



# Operations Writing Committee

## State Delegation Ready Proposals

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**PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE 17<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SPECIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES (NSTSP) PUBLICATION**

Submitted by: General Operations Writing Committee. Excerpts from the 2015 NSTSP publication; **inserted language, red, bold & underlined; ~~deleted language strike through.~~**

**General Operations – Proposal Number 1**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 123**

**OPERATIONS**

**INTRODUCTION**

The success of any school transportation operation depends largely on the performance and degree of dedication displayed by those involved. These recommendations are designed to assist state agencies, school districts, school and Head Start administrators and private operators in understanding their student transportation programs and developing applicable policies, including those for transporting students with special needs. **The size and scope of student transportation operations are highly varied across the country. This leads to varying levels of administrative and managerial capabilities that must be acknowledged when considering and determining the ability of the operations to implement the full scope of recommendations included in this document. While the recommendations identify and highlight best practices it is understood that not all operations will have the administrative, financial, or managerial capabilities to implement every recommendation.**

**Rationale for Change:** To recognize that the administrative and managerial capacity of Transportation departments vary and consequentially their capacity to implement and administer all recommendations also vary. this recognition should be explicit in order to ensure that expectations for administrators are properly aligned with feasible organizational capacity.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

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**General Operations – Proposal Number 2**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 123**

**SCHOOL TRAVEL CHOICES**

Children in the United States travel to and from pre-school, school and related activities by a variety of modes. Administrators, parents and students often choose, or encourage the use of modes of, travel for reasons other than maximizing safety or minimizing risk (e.g., convenience, flexibility, and cost). It is recommended that all school students be transported in a school bus **with a qualified driver.**

**Rationale for Change:** - The proposed language is to ensure that all users of the National School Transportation Specification and Procedures (NSTSP) publication are aware of the challenges organizations of any size can have in implementing the full scope of the suggested best practices in the document.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

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**General Operations – Proposal Number 3**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 128**

**LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION**

A. Activities

1. Assign adequately trained **and certified in accordance with state and federal requirements** staff the responsibility for implementing and/or supervising a comprehensive student transportation program;
2. Participate in student transportation operations within its jurisdiction, including training programs for all transportation personnel, **to include provisions of the Entry Level Driver training requirements contained in 49cfr380,** review of school bus routes, investigation and reporting of crashes and other transportation problems and evaluation of the student transportation system;
3. Ensure compliance with federal and state student transportation laws, regulations and policies, including drug/alcohol testing programs as required in the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991, and in compliance with 49 CFR, Parts 40 and 382 and with 45 CFR 1310, **and** other Head Start regulations, **and requirements of the drug and alcohol clearing house 49cfr383.75 & 354.235,** as may be applicable;

**Rationale for Change:** Updating section to meet current state and federal requirements.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None Noted

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**General Operations – Proposal Number 4**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 133**

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Driver Responsibilities

- E. Drivers should maintain order and safety and protect the rights of others in the school bus. They should exercise good judgment and prudence in this pursuit, using appropriate verbal interventions. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
1. Minimizing interior noise;
  2. Requiring an orderly entrance and exit, **using proper loading and unloading procedures;**
  3. Eliminating movement or potential movement of objects;
  4. Requiring silence at railroad crossings; and
  5. **Required compliance with all emergency procedures including accident and evacuation procedures**

**Rationale for Change:** Updating to reflect safe loading and unloading procedures and add accident, evacuation and emergencies procedures.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

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**General Operations – Proposal Number 5**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 134 &135**

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Driver Responsibilities

K. Drivers shall be trained in, and shall abide by, confidentiality rules and regulations (FERPA, IDEA, HIPAA, etc.:

2. Walk-around inspection:

Before starting the inspection, place the transmission in neutral and set the parking brake (or fully depress the clutch pedal in manual transmission equipped vehicles), start the engine and inspect the bus from top to bottom and end to end. Check these items:

- d. Windows (for dirt, stickers or other obstructions to vision and clean, if necessary);
- e. Mirrors (clean, properly **set in accordance with FMVSS 111** aimed and tightly adjusted);

**Rationale for Change:** Updating to meet federal requirements.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

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**General Operations – Proposal Number 6**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 138**

**Student Responsibilities**

Proper student behavior is important because the distraction of the driver can contribute to crashes. Students and parents should be made aware of, and should abide by, reasonable regulations to enhance safety. The consequences of unacceptable behavior should be clearly understood. The following actions will help to protect the student's rights and to maintain order in the bus:

- D. Students should be taught to realize that school bus transportation is a privilege and can be denied or revoked if they do not conduct themselves properly.

