

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

December 14, 2021

SUBJECT:

Proposed Sign-On Bonus for Special Education Bus Drivers and Special Education Bus Monitors

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The School Board approved sign-on and retention bonuses for bus drivers at its October 26, 2021, meeting in an effort to attract new bus drivers and retain current and new bus drivers. While some progress has been made in filling regular bus driver vacancies, the District still has a critical shortage of special education bus drivers. Transporting medically-fragile students requires additional levels of responsibility and care. As a result, many individuals opt for regular bus routes over special education routes.

In addition, the District is having difficulty attracting special education bus monitors for the same reason shared above.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The Administration believes a sign-on bonus for special education bus drivers and monitors will work as a recruiting tool. The sign-on bonus for special education bus drivers could be in addition to the \$1,000 sign-on bonus for a newly-hired permanent bus driver.

Special Education Sign-On Bonus Parameters:

- \$1,000 bonus overall
- New special education bus drivers or new special education bus monitors, including anyone participating in the December 6, 2021, new employee orientation would be eligible.
- The sign-on bonus is not exclusive to new hires. Someone currently employed as a regular bus driver or regular bus monitor who is eligible for transfer and transfers to a special education position would be eligible for the bonus.
- A current non-bus employee who takes on an additional role of special education bus driver or monitor would be eligible for the bonus.
- Drivers and monitors must be exclusively special education for the remainder of the year. Furthermore, individuals would be ineligible to transfer back to a regular bus route for a minimum of 90 work days.

- Part-time or full-time drivers and monitors would be eligible. PRNs (temporary employees) would not be eligible unless moving to regular employment status.
- \$500 would be paid shortly after initial hire (by the second paycheck) with the remaining \$500 paid upon completion of a driver's 90-day evaluation. Both bonuses would be paid on a regular pay date. A similar timeline would be followed for individuals already working for the District who transition to a special education role.
- Current special education bus drivers and bus monitors are not eligible, whether maintaining employment or departing then returning; however, the special education bus drivers are eligible for the quarterly retention bonus approved on October 26, 2021, if driving the minimum number of days for that quarter.
- The sign-on bonus provision would sunset September 30, 2022. Any extension deemed necessary would be recommended by the Administration for Board consideration and approval.

The sign-on bonus and retention bonus will be subject to payroll tax but not State retirement.

The net cost is difficult to gauge and would be dependent upon on the number of new hires. For planning purposes, projected costs are estimated at \$25,000. Costs will be incurred by the special education funds.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve implementation of sign-on bonus special education bus drivers and bus monitors

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