



NYAPT

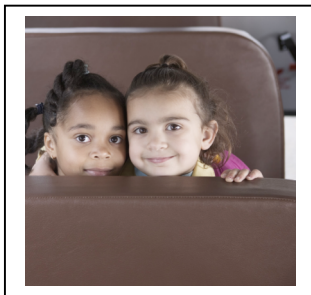
NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

266 Hudson Avenue • Albany, NY 12210 • PH: 518-463-4937 FX: 518-463-8743 • WWW.NYAPT.ORG

Our future is riding with us!

NEWS AND NOTES

November 2011



THOUGHTS...

The last month of the year and a busy year it has been. Your association is hard at work preparing educational offerings to help you in your daily work. We are covering ground in terms of representing and advocating for you in our State's Capital. We are taking time to inform you of developments and information you need to know on a timely basis. We are working with the Cyr Foundation to ready the elements of next summer's Annual Conference and Trade Show. We are organizing a series of webinars that will bring you timely and useful information and professional development opportunities.

We have a potentially difficult year ahead in terms of our school budgets and need our members to play a part in speaking out for the profession and the vital work we all do. We also need our members to recruit new members. Ask a neighboring transportation supervisor why he or she has not joined this great association and then persuade them that it's important. Ask your transportation staff to consider becoming a "team member" to help us build our base and elevate our voices across the state.

Additionally, it's important that all NYAPT members consider taking on a leadership role in our association. We need leaders to stand up and run for office or take their place as Chapter leaders or committee members and chairs. Consider this: NYAPT has no future without our members and without the willingness of our members to be involved in the work at hand.

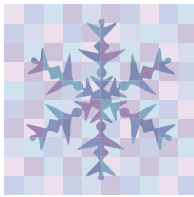
As the year 2011 ends, we are all hopeful of the future of our Association. It takes all of us working together to turn that hope into reality. Remember: **Our Future IS Riding with Us!**

Our best wishes to all for a happy and warmth-filled holiday season and a successful and meaningful 2012 ahead for you and yours!

David Christopher
President

Peter Mannella
Executive Director

AND NOW THE NEWS....



COME TO THE WINTER WORKSHOP!

Hold the Dates for the NYAPT Winter Workshop that will be held from February 23-24 at the State University of New York/Albany-East Campus in Rensselaer, NY. The “WW” will begin at 9:00 on the morning of February 23rd and come to a close at noon on February 24th.

The registration fee for the Winter Workshop is set at **\$125 per person** attending (\$265 for non-members—one-day registrations also available). Hotel rooms are available at three locations: a Holiday Inn Express, a Fairfield Inn and a Comfort Inn, all within four miles of the Workshop location. Rates for the rooms are all between \$94 and \$96, depending on location. Reservations for the hotels must be made by **January 22, 2012**, in order to receive our group room rates.

The focus of the Winter Workshop will be on the fundamentals of school transportation as well as on financial and management issues that are critical to school transportation in our current environment.

The program will include an exploration of “The Job” of being a transportation supervisor as well as sessions on driver records and fingerprinting, school bus replacement strategies, routing and other key and timely issues. We will also have a briefing on whatever budget proposals and legislative issues are on the horizon. That information will be useful given the expectation of a difficult budget season ahead.

Moreover, we are working with the Department of Motor Vehicles on a presentation relating to fingerprinting and school bus driver records issues, which have been the subject of much review and tightening in recent months. This session is an important one to attend!

The registration form is available on the NYAPT website under “Professional Development.”



PERSPECTIVE ON THE 2012-13 STATE BUDGET

At its December meeting, the Board of Regents will offer its 2012-13 school aid proposal that comes at a time when the state is forecasting a \$3 billion-plus deficit for the fiscal year 2012-13. The Regents proposal for the coming year likely will not include specific recommendations to reduce or cap expense based aids, like transportation. But it’s likely that there will be some movement to look at regionalization or mandate reduction to help decrease the level of increases in future years.

