School Bus Driver Certification Committee
NCDMV School Bus and Traffic Safety / NC Pupil Transportation Association

June 10, 2019

The Honorable Scott J. Parker
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Motor Vehicles
North Carolina Department of Transportation
3101 Mail Service Center
1100 New Bern Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27697-3101

Dear Mr. Parker,

The School Bus Licensure Committee has completed its review of the school bus licensure process. Over the past 45 days, the Committee met on 3 occasions to discuss process issues and seek solutions to the many issues identified at the NCPTA Advisory Council meeting held in April, 2019. I am thankful to the members of the committee who served and am pleased with the outcome of our work.

Below are the recommendations from the committee:

RECOMMENDATION:
DMV should be aware of the concern to protect training time during the summer months so that adequate numbers of school bus drivers are trained prior to school start-up. This issue is specific to the pilot program that requires DEPS personnel to work in the DMV office from 2-4 on select days. The committee recommends that if there are driver candidates waiting to be trained, that training school bus drivers should receive priority over assisting with other DMV office support (i.e. performing road test at Driver's License Offices - "DLO").

RECOMMENDATION:
Medical Review Removal Requests - Have the Data Capture Imaging Unit key in medical certificate documents and scan them when they are being keyed.

LEA's will send in the removal request form DL-79 (or a written request) along with a copy of the DOT Medical Card to the Medical Review Unit. The Medical Review unit will forward these documents to the Data Capture Imaging Unit when there is no evidence in the system that documents have already been processed.

Federal requirements allow 10 days for processing; the DMV Data Capture Imaging Unit intends to comply with Federal Regulations.
RECOMMENDATION:
DMV should evaluate the possibility of allowing online renewal for school bus drivers.

Such renewal will not reduce the training requirements for licensure/certification, but would allow license holders to perform renewal activities on-line which would prevent them from having to go into the DLO. These actions will reduce traffic in the DLOs and reduce the time needed to perform license renewal.

RECOMMENDATION:
DMV should review the Committee report with School Bus and Traffic Safety staff to ensure consistent communication of the report and the importance of improved communication between DMV and LEA’s (Local Education Agency).

Throughout the Committee’s discussions, poor communication was cited on multiple occasions as a source of frustration between DMV and LEA’s. Improved communication will certainly go a long way in addressing concerns and ensuring LEA’s receive high quality service.

Also, attached please find two documents that are products of the Committee’s work:

- The Committee recommends that all LEA’s follow the “Recommended Process for School Bus Driver Certification” document when licensing/hiring school bus drivers. Doing so will ensure the safety of DMV staff by ensuring background checks are performed prior to taking driver candidates on the road for training. By using a consistent process statewide, communication between DMV and LEA’s should also improve.

- The Committee responded to concerns/issues collected from LEA’s across North Carolina and addressed each of those issues in a Q&A format.

The Committee plans to update LEA’s in Wilmington regarding the outcome of our work. At this point, I believe the bulk of our work is complete. I want to personally thank you for committing NCDMV resources to this project and for the opportunity to serve as Chairman of this group. It is our desire that the outcome(s) of our work improve the process of licensing school bus drivers in North Carolina and allows for improved communication between NCDMV and LEA’s.

Respectfully yours,

G. Scott Denton
Executive Director, NCPTA
Recommended Process for School Bus Driver Certification

To ensure that prospective school bus drivers are fully qualified and physically able to perform the functions required of North Carolina School Bus Drivers, the NC Division of Motor Vehicles and the North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association have established a recommended process for Driver Training and Certification. It is recommended any entities seeking to employ school bus drivers follow the process defined below.

