

# **Delaware School Bus Rodeo**



## **Competitor Information Handbook 2025**

# Delaware School Bus Rodeo – Competitor Information Handbook

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# **Delaware School Bus Rodeo – Competitor Information Handbook**

Welcome School Bus Rodeo Competitor,

We are so excited to be able to host another School Bus, Rodeo, where drivers can come and display their driving skills and passion for driving. As a competitor, it is very important that you take the time to thoroughly review the expectations outlined in this handbook and follow the registration timelines to ensure that you are not disqualified from competing.

The DOE Team is looking forward to a fun day where drivers can connect and show off their skills. We ask everyone to pay attention to the expectations and be prompt on provided arrival times to keep the Rodeo flowing properly.

This year's competition wouldn't be possible without the generous support of American Bus Sales, I.G. Burton, and Wolfington Body Company. We are so appreciative of their support and how it helps us put on a successful event for everyone. We also are so appreciative of Appoquinimink's hospitality for hosting the Rodeo at their lovely Fairview Campus.

The top district driver and top contractor driver will be eligible to compete in National Skills Competition that will be tentatively hosted in June 2026 at Hays CISD in Austin, Texas. We will send more information to the winners about their ability to attend once it is released.

Thank you for participating, and we look forward to a fun-filled day of competition and recognition.

## **DOE School Transportation Team**

Tyler Bryan

Lamont Gorman

Lisa Reed

Linda Sullivan

Stacey Fisher

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## Rodeo Location, Schedule & Competitor Parking

### Rodeo Location:

Appoquinimink School District - Fairview Campus  
570 Tony Marchio Dr.  
Townsend, DE 19734  
Parking lots by Odessa High School Football Stadium

### Entry Level Requirements:

- Registration is an application to submit interest in participating. You must meet all the requirements and if we receive more than the 25 district drivers and 25 contractor drivers, District Transportation Supervisors will select those that represent their districts. Districts with drivers registered will get spots based on the size of the district, so their district is represented in some capacity.
- Registration will receive approval, waitlist, or ineligible emails the week of September 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Hold a valid CDL Class B or higher with P & S endorsements for a minimum of one year and have completed all school bus training through the State of Delaware
- Have been involved in no preventable school bus accident since December 31, 2024
- Be an active daily school bus driver within the State of Delaware, not in a Supervisory or specialist role with a district/charter.

### Schedule:

Friday, October 10, 2025 (Statewide Professional Development Day)

**Competitor Check-In:** will be held in the Odessa High School Cafeteria starting at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 9:00 a.m. All competitors must complete the registration process by 9:00 a.m. to be eligible to compete.

**Course Overview:** Competitors will be split by group number onto buses to get a quick overview of the course. It is essential that you read this handbook to understand the objectives and scoring of each area.

**Knowledge Test Begins:** 9:15 a.m.

**Driving Competition Begins:** 10:30 a.m.

- Competitors will be assigned numbers and will complete the course in the order they receive them. They will also be provided with check-in times to see the Rodeo Tent for their check-in for starting the course and completing the Pre-Trip Bus station.