Nonetheless, pupil transportation costs remain in the focus of the Budget Division, the Regents and others looking for ways to help bring down the cost of education. Consider that states like California are seriously weighing a proposal to eliminate ALL funding for school transportation. Most education policy makers do not view school transportation as a vital school service or expense area. This makes it an easier target for reductions or constraints.

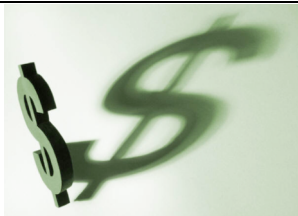
Remember as well that the state has imposed not only a 2% property tax levy cap on municipalities but also a cap on the year-to-year increase in state aid to schools. These measures serve to restrain

spending by restricting funding. At the same time, the state budget requires that aid received for Expense Based services (transportation) be offset by reductions in school aid to which a district might otherwise be entitled. This places expense-based aids like transportation in direct competition with basic education and classroom-based aids.

Here is the calculus for your information and background: the state budget in place this year caps school aid increases as noted above. It does NOT require that such an increase be put in place, it only limits the increase IF there is one at all. So there could be a ZERO percent increase or as much as a 2% increase, depending on legislative action which is dependent on the economy and the depth of the budget shortfall.

As a result, school districts will find themselves (1) uncertain as to what to expect in terms of school aid and (2) squeezed like never before. They will be faced with making hard choices that could affect our operations and service levels. In that environment, it becomes our challenge to be creative and to think of options that might not have been considered before. The difficult part of this is that school districts have been taking efficiency measures for several years as the state's budget worsened. Political leaders posture as though nothing has happened in the past and the call for cuts is a new one. We must all do better at portraying our efforts to streamline and coordinate and reduce costs.

The Regents proposal will be clearer on Monday, December 12th, when it is unveiled in its final form and adopted by the Regents. We expect it will walk a narrow path between calls for greater support for schools and calls for restraint and efficiency. NYAPT Members will receive a report on the Regents proposal as soon as we have it available.



INFORMATION ON PROPERTY TAX CAP PROVISIONS

We sought out advice from the State Education Department on questions that you asked on the implications for school transportation of the state's Property Tax Cap Law. Here are our questions and the answers we received.

QUESTION ASKED MOST FREQUENTLY:

Are districts required to put the issue of transportation mileage limits beyond the state minimums to a vote **annually** or may it be handled once and then assumed each year going forward?

ANSWER: THIS ISSUE HAS NOT YET BEEN DEFINITELY ANSWERED (*comment/note from NYAPT: it would be advisable to plan on including the mileage limits for your annual vote... "when in doubt"...*)

QUESTION: Are school bus purchases exempt from the cap?

ANSWER: Yes, the purchase of school buses is exempt from the cap.

QUESTION: What school transportation expenses are not subject to the tax cap limit?

ANSWER: Only capital and equipment expenses are included. "Equipment" means major equipment like lifts.

QUESTION: Do bus lease costs factor in to the cap calculation?

ANSWER: Bus leases are considered capital expenses and are excluded.

QUESTION: How are unanticipated/disaster restoration related costs handled under a tax cap? (*Example-flood-related costs or a loss of buses in a spontaneous bus fire, or a new student arrives and must be transported to a remote school, etc.*)

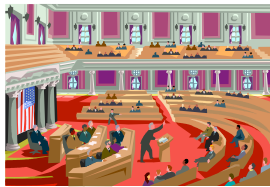
ANSWER: There are no related provisions meaning that this would require legislative intervention.

QUESTION: Are school buses purchased on a bond exempt from the tax cap?

ANSWER: Yes, the purchase of a school bus is a capital expense and therefore exempt from the cap.

QUESTION: How are the costs for new students that require nurses and other special considerations factored into the tax cap calculations?

ANSWER: This would be covered under the Tax Base Growth Factor.



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA ADOPTED FOR 2012

The NYAPT Board of Directors has adopted the 2012 NYAPT annual legislative agenda. This year's agenda builds on the 2011 legislative agenda and adds several timely issues as well.

We had a major success last year with the enactment of long-awaited amendments to improve Section 509-cc of the Vehicle and Traffic law dealing with disqualifying crimes for school bus drivers. And we had a successful budget season in turning back detrimental proposals offered in the Executive Budget. Accordingly, we need to build on those successes in the coming year and not forget the struggle that we encountered during the 2011 budget effort.

