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# A Survey of Bus Discipline Behaviors, Management Techniques, and Policies within Illinois Educational Service Center #11

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This research is a product of the graduate program in [Educational Administration](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

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A SURVEY OF BUS DISCIPLINE BEHAVIORS,  
MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES, AND POLICIES  
WITHIN ILLINOIS EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER #11

BY  
JEAN M. CHROSTOSKI

FIELD EXPERIENCE  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
SPECIALIST IN EDUCATION  
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS  
1994

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS FIELD EXPERIENCE BE ACCEPTED AS  
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**A Survey of Bus Discipline Behaviors,  
Management Techniques, and Policies  
within Illinois Educational Service Center #11**

**Jean M. Chrostoski**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: Overview</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction	4
Statement of the Problem	7
Limitations	8
Definition of Terms	8
<b>Chapter 2: Review of Literature</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Design of Study</b>	<b>18</b>
General Design	18
Sample and Population	19
Collection and Instrumentation	20
Data Analysis	21
<b>Chapter 4: Results</b>	<b>22</b>
General Information	22
Respondent Types and District Size	23
Consistency in School Bus Discipline Policies	24
Most Common/Least Common Behavior Problems	30
Comparison of Disciplinary Methods of Regular Education Students vs. Special Education Students	32
Most Effective Disciplinary Methods	36
Behavior Management Training	40
<b>Chapter 5: Summary, Findings and Recommendations</b>	<b>41</b>
Summary	41
Findings	42

Research Question One . . . . .	42
Research Question Two . . . . .	43
Research Question Three . . . . .	43
Research Question Four . . . . .	44
Research Question Five . . . . .	45
Recommendations . . . . .	45
Recruitment and Selection of Bus Drivers . . . . .	45
Use of Bus Video Cameras . . . . .	46
Recommendations for Further Study . . . . .	46
References . . . . .	49
Appendices . . . . .	51
A. School Bus Resource Manual . . . . .	51
B. Survey Questionnaire . . . . .	87
C. Cover Letter . . . . .	90
D. Response Form for School Bus Resource Manual . . . . .	92
E. Cover Letter Sent with School Bus Resource Manual . . . . .	94

## **List of Tables**

<b>Table 1.</b>	<b>Position of Respondents . . . . .</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Table 2.</b>	<b>Disciplinary Procedures . . . . .</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Table 3.</b>	<b>Most Common/Least Common Behaviors . . . . .</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Table 4.</b>	<b>Types of Disciplinary Methods (Regular Education Students) . . . . .</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Table 5.</b>	<b>Disciplinary Methods Used for Special Education Students . . . . .</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Table 6.</b>	<b>Comparison of Top Five Most Common Methods by Group . . . . .</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Table 7.</b>	<b>Most Effective Disciplinary Methods . . . . .</b>	<b>37</b>

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to research the scope and degree to which school bus discipline was a problem for school districts in the Illinois Educational Service Center #11, and to determine if there were any consistencies in the school policies, procedures and behavioral management plans used by these districts. Since there has been little written research regarding the issue, this study was a method of providing data regarding bus discipline, and synthesizing this data to compile a school bus resource manual for school personnel.

Data were collected from 28 school districts representing 177 administrators, special education coordinators and/or transportation directors in the ESC #11 service region. A survey instrument was developed by the researcher to seek information regarding demographics, most common bus discipline problems; most common and effective bus disciplinary methods; differing methods, if appropriate, for special education students; types of district policies and behavior management training for bus drivers.

Evaluation of the data revealed that a majority of the districts did have a written policy on hand; however, there were inconsistencies among these districts on procedures for bus disciplinary referrals. The most common discipline problems for bus drivers were: 1) Out of Seat Behavior, 2) General Disruption, 3) Foul Language, 4) Throwing Things, and 5) Physical Behaviors. The least common disciplinary problem was

Smoking/Drinking on the bus. The data also revealed that the significant difference between the disciplinary treatment of regular education students and special education students was predominantly in the area of expulsions. Special education students did not fall under the auspices of expulsion; however, other disciplinary methods were used more frequently such as reward systems and both forms of bus monitors (people and cameras). The least effective disciplinary methods for special education students were: 1) Bus Expulsions, 2) Parent Riding the Bus, 3) Assigned Seats, and 4) Buddy Systems. The review of literature and policy analysis revealed that although the majority of disciplinary referrals were initiated by the bus driver, there is still some controversy regarding the bus driver's role in behavior management. There are some districts in which the bus driver has no role except for reporting the problem to the building principal. Finally, survey data revealed that there is little being done in the form of staff development training for bus drivers. This was another area of concern supported by the review of literature in this study.

This study supported the researcher's opinion that there existed a need to continue research in the area of bus discipline with further emphasis being focused on staff development for bus drivers, and the use of video cameras to control behavior on school buses.

## Chapter 1

### Overview

#### Introduction

Behavior management is the basic groundwork for the success of any school system. As social mores deteriorate, this element of school structure has suffered many challenges and changes. Although much literature has been written about behavior management, and many researchers have "earned their keep" promoting their specific behavior management plans, little study has been done on the role of effective behavior management on the school buses of this country. The public eye has focused on the ethics of many bus drivers, but it has not concerned itself with the challenges that face any individual who steps onto a school bus housed with 50 or more students.

No teacher would be hired without showing some proof of understanding of behavior management, yet not all bus drivers have to show such competencies. "More good teachers resign from the ranks of the profession than we would like to admit and our bus drivers with even less training and expertise often times think that their contribution to the education of the child is negligible, in fact, nationally there seems to be a kind of pervasive desperation on the part of these support personnel who day in and day out bring students to and from school safely." (Butler, 1975)

School bus transportation is one of the most vital components of our educational system today. Without it, many students would not attend

school simply because it was inconvenient for the parent or because students would not be able to reasonably walk this distance on a daily basis. Unlike classroom instruction, bus transportation generally does not vary from day to day, and if it does, it causes more upheaval to its clients than a teacher's change in the lesson plan for that day. If buses are delayed because of weather, many households are disrupted.

School bus transportation also differs from classroom instruction in that the bus driver is responsible for an average of 50 students at a time, and is incapable of giving them his/her undivided attention because of the responsibility of actually driving the school bus. A bus driver must resort to an occasional glance through the rear view mirror to check on the students, and except for perhaps a radio, the bus driver is secluded from all other school personnel.

The responsibility of driving a vehicle as large and complex as a school bus is an important job. What the average person does not realize is that most parents expect for this individual also to supervise and protect their child during the actual bus ride. A small number of districts provide a monitor on the bus to assist in behavior management. But these districts include only those that are affluent enough to pay for the services. Others have resorted to video cameras, but again, this is dependent upon that district's capability of paying for such services. The typical rural bus driver will most likely have neither of these luxuries, and in some cases may not have the support he or she needs from the local school administration. Another obstacle facing the bus driver is the new mandated high backs on

the bus seats. Intended to protect the bus student, it has also provided an additional obstruction of vision for the bus driver.

The actual bus student has also changed over the years. Although typical behaviors will never change, today's bus driver is faced with much more aggressive students who are the products of dysfunctional homes, child abuse and neglect, and victims of severe behavior disorders caused by pre-natal malnutrition and substance abuse. As special education laws continue to become more restrictive and protective in terms of the rights of transportation of special education students, bus drivers will, in some cases, have no option of removing a disruptive student from the bus due to an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) that stipulates transportation for this student. Few districts can afford the personnel and fleet needed to provide private transportation for the behavior disorder student. Even if they are able to provide this private transportation, this will usually involve collapsing routes, increasing the number of students on a the regular route, and extending the time and miles for that route, requiring students to be picked up earlier and resulting in a longer ride.

Local administrators themselves are sometimes an obstacle to the bus driver. Many administrators have the attitude that it is the responsibility of the bus driver to handle the disciplinary situations; some administrators resent having to discipline students for an incident that occurred out of their building where they have no control over the circumstances surrounding the situation. Some bus drivers perpetuate this problem by not requiring

the students to sit in the same seat everyday or waiting to refer students until their buses are totally out of control.

As more and more outside agencies dictate the expectations of the bus driver, fewer and fewer individuals have shown interest in the position under the current conditions. Today's bus driver is required to have a physical, a drug test and a commercial driver's license. But the most important hidden requirement is that most districts expect this individual also to be an expert in behavioral management techniques.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to research the scope and degree to which school bus discipline was a problem for school districts in the Illinois Educational Service Center #11 area, and to determine if there were any consistencies in the school policies, procedures, and behavioral management plans used by these districts. The problem addressed in this study was to determine which techniques were most effective for bus drivers and school personnel in disciplining students, and if indeed the use of video cameras would be an increasing new option for students, based upon the success and opinions of those districts using it now.

This study should provide useful data to those schools who would like to consider purchasing video cameras. This investigation also resulted in the development of a school bus resource manual with strategies that might be useful to other administrators, special education coordinators, transportation directors and bus drivers for bus staff development.

The research questions that were investigated to answer the problem statement were:

1. Is there consistency in the establishment of school bus discipline policies within ESC#11?
2. What are the most common bus discipline problems?
3. Are there any differences in the way bus discipline is handled if a child is a special education student?
4. How are bus discipline referrals most commonly handled by school districts, and what role, if any, does the bus driver have in this process?
5. To what extent is staff development for bus drivers being utilized by these school districts?

#### Limitations and Operational Definitions

##### Limitations

1. The study was limited in that no bus drivers were used in the sampling.
2. The study was limited by the validity of the instrument used to collect data.
3. The study was limited to only one geographic area of the state of Illinois.
4. The study was limited by the accuracy of the individuals' answers to the survey.

Definition of Terms. The following terms have been defined to provide readers with an understanding of their contextual use:

**IEP** - Individualized Educational Program as defined by the Illinois State Board of Education.

**ESC #11** - The Illinois State Board of Education Educational Service Center located in Macomb, Illinois. (This includes the counties of Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Greene, Hancock, Henderson, Jersey, McDonough, Mercer, Morgan, Pike, Schuyler, Scott, and Warren.)

**Behavioral Management Techniques** - Techniques used to control the behavior of school students ages 3 through 21. (i.e. assigned seats on a school bus, verbal warnings, written warnings, establishment and posting of rules, consequences for non-compliance with those rules)

**Transportation Personnel** - Those individuals in charge of the bus fleet and/or the operation of driving a school bus.

**Administration** - Superintendents, Principals, Assistant Principals or Deans who handle disciplinary problems for the district.

**Bus Suspension** - Removal of a student from the school bus for a period not to exceed 10 days.

**Bus Expulsion** - Removal of a student from the school bus for a period longer than 10 days, but not longer than one actual school year.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Review of Literature**

The review of literature for bus discipline conducted by the author yielded very little up-to-date information. The fruits of an ERIC search on the topic only proved the author's assumption that very little, if anything, had been written on this topic. Some titles were misleading. Although it might have appeared that an article addressed bus discipline, in reality, the issue was bus safety. This researcher contacted the National School Transportation Association which provided twelve additional articles, with the most recent article dated 1989 from *School Business Affairs*. Most of these articles focused on three basic themes - bus driver behavior and attitudes; training of bus drivers; and consistent methods of discipline.

Stuart (1989) related that the single most important element of school bus behavior is the bus driver. He feels that districts should have a three-prong approach to the selection of bus personnel. First is the screening for the technical abilities. The second is for training and development of behavior management techniques, and the last is that students should be informed by the bus driver of "bus etiquette" and reminded of it frequently.

The November 1989 issue of the *American School Board Journal* featured several articles on adequate training for bus drivers. Saks (1989) discussed the issue of bus drivers having to acquire the Commercial Driver's License and indicated that this was one way to ensure the quality

of personnel hired, hence, improving overall bus discipline. Farmer (1989), however, disagrees with the increased regulation and requirements for quality bus drivers. He feels these measures will discourage current and future employees. Those already driving will not want to go through the ordeal, and those possible employees will seek less demanding employment. Farmer feels school districts should improve the selection procedures and also develop an effective training program. "Classroom instruction should cover rules of the road, state regulations, bus discipline, and your school board's transportation policies. . . . Other appropriate topics for in-service training include child behavior, discipline, and new regulations (or ambiguities in existing ones)" (p. A9). Farmer also felt that providing support for bus drivers in handling discipline problems was important. "The driver is an expert in operating the school bus, not in discharging the duties of a school administrator" (p. A9).

