



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: August 18, 2017
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Non-compliance with the Parking Brake Interlocking Requirement of the Virginia School Bus Specifications – Follow-Up**

This is a follow-up memo to Superintendent's Memo #153-17 that I sent on May 19, 2017, regarding school buses that did not have the brake interlocking mechanism installed as required by the *Virginia School Bus Specifications* effective March 24, 2011. Department of Education (DOE) staff members have been following-up on the retrofit progress with school divisions, bus manufacturers, and bus dealers to ensure that the non-compliant buses are brought into full compliance with the *Virginia School Bus Specifications*.

DOE has also advised all bus dealers doing business with Virginia school divisions that all buses delivered after the March 24, 2011, effective date of the parking brake interlock specification must meet this requirement. Please alert your staff to inspect all new buses being delivered this year to check and ensure that this safety feature is installed and is working as specified.

Although the bus dealers and manufacturers have been working to complete the retrofit of non-compliant buses, we are aware that there are still buses that need to be retrofitted. DOE is extremely concerned about this deficiency and have addressed this issue with the bus dealers and manufacturers. We are also taking steps to encourage the vendors to expedite and complete the retrofit process as soon as possible to bring these buses into full compliance with the *Virginia School Bus Specifications*.

The parking interlock feature was included in the *Virginia School Bus Specifications* to provide an additional level of safety for the students being transported on school buses to and from school and school activities. The safety of our students is of great concern to all of us, and as schools are opening for the school year, we strongly encourage you to instruct your bus drivers to exercise extreme caution when operating those non-compliant buses that still need to be retrofitted with the brake interlock mechanism.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Vijay Ramnarain, Director of Support Services, at (804) 225-2037 or Vijay.Ramnarain@doe.virginia.gov, or contact Kerry Miller, Associate Director for Pupil Transportation, at (804) 225-2772 or Kerry.Miller@doe.virginia.gov.

SRS/aam