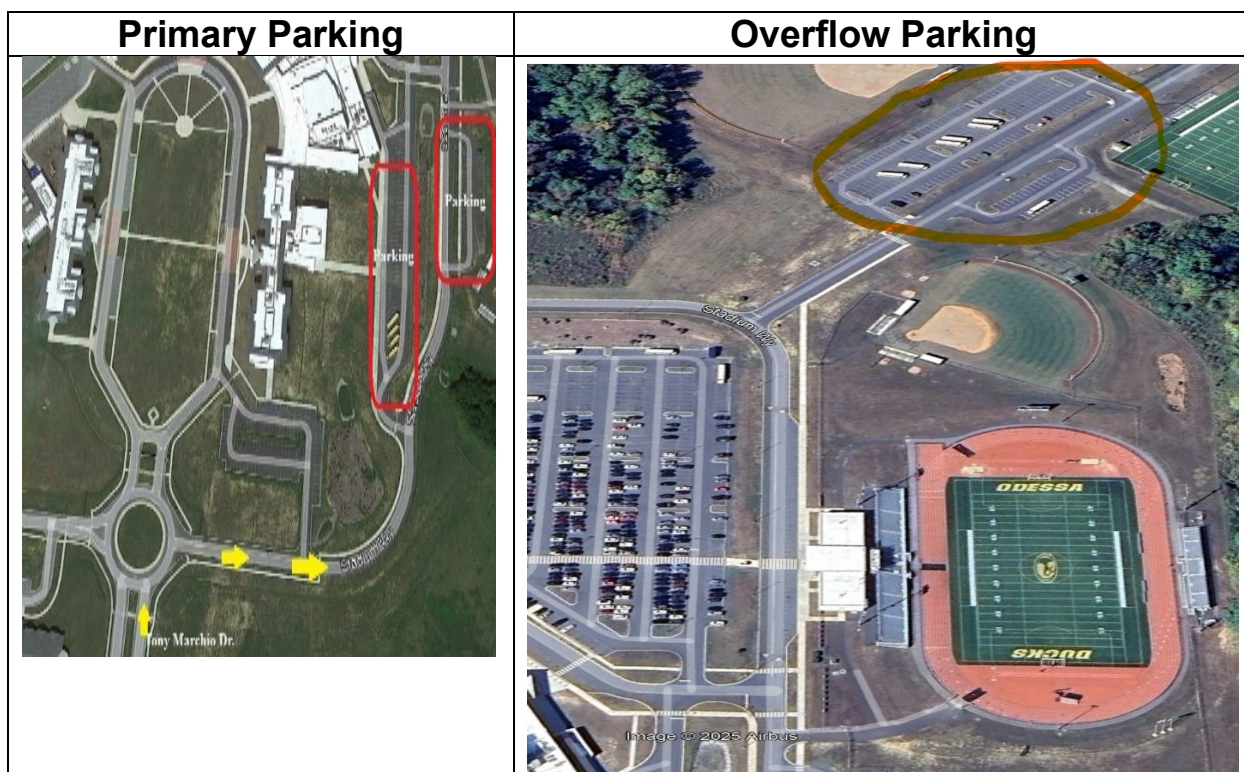
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**Lunch:** Competitors will receive a lunch ticket to use towards lunch from the food truck vendors at the competition event. ***Thank you to Wolfington Body Company for sponsoring lunch for all participants and vendors.***

**Awards:** An awards presentation will be held at the Odessa High School cafeteria after scoring is completed. All competitors will be recognized, and the top three in the District division and Contractor division will be recognized. (Estimated award time 3:30-4:00 p.m.)

### Competitor Parking:

Once arriving at the Fairview Campus, enter the roundabout and take the first exit onto Stadium Way. Parking for competitors, judges and spectators will be in the school bus parking lot to the left and also in the sports field parking lot to the right. (Red area below). If those parking areas are full, you can continue straight past the football stadium, then make a right to access overflow parking in the rear.



### General Participation Rules/Scoring Rules

- 1.) All competitors must follow the rules outlined within the handbook and act professionally during the competition. Any participant who refuses to follow directions provided by Rodeo leadership or is caught cheating will be disqualified, removed from the event, and may be disqualified from future

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- competitions. This includes any competitors who act unprofessionally, including behavior towards those working the competition or makes disparaging remarks during or publicly after the completion of the Rodeo.
- 2.) Any competitor who knowingly accepts signals from anyone may be automatically disqualified.
  - 3.) Failure to maintain proper driving position (ie, firmly in the driver's seat, hands on the wheel, etc.)
  - 4.) Failure to wear the seatbelt properly will disqualify the driver. Placement of the shoulder harness behind the back is not permitted.
  - 5.) No smoking, eating, drinking beverages will be allowed during the driving competition.
  - 6.) No communication devices or technology devices of any type will be allowed on the bus during the competition or to be operated while driving on the course. Cell phones can be on your person but must be stored and in use or recording while on the competition. Use of communication or technology devices while on the competition course will result in disqualification.
  - 7.) A competitor is not allowed to place their head out the window. Make modifications to the driver's seat in any way, other than the manufacturer's standards, that could help the driver. This will disqualify the driver and may disqualify any other driver prior to the discovery.
  - 8.) Any bus used in the competition shall have a mirror system that complies with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards (FMVSS 111). Mirrors shall be adjusted to provide the driver's vision that would normally be required for the safe operation of the vehicle, getting the maximum field of vision and seeing at least 200 feet to the rear of the bus. The driver shall not lower their head below the highest point of the steering wheel to adjust the mirrors. Mirrors can only be adjusted within the recommended mirror grid standards and not adjusted to see the ground. Any mirror being adjusted after the driver has properly set their mirrors in the bus preparation period will result in disqualification from the competition.
  - 9.) Competitors' scores are tracked using a number system; no names are placed on the score sheets or the overall score sheet while scoring is being completed. Once all scoring is completed and the winner is identified, the names are matched to the competitor's number to announce the winners.
  - 10.) Score sheets will be placed in a pocket outside the bus after each competition area is completed. After the final skills area and before returning to the staging area, a judge will remove all the score sheets and place them in a sealed envelope that will then be sent to the data entry scoring team.
  - 11.) Score sheets will be reviewed one last time by a committee of Transportation Supervisors for any discrepancies or scoring concerns before finalizing scores.
  - 12.) Scores are final and no revisions will occur after the committee has reviewed the scoring and announced the winners for the Rodeo.

