

SECTION V: EQUIPMENT

A. SCHOOL BUSES

1. Basic Specifications

The TPSS reserves the right to determine the type, size, and features of each school bus contracted or leased to the TPSB. The size of the bus will be determined based on the needs of the route in question. In addition, lift buses will be configured in such a manner as to meet the needs of the schools that are to be served by the bus. All bus purchases are to be pre-approved by the Transportation Director. No vehicle shall enter service on behalf of TPSB without the prior approval or consent of the Transportation Director (or designee).

a. Back-up Alarm

Every new and used bus purchased shall be equipped with an electronic back-up alarm which automatically sounds on backing. It must be capable of emitting sound audible under normal conditions from a distance of not less than one hundred feet and not less than 112dB. The alarm shall also be capable of operating automatically when the vehicle is in either neutral or a forward gear but still rolls backward. Hub mounted bells are not acceptable and should be removed from the vehicle.

b. Strobe Light

Every bus shall be equipped with a roof mounted double-flash strobe light. The strobe light should be located in the rear area of the bus roof that coincides with the last two window bays when viewed from the left or right side of the vehicle. A light cage is not required but is recommended to protect the strobe light from low hanging branches.

At a minimum, the bus's strobe light shall be activated whenever the bus is on the route. However, drivers are encouraged to activate the strobe light whenever the bus is in motion to increase the bus's visibility to the motoring public.

c. Crossing Arm

Every new or used school bus purchased after January 1, 1996 shall be equipped with a crossing arm which is mounted to the right side of the front bumper. When opened, this arm shall extend a minimum of seventy inches (70") from the front bumper attachment point. The crossing arm shall automatically open and close at the same time that stop arms and stoplights are activated or deactivated.

d. Fire Extinguisher

Each bus shall be equipped with a five (5) pound capacity (Type A, B, or C) dry-chemical type fire extinguisher with a gauge mounted in the manufacturer's bracket, located in the driver's compartment, and clearly marked as "Fire Extinguisher". The fire extinguisher shall bear the label of Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc. showing a rating of not less than 2A-10B/C as specified by

Louisiana Department of Education Bulletin 1213, 1998 edition. Fire extinguishers shall be inspected annually and with the current inspection tag affixed to the unit to ensure their proper operation in an emergency. Drivers are encouraged to use a high quality rechargeable fire extinguisher unit because of reliability concerns surrounding the use of disposable fire extinguishers.

e. Identification

As stated in the State of Louisiana Department of Education Bulletin 1213, all school buses must be properly identified. Only lettering and signs approved by state law or regulation shall appear on the outside of the school buses. Lettering shall be limited to the name of the owner or operator necessary for identification, including the name of the parish/city school system. All lettering must be in block form.

Lettering Sample: **Tangipahoa Parish Schools Joseph Smith**

- 1) All letters and numbers used for identification purposes shall be in glossy black enamel or glossy black vinyl decals (except front bumper lettering).
- 2) The body shall bear the words "SCHOOL BUS" in glossy black letters at least eight (8) inches high on both the front and rear of the school bus or on signs attached thereto.
- 3) The bus shall have the name of the owner on the left side of the bus under the driver's side window in glossy black lettering at least two (2) inches in height, but not more than four (4) inches in height. The name should be the owner's legal name and should not contain nicknames, handles, etc.
- 4) The numbering system on school buses shall be a minimum of five (5) inches in height and is required in and limited to four locations.
 - a) On the right side of the bus, it is behind the service door below the window line and not to exceed twenty-four (24) inches below this point.
 - b) On the left side, it is directly below the driver's window.
 - c) On the rear, it is beneath the right rear tail light.
 - d) On the front, it is either in the center of the front bumper, the right side of the bumper, or on a panel along the bumper. The numbers located on the front bumper shall be white in color.
- 5) Only the following signs/decals are approved for use on the exterior of the school bus:
 - a) Decals indicating handicapped riders are on board.
 - b) A decal indicating the school bus stops for all railroad crossings.

- c) A decal indicating that firearms of any kind are forbidden by Louisiana law.
- 6) The following decals may be placed on the interior of the school bus:
 - a) A decal stating the School Bus Rules.
 - b) A decal stating that it is against Louisiana law to threaten or intimidate a school bus operator.
 - c) A decal reminding the driver to check for sleeping students.
 - d) A decal indicating that the actions and speech of occupants may be photographed or videotaped with sound.

f. Warning Devices

Each school bus shall contain a minimum of three (3) retro-reflective triangle road warning devices that shall be mounted in a place that is easily accessible to the driver in times of emergency.

g. First Aid Kit

The bus shall have a removable moisture proof and dust proof first aid kit mounted in an accessible area within the driver's compartment and shall be marked to indicate its location.

