

Monday, February 20, 2023

I'm Crystal Stoney, I have been a Charles County School Bus Driver for ten years. My lot was the first to vote and I support SB0491 as it will enable ATU Local 689 to represent and negotiate better Wages, Retirement benefits and improved working conditions.

We needed a better advocate, so we voted one in. ATU Local 689 will negotiate solely for us, where the Charles County School Bus Contractors Association only has rights to negotiate their business contract only with CCBOE. Attached is a letter given to me by the President of the Contractors Association here in Charles County in 2021 where he stated they had been trying for eleven years to get CCBOE to the things we are asking for to no avail. Here it is two years later and they still haven't gotten anywhere, so it's time for change, and to do things differently, that change and difference is our voted choice ATU Local 689. Passing SB0491 will give us that change and the opportunity for a proper livable wage, reasonable cost healthcare, retirement that we can survive when that time comes, we can't do it in this present state because there is only a yearly deposit of **\$1000 a year** by CCBOE, **\$8 a month** by contractors, and we want cohesive working environment

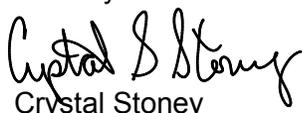
CCBOE and Charles County School Bus Contractors share responsibilities when it comes to our employment, wages, benefits, discipline, etc, with CCBOE having the most responsibility when it comes to drivers and attendants.

Please stop the misleading notion that the Contractors can negotiate for the drivers and attendants when they don't have collective bargaining rights or agreement.

Our voices are sound, our voices need to be heard, our voices need that long awaited seat at that table, without third party interference(contractors) that have gotten nowhere and aren't our best advocate. ATU Local 689 is who we voted for, who we want to negotiate for us, and who has made so many strive with us.

PLEASE DON'T LET OUR VOICES FALL ON DEAF EARS, AND PASS SB0491

Thank you



Crystal Stoney

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Charles County School Bus Contractors Association
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HAND-DELIVERED AND EMAIL

(CollinsR@charlescountymd.gov; llwilson@ccboe.com)

October 31, 2021

Charles County Commissioners
c/o Reuben Collins, President
200 Baltimore Street
La Plata, Maryland 20646

Charles County Board of Education
c/o Latina L. Wilson, Chairperson
P.O. Box 2770
La Plata, Maryland 20646

Re: School Bus Contract; School Bus Drivers and School Bus Attendants

Dear Commissioner Collins and Chairperson Wilson:

On behalf of the twenty-six small locally owned and operated businesses that comprise the Charles County School Bus Contractor's Association ("CCSBCA") I am seeking your assistance in resolving the on-going Driver and Attendant work stoppage. The CCSBCA would like to see all our children back in school and all of our buses back on the road. We are particularly concerned about the 900 students who have not attended since this issue began. Serving the County for over 90 years, our highest priority has always been to ensure each child has access to a quality education by safely and efficiently transporting our school children to and from school.

Over the past 11 years, the CCSBCA has continually brought forth concerns about pay disparity and falling retention rates. The current crisis should come as no surprise. Likewise, each year the CCSBCA has requested changes to the contract to address these concerns. For example:

- In 2016, the CCSBCA requested a 5% increase in salary for our Drivers and Attendants. We were pleased to see that the Contract included a modest increase in salary for our Drivers and Attendants, but we were disappointed that it was not the increase we requested. Additionally, our members requested an additional pay step for our Drivers and Attendants with 25 years or more service and overtime allowances for our special need Drivers and Attendants. Both of these requests were denied.

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- In 2017 there was no increase in salary but the Contractors were able to negotiate an agreement that beginning in 2019 Drivers and Attendants would get the same COLA as Charles County Public School employees as negotiated by ASFCME.
- In 2018, the CCSBCA requested 3% increase for our Drivers and Attendants, an increase from the 5.5 hour minimum to 6 hour minimum, an additional step for our drivers and attendants with 25 years of service, overtime allowances for our special need Drivers and Attendants. We were successful in obtaining 2.7% increase for Drivers/Attendants, 6 minimum hours, increasing starting leave days from 3 to 6, and overtime for special needs drivers and attendants.
- In 2019-20 CCSBCA asked for 3% increase for Driver/Attendants and was successful in that request. There were no changes to the remainder of the Contract. No additional monies were allocated to the Contractor.
- In 2020-21 There were no changes to the contract for Contractors, Drivers, or Attendants

Consistent with the contractual change negotiated by the Contractors in 2017, the recently approved 4% increase in pay for the ASFCME employees was also extended to our Drivers and Attendants. The Board of Education recently approved a \$1,000.00 for CCPS employees and authorized the extension of those monies to include the Drivers and Attendants. These actions are helpful but do not address the longer systemic issues previously raised by CCSBCA. Since the 4% increase more buses have returned to service but not all have. We would like to see all buses returned to service. Based on some confusion in the CCPS Press Release, there is a misconception that the Contractors also saw a 4% increase to the Contract. This is incorrect. The Contractors did not ask for or receive any portion of the 4% increase approved by the Board as these monies will go directly to our employees.

