

NAPT Webinar – Going Back to School Before the Kids Part I – An Actual Return to School Roadmap

A note from Brad Aemisegger and Jim Regan:

Greetings and thanks for your questions. Together we reviewed the questions and our responses reflect our work-in-progress at Toledo Public Schools. We have a plan and elements of the plan that are within the responsibility of the Transportation Department are proceeding. Elements that require Board or Administrative Approval have been submitted and are under review. Our responses are our point of view and we hope you find them helpful.

Regards

Brad and Jim

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Questions

Try to answer to Q1 and Q12 together

1.) Has there been an Exposure Control Plan made for inside the bus? i.e. Driver's seat compartment and student seat placement/protection?

12.) Is there a recommendation for social distancing on the bus? Is it one student per row?

RESPONSE: Here is what we have so far:

- Minimum seating: 1 per seat = 2 per row
- Maximum seating: 3 per row - window seat and alternative middle seat see below
 - S -- S - S
 - S - S -- S
 - S -- S - S
 - S - S -- S
- Depending on ridership - trying to keep first row open
- Students: Hopefully, district will require students to wear masks
- Boarding - Distancing in the line to board and first in goes to the rearmost seat to minimize passing students with mandatory seating charts for contact tracing with the exception of Special needs students with IEP instructions who may require specialized location seating.
- Auditing: Random checks via camera system
- Drivers: Mask always and Face Shield when Boarding and unboarding (not operating as safety not tested).

- Drivers: will have a personal hand sanitizer container in a pack they can bring on and off the bus. The package would also include disinfectant wipes.
- Reviewing keeping the driver window open. The driver is still responsible for the safety of the students and must still actively monitor mirrors and activity around the bus, so they still need to look right to view the passenger side mirror.
- Cleaning: Use of wipes in high contact areas (handrails and seat tops after each run)

We are researching airplane boarding, seating, and deplaning processes as a potential benchmark. We are also monitoring public transit efforts.

2.) You have mentioned taking temperatures a few times, obviously there are laws and such having to do with a child being left at a stop. Has this been part of the discussion if they have a temperature and leave kids at stops?

RESPONSE: First - a great link regarding taking employee temperatures::

<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/eeoc-coronavirus-temperature.aspx>

We do not anticipate taking temperatures at the stop or on the bus. We are assuming that temperatures would be taken at the school if the district mandated students' temperatures be taken. If a child has a temperature, they would be held by the nurses office, the parents contacted, and they would be returned home per district protocols.

The issue under review is more around if masks are mandated and the child at the stop does not have a mask, what happens? Leaving the child at the stop is not an option. Having the driver have spare masks is fine but comes with its own set of issues. Parent education is going to be key and ensuring that parents know what student masks will be required if the district makes that decision, will be part of a district education program.

3.) What type/method of cleaning are you considering? Disinfecting?

RESPONSE: This is a category we see in levels.

Level 1: bus cleaning/sweeping at the end of the day

Level 2: bus cleansing by using disinfectant wipes for high contact areas

Level 3; bus disinfecting using **ELECTROSTATIC DISINFECTION TECHNOLOGY** (a sample can be found at: <https://www.emist.com> where the entire interior of the bus is sprayed. Preliminary research indicates that the electro-static tech allows the solution to be an effective coating for a longer period of time. A company like EMIST sells the solution primarily. You will likely have to purchase the backpack sprayers separately. Pick the solution first and then the equipment. The solution and sprayer can also be used in the shop, mechanic locker rooms, the offices, hallways, and other public areas. We found this in our research and shared it with the Building and Grounds Department. We are aware that the district may apply this tech or require an alternative.

4.) If school is tiered in half days, morning then another for afternoon, how will parents be able to provide for their families financially being they need to be home for their children?

RESPONSE: In this area there is no good news. First the responsibility for this subject is outside the purview of the Transportation Department. Second, in our scenario work thus far, if a district decides to apply social distancing in the schools, we have found no solution that does not leave childcare gaps leaving the employment and financial conflicts reduced but still in place. I am sure economics; parent employment and childcare are criteria the school boards will consider in making their decisions.

5.) Is your district preparing to provide and pay for PPE for all staff? Students?

RESPONSE: Brad and I are starting to calculate the financial costs of our transportation readiness plan which is transportation staff and facility focused and if they are ready by Part 2 of the webinar, we will share them. With regards to your question, early indications are no due to limited availability and that employees can make their own masks. The student decision is under review and that may end up being a school related and managed budget item.

Will try to answer Q6 and Q13 together.

6.) What type of plan do you have for medically fragile students?

13.) Will there be considerations or policies for employees that are in a higher risk group?

RESPONSE: This question takes you to the intersection of COVID-19 Guidelines and the Federal Regulations regarding Education Free Access. Transportation will respond to the decision's parents make with regards to their children and the recommendations of the STUDENT SERVICES Department. Medically fragile students will face safety issues in bus, school, and classroom environments so the care of these students is an A-Z (start to end of the day) issue. As for transportation, segregated seating that is cleansed before use, having a bus aide with supplemental PPE (gloves, mask, face shield...) are the "on bus options" and the use of a 3rd party transportation provider that can certify its compliance to district standards would be considered.