**Rationale for Change:** Unless school transportation is mandated.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None Noted



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**General Operations – Proposal Number 7**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 150**

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

F. Records

1. Crash and safety incident investigation records function as the data base for statistical analysis, which, in turn, provides material for crash prevention programs. in addition to the uniform school bus crash reporting criteria, additional crash safety incident investigation records may include the following information:
  - a. If injuries occurred, a list of all students injured, their home addresses phone numbers and dates of birth, the extent of their injuries and appropriate explanations;
  - b. A list of bus occupants, **seating charts** and witnesses, including addresses, ages, phone numbers and statements;

**Rationale for Change:** Updating section to meet current best practices.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

## General Operations – Proposal Number 8

Proposed Change, Page #: 156 & 157

### SELECTION AND TRAINING OF BUS DRIVERS

- A. Procedures for selection of school bus drivers should include the following items:
7. Perform reference checks and background checks on all potential new bus drivers, to include interactions with children and/or any concerns working with children;
  8. Physical examinations to determine if the driver is capable to perform an emergency evacuation and/or aide passengers in the event of an evacuation at any time; and ~~and drug and alcohol testing administered in accordance with local, state and federal requirements; and~~
  9. Drug and alcohol testing administered in accordance with local, state and federal requirements; and
  - ~~9.~~10. A determination of educational attainment to demonstrate the applicant's ability to follow detailed, written instructions and to be able to record and report data accurately.

**Rationale for Change:** Drivers must be able to perform; assist and react in emergency situations They should successfully complete a physical performance test to demonstrate their abilities.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None Noted

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**General Operations – Proposal Number 9**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 164**

**ROUTING, SCHEDULING AND SCHOOL BUS STOPS**

It is necessary to procure a map of the area served by a school, school system or Head Start program in order to establish bus routes that will adequately meet the needs of student in **an** area. Information on road conditions, railroad crossings, **location of sexual predators** and other factors that might affect the operation should be recorded, along with the location of homes and the number of school-age children in each household. (See also “*Identification and Evaluation of School Bus Route and Hazard Marking Systems*” in APPENDIX D.) Satisfactory school bus stops must be identified along streets and highways where buses can travel with the least amount of risk to include right turns as much as possible. The number of students to be transported, individual needs and the distance to be traveled **is** are primary factors in allocating equipment for **an** area. Students should be assigned to specific stops according to age and ability, appropriate walking distances, grade level, safe travel paths and the school or Head Start Center attended. Calculation of distance between stops shall comply with the minimum distance required to activate the amber and red lighting systems. Students should not travel farther to a stop than the set walk distances for their respective school/center as deemed by each school district. Additional planning may require multiple considerations to include space availability, chain of custody, etc.

**Rationale for Change:** Addition to address the concerns of sexual predators which may live near bus stops to protect the students accessing transportation. Additional strike through is for grammatical reasons.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

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**General Operations – Proposal Number 10**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 166**

**ROUTING AND SCHEDULING**

D Methods of serving bus routes

3. The “multiple trip plan” or “dual-trip plan” calls for ~~more~~ **two or more** trips each morning and afternoon by each bus. This arrangement is feasible only where route distances are relatively short or time differences between locations are great. High school students, for example, may be brought to school on the first morning trip, with elementary children arriving on the second trip. In the afternoon, the elementary children should be brought home first if it is desired that the elementary day be shorter than the high school day. Districts whose program requires a day of equal lengths for both groups may transport the high school students on the first trip in the morning and return them on the first trip in the afternoon.

**Rationale for Change:** Verbiage cleaned up to properly reflect intent.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

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**General Operations – Proposal Number 11**

**Proposed Change, Page #: 173**

**EVAUATION OF THE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

- A. Each school district or Head Start agency should have a plan for evaluating its student transportation program. Such evaluations should enable school districts or Head Start agencies to:
1. Verify compliance with rules, regulations and laws;
  2. audit the efficiency, **effectiveness, and quality** of program service;

**Rationale for Change:** The efficiency of systems, which most often is interpreted as the cost of systems. this proposed change is designed to explicitly acknowledge that transportation department often have multiple, competing concerns that must be considered when designing the structure of the service. this change acknowledges that, illustratively, reducing the number of buses may be good for efficiency (the current purpose of the section) but it may have negative impacts on the perceived quality and/or satisfaction with the system by its primary users. a failure to acknowledge these competing interests implies that the transportation managers only job is to run as few buses as cheaply as possible, the definition of efficiency, and that is clearly not the only consideration that should go into an evaluation of a transportation system.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** - None noted