A minimum unit shall include the following supplies:

- 1) Two (2) single units Adhesive Tape--1 inch x 2 1/2 yards;
- 2) Two (2) single units Sterile Gauze Pads--3 inches x 3 inches (12 per unit);
- 3) One (1) single unit Adhesive Bandage--3 inches x 3/4 inches (100 per unit);
- 4) One (1) single unit Bandage Compress--2 inch (12 per unit);
- 5) One (1) single unit Bandage Compress--3 inch (12 per unit);
- 6) Two (2) single units Sterile Gauze Roller Bandage--2 inches x 6 yards;
- 7) Two (2) single units Non-sterile Triangular Bandage--approximately 40 inches x 36 inches x 54 inches with 2 safety pins;
- 8) Three (3) single units Sterile Gauze--36 inches x 36 inches (U.S.P. 2428 count);
- 9) Three (3) single units Sterile Eye Pad--(1 per unit);
- 10) One (1) pair Scissors;
- 11) One (1) pair Surgical Gloves (Medium or Large in size).

h. Accessory Power Plug

Effective July 1, 2007, every bus entering the service of the TPSS shall be equipped with a 12V power source suitable for use with a cellular phone charger.

i. Bus Body

The bus body must be painted National School Bus Yellow with body trim, including lettering, bumpers, mirrors and rub rails painted glossy black. Wheels and rims shall be black or grey.

j. Mirrors

All buses shall be equipped with an interior mirror mounted so the driver can view the entire interior of the bus while in a normal seated driving position. The interior mirror shall have rounded corners and protected edges. All buses shall be equipped with two (2) exterior mirrors (one on each side) each giving an unobstructed view from the mounting position to the rear of the bus while the driver is in a normal seated driving position. The exterior mirrors shall be easily adjustable and rigidly mounted to reduce vibration. Each bus shall have a mirror system which provides a clear, unobstructed view of the area in front of the bus and immediately adjacent to the right and left front wheels and at the entrance door.

k. Mud Flaps

All buses shall be equipped with mud flaps on the rear of the vehicle or immediately behind the rear wheels.

l. Seats

All school bus seats and seat covering shall meet the current FMVSS for seating and crash protection which establishes the standard for occupant protection requirements for school bus passenger seating. All seats shall be forward facing and securely fastened to the bus floor and/or wall. Each seat shall include the proper padding and cover and be free from cuts, tears, graffiti, and exposed or sharp edges.

2. Optional Equipment

Optional equipment that is not required but is often recommended by veteran drivers includes the following:

- a. Cell phone;
- b. Locking fuel cap to prevent theft of fuel and vandalism;
- c. Public address system;
- d. Light monitor;
- e. Body fluid clean-up kit;
- f. Rear wall mounted mirror;

- g. Two (2) roof hatches;
- h. Flashlight;
- i. Basic tool kit;
- j. White painted roof;
- k. Video camera system;
- l. AM/FM CD Radio.

3. Prohibited Add-on Equipment

Drivers may not add trailer hitches or towing devices, chrome or polished wheels, apply decals, lettering, signs or seasonal decorations to the exterior of the bus which are not specified by Louisiana Department of Education Bulletin 1213.

Drivers wishing to decorate for seasonal events, special occasions or to allow students to display artwork may do so if the items do not cover any window, reduce visibility, obstruct the aisle, or limit access to the service door or emergency exits. All decorative items must be fully contained within the interior of the bus. The exterior of the bus must remain free of any type of decoration, light(s), or decals which are not specifically allowed by Bulletin 1213.

4. Replacement Buses

Effective July 1, 2006, all replacement buses provided by contract drivers supplying a vehicle for their route shall be titled in the driver's name in addition to meeting all other requirements required by Bulletin 1213, 1998 Revised Edition.

Contract drivers desiring to enter into a private lease agreement rather than purchase a bus for their route are required to lease a new or used school bus not more than ten (10) model years old and certified to be manufactured in accordance with applicable federal, state and local specifications required at the time the vehicle enters the service of the TPSB. An individual driver may renew or extend their private lease agreement on an individual bus bearing the same VIN number as the original provided that the bus does not exceed twenty five (25) years in age and continues to meet all other requirements. Length and duration of any lease agreement between a contract driver and lessor shall not obligate the TPSS to the use of any vehicle that does not otherwise meet all requirements and specifications.

