



Dear Mac,

Thank you for participating in the recent survey of America's school bus driver shortage, sponsored by the [National Association for Pupil Transportation \(NAPT\)](#), the [National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services \(NASDPTS\)](#) and the [National School Transportation Association \(NSTA\)](#).

The survey was conducted to determine the extent of bus driver shortages, whether the trend is getting better, or worse, and which solutions are being used to remedy the problem. Analyses were conducted to determine where the survey responses were significantly different among segments by geographic region, respondents' job title, or size of the company/school district; how organizations recruit bus drivers, to understand more about the interviewing and hiring process; and what steps are being taken by companies and school districts to retain drivers.

As promised, those of you who completed the survey are the first to receive the results.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of survey respondents have the title "transportation director, transportation supervisor or transportation manager"; 6% are an "operations manager or supervisor"; 4% are an "executive or other manager"; and 5% are a "school superintendent or administrator".

Here are the most significant findings from the survey, which garnered nearly 1,500 responses and has a level of precision for statistics that is +/- 2.5% at 95% confidence:

1. Every region of the country is currently altering transportation service due to COVID. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondents in the Northeast said they have altered service, 77% in the Midwest, 66% percent in the South, and 80% in the West.
2. Ninety-one percent (91%) of respondents said they have altered service to elementary schools, 90% have altered service to middle schools, and 83% have altered service to high schools.
3. Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents described their driver shortage as "severe" or "desperate".
4. Roughly two-thirds of all respondents (65%) indicated that bus driver shortage is their number one problem or concern. Only 1% of respondents indicated that bus driver shortage is not a problem for them.
5. The median number of routes among survey respondents is 30.
6. In 2021, the median percentage of substitute drivers needed to cover absences each day is 12.0%, compared to 10.0% in 2017 and 11.8% in 2016.
7. Roughly three-quarters of all respondents (78%), indicated that the school bus driver shortage is getting "much worse" or "a little worse".
8. When it comes to the ability to recruit and retain school bus drivers, the top four major factors are perceived to be – (1) rate of pay (50%), (2) obtaining a CDL (43%), (3) benefits/lack of benefits (38%), and (4) the number of hours available to work (38%).
9. The average number of days in the hiring process is 17 in the Northeast, 16 in the Midwest and the South, and 22 days in the West.
10. Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents said obtaining a CDL road test appointment is a "major factor" in their ability to recruit and retain school bus drivers. Forty-four percent (44%) said it is "no factor".
11. Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents said "public perception of bus drivers" is a "major factor" when recruiting. Forty-three percent (43%) said it is a "minor factor" and 32% said it is "no factor"
12. Fifteen (15%) of respondents said "interaction with students" is a "major factor" in their ability to recruit and retain school bus drivers. Forty-six percent (46%) said it is a "minor factor" and 39% said it is "no factor".
13. Twelve (12%) of respondents said "interaction with parents" is a "major factor" in their ability to recruit and retain school bus drivers. Forty-three percent (43%) said it is a "minor factor" and 44% said it is "no factor".
14. Six (6%) of respondents said "driving conditions/traffic" is a "major factor" in their ability to recruit and retain school bus drivers. Thirty-one percent (31%) said it is a "minor factor" and 62% said it is "no factor".
15. Five (5%) of respondents said "condition of buses" is a "major factor" in their ability to recruit and retain school bus drivers. Fourteen percent (14%) said it is a "minor factor" and 80% said it is "no factor".
16. Six (6%) of respondents said "interaction with school administrators" is a "major factor" in their ability to recruit and retain school bus drivers. Thirty percent (30%) said it is a "minor factor" and 64% said it is "no factor".
17. The Internet is the number one place to advertise for bus drivers. More online applications (84%) are being accepted than paper applications (57%).

18. Over the last few years billboards have been used by an increasing number of respondents while newspaper ads are diminishing in use.
19. Thirty-six percent (36%) of all respondents indicated they have expanded their advertising into new areas and target populations. The larger the organization, the more likely they are to have expanded their advertising.
20. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of respondents said the transportation department has the primary authority for hiring drivers.
21. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents indicated that the trend in driver retention in their company is getting “much more difficult” or “a little more difficult”. Only 4% of respondents indicated that driver retention is getting a little easier or much easier.
22. In terms of financial incentives in place to retain drivers, 70% of respondents have a retirement plan, 66% have medical insurance, 56% have dental insurance, 54% have vision insurance, 31% have an attendance bonus, 25% have a referral bonus, 17% have a safety bonus and 13% selected “other”.

There are many conclusions that can be drawn from this survey. Two that come immediately to mind are:

- This a longstanding problem and it is getting worse, not better.
- The industry has historically tried to address this problem at the local level. The results of this survey indicate a local-only approach may no longer be sufficient to address this problem.

Finally, as we mentioned in our invitation, everyone who completed this survey on or before August 6, 2021, became eligible to win a \$150 gift card. Congratulations to BRYAN HOWARD, Director of Transportation for the Goshen (OH) Local School District, who was selected the winner in a random drawing the week of August 9-13, 2021.

Thank you all again.

Sincerely,



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