December 11, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: School Bus Driver Training Schedules for 2016

A copy of the 2016 School Bus Driver Training Schedule is enclosed for your use in planning for bus drivers to attend the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) new driver and recertification classes. Please remember the following points when making plans for your driver classes:

* Upon receipt of the schedule, transportation supervisors should confirm all class dates to ensure that there are no conflicts with school system calendars. All class cancellations or changes must be approved by Mr. Kevin Snowden, Program Coordinator, Pupil Transportation, at 334-242-9730.

* An appropriate instructional environment and adequate equipment are needed for each class. A comfortable meeting room with adequate space for all drivers with a large screen TV, DVD player, and a chalk/dry erase board or Smart Board are needed for each class. Drivers will be writing; therefore, meeting rooms with tables will be needed. Classrooms should conform to the criteria listed on the Recertification and New Driver Class Checklist that can be found in the ALSDE/Pupil Transportation/Publications at http://www.alsde.edu/html/sections/doc_download.asp?section=63&id=17176&sort=

* Transportation supervisors must ensure that prospective new drivers are trained in the safe operation of a school bus before allowing them to attend a new driver workshop. Documentation of this training must be provided to the ALSDE instructor before any driver will be performance tested. A prospective driver should have either a current Commercial Driver License (CDL) with both passenger (P) and school bus (S) endorsements or a CDL Learner’s Permit before attending a new driver class. Drivers must be trained in accordance with the new CDL training requirements issued by the Alabama Department of Public Safety (DPS). Trainings on these new requirements have been conducted by the ALSDE Pupil Transportation Section.

* Transportation supervisors should attend local classes in order to support the ALSDE instructor, answer questions concerning local transportation policies, and complete their own recertification.

* All new drivers must bring a completed Application for an Alabama School Bus Driver Certificate form on the first day of new driver class. The transportation supervisor should sign and discuss the information provided by the applicant prior to attending class. Additionally, all drivers should meet all training requirements before being sent to a new driver class.

* Anyone driving a school bus for a city or county school system; junior, community, or technical college; or contract carrier serving a school system must hold an Alabama School Bus Driver Certification and an appropriate Commercial Driver License (CDL) issued by the Alabama Department of Public Safety.

* The host transportation supervisor must be contacted for approval before drivers attend any class outside their school system. Failure to do so could result in the driver not being allowed to attend class. Telephone numbers are provided on the schedule for your convenience.
Transportation supervisors should assign drivers to a recertification class and only allow them to change classes with the supervisor’s approval. New driver classes are scheduled throughout the year. Recertification classes are typically scheduled from January through the end of November.

Recertification class sizes must be limited to ensure proper instruction. In cases where systems have more than one recertification class, supervisors should divide their drivers equally among the classes offered. If you have questions about this item, contact your ALSDE instructor. Systems failing to limit class sizes, thus creating very large classes, may be asked to limit them before the start of class.

In order to receive certification for 2017, a driver must attend a 2016 recertification class prior to the end of scheduled classes. This does not apply to new drivers who receive their initial certification in 2016. Transportation supervisors should ensure that all drivers are notified regarding their assigned training date. Do not provide drivers with copies of the training schedule.

Contact your ALSDE instructor with any driver performance testing needs you may encounter in your school system.

During 2016, the ALSDE will continue to offer classes expressly designed for special needs school bus drivers and aides. A separate master schedule for these classes is also enclosed. Since the instruction offered in these classes targets the transportation of special needs students, school systems are urged to send their special needs drivers, aides, and their substitutes to these classes for their 2016 recertification. Only special needs drivers and aides will receive recertification credit for their attendance in these classes.

If you have questions concerning any part of the driver training program, please contact your ALSDE instructor or Mr. Snowden at 334-242-9730.

TRB/KS/JL

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Andy Craig
    Mr. Dennis Coe
    Mr. Kevin Snowden
    City and County Transportation Supervisors
    Contract Supervisors
    Presidents and Directors of Junior, Community, and Technical Colleges

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