

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF SCHOOL BUS COMPANIES ARE FORCED TO CLOSE?



On a regular school day, 10,000 buses travel across New York City to safely transport 150,000 students to and from school. Parents and students are relying on this essential service that starts and ends each school day. The reliability, safety and peace of mind the industry presents should not be taken for granted.

What happens if the city reneges on its contractual obligation to pay school bus companies?

- ▶ **16,000 workers, 90% of whom are minorities**, will be laid off immediately.
- ▶ Workers and their families will **lose their health insurance** during a global pandemic.
- ▶ **Drivers and attendants will lose their state and city certifications** and will be unable to return to work in time for the students to return to school.
- ▶ Buses cannot be maintained.
- ▶ When schools reopen, bus services will not be prepared, leaving students and their families without an essential service.

In the meantime, school bus companies are ready, willing and able to assist New York City in the fight against COVID-19.

The industry has offered resources to provide essential services, including:

- ▶ Delivering meals to children in need
- ▶ Turning buses into Wi-Fi hotspots for students to access online learning
- ▶ Picking up course work and dropping it off at students' homes
- ▶ Transporting nurses, military personnel, and other essential workers so they can avoid riding public transportation and adhere to social distancing guidelines
- ▶ Delivering PPE supplies wherever needed

We must be prepared for the eventual reopening of schools.

- ▶ Before the pandemic, it took about 4 – 6 weeks to hire a new school bus driver. If we lay off all workers, this could seriously delay our ability to rehire our entire workforce, complete the necessary trainings and quickly get up and running.
- ▶ By the time students return to school, school buses will likely be due for inspection. NYS DOT inspectors typically review 7 – 8 vehicles a day. If thousands of school buses have invalid DOT stickers by the time schools return to normal, this process alone could take weeks.
- ▶ With the reopening of schools, it will take additional time and resources to ensure that bus drivers are equipped with necessary PPE, receive updated safety training to prevent the spread of the virus, and get tested themselves.

The decision to not pay school bus companies will disrupt the education of thousands of children across New York City, more than it already has been. Schools are already handling one crisis – let's not create another.

We are calling for the creation of a task force including unions, bus companies, bus drivers, and parents, to ensure that this essential service remains available for families when life returns to normal.



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