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NAPT, NASDPTS and NSTA Release Findings of School Bus Driver Shortage Survey

The National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), and the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) recently conducted a joint survey of America's shortage of school bus drivers. The results confirm what many have been saying.

"As school districts across the country return to in-person learning and COVID continues to have an impact on education in general and school transportation scheduling and logistics in particular, the shortage of school bus drivers has become conspicuous", said NAPT Executive Director Mike Martin. "But let's be clear – this is not a new problem. Nor it is easy to solve."

Here are the most significant findings of the survey, which garnered nearly 1,500 responses and has a level of precision for statistics that is +/- 2.5% at 95% confidence:

- Every region of the country is currently altering transportation service due to COVID. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondents in the Northeast said they have altered service, 77% in the Midwest, 66% percent in the South, and 80% in the West.
- Ninety-one percent (91%) of respondents said they have altered service to elementary schools, 90% have altered service to middle schools, and 83% have altered service to high schools.
- Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents described their driver shortage as "severe" or "desperate". Roughly three-quarters of all respondents (78%) also indicated that the school bus driver shortage is getting "much worse" or "a little worse".
- Roughly two-thirds of all respondents (65%) indicated that bus driver shortage is their number one problem or concern. Only 1% of respondents indicated that bus driver shortage is not a problem for them.
- The average number of days in the hiring process is 16, with the Northeast averaging 17 days, the Midwest and the South averaging 16 days, and the West averaging 22 days.
- In a question that allowed for multiple answers, 50% of respondents said the rate of pay is a major factor affecting their ability to recruit and retain drivers, 45% cited the "length



of time to secure a CDL”, 38% the “availability of benefits” and 38% the “hours available to work”.

“While the industry seems to struggle with driver shortages each year, this year’s shortage has a different feel to it and having the data to really understand it is invaluable. We hear anecdotal reports all the time but being able to point to real information will ensure we are responding to this situation in the best manner possible for our members,” noted National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) Executive Director Ronna Weber.

NAPT, NASDPTS and NSTA conducted the survey to determine the extent of bus driver shortages, whether the trend is getting better, or worse, and which solutions are being used to remedy the problem. Analyses were conducted to determine where the survey responses were significantly different among segments by geographic region, respondents’ job title, or size of the company/school district; how organizations recruit bus drivers, to understand more about the interviewing and hiring process; and what steps are being taken by companies and school districts to retain drivers.

“This survey reaffirms individual feedback that we have heard from our members that both in-district and contract school bus operators are facing serious challenges with respect to staffing of the driver pool this fall. While we are vitally concerned about the short-term implications of the shortage, our organization looks forward to engaging on potential solutions to address this vexing issue,” offered National School Transportation Association (NSTA) Executive Director Curt Macysyn.

About Each Association

The National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) is a diverse community of people that share a passion for safe and efficient student transportation. Our non-profit organization offers school districts and their transportation and transportation-related service providers a variety of communication, leadership, education, advocacy and research services. To learn more about us, please visit www.napt.org and www.naptcollaborative.org

The [National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services](http://www.nasdpts.org) (NASDPTS) was founded in 1968. Our purpose is to provide leadership, assistance, and motivation to the nation’s school transportation community and industry. The association works to ensure safe, secure, environmentally responsible, and cost-effective transportation to school children and to school and school related activities. NASDPTS represents a cross section of individuals and organizations involved in student transportation. As the association’s name indicates, members include those individuals with the primary responsibility for school transportation in each state.



In addition, school bus manufacturers and other industry suppliers, school transportation contractors, and a number of state associations, whose members include school transportation officials, drivers, trainers, and technicians, also are members of affiliated councils within the association. This diversity in membership, combined with the day-to-day involvement of the state directors in policy matters, creates a unique perspective on pupil transportation issues.

The [National School Transportation Association](#) (NSTA) is the leading resource for private school bus transportation solutions. NSTA and its members are dedicated to leading the school bus transportation industry through a commitment to safety and security; cost-effective operations; high quality operating standards; professional integrity; environmental responsibility; education and promotion; community involvement and industry advocacy. NSTA has been the Washington, DC voice for private contractors for over 50 years. Our goal and commitment is to provide our members with the support they need to be successful in today's challenging times.

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If you would like more information, the three associations will jointly offer a webinar after Labor Day to discuss the survey and its results in greater detail as well as the return to school more generally. The day/date and time of the webinar will be available on our websites soon.