A re-occurring theme in the literature was that of the bus driver's "attitude." "The bus driver's responsibility begins with his attitude toward and his relationship with his passengers" (Pope, 1971, p.32). Being liked and being respected are very important differences in the role of a bus driver. Bus Driver A wants the students to like him, however, he is lax in discipline. Driver A ignores the foul language and ignores the pleas of a student being hit. Driver B, on the other hand, greets his passengers cheerfully, but explains the rules and consistently enforces them. There are two types of motivation in the typical bus driver as well - "involved" and "enforced" (Pope, 1971). When a bus driver is operating under "involved"

motivation, he or she is willing to "tangle with difficulty." These individuals receive an intense training program and are taught the procedures to carry out their responsibilities. These drivers do their jobs with enthusiasm and never set poor examples for students. The second type of motivation, and one not so desirable, is "enforced." Unlike the "motivated" bus driver, these employees get motivated by "simply laying it on the line that disciplinary action will be taken if other means of motivation fail" (Pope, p. 32). These bus drivers typically view their job as a means to acquire a paycheck. They seldom establish a lasting rapport with the students, and are often resistant to suggestion for improvement in their jobs.

Butler and DeGregori (1975) feel that it is the driver's willingness to assume the leadership role when dealing with students that makes the difference. They feel that there are four quadrants that a bus driver's attitude can fall into: Big John, Mr. Goodfellow, Lonely Sam and 10/4 Good Buddy (p.1). Big John feels that students are uncooperative and he could care less. He feels the bus driver must be in control at all times. In these cases, the administrator is often engaged with problems from this bus driver. Lonely Sam bus drivers are loose and inconsistent with discipline. They never really develop a positive relationship with their students. The 10/4 Good Buddy drivers "utilize the nice guy approach on the bus" (p.2). These drivers feel that if the students like them, then students will behave. On the other end of the spectrum, Mr. Goodfellow believes that students will be cooperative if they are involved in the

decision-making process. It is this type of bus driver who achieves the most success.

In order for bus drivers to become Mr. Goodfellows means they must have the appropriate staff development. Aside from the regular behind the wheel training, bus drivers should be inserviced at least twice a year for due process and also the resolution of conflict. In Tucson, Arizona, the training for bus drivers involves three processes. The first is a training in basic terms of behavior and an examination of behavior styles. The second is an introduction to resolving conflict with the use of the Adversary Approach and the Win/Win Approach. Next, bus drivers are given simulated cases which they have to resolve. The final component is a summary and evaluation of the workshop. It is felt that this training does three things:

1. It does change attitudes and provides the bus driver with more interaction tools to help him/her resolve many of the daily problems encountered on the job.
- 2) It does improve image, self-respect, and prestige of the drivers.
- 3) It helps to prevent being a bugged and bewildered bus driver (Bulter, 1975, p.7).

Lee Cantor and Associates, well known for the Assertive Discipline behavior management plan, also offers a video-tape training program for bus drivers. But even Canter points out that "no teacher would turn his back on 60 students for two minutes, but a driver must do so for as long as an hour (or even longer) while maneuvering a bus through traffic" (p.46).

Canter's training which focuses on the same framework as his classroom program, emphasizes good communication skills, staying calm, and talking with the students at the end of the ride. However, today's bus drivers deal with more than just the regular education students; many of them are confronted with behavior disorder students whose IEP may stipulate transportation. For some districts transportation off the regular school bus is sometimes costly and unaffordable. Canter's program falls short in this area.

In Fairfax County, Virginia, the administration has created its own inservice training program to help bus drivers. They feel that only four guidelines need to be adhered to: "1) Set a few clear, simple rules for proper behavior on the school bus. . . . 2) Be positive. . . . 3) Make bus rules consistent with the behavior rules in force at school. . . . 4) Emphasize communication. . . ." (Trotter, 1986, p.47). Fairfax feels that it is important for the driver to talk to the student about his or her behavior instead of running to the principal. Trotter also gives discipline tips to bus drivers (see Appendix A).

Trotter (1986) compares the various forms of disciplinary techniques that were used in the 1980s. Not surprising, one finds that these similar behavior management plans are still currently being used. Trotter stated that it was not unusual for a school bus driver to stop the bus in the middle of the road, blow her whistle, and if things did not get better, haul all the students back to the school. As early as 1986, it was felt that even if the district used a variety of disciplinary techniques, the effectiveness of

managing student behavior still lies in the quality of the individual driving the bus. "Schools have tried many approaches to improving bus discipline, such as getting parents to sign lists of rules, using monitors or seat belts to keep kids still, entertaining the youngsters with AM/FM radios or calling for help by walkie-talkie. Whatever the merits of these methods, they are only stopgap measures if the drivers lack confidence and don't know how to communicate with their charges" (Trotter, p. 46).

Pope, Director of Transportation Services in Battle Creek, Michigan stated that the first step to effective student discipline is a clear policy concerning what action should be taken. He feels a printed set of rules should be given to each driver and explained thoroughly by the transportation director.

Grier, superintendent of the McDowell County Schools in Marion, North Carolina, tells of his district's student awareness and driver training procedures. That district has developed a bus-safety program that begins with kindergartners and goes all the way to school board members. On a Saturday before school opens, the previous "Driver of the Year" will give a presentation on bus rules, along with a safety demonstration on how to board the bus. Students and parents then participate in an actual bus ride. "Best Kid on the Bus Cards" are used for students who demonstrate exemplary behavior. "And many principals give monthly ice cream parties for children who have earned a 'Best Kid on the Bus Card.' Older students receive free passes to school dances or athletic contests for exemplary bus behavior" (1986, p.38).

All the articles researched supported some type of consistent, progressive manner of discipline for students with bus problems. The National Safety Council (1981) puts it simply in three statements: " 1) Make rules; 2) teach the rules; and 3) enforce the rules" (p.1). Creston-Kaslo School District in British Columbia has four phases to its policy. The first is a verbal warning. This is done after the other children have left the bus. The second incident is a written reprimand by the bus driver reporting that the next incident will result in a two-day suspension off the bus. This letter is given to the supervisor who will be responsible for contacting the parents. The third occurrence results in a two-day suspension, and the fourth referral is an indefinite suspension until there is a parent meeting with the school. (*School Bus Fleet*, 1987) Assignment of the seat up front near the driver, also known by some as the "angel seat" is incorporated in some policies. Students typically have to earn their privilege of moving back to their regular seat. Disciplinary tickets are also used by some. A ticket for each instance of misconduct serves as a paper trail for bus drivers if a bus suspension is necessary. "Although tickets have an important place in the discipline control program they should not be looked upon as the only way to solve problems. A personal contact with the parent will solve many problems at their beginning before they become serious" (Pope, 1971, p.35).

The only article written in the 1990s dealt with the use of videos on the school bus - not video cameras to tape behavior, but TV videos to be shown while the bus was in transit. This practice is currently being piloted

in the St. Louis Public Schools. The various video-tape programs last 16 to 30 minutes and include such titles as *Electric Grandmother*, *Call of the Wild*, *Charlotte's Web* and *High Noon*. The importance of this experiment lies in the simplicity and the inexpensive nature of the program. For relatively small dollars, inner-city schools could possibly reduce violence on buses with the utilization of a simple video system" (Gray, 1992, p.29).

A newspaper article from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, dated February 21, 1992, reported that the Hutsonville Independent School District showed improved behavior by installing video cameras. These video boxes, which cost \$270 each are mounted near the driver's rear-view mirror. "The kids don't know whether they are being filmed or not. There's always that element of doubt" (p.1). The installation of these cameras decreased the number of disciplinary referrals by half. Two companies selling these systems are Optronics of Texas, and Silent Witness Enterprises of Burnaby, British Columbia. Both companies foster the idea that a box will be placed in every school bus, but the camera will not be running everyday. The literature accompanying their advertisements indicates that school districts are pleased with the results.

In summary, there are no timely studies available on current practices in bus discipline. Most states and most districts develop their own procedures for training of bus drivers, and once they are trained, there is little follow-up. There are diverse beliefs on whose responsibility it is for the behavior management of students. Surprisingly, it is found that little has changed since the above articles were written in the 1980s.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Design of the Study**

#### **General Design**

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to research the scope and degree to which school bus discipline was a problem in school districts in the Illinois ESC #11 area, and to determine if there were any consistencies in the school policies, procedures and behavioral management plans for these districts. The problem addressed in this study was to determine which techniques are most effective for bus drivers and school personnel. The research questions that were investigated in relation to this problem were:

1. Is there consistency in the establishment of school bus discipline policies within ESC#11?
2. What are the most common bus discipline problems?
3. Are there any differences in the way bus discipline is handled if a child is a special education student?
4. How are bus discipline referrals most commonly handled by school districts, and what role, if any does the bus driver have in this process?
5. To what extent is staff development for bus drivers being utilized by these school districts?

There has been little written research regarding this issue; therefore, this study was another method to provide data regarding bus discipline and to synthesize these data to compile a school bus resource manual for school administrators and transportation directors. This manual should assist in decision-making processes for districts - be it the purchase of video cameras or the establishment of stronger staff development programs for bus drivers.

Data were collected from 28 school districts representing 177 administrators, special education coordinators and/or transportation directors in the ESC #11 service region. A survey instrument (see Appendix B) was developed by the researcher to seek information regarding demographics, most common bus discipline problems, most common and effective bus disciplinary methods, differing methods, if appropriate, for special education students, types of district policies, and behavior management training for bus drivers. Demographic information included position of respondent and district size.

#### Sample and Population

An entire population of 177 superintendents, principals, special education coordinators and transportation directors in the ESC #11 service region was used for this study. All 177 individuals received a cover letter (see Appendix C) attached to the questionnaire, along with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.

Each questionnaire was coded with a number to make it easier to monitor which schools returned the questionnaire by the designated date.

A follow-up letter was not sent for the following two reasons: 1) Time constraints for project completion, and 2) the questionnaire resulted in a valid response from its sampling.

### Collection and Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire was designed by the researcher of this study. Demographic information only included two components - the respondent's position and the district's size. Although the demographic information was not very lengthy, it did provide insight to the researcher in analyzing the data for this project.

Questions 2 and 3 asked for respondents to indicate in priority order which were the most common discipline problems for the district. Questions 4 and 5 asked for the disciplinary methods used and also which ones were most effective, indicative by a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the most effective. Question 7 asked for those disciplinary methods used by the district in relation to special education students. Questions 6 and 8 were open-ended questions asking the respondents to give opinions as to why they felt a certain disciplinary method was most effective, and also to describe the types of behavior management training available to bus drivers in the district.

A loose individual flier (see Appendix D) was also inserted asking respondents to indicate if they would be interested in receiving a district resource manual based upon the results of the project.

The survey instrument, flier, cover letter and stamped return envelopes were mailed to the 177 individuals on October 18 and 19, 1993. Mailing

labels for this project were generated by use of a Packard Bell Personal Computer with Windows Accelerator and a Panasonic printer. The cover letter included a request to return the survey by October 29, 1993. It was felt that most individuals, if they were going to respond, would do so within 10 days.

### Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaire were analyzed to determine the scope of bus disciplinary problems among the districts, and to determine which behavioral management methods were used and were most effective. Respondents were also invited to send their specific district policies on bus discipline to generate more data. All of these data would be used to answer the five specific research questions listed at the beginning of this chapter.

Responses to the study questionnaire that could be listed in the form of frequencies and percentages were analyzed by Eastern Illinois University's Computing Services. The sections of the questionnaire which dealt with ranking of most common behaviors and most effective methods, along with the questions asking for open-ended responses were hand-tabulated by the researcher. The analysis of district policies that were received were also completed by the researcher.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

#### **General Information**

The purpose of this study was to research the scope and degree to which school bus discipline was a problem for school districts in the Illinois Educational Service Center #11 region, and to determine if there were any consistencies in the school policies, procedures, and behavioral management plans used by these districts. The problem addressed was to determine which techniques were most effective for bus drivers and school personnel. There were five research questions investigated to assist in responding to the problem.

