



Drive Up Standards

NEWSLETTER

Connecting School Bus & Transit Workers From Coast to Coast

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PREVENTING WAGE THEFT: Make Sure You Get What You Deserve

By Durham School Bus Workers, Local 984

We are school bus workers in Memphis, Tenn. who proudly serve the children of our community. We are hardworking parents who want to make sure that we can provide for our own families. And right now, we are under attack by Durham, who insists on stealing our hard-earned wages.

Our days are long. A typical day begins at 4 a.m. with a commute to the bus yard. We clock in around 5 a.m. and begin inspecting the buses to make sure they're safe before taking them out on the routes. We'll have a short break for lunch and then we get ready to drive our afternoon routes. We're home usually by 5 p.m. after a long day on the road. If a school has a sporting event or special event, we will stick around and drive that as well, sometimes getting back as late as 10:30 or 11. We will wake up and do it all again the next day.

Many of us have been out on routes, only to discover that we'd been clocked out while driving after returning to the yard. Sometimes we pay for our own cleaning supplies and sometimes they won't pay us at all for driving for special events. We've had to keep our own detailed records and compare them to the timesheets that Durham shows us, because their records and calculations can be incorrect and when they are, we get short-changed.

We are fighting for our kids and ourselves. The company has to be more committed to safety. We are dedicated professionals and we want to ensure that the children we are charged with are kept safe and stay healthy. We shouldn't be struggling to put food on our own tables. We are organized, we are motivated and justice will prevail over corporate greed!



TRACKING YOUR WAY BACK TO SCHOOL

By Scott Busch, Local 449

As the school year begins and we go over our training before we start our routes, many of us will be reminded about Zonar and the effect it has on our work. Zonar has multiple features including a GPS system, pre-trip inspection checkoff and post-trip inspection examination. In many yards, Zonar calculates your payroll with the use of the Zonar wand and can detect defects on an unsafe bus. The bus companies use Zonar for payroll and GPS tracking of the drivers. Zonar can benefit us in a few ways. It makes pre-trip and post-trip inspections easy. By using the wand to go around the bus clicking on the cookies, it will keep inspections on the record and help develop a proper inspection routine.

However, many of us have had issues with Zonar, particularly when it comes to our paychecks. In Buffalo, when we arrive at work to get our keys, we go to our buses for pre-trip inspections. We must swipe in first on our cards and download it first in the cradle. This procedure is the same for bus attendants. We must take it out again, swipe in and perform the inspection. The system might read that we punched in late if the proper procedures weren't followed. As you know, every terminal payroll clerk has his

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Strength, In Writing: Negotiating Our Teamster Contracts

By Mike Gatto, Local 553

As a business agent, one of the most frequent questions I get is, “What happens during contract negotiations?”

Before we even sit down across the table from the company, elections for negotiating committee positions are held. Rank-and-file members from the bargaining unit will be selected to sit alongside local union leadership and represent their sisters and brothers in the collective bargaining process.

The actual negotiations are much more dramatic in the movies than in real life. Yelling and screaming is not always a part of negotiations. Both parties will most likely meet several times in the negotiation process in order to obtain a fair agreement. Each side will continue to pass verbal and written proposals back and forth until they are able to reach an agreement on each article. The committee will take breaks known as “caucuses” to evaluate the path negotiations are going down. The breaks will afford union leaders time to speak with the committee members and discuss different topics. The committee may bring in outside counsel to cost out the total package of benefits such as wages, personal time, health care, pension, etc. The days between bargaining sessions will provide time to put pencil to paper and see what is a must have, what demands can be altered and what proposals can be deleted with the guidance of the committee. Pressure from time constraints or membership actions will definitely factor into the outcome of the negotiations. No member wants to walk the picket line, but will if it necessary. This message must be conveyed to the company carefully.

The union must be smarter than the company when exerting its power during collective bargaining. However, no member benefits from a contract that puts the employer out of business. Knowing when it is the right time to say we have an agreement is important. We must then vote on the agreement internally, allowing the committee an opportunity to put a stamp of approval on the deal before it goes to the membership for ratification. The contract then goes to the members in the bargaining unit for a ratification vote. There is no greater satisfaction than knowing the contract that you and your fellow committee members just spent weeks or even months negotiating passed with an overwhelming “yes” vote. When it raises wages and benefits for everyone, that’s what we call Teamster power!

Change at the Local Level

By Starr Klein, Local 633



I am a proud member of Local 633 in Manchester, N.H., and a shop steward at my First Student bus yard. During my four years driving home-to-school routes, I have noticed many things about the way bus drivers are perceived and treated by their local school districts.

My first route was in a small town where bus drivers were treated like members of the community. We were invited to all of the school functions, including teacher appreciation days, staff luncheons and school plays. My second route was completely different. Drivers were unfairly blamed for everything that went wrong on the buses. This happened despite the district telling us time and time again that we were a critical component to the school and valued.

There are high expectations for bus drivers in this country. We are expected to be janitors, psychologists, medics and parents. These roles are expected of us, without training, on top of our professional obligations to make sure children get to and from school safely.

When my first route had another opening, I returned as quickly as I could. I love my job and I appreciate the respect we get from the school district. Locally, we must be our own best advocates as bus drivers. We must stand up for our rights and our respect. Show up to school board meetings and be part of the discussion. Of course, this is all made much easier, because we’ve got the Teamsters on our side!

