To: Parents of Students Riding School Buses

FROM: Kimberly G. Heiser, Manager of Transportation

We need your cooperation to help us make riding a school bus safe for all student passengers. Please review the following information from the Board of Education Transportation Procedures that explains the expectations for student behavior while riding the school bus and the actions that will be taken for unacceptable behavior.

School Bus Discipline Procedures

A. Student responsibilities

1. Students riding buses are expected to follow rules and regulations approved by the Board of Education. Riding a school bus is a privilege that will be withdrawn for misconduct or behavior which jeopardizes the safe operation of the bus or which infringes on the rights of other students on the bus.

2. Students are expected to know and follow the bus rules which will be published each year and will be distributed to each student at the beginning of the school year.

3. Students must follow directions given by the bus driver and are expected to sit in the seat to which they are assigned by the bus driver.

4. Students who are denied the riding privilege for misbehavior on their assigned bus may not ride any other school bus from home to school for the duration of the loss of riding privilege.

B. Bus driver responsibilities

1. The driver shall be in charge of the bus at all times and shall be responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly environment on the bus.

2. The driver shall pick up and discharge students at their assigned bus stop. The driver shall not permit a student to get off of the bus at a stop other than where assigned, unless approval is given in writing by a school administrator.

3. The driver may deny a student the bus privilege for misconduct which occurs while students are being taken home from school; the student will not be allowed to ride the bus to school the following morning. The bus driver shall:
   a. take the student home to the assigned bus stop only.
   b. notify the student that he/she will not be allowed to ride the bus to school the next morning and the reason for the action.
   c. contact an administrator of the school the student attends.
   d. ensure that the parent of the student is contacted. If the parent cannot be contacted, the student shall be transported the next morning.
   e. submit a written discipline referral to the school administrator on the morning following the misbehavior.

C. Referral procedures

1. All referrals for misbehavior on a school bus shall be submitted in writing on the form provided by the Transportation Department.

2. The bus driver shall submit a written referral to the school administrator as soon as reasonably possible after the misbehavior occurs and shall make every effort to be available, if needed, to clarify events in question.

3. The school administrator receiving a discipline referral shall investigate, take appropriate action and return the referral form to the bus driver, noting action taken, as soon as reasonably possible.
D. Infractions and range of consequences

1. Infractions affecting the safety of students or infringing on the rights of other students, include, but are not limited to:
   a. standing / out of assigned seat or walking around while bus is in motion
   b. talking too loud / yelling/or use of inappropriate language
   c. throwing items at other students
   d. eating / drinking
   e. harassing / bothering other students
   f. not following directions given by driver

   Range of consequences:
   1. **Prior to first referral**: bus driver shall discuss the inappropriate behavior with the students and shall ensure that the parent is notified of the inappropriate behavior
   2. **First referral**: minimum of a conference with student, and parent contact
   3. **Second referral**: minimum of denial of bus privilege for one (1) day.
   4. **Third referral**: minimum of denial of bus privilege for three (3) days and a conference with the student, parent and bus driver will be held. The Supervisor of Transportation will participate if requested.
   5. **Fourth referral**: minimum of denial of bus privileges for five (5) days and a referral to the Supervisor of Transportation to consider extended loss of bus privilege.

2. Safety hazard infractions that affect the driver’s ability to safely operate the bus and/or the safety of students on the bus, include, but are not limited to:
   a. lighting matches, lighters or other devices with an open flame or smoking.
   b. detonating an explosive device, setting off a stink/smoke bomb, or using mace or pepper spray.
   c. throwing items at the bus driver

   Range of consequences:
   1. minimum of denial of bus riding privileges for twenty (20) school days
   2. subsequent violations may results in loss of bus riding privileges for the year

3. Infractions against another person, against property or other infractions for which a student may be suspended from school, include, but not limited to:
   a. assault of a student
   b. fighting
   c. profanity directed at the bus driver
   d. possession of dangerous weapons or any object intended as such, including any object which is a look-alike
   e. verbal or physical threats
   f. use or possession of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, look-alike substances, paraphernalia or misuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications
   g. maliciously cutting, defacing or otherwise damaging the bus

   Range of consequences:
   1. Any incident will be handled the same as infractions that occur in school according to the grade level of the student(s).
   2. loss of bus riding privilege
   3. suspension
   4. law enforcement authorities notified where appropriate
   5. restitution for damages

4. Infractions requiring referral to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, include, but are not limited to:
   a. assault of bus driver
   b. use of weapon, or an instrument used as such, on any person
   c. sale or distribution, or attempts to sell or distribute, alcohol or illegal drugs
   d. possession of a firearm

   Range of consequences:
   1. Any incident will be handled the same as infractions that occur in school
   2. suspension from school and a recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools for expulsion
   3. notification of law enforcement authorities
E. Parent responsibilities for student behavior

1. Parents are responsible for the actions and safety of their children prior to the bus arriving at the bus stop in the morning and after the bus leaves the bus stop in the afternoon. Board of Education authority to control behavior of students begins when students are on the bus.

2. Parents should have children at the assigned bus stop or crossing point five (5) minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the bus in the morning.

3. Parents may be held responsible for reimbursement for damage to the property of other students on the school bus and for damage to equipment on the bus.

4. Parents should help their children establish good citizenship habits in respecting the property and the rights of persons who live near the bus stop or on the walking route to the bus stop.

5. Parents should examine the route from home to the bus stop to ensure the safety of children. The route should be as direct and uninterrupted as possible, taking into consideration the flow of vehicular traffic in the area. Children should be instructed to go directly to and from the bus stop, without crossing dangerous obstacles or passing through isolated areas.

6. It is recommended that parents walk with or take very young children to the bus stop in the morning and meet the bus in the afternoon. If this cannot be done, it is recommended that arrangements be made with an older student sibling or family friend to escort younger children to and from the bus stop.

7. Parents should train children to be aware of potential dangers in current society from strangers who may offer things to children and who have bad motives for associating with children. Examples of training include, not accepting a ride in a vehicle, not going with strangers anywhere out of sight of other persons, and not accepting gifts.

8. Parents should dress children according to the weather conditions and visibility conditions to be comfortable and safe while going to and from the bus stop and while waiting for the bus in the morning. In all conditions, the children must be able to see clearly and must be clearly seen by vehicular traffic.

9. On days when weather conditions are questionable, parents should check local radio and television broadcast, the WCBOE hotline and or WCBOE web site for announcements of the delayed opening or closing of schools. The announcements begin as early as 6:00 a.m.

10. Parents may request a change of bus assignment for their children by contacting the Supervisor of Transportation. The circumstances will be evaluated and approval will be granted if all of the following conditions are met:

   a. A compelling reason exists for the change in bus assignment that will be in the best interest of the student
   b. Adequate seating is available on the requested bus or on the bus that is routed nearest the current bus stop
   c. The student will use an existing bus stop. A bus route will not be extended to provide this service.

11. Parents may request transportation to or from a site other than the assigned bus stop nearest the student’s legal residence. Service will be provided if all of the following conditions are met:

   a. A note signed by the parent that states the student’s name date and requested destination must be approved by the signature of an administrator of the school the student attends.
   b. Adequate seating is available on the requested bus
   c. The student is let off of the bus at the regularly assigned bus stop nearest the requested destination. A bus route will not be extended or extra stops made to provide this service.