The survey was mailed to 177 administrators, transportation directors and special education coordinators. One hundred and eleven surveys were returned creating a total survey percentage returned of 63%. There was only one survey received a month after the questionnaires had already been submitted to Eastern Illinois University's Computer Services Center.

It should be noted that of the 111 respondents, two of them returned blank surveys because their districts did not use buses - all the students came via parents or walking. Fifty-six of those surveyed indicated that they would like to receive the district resource manual that would be generated from the study.

This chapter presents the data in six sections. The first section highlights pertinent information regarding the types of respondents and the

size of the districts surveyed. The second section presents data regarding the first research question asking whether or not consistencies could be found among school bus discipline policies. The third section addresses the second research question regarding the most common bus discipline problems. The fourth section addresses responses to the differences in disciplinary methods for regular education and special education students. The fifth section analyzes procedures for bus referrals. The sixth section focuses on the issue of staff development for bus drivers being utilized by school districts.

#### Respondent Types and District Size

The first portion of the survey asked respondents to check their current positions with the district. Their options were: Superintendent, principal, special education director and other. Table 1 provides data on the positions held by the respondents of this survey.

Of the 111 surveys returned, 25 (23%) were completed by superintendents. Seventy-two (66%) were completed by principals. Two (2%) were completed by special education directors, and 7 (6%) were marked "other." Those responses included three transportation directors, one assistant superintendent, one special education supervisor, one principal intern, and one assistant principal.

The next item to be checked indicated district size in terms of student enrollment. Since the respondents were not given ranges to choose from, the results are reported in terms of mean, median and mode. The mean for the districts represented in the sample was 1,385 students; the mode was

**Table 1****Position of Respondents**

Respondent Position	Frequency	Percent
Superintendent	25	23%
Principal	72	66%
Spec. Ed. Dir.	2	2%
Other	7	6%
Not Usable	3	3%
Total	109	100%

(Note: Two surveys were not sent to computing services because they were returned blank)

450 students, and the median was 720 students. There were 22 people who did not respond to the questionnaire.

**Consistency in School Bus Discipline Policies**

Research Question One asked if there was inconsistency in the establishment of school bus discipline policies. The survey questionnaire asked individuals to indicate by marking yes or no whether or not their district had a policy in place for bus discipline. Of the 109 responding, 78 (72%) had a policy in place; 18 (17%) did not have a policy on bus discipline, and 13 (11.9%) did not respond to the question. Of the 78 who

did indicate that they had a policy in place, 28 sent a copy of it back to be used for the policy analysis.

Twenty-eight districts in the Illinois Educational Service Center #11 offered their district policies for use in this study. One of the assumptions of this project was that districts would be very diverse in their policies regarding bus discipline. What was found was that there were amazing similarities. Four districts touted exactly the same policy. Due to its generic nature, it is assumed that this policy was prepared by an association or a legal firm (see Appendix A).

When reviewing these policies, it was found that all districts established similar rules and expectations for students. The following is a summary of the 10 most common rules used by these districts.

1. Listen to the bus driver
2. Keep hands, feet, objects to oneself
3. No standing or movement while the bus is in motion
4. No eating, drinking, use or possession of tobacco products
5. No vandalism - destruction of bus property
6. Keep the aisles clear
7. No obscene or vulgar language
8. No excessive noise
9. No fighting or horseplay
10. No weapons or animals

Although there was notable consistency in the rules to be established for buses, the procedures used for referring discipline problems did vary.

Table 2 gives a summary of the various combinations of disciplinary measures. Most all of them included bus warnings, bus suspensions and bus expulsions.

Table 2 shows that districts vary on how many warnings are given to a student before removing him/her from the bus. Policy #1 has a continuous level of increasing disciplinary actions. Policy #9 goes from two warnings to two

**Table 2**

Disciplinary Procedures

Policy #	Action Taken	Driver	Principal	Board
1	Verbal Warning	X		
	Referral to Principal	X		
	3-day suspension		X	
	5-day suspension		X	
	10-day suspension		X	
	Bus expulsion			X
2	After 3 referrals -			
	5-day suspension from the bus.		X	
	5-day suspension for any referral thereafter		X	
(Three different districts use this format)				
3	Warning		X	
	3-day suspension		X	
	5-day suspension		X	
	10-day suspension		X	
	Parents must appear before the board			

**Table 2**  
**Disciplinary Procedures (cont.)**

Policy #	Action Taken	Driver	Principal	Board
4	Student Conference	X		
	Parent Conference	X		
	1-5 day suspension		X	
	6-10 day suspension		X	
	Expulsion			X
5	Talk to student	X		
	Move to front for two weeks		X	
	Office referral	X		
6	Written warning		X	
	3-day suspension		X	
	10-day suspension		X	
	Expulsion			X
7	Warning	X		
	Warning		X	
	Parent Conference		X	
	1-5 day suspension		X	
	Expulsion (30-day min.)			X
8	Note home	X		
	Note home - parents must call the school		X	
	Parent conference with driver/principal/supt.		X	
9	Warning	X		
	Parental Contact		X	
	2 week suspension		X	
	Expulsion			
10	Parent signs card	X		

**Table 2**  
**Disciplinary Actions**

Policy #	Action Taken	Driver	Principal	Board
10	Parent conference		X	
	3-day suspension		X	
	10-day suspension		X	
11	Loss of Recess		X	
	1-day suspension		X	
	2-day suspension		X	
	5-day suspension		X	
12	Warning		X	
	1-day suspension		X	
	3-day suspension		X	
	5-day suspension		X	

—  
weeks off the bus. Policies #4 and #7 give a range of days that could be used for suspension. Policies #5 and #8 do not even address the issue of suspension from the bus. Policies 3,6,11 and 12 indicate no involvement of the bus driver in the warning process.

There were 12 total districts which had a written procedure for disciplinary action. All others have notations in their policies that suspensions were an option of the district, but they did not indicate in their policy what actions lead to the bus suspensions.

Seven districts provided additional information regarding referral forms, rules and handbooks. Included in the resource manual is a list of 26 ways that a bus driver can maintain discipline, samples of disciplinary referral

forms; and samples of a flier and handbook created by two districts that specifically deal with bus transportation (see Appendix A).

The final analysis of these policies indicates that districts vary a great deal regarding who makes the initial contact with the rider. Seven out of twelve policies indicate it is the bus driver. This then would support the review of literature's findings that there are conflicting values regarding who is responsible for dealing with disciplinary actions first. Should it be the bus driver or the principal? Do effective bus drivers attempt to handle their own situations? Should this in fact be the responsibility of the bus driver at all? Is a bus driver's effectiveness the sole problem of behavior management problems on buses today? More research is necessary to answer the above questions.

What is known is that districts that have worked to create a policy have included warnings, suspensions and expulsions as their sole means of disciplinary action. Only one district indicated that it used recess detentions for elementary discipline of bus infractions. This also brings up another issue. Should the age of the student make a difference in how many warnings are given and how severe the overall consequences are? These policies only provide the researcher with disciplinary opinions that have been adopted by local districts. Further research is warranted in this area.

**Most Common/Least Common Behavior Problem**

Research Question Number Two asked what were the most common bus disciplinary problems. Survey Question 2 gave respondents a list of 10 behaviors which included the following:

- |                               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Out of seat behavior       | 6. Physical Behavior |
| 2. Eating/Drinking on the bus | 7. Insubordination   |
| 3. General disruption         | 8. Foul Language     |
| 4. Radios on bus              | 9. Damaging Bus      |
| 5. Throwing Things            | 10. Smoking/Drinking |

Using a scale of 1-10 (1 being most common and 10 being least common), individuals were asked to rank the behaviors. The researcher then tabulated the rankings, divided it by the number of responses and came up with an average ranking for each item. The results of this tabulation are included in Table 3.

**Table 3****Most Common/Least Common Behaviors**

Behavior	Rank Average
Out of Seat Behavior	2.1
General Disruption	2.8
Foul Language	3.71
Throwing Things	4.21
Physical Behaviors	5.17

**Table 3****Most Common/Least Common Behaviors (cont.)**

<b><u>Behavior</u></b>	<b><u>Rank Average</u></b>
Insubordination	5.35
Eating/Drinking on Bus	5.98
Damaging Bus	7.55
Radios on Bus	8.67
Smoking/Drinking on Bus	9.49

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(Note: Out of the 109 surveys, 20 were not usable. The major reason was not ranking as asked in directions.)

In reference to Table 3, it can be noted that the behavior ranked most common was Out of Seat Behavior, followed by General Disruption, Foul Language, Throwing Things, Physical Behavior, Insubordination, and Eating and Drinking on the bus. All of these behaviors ranked an average of less than 6. The last three behaviors over the ranking of six were Damaging Bus (7.55), Radios on the Bus (8.67), and Smoking and Drinking on the Bus at the lowest incidence of 9.49.

In Survey Question 3, respondents were given an opportunity to list any other misconduct on the school bus that they felt was problematic.

Responses included the following:

1. Farting
2. Sexual Harassment
3. Yelling, talking too loud

4. Fighting
5. Opening the rear emergency door
6. Problems at the bus stop
7. Carrying smoking materials

Comparison of Disciplinary Methods of Regular Education Students  
vs. Special Education Students

Research Question number Four asked if there were any differences in the way bus discipline was handled if the child was a special education student. Survey Question 4 asked respondents to indicate which methods of discipline were used most often with regular education students. The researcher provided the individuals with 10 different options, along with a category to indicate "other" methods that might be used but are not listed. The results are indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4**

Types of Disciplinary Methods(Regular Education Students)

<u>Method</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Bus Warnings	107	94%
Bus Suspensions	101	93%
Bus Expulsions	73	67%
Corporal Punishment	1	.9%
Parent Rides Bus	6	5%
Bus Monitor (Person)	26	24%
Bus Monitor (Camera)	33	30%

**Table 4****Types of Disciplinary Methods Used(Regular Education Students(Cont.)**

<b><u>Method</u></b>	<b><u>Frequency</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>
Assigned Seats	99	91
Reward Systems	20	18
Buddy System	33	30

Table 4 indicates that the use of bus warnings are used by 107 of the respondents (94%); bus suspensions are used by 101 of the respondents (93%); ninety-nine individuals (90%) used assigned seats; bus expulsions are used by 73 respondents (67%), and all other categories - parents riding the bus, bus monitors, and rewards were under 50%. The lowest response was for corporal punishment, which had only one respondent or .9%. There were no missing samples from this part of the questionnaire. All 109 that were computed responded to the question accurately.

Included in this portion of the survey was a section for "other" methods that were used in the district. The responses were as follows:

1. Haven't had a bus expulsion in 16 years
2. Student seat selection as a reward.
3. Detentions
4. Assertive discipline sheets passed out to parents.
5. Stopping at Dairy Queen, candy and stickers
6. Use of certificates

7. Use of praise and soda.
8. Listen to audio tape of choice
9. Certificates to classroom with no bus referrals for the month.
10. Loss of recess
11. Use of white slips for classroom rewards
12. Spirit slip for drawing for reward.
13. Walk downtown for reward

The purpose of Survey Question 7 was to see what forms of disciplinary methods were used for special education students. The results of the responses to this question are listed in Table 5.

**Table 5**

Disciplinary Methods Used for Special Education Students

<u>Method</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Bus Warning	85	21.1
Bus Suspensions	69	63.3
Bus Expulsions	1	.9
Corporal Punishment	2	1.8
Parent Riding Bus	1	.9
Bus Monitor(Person)	45	41.3
Bus Monitor(Camera)	26	23.9
Assigned Seats	1	.9
Rewards	27	24.8
Buddy System	1	.9

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Of those responding, 21% used bus warnings, 63% used bus suspensions, 41% used bus monitors (person), 24% used cameras, and 25% used a reward system. Bus expulsions, parents riding the bus and assigned seats were all tied at .9%. Corporal punishment was used by 2% of the respondents.