The 2011 Legislative Agenda focuses on mandate relief, illegal passing and a small number of safety-related measures. Among the **mandate relief measures** to be advocated are:

- Reducing the mileage for mandated transportation for non-public school students to ten miles;
- Reducing the mileage for mandated transportation for special education services to 25 miles;
- Eliminating the "Fire Suppression equipment" mandate;
- Eliminating mandated installation of seat belts on large school buses;
- Establishing a deadline for BOCES to provide special education placement information;
- Eliminating disincentives for shared services among districts;
- Adopting standard school year calendars and adjusting bell times for greater efficiencies;

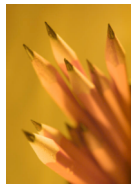
- ...and more.

In the area of **illegal passing**, the agenda proposes several elements as follows:

- Allow prosecution of violations of Section 1174 based on an affidavit from the school bus driver attesting as to the license plate affixed to the violating vehicle (presumed driver);
- Allow prosecution of violations of Section 1174 to proceed from evidence derived from a camera affixed to the school bus;
- Increase penalties for repeat violators of Section 1174, to include suspension of the violator's drivers license;
- Allow for the annual diversion of a portion of fines collected from violations of Section 1174 to support education and enforcement activities related to illegal passing;
- Include illegal passing as qualifying for the distinction made for crimes of aggravated assault and aggravated vehicular homicide.

With our key focus on the state budget and mandate relief, the agenda also includes a bold plan to **eliminate lap belts** from our school buses. We are asserting that the lap belts are used by fewer than 5% of all students in the state and that, absent a directive from NHTSA for their use and absent a compelling safety argument, it is an unnecessary and unwarranted expenditure of tax dollars. This is certain to garner attention but we believe our arguments are logical and persuasive.

Each legislative agenda item will have a brief description and discussion posted on the NYAPT website. Look for those discussion papers to appear during the month of December.



OGS PREPARING BUS CONTRACTS

In response to inquiries from our members, we contacted the State Office of General Services (OGS) about the status of the contract for Medium Duty Type C and D Diesel Powered school buses...we learned that the contract has been submitted to the Office of the State Comptroller for approval and that that can happen within the next two months. We will keep you posted on this matter as we learn more information.



PATTERNS

The State Legislature included in the final Property Tax and Mandate Relief legislation a provision that allows school districts to manage and adjust their transportation services consistent with so-called "patterns of ridership." Under the provisions of that act, districts could reduce services to areas of their districts in which the 'pattern of ridership' indicates that there are no riders or insufficient riders to justify routing a school bus to that area or neighborhood or street (the law is not that specific).

That provision raised many concerns for school transportation professionals but it is now law and we are interested in learning whether any school districts engaged in any "pattern-based" analysis or adjusted their routing in accordance with information gleaned from such analysis.

Please share whether you have done a 'patterns' analysis and provide some basic information on the results of your efforts. For instance, did you reduce routes, stops, riders? Did you save on transportation costs as a result of the routing changes? Have you encountered any problems with parents objecting to the changes? Have you had children 'stranded' needing transportation where you had reduced services? Have you had to restore service to areas you had intended to cut?.

Please email me at peter@nyapt.org....your time responding to this request is greatly appreciated!



BULLYING LINKS AVAILABLE

In an effort to present our members with timely and useful information on a critical issue like bullying, we are scanning the WEB for websites and programs on the topic. We are paying particular attention to sites that offer solutions or ideas and not just a statement on the issue

Here are several new sites to consider---among so many that are a tremendous resource for you:

www.stopbullying.gov (Federal HHS Department site)

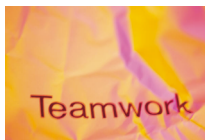
www.standtogether.tv (created by GLSEN and is a campaign to get people involved)

www.nyscenterforschoolsafety.org (the NYS Center for School Safety)

State Education Department has created a website for the Dignity Act:

www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/

SED has created a FaceBook page specifically for the Dignity Act: www.facebook.com/dignityact



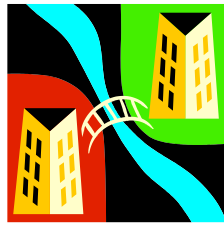
TEAM MEMBERSHIP: LOOKING FOR MEMBERS!

