

Transfinder – NAPT: Getting a Seat at the Table with Decisionmakers

Q & A

Are School Districts anticipating recommendations from County or State Health Organizations as to reopening limitations?

School districts in NY are waiting on the governor's executive order to allow schools to open. Currently, our region just entered phase 2 for reopening. School districts are part of phase 4. What we need to know are the final restrictions the governor may impose on reopening of schools. For example, we know that we have to sanitize school buildings, buses, and equipment like never before and that we have to maintain social distancing. We are waiting to see what other, as Dr Robinson said, "guide-rails" the governor is going to place as conditions for phase 4 reopening. *Al Karam, Director of Transportation at Shenendehowa School District (NY)*

One of the reasons that NAPT, NSTA and NASDPTS created the STARTS Task Force was that health organizations will not take into account student transportation in its totality, when they offer recommendations. The STARTS Task Force will review many of these issues thoroughly, and respond with guidelines from their deliberations. Our objective is to launch the report by the end of June. *Curt Macysyn, Executive Director at the National School Transportation Association*

I was asked if we could put barriers up around the driver. Has anyone come up with a solution to this or is it even legal to do on a school bus?

As for barriers to "protect the driver" goes, this is not legal in NYS. It would require NY State DOT approval which, according to my sources, may not happen. Secondly, plexiglass or plastic barrier around or just behind the driver seat, as far as we are concerned, is a waste of money. Airborne viruses are not going to follow our logic and stop in their tracks just because there's a barrier there. The cost for plexiglass is astronomical. School districts are facing budgetary pressures as it is, so I don't see us supporting such a recommendation...I really would love to see real data which would indicate a barrier behind the driver seat is going to protect the driver...I can't find the data and I've already indicated to Dr Robinson that we will not be recommending this solution. *Al Karam, Director of Transportation at Shenendehowa School District (NY)*

The short answer about plexiglass barriers is that it depends on the state. But when considering this, we must remember that while protecting the driver is important, we still must remember that he or she still have to be able to manage the student population on the bus. Another issue that the STARTS Task Force will consider. *Curt Macysyn, Executive Director at the National School Transportation Association*