There was a place for those completing the questionnaire to indicate any "other" methods that were used. Those responses included the following:

1. We treat special ed students the same as all others. (Four different individuals made this comment on the questionnaire.)
2. Treats, seat selection and use of radios for reward system.
3. We write it in the IEP that students CAN follow the rules as other students do.
4. Most bus problems occur when BD students are transported in on their "home" buses.
5. The use of white slips to be reinforced in the classroom.
6. Use of seat belts (Two individuals made this comment)
7. Go to closest resident and call police. Parents can get the child at the police station.
8. Assign to a different bus.

The data from Survey Questions 4 and 7 have been compiled in Table 6 to show the differences in the most common types of disciplinary methods used for each group - regular education students and special education students.

**Table 6****Comparison of Top Five Most Common Methods by Group**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Regular Ed. Student</b>	<b>Special Ed. Student</b>
1	Bus Warning	Bus Suspension
2	Bus Suspension	Bus Monitor - Person
3	Assigned Seats	Rewards
4	Bus Expulsions	Bus Monitor - Camera
5	Bus Monitor - Camera	Bus Warning

**Most Effective Disciplinary Methods**

Research Question Number Four addressed how most bus disciplinary referrals are handled. Respondents were asked in Survey Question 5 to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being "most effective" and 10 being "least effective")

10 pre-selected behavior management options. These options were as follows:

Bus warnings, bus suspensions, bus expulsions, corporal punishment, parent riding the bus, bus monitor (person), bus monitor (camera), assigned seats, buddy system and rewards.

The researcher then tabulated the rankings, divided it by number responding and computed an average ranking. The results are reported in Table 7.

As indicated in Table 7 the most effective disciplinary method as seen by the respondents was bus suspensions. The next four methods were very close

**Table 7**

**Most Effective Disciplinary Methods**

Disciplinary Method	Rank Average
Bus Suspensions	2.95
Bus Warnings	3.25
Assigned Seats	3.33
Bus Monitor (Camera)	3.54
Bus Expulsions	3.88
Bus Monitor (Person)	4.33
Buddy System	5.19
Reward System	6.13
Parent Riding the Bus	6.27
Corporal Punishment	8.33

(Note: Of the 109 surveys, only 9 were non-usable)

in rankings - Bus warnings, Assigned seats, Bus monitors (cameras), and Bus Expulsions. These methods ranged from the high of 3.25 to a low of 3.88. Bus monitors averaged 4.33, the Buddy System (an older student sits and watches a younger student) was 5.19; Rewards System and

Parents Riding the Bus came in at 6.13 and 6.27 respectively; and the lowest ranking method was Corporal Punishment.

There was a blank asking respondents to fill in any other methods they might use. There were only three additional comments of: "Use the positive approach" "Treat the kids right and they treat you right" and "We don't have that many problems in our district."

Survey Question 6 then asked respondents to explain why they ranked their number one choice of disciplinary method as most effective. The following responses were given. The responses are listed under each method and a number at the side in parentheses show how many individuals shared that same opinion.

Bus Warning

1. Never had to go beyond talk and warning. Copy of referral and action is sent to parent.

Bus Monitor(Person)

1. Two heads are better than one. Driver has more important things to do.

2. An aide with special ed students helps.

Parent Riding the Bus

1. Early adolescents don't want a parent riding to help correct them.

Assigned Seats

1. Buses are never to capacity - students can be isolated.

2. Assigned seats work and prevent littering and damage to the bus.

3. Students hate it - especially behind the driver. They'd rather be sitting with friends.

Bus Monitor (Camera)

1. Cameras eliminate student's word vs. bus driver (5)
2. Proof of incident saves credibility of bus driver and administration (3)
3. Cameras have helped (2)
4. Referrals went down with cameras
5. With cameras students know an official record has been made

Bus Suspensions

1. Parents are involved (7)
2. Parent brings child to school (6)
3. Most students need to ride. Parents reinforce discipline if they are inconvenienced.(3)
4. Puts pressure on parents who have to get their child to school
5. If you remove the child you have no problems
6. Parental pressure on student
7. Suspension helps child and parent become more responsible
8. Eliminates disruption without jeopardizing transportation.
9. Fewer bus problems
10. Removing child is signal to parent and child you won't put up with behavior.

Bus Expulsions

1. Expulsions are effective
2. Expulsions get rid of the problem

3. Bus Expulsions are quick and effective

Behavior Management Training

Research Question Number five dealt with to what extent staff development for bus drivers was being utilized by the districts who were surveyed. Survey Question 8 was an open-ended question, asking the respondent if the district provided behavior management training for bus drivers, and if so, what type. The results are provided below. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of individuals who answered the question the same.

1. No. Only bus drivers state classes are required.(6)
2. Assertive Discipline (9)
3. Provided by the special education cooperative who has a behavior management specialist. (3)
4. Bus inservice is contracted (3)
5. Head Bus driver and administrators talk to bus drivers (2)
6. Retired administrator comes in to help drivers in managing behavior.

These results are consistent with the researcher's hypothesis and the review of literature. Further study is needed in this area.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary, Findings and Recommendations**

#### **Summary**

This study focused on the scope and degree to which school bus discipline was a problem for school districts in the Illinois Educational Service Center #11 region. A review of literature indicated that, in the general topic of bus discipline, very little research has been done to disclose what techniques have been most effective for bus drivers. It was found that staff development for bus drivers is varied and inconsistent, but there is somewhat a general consensus that the personality of the bus driver may be an integral factor regarding student bus behavior.

In order to determine if there were any consistencies in the school policies, procedures and behavioral management plans of the districts included in this study, there were five research questions developed to investigate these issues:

1. Is there consistency in the establishment of school bus discipline policies within ESC #11?
2. What are the most common bus discipline problems?
3. Are there any differences in the way bus discipline is handled if a child is a special education student?
4. How are bus discipline referrals most commonly handled by school districts, and what role, if any, does the bus driver have in this process?

5. To what extent is staff development for bus drivers being utilized by these school districts?

Answers to these questions could assist districts in determining whether or not they need to consider writing or revising district policies, implementing staff development programs for bus drivers, or assessing the consistency of their own district procedures in the management of school bus discipline. This study may also provide an impetus for others to consider investigating this area of educational research.

### Findings

A brief summary of the demographic information revealed that a majority (66.1%) of the individuals completing the application were building principals. All of the respondents were homogeneous to the ESC#11 region; however, student population did vary. The mean district population was 1,385.

Research Question One. Is there consistency in the establishment of school bus discipline policies? Data from the survey question asking if districts had a policy in place for bus discipline revealed that (71%)78 out of 109 responding to the survey had a policy in place. Twenty-eight of these respondents offered their district policies for use in this study. One of the assumptions was that the policies regarding bus discipline would be diverse. What was found was that there were amazing similarities. It was found that these districts have similar rules and expectations for students. There are 10 most common rules used by these districts for managing student behavior (see Chapter 4).

What was found inconsistent in the policies were the procedures used for referring bus discipline problems. Most all of the policies included bus warnings, bus suspensions and bus expulsions. Areas where districts would vary were how many warnings were given before removing a student from the bus; whether or not referral forms were used, and who made the initial contact with the rider. In most districts it was the bus driver, but in five out of 12 policies that had written procedures, it was the principal who held this responsibility.

Research Question Two. What are the most common bus discipline problems? Data which included a ranking of most common to least common of behaviors revealed that the five most common school bus problems were: 1) Out of Seat Behavior, 2) General Disruption, 3) Foul Language, 4) Throwing Things, and 5) Physical Behaviors. The lowest ranking behavior was Smoking/Drinking on the Bus. Respondents were given an opportunity to list other behaviors that were not provided by the researcher. Some of these included Farting, Sexual Harassment, Opening the Rear Emergency Door, and Problems at the Bus Stop. There appeared to be strong agreement among the districts regarding which behaviors were most problematic.

Research Question Three. Are there any differences in the way bus discipline is handled if a child is a special education student? Data revealed that for the regular education student, the three most common disciplinary methods used were Bus Warnings (94%), Bus Suspensions (93%), and Assigned Seats (91%). The least common disciplinary method

was Corporal Punishment (.9%). For the special education student, the most common disciplinary methods were Bus Suspensions (63%), Bus Monitor - person (41%), Rewards (25%) and Bus Monitor - Camera (24%). There were four methods tied for least common at .9%. These were Bus Expulsions, Parent Riding Bus, Assigned Seats, and the Buddy System.

This data revealed the researcher's assumptions that the option of bus expulsion due to the special education student's IEP would not be as useful, and that options such as rewards and bus monitors would be much more commonly used than those methods used with the regular education student. Through further study, it may be found that those methods that are working for special education students may help decrease frequencies of unwanted behaviors for the regular education student as well.

Research Question Four. How are bus discipline referrals most commonly handled by school districts, and what role, if any does the bus driver have in this process? Through the policy analysis it revealed that although 72% had bus discipline policies in place; there was a great deal of variance in the procedures used for bus referrals, and not all districts had a specific procedures for bus referrals. The results of the study were consistent with the review of literature that there are conflicting opinions regarding the bus driver's involvement in the enforcement of bus discipline and in the overall referral process. Five out of 12 procedures that were analyzed indicated that the bus driver did not have any involvement in the referral process. It would appear that this area of bus discipline could warrant additional research.

Research Question Five. To what extent is staff development for bus drivers being utilized by these school districts? Response from an open-ended survey question revealed that very little is currently being done in the area of staff development. Only 24 individuals responded to the question. Their responses varied from no staff development to contracting with other entities for the service. These data are also consistent with the review of literature revealing that districts expect bus drivers to be responsible for behavior management, but very little formal bus driver staff development is provided to the bus drivers.

#### Recommendations

This study revealed that although there are consistencies in the types of behaviors that bus drivers experience on their bus routes and the techniques that are considered to be most effective, there are still some inconsistencies in the area of staff development for bus drivers, and the procedures used for implementation of policies among the districts. For these reasons, the following recommendations are given.

#### Recruitment and Selection of Bus Drivers

As with teaching, just because an individual has the proper certification, it does not mean that he or she will be effective as a classroom teacher. When recruiting bus drivers, employers have to look beyond the baseline requirements for certification and evaluate these individuals on their abilities to not only control the actual operation of a bus, but also to be able to interact and to manage the behavior of children. As the challenges of behavior management become more complex, districts will continue to

see an evacuation of quality bus drivers. The reason for this, in this author's opinion, is the lack of emphasis that has been taken on the training of bus drivers. If bus drivers are truly to be effective, they must be willing to admit that training in behavior management is worthwhile and ongoing.

Sources for training can include such companies as Canter's Assertive Discipline, but this is only a start. The district must have a written policy and a set of rules and regulations. These regulations must be made available to all parents and students, plus posted in all buses. Bus drivers should be required to have seating charts which are checked sporadically. There must be an agreement with the administration on the procedures for bus referrals, and there must be consistency in the administration of consequences. Consistency is important among bus drivers and the various building administrators among the district as well. A bus suspension must mean the same no matter which bus upon which it occurs.

Bus drivers should encounter, as do other educational support personnel, an annual evaluation. A study focussing on the number of districts who annually evaluate bus drivers to a specific job description would be beneficial. Unless there are standards upon which an employee is evaluated, there is no goal for these individuals to be reaching; therefore validating the acceptance of mediocrity.

#### Use of Bus Video Cameras

The use of bus video cameras is still very much in its infancy. Its importance lies with providing evidence of the actual incidents that occur

on the school bus. A bus drivers main concern is driving the bus safely. With the recent high back seat requirement, the bus driver has now more obstructed vision, and a glance in the review mirror does not tell all. The use of the video camera provides a commitment to students that there will be validation of their actions, and support for the bus driver who makes the necessary referral. There is less chance for challenges to any disciplinary actions. The video cameras can also be seen as a way to monitor bus drivers. These cameras can be turned on periodically to actually evaluate how a bus driver handles or does not handle situations occurring on the school bus.

