Changes to what you’ll see along your bus route are also common. Watch for children playing and small animals. Look low for bicycles and skateboards or runaway toys (no skateboards on the bus, please) and look high for basketball hoops and hanging tree limbs. There may not have been anything there before, but there may be something there now. In subdivisions and on main roads, there may be different vehicles on the street. Look once, look twice, then look again while students are crossing.

These are just a few examples of what you can expect, but one thing is for sure...spring has sprung and you will have to keep your EYES open—especially the ones in the back of your head—and your HANDS on the wheel at all times.

Springtime Student Safety is more than just good luck. It is leadership, it is caring, it is absolute dedication to the big yellow bus and to the children in our care. Springtime Student Safety is YOU!

Ah, you can smell it in the air….the fresh scent of springtime!

March is always one of the best times of the year; the weather has started to change, the sun is brighter, the flowers are peeking out, and the days are getting longer.

Sunny skies and longer days mean more time to play, and more time to play means that your students will be anxious to get home, ditch the books and head outside after school.

For bus drivers and bus attendants, this means that it’s time to start following your Springtime Student Safety procedures!

Many of your students will be staying after school for sports, clubs or other activities, so there may be fewer children to transport and the drop-off times could change. Talk to your students, and talk to the parents you meet in the afternoons so that they can plan accordingly.

Some students may also need to be reminded of proper conduct on a school bus, such as sitting down facing the front in their assigned seats and no eating or drinking on the bus. They may also need a reminder to be waiting at the bus stop in the morning, not running toward the bus as it approaches. The windows will be coming down soon, and it is important that children keep hands and heads inside the bus at all times for their safety and for the safety of other motorists.

The energy level on a school bus usually changes when the weather breaks, and it will continue to rise as we get closer to year’s end. It is our job to be aware of the changes and harness that energy, so that the rides to and from school can be safe ones for all.

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Upcoming Calendar Events

Friday, March 1 — MAKE UP DAY
Monday, March 4 — “Get Active Get Fit” sign-ups begin. Contest starts 03/18.
Wednesday, March 6—School Bus Illegal Passing Survey
Sunday, March 10—Daylight Savings; change your clocks & check your smoke detectors
Friday, March 15 — MAKE UP DAY
Sunday, March 17—Happy St. Patrick’s Day!
Thursday, March 21—First Day of Spring
Friday, March 29 — No School; Teacher Workday
Sunday, March 31—Happy Easter!
Monday, April 1 to Friday, April 5—Spring Break
Friday, April 19 — No School; Teacher Workday
Friday, April 19 — Relay for Life event @ SHS
Tuesday, April 30 to Friday, May 10—School Bus Evacuations, Split Door
School buses have traditionally been the transportation of choice for public school students across the country. These big yellow vehicles have become a mainstay in both urban and suburban communities, offering students access to school campuses that might have difficulty getting to and from school otherwise. However, budget cuts, rising gas prices and concerns over their environmental impact have forced many school districts to take another look at the diesel-run buses that dominate most school district today. In some cases, propane buses are providing a cheaper and more environmentally friendly option.

The Cost of Diesel

The expense of running children to and from school on diesel buses is not a small one by any means. According to a report in the Christian Science Monitor, it is estimated that more than 25 million children ride the bus to school each day. In some areas, year-round schooling means no respite from gas bills over the summer months. As the number of children requiring bus transportation remains relatively consistent, the cost of fuel does not.

There are a number of reasons to consider propane buses over their diesel counterparts. First, many areas of the country offer propane filling stations that are much cheaper than diesel fuel. A report issued by the U.S. Department of Energy also estimates that smaller propane tanks can be cheaper to fill than those holding natural gas, and they are as equally friendly to the environment. The period between oil changes for propane-run buses can also be extended, further reducing the cost of operating these vehicles.

Benefits of Propane

Then, there are the government incentives to consider. In 2008, the federal government appropriated $4.2 million for reducing emissions from diesel engines. That means money could be available to establish the necessary infrastructure for propane, including retrofitting or purchasing new buses for this purpose. School districts might also get a federal tax credit that offers 50 cents back on every gallon of propane used throughout the year.

