July 16, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: School Bus Driver Physical Examination Update

This correspondence is to update you with regard to recent issues concerning requirements for school bus driver physicals. As you may know, the Lieutenant Dexter Holcomb Act 2012-372 requires Alabama school bus drivers to have a current Alabama physical examination form on file with their school system. This requirement also applies to drivers who work in school systems that contract for transportation services. The physical examination must be performed by a duly licensed medical doctor and/or a nurse practitioner and is normally valid for a period of two years. However, if the examining physician feels that a person needs to be examined more often, the expiration date for the physical may be less than two years. As an example, a driver who takes insulin to control diabetes through injection who may be “waivered” by his/her examining physician as capable of driving a school bus safely may be required to undergo a physical examination more frequently than every two years.

Except for contractor drivers, school bus drivers who drive for a public school system are not required to meet DOT medical requirements. However, some Alabama school bus drivers may choose or be required by their local system to have a DOT Medical Examiner’s Certificate (DOT Medical Card). Act 2012-372 allows for the DOT Medical Card to be accepted in lieu of the Alabama School Bus Driver Physical Examination. Therefore, drivers are not required to have both the DOT Medical Card and the Alabama School Bus Driver Physical Examination.

School systems should also be aware that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has recently implemented a new rule concerning certifications for those who perform physical examinations for CDL holders. This requirement for certification does not apply to the state-required physical. Rather, it is a federal requirement for physicians who perform physical examinations for drivers who need or want a DOT Medical Card. Again, except for contractor drivers, Alabama school bus drivers who drive for a school system are not required to have a DOT Medical Card.

If your school system requires the DOT Medical Card, you have drivers who prefer to have the DOT Medical Card, or you have drivers who drive outside the borders of Alabama, they must use a federally certified physician for their physical examination. A list of FMCSA-certified physicians for your area can be found at: https://nationalregistry.fmcsa.dot.gov/NRPublicUI/home.seam.

Contact Mr. Brad Holley, Program Administrator, or Mr. Joe Lightsey, Director, Pupil Transportation, at 334-242-9730, if you need additional information.

TRB/JL/JL

cc: City and County Transportation Supervisors
Contract Supervisors
  Mr. Joe Lightsey
  Mr. Brad Holley

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