Before allowing a prospective employee to attend DMV School Bus Driver Classroom Training, the Local Education Agency (LEA) with assistance from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) should complete the following:

- Obtain a copy of the prospective employee’s current Driver’s License (LEA)
- Perform a DMV License Check to ensure candidate meets criteria (LEA)
- Prospective employee begins LEA employment application process (LEA)
- Obtain authorization/conduct criminal background check (including sex offender check) and obtain results to ensure eligibility (LEA)
- Schedule qualified candidates for DMV Training Classwork – LEA sends class roster to DMV Trainer 3 business days prior to class with an allowable adjustment of up to 10% of candidates submitted 24 hours prior to class – See Attachment A - roster (LEA)

Once prospective employees have successfully completed the classroom portion of DMV School Bus Driver Training, the following steps will be completed before being scheduled for DMV School Bus Driver “On the Road” Training:

- DMV records scores in the DOT system
- Candidate obtains a valid DOT Medical Card
- Candidate obtains Learner’s Permit (See Attachment B - CDL-5)
  - Self-Certification must be correct when the candidate goes to DMV
  - Permit must be obtained within 90 days of passing all required classroom testing requirements
- Candidate holds Learner’s permit for minimum required 14 days
- Prospective employee must successfully pass a Drug Test before being scheduled for behind the wheel training
- LEA works with DMV to schedule behind the wheel training for prospective drivers

Prospective employees that successfully complete the “On the Road” Training administered by DMV, will complete any additional steps required by the LEA in order to complete the employment process.
Supplemental Process Notes

Does the DOT Medical Card replace the Medical Review Program process?

For current license holders that have an active medical review file open at NCDMV – The NCDMV Medical Review Office requires current license holders to submit a letter (or Removal Request Form) to their office with a copy of their DOT Medical Card. Information may be submitted by email, regular mail or fax. Need a sample of the packets that are allowed.

All medical review removal request should be sent directly to medrec@ncdot.gov or mail to Medical Review Unit 3112 MSC Raleigh, NC 27697. The request should include a copy of driver’s most recent medical certificate with a letter (or Form DL-79) requesting removal from the Medical Review Unit. (See Attachment C - DL-79 Form)

NCPTA recommends requiring all NC School Bus Drivers to have/hold a current DOT Medical Card. Any exceptions are completely the responsibility of an applicant/current license holder.

DOT Medical Card Expense

Cost for acquisition of the DOT Medical Card is an allowable Transportation expense that is included in the funding formula and reimbursed (based on budget rating) in the following year. LEA’s have a choice regarding if/how to reimburse bus drivers/prospective bus drivers for obtaining their DOT Medical Card as well as how often those reimbursements will occur (for example, reimburse once every 2 years, etc.).

Bus Driver License Committee Recommendations

The process steps outlined in this document are required for all LEA’s; process steps may be performed earlier in the process, but may not be moved later in the process. For example: A DOT Medical card must be obtained before obtaining the Commercial Learner’s Permit; if an LEA wishes to require the DOT Medical card prior to an applicant going to class, that is perfectly acceptable because the step is being moved ahead of other steps in the process.

Additional Changes to Process

Fed Motor Carrier 380 will be implemented in February, 2020. Nearly all of what is required will happen behind the scenes at DMV and “should not” add significant additional processing time to the licensure process.
Supplemental Process Notes (continued)

Additional requirements include:

- DMV has a requirement to document classroom theory;
- Behind the wheel training may increase to a full 3 days (TBD);
- DEPS will enter info into Fed Motor Carrier system; DEPS will receive a training certificate from Fed Motor Carrier (Electronic) - overnight notification.

Bus Driver License Process Committee Members

NCDMV
Paul Dlouhy, Manager School Bus and Traffic Safety
Ericka Amerson, Operations Support Manager - Medical Review Unit
Darrell McLaurin, CDL Operations
Oluwatoyin Adewumi, Nurse Manager

NCTPA
Carole Farrow, New Hanover County Schools
Diane Grumelot, Cumberland County Schools
Tanya Rich, Wake County Public Schools
Christy Estes, Wake County Public Schools
Eric Eaker, Lincoln County Schools
G. Scott Denton, NCPTA
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DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM SPECIALIST

DATE

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June 10, 2019
TRAINING USE ONLY

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Motor Vehicles

APPLICATION / CERTIFICATION
FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSE

Name (Last) (First) (Middle) (Suffix)

North Carolina License Number: ____________________________
Social Security Number: ____________________________
Date of Birth: ____________________________

Race: [ ] White [ ] Black [ ] Other [ ] American Indian [ ] Male [ ] Female [ ] Hispanic [ ] Other

Sex: [ ] Male [ ] Female

Eye Color: [ ] Blue [ ] Gray [ ] Hazel [ ] Brown [ ] Other

Height: ______ ft. ______ in.

