

SECTION IV: OPERATIONS

C. BUS STOPS

A critical factor in the safe transportation of students to and from school is the selection of a student's bus stop. There are many factors to be considered in the selection of a school bus stop. The court system has determined that school districts may choose a stop location with "reasonable safety", not the "safest stop". The TPSS relies on each school bus driver to make a "reasonably safe" bus stop determination for each student riding their bus. Listed below are some things to consider when determining a school bus stop location:

1. Getting to the Stop

In determining a school bus stop location, the bus driver should consider how each student will travel from their home to their assigned bus stop. Hazards such as railroads, interstates, intersections, known child molesters, drug houses, and dangerous animals should be avoided if at all possible.

The TPSSB has established a maximum walking distance of 3/10 (1600 feet) of a mile (measured from the end of a student's driveway to the bus stop) for all students. If a student's actual walking distance exceeds this distance, then a stop location within the maximum walking distance should be established.

2. Distance Between Stops

Louisiana law requires that a school bus driver provide a minimum of 100 feet notice to other motorists that the school bus plans to stop to load or unload students. This distance is roughly equivalent to three school buses in length. Due to this requirement, school bus stops should be at least 100 feet apart.

3. Number of Bus Stops

Drivers must balance the desire to establish the safest bus stops with the need to have the most efficient bus stops. This balance requires drivers to take many factors into consideration in determining the number of bus stops needed to load and unload assigned students in a timely manner. Some factors to consider are listed as follows:

a. Advantage of frequent stops:

- 1) Parents feel secure when they are able to monitor their children at the stop;
- 2) Ease of getting to the stop location due the lack of sidewalks, density of traffic, and weather conditions;
- 3) Fewer students at each stop can mean less behavior problems;

b. Disadvantage of frequent stops;

- 1) Routes take longer because of additional bus stops and loading time;
- 2) Additional stopping and starting creates additional traffic hazards and delays;
- 3) Can frustrate other motorists resulting in unsafe driving patterns;
- 4) Additional stopping and starting requires more vehicle maintenance.

4. Number and Age of Students at Stop

The characteristics of each stop location such as traffic speed, waiting area for students (i.e. 15 feet from the road), age of students, and other hazards in the vicinity must be considered in determining how many students can safely wait at one stop. However, at stop locations with a large number of students or with very young students, drivers may request parents to assist in monitoring student behavior while waiting for the bus to arrive or depart.

5. Visibility

In order for a school bus to safely execute a school bus stop and for all traffic to respond properly, there must be adequate visibility in both directions at the bus stop. Motorists must have sufficient time to react to the bus and to stop their vehicle in a controlled manner. Motorists need between 100 to 500 feet of visibility depending on the vehicle's speed and size to adequately react to a stopping school bus. A driver should consider the roadway characteristics such as curves, hills, slopes, trees, shrubs, buildings, and real vs. posted speed. If a particular stop encounters some of these characteristics and can not be relocated, then "School Bus Stop Ahead" signage may be necessary to provide advance warning to motorists. To begin the process of obtaining a "School Bus Stop" sign, drivers need only contact their Field Coordinator.

6. Crossing the Road

Crossing the road is the most hazardous aspect of riding a school bus and should be eliminated whenever and wherever possible. However, because of the number of two lane roadways in our parish, not every student can be picked up and dropped off on the right side of the bus. A driver who travels a road section in both directions should require students to load and unload on the right side of the bus even if this means they have a longer ride to and from school.

7. Walking Distance to Bus Stop

The TPSS has established that no student will walk more than three tenths (3/10 or 1600 feet) of a mile from the end of their driveway to the bus stop location. If a student is walking more than three tenths (.3) of a mile, the Transportation Department must make a reasonable effort to relocate the bus stop to a location within the required walking distance.

8. Driver Concern over a Stop Selection

If you have a question or concern over a specific bus stop location, please do not hesitate to contact the Transportation Department so we may assist in providing a "reasonably safe" bus stop location for your student rider.

9. Miscellaneous Bus Stop Information

In general, students should be picked up and returned to the same morning and afternoon bus stop unless written permission from the student's parent/guardian has been approved by the Principal or Transportation Director and given to the driver. The parent/guardian must complete the Transportation Special Request Form and submit it to their child's school principal for approval. (See Appendix)

Parents/guardians requesting their child be picked up and/or dropped off at a work location must provide written permission from their employer on the employer's business letter head. This written permission must accompany the parent's completed Transportation Special Request Form requesting a change in student's transportation.

ⁱ Revised Date July 1, 2008.