

# POLICY

2009

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NON-INSTRUCTIONAL/BUSINESS  
OPERATIONS

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**SUBJECT: SCHOOL BUS IDLING**

The Board of Education recognizes the need to promote the health and safety of District students and staff and to protect the environment from harmful emissions found in bus exhaust, in particular diesel exhaust, by eliminating the unnecessary idling of all school buses on school property including all schools within the District or at any school or school related activities to which District students are transported. For purposes of this policy, an "idling school bus" shall mean a school bus that is parked or stopped at a school or other location and has its engine running. *This policy applies to the operation of every District-owned and/or contracted school bus.* The District shall strive to eliminate all unnecessary idling of school buses such that idling time is minimized in all aspects of school bus operation.

In accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), excessive idling of certain vehicles is illegal in New York State. State regulations provide in part that buses exceeding 8,500 pounds and designed primarily for transporting persons or properties (i.e., a "heavy duty vehicle") shall not idle for more than five (5) consecutive minutes when not in motion unless otherwise authorized by the regulations. Significantly, the state regulations apply to a heavy duty vehicle whether or not powered by a diesel or non-diesel fueled engine.

State law already restricts bus and truck idling to no more than five consecutive minutes. This legislation authorizes the Commissioner of Education to require that school buses be turned off while waiting for passengers to load or unload on school grounds or in fronts of schools, unless idling is necessary for heating, mechanical or emergency conditions.

Further, the five (5) consecutive minute limitation on idling applies to buses whether owned, operated or leased; or to one who owns, leases or occupies land and has the actual or apparent dominion or control over the operation of the bus present on such land.

## **Exceptions**

Exceptions to the five (5) consecutive minute limitation on idling of school buses will be as enumerated in state regulations and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) The bus is forced to remain motionless because of the traffic conditions over which the driver has no control; and
- b) Idling to maintain an interior temperature of fifty (50) degrees Fahrenheit when the outside temperature is less than fifty (50) degrees or an interior temperature of seventy (70) degrees Fahrenheit when the temperature outside is more than eighty (80) degrees.
- c) Auxiliary function such as wheelchair lifts IF the operation requires the engine to continue running.
- d) When operation of the vehicle is required for maintenance, including necessary pre-trip safety inspections.

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## **Private Vendor Transportation Contracts**

All contracts for pupil transportation services between the School District and a private vendor that are entered into on or after August 21, 2008, shall include a provision requiring such vendor's compliance with the provisions of reducing idling in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations Section 156.3(h).

## **Publication of District Policy/Bus Driver Training**

This policy shall be posted at the Transportation Department and bus garage; and the Director of Transportation shall provide training to District bus drivers/transportation personnel on the District's idling reduction program and other practices for environmentally friendly bus operations to reduce school bus emissions and minimize exposure to bus exhaust. Appropriate signage shall be posted at each school to remind drivers and school staff of the policy.

Also, as may be applicable, the District shall ensure that each vendor/contract bus company receives a copy of the District policy regarding idling of school buses and shall provide any educational materials, regulations and/or procedures developed by the District with regard to meeting training requirements of the District's idling reduction program. The vendor/contract bus company shall sign for receipt of all of the above documents at the beginning of each school year and shall provide training for all currently employed bus drivers/transportation personnel. The vendor/contract bus company must also ensure that newly hired bus drivers, upon employment, are informed of the District policy and provided appropriate training regarding the idling of school buses.

The provisions of this policy shall be incorporated by reference in all transportation contracts and agreements.

The District shall otherwise publish its School Bus Idling Policy at its discretion which may include publication in the local newspaper and/or annual District calendar.

## **Sanctions for Violation of District Policy**

District employed bus drivers as well as other District employees who are known to have engaged in prohibited behavior with regard to excessive idling of school buses are subject to disciplinary action, as well as the sanctions provided for in law and/or regulations.

Any significant violations by vendors/contract bus companies of District policy and/or regulations regarding excessive idling of school buses shall result in revocation of their contract for the transportation of District students; and they may be subject to sanctions provided for in law and/or regulations.

The District will monitor and enforce compliance with this policy; and any person may report incidents of noncompliance by contacting the Director of Transportation.

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Education Law Section 3637  
Vehicle and Traffic Law Section 142  
8 New York code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Section 156.3(h)

Adopted: 10/12/04  
Revised: 2/9/09