Green Success Stories

While the idea of switching to propane or another form of alternative fuel may sound good on paper, how does it stack up in practical use? According to some of the school districts across the country that have made the switch, the proof is in the pudding – as well as the savings many of these districts have enjoyed since converting their buses. We have just a few examples of school districts that are going green with their student transportation options.

El Paso Schools

In Texas, eight El Paso-area school districts have made the switch to propane, according to a report at the Railroad Commission of Texas website. The project began with 16 ultra-low emission propane buses, but 56 more have been added since the program began. The districts hope to continue to expand their propane-based fleet by replacing retiring buses with the newer style. The press release reports that these buses have cut 14.6 tons of smog-forming NOx, 94 tons of carbon monoxide and one ton of particulate matter from the El Paso air. It is also estimated that each bus will save school districts more than $5,800 the first year and $1,250 each year after.

Portland Schools

In Portland, Oregon, the school district received $600,000 in federal tax credits for its propane-based buses in 2008. About 90% of this district’s school buses run on propane currently. Phil Weber, Portland’s director of transportation, told the Christian Science Monitor, “I was not a believer in propane. But I crunched the numbers and propane does pay off.” This school district has been using the propane buses since 1983, with great success and cost savings. Weber estimated that it took the district about five years to recoup the expense of switching to the propane buses, including the cost of propane fuel pumps and retrofits.

Going green is one way school districts can cut their budgets and help the environment at the same time. While propane might not be the best solution in all school districts, the schools that have switched to propane-powered school buses are enjoying significant savings and the satisfaction of a reduced carbon footprint. With incentives from the federal government, it may not be long before other districts nab the benefits propane offers.

Propane School Buses roll in Spotsylvania County too...

Our first five propane buses were purchased in 2010 with 50% of the initial cost coming from a federal grant program. As part of the grant, a dedicated “tank farm” was constructed here at the Transportation lot to fuel the buses. A sixth bus was purchased this year, and more may be added in the future as older fleet buses are replaced.

The feedback we have had from the community has been positive; the buses are quiet, odorless and show that we care about our environment.

Cost is also a huge factor; on February 1st we paid $1.06 per gallon for propane bus fuel compared to $3.85 per gallon for diesel bus fuel (in Spotsy, a one-cent rise in diesel fuel prices translates into a $7,000 budget increase). Although miles per gallon is lower for propane buses than it is for diesel buses, we anticipate over time that a savings will be realized.

Spotsy is GOING GREEN!
2013 Scholarships Are Now Available

There are 3 different scholarship opportunities for the children or grandchildren of those associated with Pupil Transportation in Virginia. Each Scholarship for 2013 is valued at $2500. In some cases more than one person can be a winner.

Time is limited—applications are due very soon!

1. Clyde aka CLYDE W. MORRIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
2. Buster aka BUSTER BYNUM EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP
3. Sonny aka PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SCHOLARSHIPS (Available at VA Tech only)

Criteria for each and other information to help you apply is available online. For more information, visit www.VAPT.org

Tips From the Training Room

Fuel Cards are assigned to EACH BUS, not to EACH DRIVER. They should always remain on the bus, inside the First Aid Kit. Please do not take cards with you when you exit the bus, and never use someone else’s card to fuel your bus. If there is no fuel card on the bus please contact Tiffany at extension 1807.

Ignition Keys are assigned to EACH DRIVER, not to EACH BUS. Please take your key with you when you exit the bus...don’t worry, subs will have their own key! But they may not have a route sheet, so always leave one onboard. Why should you always take your key? Read the story below....

Wellness Alert:

Get Active—Get Fit Challenge ’13

kicks off on March 18th. Enrollment begins 03/04. Watch your e-mail for more information on this event coming soon.

Stolen Knox County School Bus Found in Anderson County

A school bus that was stolen Wednesday morning in East Knoxville was recovered later in the morning in Anderson County.

A 72-passenger bus Knox County school bus was reported stolen around 7 a.m.

