

## **Utah State Office of Education**

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### **Best Practices for Implementation of Physical Assessment Standard for School Bus Drivers and School Bus Attendants**

These best practices are provided as recommendations from a Best Practices Committee with representatives from The Utah State Office of Education, Utah Association of Pupil Transportation, Utah State Risk Management, and the Wasatch Front Human Resources Group.

The Best Practices Committee recognizes the importance of consistent administration of the Physical Performance Assessments by certified instructors and supervisors or qualified providers. Each school district or busing entity should take the necessary steps to ensure that those who administer the tests do so correctly, safely, and consistently. It is important to have an adequate pool of trained and certified school bus drivers and school bus attendants who have already passed the Physical Assessment Test in order to ensure a school district or busing entity will not be found negligent in using an employee who may not be able to perform the job duties in an emergency.

The resources provided by the Utah State Office of Education, along with the recommendations of the Best Practices Committee, should provide all school districts and busing entities with everything that is needed to ensure consistency in standardized testing across the state.

The Best Practices Committee recognizes that state-wide consistency in standardized testing is reliant on the expected professionalism of both supervisors and certified instructors. The “Evaluator Instructions for Physical Performance Assessment” provide detailed information in the following areas:

1. Assessment Overview
2. Who can administer the test and what vehicle should be used
3. Using the Performance Assessment form
4. Drag task restrictions and acceptable modifications
5. Screen testing, confirmation testing, job action
6. How often the assessment shall be performed

The Best Practices Committee makes the following additional recommendations and clarifications concerning full implementation of the physical performance assessments tests:

1. The Best Practices Committee believes it is reasonable to expect that each school district and busing entity should have initial screening tests for school bus drivers and school bus attendants completed by now.
2. The Best Practices Committee believes school districts and busing entities should work together on a regional basis with the largest school districts taking the lead in identifying third-party providers for test administration and/or confirmation testing as needed. If utilized, qualified providers must ensure the testing they facilitate is equal to the tasks specifically identified for school bus drivers and school bus

attendants. Testing may either be done at a qualified provider's facility or with the qualified provider facilitating it on site for a school district or busing entity.

3. For new School Bus Drivers and/or School Bus Attendants:
  - a. Job postings for school bus drivers and school bus attendants should include a reference of the need to have the ability to meet the physical assessment standard for school bus drivers and school bus attendants. A copy of the standard to be met should be attached to the job description when it is given to potential new hires.
  - b. Job descriptions should include a summary list of "Physical Demands" for the job identified with quantifiable numbers.
  - c. When should the Physical Assessment Test be administered to new school bus attendants and new school bus drivers?
    - i. To avoid possible liability, the Physical Assessment Test should be administered after an offer of employment takes place, as a condition of the offer. This includes offers of employment for substitute positions, at-will positions, or career contract positions. It is recommended that the physical assessment testing take place after all other requirements have been met. The suggested order is:
      1. Application review
      2. Interview
      3. DMV record review
      4. Make offer of employment, conditional on:
        - a. CDL written exam completion (includes DOT physical)
        - b. FBI BCI background check review and clearance
        - c. Pre-employment drug test with negative results
        - d. Successful completion of all state and local required instruction and certification
        - e. Successful completion of Physical Assessment Evaluation
    - ii. Requests for exceptions to any of these conditions should be referred to the Human Resource Department.
    - iii. All existing school bus drivers should be notified of the expectation that they will pass the Physical Assessment Test every two years.
    - iv. All existing school bus attendants should be notified of the expectation that they will pass the Physical Assessment Test every year.
4. For Existing School Bus Drivers and/or School Bus Attendants
  - a. Concerning Return-To-Duty after a School Bus Driver and/or School Bus Attendant has been away for an operation or extended illness under medical care, there are three important areas that should be addressed:
    - i. As soon as an employer becomes aware a school bus driver or school bus attendant will be returning to work after an operation or extended illness under medical care, the employee should be provided with a job description including a summary list of the physical demands of the job.

- ii. Each employee should be notified that their health care provider will need to provide them with a signed statement that they are fit to perform the duties identified in the job description including the list of physical demands of the job prior to returning for duty.
- iii. If after an employee is released to full duty by his/her health care provider, transportation management personnel have concerns about the employee's physical ability to perform the job with or without reasonable accommodation, based on objective evidence in the workplace, employees should be referred to Human Resource departments for verification of an appropriate release from a health care provider or an independent medical evaluation.