U.S. Citizen: [ ] Yes [ ] No

Hair Color: [ ] Blonde [ ] Black [ ] Red [ ] Female [ ] Male [ ] Bald [ ] Hair Color: [ ] Blue [ ] Gray [ ] Hazel [ ] Brown [ ] Other

Dye: [ ] Yes [ ] No

Residence Address: ______________________________________

Mailing Address: ______________________________________

City: ____________________________ State: __________ Zip: __________
County: ____________________________

City: ____________________________ State: __________ Zip: __________
County: ____________________________

Class CDL Applying For ____________________________

Organ Donor: [ ] Yes [ ] No

Are you transferring to North Carolina? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Previous State and Number ____________________________

If yes, list all states and license numbers where you have been licensed in the last 10 years.

Previous State and Number ____________________________

Previous State and Number ____________________________

Previous State and Number ____________________________

INITIAL BELOW: All applicants must certify to items 1, 2, 3 or 4, whichever is applicable.

You must certify that you operate or expect to operate in one of the following applicable certifications.

1. [ ] NON-EXCEPTED INTERSTATE: operates or expects to operate in interstate commerce, is both subject to and meets the qualification requirements under 49 CFR part 391, and is required to obtain a medical examiner’s certificate by 391.45. EXAMPLES: UPS, FED EX, JB HUNT, SWIFT, WAL-MART (DOT MEDICAL EXAMINER’S CERTIFICATE REQUIRED)

2. [ ] EXCEPTED INTERSTATE: operates or expects to operate in interstate commerce, but engages exclusively in transportation or operations excepted under 49 CFR 390.3(f), 391.2, 391.55 or 398.3 from all or parts of the qualification requirements of 49 CFR part 391, and is, therefore, not required to obtain a medical examiner’s certificate. EXAMPLES: SCHOOL BUS DRIVER, VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATORS, CHURCH BUS DRIVERS, CITY, STATE, & FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

3. [ ] NON-EXCEPTED INTRASTATE: operates only in intrastate commerce and, therefore, is subject to State driver requirements. EXAMPLES: TOW TRUCK OPERATOR, GAS & OIL DELIVERY, TRUCK OPERATORS, UNDER 21 (DOT MEDICAL EXAMINER’S CERTIFICATE REQUIRED)

4. [ ] EXCEPTED INTRASTATE: operates in intrastate commerce but, engages exclusively in transportation or operations excepted from all or parts of the State driver qualification requirements. EXAMPLES: UNEMPLOYED OR RETIRED

All applicants must initial Items 5 and 6. Only initial line 7 when a skills test is required.

5. [ ] I certify that I am not subject to disqualification under Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 383.51, of any license suspension, revocation, or cancellation under State Law.

6. [ ] I certify that I do not have a driver’s license from more than one state or jurisdiction.

7. [ ] I certify that the vehicle in which I will take the commercial motor vehicle skills test is representative of the type and size motor vehicle I operate or expect to operate. IF SKILLS TEST IS REQUIRED, THE CUSTOMER MUST INITIAL

I certify that the information is correct and true to the best of my knowledge. My consent to release my signature represents driving record information. I understand that supplying false information may result in the suspension of my driving privilege. I also understand that the application fee required when submitting this application is non-refundable, and all test scores are valid for 90 days.

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June 10, 2019
North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles
Medical Review Program
Removal Request Form
DL-79

Name (First, Middle, Last): ____________________________________________

Date of Birth: _______________________________________________________

North Carolina Driver License Number: _______________________________

Reason for Request:
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________

Important: Submitting a removal request does not indicate or guarantee removal from the
Medical Review Program. Your records will be reviewed to determine if you may be removed.

You will receive a letter by mail once your request has been received.

You may need to submit additional or updated medical information in order for your request to
be processed. If additional information is required, you will be notified by mail.

Once a final decision is made, you will receive a letter by mail.

