

The Buncombe County Board of Education directs the Superintendent to operate a pupil transportation system based upon the General Statutes of North Carolina concerning pupil transportation, G.S. 115C-239 et. seq., and to operate a maintenance program in compliance with state law and state regulations so as to provide the most efficient and economical services possible.

A. ANNUAL REVIEW OF BUS ROUTES

Prior to the commencement of each school year, the principals, with the aid of the Transportation Department, shall prepare and submit to the Superintendent or his designee for approval a proposed route for each school bus. Adjustments may be made in the proposed routes to accommodate unforeseen situations which occur during the first two months of the school year, but no changes shall be made after November 1, except for extraordinary cause as recommended by the Transportation Director and approved by the Superintendent or his designee. All bus routes will be kept on file, and all changes will be filed within 10 days after such change becomes effective.

B. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ROUTING SCHOOL BUSES

1. Buses should be routed so that they pass within one mile of the residence of each pupil who resides more than one and one-half miles from the school which serves his attendance area.
2. The travel time (one way) for each student should not exceed one and one-half hours under normal conditions. However, it is the goal of the Board to reduce the maximum travel time for each student to one hour (one way).
3. To the extent possible, school bus routes and stops should be established so as to avoid steep hills, sharp curves and other hazardous road conditions.
4. In urban areas and densely populated suburban areas, school buses shall be routed so as to most safely and economically serve students eligible for transportation.
5. In rural and suburban areas, school buses shall be routed so as to most safely and economically serve students eligible for transportation, but shall be routed on main or primary roads and not onto side roads or into housing developments unless:
 - a. There is a student who resides more than .5 of a mile from the main or primary road, or
 - b. There are ten or more students to be served by one bus and unless;
 - c. The side road is a state or city maintained road; and
 - d. There is a safe place for the bus to turn around.

6. School buses may be routed to serve students who reside within one and one-half miles of the school which serves their residence in order to avoid hazardous walking conditions.

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SHORTENING OR ELIMINATING ROUTES

1. During the annual review described in Section I, the principal, with the aid of the Transportation Department, shall review each route in an effort to shorten the time and distance traveled by each school bus.
2. In the event of a fuel shortage or a financial emergency due to a sudden or unforeseen increase in the cost of fuel, as determined by the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, school bus routes may be altered to run main highways and streets in a general path or direction to each school with little deviation and in rural and suburban areas, in particular, routes may be removed from side roads and housing developments.

D. TRANSPORTATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Transportation shall be provided from a student's home to and from school for those "children with disabilities," as defined by G.S. 115C-250 who because of their disability cannot ride regular school buses. If school bus transportation cannot reasonably be provided, the school system shall assist the child's parent in obtaining travel reimbursement from the State of North Carolina at the standard rate.

A student who is identified as having special needs following procedures in the North Carolina *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities* will be provided with transportation services as required by law.

E. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR BUS STOPS

1. The principal, with the aid of the Transportation Department, shall designate school bus stops.
2. Bus stops shall be no closer together than .2 miles unless the distance is shortened in the interest of safety.
3. School buses shall come to a complete stop at each bus stop. If no student is in sight, the bus shall proceed onward immediately.
4. It is the responsibility of the school bus driver to report to the principal the name of any student who is frequently late for the bus.

F. TRANSPORTATION TO LOCATIONS OTHER THAN HOME

Upon request, the superintendent or designee may, but is not required to, assign a student to a bus to transport the student to and/or from a location other than home if the following conditions are met.

1. The student's parent or guardian submits a written, signed request that states the specific location other than home to which the student is to be transported and acknowledges that the parent or guardian and not the school system is responsible for the student's safety once the child has departed from the bus.
2. The request for such transportation does not require a bus to deviate in any significant way from an established route.
3. There is capacity on the bus if the request would necessitate the student's riding a different bus from the regularly assigned bus.
4. The student's residence and requested bus stop are within the zone eligible for transportation service.
5. The request for such transportation does not cause the school system to incur any additional cost.
6. The proposed bus stop meets safety standards established by law, the board, the superintendent or the principal.

Any changes in bus stops must be approved by the superintendent or designee.

G. BUS ROUTES IN HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS

School buses will not be allowed to operate if there is a serious threat to the safety of students or drivers. The superintendent may develop a more limited bus route for hazardous weather conditions in order to operate only on roads that are safe. To the extent possible, parents will be notified in advance of the bus route that will be used in hazardous conditions. Example: No buses on icy roads.

Legal References: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*; G.S. 115C-240(d), -246,16 N.C.A.C 6B .0111; *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, State Board of Education Policy GCS-D-000; State Board of Education Policies TCS-H-000, -002.

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