Bus capacities and special equipment required for transporting disabled passengers shall be specified and authorized by the Transportation Director before a bus purchase or lease is approved.

5. Purchase Authorization/Procedures

A school bus operator must follow these procedures when purchasing a new, replacement, or spare bus:

- a. Before a contract driver purchases a new or used bus, a written request must be sent to the Transportation Department and approved by the Transportation Director, who shall be responsible for specifying vehicle capacity and equipment. (See Appendix)
- b. A member of the staff will schedule a route audit to set "frozen" mileage amounts if applicable.
- c. Before the act of sale or delivery of the vehicle, Form T-10 must be completed by the seller, signed by the purchaser, and sent to the Transportation Department for approval by the Transportation Director. A copy of the form shall be maintained in the Transportation Department as required by the Louisiana State Department of Education.
- d. The school bus driver's mileage will be "frozen" as provided by Louisiana law (RS 17:497). The driver shall have seven (7) years frozen mileage for new buses purchased and five (5) years frozen mileage for used buses not more than 5 model years* old when purchased. Mileage is frozen at the level stated on Form T-10, provided that the bus is placed into service and not delayed for any reason.

The "frozen" mileage shall remain in effect as stated provided that the contract driver to whom the "frozen" mileage is assigned remains on the same route until the specified time expires. "Frozen" mileage is negated by the termination of full-time employment as a school bus driver or voluntary transfer by the contract driver to any route other than the route to which the "frozen" mileage was originally assigned.

- e. A contract driver who wishes to replace his/her bus with a newer model may purchase a used bus, provided that the replacement bus is not more than ten (10) model years* old at the time of purchase.
- f. Newly appointed contract drivers who are to provide the bus for their route are required to purchase new or used school buses not more than ten (10) model years* old and certified to be manufactured in accordance with federal, state and local specifications.
- g. When a driver retires or resigns, he/she may sell their bus to the person appointed to replace him/her, provided that the vehicle meets all state and local standards, the bus is not more than ten (10) model years* old, and the transaction is approved by the Transportation Director. Such an arrangement shall not be construed as a requirement for the replacement driver to purchase the retiring or resigning owner's bus, nor as an automatic route assignment.

This policy shall apply equally when an approved family member is replacing a deceased or disabled owner/operator.

* NOTE: (Model years shall be reckoned from the date of manufacture, the first year being zero, the second year being one, etc.)

6. Spare buses

Spare buses may be used by contract drivers in emergency situations, such as breakdowns, extensive repairs, etc. No school bus exceeding twenty five (25) model years shall be approved for use as a spare bus. All buses approved for use as spare buses may be used as long as they meet all federal, state and local requirements and they have been approved by the Transportation Director. Spare buses must have the appropriate capacity and be properly equipped to meet the needs of its passengers. When a rental of more than fifteen (15) school days is required due to severe mechanical problems, the rental bus must be numbered and lettered according to the requirements of Section V-A1e for the route which it occupies until the driver's regular bus is returned to service.

Spare buses owned by or leased to the TPSB may be rented by a bus operator at daily rental rates established by the TPSB. Charges for the use of school owned buses shall be \$40.00 per day and \$20.00 per half day. The driver shall be required to furnish fuel and return the bus cleaned to the designated parking location. A \$10.00 cleaning fee shall be assessed to the renter if the bus is not clean when it is returned. The renter shall be responsible for all expenses incurred should the spare bus break down while being used unless otherwise approved by the Transportation Director.

Drivers who wish to purchase a spare bus are required to purchase a new or used school bus not more than ten (10) model years old and certified to be manufactured in accordance with Louisiana specifications.

School buses more than ten (10) model years old, but not more than twenty five (25) model years may remain in the TPSB fleet as a spare bus provided that the bus being used has been in the continuous, uninterrupted service from the time that the bus reached ten (10) model years of age. Continuous, uninterrupted service will be determined by a review of the semi-annual motor vehicle inspection reports. Semi-annual inspection reports must be on file in the Transportation Department, without exception, for the vehicle to qualify for continued service. Buses that meet these criteria can not be purchased as a replacement bus and placed full-time on a driver's route.

ⁱ Revised Date July 1, 2008.