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- 13.) Competitors' scores will be compiled on a spreadsheet listed by competitor number for each area of the competition. This compiled score sheet will be displayed on a TV screen that competitors can view before leaving. The same score sheet will be uploaded onto the Delaware School Bus Rodeo website the following week for historical purposes. Individual score sheets will no longer be released following the same procedures as at the National Safety Competition.
- 14.) In the event of a tie between contestants, it will be broken by using the combined fastest overall time recorded for the competitors for Back Up Stall/Alley Dock, Parallel Park, and Surprise Event.
- 15.) Points
- Knowledge Test = 100 points
  - Pre-Trip Bus Inspection (Bug Bus)= 50 points
  - ED TV Interview = 5 points
  - School Bus Staging Area = 10 points
  - Simulated School Bus Stop & Stop Line = 100 points
  - Straight Line = 50 points
  - Right Turn = 50 points
  - Diminishing Clearance = 50 points
  - Offset Alley = 50 points
  - Parallel Parking = 50 points
  - Back-Up Stall/Alley Dock = 50 points
  - Railroad Crossing = 50 points
  - Surprise Event = 50 points
  - **Total Points = 665 points**

### **Competition Areas**

Below is a listing of all the areas that competitors will compete in. In the following pages of the handbook, competitors will be able to review the objective and scoring points for each area.

#### **General Knowledge Test:**

1. 30 minute – 25 question test

#### **Competition Station Areas:**

1. Pre-Trip Bus Inspection (Bug Bus)
2. ED-TV Interview

#### **Course Competition Areas:**

3. School Bus Staging Area
4. Simulated School Bus Stop & Stop Line
5. Straight line

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6. **Right Turn**
7. **Diminishing Clearance**
8. **Offset Alley**
9. **Parallel Parking**
10. **Back-Up Stall/Alley Dock**
11. **Railroad Crossing**
12. **Surprise Event**

### General Rules:

#### Competitors Station Areas:

Each competitor will be given a time to check in with the oversight tent. This area will keep the flow of people moving and ensure all competitors complete the required areas. Ensure you check in at your assigned time to be sent to the correct area. The bug bus will be sent in reverse competitor number order.

#### Course Competition Areas:

Each competitor will be assigned a competitor's number and a time to check in with the oversight tent. Competitors will enter the course in order of their number. When directed from the oversight tent after checking in, each competitor will report to the staging area. Once the bus is available, they will get set up within the bus and adjust the seat and mirrors with assistance from the judges in the area. You will have a mirror grid provided to help them properly adjust the mirrors. Once told, you will begin the course by following the path of the course in order. After the last skill is scored, your scores will be removed and placed into a sealed envelope, and you will return to your bus in the same line you departed from. Before entering each of the course competitions, you must wait to be signaled to enter by the judge. Once you have completed the judged area, you must wait for the judges to place the score into your score packet. Competitors must follow the course as outlined and wait until competitors ahead have completed and instructed to move forward.

### Knowledge Test

**Objective:** Competitors will take a 25-question computerized or written test with multiple-choice and true/false questions. They will have 30 minutes to complete the test.

**Rules:** The test is a close-book test, and any competitor will be disqualified for trying to use notes, cell phones, or talk to other competitors. To be prepared for the test, competitors are encouraged to review the Delaware School Bus Driver/Aide Handbook, DMV Driving Manual, and Operation Lifesaver materials to help prepare for the knowledge test.

