TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NOTE

No. T-03-18

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Department of Education
Jim Horne, Commissioner

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DATE: **June 20, 2003**

TO: **School District Transportation Directors, Service Managers, and Other Interested Parties**

FROM: **Bill Schroyer, Director, Fleet Management**

SUBJECT: **Biannual School Bus Specifications Meeting**

The Florida Department of Education and the Florida Association for Pupil Transportation (FAPT) will be conducting the biannual Florida School Bus Specifications review meeting on Sunday, July 6, 2003, from 12:00 PM until 5:30 PM. The review meeting will be held in Ft. Lauderdale at the Radisson Bahia Mar Hotel. The hotel is located at 801 Seabreeze Blvd., Ft Lauderdale, FL 33316. The phone number is (954) 764-2233.

In order to reduce travel costs for local school districts, this meeting will be held in conjunction with the FAPT summer conference.

Attached for your information is the agenda for the meeting. Consistent with FAPT bylaws, each school district with representatives present will be allowed one vote per item. The meeting will be conducted using Roberts Rules of Order.

Please let us know if you have special needs, so that we can make appropriate accommodations.

If you have any questions, please call me at (850) 245-9795 or e-mail me at bill.schroyer@fldoe.org.

Attachments: Meeting Agenda

cc: District Superintendents (without attachments)
Dr. Cathy Wooley-Brown
Jennifer Rippner

AGENDA
FLORIDA PUBLIC SCHOOL BUS
SPECIFICATIONS REVIEW MEETING

RADISSON BAHIA MAR HOTEL
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
JULY 6, 2003

The following agenda was developed from the requests of personnel in transportation services in Florida school districts and in related industries. An effort was made to include every request submitted to the FAPT Specifications Committee in writing by January 31, 2003, for their review and recommendations to the full Advisory Committee. The practice and procedure have been to offer for consideration first the items proposed on the agenda or any additional items submitted to the committee for their prior review and recommendations. Industry representatives are encouraged to enter into any discussion and serve as technical advisors to the committee and suggest recommendations as appropriate.

Any proposals for change in the above procedures should be offered at the beginning of the meeting.

12:00 PM	Orientation
12:15 PM	Introduction General Discussion of Specifications Issues
12:30 PM	Discussion and Voting - Specifications Agenda Items Types A, B, C, and D School Bus Chassis and Bodies
3:00	Break
3:20 PM	Discussion and Voting – Continued
5:30PM	Adjourn

Note: Per FAPT bylaws, for votes on statewide policy issues, a vote on each agenda item will be solicited on a one-vote per school district basis.

ITEM: C1 MorRyde Suspension System 01-08

Original Proposal – To allow an approved option for the MorRyde front and rear suspension system.

Objective of Proposal – To provide districts with an alternative to the currently optional air ride suspension system.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends allowing an approved option for the MorRyde suspension system.

Rationale – These systems have been successfully pilot tested in Florida school districts with good results.

ITEM: C2 Bendix Auto Brake 00-14

Original Proposal – To require the Bendix Auto Brake system on all air brake equipped buses.

Objective of Proposal – To include on all air brake buses a system that would automatically actuate the parking brake system when the pupil warning lights are activated.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – During pilot testing it was determined that this system could be activated unintentionally, causing the bus to stop suddenly.

ITEM: C3 SSC Trans-Stop Transmission Interlock 01-06

Original Proposal – To allow an approved option for the SSC transmission interlock system.

Objective of Proposal – To provide a system that will not allow the transmission to be shifted into gear until all doors are closed.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee finds this device to be unnecessary. Its functionality is covered by recent changes in statewide operation procedures.

ITEM: C4 International T444E Engine 01-07

Original Proposal – To allow the International T444E engine as a standard engine in all types of buses.

Objective of Proposal – To allow the T444E engine to be bid as a standard engine rather than an optional engine.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee believes that the current system that requires the DT-466, Cat 3126, and Cummins 8.3 to be bid as standard engines provides school districts with the best value and flexibility.

ITEM: C5 CRS Headlight Flasher System 01-12

Original Proposal – To allow an approved option for the CRS headlight flasher system.

Objective of Proposal – To allow a system that will flash the headlights while the red pupil warning lights are flashing.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends tabling this proposal.

Rationale – The committee has not yet had time to fully investigate this proposal.

