



6201 Powers Ferry Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30339



[www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org)

# News Release

**For Immediate Release**

June 18, 2018

**For More Information Contact**

Susan Hale, SPLOST Communications  
470-254-6830 or [communications@fultonschools.org](mailto:communications@fultonschools.org)

## **Fulton County Schools named one of Georgia's top districts for bus safety**

Today State School Superintendent Richard Woods recognized Fulton County Schools for going above and beyond to ensure safe and efficient student transportation.

“Nothing is more important than the safety of our children, and making sure they can travel safely and arrive at school ready to learn,” Superintendent Woods said. “Our drivers and transportation employees work harder than many ever realize, and they’re an integral part of our educational system.”

Fulton County Schools was selected by a panel of judges on factors such as completing safety training, evacuation drills, and other safety initiatives with students; evaluation of accidents and internal practices to prevent accidents; and innovative initiatives used to inspire safe practices, hire and retrain drivers, and enhance student safety. The award is sponsored by Blue Bird, Georgia’s school bus manufacturer, and Yancey Bus Sales & Service.

With nearly 800 school buses traveling more than 7.5 million miles annually, Fulton County Schools has one of the largest and safest bus fleets in Georgia.

“We’re proud to go above and beyond in our safety requirements,” said Sam Ham, executive director of Fulton’s Transportation Department. “We exceed the required state training with additional classroom and on-the-road training, and all drivers must pass a criminal background check, have an annual physical, become CPR and first aid certified, and participate in a defensive driving course.”

Drivers also are subject to new hire and random drug and alcohol testing, and driving records are reviewed monthly.

In addition, the Transportation Department is an active participant in the district’s strategic goal to increase the percentage of students reading at or above grade level by third grade, and is adding magnetized “sight word” signs on the interior ceiling of the buses that serve four pilot schools. Drivers also use the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) approach with elementary and middle school students to promote a safe and well-behaved bus riding experience.

As another safety feature, last year Fulton County Schools became the first school district in Georgia to begin placing three-point safety belts – similar to what are found in passenger cars – on its larger school buses. The National Transportation Safety Board and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration both endorse adding

seat belts to school buses, and according to the NTSB, the physical structure of school buses aid in safety through “compartmentalization.” School buses use their energy-absorbing steel inner structure and high, padded seat backs to create a “compartment” where students are protected in the unlikely event of an accident.

Fulton County Schools also is creating a more environmentally-friendly and economical bus fleet. Using SPLOST (one-penny education sales tax) funds as well as federal/local grant funding, the school system is gradually converting its diesel transportation fleet to become propane-powered. Propane bus engines are 75 percent cleaner than the current emissions standard, and reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by thousands of pounds each year.

Propane fuel also is half the cost of diesel fuel, and the new propane-powered buses save an additional \$3,500 per year, per bus, in basic maintenance costs. Last August, 90 diesel buses were replaced by new propane-powered buses, and this fall, 97 more will replace older diesel models. Each of the new propane buses has three-point safety belts.

### **Bus Driver Job Fair on June 26**

Fulton County Schools is looking for drivers who want to become part of its Transportation team and contribute to the district’s safety success record. A Transportation Job Fair is being held next Tuesday, June 26, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at Westlake High School (2400 Union Road SW, South Fulton). This fair is for bus driver and bus monitors positions throughout the district, and the positions include benefits packages with medical, dental, vision, life insurance, pension, and more. For more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/BusFair2018>.

###

**About the Fulton County School System.** The Fulton County School System is the fourth largest school system in Georgia. Approximately 96,700 students attend 105 schools in the cities of Alpharetta, Chattahoochee Hills, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Johns Creek, Milton, Mountain Park, Palmetto, Roswell, Sandy Springs, South Fulton and Union City.