**Scoring:** Each question is worth 4 points with a maximum score of 100 points.



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## Pre-Trip Bus Inspection (Bugged Bus)

**Objective:** Competitors have 5 minutes to complete a school bus pre-trip, identify the five defective items, and report them to the judge.

**Rules:** Competitors do not start the pre-trip until the judge tells them to begin and they must report their defective items to the judge as they find them or by the conclusion of the 5-minute timer.

**Scoring:** Competitors will earn 10 points for each of the five defective items they can identify in the 5-minute time frame. The maximum point total is 50.

## ED TV Interview

**Objective:** Each competitor will enter the Red Clay ED TV bus to give a quick interview. This helps us have a fun video to capture all of our amazing competitors. The ED TV bus will ask various questions, including how long you have been a bus driver, how many times you have participated in the Rodeo, and why you love driving a school bus.

**Rules:** Enter the Red Clay ED TV bus and answer the questions to receive your points for this activity.

**Scoring:** Each competitor will earn 5 points for participating in the ED TV Interview

## Staging Area

**Objective:** Each competitor will report to the staging area and get on their assigned bus. Once they arrive, they will need to present their Delaware Driver's License with P&S and their valid green card to the judge. Once processed, they will then get on the bus, and the judge will help them adjust their mirrors using the mirror grids provided. The judge will also provide them with how to operate the door, lights, etc. if they request assistance.

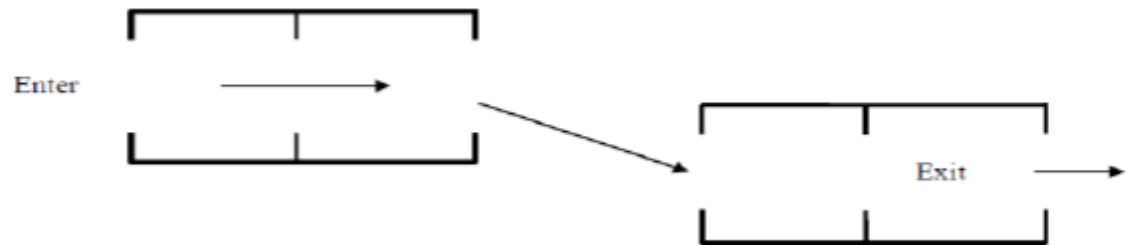
**Rules:** Arrive to the staging area when directed, present the required

**Scoring:** Each competitor will receive 5 demerits each if they are unable to present their Driver's License with P&S endorsement and a valid green card.

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## Offset Alley (*Time Event 2-minute limit*)

**Objective:** Competitors will be required to navigate their bus between one set of barriers staged to the left and then navigate their bus between the second set of barriers staged to the right without striking any barriers when entering or exiting the objective.



**Rules:** The driver must enter the objective once instructed by the judges. The driver is to keep the bus moving through all the barriers and is to only stop once the bus has cleared the last set of barriers. Once stopping, the driver will wait to receive their score.

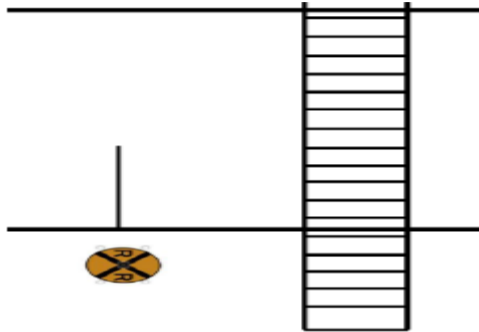
### Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points

- 8 demerits for each instance of stopping forward motion of the bus
- 10 demerits for each instance where the bus touches or knocks barrier markers
- 50 demerits for failure to keep bus door closed, wear seatbelt, drive with headlights on, or backing during the event.

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## Railroad Crossing

**Objective:** Competitors will be required to complete a Railroad Crossing maneuver following at Delaware rules and regulations. Judging that they stop no farther than 50 feet and no closer than 15 feet to the crossing. The stop line will not be marked.



**Rules:** The driver must enter the objective once instructed by the judges. The bus driver will approach the Railroad Crossing and complete the maneuver following all Delaware rules and regulations and ensuring they stop no closer than 15 feet and no farther than 50 feet from the crossing. Once they have completed their check they will then completely cross the track and stop a safe distance away to receive final scoring.

### Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points

- 25 demerits for failure to activate 4-way flashers
- 50 demerits school bus flashing lights activate
- 25 demerits for failure to open the service door and driver's window
- 10 demerits for failure to look left and right
- 25 demerits for failure to place bus in neutral and set parking brake
- 50 demerits if the bus is stopped on or within 15 feet of railroad tracks or farther than 50 feet from railroad tracks.
- 25 demerits failure to close entrance door before crossing railroad tracks
- 25 demerits failure to clear back of bus by at least 15 feet from the nearest rail after crossing
- 10 demerits failure to cancel 4 way flasher after crossing

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## Straight Line

**Objective:** Competitors will be required to navigate their right-side front tires and right rear duals only through a 75-ft. straight-line course marked with tennis balls at each 25-ft. mark. The objective is to drive the bus through the straight line without knocking off or touching any of the tennis balls with the right-side tires.



**Rules:** The driver must enter the objective once instructed by the judges. The driver is to keep the bus moving through all the balls and is to only stop once the bus has cleared the last set of balls. Once stopping, the driver will wait to receive their score.

### Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points

- 2 demerits for each instance of jerky movement of the bus
- 4 demerits for each instance of stopping forward motion of the bus
- 5 demerits for each instance of where bus touches or knocks balls off
- 10 demerits for each time the driver drives to either side of the balls
- 50 demerits for failure to complete event, wear seatbelt, keep door closed during event, to drive with headlights on, or back up during the event.

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### **Surprise Event**

There will be a surprise event that all competitors will have to complete. The rules and objectives will be shared on paper at check-in on the day of the event.

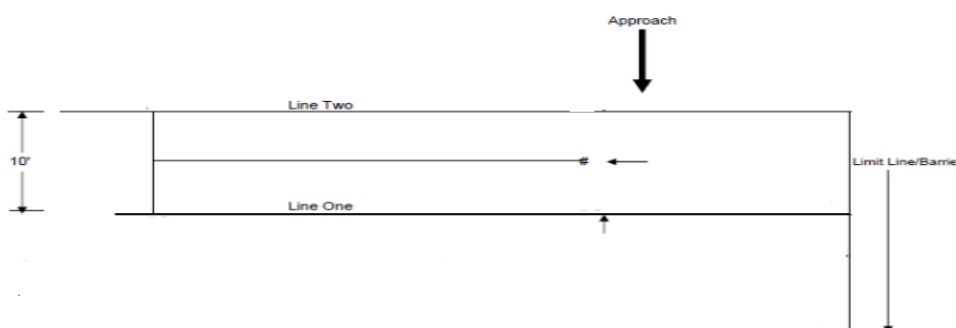
**Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points**

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## Back-Up Stall/Alley Dock (Time Event - 3 minutes)

*Time starts once the front bumper passes the first standard cone*

**Objective:** Competitors will be required to alley dock their bus door-side within 3 minutes between the outlined cones and rope. Depth perception is tested by penalizing the driver for backing up too close to the rear barrier, or parking the bus too far from the rear barrier, or not having centered the bus within the stall (front and rear). The bus should not strike any cones or tire tread touch or cross stall markers or boundary limitation lines.



**Rules:** The approach to the back-up stall will be made from the right side only. A three-minute time limit starts when the front bumper passes the first upright standard. The bus must be parked in the stall, with the parking brake set, and the horn sounded, within the three-minute time limit. Each contestant will be permitted one back-up before demerits are charged for excessive backing. Upon completion of this event, the bus should be parked as near to the center of the stall as possible. Centering of the bus in the stall will be determined by the relationship of the center of the front and rear bumpers at the center of the stall, but with only the farthest distance off center (front or back) being used to compute demerits. There will be a one-foot free zone four to five feet in front of the rear barriers in the center of the stall and demerits will be charged if the bus is parked ahead or behind the free zone. After the bus is measured, the contestant will exit the stall between the upright standards. Once position driver must blow their horn to be judged.

If you do not complete the event in 3 minutes, or you hit any barriers/curb line you will be signaled to stop, score place and to continue on.

**Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points**

*Scoring Information for Backing Stall/Alley Dock Next Page:*

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## Back-Up Stall/Alley Dock Scoring Information (Contd.)

### Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points

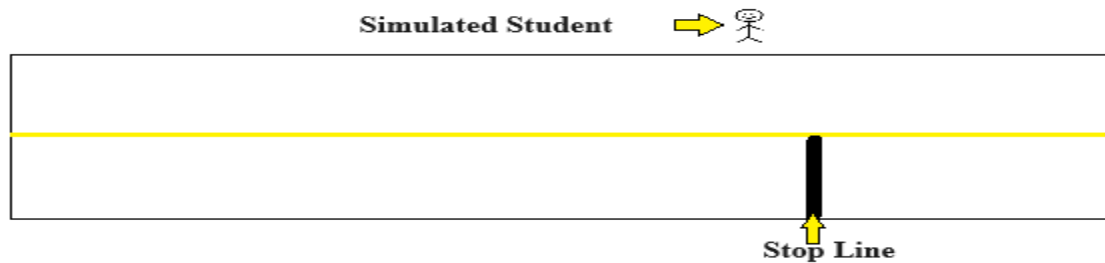
- 50 demerits – tire touches front wheel limitation line
- 50 demerits- bus touches front upright standards (cones)
- 50 demerits – tire tread touches stall side marker line
- 50 demerits- failure to pull out between the front upright standards
- 5 demerits each (maximum 50) for each forward motion after the first back up.
- Bus Parked more than 1 inch of the center line
  - 0"-1" – 0 demerits
  - 1"+ to 2" – 2 demerits
  - 2"+ to 3"- 4 demerits
  - 3"+ to 4" – 6 demerits
  - 4"+ to 5" – 8 demerits
  - 5"+ to 6" – 10 demerits
  - 6"+ to 7" – 12 demerits
  - Greater than 7" – 14 demerits
- 5 demerits (maximum 50) for each 6-inch increment bus parked forward of the one-foot free zone
- 10 demerits (maximum 50) for each 6-inch increment of a bus parked behind the one-foot free zone
- 50 demerits, failure to park the bus, set the parking brake, and sound the horn within three three-minute time limit. Time starts when front bumper passes upright standard.
- 50 demerits, failure to drive with headlights on, wear seat belt, and keep door closed during event.

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## Simulated School Bus Stop & Stop Line

**Objective:** Competitors will be required to complete a simulated school bus stop, which requires crossing a student to load the bus and scoring the distance they stop for the designated stop line. The bus is only to come to a stop once and when stopping for the student you must follow all state procedures.

**Rules:** The driver must enter and approach the school bus stop following all the required steps for loading a student who will be crossing the roadway and are stop once as close to the stop line without crossing. Once stopped, the driver must simulate loading a student who must cross the roadway. Once completing the simulated loading process the driver will wait to receive their score.



### Scoring: Maximum Points = 100 points

- 25 demerits for each instance of the bus being brought to a stop more than once
- 50 demerits for the final stop over the stop line
- 3-25 demerits for 4 inches or more away from the stop line
- 50 demerits for failing to activate overhead lights
- 50 demerits for failing to place bus in neutral and set parking brake
- 50 demerits for failing to check mirrors while approaching stop
- 50 demerits for failing to use Public Address System
- 50 demerits for failing to check mirrors before leaving stop

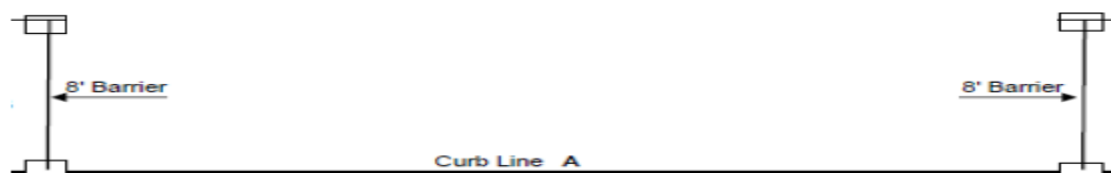


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## Parallel Park (Time Event 3-minutes)

*Time starts once the front bumper passes the rear barrier*

**Objective:** Competitors will be required to parallel park their bus door-side between two barriers, bringing the bus as close to the curb as possible without striking. Once scored, you must exit the parking barrier without striking the barriers, and, once fully exited, stop for finals scoring.



