

LESSON PLAN
2007–08 School Bus Driver Instructor Inservice

TITLE OF LESSON: **HIRING/ DEVELOPING/ RETAINING DRIVERS**

Objectives of Lesson: The student will be able to:

1. List three (3) strategies to recruit new drivers.
2. Name one RED FLAG item that would alert you that this applicant may not be suited to drive school bus.
3. Give three (3) training strategies.
4. Name three (3) ways that you can help new drivers after they are on the road.

Equipment for Lesson:

- Overhead projector
- Flip chart or white board

Introduction:

Recruiting and retaining school bus drivers continues to be an issue in our industry. There is an urgent need, due to the increased number of pupils being transported, for transportation departments to join together and come up with methods to recruit new drivers, and also ways to train them that encourages them to stay. Due to the difficulty of this job it is important that new drivers have as much information as possible before they begin.


After these individuals are hired, we should give them the support of mentor programs and keep them involved in driver activities and committees. They may be helped financially by job sharing within your district or in neighboring districts.

This is meant to be a time for discussion and sharing of ideas between trainers about what is working and what is not working to hire and retain qualified school bus drivers. Anything that we can do to better prepare them will create an atmosphere that is positive for both drivers and students.

Presentation:

Trainer note: Have drivers share ideas while someone records the suggestions. Keep in mind, not all ideas work in all districts.

Recruitment

- School reader boards.
- Parked bus with sign.
- Local newspapers.
- Job fairs.
- PTA—school publications.
- Community centers.
- Restaurant place mats.
- One page flyer with outline of driver qualifications and requirements.
- Hire-on bonus to person bringing in new driver (after hired and again after completing a prescribed time).
 -  KWRL uses a hire-on bonus for employees that bring in a new driver. After 30 days as an authorized driver, the referring employee receives a bonus of \$200 and another \$200 after the driver completes 90 days.
- Training compensation. **Example Only:** Minimum wage or other hourly compensation during training.

Interview Tips

- Make sure you already have a copy of their current, complete school bus driver's abstract to review and discuss. *Please note:* a copy of a school bus driver's abstract must also be requested by the district and obtained from the Department of Licensing in Olympia.
- Be clear about the kind of person you are looking for before you start the interviews.
- Ask pertinent questions such as “why do you want to drive a school bus?” If they do not talk about kids, this is a RED FLAG.
- Make sure your applicants know it is a part-time, split-shift job with no benefits (in most districts) for substitutes.
- Let them know if you offer compensation during training.
- Many times the interview process itself can eliminate people that are not suited to be a school bus driver.

Training Information

- Put yourself in their place. Try not to overwhelm them. Remember you are dealing with adult learners who bring with them many life experiences.
- Keep it as concise, detailed, and timely as possible without sacrificing quality training to achieve your goals.
- Give them pertinent information about field trips, union information, reading route books and maps.
- Have them ride with mentor drivers during the training period to make sure this is what they want to do—especially special needs routes.

When they are ready to go on the road

- Have them do a dry run first to become familiar with the route.
- Have a mentor or yourself ride with them, if necessary, the first time.
- If it's a special needs route with special equipment, make sure you go over the important information before they go out.
- Make sure the route books are accurate.
- Create an in-depth map reading class. This should include the areas that drivers have the most difficulty with. Consider bringing in an outside presenter from the county or city road department
- Allow more clock time, if necessary, to review books.
- Put them on a route for a period of time until they get used to handling a bus with children.

Retaining Subs/Drivers

- Connect them to mentors to help alleviate some of their fears.
- Think about giving them some kind of incentive pay based on days worked during the year.
- Talk with neighboring districts about job sharing or route sharing.
- Pay them to ride with the driver if you know in advance that they will be subbing on the route.
- Look into other district jobs such as lunch duty, recess EA, tutoring, library, part-time custodian, etc.
- Keep them involved in driver activities.
- Have a day honoring them for being sub drivers.
- Most important, keep monitoring them to see how they are doing. Bring them in and talk with them.

Share Transportation Activities

- Safety Meetings
- Bingo, bowling, basketball & barbeques
- Safety committee, planning committee, levy-bond committee
- Sunshine committee
- Generate a data base of successful ideas to acquire and retain drivers

Summary:

Attracting and keeping school bus drivers is a common problem in transportation departments across the state. As districts continue to grow, we must come up with ways to encourage people to apply as school bus drivers. Then our job becomes to keep them once they are trained and hired.

We have taken this opportunity to share what has worked for you knowing that individual departments have different needs. We will continue to strive to better prepare our new drivers in creating an atmosphere that is positive, and one in which they want to continue to work.

Evaluation:

1. List three (3) ways to recruit new drivers.
2. Name one RED FLAG item that would alert you that this applicant may not be suited to drive school bus.
3. Give three (3) training strategies.
4. Name three (3) ways that you can help new drivers after they are on the road.

Answers:

1. School reader boards, local newspapers, community centers, retirement communities.
2. If they don't mention "children" in their answer, as to why they applied.
3. Remember you are dealing with adult learners. Do not extend training out too long. Have them ride routes to make sure this is what they want to do. Provide training on reading maps, route books etc. Assign a mentor.
4. Mentoring, monitoring, job sharing.