Although expensive, these cameras are now partially reimbursed through some of the transportation fund, and has the potential to be one of the best deterrents to behavior problems on the bus. It will take some longitudinal studies to see exactly how effective this method is for bus districts.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

1. Additional study is needed in the specific area of staff development for bus drivers.
2. Additional study is needed to specifically ask districts how effective the use of the Bus Camera Monitor is in decreasing the occurrence of unwanted bus behaviors.
3. Additional study should be open to all school districts in Illinois as opposed to just the one geographical area focused upon in this study.

4. Additional study would be enhanced by comparative research on policies between Illinois and other states.

5. Additional study would be enhanced by using a research instrument that was tested for validity and reliability.

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**Appendix A**

**School Bus Resource Manual**



March 1994

Dear Educator:

This manual is the product of a field study conducted through Eastern Illinois University's Department of Educational Administration. It was only through the cooperation of a variety of school districts that this manual became possible. You are receiving this complimentary copy because you showed an interest in the results of the study when you completed the survey questionnaire.

The manual is divided into four parts. Part 1 includes the abstract and results of the field study. Part 2 provides two resources of tips for bus drivers. Part 3 offers samples of bus referral forms, and Part 4 includes a sample bus discipline policy, a flier used by a local district, and a Student Transportation Handbook.

It is my hope that this information may be useful to you. A special thanks goes to all the educators in ESC#11 who participated in the study, and to Dr. Bev Findley and other Eastern Illinois University staff members who made the completion of this study possible.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Chrostoski  
Winchester, IL

**Part 1**  
**Abstract and Results of Research Study**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to research the scope and degree to which school bus discipline was a problem for school districts in the Illinois Educational Service Center #11, and to determine if there were any consistencies in the school policies, procedures and behavioral management plans used by these districts. Since there has been little written research regarding the issue, this study was a method of providing data regarding bus discipline, and synthesizing this data to compile a school bus resource manual for school personnel.

Data were collected from 28 school districts representing 177 administrators, special education coordinators and/or transportation directors in the ESC #11 service region. A survey instrument was developed by the researcher to seek information regarding demographics, most common bus discipline problems; most common and effective bus disciplinary methods; differing methods, if appropriate, for special education students; types of district policies and behavior management training for bus drivers.

Evaluation of the data revealed that a majority of the districts did have a written policy on hand; however, there were inconsistencies among these districts on procedures for bus disciplinary referrals. The most common discipline problems for bus drivers were: 1) Out of Seat Behavior, 2) General Disruption, 3) Foul Language, 4) Throwing Things, and 5) Physical Behaviors. The least common disciplinary problem was

Smoking/Drinking on the bus. The data also revealed that the significant difference between the disciplinary treatment of regular education students and special education students was predominantly in the area of expulsions. Special education students did not fall under the auspices of expulsion; however, other disciplinary methods were used more frequently such as reward systems and both forms of bus monitors (people and cameras). The least effective disciplinary methods for special education students were: 1) Bus Expulsions, 2) Parent Riding the Bus, 3) Assigned Seats, and 4) Buddy Systems. The review of literature and policy analysis revealed that although the majority of disciplinary referrals were initiated by the bus driver, there is still some controversy regarding the bus driver's role in behavior management. There are some districts in which the bus driver has no role except for reporting the problem to the building principal. Finally, survey data revealed that there is little being done in the form of staff development training for bus drivers. This was another area of concern supported by the review of literature in this study.

This study supported the researcher's opinion that there existed a need to continue research in the area of bus discipline with further emphasis being focused on staff development for bus drivers, and the use of video cameras to control behavior on school buses.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary, Findings and Recommendations**

#### **Summary**

This study focused on the scope and degree to which school bus discipline was a problem for school districts in the Illinois Educational Service Center #11 region. A review of literature indicated that, in the general topic of bus discipline, very little research has been done to disclose what techniques have been most effective for bus drivers. It was found that staff development for bus drivers is varied and inconsistent, but there is somewhat a general consensus that the personality of the bus driver may be an integral factor regarding student bus behavior.

In order to determine if there were any consistencies in the school policies, procedures and behavioral management plans of the districts included in this study, there were five research questions developed to investigate these issues:

1. Is there consistency in the establishment of school bus discipline policies within ESC #11?
2. What are the most common bus discipline problems?
3. Are there any differences in the way bus discipline is handled if a child is a special education student?
4. How are bus discipline referrals most commonly handled by school districts, and what role, if any, does the bus driver have in this process?

5. To what extent is staff development for bus drivers being utilized by these school districts?

Answers to these questions could assist districts in determining whether or not they need to consider writing or revising district policies, implementing staff development programs for bus drivers, or assessing the consistency of their own district procedures in the management of school bus discipline. This study may also provide an impetus for others to consider investigating this area of educational research.

### Findings

A brief summary of the demographic information revealed that a majority (66.1%) of the individuals completing the application were building principals. All of the respondents were homogeneous to the ESC#11 region; however, student population did vary. The mean district population was 1,385.

Research Question One. Is there consistency in the establishment of school bus discipline policies? Data from the survey question asking if districts had a policy in place for bus discipline revealed that (71%)78 out of 109 responding to the survey had a policy in place. Twenty-eight of these respondents offered their district policies for use in this study. One of the assumptions was that the policies regarding bus discipline would be diverse. What was found was that there were amazing similarities. It was found that these districts have similar rules and expectations for students. There are 10 most common rules used by these districts for managing student behavior (see Chapter 4).

What was found inconsistent in the policies were the procedures used for referring bus discipline problems. Most all of the policies included bus warnings, bus suspensions and bus expulsions. Areas where districts would vary were how many warnings were given before removing a student from the bus; whether or not referral forms were used, and who made the initial contact with the rider. In most districts it was the bus driver, but in five out of 12 policies that had written procedures, it was the principal who held this responsibility.

Research Question Two. What are the most common bus discipline problems? Data which included a ranking of most common to least common of behaviors revealed that the five most common school bus problems were: 1) Out of Seat Behavior, 2) General Disruption, 3) Foul Language, 4) Throwing Things, and 5) Physical Behaviors. The lowest ranking behavior was Smoking/Drinking on the Bus. Respondents were given an opportunity to list other behaviors that were not provided by the researcher. Some of these included Farting, Sexual Harassment, Opening the Rear Emergency Door, and Problems at the Bus Stop. There appeared to be strong agreement among the districts regarding which behaviors were most problematic.

Research Question Three. Are there any differences in the way bus discipline is handled if a child is a special education student? Data revealed that for the regular education student, the three most common disciplinary methods used were Bus Warnings (94%), Bus Suspensions (93%), and Assigned Seats (91%). The least common disciplinary method

see an evacuation of quality bus drivers. The reason for this, in this author's opinion, is the lack of emphasis that has been taken on the training of bus drivers. If bus drivers are truly to be effective, they must be willing to admit that training in behavior management is worthwhile and ongoing.

Sources for training can include such companies as Canter's Assertive Discipline, but this is only a start. The district must have a written policy and a set of rules and regulations. These regulations must be made available to all parents and students, plus posted in all buses. Bus drivers should be required to have seating charts which are checked sporadically. There must be an agreement with the administration on the procedures for bus referrals, and there must be consistency in the administration of consequences. Consistency is important among bus drivers and the various building administrators among the district as well. A bus suspension must mean the same no matter which bus upon which it occurs.

Bus drivers should encounter, as do other educational support personnel, an annual evaluation. A study focussing on the number of districts who annually evaluate bus drivers to a specific job description would be beneficial. Unless there are standards upon which an employee is evaluated, there is no goal for these individuals to be reaching; therefore validating the acceptance of mediocrity.

#### Use of Bus Video Cameras

The use of bus video cameras is still very much in its infancy. Its importance lies with providing evidence of the actual incidents that occur

was Corporal Punishment (.9%). For the special education student, the most common disciplinary methods were Bus Suspensions (63%), Bus Monitor - person (41%), Rewards (25%) and Bus Monitor - Camera (24%). There were four methods tied for least common at .9%. These were Bus Expulsions, Parent Riding Bus, Assigned Seats, and the Buddy System.

This data revealed the researcher's assumptions that the option of bus expulsion due to the special education student's IEP would not be as useful, and that options such as rewards and bus monitors would be much more commonly used than those methods used with the regular education student. Through further study, it may be found that those methods that are working for special education students may help decrease frequencies of unwanted behaviors for the regular education student as well.

Research Question Four. How are bus discipline referrals most commonly handled by school districts, and what role, if any does the bus driver have in this process? Through the policy analysis it revealed that although 72% had bus discipline policies in place; there was a great deal of variance in the procedures used for bus referrals, and not all districts had a specific procedures for bus referrals. The results of the study were consistent with the review of literature that there are conflicting opinions regarding the bus driver's involvement in the enforcement of bus discipline and in the overall referral process. Five out of 12 procedures that were analyzed indicated that the bus driver did not have any involvement in the referral process. It would appear that this area of bus discipline could warrant additional research.

Research Question Five. To what extent is staff development for bus drivers being utilized by these school districts? Response from an open-ended survey question revealed that very little is currently being done in the area of staff development. Only 24 individuals responded to the question. Their responses varied from no staff development to contracting with other entities for the service. These data are also consistent with the review of literature revealing that districts expect bus drivers to be responsible for behavior management, but very little formal bus driver staff development is provided to the bus drivers.

### Recommendations

This study revealed that although there are consistencies in the types of behaviors that bus drivers experience on their bus routes and the techniques that are considered to be most effective, there are still some inconsistencies in the area of staff development for bus drivers, and the procedures used for implementation of policies among the districts. For these reasons, the following recommendations are given.

#### Recruitment and Selection of Bus Drivers

As with teaching, just because an individual has the proper certification, it does not mean that he or she will be effective as a classroom teacher. When recruiting bus drivers, employers have to look beyond the baseline requirements for certification and evaluate these individuals on their abilities to not only control the actual operation of a bus, but also to be able to interact and to manage the behavior of children. As the challenges of behavior management become more complex, districts will continue to

on the school bus. A bus drivers main concern is driving the bus safely. With the recent high back seat requirement, the bus driver has now more obstructed vision, and a glance in the review mirror does not tell all. The use of the video camera provides a commitment to students that there will be validation of their actions, and support for the bus driver who makes the necessary referral. There is less chance for challenges to any disciplinary actions. The video cameras can also be seen as a way to monitor bus drivers. These cameras can be turned on periodically to actually evaluate how a bus driver handles or does not handle situations occurring on the school bus.

Although expensive, these cameras are now partially reimbursed through some of the transportation fund, and has the potential to be one of the best deterrents to behavior problems on the bus. It will take some longitudinal studies to see exactly how effective this method is for bus districts.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Additional study is needed in the specific area of staff development for bus drivers.
2. Additional study is needed to specifically ask districts how effective the use of the Bus Camera Monitor is in decreasing the occurrence of unwanted bus behaviors.
3. Additional study should be open to all school districts in Illinois as opposed to just the one geographical area focused upon in this study.

4. Additional study would be enhanced by comparative research on policies between Illinois and other states.

5. Additional study would be enhanced by using a research instrument that was tested for validity and reliability.

**Bus Disc 65**

**Part 2**  
**Disciplinary Tips for Bus Drivers**

### Discipline Tips

- \* Let the children see that you take your responsibilities seriously (by following all traffic laws and not speeding, for example)
- \* Be friendly with the children, but don't try to be buddies
- \* Don't start off easy and crack down later; it's better to be strict at first and lighten up later.
- \* It's okay to have favorites, but don't play favorites when it comes to discipline.
- \* Compliment the kids when they behave well, and use positive reinforcement, but don't bribe students.
- \* Keep yourself and the bus neat.
- \* Keep the number of bus rules to a minimum.
- \* Be firm, but not tough.
- \* Remember the ages and maturity of children.
- \* Don't let children see you arguing with other adults.
- \* Treat kids with respect.
- \* Leave your personal problems at home.
- \* Be aware of children's moods, and recognize that kids have their own problems.
- \* Don't argue with children. If they clearly violate the rules, arguing about it just weakens your authority.
- \* Laugh at funny situations, even if they involve you.
- \* Enforce all school system policies, even if you don't agree with them.
- \* If groups of kids cause problems on the bus, isolate the ringleaders.
- \* Give extra attention to children who are discipline problems, but give it to them when they are behaving well.
- \* Establish an "isolation seat" near the front of the bus where you can assign troublemakers to sit.
- \* Don't purposely embarrass kids in front of their classmates.

