer mileage rate based on the currently high fuel prices. Mr. Schnadelbach indicated that he would compare the summer mileage rate with that of the most the recent fuel price adjustment and if necessary make a recommendation increasing the mileage rate. Mr. Schnadelbach informed the Committee that there would only be three programs this summer (Leap, 21st Century, and Special Education) resulting in a reduction in summer routes.
- 6.) **Professional Drivers' Discount Program** – Ms. Notariano inquired about the status of this year's Professional Drivers' Discount Program's refund check. Mr. Schnadelbach informed the Committee that refund checks will be issued in July after the completion of summer school programs.
- 7.) **Miscellaneous Items** – Committee members expressed concerns about the motoring public failing to adhere to the school bus stop arms. Mr. Schnadelbach indicated that if there was a pattern (time and location), he would request assistance from the Sheriff Department to patrol the area looking for violators. Mr. Rimes indicated that his office issues four to five tickets a month for drivers running school bus stop arms on Highway 38 in Kentwood.

It was moved by Mr. Puls and seconded by Mr. Rimes that the meeting be adjourned.
Meeting adjourned.

Chairman, Kim Notariano
Minutes taken by Ella Williams