ITEM: C6 Park Brake Lock System 01-30

Original Proposal – To allow an approved option for the Park Brake Lock System.

Objective of Proposal – To allow a system that incorporates a key lock in the park brake and requires the use of the key to release the park brake.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee finds this device to be unnecessary. Its functionality would be in conflict with recent changes in statewide operation procedures.

ITEM: C7 E-Stroke Brake Sensor System 00-33

Original Proposal – To require the MGM E-Stroke Brake System on all buses.

Objective of Proposal – To provide a system that notifies drivers if any wheel brake becomes out of adjustment.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee believes that the current braking system with automatic slack adjusters in conjunction with the required pre-trip and monthly inspections eliminates the need for this system.

ITEM: C8 Control Panel Standardization 00-13

Original Proposal – To standardize the location of common controls on the school bus.

Objective of Proposal – To improve driver comfort and convenience by providing standardized locations for common controls on the bus.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends tabling this item for further research.

Rationale – The committee's research determined that this item will require a great deal of coordination with the manufacturers and other states in order to build a consensus of the best location for some controls. The committee is continuing to work toward this goal.

ITEM: C9 Delete Line Sett Ticket 00-41

Original Proposal – To delete the requirement for a one page line-sett ticket to be attached to each school bus chassis.

Objective of Proposal – To eliminate an obsolete requirement, since bus build information is now available to all districts via the internet or on CD.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal.

Rationale – Since this and more information is now available electronically and a paper copy is included with the bus delivery packet, there is no need to have it posted on the school bus.

ITEM: C10 Type C Hood Design 02-10

Original Proposal – To require Type C buses to have a minimum hood slope angle.

Objective of Proposal – To require a minimum level of direct visibility.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee believes that it is not in the best interest of the districts to include design or manufacturer-specific specifications. The committee believes instead that performance oriented specifications provide the districts with better products at a lower overall cost.

ITEM: C11 Additional Warranty Requirements 98-11

Original Proposal – To require rear end gaskets and pinion seals to be covered by the five year warranty. Additionally to require that the chassis electrical system be warranted for five years, unlimited mileage.

Objective of Proposal – To provide better warranty coverage for our buses.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee has observed excessive failure rates in these areas. Requiring additional warranties will at least mitigate the additional cost of dealing with these problems.

ITEM: BC-1 Electronic Service Manuals 01-02

Original Proposal – To require that vehicle service manuals and line sett tickets be provided on Compact Disc or via the Internet.

Objective of Proposal – To provide more complete and updateable information to the school districts.

Committee Recommendation – The subcommittee concurs with the recommendation.

Rationale - This proposal will provide more accessible and more up to date information to the end users.

ITEM: BC-2 Parts Availability 01-11

Original Proposal – To require that service parts be available for at least ten years from the date of delivery of the school bus.

Objective of Proposal – To ensure that buses purchased by the school districts can be kept in service for at least ten years.

Committee Recommendation – The committee agrees with the proposal and recommends adding a requirement to Specifications and the bid document requiring that chassis and body parts be available for at least ten years.

Rationale – As stated in the objective.

ITEM: BC3 School Bus Cost Analysis 02-03

Original Proposal – To examine on an item by item basis the cost and value of each component currently required on a Florida school bus.

Objective of Proposal – To analyze the items that make up a standard Florida school bus to determine if they are still necessary and cost effective.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends tabling this proposal.

Rationale – This task was recently undertaken by the committee, and it has not yet completed the analysis.

ITEM: B1 Lower Brake Light Placement 00-16

Original Proposal – To require brake / tail lights to be placed as low as possible on the rear of the bus body.

Objective of Proposal – To place rear lights in the line of sight of drivers behind the bus.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – Rear lights are governed by FMVSS 108 and manufacturing constraints and are, therefore, beyond the purview of Florida specifications.

ITEM: B2 Zone Guard System 01-03

Original Proposal – To allow an approved option for the Zone Guard obstacle detection system.

Objective of Proposal – To allow a system that will assist drivers by notifying them of obstacles near the front or rear of the bus.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee is concerned that drivers might rely on this system too much and not be as vigilant watching around the bus. Additionally, this system can not reliably discriminate between animate and inanimate objects based on manufacturer's statements.