Tracking Your Way Back to School *continued from page 1*

or her own personal way of resolving time disparities and their initial ruling could favor the company and not you.

So it's very important to follow the procedures and to keep a written record of your time. It is important to leave on time because if you don't they dock you every minute you don't leave the yard. If this happens beyond your control make sure to document what happened so you can get your full pay. There can be some misconception on your return trip to the yard that you stop getting paid right when you enter the yard

and that is not true. There is a magnetic field that surrounds each terminal to tell the system that you are back on the property. You still get paid to park the bus. Once you do park, get your wand out and do your post trip inspection and download your information into the cradle. Then, pull it back out, swipe out and put it back in the cradle to download.

If there are any further questions about Zonar, Zonar training, or pay and safety issues, talk to your local business agent or shop steward today!

ORGANIZING ROUNDUP

Lewisville School Bus Workers Join Teamsters Local 745

(DALLAS) – First Student school bus workers in Lewisville, Texas voted decisively in favor of joining Local 745 in Dallas. The nearly 400-worker unit consists of drivers and monitors who are seeking a strong voice to address their workplace concerns.

"We are elated to join the Teamster family," said LaRae Saldivar, a First Student driver in Lewisville. "My co-workers and I worked hard to get to this point and we're going to continue to work hard so we can secure a strong contract. As a third-generation school bus driver and former member of the Teamsters, I have long known how important it is for workers to have strong representation. I'm so proud of my co-workers for uniting together to win a strong voice on the job."

"This has been an eye-opening experience for me. We showed what workers can do when we stick together. We never backed down," said Kristina Brantley, a monitor at First Student.

The drivers and monitors will be covered by the Teamsters-First Student national contract and Local 745 will negotiate a supplemental that will include economics.

"This was a full team effort. I am proud of these workers for staying united and the organizing committee for their commitment to forming their union with the Teamsters. This was a hard-fought campaign," said Brent Taylor, Local 745 Secretary-Treasurer. "I also want to thank all the organizers and representatives from all levels of the union who helped out."

Lockport School Bus Workers Choose Teamsters

(LOCKPORT, N.Y.) – School bus drivers and monitors at STA/Ridge Road Express who transport students for the Lockport City School District and Starpoint Central School District overcame tough opposition from management to join the Teamsters Union. The nearly 200 school bus workers voted decisively in favor of Local 449 in Buffalo, N.Y., calling for improved working conditions and

wages, respect on the job and assurances that they will be paid for all hours worked.

"We stood strong to exercise our union rights and win Teamster representation. We are looking forward to negotiating a contract that will ensure better pay, safer equipment and improved working conditions," said Lisa Szpakowski, a 16-year driver with the Lockport School District. "We hope to win respect from management and develop a strong working relationship with the company."

The victory in Lockport marks just the latest group of workers who have been successful in their organizing efforts at STA, the third-largest school bus operator in the country. Szpakowski and her co-workers will join hundreds of STA employees represented by the Teamsters Union nationwide.

"One of the most important parts of this campaign was educating workers on their right to assemble and free speech. Once they understood they had the right as citizens, under the protection of the Constitution and U.S.

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federal labor law, the momentum grew and workers united under a strong collective voice," said George Harrigan, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 449. "This was a hard-fought campaign by an incredible group of workers. They truly care about their co-workers and look out for one another on the job. As Teamsters, they will solidify this already-strong bond at the bargaining table and win the respect all school bus workers deserve."

STA School Bus Workers in New Jersey Choose Teamsters Union

(PINEBROOK, N.J.) – More than 150 school bus workers who transport students for Student Transportation of America (STA) in Pine Brook, N.J., have voted decisively to join Local 102 in Springfield Township. The drivers and monitors stood united for fair wages, decent and affordable health insurance, respect and fairness on the job.

"I'm glad we did this. We are all very excited to be Teamsters,"

said Luz Cadavid, a nine-year driver for STA and one of the leading members of the organizing committee. "We all stood together and I'm glad that we did. We will continue to work together to win a strong contract that will bring us fairness."

The victory in Pine Brook marks just the latest group of workers who have been successful in their organizing efforts at STA. Cadavid and her co-workers will join with STA drivers and monitors in Parsippany, N.J., who voted to join Local 102 in December 2015.

"Workers in the school bus industry recognize that in these difficult economic times, they need a strong union to represent them," said Kevin O'Connor, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 102. "This group was really motivated to win representation. The company put a lot of pressure on them to vote against the union, but they held their ground. We are proud to welcome them to the Teamsters Union."

15th Annual Teamster Women's Conference



The 2016 Teamsters Women's Conference will take place from Sept. 22-24 in Los Angeles.

The Teamsters Women's Conference brings together Teamsters from throughout North America in the spirit of sisterhood. The three-day event consistently features an impressive program of speakers, dozens of educational workshops and union-building activities. This year we will be holding two workshops for our bus members:

10 Years of Driving Up Standards in School Bus & Transit

Friday, Sept 23 at 9 a.m.

Being a Leader on Your Bus Yard

Friday, Sept 23 at 11 a.m.

Look forward to seeing you there!



How do we keep our union growing strong? By building political power, one member at a time, at every Teamster local union across North America.

Interested in joining DRIVE?
Talk to your local union.

Have a question or story idea? Email us at driveupstandards1@gmail.com

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