Submitting a removal request does not delay or reverse any license restrictions. If you received
a letter that restrictions must be placed on your license, please visit your local Driver License
Agency to have the restriction(s) placed.

Please mail or fax all removal requests to:

Medical Review Program, 3112 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27697-3112
or fax to (919) 733-9569, Attention: Medical Review Program

Rev. 12/16

June 10, 2019
The School Bus Driver Certification Committee evaluated concerns and issues gathered from Transportation Departments across North Carolina. Listed below are those concerns/issues and recommendations for each:

**Concern/Issue:** The process is lengthy including multiple trips to DMV to get properly certified as some examiners are not all up to speed on filling out the med-1 form properly. Drivers have to go to the DMV multiple times to show DOT cards, get permits and then to get the license.

**Discussion/Recommendation(s):** Set up appointments for obtaining licenses when possible. Applicants must have all forms completed accurately, legibly and completely. DMV is working on getting their personnel trained to improve processing time. Counties should work together so that class time is maximized.

**Concern/Issue:** Currently, DMV School Bus Driver Trainers only take 2 people on the road at a time. If one of the two doesn’t show up, training is cancelled... which affects the time it takes to license drivers.

**Discussion/Recommendation(s):** NCDMV recommends 3 drivers be trained at a time; some counties take 2 out at a time. The time it takes to train is dependent upon how many driver candidates are on the road at one time and how well the candidate demonstrate that they have acquired the skills needed to operate a school bus. NCDMV is working with its staff to evaluate taking out 1 driver when only one shows up.

**Concern/Issue:** Not holding classroom sessions in Nov, Dec, April, May, July, Aug due to having too many people to take on the road.

**Discussion/Recommendation(s):** Classes are scheduled based on the amount of drivers that are waiting to be trained for road work, so that classroom scores will not expire before receiving training. LEA’s are encouraged to work with neighboring counties to ensure classes are scheduled as often as needed. Road work training may occur in any county so long as the CDL learner’s permit has been obtained. It is desirable for counties to have training in the same area that they will be driving. Improved communication and allowing more flexible training options is highly desirable; DMV will work with LEA’s to the maximum extent possible.

**Concern/Issue:** Trainer vacancies are impacting the ability of DMV to license drivers; worse in some areas than others.

**Discussion/Recommendation(s):** As of May 15, 2019, 2 out of 77 DEPS are currently vacant; another 4 are being trained (takes 90 days) and should be ready soon.
Concern/Issue: Trainers may not have as much time to train in the future as they will have more duties within the DMV office.

Discussion/Recommendation(s): Effective 5/15/19, trainers will be taking the Class C drivers out on the road and completing the DL3A that documents whether the candidate was successful or unsuccessful. Selected locations and selected days 2 - 4:30 depending on location. Limited to 10 areas, but will continue through August 31, 2019. NCDMV will track every two weeks the backlog of school bus drivers not being trained along with other duties. NCDMV will approve overtime to address backlog of school bus drivers.

Concern/Issue: We have a year backlog due to all non-certified staff being required to have a CDL (Cumberland County).

Discussion/Recommendation(s): Cumberland currently has 370 people on waiting list to attend classroom training. Backlog is due to renewed school bus driver policy requirement. DMV wants to schedule the drivers that are most likely to drive. Once the requirement that all buses have a driver is fulfilled, the obligation on behalf of DMV is to license drivers in other areas to reduce backlogs (if any) in those areas.

Concern/Issue: The role of school district personnel and DMV personnel needs to be clarified; LEA's often do all scheduling for the class and road training. The trainers give us the dates they are available and LEA's are responsible for setting up the training.

Discussion/Recommendation(s): Each LEA must work with their District Supervisor and DEPS to determine proper scheduling. Communication is key!! It is recommended that Transportation Directors (or their designee) meet at least semi-annually with DMV to assess training needs and address any issues.

Concern/Issue: DMV holds commercial school in some of the buildings in April and July; this affects the class for school bus drivers.

Discussion/Recommendation(s): Meet with DEPS to figure this one out. Classes are held May - August. DMV is willing to conduct class in an alternate location provided the needed audiovisual/computer equipment can be supplied.

