

Dierks School District
School Bus Safety Plan

1. Plan Authorization

The Dierks School District recognizes that we have a need for a Bus Safety Plan. We are responsible for the transportation of over 500 students to and from school each day. Along the way we come across many hazards that change from day to day and need a plan to address those hazards when they do arise. By planning ahead we will do everything within our power to avoid any accident that could affect our students and drivers.

a. Statutory Authority

As instructed by Act 1206 Of 2006, §27-51-1004 and §27-51-1005, our Superintendent/Transportation Director will work in conjunction with the Arkansas State Police, Howard County Sheriff's Department and Judges' Office, Dierks City Police, and our local deputy prosecuting attorney to develop a bus safety plan designed to ensure the safety of the children being loaded onto or unloaded from school buses.

b. Applicable Participants

Our plan at the Dierks School District will involve many different agencies. It will begin at the school with our drivers, the transportation director, the principals, and the Superintendent. Outside of school we will need help from many different agencies to make our routes as safe as possible. We will have to work with the county judge and county road department to keep the trees cut and obstructions out of the way at intersections and blind curves. We will ask the Arkansas State Police and sheriff's office to help patrol and issue tickets to motorists that fail to follow the law when it comes to passing stopped school buses. And lastly, we will call on our local deputy prosecuting attorney to prosecute those motorists that fail to abide by the school bus safety laws.

c. Initial Plan and Updates

Initially, our plan will call for our bus drivers to make our transportation director aware of any safety issues they observe while driving their bus routes. The transportation director will check into these issues and see what steps need to be taken to remove the safety threat from the routes. If the route can be changed, the transportation director will make these necessary changes. If a change in the route doesn't help, the transportation director will notify the proper agency to help alleviate the safety problem. Review of the plan will be constant. As people move in and out of our district, the routes change daily. Anytime that the driver changes his/he route and feels that there is a safety hazard, he/she will be persuaded to go to the transportation director. An annual meeting will be held at the beginning of each school year to go over the routes and safety issues.

II. School District Responsibilities

The Dierks School District assumes much of the responsibility of making sure our students arrive to school and back home safely each day. To ensure this safety, we will have a comprehensive route analysis at the beginning of each school year. The transportation director will periodically review the routes and make sure they are still safe. All drivers are trained annually with 3 hours of bus driving safety. A plan will be put into place for how bus drivers are to handle changes in their routes. The Dierks School District will also meet and discuss with local law enforcement agencies, prosecuting authorities, and public works departments of the state and local government to discuss safety issues for our bus routes.

a. Route Analysis

Before school starts each year, the transportation director will get with the bus drivers and survey the bus routes. This survey is an attempt to identify those road conditions that may be a hazard to bus operations. Included in this survey will be bus stop locations, and will take into account recommendations from the "identification and Evaluation of School Bus Route and Hazard Marking Systems" produced by the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. This report is included at the back of this safety plan.

b. Periodic Reviews

Bus routes are subject to change almost daily. Therefore, bus drivers will constantly review their route for any hazards that may come up because of these changes. If a driver confronts a hazard, he/she shall notify the transportation director of the hazard. The transportation director will check into the hazard and take the necessary measures to remove the hazard. It is here that the city and county governments will help. It may be that a tree needs trimmed or a gravel road graded or a road floods when it rains. The Dierks School District is committed to do whatever is necessary to ensure the safety of its students.

c. School District Training

Each August, the bus drivers will receive three hours of training in school bus training. This training includes all procedures for loading and unloading, laws, train track safety, and their responsibility to report any and all motorists who violate the provision of Arkansas Code Annotated §27-S1-1004 or §27-S1-100S. Our students are given procedures at the beginning of the school year on how to load and unload the bus, how to act while on the bus, and the rules and consequences for violating these rules.

d. Route Updates

As mentioned earlier, it is necessary to occasionally make changes to the routes. When this takes place, it will be up to the transportation director to notify local authorities. The Dierks School District will coordinate annually with local law enforcement agencies on current routes

and hazards to those routes and stops that are beyond the control of the school district to correct.

e. School District Discussion with Local Officials

The transportation director and the safety coordinator will meet periodically with local law enforcement agencies, prosecuting authorities, and public works departments of state and local governments regarding procedures to improve and ensure the safety of students loading and unloading school buses. These discussions shall include the appropriate procedures for a person who observes an operator of a motor vehicle violating §27-S1-1004 or §27-S1-100S to the appropriate jurisdictions. These meetings should also include the possibility of additional signage, traffic markings, or electronic traffic control devices.

III. Local law Enforcement Agency Responsibilities

In order for the bus routes to be as safe as possible, the Dierks School District needs help from outside agencies. We need local police department and the Howard County Sheriff's department to help patrol the routes and be aware of where the routes run. We need the county road crews to help keep the roads safe and the areas around the roads need to be clear of any obstructions. Our transportation director will sit down annually with the law enforcement agencies to make sure they have a detailed map of where our routes are going.

a. law Enforcement Compliance Guidance

As a school district, we are not always notified of changes to the traffic laws. This is one area where the local law enforcement can help us out. When there are changes to the city, county, or state laws pertaining to motor vehicle operation, someone from these agencies will notify the Superintendent who can then pass the information on to the transportation director

b. Route Analysis

No agency better understands the safety of the roadways than the local and county law enforcement agencies. That is why it is imperative that we have them analyze our bus safety plan, bus routing, and pickup and discharge stops. They will offer suggestions and recommendations on the safest way to conduct these operations. They can also assist in finding routes around safety hazards.

c. Route Markings

Local law enforcement agencies can assist the Dierks School District in many ways. There are times throughout the year when some of our roads are not safe to be driven on. Whether it is flooding, snow, or any other reason, these agencies will notify the district in order for us to make arrangements for the routes. Also, they can assist us by placing road markings for stops, signs, lights, and anything else that will help make our bus routes as safe as possible.

d. Law Enforcement Training

Our local law enforcement agencies will seek any training that they feel will help them assist us in making the roadways as safe as possible for our buses. They are constantly receiving training about new traffic laws and enforcement. They will always look for motorists who are not observing the laws around school buses and their routes. Also, our local deputy prosecutor will make sure those who violate bus laws will be sought out and fined.

IV. Final Agreement

a. Dierks School District Commitments

The Dierks School District commits to follow through with this plan. The school commits to require training for drivers, work with local law enforcement agencies, the local deputy prosecutor and other agencies to ensure that our routes are as safe as possible. We will constantly look for hazards along routes and monitor and adjust those routes as needed. This plan goes into effect immediately and our transportation director agrees to meet with local agencies each year sometime before the start of the school year.

b. Local Official Commitments

The county law enforcement agencies are committed to making our bus routes as safe as possible. They will meet with the school transportation director annually to review routes and offer suggestions to improve the safety of the routes. The county road crews will keep the roads cleared of hazards and the areas around the stops and along the routes free of obstructions. Our local deputy prosecutor is committed to prosecute those motorists that fail to follow the traffic laws regarding bus safety.

c. Signatories

The following signatures signify a willingness to work together and make the bus routes of the Dierks School District as safe as possible. Through constant communication and monitoring by everyone involved our students will be picked up and delivered home each day without any accidents.

Holly Cothren, Superintendent/Transportation Director

Bryan McJunkins, Sheriff of Howard County

Brian White, Chief of Police Dierks

Kevin Smith, Howard County Judge

Prosecuting Attorney