

Minutes of the Arizona School Bus Advisory Council
Meeting held on March 11, 2026
Arizona Peace Officer Standards Training, Board Room
2643 E. University, Phoenix, Arizona 85034-6914

1. **Welcome and Call to Order** – Chairperson Franklin called the meeting to order at 10:00am MST and welcomed the other Council members, the public in attendance and virtually.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance was performed**
3. **Roll Call** – The following Council members were present, Nicholas Franklin (Chairman), Trace Tolby (Co-Chair), Jason Nelson, Tom Hartman and Nicholas Lloyd. Council members appearing virtually were Kela Powers, Ashley Berg, Chuck Essigs and Sean Ross.
4. **Members of the public**- One in attendance
5. **Attendees appearing virtually**- Ann Mundinger, Ardell Nachie, Cori Radford, Dale Wyman, Darlene Steffen, Darrin, Debbie Hurt, Donald Gibson, Doris Osenbau, Dustin Hastings, Eric Kissel, Erik Cooper, Evan, Felicia Francis, Harold Janes, Harrison Smith, Hilma Gustafson, Ilene Willie, James Barbee, Jeanne Vandemark, Jeff Kingsley, Josh Lykins, Julia Osuna, Lisa Pauli-Lake, Margaret Lee, Marlene Flowers, Mashayla Dawn, Meagan Scott, Norma Frye, Patricia Frasure, Patti Huggins, POST AV Service, Richard Garmon, Richard Popour, Roderick Poneoma, Ronald Schepers, Tami Baker, Teresa Ramirez, Thomas Sims, Vanessa Chee, Wendy Hartjen-Fleming, William Bailey, and William Olivas.
6. **Approval of the Meeting Minutes dated February 11, 2026** – Co-Chair, Trace Tolby made the motion, and Jason Nelson seconded the motion to approve. All members were in favor and the motion passed.
7. Questions for the Department regarding 925 vehicles- Jason Nelson asked the Department to clarify what “primary roadway” means and how that applies to 925 vehicles. Sgt. William Lunt from the Department responded, stating this only applies to the 925 vehicles not the type A and B school buses.
8. Question for the Department regarding 5-panel drug screens for 925 drivers- Jason Nelson mentioned that a 925 driver is a non-DOT regulated position and does not require a 5-panel drug screen. How do we want to move forward with this in the Minimum Standards? Sgt. William Lunt answered that the Department will create a form that the 925 drivers can bring to the lab requesting a 5-panel drug screen for a non-DOT regulated test. Kimberly Thomas stated the Department will discuss this as an agency and should have a response at the next STAC meeting on how we would like to proceed.

9. Jason Nelson asked if it would be acceptable to rearrange Minimum Standards so that the rules will flow better. Paul Swietek from the Department said “Yes” that it is possible. You would want to strike through the entire Minimum Standards and create a new draft with the new sections.
10. Mr. Sean Ross was not opposed but would want the new revision to be reviewed by the Attorney General’s Office to ensure we follow the correct rule and statute.
11. Chair Nick Franklin asked for the Assistant Attorney General’s opinion on how to proceed with this amendment. Mr. Erik Cooper advised organizing draft rules would not be eligible for executive session. This discussion needs to be held in an open meeting.
12. **Updates from Each Study Group-** Denice Hall with Special Needs was absent from the meeting and could not provide an update. Trace Tolby stated he is working on driver requirements and met on February 19. Nine (9) people were in attendance. Discussion was held on PPT requirements and drug screens. Tom Hartman stated he is working on electric buses, alt fuel and chassis. This group met on March 5th. A full review of the article has been completed, and they should have a proposal by the next STAC meeting. One question was asked by Tom Hartman to Sgt. William Lunt from the Department regarding major vs. minor violations and questioned the 15 business days to correct a violation. Jason Nelson is working on driver training requirements and qualifications and asked the Department for clarification on what the “Least Regulatory Burden” means. Paul Swietek from the Department provided examples. Jason Nelson also asked for clarification on when an economic impact statement is required along with changing a rule from a shall to may. Paul Switek from the Department advised an economic impact statement is required for any change. Nick Franklin is working on the hours of service and has been doing some additional research on how other states handle hours of service.
13. Mr. Erik Cooper, Assistant Attorney General, provided input on how the council can share information with other working groups. He advised working groups should not overlap. Mr. Cooper advised the council if additional information is needed, he recommended voting to go into executive session.
14. Discussion was held to determine if a new working group was needed for bus aides/monitors. Erik Cooper advised this question should go to the Attorney General’s office to see if this would require a legislative change.
15. **Members of the Public requested to speak-** Justin Glover spoke on major and minor violations on school bus inspections.

16. A motion was made to move into executive session with Assistant Attorney General Erik Cooper.
17. Chair Nick Franklin welcomed everyone back to the public meeting.
18. **Schedule future meeting-** Chairman Nicholas Franklin stated we have future meetings scheduled to ensure availability. The next scheduled meeting is set for April 8, 2026, at 10:00am.
19. **Meeting was adjourned at 12:39 MST.**

By:

Kimberly Thomas, Administrative Supervisor, DPS Student Transportation