Concern/Issue: Too few classes are offered which impacts the ability to license enough drivers.

Discussion/Recommendations: It is recommended that LEA's work with DMV Area Supervisor and DEPS to facilitate scheduling between counties. Drivers may attend classroom work in any county.
Concern/Issue: Protecting July and August is essential for training bus drivers; not only are bus driver candidates needing licensure, but many coaches that drive activity buses need licensing during this time period.

Recommendation(s): The Committee is recommending that the licensure of school bus drivers take priority over use of DEPS staff in DMV offices. With the current school bus driver shortage across North Carolina, this recommendation is a top priority!

Concern/Issue: Trainers are shared among counties (3 – 6)

Discussion/Recommendation(s): NCDMV personnel are assigned based on population; with limited staff, trainers must be assigned geographically based on the population served. In the event an LEA has a large backlog of driver candidates waiting to be trained, DMV will work with that LEA to address the issue.

Concern/Issue: Drivers have to pay licensing fees up front and often do not have the resources to pay the fees.

Discussion/Recommendation(s): Cost currently is $68 for Permit; $84 for License. The committee suggest one of the following alternatives to address this issue:

- The LEA can pay on behalf of the driver by issuing a check directly to DMV.
- LEA’s can hire driver candidates early in the process as bus driver trainee position so that money is available for some of the fees when training is completed.
- LEA’s may choose to reimburse on the 1st paycheck.

Concern/Issue: Permits issued by DMV offices often are sometimes issued with incorrect endorsements; some DMV office personnel do not process licenses correctly which slows the process down and requires multiple trips to DMV; can DEPS personnel complete the entire process by issuing permits/licenses?

Discussion/Recommendation: The NCDMV trainers are provided limited access to the “Saddles” DMV system. The DEPS job is completely different from the Driver’s License Examiner position; the training protocol is different, particularly the training required to operate the DMV computer system. Therefore, DMV does not endorse requiring the DEPS to issue the permit/license. The current process complies with Federal Motor Carrier requirements.

DMV will evaluate the potential use of the mobile unit where there is a high need for school bus licensure processing in a given area. Also, the Committee is recommending that school bus drivers be allowed to renew their licenses online without having to go into a DMV office location, provided all other renewal requirements are met.
Concern/Issue: There is a concern that DOT Medical Cards are not replacing open Medical Review files at DMV and the process around closing the Medical Review process once a bus driver (candidate) obtains a DOT Medical Card.

Discussion/Recommendations: A DOT Medical Card does eliminate the need for the Medical Review Process, except in cases where a bus driver (candidate) is unable to get a DOT Medical Card for health reasons. For the DMV Medical Section to close an open Medical Review file, a form DL-79 (or written request) must be submitted to the Medical Review Section along with a copy of a current DOT Medical Card. So the form and medical card may be submitted via email, fax or regular mail.

Over time, the Medical Review Section should close any medical review files that remain open for school bus drivers. The Committee recommends that any active school bus driver or school bus driver candidate that cannot successfully obtain a DOT Medical Card not be allowed to operate a school bus.

Concern/Issue: Is it possible to do away with the pocket card? Pocket cards will be eliminated per Mr. Dlhoughey.

Discussion/Recommendation(s): At the March 31st Transportation Advisory Council Meeting, Paul Dlhoughey made and communicated a decision to eliminate the use of DMV issue pocket cards for school bus drivers.

Concern/Issue: Drivers that transfer from one county to another; look at the transfer process to ensure it is efficient and that drivers are good to drive. Need to make sure drivers are qualified and have been driving a yellow bus/making passenger stops.

Discussion/Recommendation(s): Due to the need to ensure ALL drivers are safe in transporting our children, DMV will continue the process of test driving currently licensed school bus drivers before allowing them to operate a bus in their county/jurisdiction. If a DEPS is responsible for multiple counties, that DEPS will have a discussion with the Transportation Director(s) to ensure that drivers are qualified and may choose NOT to complete the test drive if both the DEPS and the Transportation Director agree.

Concern/Issue: Local cancellations need to be part of the process; look at blue card process.