Time to sign up as a TEAM MEMBER of NYAPT and have your voice heard in our State Capitol!

TEAM membership is a new membership category approved by the NYAPT membership in July 2011. The target audience for the TEAM member category is drivers, dispatchers, attendants and mechanics who are not head mechanics or supervisory mechanics. Their inclusion will increase our ability to present ourselves to the Legislature as representing the school transportation industry.

Team Member dues are only \$25.00 per year. A listing of the benefits for all membership categories is posted on the NYAPT website under "Benefits of Membership." The application form has is posted on the website as well.

Please discuss this new membership category in your operations and at local chapter meetings!!



SHARED SERVICES

Shared Services are going on across the state. The school transportation community had been sharing and helping one another out in many ways over the years BEFORE it became vogue to do so.

Take a minute to email Peter Mannella with examples of your efforts (large or small) to share services as a way to save costs and be more efficient. Send comments to peter@nyapt.org.



DRIVER TRAINING INITIATIVE ADVANCES

The **Cyr Foundation** thanks all who have subscribed to the **"IN THE DRIVERS SEAT"** newsletter and the training video series subscription program. There are 68 school bus operators and school districts that have signed up for this new service.

The program is still open to those who would like to receive the newsletters and training videos. Just fill out the registration form that is on the website (under Professional Development as well as under CYR FOUNDATION). The cost for nine newsletters and six videos is \$125 per district per school year.



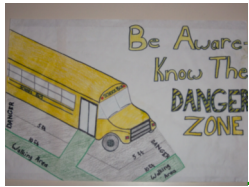
ANNUAL CONFERENCE FEES SET; NO INCREASES

Plans for the 2012 Annual Conference are continuing and workshops and featured speakers will be announced soon. We are planning a powerful and exciting agenda for all who attend and the good news is that the registration fees will remain the same for the coming year.

The cost for attending the Annual Conference will continue to be \$300.00 per registrant and \$125 for one-day registrations. The fees for the Roadeo will again remain at \$35.00 per contestant.

The Board feels that members are facing numerous budget challenges and that it is just good practice and fair to our members to hold the line on the conference fees.

Thanks to all who attend the Conference! It's going to be a great show for you this year as well!



AWARDS AND CONTESTS ANNOUNCED

We have posted to the NYAPT website the forms and applications for the following:

- School Bus Safety Poster Contest
- Art Schock Award
- Hall of Fame Award
- Technician of the Year Award
- Life Membership
- Honorary Membership
- Marchi Scholarship Program

These documents are posted on the [ABOUT US](#) page—click on the “**AWARDS**” button on the right hand side of the page.

It is not too early to begin to prepare nominations for awards and to get the children and their teachers excited about the Poster Contest. The Above and Beyond Award and the KIDS SAY STOP Bumper Sticker contest will be posted shortly as well.

Deadlines have been set for each award---please adhere to these deadlines in fairness to all! Thanks!



CANDIDATES FOR CYR BOARD TO BE ELECTED

The Cyr Foundation Board of Directors will convene a vote by the NYAPT Board of Directors during the week of December 12, 2011, to fill a “NYAPT” seat on the board.

Candidates for the open Board seat are as follows:

- **Robert Galloway**, *Transportation Supervisor in Sodus CSD and North Rose-Wolcott CSD in the RATSA chapter*
- **Cyril Hughes**, *Transportation Supervisor in Tarrytown UFSD in the Lower Hudson chapter*

More information on each candidate will be sent to the NYAPT board that is constituted as the voting membership of the Foundation.

Thanks to Cy Hughes and Robert Galloway for offering their services and talents to the work of the Foundation! We will share the results of that election when it is completed.



