



February 3, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins and Members
House Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: UNFAVORABLE – HB 189 - Public Middle, High, and Charter Schools – Start Time for Instruction

Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland School Bus Contractors Association (MSBCA) does not support HB 189 – Public Middle, High, and Charter Schools – Start Times for Instruction.

MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 20 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. MSBCA members own and operate over 3,600, or 50% of the school buses transporting school children across the great State of Maryland. MSBCA contracted school buses routes travel over 58 million miles each year while remaining fully committed to the safety of the students we transport and considers it a privilege to do so.

There are a variety of issues to consider in this proposed bill that need to be considered when transporting children later in the morning. Such include:

- Eliminating earlier hours condenses the time window available to transport all children in not only Middle and High School, but those to Elementary school requiring more bus drivers, buses and monitors if applicable for both the school systems and the school bus contractors.
- The school systems and school bus contractors are all currently operating with a shortage of qualified school bus drivers. Condensing hours would require more drivers that are already hard to come by.
- More drivers needed also means more buses required by both the school systems and the private contractors. I have enclosed a 2026 quote from a school bus manufacturer. A diesel bus averages \$145,000-\$160,000, a propane school bus is \$156,000 and EV school bus ranges from \$399,000-\$420,000.

MSBCA serves as the voice of the private school bus companies that contract with local Maryland school systems in 20 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions to own and operate over 3600 contracted school buses that transport school children across the State.

- The average school bus driver is considered a "retiree" with 66% over the age of 50 and already drive an average 6 hours a day. Increasing the current driver's hours each day to accommodate a condensed route schedule from later start times is not ideal for most individuals and may result negatively in driver retention.
- Later in the morning routes can roll into later start times for field trips or sporting event charters, if drivers are not to get back in time.
- Starting instruction times later would mean required classroom time being pushed later into the afternoons. Many older children care for younger children, i.e. siblings, in the afternoon before parents return home from work. That childcare may be disrupted.

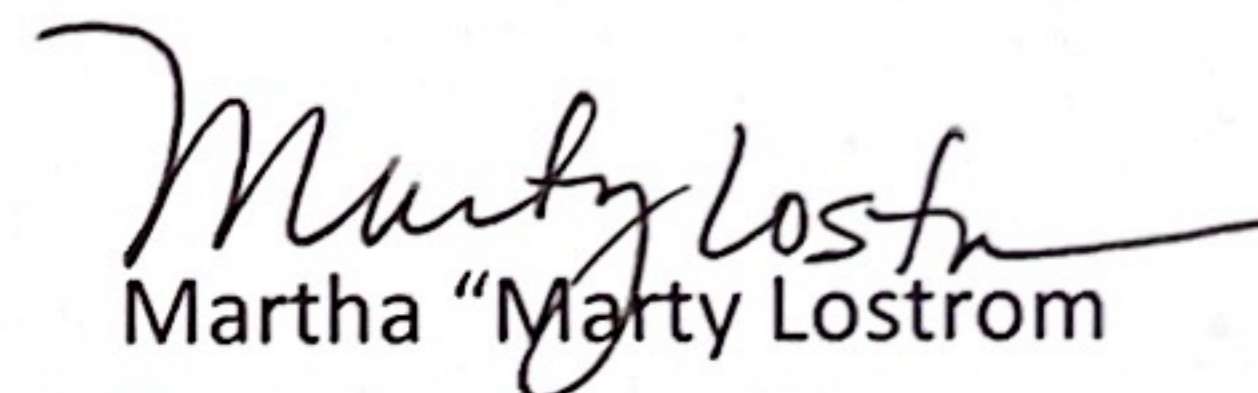
MSBCA asks that you consider the challenges later school start times can create with in our school transportation system and the lack of resources and personal transporting more children in a condensed time. MSBCA asks for an unfavorable report of HB 189.

Again, MSBCA looks forward to working with all our legislators to make Maryland the safest and most efficient state in the country for all our children.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson

Steve Nelson
President



Martha "Marty" Lostrom
Executive Director

Maryland School Bus Contractors Association
29 Francis Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
202-386-3859

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Bus Pricing 64 Passenger

From Gordon Dhue <gdhue@igburton.com>
Date Sun 2/1/2026 1:40 PM
To busboss.nelson@gmail.com <busboss.nelson@gmail.com>
Cc Marty Lostrom <mlostrom@mdschoolbus.org>

Good Afternoon Mr. Nelson,

The pricing for MD buses that are 64 passengers are as follows.

Diesel- \$145,945
Propane- \$156,233
EV- \$399,309

These are prices that do not include A/C. To add A/C the cost is \$12,000 for ICE units and \$20,000 for the EV unit.

If you want to add 3pt belts, the price increase is 13,900.00.

These numbers do not include tax, tag, or title fees.

Thank You

Gordon Dhue

Bus Sales
i.g. Burton Bus & Truck Center
Mobile: 410-443-6058
gdhue@igburton.com
www.igburtonbuscenter.com



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