Discussion/Recommendation(s): When drivers are dismissed from employment for performance (i.e. drug testing violation or other serious driving/character offense a local cancellation must be submitted to DMV. The CDL-8 (positive test) or CDL-9 (refusal to take drug/alcohol test) must be submitted when there is a drug testing violation. The DMV must know why a person cannot be recertified in order to place notes in the system regarding recertification.
School Bus Driver Certification Committee
NCDMV School Bus and Traffic Safety / NC Pupil Transportation Association
Q&A Document

Concern/Issue: Training for use of DMV system needed for LEA personnel.

Discussion/Recommendation: Contact DEPS (or District Supervisor) for assistance with training.

Concern/Issue: Buses need to be available before 9 a.m. and after 2 p.m. so that training can be done for more than a short window during the day.

Discussion/Recommendation: Each LEA should work with their DEPS to use buses from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. provided there are adequate school bus resources available to support on the road training needs. It is recommended that school buses be “up-to-date” with equipment so that bus driver candidates are operating vehicles that have equipment that they will be using on a daily basis.

Concern/Issue: Will DEPS be allowed to work 4/10’s in the summer to mirror some LEA schedules?

Discussion/Recommendation: DEPS are allowed to work the 4/10’s schedule provided the DEPS can handle the training requirements and schedule required during a 10 hour day. LEA’s should have a discussion with the DEPS regarding this issue.

Concern/Issue: Communication between NCDMV and LEA’s needs to be open.

Discussion/Recommendation: LEA’s are encouraged to set up meetings with the DEPS and District Supervisor at least semi-annually to discuss issues and promote open communication.

Concern/Issue: Is online renewal an option.

Discussion/Recommendation(s): Currently, there is not a way to renew online. While not an impossibility, there are many issues to vet regarding this process. If online renewal is allowed, the committee recommends that minimum training/recertification requirements remain in place. The Committee recommends that DMV will evaluate the possibilities surrounding online renewal.

Concern/Issue: Requirement to send in a letter to the Medical Review section to have a DOT Medical Card replace the medical review currently on file; processing of these requests takes too long and communication/notification needs to be significantly improved.

Discussion/Recommendation: All medical review removal request should be sent directly to medrec@ncdot.gov or mail to Medical Review Unit 3112 MSC Raleigh, NC 27697. The request should include a copy of driver’s most recent medical certificate with a letter (or Form DL-79) requesting removal from the Medical Review Unit. (See Attachment C - DL-79 Form).
School Bus Driver Certification Committee
NCDMV School Bus and Traffic Safety / NC Pupil Transportation Association
Q&A Document

Concern/Issue: DMV will not conduct class for less than 5 attendees

Discussion/Recommendation: In order to ensure good use of DEPS time, DMV will continue to require at least 5 drivers attend class. If by chance only 4 of 5 candidates show up for a class, DMV will likely conduct the class . . . but, it is highly encouraged that the LEA reach out to surrounding counties to ensure there are enough candidates present to conduct the class. Bus driver candidates may attend classroom work in any county, but should be trained behind the wheel in the county in which they will be driving.

Concern/Issue: Under the hood pre-trip not to be part of the CDL driver test during the bus walk around.

Discussion/Recommendation: Federal Motor Carrier currently requires the under the hood pre-trip inspection remain a part of the licensure process, so at this time this requirement will remain in place.

Concern/Issue: Review what is taught in the classroom; there is a concern that teaching the newer concepts needed to acquire CDL does not focus enough on what school bus drivers need to know to safely operate a school bus.

Discussion/Recommendation: DMV will review the mandatory CDL requirements along with supplemental training materials to renew the focus on NC school bus driver training and certification. DMV will work with staff to promote the use of the school bus training manual to ensure the best possible training for school bus drivers.

Concern/Issue: Is it possible for North Carolina to issue their own license outside of the Federal Motor Carrier rules?

Discussion/Recommendation: There currently are no licenses issued for any CDL vehicles that do not comply with FMC rules. Under Federal guidelines, a driver can only be issued one license so they would not be able to operate a vehicle outside of North Carolina.