

North Carolina Transportation Advisory Group History

BEGINNINGS

The Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) is an outgrowth of the Transportation Advisory Council of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA). The Advisory Council was created as recommended in the final report of the NCASA Transportation Funding Team, published in September, 1998. Tom McNeel, Superintendent of the Caldwell County Schools, was asked to chair the Team comprised of Superintendents and their Transportation Directors who volunteered to serve. The President of the North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association was also included on the Team, along with Jan Crofts, NCASA Executive Director and Derek Graham, NCDPI Transportation Chief." "The initial Team meeting was held on October 27, 1997. Guilford County officials hosted all but one of our meetings. After the initial task was completed, the final report recommended "the NCASA should maintain a Transportation Advisory Council to monitor student transportation services, needs, funding and to provide counsel to the Department of Public Instruction."

TRANSITION

Dr. McNeel continued to chair the Advisory Council until 2003, when he left to chair the Low Wealth Consortium. He was replaced as chair by Dr. Rodney Shotwell, superintendent of Macon County Schools who chaired the Council until 2006. In 2007, NCASA discontinued its sponsorship of the Council (as it did with some other affiliated groups) and it was turned over to the members, all of whom were involved directly in pupil transportation. The group began an affiliation with the North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association (NCPTA), meeting as the Transportation Advisory Committee. Don Byrnes, recently retired transportation director from Cleveland County and past NCPTA president was asked by the NCPTA Advisory Council to serve as chair. According to the April 25, 2008 meeting minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee, The TAC is an open forum welcoming all to participate who have interest in betterment of pupil transportation in North Carolina." Later in 2008, in order to be consistent with its bylaws, NCPTA Board of Directors changed its name back to the NCPTA Advisory Council (TAC). To avoid confusion, the group agreed to rename the former Transportation Advisory Council to be the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), under which name it has been meeting ever since.

The TAG has, over the years, provided recommendations and comments to (and sought clarification from) the following state agencies: • NCDPI Transportation Services • NCDOT, Division of Motor Vehicles, School Bus and Traffic Safety • NCDOT, Division of Motor Vehicles, Vehicle Inspection Unit • NC Department of Justice, Tort Claims Section • North Carolina General Assembly and the NC Division of Purchase and Contract.

MISSION

It is the mission of the Transportation Advisory Group to fully understand and be involved in the creation of state transportation laws, rules and policies in order to provide feedback and recommendations to provide for safe student transportation in North Carolina. Feedback and recommendations will be provided, as needed, to state agencies including – but not limited to – the Department of Public Instruction, the NCDOT Division of Motor Vehicles and the North Carolina General Assembly. The TAG will also develop strategies to assist others in understanding of state laws, rules and policies and promote the adoption of any recommended changes. TAG meetings will facilitate communication between and among school transportation departments across the state and will serve as a forum for sharing innovations and best practices.

OPERATING RULES

TAG meetings are open to anyone that works in pupil transportation in the Public Schools of North Carolina including Charter Schools. Vendors should attend only to the extent that they are invited to address specific agenda items. The Transportation Advisory Group is administratively part of the NCPTA. The level of financial support for TAG from NCPTA should be determined by the NCPTA Advisory Council during the last half of a calendar year for the following calendar year. Support could include arrangements for joint meetings, refreshments or a meal, or request items to be placed on TAG meeting agendas. A TAG facilitator is appointed for a 2-year term by the TAC. The NCPTA president or vice-president, or DPI Transportation section chief if those NCPTA officers are not available, shall preside over the election. The TAG facilitator solicits agenda items from and supply meeting minutes to: NCPTA leadership, NCPTA membership, DPI Transportation staff, DMV School Bus staff and others associated with pupil transportation in North Carolina. Such communication is typically done by email, utilizing the statewide email list administered by the Department of Public Instruction. TAG recommendations should be determined by consensus as much as possible, but to the extent that a vote is necessary, by majority vote of those in attendance at the meeting in which the vote is taken. When such a vote is needed, only one vote per LEA is allowed. Recommendations are forwarded to the agency that would be appropriate to receive it (e.g., DPI, DMV, General Assembly). Such recommendations are also to be sent for information – apart from the regular meeting minutes - to DPI, DMV and the NCPTA president.