

Transportation Update: Bus Driver Hours

Bus drivers ensure students' safe passage to and from school, prevent absences, and extend a positive school climate beyond the classroom. They support the larger mission of our schools.

Over the past few years we have initiated steps to incentivize people to become bus drivers. Even through our best efforts it continues to be challenging to hire and retain bus drivers. The requirements to become a school bus driver in the State of California are rigorous, cost approximately \$500.00 and include the following:

- Attend a minimum of 20 hours of classroom instruction.
- Pass a physical examination (no Epilepsy, Type I Diabetes, or High Blood Pressure).
- Pass 4 written tests at the DMV.
- Pass 2 written tests at the CHP.
- Train a minimum of 20 hours behind-the-wheel.
- Pass a driving test with the CHP.
- Pass a pre-employment drug test & finger printing

Once you become a California School Bus Driver you must:

- Be randomly tested for drugs and alcohol.
- Attend a minimum of 10 hours per year of training.

For the most part, we have been very fortunate to hire drivers that are already licensed, or hire individuals that successfully completed the training. Our one incentive includes paying for a driver's training once they successfully complete all the requirements and are hired by our district. There have been numerous occasions throughout the years where we have interviewed experienced drivers but when they learn we can only offer a 4 hour day, they decline our offer of employment.

Over the past year we explored the concept of offering all drivers a 6 hour work day. We calculated the annual cost of increasing all drivers to 6 hours a day at \$71,721.93. This seems like a significant increase to the budget until we compared the cost of overtime paid to drivers.

During the most recently completed fiscal year, (FY 17-18) we paid drivers \$90,519 (\$71,470) wages + statutory benefits (\$19,049). Adjusting for extended school year in the amount of \$13,741, this still leaves \$76,778 paid in actual overtime pay to bus drivers.

Overtime is earned when a driver exceeds their contracted hours for the day. Overtime pay occurs for field trips, unforeseen traffic conditions, for our special education drivers, due to extra time a child might require to leave their home and get on the bus, time to clean a bus, attend the required 10 hours of training per year, providing transportation to special education students participating in extended school year services, department meetings, etc.

The following table provides information about our drivers, their hours, and the projected cost of additional hours on an annual basis to bring all drivers to 6 hours per day.

<u>DRIVER</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>HOURS</u>	<u>HOURS NEEDED</u>	<u>COST</u>
Driver 1	Special Ed	7.250		
Driver 2	Special Ed	7.500		
Driver 3	Regular	7.500		
Driver 4	Special Ed	5.000	1.00	26.17
Driver 5	Regular	4.500	1.50	40.06
Driver 6	Regular	4.750	1.25	32.71
Driver 7	Special Ed	6.000		
Driver 8	Special Ed	4.250	1.75	
Driver 9	Regular	4.750	1.25	32.71
Driver 10	Regular	4.000	2.00	52.34
Driver 11	Regular	4.250	1.75	45.79
Driver 12	Regular	4.750	1.25	32.71
Driver 13	Special Ed	4.000	2.00	52.34
Total Per Day		68.500	13.750	\$314.83
# of Student Days				180.00
Additional Annual Cost (Wages)				\$56,669.40
Statutory Benefit Rate				26.56%
Cost of Additional Benefits				\$15,052.53
Total Annual Cost				\$71,721.93

Our analysis indicates that the district will actually decrease our cost by bringing all drivers to 6 hours a day. Additional benefits include:

- The extra hours will eliminate most overtime pay, thus decreasing the time consuming paperwork and calculations required on office staff to process extra pay each month.
- Currently some students do not arrive to school on time to participate in breakfast. With the added hours, routes could be restructured to provide the opportunity for additional tiered routing and students would arrive to school with additional time to interact with friends, eat breakfast, or engage in play on the playground.
- Filed trips would mostly fall within contracted hours
- Ability to hire drivers interested in working for the Sylvan District from other districts that already offer a 6 hour work day
- Any additional time not on the road would be absorbed by the following type of activities:
 - Seat replacements
 - Washing bus

- Cleaning bus more thoroughly each day
- Bus rider eligibility reviews
- Assist with minor bus repairs and minor shop duties
- Assist with documenting information for weekly fuel report
- Department meetings that are currently paid by overtime

The downside is that all overtime will not be completely eliminated, but it is expected that it will be significantly reduced.

We will be increasing driver hours up to 6 hours per day, for those drivers who currently work less than 6 hours beginning with the 2019-20 school year. In order to accomplish this, a bus driver job description is in the process of being revised, and will be brought to the board for approval at the June 25th board meeting.