

February 2019

Issue: Effective March 1, 2019, government is making it mandatory for school bus Drivers and spare drivers to take MELT training. This could cause a shortage of bus drivers and put strain on school boards' abilities to get students to school.

SAMPLE Key messages- For voluntary rural school board

use *****PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD OR REMOVE MESSAGING AS YOU SEE FIT FOR YOUR LOCAL CONTEXT*****

- At [INSERT SCHOOL BOARD NAME], we are already running transportation deficits and experiencing transportation issues. This mandatory training program will only serve to put further strain on our budget.
- We all believe the safety of students is of paramount importance.
- And parents deserve to feel secure in the understanding that their children will be transported to and from school in vehicles operated by trained professionals.
- That is why at [INSERT SCHOOL BOARD NAME], we already secure comprehensive driver training and supervision to ensure the safety of students while on school buses.
- However, the MELT program may bring hardship to our [SCHOOL DISTRICT/DIVISION] unless government provides funding for this program.
- For example, at [INSERT SCHOOL BOARD] it is challenging for us just to attract enough bus drivers. And to make matters worse, they are being asked to travel farther distances to reach our students.

- [INSERT ADDITIONAL LOCAL EXAMPLE]
- In fact, we may be forced to use funds allocated for the classroom to compensate for this additional requirement. [INSERT ADDITIONAL LOCAL DETAILS]
- This mandatory MELT training may even cause a school bus driver shortage in our area, which could ultimately result in children being unable to get to school to receive an education.
- Parents also deserve to feel secure in the understanding that their children will be transported to school in a timely manner.
- In partnership with school boards across Alberta, we at [INSERT SCHOOL BOARDS NAME] are urging government to provide the funding that covers the full cost of the MELT program.

Background

Starting March 1, 2019, drivers seeking a [Class 1 \(tractor trailer\) or Class 2 \(bus\) licence](#) will be required to complete mandatory entry-level training in order to apply for their licence.

- Training will include a government-mandated number of training hours in-class, in-yard and in-vehicle.
- Standardized curriculums must be taught at all licenced Alberta driving schools.
- Knowledge and road tests for Class 1 and Class 2 drivers will be expanded to include the new curriculum.

Any driver who obtains a Class 1 or 2 licence between October 10, 2018 and March 1, 2019, will be required to retake the new enhanced knowledge and

road test when it becomes available in March 2019, but will have until March 2020 to complete the training. This is to ensure all new drivers meet the new standards. Drivers will have two attempts to pass, the first one at the government's expense.

The Government of Alberta will pay for the first enhanced knowledge test and enhanced road test. All other costs, including the vehicle rental, must be paid by the client.

Anyone who fails either enhanced test will have one more chance to retake the test (at their own expense).

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