7.) Have you reviewed the scenario of just transporting IEP students who are not benefitting from virtual learning?

RESPONSE: We would test and ensure a solution if that was a district decision. In that case, transportation would transport the students in compliance to the current or possibly enhanced IEP transportation requirements. In some districts internationally, the special needs population was the first group to return to school. So, this is a possibility.

8.) Will this affect school funding if we do split schooling by grade? Will they be able to accept the rise in funding?

RESPONSE: Rock and a hard place time. First, school funding will be lower. Second, applying social distancing is the first domino that then impacts class sizes, split schedules and the challenges that go with it. A split schedule will come close to 2x-ing transportation costs. Running the same route sets 2x a day = 2x labor, 2x mileage and since Preventative Maintenance Schedules are mileage driven, 2x PM maintenance costs plus 2x fuel costs. The only offset would be if ridership drops dramatically and fewer buses are required. Then, of course, the school will need staff to manage the increased traffic at the schools due to all the parents driving their children to school. Responsible boards will be considering the financial impact of the changes.

9.) I am in New Jersey and wondering how to develop the SOP's or will it be too early?

RESPONSE: First pick a template. Here is a link with 37 downloadable examples:

http://templatelab.com/sop-templates/#Standard_Operating_Procedures_Examples

Some advice if doing it for the first time - pick a simpler template. The ultimate goal is to get to common and sustainable best practices. You can add more detail over time. When to start - earlier the better. Once you write them, they have to be tested and validated before they are implemented and that takes time.

Will try to answer Q10 and Q11 together. Also see Q1 Response

10.) Our routes are tiered - three schools ride on one bus (elementary). How can you have 12 kids on a bus without needing to do re-runs on all the routes?

11.) Cutting class sizes may not correlate the same way mathematically to the routes on a logistical basis. Would transportation then need to have a part in the selection of students from a logistical basis?

RESPONSE: Here is the underlying math assumptions:

- Split schedules = reduced class size by 50%
- Split schedules - reduced ridership by 50%
- Standard Yellow Bus Capacity = 72 and 50% of capacity = 36
- A child at every window seat = 24 students (12 rows, 2 seats a row, 1 child per seat)
- Maximum seating: 36 per bus = 50% capacity based on 3 per row - window seat and alternative middle seat see below:
 - S -- S - S
 - S - S -- S
 - S -- S - S
 - S - S -- S
- In a **perfect** world split classes = split ridership = split capacity so that you can simply operate each tiered route set 2x:
 - FIRST run for Group 1 to school
 - FIRST run for Group 2 to school - dropping off at door x, then students from GROUP 1 exit from a different door Y to be taken home on their SECOND run.
 - SECOND run for Group 2 to take them home
 - Repeat for all schools in the tier
- To come close to a **viable** world, the schools SHOULD be aware of who is riding the bus and try to allocate an equal number of riders in GROUP 1 and GROUP 2 or schools should send proposed grouping to Transportation for feasibility testing.

14.) Did you look at splitting students into group A and group B - when group A students are in school MWF group B students continue on-line learning T TH and flip flop to alternate days evenly throughout the year.

RESPONSE: Short answer is YEP. It is the less expensive transportation option as it increases costs by 20% vs 2x the current expense for operating all routes twice if you split the day. But it does not get around the issues identified in Q4 regarding childcare coverage and parent employment conflicts. We have run the scenario and provided the administration with our input.

15.) What about employees who have already had COVID-19 or will get it during the summer and return in August fully cured? Will we have to have them use PPE?

RESPONSE: Short response: All for One and One for All. We assume that all drivers and staff will have to comply with district standards despite their individual medical condition for the following reasons:

- There is some data that suggests that you can get the virus 2x and be asymptomatic the second time just like the first. Thus, someone may not be "cured"
- W. Edward Deming indicated that quality comes from reduction of variation - trying to manage PPE use by individuals would be a challenge.

However, this question does bring up the question of **“Under what conditions will PPE no longer be required?”** It is a very valid question for districts with few to no cases of the virus. To be safe, I would develop an answer with your State/Local Health Department representative.

16.) Any thoughts on driver PPE, face shields for drivers, can the driver operate the bus safely with a shield?

RESPONSE: We think face shields should be used during boarding and unboarding of students and not while driving for the safety risk you mention. An early thought would be your State Highway Patrol would have to approve the use of the face shield while ***operating*** a bus.

17.) Will any districts be implementing reduced student loads for the coming year?

RESPONSE: As discussed, if social distancing guidelines will be applied in an education setting, the dominos will begin to fall with reduced student ridership when schools reopen. Ridership may also be reduced by:

- Parents driving their children to school individually or in carpools (do you trust the school bus or your neighbor more?)
- An increase in parents deciding to homeschool their children
- Schools increasing walk distances to school to reduce ridership eligibility
- An increase in virtual learning in communities with the adequate infrastructure

Th..Th..That;s all folks..hope it helps.

Regards

Brad Aemisegger and Jim Regan