## General Operations – Proposal Number 12

Proposed Change, Page #: 174

### EVAUATION OF THE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- C. Areas subject to evaluation include:
1. Board of Education or Head Start policies;
  2. Routing procedures and processes for efficiency, effectiveness, and the management of route hazard analysis;
  3. Types of service provided;
  4. Financial obligations;
  5. Quality of service;
  6. Training of staff and students;
  7. Replacement planning, financing of purchases, and the maintenance of buses, other vehicles and equipment;
  8. Record keeping systems; and
  9. Analysis of the cost and operational impacts of changes to law, regulation, and policy
  10. The influence of school and program placement on the cost of transportation and the impact on key concerns such as student ride time;
  11. The influence of school start and end times on transportation costs and resource requirements;
  12. The acquisition and implementation of efficiency and effectiveness enhancing technologies;
  913. Other areas as determined by state and local policy.

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**Rationale for Change:** The range of issues and concerns that modern transportation departments must address have expanded considerably over the last five years. the expectations for operational efficiency and effectiveness, while always high, have only increased as resources have become more constrained, programs have expanded, and statutory and regulatory changes have continued to increase requirements without concomitant increases in funding. this change is designed to acknowledge that the range of issues and concerns that transportation professionals must consider have expanded well beyond the purely operational and now include significant financial, policy, and regulatory assessments to determine the impact of operational practices on the safety and reliability of services.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** - There is no direct out-of-pocket impact. However, including additional items for review will have the soft costs associated with the additional time necessary for their review.

## General Operations – Proposal Number 13

Proposed Change, Page #: 176

### ~~NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB)~~ EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA)

#### A. Overview

~~In January 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB). The act makes substantial new requirements for state and local education agencies (LEAs; or “school districts”) in order to continue to receive Federal money for education. The act also provides additional rights for students and parents. Information on how the ESEA relates to pupil transportation and descriptions of transportation choice options and requirements for school districts follows.~~

**The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. ESSA replaces No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and rolls back much of the federal requirements for pupil transportation with regard to student achievement.**

#### ~~B. Attendance choice options~~ 1. Low performing

##### ~~1. Low performing~~

~~If a school receiving Title I, Part A funds is identified as “low performing” for two consecutive years, parents have the option of enrolling their students in another public school that has not been identified as *low performing*. There are many rules and regulations controlling this process, including the determination of which school the parent can select as the alternate school. The Act does not provide for unlimited choice, however. For instance, if the “low performing” school is the sole elementary school in a school district, there is no obligation to provide an alternate school choice. If a school continues not to show “adequate yearly progress” (as defined in the NCLB), students continue to have a right to transportation to a choice school.~~

##### ~~2. Persistently dangerous~~

~~If a school receiving Title I, Part A funds is identified as “persistently dangerous,” students have the right to be offered other optional public school enrollment opportunities. (A discussion of the process leading to the “persistently dangerous” designation is beyond the scope of this~~



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~~material.) Once a school is designated as “persistently dangerous,” parents are afforded rights to school choice for their students at that school.~~

~~3. Violent Students~~

~~Students involved in violent incidents have a right to attend another public school. All of these situations require LEAs to provide students and parents the option of enrolling in an appropriate alternate public school, i.e., *school choice*.~~

**Rationale for Change:** Update to regulation to reflect change of NCLB to ESSA and summarize to refer to regulations as approved through President Obama. Individuals may reference directly to assure updated information and assure succinct section.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

## General Operations – Proposal Number 14

Proposed Change, Page # 387 New Addition:

### SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

#### Bus Driver

#### Alternative Transportation Driver

#### A. The specific duties should include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

1. Report defective equipment and accessories, including but not limited to, fire extinguishers, highway warning kits, first aid and body fluid cleanup kits, snow chains, sanders, etc., and when necessary install, service or replace defective equipment;
2. Perform required operational and safety inspections of the vehicle and all related equipment;
3. Ability to clean and service the vehicle to include interior cleaning and exterior vehicle washing, installation of fuel, oil and other fluids, as directed;
4. Operate all hand and foot controls installed in a vehicle, as required;
5. Perform basic first aid, as appropriate, which may include CPR;
6. Work effectively with a group of students of different grade levels, abilities or program placement;
7. Complete legibly and accurately forms, records, reports and other documentation/data-logging activities, as required by state or district policy.
8. Be punctual;
9. Dress appropriately and wear proper foot protection;
10. Manage passengers in the vehicle;
11. Report unsafe acts or conditions that require the attention of any person other than the driver; and
12. Successfully complete a driver training program and courses established by the state or school district.