ITEM: B3 Cross Arm on the Rear Bumper 01-13

Original Proposal – To place a crossing arm at the left rear bumper of the bus.

Objective of Proposal – To provide a barrier to stop traffic when the bus is loading and unloading students.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee does not believe that this item would decrease the pass-by rate, but would add a great deal to maintenance cost.

ITEM: B4 Emergency Door Hinge 01-20

Original Proposal – To require the L. H. Thompson hinge/ hold open device on emergency exit doors.

Objective of Proposal – To replace the current hold open device with a higher quality, sturdier system.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – After limited pilot testing the committee determined that the hinge system was difficult to release and caused doors to be deformed if a driver closed the door without properly releasing the hinge.

ITEM: B5Noise Reduction Switch 01-29

Original Proposal – To require the required noise reduction switch to be an on/off type switch rather than the current momentary switch.

Objective of Proposal – To change the system to allow controlled noise producing items to stay off without the driver having to hold the switch down.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee believes that this change would cause maintenance problems if drivers forget to turn the switch back on. Additionally the committee believes that this switch should only be activated prior to crossing a railroad track, and does not need to remain on while crossing the track since engine noise while accelerating across the tracks would cancel out any advantage this change might add.

ITEM: B6 Distance Measuring System 01-27

Original Proposal –To allow an approved option for the Distance Measuring System.

Objective of Proposal – To allow a system that provides a digital readout in the rear view mirror to tell the driver how close they are to objects behind the bus.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee believes this device is of very limited use in Florida since all districts discourage the backing of school buses.

ITEM: B7 Vandal Box for Type B, C, and D Buses

Original Proposal – To require a vandal box on all Type B, C, and D buses.

Objective of Proposal – To provide a vandal box like the ones required on all Type C on Type B and D buses also.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal.

Rationale – This box provides additional storage for the driver and in some cases provides a storage area for emergency equipment.

ITEM: B8 Remove First Aid Kit 96-29

Original Proposal – To delete the currently required First Aid Kit.

Objective of Proposal – To eliminate maintenance and time cost for an item of limited value.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – Both National and Federal Standards require school buses to be equipped with a First Aid Kit.

ITEM: B9 Type D-RE Engine Access Panel 01-25

Original Proposal – To require an engine access panel under and behind the rear seat of all rear engine buses.

Objective of Proposal – To provide better maintenance access to the engine on rear engine buses.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee agrees with the objective of the proposal.

ITEM: B10 Wheelchair Lift End Barrier 01-26

Original Proposal – To require wheelchair lift end barrier to be high enough to stop even the most aggressive powered wheelchair.

Objective of Proposal – To prevent the accidental launching of students from the wheelchair ramp.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting the proposal.

Rationale – Current Florida specifications are in compliance with stringent Federal requirements for safety of wheelchair lifts.

ITEM: B11 Child Check System 02-01

Original Proposal – To require a system on all buses that requires drivers to walk to the back of the bus to check for passengers before exiting the bus.

Objective of Proposal – To ensure that no passengers are left on the bus at the end of each run.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends adopting this concept with performance specifications to be developed for the next revision of the specifications manual.

Rationale – The committee agrees with the objective of the proposal.

ITEM: B12 C. E. White Drivers Seat 02-04

Original Proposal – To require the C. E. White driver's seat with integrated seat belt.

Objective of Proposal – To provide bus drivers with an integrated seat and belt system that should increase the comfort and safety of the drivers.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends tabling this proposal for further research.

Rationale – This seat will require changes to the floor structure of the bus, and body manufacturers have not yet had time to complete engineering in order to provide pilot units for testing.

ITEM: B13 3 and 4 Point Seat Belt Passenger Seats 01-19, 02-04b

Original Proposal – To allow or require both 3 and 4 point integral seat belt type passenger seats.

Objective of Proposal – To provide school districts with more options for restraining passengers in their seat.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends tabling this item for further research.

Rationale – The committee has not yet had time to fully research, pilot test and evaluate these systems and their safety and cost implications.

ITEM: B14 Emergency Exit Requirements 02-07

Original Proposal – To revise emergency exit requirements to coincide with the revisions in FMVSS 217.