Wednesday from the driver’s residence on Prosser Road in East Knoxville. Police do not have a description of the thief. The bus, number 117, is used to transport students to and from Beaumont and Norwood elementary schools and Northwest Middle School.

Knox County Schools spokesperson Melissa Copeland told 6 News the bus was discovered stolen before it was needed for transporting students, so another bus was brought into service. The bus was later recovered in Anderson County.

Police have not released any additional details about the theft.

**Hmm...Do you think there was a key left on the bus??**

WATE-TV -Posted: Feb 20, 2013 5:35 AM
Everywhere you turn you are probably seeing and hearing the following phrases: “go green,” “eco-friendly,” and “environmentally conscious.” The push, especially for Americans, to reduce pollution and help save the environment is based on evidence that the decisions we have made, and continue to make, are damaging the air we breathe and the land we live on. Since you’re already thinking green this month, why not take it a step further? Here are a few tips and tricks to help you get started in living a green lifestyle, both at home and while on your school bus!

- Get in the habit of brushing your teeth with the water off, and encourage other family members to do so, as well.
- Recycle – junk mail, cell phones, paper products, plastic bags, and more.
- Don’t purchase disposable water bottles, but rather use recyclable (and refillable) beverage containers that you can fill with filtered water.
- Buy groceries in bulk. Purchase a membership to a wholesale club, such as Costco or BJ’s (discount memberships for BJ’s are available.  See Sean Clore for an application).
- Purchase locally produced food at farmer’s markets and even road-side stands. The Gordon Road Farmer’s Market opens for the regular Saturday season on April 20th!
- Collect rain water to use for watering your plants and for washing the wheels on your bus.
- Switch from paper and plastic bags to reusable bags and totes.
- Save stained or ill-fitting clothing to use for dusting and cleaning. This is great for wiping down bus seats!
- Rent movies and borrow books, instead of purchasing. Netflix and Blockbuster make it easy by delivering the flicks right to your door.
- Many bus routes begin before dawn and end after sundown; a good flashlight can really come in handy during a proper pre-trip or post-trip inspection. Use rechargeable batteries -- Duracell now has a line of pre-charged rechargeable batteries.
- Try your hand at composting (planting scraps from fruits, veggies, and coffee grounds outside), which will help create better soil and less landfill waste.

Good Luck Going Green!

Welcome Aboard!
Lucky for us—our family keeps growing! Please join us in welcoming the following new staff members….

ATTENDANTS
Michele Burton
Mason Perry

DRIVERS
Emily Blodgett
Teresa Bobbitt
Jennifer Chewning

MORE DRIVERS
Kristie Davis
Mary-Beth Doss
Mark Gaines
Heather Hockaday
Bonnie Mangino
LeVert Marshall
Gerald Masello
Candace Moreland
Charity Pickett
Susan Purks
Sandy Sancarranco
Marcel Southern

SCS Transportation Wins State Training Award
The Transportation Department was recently recognized by Virginia Municipal League (VML) Insurance Program for meeting the goal of providing 90% or more of our entity drivers with Defensive Driving Training. This program, called “Where the Rubber Meets the Road”, has been a part of the in-service training curriculum since 2011. As a result of this achievement, Spotsylvania County Schools will receive a discount on its fleet insurance policy for all vehicles.

Congratulations and special thanks to our Trainers for all of their hard work making this program a continuing success. Way to go!
A question came to mind as school bus drivers prepared to start their engines on Wednesday on 7,700 public-school routes in New York City and end their month-long strike: Why are most school buses yellow? Why not some other color? Why not burnt sienna, like a crayon? Why not light-medium robin's egg blue, like a jewelry box? Why not magma orange, like a Lamborghini?

The answer is Frank W. Cyr, a professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, who became known as the "father of the yellow school bus" for research he led in the 1930s. Dr. Cyr, who died at 95 in 1995, had traveled the country, surveying pupil transportation in an era when school buses cost $2,000 apiece but differed widely from manufacturer to manufacturer and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some states had safety standards; some left the task to local school districts. "In many cases, standards have been set up by more or less hit-and-miss methods," according to an account that Dr. Cyr oversaw.