Developed by A. Trotter, American School Board Journal  
November, 1986.

## 26 Ways to Maintain Discipline

1. Never give an order you do not mean to enforce
2. Students will usually respond to your command. Give your command to stimulate positive action. Say "do this" rather than "don't do that". Suggest an action which can easily and successfully be obeyed.
3. Give a child time for reaction.
4. Have a reason for what you ask a child to do, and when possible take time to give the reason.
5. Be honest in what you say and do. A child's faith in you is a great help.
6. Be fair; it isn't punishment, but injustice that makes a child rebel against you.
7. Be friendly. Always show an interest in what they are doing.
8. Commend good qualities and action.
9. Try to be constructive, not repressive, in all dealings with children.
10. Remember that a sense of humor is extremely valuable.
11. Never strike a child. It may seem to be the easiest way, but it only aggravates the problem.
12. Do not judge misconduct on how it annoys you.
13. Do not take your personal feelings and prejudices out on the children.
14. Maintain poise at all times. Do not lose your temper.
15. Remember - - "The tongue is the only keen-edged tool which grows sharper with constant use." Do not nag or bluff.
16. Look for good qualities - - all children have them.
17. Do not "pick" on every little thing a child does. Sometimes it is wiser to overlook some things.
18. Bear in mind that misbehavior is seldom willful. There is usually a cause and it may be in yourself or some other influence outside the child.
19. Listen for suggestions and complaints from the children.
20. Follow up all cases which have been disciplined. Be certain that you still have the respect and confidence of the child.
21. Be sincere in your work.
22. Set a good example yourself.
23. Intelligence in handling youth consists of thinking faster than they do. If they can out think you, you are not using your maturity and the advantage of your larger education. You should see possibilities before they become results. This is the secret of leadership.
24. Defiance to established procedure comes from failure in some adults to keep the situation in hand. If there is danger that a student will openly defy the procedure, the child should not be forced. An adult's will should never be pitted against that of a child. It is far wiser to give simple directions that will be mechanically obeyed and pick up the reins of control in a quiet way.
25. Never hold a child up to public ridicule. It is the surest way of creating a discipline problem.
26. Drivers may assign seats to any one or all of their passengers for as long a time as it is necessary for the safety of all concerned.

(Reprinted from the April 1966 issue of School Bus Fleet)

**Part 3**  
**Sample Bus Referral Forms**



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SHIREFORM 067953

# SCHOOL BUS INCIDENT REPORT

NAUVOO COLLUSA C.U.D. #325  
1450 Knight Street, Nauvoo, IL 62354 (217) 453-6385

STUDENT'S NAME	STUDENT'S ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER
SCHOOL	CLASS/GRADE	DATE OF INCIDENT
BUS DRIVER	BUS NUMBER	TRIP A.M. P.M.

DEAR PARENTS: The purpose of this report is to inform you of a disciplinary incident involving the student on the school bus, which may have jeopardized the safety and well-being of all students. You are urged to both appreciate the action taken by the driver and to cooperate with the corrective action initiated today by the School District.

## INFRACTION

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improper Boarding/<br>Departing Procedures                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Failure To Remain Seated          | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting Matches/Smoking On Bus | <input type="checkbox"/> Rude, Discourteous And<br>Annoying Conduct                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bringing Articles Aboard<br>Bus Of Injurious<br>Or Objectionable Nature | <input type="checkbox"/> Refusing To Obey Driver           | <input type="checkbox"/> Spitting/Littering              | <input type="checkbox"/> Destruction Of Property  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting/Pushing/Tripping         | <input type="checkbox"/> Unnecessary Noise               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Behavior Relating To<br>Safety, Well-Being And<br>Respect For Others |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging Out Of Window             | <input type="checkbox"/> Tampering With Bus Equipment    |   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing Objects In Or Out Of Bus |  |   |

## SPECIFIC DETAILS

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- ☐ PREVIOUS WARNINGS ☐ REPORTED 1ST OFFENSE ☐ REPORTED 2ND OFFENSE ☐ REPORTED 3RD OFFENSE

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

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Bus riding is a privilege which may be revoked. Parents are urged to appreciate the disciplinary action taken and to discuss this to prevent further occurrence.

PRINTED IN U.S.A. SHIREFORMS No. 067953  
TRADEMARK

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

TITLE

REPORT DATE

PARENT'S COPY - PART 1

BUS CONDUCT REPORT

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Referral

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Use of tobacco/drugs/alcohol (Other school policies may apply.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Failed to follow directives of bus drivers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Talking loudly, yelling, use of profanity, or obscene gestures
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Not keeping ones hands, feet, and personal objects to oneself
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Eating or drinking on the bus
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Shooting rubber bands, paper wads, BB's, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Fighting
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 1st Offense      ☐ 2nd Offense      ☐ 3rd Offense  
☐ 4th Offense      ☐ 5th Offense

\* See Reverse Side for Consequences of each Offense.

Driver's Report	Administrative Action

Driver's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Principal's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Copy distribution: White/Parents, Green/File, Yellow/Driver, Blue/Transp.

SOUTHEASTERN COMMUNITY UNIT #337  
**BUS VIOLATION REPORT TO PARENTS**

SCHOOL NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Building \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for action checked below:

Continually too noisy \_\_\_\_\_ Improper Language \_\_\_\_\_

Will not follow directions \_\_\_\_\_ Fighting on bus \_\_\_\_\_

Bothers others continually \_\_\_\_\_ Destroying school property \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Check:

- ☐ 1. The "first" note is only a **WARNING** that the above has taken place. (This note must be signed and returned to the driver tomorrow morning in order for the student to ride the bus.)
- ☐ 2. The "second note" will bring **DISCIPLINARY ACTION** and possible suspension of bus riding privileges from 1 to 5 days. Parents must contact either the bus driver, the child's Principal or the Director of Transportation to see if a solution to the problem can be reached. If no contact is made with one of the above, the student will not be allowed to ride the bus.
- ☐ 3. The "third" note may bring from one day to complete **SUSPENSION** from riding the bus. (parents or guardian must meet with the bus driver, the Director of Transportation, Principal and Superintendent if student is to be allowed to ride the bus after the suspension-period—and then—only if proper corrective measures have been worked out.)

Driver's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Bus No. \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

WHITE: To Parent

CANARY: To Building Principal

PINK: To Director of Transportation

COLCHESTER COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #180  
COLCHESTER, ILLINOIS 62326

NOTICE OF UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUS

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and responsible to the driver of the bus. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to comply with the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with regulation of the governing board of the District. The driver of any school bus shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils transported. No bus driver shall require any pupil to leave the bus before such pupil has reached his destination.

This is notice that the conduct of \_\_\_\_\_

on Bus No. \_\_\_\_\_ has been unsatisfactory for having violated one or more of the following rules:

- ① Not remaining seated. Changing seats while bus is in motion, or without permission.
- ② Disturbing other students.
- ③ Not keeping all parts of the body inside the bus. Feet should be kept on the floor.
4. Eating on the bus.
5. Destruction of property.
- ⑥ Deliberate defiance--refusal to cooperate with driver.
7. Obscene & unacceptable language, gestures, remarks or signs.
- ⑧ Excessive talking & unnecessary noise--lack of courtesy & respect.
9. Throwing items of any kind in the bus or out of the window.
- ⑩ Fighting or scuffling on the bus or at the bus stop.
11. Having or using tobacco on the bus or at the bus stop.
12. Other reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

Students may not get off of the bus at any stop other than their own unless they have a signed note from parent or guardian requesting such a stop.

Action recommended: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal contact with the parent or legal guardian is strongly encouraged as early as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Bus Driver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administration

**Part 4**  
**Sample Bus Discipline Policies**  
**and**  
**Bus Discipline Handbooks**

Triopia Community Unit School District No. 27

STUDENTS

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Bus Conduct

The law of the State of Illinois requires Triopia Community Unit School District No. 27 to furnish transportation for students to and from school. The responsibility for supervision of the student remains with the parents until the student boards the bus and returns to the parents when the child leaves the bus.

Once a student boards the bus, and only at that time, he or she becomes the responsibility of the District. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to his or her bus stop at the end of the school day.

In view of the fact that the bus is an extension of the school and the classroom students riding buses are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with expected school behavior. In accord with this statement the Superintendent shall prepare a statement regarding Instructions To School Bus Riders which shall be reviewed annually in August for use the following school year. The Instructions to School Bus Riders shall be published in the Parent-Student Handbook. School bus drivers, riders, school employees, parents and other interested citizens are invited to comment or make recommendations in regard to such instructions.

When a student does not conduct himself or herself properly on a bus, such instances shall be brought to the attention of the Building Principal or Superintendent. The Building Principal will confer with the student and the student's parents/guardian as needed to request their cooperation in solving the problem.

In cases of gross disobedience or misconduct of a student who rides the school bus, the District may suspend the student's privileges to ride the bus according to the following conditions:

1. The student may be suspended by the Superintendent or Building Principal for a period of ten (10) school days or, for safety reasons a period in excess of ten (10) days.
2. The Superintendent or his designee shall inform the parents/guardian of the suspension, giving a full statement of the reasons for the suspension and their entitlement to a hearing on the matter.

STUDENTS

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - Bus Conduct

3. Should the parents/guardian request a hearing, the School Board or a hearing officer, appointed by the Board, shall review the action taken by the Superintendent. Suspension of the student shall continue until the hearing is completed and the School Board acts on the matter.
4. The student shall be provided an opportunity to present his side of the matter during the hearing.
5. In cases when a hearing officer is used, the hearing officer shall provide the School Board with a written summary of the hearing.
6. Following the completion of the hearing, the School Board may take appropriate action.

Gross disobedience or misconduct providing just cause for suspension or denial of the privilege of riding the school bus shall include:

Possession or use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco on the bus.

Willful injury or threat of injury to a bus driver or to another rider.

Willful and/or repeated defacement of the bus.

Repeated use of profanity in the presence of the bus driver or other riders.

Possession of a dangerous or potentially dangerous weapon.

Repeated willful disobedience of directives of the bus driver.

Such other behavior as the administration deems to threaten the safe operation of the bus and/or its occupants.

LEG. REF.: Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 122, para. 10-22.6 (1985).

**WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS AN ACCIDENT ON THE SCHOOL BUS?**

School bus accidents are rare but could happen. The police are called to every school bus accident no matter how minor. It has been our experience that the police respond very quickly. If the police feel medical treatment is warranted, the children will be taken to the hospital. In the meantime, the administration is notified and advised of the situation.

**MAY I HAVE MY CHILD PICKED UP AT ONE ADDRESS AND DROPPED OFF AT ANOTHER ADDRESS?**

Yes, provided this has been approved by the Principals and by the Director of Transportation. This will only be approved if it is on the regular route and extra miles are not driven. This will be done for emergencies only. We will try to accommodate work schedules if you notify the principal who will in turn notify the proper people.

**MAY MY CHILD GET OFF AT A DIFFERENT STOP?**

Yes, as long as the stop is on the student's regular route. However, the school does require written permission from a parent/guardian before approving.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF WE ARE GOING TO MOVE?**

Call the school your child(ren) attend to indicate the last day there is a need for transportation.

• • •

**WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF MY CHILD HAS PROBLEMS ON THE BUS?**

At Northwest, we like to follow the "chain of command" so the first person you should contact would be the driver. If the driver is not able to answer your question or address the concern, you need to contact the Principal. She will work with the Transportation Director and the drivers to try to work out a solution that will work for everyone.