**Rules:** The driver must enter the objective once instructed by the judges. The bus driver has 3 minutes to complete a parallel parking maneuver. Drivers must signal their entrance into the parallel parking box, using their mirrors to enter the parallel parking box without striking barriers or the curb. Drivers can complete two free pulls up before receiving demerits. Once positioned, the driver must blow their horn to signal scoring within the 3-minute timeframe. The farthest measurement from curb from front & rear tire will be used. Once the judges tell the driver, you are to exit the maneuver by signaling and not striking any barriers, and once out, you must stop again to receive final scoring.

If you do not complete the event in 3 minutes, or you hit any barriers/curb line you will be signaled to stop, score place and to continue on.

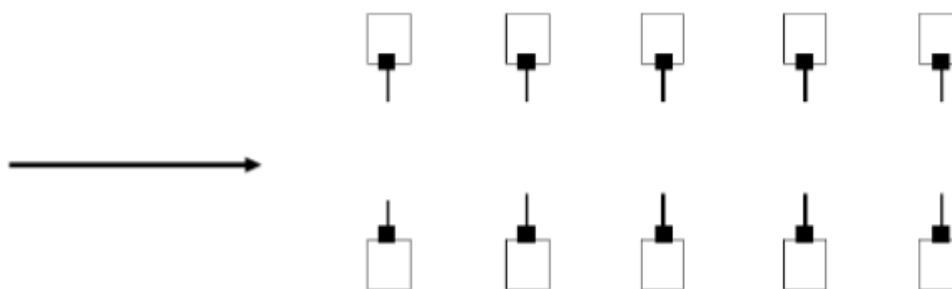
### Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points

- Entering/Exiting the Parking Zone
  - 50 demerits for failure to activate signal entering/exiting
  - two free backs then 5 demerits for each change of direction – starts over for the exit maneuver
  - 50 demerits bus touches any barrier or tire tread touches curblines.
- Zone 1- 0"-3" from curblines = 0 demerits
- Zone 2 -3"+ to 6" from curblines = 3 demerits
- Zone 3 – 6"+ to 9" from curblines = 6 demerits
- Zone 4- 9"+ to 12" from curblines = 9 demerits
- Zone 5- 12"+ to 15" from curblines = 12 demerits
- Zone 6 – 15"+ to 18" from curblines = 15 demerits
- Zone 7 – Parked over 18"+ from curblines = 50 demerits
- 10 demerits for failure to cancel turn signal once exiting
- 50 demerits for failure to park the bus, set-parking brake and and blow horn in 3-minutes.
- 50 demerits failure to drive with headlights on, wear seatbelt, keep door closed during event.

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## Diminishing Clearance

**Objective:** Competitors will be required to navigate the bus between the tennis balls that will continue to narrow as they reach the end of the 100 ft. objective. The object is to navigate through this course without striking any of the tennis balls.



**Rules:** The driver must enter the objective once instructed by the judges. The driver is to keep the bus moving through all the balls without touching or knocking off the balls and is to only stop once the bus has cleared the last set of balls. Once stopping, the driver will wait to receive their score.

### Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points

- 2 demerits for each instance of jerky movement of the bus
- 4 demerits for each instance of stopping forward motion of the bus
- 10 demerits for each instance where the bus touches or knocks balls off
- 50 demerits if the bus runs over tennis ball and stand
- 50 demerits if failure to complete event, wear seatbelt, keep door closed during event, drive with headlights on, or backing during the event.

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## Right Turn

**Objective:** Competitors will be required to make a right turn, bringing their right rear tire as close to the white line on the color board on the ground, and keeping the back tire as close to the white line on the second color board when completing the turn.



**Rules:** The driver must wait to enter the objective until signaled by the judges. Once starting, the driver will complete the right turn maneuver with the objective of getting their right rear tire on the white line of the first and second boards. After completing the turn and clearing the second markerboard, the driver will stop the bus to receive their score.

\*Please note that after this event is scored, this is where the designated judge will remove all scores from the packet outside your bus and place them in a sealed envelope. Do not return to the staging area until this occurs.

### Scoring: Maximum Points = 50 points

- 25 demerits driver fails to use right turn signal
- 25 demerits driver stops (other than initial stop)
- 50 demerits rubs or hops curb
- Color Board Scoring if right rear tire touches:
  - Black = 50 demerits
  - Red = 40 demerits
  - Blue = 30 demerits
  - Green = 20 demerits
  - Yellow = 10 demerits
  - White = 0 demerits