**Page Continued:**

**B. Minimum qualifications should include, but are not limited to these:**

- 1. High school graduate or equivalent.**
- 2. Hold and maintain a class license with all applicable endorsements for the type of vehicle being driven;**
- 3. Excellent driving record;**
- 4. Physical ability to drive and perform all duties related to vehicle operations;**
- 5. Ability to relate effectively with parents, staff and public in a multicultural and multiracial community;**
- 6. Possess sufficient command of local language so as to communicate with students, parents, district staff members and other concerned individuals regarding all aspects of their job-related activities;**
- 7. Ability to pass a criminal history background check;**
- 8. Ability to pass a state or other required medical examination: and**
- 9. Ability to pass a federally mandated drug/alcohol screen.**

**Bus Attendant (Monitor, Aide, Driver Assistant, Para Para Professional, Matron)**

**Rationale for Change:** This proposal is to ensure that ridesharing companies (non-school bus) that are contracted with school districts for student transportation have guidelines to following when selecting and training their drivers.

**Fiscal Impact if Any:** None noted

## General Operations – Proposal Number 15

### Proposed Change, Page # Appendix D:- New Addition

#### Identifying School Bus Stop Risk Factors

##### Introduction:

Each day, nearly 500,000 school buses transport over 26 million school children to and from school, stopping at millions of uniquely determined locations throughout the United States. School district administrators and transportation officials are challenged each year with designing school bus routes and determining the location of bus stops. This is a complex task in and of itself but especially when it involves working with parents, landowners, federal, state, county, city and local, traffic and law enforcement officials, and other stakeholders. But how safe are school bus stops? Are some school bus stops safer than others? Additionally, once the location of a school bus stop has been identified, what steps are taken to determine and rate the safety or relative risk of that school bus stop?

##### School bus design and safety devices:

The school transportation community, school bus manufacturers and their suppliers have gone to great lengths to design and create devices to make a school bus stop safe for pupils. The school bus design features and special added equipment include, but are not limited to the following:

- The yellow school bus color
- School Bus Red/Amber lights
- Left side stop arm (front and/or rear)
- Extended single stop arm
- Stop arm cameras
- FMVSS 111 mirror system
- PA system with exterior speaker(s)
- Driver/monitor hand-held stop sign
- Bus body mounted cameras/monitors
- Extended double stop arm
- Movement sensors
- Two-way communication systems
- Bus tracking system (GPS)
- Student tracking system
- Other

These design features and safety devices have enhanced safety at school bus stops but do not ensure that it's safe for a pupil to load or unload from the school bus, particularly when a student is required to cross the roadway to reach the bus or disembark and cross the roadway to get home. Approximately 1/3 of all school bus-related fatalities each year are the result of students being struck by the bus and another 1/3 are caused by other vehicles on the road with the bus. In other words, school bus design features and safety devices simply cannot guarantee that motorists will stop at school bus stops.

According to the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services ninth annual survey on illegal passing of school buses (<http://www.nasdpts.org/stoparm/>), 130,963 school bus drivers reported that 95,319 vehicles passed their buses illegally on a single day during the 2018-19 school year. Throughout a 180-day school year, these sample results point

to more than 17 million violations among America's motoring public and the actual number of incidents is likely far greater, since not all school bus drivers participated in the voluntary survey.

The physical presence of an adult school crossing guard/adult monitor or the school bus driver her/himself could ensure that traffic is stopped, and it is safe before allowing a student to cross the roadway to board the bus or before allowing a student to cross the roadway to go home. An adult monitor would also provide additional eyes and ears because students being struck by the bus or caught in the service door is a leading cause of school bus loading/unloading injuries and fatalities.

In addition to the items above, one other deterrent would be increased penalties and fines for motorist that fail to obey state laws at school bus stops. However, that also does not guarantee a motorist will stop for the students. The goal is zero injuries and fatalities and to achieve this will require changes in both school bus driver awareness and the attention of other motorists at school bus stops.