CANDIDATES FOR NYAPT OFFICE ENCOURAGED

NYAPT members are encouraged to consider running for office or leading their local chapters or a committee at the state or local levels. In 2012, NYAPT members will elect a new **Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President and President-elect**. Any NYAPT ACTIVE member employed by a school district or BOCES is eligible to run for office. Any member who is interested should contact Dave Christopher, other officers or Peter Mannella to discuss your interest and to learn more about the offices.

To date, we have two candidates announced for office and we thank them both for their willingness to step up and **COMMIT TO EXCELLENCE**:

- o *Lori Ann Savino (Jericho Public Schools) Candidate for Vice President*
- o *Donna Hackett (Pembroke CSD) Candidate for Treasurer*

Please consider taking a leadership role in your future and your organization!



NEW COMMITTEE CHAIR

Congratulations to **Lisa Wilson** (Union Endicott CSD/Southern Tier Chapter) who has accepted the role of Chair for the NYAPT Poster Committee. Lisa has gotten right to work collaborating with our NYAPT executive director to ensure that the Poster Contest flyer was complete and ready to post on the website. Good luck Lisa!



MEMBERSHIP: WE NEED YOU!!

It is important that our membership remain strong and that our voices remain numerous and statewide. Our advocacy efforts are greatly strengthened by our numbers.

That said, we have over 344 members who have renewed their membership but that means we still have over 80 members still to renew....and untold numbers who could sign up to become members! All are encouraged to join in and be counted!

Joining your state association brings you benefits and opportunities for growth and development. Being a member makes you a part of something larger than yourself or any issue specific to you or your operation. You become a part of the profession in which you work and through which you keep our children safe. So be a part of NYAPT and renew your membership as soon as possible!

Application forms can be found on the website by clicking on the Membership button and then clicking on “How to Become a Member.” Sign right up!



MEMBER DATABASE ALERT!

NOTE PLEASE that we are updating the NYAPT membership data base. Some of you will be getting emails ‘confirming’ your membership or ‘acknowledging payment’. These are pro forma messages that the system will kick out in some instances. IF YOU OWE DUES OR IF THERE IS SOME QUESTION about your membership status, we will send you a specific email not generated by the Wild Apricot system with an address including the word “cloverpad.” I hope this advance notice alleviates any concerns or questions. We are just doing some maintenance on the database. Once this is complete, we will be able to post a Membership list to the website in a Members Only format. Thanks all!



REMEMBERING

We have learned of the passing of two individuals whose lives brought much good to the world of pupil transportation services....

>>> **Leon Tily**, Superintendent of Transportation at the Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District in Central NY for many years...

>>>**Charles Button**, who served as a bureau chief at SED and oversaw the pupil transportation unit. Charlie was the very first to be bestowed the status of Honorary Member of NYAPT. (His obituary notes that he was ‘proud’ to have been the first recipient.)

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of these two men who offered such good for the children and benefits to our profession. These are the men and women whose footprints we follow and who built our organization and strengthened our profession with their dedication and talents over the years. We are grateful that they worked among us.



CHAPTER MEETING CALENDAR

We have posted the meeting dates for chapter meetings for the 2011-2012 school year on the website Calendar for all those chapters that have shared their dates with us. Executive Director, Peter Mannella, will try to attend chapter meetings more frequently in the coming year as a part of our campaign to get the word out about school transportation.

We encourage all transportation supervisors to get involved in their local chapter activities and to be involved and engaged in statewide education and advocacy efforts. ***Together We Can!!***



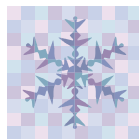
HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A HAPPY 2012!

As we close this issue of NEWS AND NOTES, we pause to wish you all a happy holiday season and a successful & healthy 2012! Be safe and be happy!



PLAN ON ATTENDING THE 2012 ANNUAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE!!

JULY 11-14, 2012 IN SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY



PLAN ON ATTENDING THE 2012 WINTER WORKSHOP

FEBRUARY 23-24, 2012 IN RENSSELAER, NY

BECOME A MEMBER OF NYAPT!!

Go to www.nyapt.org and Click on Membership to Download an Application NOW!

NYAPT NEWS AND NOTES is a publication of the New York Association for Pupil Transportation and is intended solely for the use and information of the Members of NYAPT.