

Arizona School Bus Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 2, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM MST

Location: Arizona POST – Phoenix, Arizona & Google Meets

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairperson Nicholas Franklin called the meeting to order at **10:00 AM MST** and welcomed Council members and public attendees.

2. Roll Call

Members Present:

- Nicholas Franklin, Chair
 - Trace Tolby, Co-Chair
 - Captain Weston White
 - Jason Nelson
 - Denice Hall
 - Kela Powers
 - Nicholas Lloyd
 - Tom Hartman
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3. Attendees

A total of **55 online attendees** participated virtually.

4. Approval of Minutes – August 27, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jason Nelson and seconded by Tom Hartman.

Vote: All in favor.

Motion carried.

7. Proposals for Body & Chassis

Presented by: Tom Hartman

Proposal 1 – Engine Air Cleaner

An engine intake air cleaner shall/may be installed in the school bus that meets manufacturer engine specifications (*option available where applicable*).

Motion: Jason Nelson

Second: Nicholas Lloyd

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Proposal 2 – Battery Shut-Off Switch

Buses shall be equipped with a battery shut-off switch located in a position not readily accessible to the driver or passengers.

Minimum standard moving forward; not retroactive.

Amendment: Add wording: “*not accessible to passengers inside the bus.*”

Motion: Jason Nelson

Second: Captain Weston White

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Proposal 3 – Tire Age Limit

Add section h:

- No tire shall remain on a Type A (925) bus more than **6 years** beyond the manufacturer date.
- No tire shall remain on a Type C/D bus more than **8 years** beyond the manufacturer date.

Motion: Trace Tolby

Second: Nicholas Lloyd

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Proposal 4 – Bus Body Color (Electric Bus Exception)

Original wording: Bumpers, lamp hoods, lettering, and rub rails shall be black.

Proposed addition: Electric buses excluded; electric buses must be blue.

Action: Motion to strike as a proposal.

Outcome: Proposal removed.

Proposal 5 – Emergency Exit Labeling

Emergency exits shall open outward and be labeled within 6 inches of the release mechanism using black lettering at least 3/8 inch high.

Additions:

- Red lettering allowed
- White etched lettering allowed on glass

Motion: Jason Nelson

Second: Trace Tolby

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Proposal 6 – Interior & Exterior Signage (Tabled)

Only signs, lettering, and objects approved by state law or rules may appear inside/outside a bus, including glass.

Additions:

- Must not be within 6 inches of emergency exit signage
- Must not be the same color as emergency exit signage
- Maximum verbiage size **3 in. x 5 in.**

Outcome: Tabled for additional information.

Proposal 7 – Exterior Camera System

A school bus may use an exterior camera system instead of mirrors if in compliance with **49 CFR 571.111**.

Motion: Trace Tolby

Second: Jason Nelson

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Proposal 8 – Blue Bumpers (Tabled)

Buses purchased after **January 1, 2027** shall have **blue bumpers only**.

Outcome: Tabled until specific shade/paint code is identified.

Proposal 9 – Main Service Disconnect Location

The main service disconnect shall be located opposite the access point for the low-voltage system to ensure redundancy in rollover/tip-over events.

Motion: Jason Nelson

Second: Captain Weston White

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Proposal 10 – Safety Sheets (Electric Buses Only)

Two safety sheets accessible from the exterior or interior shall be stored:

- One on the left front side
- One on the right side

Amendment: Applies to **electric buses only**

Motion: Jason Nelson

Second: Nicholas Lloyd

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

8. Proposals for Driver Training Requirements

Presented by: Jason Nelson

Proposal 1 – Comprehensive Training Curriculum

A Department-approved curriculum shall be developed and reviewed by the Student Transportation Advisory Council, covering laws, operations, responsibilities, inspections,

reports, special needs transportation, and emergencies.
AZDPS Student Transportation Unit will lead the effort.

Proposal 2 – Road Test

A road test on streets/highways per A.R.S. § 28-1171 demonstrating safe bus operation and passenger transport.

Proposal 3 – Classroom Training Requirements

Applicants must complete **14 hours** of classroom instruction covering required topics using a Department-approved curriculum.

Proposal 4 – Instructor Notification Requirement

Classroom instructors must notify the Department:

- At least **2 business days** prior to training
 - At least **24 hours** prior to any change or cancellation
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Proposal 5 – Language Accommodation (Tabled)

Oral exams may be administered in the applicant's primary language; written exams remain in English.

Outcome: Tabled.

Proposal 6 – Behind-the-Wheel Training

Applicants must complete **20 hours** of behind-the-wheel instruction.

Proposal 7 – Training Across All Bus Types

Behind-the-wheel training must include all bus types (A, B, C, D) and each power/fuel system operated by the employer.

Proposal 8 – Occupancy Limit During Training (Tabled)

No more than 3 applicants, instructor, employer, and Department staff may be aboard while the applicant operates a bus.

No student passengers permitted.

Outcome: Tabled.

Proposal 9 – Instruction Delivery

Instruction may be in-person or virtual; CPR components must be completed in person by an approved certified instructor.

Proposal 10 – First Refresher Training

A new school bus driver must complete refresher training **within one year**, consisting of:

- **6.5 hours** classroom training
 - Behind-the-wheel evaluation
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Proposal 11 – Recurring Refresher Training

After the first refresher, drivers must complete **6.5 hours** of classroom refresher training every **24 months** using a Department-approved curriculum.

Proposal 12 – Behind-the-Wheel Evaluation with Refresher (Tabled)

An additional behind-the-wheel evaluation performed by a certified instructor is required.

Outcome: Tabled.

Approval Motion

A motion to approve all Driver Training Proposals **except Proposals 5, 8, and 12** was made by Captain Weston White and seconded by Tom Hartman.

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

10. General Council Suggestions

Jason Nelson requested establishing additional working groups to address remaining unreviewed Minimum Standards.

He requested the item be placed at the top of the next agenda.

11. Upcoming Meetings

- **Virtual Meeting:** September 23, 2026 – 10:00 AM
 - **Hybrid Meeting:** October 14, 2026 – 10:00 AM
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12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Nicholas Lloyd, seconded by Trace Tolby.

Time Adjourned: 12:05 PM MST

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Minutes Prepared By:

Kimberly Thomas

Administrative Supervisor

DPS Student Transportation