Northwestern Elementary School  
Mrs. Barbara Shrode, Principal  
309-456-3920

Northwestern Jr/Sr High School  
Ms. Judy Lane, Principal  
309-456-3730

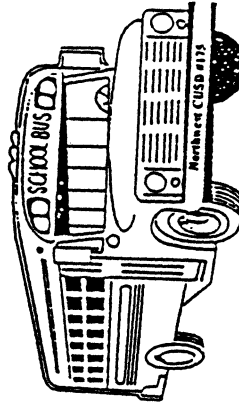
District Transportation Director  
Mr. Jerry Beck  
309-456-3845

Northwest CUSD #175  
Mrs. Gail Lester, Superintendent  
309-456-3500

**District Drivers**

Mrs. Linda Comstock  
Mr. Jim Curl  
Mrs. Gretchen Delaynes  
Mrs. Carol Hobby  
Mrs. Jody Little  
Mrs. Jackie Metcalf  
Mr. Kevin Soule  
Mr. Tim Stuber  
Mr. Tom Vogel  
Mrs. Cathy Wilson, Sub.

# TRANSPORTATION



Northwest Community Unit School District  
#175

Gail Lester, Superintendent

Jerry Beck, Transportation Director

**WHO QUALIFIES FOR A BUS RIDE?**  
Students residing at least one and one-half miles from school and are not tuition students qualify for bus transportation.

**WHEN DOES THE DISTRICT DO THE ROUTING FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR?**

A list of eligible riders is accumulated in the spring and the summer for the following year. Actual routing starts in July and is usually completed in early August.

**HOW ARE THE STOPS DETERMINED?**  
Several factors are considered in making these decisions. Included are the distance students must walk (must be less than 1 1/2 mile), age of the children, walking conditions, overall transportation efficiency, and whether the conditions of the road would permit a bus to travel safely.

**WHERE WILL MY CHILD CATCH THE BUS?**

Permanent stops will be established. All eligible students, regular and special programs will be assigned to these permanent stops.

**HOW LONG WILL MY CHILD BE ON THE BUS?**

Your child may ride approximately one hour. However, most students ride considerably less. The distance, the number of children, the number of stops, the area they are transported from and the condition of roads are major determining factors on the length of the ride.

**WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD BE AT THE BUS STOP?**

Your child should arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes before the bus's scheduled departure time. According to State Rules, the driver on a regular route shall not be expected to wait for a tardy student but may proceed on a timely route if the student is not in sight. The driver should be seldom late and never

**I HAVE A SPECIAL EDUCATION CHILD. HOW WILL TRANSPORTATION BE ARRANGED FOR MY CHILD?**

The Special Education coordinator, 456-3500, will determine if your child is eligible for busing and will forward the information.

**MAY MY KINDERGARTENER RIDE A SCHOOL BUS?**

Kindergarten students will be assigned a bus to ride at least to or from school. The return trip will be made in a school vehicle, usually a van or station wagon. Parents should review bus procedures with your child.

**DO I HAVE TO SEND MY CHILD TO SCHOOL WHEN THE WEATHER IS VERY BAD?**

During the winter, there are parts of the Northwest School District which are much more susceptible to blowing and drifting snow than others. You know your area better than anyone; and if you feel the roads are too dangerous to have your child transported, you have the right to keep your child home. Be sure to call your child's school and advise them why you are not sending your child to school. School cancellations and transportation limitations will be announced on area radio stations.

**MAY I HAVE MY CHILD BUSED FROM THE BABYSITTER'S?**

Babysitter addresses submitted may be honored if the babysitter's address and/or the home address are on a regular route and will not cause extra miles to be driven. Requests should be made through the building principal.

**DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO SIT IN AN ASSIGNED SEAT ON THE BUS?**

The bus driver may make seat assignments and students must sit in the designated seat.

**WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE BROUGHT ON A BUS?**

No animals, weapons (including cap guns), tubas, bass drums, glass objects, lighters, matches, or anything that could cause a potential danger. Eating and drinking on a school bus is prohibited by state law. If food is transported it must be in a lunch box or bag or in a sealed container. All objects must be small enough to be held in the child's lap or between their feet. Individual drivers will offer their own directions on this.

**ARE MY CHILDREN INFORMED OF THE BUS RULES?**

Yes, every student transported by Northwest School District is provided with a set of rules for riding the bus. These rules, most of which are established by the State of Illinois, are established for the safety of all students transported.

**CAN MY CHILD BE SUSPENDED FROM RIDING THE SCHOOL BUS?**

A bus ride is a privilege and the ride for all must be safe. When a child's behavior threatens the safety of others, the principal can suspend the riding privileges. The student is still expected to attend school and transportation during this time is a parental responsibility. Parents may request a hearing on all suspensions. Persistent behavior problems by a student can result in expulsion from

STUDENT  
TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK  
CARROLLTON COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 1  
CARROLLTON, ILLINOIS

1993-94

IMPORTANT  
PLEASE SAVE

EMERGENCY BUS ROUTES INSIDE

BUS GARAGE PHONE NO. 942-5511

INTRODUCTION

This handbook answers questions you may have about district school bus transportation, state transportation regulations and school board transportation policy. Parents and students are asked to read the contents and keep the handbook for reference.

Sincerely yours,



Mr. Michael Barry  
Transportation Director

#### **STUDENTS GETTING OFF THE BUS**

If you get on a bus at the grade or high school you can not get off till you get to your pick-up point unless you have a bus permit or your parents take you off the bus. Example: You cannot ride the bus to Eldred and get off and ride in a car to your home.

The school bus driver is held personally responsible for you until you arrive at your discharge point. The only way he or she will let you off is one of the methods described above.

#### **BUS PASSES**

To get off the bus at a different place than your regular drop point or ride a different bus, you will need a bus pass. To get a bus pass, take a note from your parents to the building Principal at the grade school or to the Principal at the high school and you will be issued a bus pass to ride the bus or get off at a different place than your regular drop point.

The drivers can let you off at any of their regular stops, but they cannot stop any place but the regular stops. They will not stop in town or pick up in town or in the country at any place but the regular stops. However, drivers will let you off any place as long as you go with your parents. Remember, once on the bus the only way you can get off any place else but your regular drop point is with a bus pass or your parents picking you up. This can be at the school or any place the bus stops on the bus route. The reason for this rule is for your personal safety.

#### **STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES**

School bus drivers must devote 100 per cent of their time to driving the school bus and, therefore, should not be distracted by the conduct of passengers.

Each year, millions of boys and girls are transported to and from school safely. This is only possible because they understand how to act on the school bus. Everyone has a part in helping the driver maintain order--the classroom teacher, parents and last but not least, the riders themselves.

The following list of safety rules, although far from complete, will provide a basis for safe conduct as required by the State of Illinois. You must obey these rules or you will lose your right to transportation for a period of time. A report will be sent home by the school bus driver, through the building office, anytime you are disciplined. This includes reprimand, changing seats, or whatever is done by the driver to get you to ride the bus in a safe manner and to follow the rules. You are to treat the bus driver with the same respect you treat your parents and teachers.

1. Be careful in approaching bus stops, walk on the left side facing oncoming traffic, cross the road only after the bus driver has signaled that it is safe to do so.
2. Be sure to leave home early so that you will be on time--the driver has a schedule to keep, so he or she cannot wait for you; if thirty students each delay thirty seconds, the schedule will be fifteen minutes late.
3. Wait in an orderly fashion for the bus and be sure you are off the road and out of danger of passing vehicles and flying stones--this is particularly important during icy weather, because the bus might skid as it is stopping for you.
4. Board in an orderly fashion, do not crowd, push, or shove, and always use the hand rail both when getting on and off the bus.
5. Go quickly and directly to your assigned seat without disturbing or crowding other pupils; remember the driver has to wait until you are seated before he starts and, as other traffic is stopped for the bus, the sooner you get to your seat, the sooner the driver can be on his way.
6. Obey the drivers promptly and cheerfully; realize that they have a big responsibility for your safety and that it is everyone's duty to help--don't question any of their requests when they are given; if you don't understand, ask about it at the end of the trip or when you are leaving the bus.
7. Behave on the school bus just as you would in the classroom, observe rules just as your classroom teacher would have you observe them.
8. Help keep the bus clean and sanitary; this means no eating on the bus; save your lunch for lunch time.
9. Stay in your seat while the bus is in motion, because any sudden stop, swerve, or other defensive driving maneuver may knock you on the floor--or throw you against an object and cause an injury; if you must stand, face the front and brace yourself in case the driver has to make a sudden stop.
10. Keep your voice low; remember that loud talking, laughing, or unnecessary confusion diverts the driver's attention and may result in a serious accident, a safe bus driver must be able to hear the sounds of traffic such as sirens, horns, and train whistles at railroad crossings. You should be absolutely quiet so the driver can hear a train whistle; this is very important when it is raining and during foggy weather when the windshield wipers, heater and defroster are operating.
11. Keep your head, arms, and hands inside the bus at all times; windows are for light, ventilation, and to see through; relax and enjoy the ride going to school and on your way home.

12. If you detect any approaching danger that you believe the driver is not aware of, don't hesitate to warn the driver--sometimes the driver cannot see in all directions; if you see that a car is not going to stop while loading or unloading, or if some vehicle is passing on the right, let the driver know about it quickly and calmly.
13. Be courteous to fellow pupils, and the bus driver; greet your driver with a cheery good morning and a smiling good-bye as you leave the bus--remember we are all working together for safety.
14. Keep your feet and other objects out of the aisle, so that students will not trip over them as they enter and leave the bus--musical instruments, lunch pails, brief cases, and other large packages should be placed under the seat.
15. Treat bus equipment as you would valuable furniture in your own home; damage to seats, etc., is unnecessary, costly and wasteful. The bus drivers will inspect seats after each run. If a seat is damaged, the student assigned to that seat will be held financially responsible.
16. Remain seated until the bus stops to unload; then get off the bus quietly and quickly--do not crowd or push; if you must cross the street, take five or six steps from the bus and cross at right angles so that the bus driver can see you; wait until the driver gives you the signal then look both ways before crossing.

If the above rules and regulations are thoroughly understood by all concerned, the safety of the students traveling to and from school can be assured.

#### **ROADS TRAVELED BY BUS**

Buses will travel only public roads, such as state, county, township, and city streets. The only time we travel private roads would be for safety. Example: We cannot turn around on the highway, in this case we would, or could, use a private road or drive.

#### **CHILD PICK-UP PROCEDURE (GRADE AND HIGH SCHOOL)**

Each child will be picked up in the morning and returned each afternoon at the same point each day. The bus driver cannot let your child off the bus at any other point. The driver may not let off or pick up a child any place in town except at the school. If your child wants to ride a bus other than his or her own or, get off at a stop other than his or her own, the child is to bring a note from the parent and follow the procedure as outlined above.

#### **BUS ROUTE TIMES**

We try to vary our bus routes as little as possible. When we do have a change it is usually due to an overload on one bus or a new family on the bus route.

Bus route pick-up times will be given to you when you enroll in August. If you do not get them at this time please call the bus garage at 942-5511, 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

The routes are timed so we can pick up your child as late as possible and still be to school on time. No student will be picked up before 7:00 a.m. BUS DRIVERS ARE REMINDED THAT NO STUDENTS ARE TO ARRIVE AT THE HIGH SCHOOL PRIOR TO 8:20. TAKE-UP TIME AT THE HIGH SCHOOL IS 8:30. DISMISSAL TIME AT THE GRADE SCHOOL IS 3:25 AND AT THE HIGH SCHOOL 3:30. DURING PERIODS OF WEATHER WHEN FEW STUDENTS ARE RIDING THE BUS, PICK-UP TIME MAY BE LATER THAN THE ABOVE SO THAT STUDENTS DO NOT ARRIVE AT SCHOOL EARLIER THAN 8:20.

Your child should be dressed and at the bus stop a few minutes before the set pick-up time. If the child is late at the pick-up point and the driver has to wait, then the other children standing waiting for the bus are required to wait longer and the bus driver has to drive faster to make up lost time.