Objective of Proposal – To reduce the number of emergency exit windows on wheelchair lift equipped buses in order to preclude the reduction of capacity of these buses due to new Federal regulations that do not allow emergency exit windows to be blocked by wheelchairs or child carrier seats.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal by reducing the number of emergency exit windows required on all wheelchair lift equipped buses to the minimum required to meet the requirements of FMVSS #217.

Rationale - The committee concurs with the objective, and notes that wheelchair lift buses transport fewer students than their rated shell size. Additionally, emergency exit windows would be of limited use to non-ambulatory passengers.

ITEM: B15 Emergency Window Hinges 00-21

Original Proposal – To require a better hinge and latching device on emergency exit windows.

Objective of Proposal – To require better equipment that will stand up to Florida service requirements.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends tabling this item for further research.

Rationale – The committee has not yet had time to thoroughly research this item.

ITEM: B16 Line-X Bus Flooring Material 00-24

Original Proposal – To allow Line-X truck bed liner material to be used as a replacement for the required rubber floor material.

Objective of Proposal – To allow Line-X truck bed liner material when districts must replace the original flooring material.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal.

Rationale – This will provide districts with the option of using a material that reduces install time significantly. Additionally, pilot units are holding up very well after over one year of service.

ITEM: B17 Motion Masters Driver's Seat Dampeners 01-09

Original Proposal – To allow an option for the Motion Masters driver's seat dampener system.

Objective of Proposal – To allow a system that reduces the bouncing of air suspension driver's seats on rough roads.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal by creating an approved option for the Motion Masters system.

Rationale – The committee agrees with the objective and notes that pilot testing of this system was sucessful.

ITEM: B18 Transpec Stop Sign 01-18

Original Proposal – To require the Transpec LED Stop/Caution sign on the rear of all buses.

Objective of Proposal – To provide motorists behind the bus with more information as to when they should stop or use caution around the bus.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends tabling this item for further research.

Rationale – The pilot testing on this item is ongoing.

ITEM: B19 Bus Vision Monitoring System 01-21

Original Proposal – To allow the Bus Vision digital student monitoring system as an approved option.

Objective of Proposal – To allow a higher quality, more durable option for on-the-bus student monitoring.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends rejecting this proposal.

Rationale – The company failed to supply units for pilot testing; therefore, the committee was not able to evaluate the system. The committee also noted that this company can resubmit their request in the future.

ITEM: B20 Heavy Duty Air Conditioning Systems 01-23

Original Proposal – To allow approved options for heavy duty, transit style air conditioning systems on Florida school buses.

Objective of Proposal – To allow an option for a system that provides higher cooling capacities and more durable components.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends continuing the pilot testing of this type of system.

Rationale – Pilot testing for these systems began recently, and testing data has not yet been compiled.

ITEM: B21 Rear View Mirror and Sunshield 01-28

Original Proposal – To require a convex unbreakable interior rear view mirror with non-corrosive, unbreakable brackets and thumbwheel adjustment. Additionally, to require the driver's front and side window sunshield to be fully adjustable and mounted on one articulating arm.

Objective of Proposal – To provide higher quality, higher performance equipment for the bus drivers and lower maintenance for the technicians.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal.

Rationales – In pilot testing the results were extremely positive, and the mirrors provided better vision and much improved usability.

ITEM: B22 Floor Insulation Materials 02-08

Original Proposal – To change the requirements for floor insulation material in order to eliminate the use of chromated copper arsenate in the construction of the school bus.

Objective of Proposal – To require a more environmentally friendly bus floor insulation material that is at least as durable as the current material.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends tabling the proposal for further research.

Rationale – The committee has not yet had time to research this item but notes that the current material poses no known health hazard since it is completely encapsulated between the steel floor and the rubber mat floor covering.

ITEM: B23 Lifeline Door Alarm System 02-09

Original Proposal – To allow the lifeline entrance door alarm system on all buses.

Objective of Proposal – To minimize the possibility of dragging a passenger beside the bus by providing a system that alarms if anything is caught in the door.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends continuing the pilot test on this unit.

Rationale – Pilot testing on this system has just begun.

ITEM: B24 PA System

Original Proposal – To require internal / external PA system on all buses.

Objective of Proposal – To provide drivers with a tool to use to communicate effectively with students on and off of the bus.

Committee Recommendation – The committee recommends accepting the proposal.

Rationale – The committee agrees with the objective and notes that this item could increase safety by making it easier for the driver to communicate with the students.