NAPT STATEMENT ON

CLEAN-AIR & ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS IMPLEMENTATION

Background

Over many years, the school transportation industry has adapted to new developments and approaches to cleaner school bus operation. We met head on advances toward low sulfur diesel fuels in the early 2000s, requirements for reduction in idling of school buses, the introduction of particulate filters and similar adaptive clean-air technologies, among other directions. These efforts required partnerships among industry professionals, the manufacturing community and school leaders nationally. Emissions from school buses were reduced dramatically as we all stepped up to ensure safety and health for our children.

In recent years, school bus manufacturers have invested in and worked diligently to develop and produce electric school buses as well as other accepted clean school bus products. The infusion of federal incentive funding and emerging state-level electric school bus mandates have accelerated the movement toward electric and other forms of clean-air school buses.

Federal and state programs have begun providing funding for the introduction of or transition to electric (and other clean fuel) school buses. In some states, districts and operators have been presented with mandated timelines for the transition to electric buses (e.g., deadlines relating to restricting purchases to electric buses or clean fuel alternatives).

Current Situation

School transportation operations have adapted over the years to changes in fuels and technology to ensure school buses meet or exceed NHTSA air quality standards as well as some state-imposed requirements.

School districts and transportation operators face significant challenges during this transition away from traditional diesel and fossil fuels. One of those challenges is ensuring the school bus industry of the reliability of electric or other power sources so that we can safely and reliably reach our students each day. That is the mission and it is one that cannot be compromised.

These challenges are exacerbated by constraints in school financing and budgets, increases in costs for operations, access to power supplies, supply chains for the electric school buses and more. Moreover, at a time when districts need to focus on improved academic results, it is difficult to invest increasing funding to a non-instructional expense such as transportation.

Over the years, NAPT and our NAPT Foundation have worked hard to be good partners in national and state efforts to improve school bus emissions and other health-related initiatives. We have provided educational opportunities for members of our industry to learn about reduced emissions from school buses, the use of cleaner fuels, enhanced maintenance and sound operational practices that all contribute to a cleaner environment.

As the electric school bus movement advances across the nation, NAPT is intent on continuing and expanding our role in providing information and resources to our members on this topic. Moreover, as a member-driven association, it is important that we give voice to the significant operational, financial and safety concerns of our members related to this moment in school bus history.

NAPT Positions on Clean-Air and Electric School Bus Implementation

>Overall Support
NAPT supports efforts to ensure that school buses are safe environments for our children, including through the timely and appropriate introduction of cleaner fueling options for those buses. This would include not only electric-powered school buses but also other existing and emerging technologies that offer similar benefits.

>Challenges Are Real
While schools across the nation seek to introduce clean school bus technology, there are *bona fide* issues that affect the capacity of school districts and operators to implement such efforts and transitions. NAPT believes it is crucial that honest and productive conversations continue to ensure that prudent and proper decisions and investments are made by schools and operators. School expenditures are limited in most states and that will require extremely due diligence and rigor by school officials and boards of education.

>Successes Are Real, too
NAPT members and everyone engaged in school transportation are focused on success. Our industry is characterized by problem-solvers who focus like lasers on safely getting our children to and from school. As we expand our discussions and efforts, it is crucial that we take time to identify and disseminate their successes in addressing the transition to clean fuels (including especially electric buses) and in overcoming the various issues and needs involved in that transition process.

>Allowing for Local Needs Is Most Effective
NAPT believes that transitioning to electric or other clean-fuel buses should allow school districts and school bus operators to adapt and implement in ways consistent with the needs of their students and their communities. One-size-fits-all mandates are not always productive and could lead to inefficient decisions at the expense of safety, taxpayer dollars and community support.

>Moderating Mandates Is Important
Where states determine it is important to mandate certain steps and milestones toward electrification, NAPT would urge that those decisions be tempered with a realistic understanding of the demands that will be placed on local operations and budgets.

>Access to Funding Streams is Advisable
NAPT encourages our members to avail themselves of state and/or federal funding that assists

them in making a smooth and efficient transition to electric or other clean sources of fuel. While this is not always optimal, supplemental funding is always useful to accomplish important goals.