#### **THE STUDENT SHOULD ALWAYS BE ON TIME AT THE PICK-UP POINT**

The driver is only required to pull up to the pick-up point, honk the horn and if no one is in sight, drive on. There is no waiting time on the bus route. State regulations recommend children be ready ten minutes before the bus arrives at pick-up points.

Example: if we waited on each child for three minutes and there were twenty families on this bus route, the bus route would have to start an hour earlier. If your child gets on the bus at 7:30 now and we started three minute waiting at each stop the child would have to meet the bus at 6:30.

#### **STUDENT BUS PERMIT**

When school starts your child will be given a bus permit form. Please fill this out and return to the bus driver. The state requires us to keep these on file in the school garage office to show our bus loads, whether we are overloading.

#### **STANDEES ON BUS**

NO CHILD IS ALLOWED TO STAND ON THE BUS. THEY MUST SIT IN A SEAT.

NO CHILD IS ALLOWED TO SIT ANY OTHER PLACE BUT IN AN ASSIGNED BUS SEAT.

NO CHILD IS ALLOWED TO STAND IN A SEAT.

DRIVERS ARE REQUIRED TO ASSIGN SEATS TO STUDENTS.

#### **BUS LOADING**

Most of the buses can haul 65 passengers - we can load three students to each seat.

#### **EMERGENCY ROUTES**

The following procedures will be followed when emergency routes are used:

1. An announcement will be made on the radio stating the number of the emergency routes affected. In some cases some regular routes may be run and it will only be necessary to use one or two emergency routes.
2. Your children will not necessarily ride the same bus and have the same driver as they usually do.
3. In some cases two buses may travel the same road. An example: Bus #7 and Bus #5, will both come from Eldred to Carrollton. If you bring your children to Route 108 they may ride the first bus to come along.
4. Parents who bring their children to the main road **WILL BE EXPECTED TO MEET THEIR CHILDREN AT THE SAME PLACE IN THE EVENING** or to arrange other transportation for them at that discharge point.
5. The bus will stop at all regular pick-up points that lie along the emergency route and at all roads that meet the emergency route.

Following are the emergency routes and approximate time schedules assigned to each route. In all cases buses will not leave the specific roads mentioned to travel side roads. There will be seven emergency routes:

Bus #3 WOODY ROAD - Route begins at Woody. The bus will arrive at Woody at 8:05 a.m. Bus will leave Woody at 8:10 a.m. for Carrollton. Bus will pick up along 267 to Carrollton.

Bus #4 ROUTE 267 NORTH OF CARROLLTON AND EAST TO BERDAN - Route begins at Berdan at 8:00 a.m. Bus leaves Berdan at 8:10 a.m. for Carrollton. Bus will pick up along 267 to Carrollton.

Bus #5 ROUTE 108 WEST AND EAST OF ELDRED - Route begins at Best Seed House. The bus will arrive at this point at 7:45 a.m. The bus will leave for Eldred at 7:50 a.m. Bus will pick up in Eldred along highway and at corner of Bluff Street and 108 - then the bus will leave Eldred for Carrollton at 8:10 a.m. The bus will pick up along Route 108 to Carrollton.

Bus #8 BLACKTOP NORTH OF ELDRED - Route begins at Bob Inman's, bus leaves Bob Inman's at 7:45 a.m. for Eldred. Arrive at Eldred at 8:05 a.m., leave Eldred for Carrollton at 8:10 a.m. Bus will pick up along Route 108 to Carrollton. Bus will pick up in Eldred.

Bus #9 ROUTE 267 - SOUTH OF CARROLLTON - Route begins at first crossroads south of Macoupin Creek Bridge. Bus arrives and leaves starting point at 8:10 a.m. Bus will pick up along 267 to Carrollton.

Bus #10 BLACKTOP SOUTH OF ELDRED - Route begins at Spanky Bridge on blacktop. Bus will arrive at starting point at 7:40 a.m. Leave for Eldred at 7:45 a.m. Bus will arrive at Eldred at 8:05 a.m. The bus will pick up along blacktop to Eldred. Bus will pick up students south of Eldred.

Bus #11 ROUTE 108 EAST OF CARROLLTON AND PROVIDENCE ROAD - Route begins at junction of 108 and Providence Road. Bus will arrive at starting point at 8:05 a.m. The bus will leave for Carrollton at 8:10 a.m. Bus will pick up along 108 to Carrollton.

If you have any questions relevant to the above procedures, please feel free to call the bus garage at 942-5511.

As soon as a decision to close school has been made, the radio station W.J.B.M. in Jerseyville will be notified. The call number of THE STATION IN JERSEYVILLE IS 1480 A.M. It is hoped the announcement will be made between 6:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. each morning schools are to be closed. Mr. Barry will call the station prior to 6:00 a.m. School will be held each day as scheduled if at all possible, and should there be no announcements, please assume that school will be held. If it becomes necessary to use emergency routes the above listed radio station will be asked to make this announcement.

The emergency routes will be used when we have extreme deep and/or drifting snow or dangerous icing conditions and the routes will be limited to main roads only.

If it is a bad day and you want to know if the buses are going to run, please listen to the radio and do not call the school.

#### STATE ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Rules related to the operation of a school bus are set forth in Title 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Subtitle A, Chapter I, paragraph 275, Subchapter h, Section 275.110.

1. School buses must be operated in accordance with all state statutes and rules of the State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

2. Each driver shall conform with the Illinois Department of Transportation's pre-trip inspection requirements.
3. The service door shall be closed at all times when the bus is in motion.
4. Windows shall not be lowered below the stop line painted on the body pillar.
5. The emergency door shall be unlocked but securely latched when the school bus is in operation.
6. The driver shall not leave the bus while the motor is running.
7. The gasoline tank shall not be filled while there are any persons on the bus or while the motor is running.
8. The school bus signs shall be displayed only when the bus is being used for official school transportation.
9. The required alternately flashing warning lights and stop arm shall be used only when stopping the bus to receive or discharge students.
10. The manufacturer's capacity for a bus shall not be exceeded.
11. All passengers shall be seated when the bus is in motion.
12. Students shall not be asked to leave the bus along the route for breach of discipline, nor shall they be asked to sit anywhere other than a seat for breach of discipline.
13. Gross disobedience or misconduct on the part of a student shall be reported to the proper school authority for appropriate disciplinary action.
14. The driver shall not back a bus at the school while students are in the vicinity unless a responsible person is present to guide the bus driver.
15. Loading: When children to be picked up must cross a roadway, the driver shall beckon them to cross the road when it is safe to do so. Students shall be instructed to wait for the proper signal to cross the roadway when traffic conditions are such that they may go safely ahead of the bus.
16. The driver on a regular route shall not be expected to wait for a tardy student but may proceed on a timely route if the student is not in sight. The driver shall be seldom late and never early.
17. Unloading: At school, the bus shall be driven onto the school grounds to discharge pupils, or they should be discharged so they will not have to cross a street. At all discharge points where it is necessary for pupils to cross a roadway, the driver shall direct students to walk to a distance at least ten feet in front of the bus on the shoulder of the highway and to remain there until a signal is given by the bus driver for the student to cross.
18. The driver shall not allow a student to get off the bus at any place other than the student's designated discharge point unless permission is granted by the proper school official.

19. Except with the permission of school authorities, the driver shall transport no school children with animals. The animal must be properly confined at all times on the school bus.
20. The driver shall not permit a weapon or explosive of any kind on the bus.
21. In case of an accident or breakdown while the bus is transporting students, the first consideration shall be whether it is safer to evacuate or to leave the students on the bus.
22. All accidents shall be reported immediately to the appropriate school officials.
23. A complete copy of the Illinois Department of Transportation's "Motorist Report for Motor Vehicle Accident Form" (SR-1) shall be forwarded immediately to the regional superintendent in case of an accident.
24. When stalled on the highway or shoulder of the highway, the driver shall place appropriate signals as outlined in Ill. Rev. Stat. 1981, ch. 95 1/2, par. 12-702.
25. The driver shall not smoke nor be under the influence of intoxicating beverages or drugs when operating a school bus.
- 26.1 The driver shall stop between 15 and 50 feet of the first rail. While stopped, the driver shall open the service door, listen and look in both directions for any approaching train. When the driver determines that no train is approaching, the driver shall close the door, then proceed completely across the grade crossing in low gear.
- 26.2 The driver shall not change gears while crossing the tracks.
- 26.3 The driver shall not use the alternately flashing warning signals or stop arm at railroad grade crossings.
27. The driver's seat belt shall always be properly fastened before putting the bus in motion.

**Appendix B**  
**Survey Questionnaire**

## Survey of Bus Discipline

### Person Completing Survey:

Superintendent\_\_\_\_\_ Principal\_\_\_\_\_ Special Education Director\_\_\_\_\_  
Other\_\_\_\_\_

District Size\_\_\_\_\_

1. Does your district have a written policy for school bus discipline? Y \_\_\_ N\_\_\_  
(If so, please attach a copy)

2. Please indicate the most common discipline problems. (1 being most common  
and 10 being least common)

Out of seat behavior\_\_\_ Throwing things\_\_\_ Foul Language\_\_\_

Eating/Drinking on bus\_\_\_ Physical behavior\_\_\_ Damaging Bus\_\_\_

General Disruption\_\_\_ Insubordination\_\_\_ Smoking/Drinking\_\_\_

Radios on bus\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please list any other misconduct that was not listed above:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please check below all the disciplinary methods used by your district.

Bus Warnings\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Suspensions\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Expulsions\_\_\_\_\_

Corporal Punishment\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Riding the Bus With His/Her  
child\_\_\_\_\_

Bus Monitor (Person)\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Monitor (Cameras)\_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Seats\_\_\_\_\_ Rewards for Good Behavior\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please list type of rewards)

Buddy System\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Older student assigned to \_\_\_\_\_  
younger student) \_\_\_\_\_

Other:\_\_\_\_\_

5. With a scale of 1 as "most effective" and 10 as "least effect", please label the methods below appropriately.

Bus Warnings\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Suspensions\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Expulsions\_\_\_\_\_

Corporal Punishment\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Riding the Bus with His/Her Child\_\_\_\_\_

Bus Monitor (person)\_\_\_\_\_ Bus monitor (cameras)\_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Seats\_\_\_\_\_ Rewards for Good Behavior\_\_\_\_\_

Please list types below\_\_\_\_\_

Buddy System\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other\_\_\_\_\_

6. Please explain why you have chosen the above as your most effective. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Please check below all the disciplinary methods used for Special Education students. (Special Education students are those students who have an active Individualized Educational Program with required transportation)

Bus Warnings\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Suspensions\_\_\_\_\_ Bus Expulsions\_\_\_\_\_

Corporal Punishment\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Riding Bus\_\_\_\_\_

Bus monitors (person)\_\_\_\_\_ Bus monitor (camera)\_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Seats\_\_\_\_\_ Rewards for Good Behavior  
(Please list)

Buddy System\_\_\_\_\_  
(Older Student assigned  
to younger student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other\_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you provide behavior management training for your bus drivers, and if so, what type?

**Appendix C**

**Cover Letter**

October 18, 1993

Dear Colleague:

I am involved in a Field Study Project as part of my requirements for a graduate program at Eastern Illinois University. The purpose of this project is to research the behavioral management techniques used for bus discipline, and then to compile a handbook of the most successful strategies for local administrators. By responding to the attached survey, you will help make the results of this project become more meaningful for others.

I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Your responses will be useful if they are returned before October 29, 1993. All responses are confidential, and anyone completing this survey will receive a copy of results if so indicated on the survey.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact me at (217) 742-5746.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Chrostoski

**Bus Disc 92**

**Appendix D**  
**Response Form for**  
**School Bus Resource Manual**

If you would like to receive a copy of the results of this project, please indicate below where you would like it sent.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**  
**Cover Letter for**  
**School Bus Resource Manual**

March 18, 1994

Dear Educator:

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for completing the questionnaire on bus discipline that you received last fall. As promised, I have enclosed a resource manual for you based upon the fruits of my research. If you have any further questions regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact me. Again, thank you for your input.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Chrostoski