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Dear Cheryl Brackett, Maine Department of Education,

On behalf of the Maine Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT), I am writing to express the need for stronger statewide training, guidance, and consistency for pupil transportation directors across Maine.

Transportation Directors hold critical responsibility for student safety and staff training, yet many assume this role with limited formal guidance. Recent events underscore the importance of clear expectations, consistent practices, and strong leadership. MAPT respectfully requests collaboration with the Maine School Safety Center to begin developing a sustainable framework for Director training, school bus and van driver training, and certification.

Directors are seeking clarity in areas including:

- Frameworks for training new bus and van drivers
- Meaningful New Employee Orientation (NEO) guidance
- Statewide standards for student stop criteria, crossings, and other high-risk operations
- Minimum recommended annual proficiency training for drivers
- Clear policies for documentation, record retention, and audits

In addition, MAPT urges the creation of an advisory council to the Maine School Safety Center Transportation Section. Regular collaboration between regulators and transportation professionals reflects best practice and would support informed, practical solutions to shared challenges.

MAPT stands ready to assist in this work and respectfully requests time during the March conference for a dedicated session for Transportation Directors to discuss statewide needs and begin outlining a clear path forward.

Thank you for your continued commitment to student safety. We look forward to partnering with you.

Respectfully,

Mitzii Smith

President, MAPT / Maine School Safety Specialist

cc:// Maine School Safety Center Team - Robert Susi, Jeff Upton, Megan Welter,