Then, in the spring of 1939, he called together educators, school bus manufacturers and paint experts for a conference that approved the nation's first school bus safety standards - 42 pages covering everything from axles, batteries and emergency brakes to the inside height of the passenger compartment to, yes, the color that the world saw outside. The standards were published in a booklet with a yellow cover: the yellow was the color the group had chosen.

"They wanted a color that would stand out, that other drivers could see from a distance and that would be identified with a school bus so whenever we saw it, we'd think, there's a group of kids going someplace," said Frank Cyr's son, William. "Before that, they sent kids to school in anything." Buses, trucks and even horse-drawn wagons carried schoolchildren in those days. Some buses were painted in drab colors.

Some administrators suggested red, white and blue, apparently not to make the buses more visible but to make the passengers more patriotic.

For his part, Frank Cyr understood the importance of standardization. "For every different color," he recalled in 1989, "the bus companies had to have different booths to spray-paint them." Yellow was hard to miss, even in weather so bad your mother made you wear galoshes. But which yellow? This is like asking what color is the White House. "I remember as a kid, he had color samples," William Cyr said. "He had a desk at home in his study and he would lay the samples out across his desk and look at them. He would talk about the samples as being orange. As I remember it, they were a gradation from orange over to a pale yellow."

At the conference in 1939, he displayed 50 shades of yellow, from a deep, lemony yellow to a deep orange-red. He recalled in 1989 that the group appointed a committee of education officials to make the final color choice. "The color they selected was and remains 'national school bus chrome,'" said Bob Riley, executive director of the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. "I don't know why the word 'chrome' was in there, but it has something to do with the makeup of that paint."

The most recent version of the standards, approved in 2010, calls the color "national school bus yellow." Other specifications adopted at the school-bus conference have been revised over the years, but not the yellow, even though it is a relic from before the eye-popping palettes of artists like Andy Warhol and Peter Max.

"If they had to do it today, who knows if it would be the same, because now they have brighter, more noticeable things," Mr. Riley said. "Think of the vests highway workers wear. Obviously, they're even more noticeable than national school bus chrome yellow. But the rationale for maintaining that color is its universal acceptance. We've all been born and raised knowing what that is."

William Cyr said he remembered asking his father, "If you're the father of the yellow school bus, what does that make you?" Frank Cyr had a ready answer: Anytime William saw a school bus, he could announce, "There goes one of my brothers."
IRISH SAYINGS O’ THE MONTH

A son is a son until he gets a wife,
a daughter is a daughter for all of her life.

For each petal on the shamrock
This brings a wish your way-
Good health, good luck, and happiness
For today and every day.

Leprechauns, castles, good luck and laughter
Lullabies, dreams, and love ever after.
Poems and songs with pipes and drums
A thousand welcomes when anyone comes.
That’s the Irish for you!

A happy heart is an open heart.

May you always have
Walls for the winds,
A roof for the rain,
Tea beside the fire,
Laughter to cheer you,
Those you love near you,
And all your heart might desire!

‘Tis better to buy a small bouquet
And give to your friend this very day,
Than a bushel of roses white and red
To lay on his coffin after he’s dead.

May your neighbors respect you,
Troubles neglect you,
The angels protect you,
And Heaven accept you.

May the lilt of lush laughter lighten ever road,
May the midst of Irish magic shorten every road.
May you taste the sweetest pleasures
that fortune ever bestowed,
And may all your friends remember

These things I warmly wish to you—
Someone to love
Some work to do
A bit o’ sun
A bit o’ cheer
And a guardian angel always near.

May your pockets be heavy and your heart be light,
May good luck pursue you each morning and night.

May you live as long as you want,
And never want as long as you live.

May the best day of your past
Be the worst day of your future.

Dance like no one were watching,
Sing as if no one were listening,
live each day as if it is your last.

Erin Go Bragh

May your blessings outnumber
The shamrocks that grow,
And may trouble avoid you
Wherever you go.

May your thoughts be as glad as the shamrocks.
May your heart be as light as a song.
May each day bring you bright, happy hours. That
May the lilt of lush laughter lighten ever road,
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