

Memorandum of Understanding

St. Johns County School District and

St. Johns Educational Support Professional Association 2026-2027 School Year

"School Bus Operator Sign-On and Recruitment Bonuses"

This memorandum is written to serve as an agreement between the St. Johns County School District and the St. Johns Educational Support Professional Association for the 2026-2027 school year regarding the recruitment and retention of school bus operators. Currently, the position of school bus operator is an area of critical shortage for school districts across Florida. The purposes of this memorandum of understanding is to recruit and retain school bus operators for the St. Johns County School District. Maintaining full time school bus operators is imperative to ensuring the safety of children and attaining the agility and flexibility required to successfully operate school buses in St. Johns County.

Definitions:

- a. **Recruiting Employee:** Any school district bargaining unit employee regardless of department. There are no limits on the number of recruiting bonuses a recruiting employee can receive from the Transportation Department
- b. **Candidate for School Bus Operator:** A person referred by the recruiting employee or establishing candidacy without a referral who is interested in serving as a school bus operator for St. Johns County School District who has not yet fulfilled the requirements of becoming an entry level school bus operator.
- c. **Prequalified Candidate for School Bus Operator:** A person with a current Class A or Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with Passenger (P) and School Bus (S) Endorsements without air brake restrictions who has not yet fulfilled the requirements of becoming an entry level school bus operator. A person with a Class C Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or a Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with air brake restrictions does not qualify as a prequalified candidate for school bus operator.
- d. **Entry Level School Bus Operator:** A licensed and certified school bus operator of the St. Johns County School District with less than twelve (12) consecutive months of service.
- e. **Prequalified Entry Level School Bus Operator:** A licensed and certified school bus operator of the St. Johns County District with less than twelve (12) consecutive months of service.
- f. **School Day:** For the purpose of this MOU, a school day is a day in which school buses are operating with children aboard traveling to and from schools and bus stops/residences without a school bus trainer aboard. Absences for any reason do not count towards qualifying school days for bonuses.

Process:

- a. Recruiting employees identify people who they believe will tirelessly, safely, and expertly serve the children of St. Johns County School District as school bus operators.
- b. Candidates for school bus operator contact the Transportation Department's recruiter alerting them of their interest in a school bus operator position.
- c. During the initial contact, the Transportation Department's recruitment will inquire as to how the candidate for school bus operator learned of the employment opportunity as a school bus operator for St. Johns County School District. The recruiter will officially log how the candidates for school bus operator learned of the opportunity. If the sign on/recruiter bonuses apply, the recruiter's record will serve as the formal start of the process for bonuses.
- d. Candidates for school bus operator are eligible for the sign on bonus regardless of whether they were referred by a recruiting employee or not.

Conditions of Service for Entry Level Operator:

Once licensed and certified as a school bus operator for St. Johns County School District, entry level operators must fulfill the following requirements over sixty (60) school days to maintain eligibility for payment of the recruiting and/or sign on bonuses:

- a. Demonstrate proper conduct as a school bus operator for St. Johns County School District
- b. Report to duty on a regular basis without system attendance issues
- c. Successfully fulfill duties as a fulltime school bus operator for the St. Johns County School District
- d. Pass all administered drug and alcohol tests, random and directed
- e. Receive a favorable recommendation by their supervisor, the Fleet Operations Manager
- f. Not receive any written disciplinary action
- g. Apply and become employed as a fulltime school bus operator with the St. Johns County School District

Conditions for Payment of Bonuses:

Sign on Bonus Only: Once an entry level operator completes sixty (60) school days as a licensed/certified as a school bus operator for St. Johns County School District, the entry level operator is eligible for a sign on bonus in the amount of \$500. Entry level operators are entitled to the sign on bonus one (1) time only.

Recruiting and Sign-On Bonus: Once an entry level operator completes sixty (60) school days as a licensed/certified as a school bus operator for St. Johns County School District, the entry level operator is eligible for a sign on bonus in the amount of \$2,500 and the recruiting employee is eligible for a recruiting bonus in the amount of \$500.

Once the conditions of service are fulfilled, the Transportation Department will initiate lump sum payments as appropriate:

- a. A payment of \$2,500 to entry level operator
- b. A payment of \$500 to the recruiting employee

Sign on Bonus for Prequalified Candidates for School Bus Operator: School bus operator candidates who are currently licensed operators with Class A or Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with Passenger (P) and School Bus (S) endorsements are eligible for \$5,000 sign on bonus after completing ninety (90) school days as a licensed/certified school bus operator for St. Johns County School District. A \$500 recruiting bonus applies if a recruiting employee recommends the candidate for hire. The \$5,000 sign on bonus does not apply to school bus operator candidates with a Class C Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or candidates with a Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with air brake restriction. Any new hire operator candidates who terminated employment from a St. Johns County School District school bus operator position with the past fifteen (15) months is ineligible for this bonus. Prequalified entry level school bus operators are entitled to the sign on bonus one (1) time only.

Budget: The Transportation Department shall make payments in the order of date of hire of the recruited entry level operator. Payments are made in order of application for school bus operator candidacy. The Transportation Department may suspend and restart the sign on and recruiting bonus program when appropriate based on availability of qualified school bus operators.

Transportation Department Recruiter:

Printed Name and Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____

Date Referral Received: _____

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Recruiting Employee Identified: _____

Recruiting Employee:

Printed Name and Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____

Entry Level Operator:

Printed Name and Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____

Official Start Date as a Licensed/Certified School Bus Operator:

OR

Newly Hired School Bus Operator: Currently licensed with Class A or Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with Passenger (P) and School Bus (S) Endorsements:

Printed Name and Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____

Official Start Date as a SJCSD School Bus Operator: _____

Senior Director for Transportation:

Alfred A. Pantano Jr. _____

Today's Date: _____

This Memorandum of Understanding begins July 1, 2026, and shall expire on June 30, 2027.

 7/9/26
Bethany Koch Date

 7/9/26
~~Wayne King~~ Date
Patrick Snodgrass

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