



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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January 7, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Distribution

FROM: Derek Graham, Section Chief
Transportation Services

RE: **PLAN FOR STATEWIDE MOTOR COACH PERMIT**
Session Law 2009-451

The State Board of Education, in conjunction with the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), was directed to develop a plan for a statewide permit for commercial motor coach companies that seek to contract with local school systems to transport students, school personnel and other authorized persons on school-sponsored trips.

In order to develop the program, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) contracted with the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) at N.C. State University. ITRE was charged with facilitating a process that would include input from the North Carolina School Boards Association, the State Highway Patrol, the North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association, the North Carolina Motor Coach Association, independent motor coach operators and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration as well as DPI and DMV.

The permit program outlined in the report submitted to the General Assembly hinges on the only entity in state government qualified to conduct motor carrier site visit inspections - the State Highway Patrol (SHP). SHP would require significant new funding in order to take on this new function.

Meanwhile, ITRE reports that the affected associations, after significant in-depth discussions, have requested that a state permit program NOT be initiated at this time. (This includes the North Carolina Motorcoach Association, which initially requested the legislation and permit program.) They feel that, especially in the current economy, the objectives stated in the legislation can be best met through a State Board of Education policy that requires each school district to follow documented procedures when contracting for motor coach transportation.

Whether or not a statewide permit program is initiated, the objectives of such a policy would be very beneficial to help with student safety. Included in the report is a draft policy that the State Board of Education may want to consider in the coming months. Documents will be prepared for Board consideration in the coming months.

SCHOOL SUPPORT DIVISION

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