



For Immediate Release

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**NSTA TAKING PROACTIVE STEPS TO ADDRESS IMPENDING DRIVER SHORTAGE
Group applauds Congress and States on workforce initiatives**

As private school bus contractors throughout the country continue to rebound from the adverse staffing side-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) urges Congress and States to help address the anticipated school bus driver shortage.

Private school bus operators provide nearly 40 percent of the nation's school bus service in 200,000 yellow school buses with close to 380,000 employees. Each day, almost 26 million children rely on the yellow bus as their primary way to get to school in the safest way possible.

But the industry also suffered severe economic losses and furloughed thousands of employees over the course of the pandemic, so the driver shortage has only been amplified by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The process of getting an applicant to the point where an individual can drive a school bus remains a lengthy one. This dynamic has been lengthened in many cases, due to closures of State Driver's License Agencies (SDLA).

"Depending upon where a school bus contractor operates, the process for getting a candidate trained, qualified, and licensed can take anywhere from six to eight weeks, under the best of circumstances. In addition, school bus operators usually have additional company-based training requirements in addition to what is mandated by law," explained John Benish, Jr., COO of Cook-Illinois and president of NSTA.

NSTA strongly supports Senator Ben Sasse (NE) and his proposal entitled "National Signing Bonus Act", which was recently introduced in the U.S. Senate. In addition, this week several states, including Alabama, Montana, and South Carolina, have indicated that they will cease providing enhanced unemployment compensation, instead opting to incentivize citizens returning to the employment pool. These actions are seen as a positive development in the quest to have existing CDL drivers return to work, as well as attracting new employees pursuing career opportunities.

"NSTA applauds Senator Sasse, and the states of Alabama, Montana, and South Carolina, for taking pro-active steps to provide tangible incentives for candidates to enter or re-enter the workforce," said Carina Noble, SVP, Communications and External Affairs of National Express, and president-elect of the National School Transportation Association.

Additionally, on May 19, 2021 at 12:00 PM (ET), NSTA will be hosting a webinar titled "Proactively Addressing the Driver Shortage." This NSTA FLASH webinar will be moderated by NSTA Executive Director, Curt Macysyn, and feature Julius Ceaser of the Cook-Illinois Corporation, and David Strong, President of the Student Transportation Association of



Massachusetts (STAM). Panelists will discuss potential policy solutions and company tactics that can be implemented to help ease the driver shortage.

"Due to deadlines provided for in the American Rescue Plan, many school bus contractors around the country have found it difficult to garner new employees and with continued disincentives to return-to-work, it will become increasingly more difficult to get potential new bus drivers trained, certified, and licensed in time for a return-to-school," explained Curt Macysyn, executive director of NSTA.

Macysyn cited the September 6, 2021 unemployment insurance extension provided in the American Rescue Plan as particularly problematic, since nearly every school will have begun its new school year by that date, and student transportation has to be 100 percent operational by the opening of the schools around the country.

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About NSTA: National School Transportation Association has been the voice of private school bus contractors, manufacturers and suppliers since 1964. The association provides school transportation professionals with the tools and resources they need to make school buses safe, affordable, and efficient nationwide.