Since the work stoppage commenced, the Contractors have been using every means at their disposal to ensure the safe transport of our children. As we have always done, Contractors and Drivers stepped up to cover additional routes and assist each other. Additionally, we have met and continue to meet with both CCPS and our employees to find a means to move forward. In our meetings with CCPS, the Contractors, as they have in the past, proposed long term solutions such as a 6% increase wage for the next 3 years, an additional step for the Drivers and Attendants, an 8 hour minimum workday, an increased retirement contribution, recruitment bonuses, a \$500 retention bonus to be paid on November 26, 2021, full-time substitute drivers to ease the burden on our Drivers and a review committee to address Driver and Attendant concerns related to student behavior and support from the local schools. The Contractors proposal contained a long-term solution to a long-standing issue.

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Calvert County, in reaching a resolution similar to what was proposed by our Contractors, choose to address the Driver and Attendant concerns holistically as opposed to a piecemeal fashion. Attached is the Contractors' most recent proposal which will keep Charles County competitive with adjacent jurisdictions (*See Attachment A*). This proposal is fiscally responsible, sustainable and provides a long term solution.

We have reached an impasse as CCPS has expressed an inability to address the Contractor's proposal. CCPS has expressed that they will continue to review our proposals and thoughts. The best hope of getting all of our children back in the classroom and resolving the longer term issues is the intervention of the Charles County Commissioners in facilitating binding arbitration.

The Contractors propose the Commissioners delegate this issue to the County's Director of Transportation. The Director of Transportation would oversee and select a neutral third party arbitrator with transportation experience. Arbitration between CCPS and the Contractors would solely relate to the Driver and Attendant issues. While the Contract is between CCPS and the Contractors, the Contractors are willing to work on a mechanism that allows the presence/participation of our Drivers and Attendants so that the process is open and transparent. We would request that such Arbitration be concluded no later than November 30, 2021 and that all buses operate during this period.

Numerous CCPS studies have shown the value of the private contract system, both fiscally and as a substantive part of the educational process. Like the Contractors, our Drivers and Attendants also live in this community. Fundamental respect for their profession and their work is key to a quality education and resolution of this issue.

Respectfully,



Mark Koch, President
Charles County School
Bus Contractor's Association

cc: Dr. Navarro
Superintendent of Schools

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Attachment A.

Contractor proposal for Drivers and Attendants

1.) \$500 Retention Bonus to be paid on November 26th

2.) New wages for drivers and attendants

Certified Driver	
Years of Experience	Current pay rate with Nov 4% COLA
0-4	\$20.92
5-9	\$21.37
10-19	\$21.86
20+	\$22.82

Proposed Pay Steps	
Years of Experience	Driver Rate
0-4	\$23.00
5-9	\$25.00
10-14	\$27.00
15-19	\$29.00
20-24	\$31.00
25+	\$33.00

Certified Attendant	
Years of Experience	Current pay rate with Nov 4% COLA
0-4	\$15.37
5-9	\$15.85
10-19	\$16.41
20+	\$16.93

Proposed Pay Steps	
Years of Experience	Attendant Rate
0-4	\$16.90
5-9	\$18.54
10-14	\$20.27
15-19	\$20.85
20-24	\$23.00
25+	\$24.48

3.) 8-hour minimum workday

4.) \$1000 contribution towards retirement from the Board
- currently \$487.50

5.) \$1500 driver recruitment bonus

5.) Additional full time paid subs throughout the county to allow drivers to take off when they need to. They could also be utilized by Transportation.

6.) Assemble discipline review committee to address driver and attendants concerns over bus behavior and support from the schools.

SY 22/23 Contract Changes

1. Bus driver and bus attendant steps and wages

Certified Bus Driver Step	Years Of Experience	Amount	Fixed Charges	Total
1	0-4	\$23.00	\$5.74	\$28.74
2	5-9	\$24.00	\$5.99	\$29.99
3	10-14	\$25.00	\$6.24	\$31.24
4	15-19	\$27.00	\$6.73	\$33.73
5	20-24	\$29.00	\$7.23	\$36.23
6	25 +	\$31.00	\$7.73	\$38.73

Certified Bus Attendant Step	Years Of Experience	Amount	Fixed Charges	Total
1	0-4	\$16.00	\$3.99	\$19.99
2	5-9	\$17.00	\$4.24	\$21.24
3	10-14	\$18.00	\$4.49	\$22.49
4	15-19	\$19.00	\$4.74	\$23.74
5	20-24	\$20.00	\$4.99	\$24.99
6	25 +	\$21.00	\$5.24	\$26.24

2. Bus driver and bus attendant benefits

Illustrated Benefits Costs

	<u>(Total Base Premium)</u>	<u>Board</u>	<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Driver</u>
a. Health & Life	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
b. Life Only	\$ 210.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00
c. Retirement (Option 1)	\$ 1,333.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 166.50	\$ 166.50
c. Retirement (Option 2)	\$ 1,162.50	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 81.25	\$ 81.25

- Apply CPI (released in January) to Administrative Fee per the contract
- Apply CPI (released in January) to Maintenance Factor per the contract
- Calculate the Management Fee for paid spares (years 13-15) based on the new Maintenance Factor
- Calculate the PVA based on January's bus prices to include AC on all buses
- Implement an evaluative tool for bus inspections and overall contractor performance