#### School Bus Stop Risk Factors:

There are a variety of things that should be considered when designating all school bus stops. At a minimum, the following list of items should be used to help assess the risks associated with each stop:

- The age of the students involved
- Disabilities and/or special transportation needs of the students
- Security threats
- Visibility (daylight, darkness)
- Time of day
- The number of students at the bus stop.
- The physical location of the bus stop
- The roadway (single or multi-lane)
- Traffic on the roadway
- Traffic control devices
- The terrain surrounding the bus stop
- The speed limit of the roadway.
- Weather (rain, snow, ice, wind, dust, fog, etc.)

School bus stops should be selected with situational awareness in mind so the driver can anticipate a potential threat or high-risk situation before stopping picking up or discharging students. There are a multitude of other variables that may apply in any given local area that could/should be added to the list above to obtain an accurate rating for each school bus stop. For example, some jurisdictions may have locations where a bus stop is prohibited. One year a property owner may allow a school bus stop, the next it may be prohibited. Additionally, risk factors at a given school bus stop change throughout the year, requiring a periodic assessment of each stop. For example, a low risk stop at the beginning of the year may change and become more dangerous during the school year as a result of seasonal change and/or age of students.

Page Continued:

**School Bus Stop Risk Factor Rating Guide:**

**It is suggested that the following rating system be utilized when assessing the inherent risk of a designated bus stop (The higher the rating the higher the risk):**

<b><u>“SAMPLE” rating of each school bus risk factor: (Rating Scale: Low Risk = 0 High Risk =10)</u></b>	<b><u>RATING GUIDE</u></b>	<b><u>BUS STOP RATING</u></b>
<b><u>1. Pre-School Kindergarten Age pupil(s)</u></b>	<b><u>8 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>2. Elementary School Age Pupil(s)</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>3. Middle School Age Pupil(s)</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>4. Secondary School Age Pupil(s)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>5. Special Needs Pupils(s)</u></b>	<b><u>8 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>6. On the main traveled roadway bus stop (red light crossover)</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>7. On the main traveled roadway bus stop (Right side only)</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>8. Off the main traveled roadway bus stop (red light crossover)</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>9. Off the main traveled roadway bus stop (right side only) (No Rt. Side Passing)</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>10. Number of pupils at the bus stop</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>11. Visibility at bus stop (lighting, etc.)</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>12. Multiple lane roadways/divided highway/one-way roadways</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>13. Urban, suburban, or rural traffic conditions</u></b>	<b><u>2 to 05</u></b>	
<b><u>14. Traffic control devices (signal vs. signs)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 05</u></b>	
<b><u>15. Terrain (Hills, Curves or flat conditions)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>16. Highway/roadway speed limit</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>17. Time of day (daylight or darkness)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 05</u></b>	
<b><u>18. Line of sight visibility to or from bus stop</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>19. Road conditions (dirt, mud, ice, pavement, etc.)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>20. Weather Conditions (snow, rain, wind, ice, etc.)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>21. Climatic conditions (fog, smoke, dust, etc.)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 08</u></b>	
<b><u>22. Hazardous conditions (animals, waterways, Railroads, ditches, lakes, ponds, etc.)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>23. End of route turn around</u></b>	<b><u>5 to 10</u></b>	
<b><u>24. Security threat assessment (Potential for criminal activity)</u></b>	<b><u>3 to 10</u></b>	

**Extra Care Loading/Unloading Procedures at High Risk School Bus Stops :**

**Each school bus stop should be assigned a risk factor rating. The higher the risk factor rating the greater the need to implement extra care procedures during the student loading and/or unloading process. Some examples of extra care student loading and unloading practices are as follows:**

- **Right-side only school bus stops located off the main travel portion of the roadway (prohibits right side Passing of the school bus)**

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- Door to door (right-side) only (Off the main travel portion of the roadway)
- Curb to curb (right-side) only
- Red light crossover escort to or from the school bus (Optional)

**Rationale for Change:** As reported annually by the Kansas Department of Education and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) student injuries and fatalities at school bus stops continue to be a significant problem. Despite ongoing efforts by the school transportation community, state and federal agencies and school bus manufacturers, a school bus stop continues to be the most dangerous part of every school bus ride. There is nothing in the 16th National School Transportation Procedures and Specifications publication that addresses school bus stop risk factors.

**Fiscal Impact if Any: Cost factors could include the following:**

1. Staff time evaluating all designated school bus stops in the carrier's jurisdiction. (Cost Unknown)
2. Increasing school bus fleet if utilizing only right-side student loading and unloading. (Cost Unknown)
3. Using paid monitors rather than drivers to conduct student escorts if implemented. (Cost Unknown)
4. School bus driver training to avoid injuries caused by driver error at high risk stops. (Cost Unknown)

END