>Access to Adequate Power Is Critical
Implementation of electric school bus initiatives must be realistic about the availability of and costs associated with access to sufficient electric power supplies. School buses must be ready to roll every day to bring our nation's children to their education.

Currently, access to power is not only a significant cost issue but a serious feasibility issue. We are aware of the issues of power suppliers having to keep up with burgeoning infrastructure demands for electric vehicles, appliances, and even artificial intelligence. That could present serious dilemmas for school buses that transport our nation's children, challenges that cannot be given short shrift.

It can NEVER happen that a school bus is unable to complete a route with children aboard due to a lack of power. Our industry does not and cannot accept such failure as an option.

>Supply Chain and Production Issues
School bus manufacturers have done admirable work in developing, designing, and producing electric school buses. However, current experiences among our members suggest that access to component parts could present delays in the production and delivery of buses. The federal government needs to work closely with components of the school bus 'supply chain' to ensure that production by OEMs is not delayed by shortages of key components.

>Preparing Operators and Drivers
Handling and maintenance of electric school buses presents technological and safety-related concerns for school bus operators. Increased short-term and mid-term focus should be placed on providing effective and timely training for school bus technicians in the proper inspection and maintenance of these new vehicles. Training needs to be provided as well to new and incumbent school bus drivers on safe handling, pre-trip and post-trip inspections and related matters.

>Emergency Management
School buses carry our nation's future: our children. School buses are susceptible to accidents and emergency situations. Such situations must be handled carefully to protect the children who are aboard the bus. The introduction of electric-powered vehicles presents questions and change for emergency teams including firefighters and first responders. Such provisions for their preparation and training are critical elements of a successful transition to electric or any other emerging power technology.

>Impact on Ridership
Research has shown over the years that transportation on yellow school buses is THE SAFEST MEANS of transporting our children to and from school. The significant differential in the purchase cost of electric school buses over traditional diesel and other fuels will present challenges for school superintendents and business officials who will need to balance the instructional needs of children with the new school bus expenses.

In that scenario, instructional needs and costs will prevail. School transportation will be cut back through restrictions on eligibility for transportation. This will lead to fewer children riding yellow

school buses, more children walking, more parents driving their children (with commensurate increases in school traffic) or children getting to school by other, less safe means. These options are not acceptable from a safety and environmental perspective.

>Just the Facts: Data-Driven Decisions
As school transportation operations, it is crucial to local school decision-makers that data be collected, assessed, and shared on the success and/or failure of efforts to transition to electric and other alternate fuels on the market. This is a sea change in the method of propulsion for school buses and our colleagues across the nation must know that it will be reliable and enable them to transport their children to and from school every day…without fail.

At a minimum, data should be available regarding not only cost, but access to power sources, cost of ownership, availability of vehicles, infrastructure needs, preparation of drivers and technicians, impacts on regular routes as well as athletic and extra-curricular activity routes. NAPT will work with practitioners and researchers who can provide useful data to our members on this issue.

>Success is Our Mission
The school bus industry has never shied away from managing and successfully implementing difficult transitions in equipment or driver standards or safety technology. We are proud of that posture and approach to problems and challenges.

Leadership requires hard work and resourcefulness and collaboration.

NAPT and our entire school bus industry will work diligently and assertively to succeed in these major steps toward cleaner and safer school buses for our children.

NAPT Action Agenda

- NAPT will share these concerns with our members and our state association partners.
- NAPT will engage with members and state associations to gather intelligence and real data on this clean school bus implementation.
- NAPT will provide education and resources to our and their members on a timely basis through webinars, conference workshops and School Bus Ride, our official magazine.
- NAPT will share these concerns with federal, state, and local officials as well as with our national partners, including especially school superintendents, school business officials, school facilities officials, parent organizations.
- NAPT will create frequent and regular opportunities for our members to share not only their challenges but also their solutions and successful strategies.
- NAPT will engage with our school bus manufacturing partners to ensure that we are able to share access to useful and timely information about electric bus production and supply chain matters.
- NAPT will develop national and regional gatherings and forums for the exchange of ideas among our members, manufacturers, power suppliers, school administrators, and others engaged in managing this issue.