



## **School Bus Driver – Job Satisfaction**

**Survey  
May 2019**

# School Bus Driver - Job Satisfaction



## Introduction

Driver recruitment and retention is a major issue in the Ontario school bus industry. It has contributed to service disruptions. In attempting to find ways to improve driver recruitment and retention, the ISBOA Board of Directors requested input from school bus drivers regarding their responsibilities and 'job satisfaction'.

There is no repository of school bus driver names and contact information of which to use for a survey. Therefore, we were dependent of school bus operator members asking their drivers to participate in our on-line survey. We accept that not all drivers would be notified but based on the total potential drivers, we obtained a 21% response. It should be noted that the majority of our members are rural based versus urban based. This does not necessarily mean that drivers in an urban area would have responded differently.

## Survey questions to drivers:

The Independent School Bus Operators (ISBOA) recognize that drivers like you are the backbone of our industry. As such, we want to hear from you so we can benefit from your input on how we can improve your job satisfaction, as well as give us your thoughts on the issue of seat belts. We ask that you take a couple of minutes and help us help by answering the following questions. (Please ask your fellow drivers to complete this as well.)

1. Check the reasons below (as many as apply) why you applied to become a school bus driver:

- a. Income
- b. Wanted something to do part time
- c. Enjoy driving
- d. Wanted to contribute to your community
- e. Enjoy working with children/young people
- f. Entry into the job market
- g. Wanted a new challenge
- h. Was referred by a family member/friend
- i. Heard good things about the industry
- j. Free training
- k. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Check the reasons below (as many as apply) why you continue driving school buses

- a. Income
- b. Part time hours
- c. Enjoy the summers off
- d. Enjoy driving
- e. Satisfaction in safely transporting students to and from school
- f. Feeling of accomplishment
- g. Feeling that you are part of the community
- h. Enjoy helping “your” students/riders
- i. Driving experience
- j. Driver Retention Program (government bonus program)
- k. Keeps you busy/Something to do
- l. Enjoy working for your company
- m. Enjoy working with your colleagues
- n. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Check the reasons below (as many as apply) that make you consider leaving the student transportation industry?

- a. The pay
- b. The split shift
- c. Early mornings

- d. Student/rider behavior
- e. Responsibilities
- f. Traffic and other road users
- g. Blow-bys/Drivers failing to stop for your lights
- h. Lack of authority over students
- i. Lack of respect (from students or teachers or parents)
- j. Lack of route consistency (route changes)
- k. Paperwork (inspection reports, logs, etc.)
- l. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note 1:** There were questions regarding seatbelts and the results of those questions are reported in a separate report. However, 48% of respondents replied that the mandating of seatbelts in school buses would “worsen” recruitment and “worsen the desire to remain a driver”.

## Summary

**Note 2:** There were 10 or more choices to each question. Respondents could check more than one reason and could write their own reasons under the heading “Other”.

**Note 3:** Due to limitations of the software we used, only the top 10 reasons were shown in the graphs. The responses to the remaining reasons are group with the “other” reasons.

**Note 4:** We had no access to individuals that have recently left driving to ask what their reasons for doing so were. They may have varied from the responses to our question “reasons that make you consider leaving”.

The four most popular reasons why a driver applied to be a driver were:

- Enjoy driving - 18%
- Wanted something to do part time – 17%
- Enjoy working with children/young people – 17%
- Income – 15%

The four most popular reasons why a driver continues to be a driver were – three were tied for fourth:

- Enjoy driving – 11%
- Enjoy the summers off – 10%
- Satisfaction in safely transporting students – 9%
- Enjoy working for your company – 9%
- Part time hours – 9%

The four most popular reasons that make a driver consider leaving – three were tied for fourth:

- The pay – 22%
- Student Rider behavior – 12 %
- Lack of respect from Students/teachers/parents – 12%
- Blow-bys/drivers passing – 10%
- Lack of authority over students – 10%

## Conclusions

1. There are multiple reasons that individuals apply to drive, stay driving and leave driving. There is no one major reason. As seen in the responses to “Reasons you continue driving”, 22% had checked that they had “other” reasons beyond the 10 responses shown in the graphs.

2. Income is a major reason (15%) for people to apply to drive, although it is below the top three (Enjoy driving 18%, Something to do part time 17% and Enjoy working with young children 17%). Income is the highest reason that drivers consider leaving at 22% of respondents. It is also the highest reason (11%) that they continue to drive but much lower than those (22%) that consider leaving because of the pay.

As many suspected, an increase in income would increase both recruitment and retention of school bus drivers.

3. It was expected that income (22%) would be the main reason drivers would consider leaving. However, student/rider behavior (12%) combined with the lack of authority over students (10%), suggests a need to create a better relationship between driver and students. Lack of respect (12%) included students, teachers and parents which adds to the need to improve the environment within the workplace of the driver.

The industry, consortia, teachers, principals and parents all have role to play in improving the work environment of a school bus driver

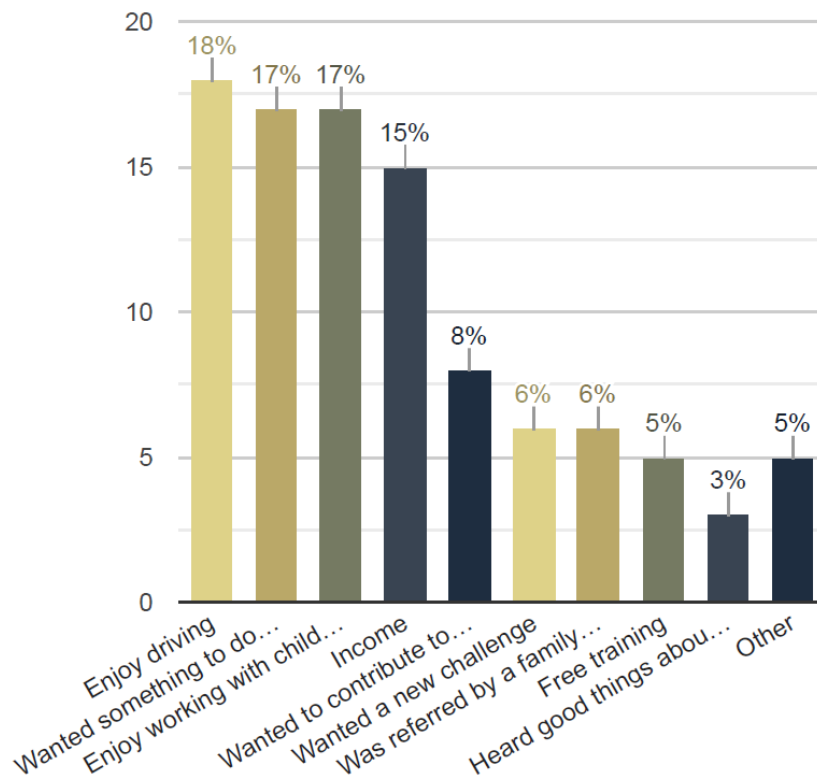
4. Blow-bys is the fourth highest reason to consider leaving (10%) and traffic and other road users follow at (7%). Not much can be done about traffic and other road users, but something can be done with blow-bys to allow drivers to enjoy driving more but that can only be done by government. Pressure needs to be put on government to enforce the law and reduce blow-bys.

Eliminating, even reducing, blow-bys will increase the retention of drivers. Government enforcement and a public relations campaign are needed.

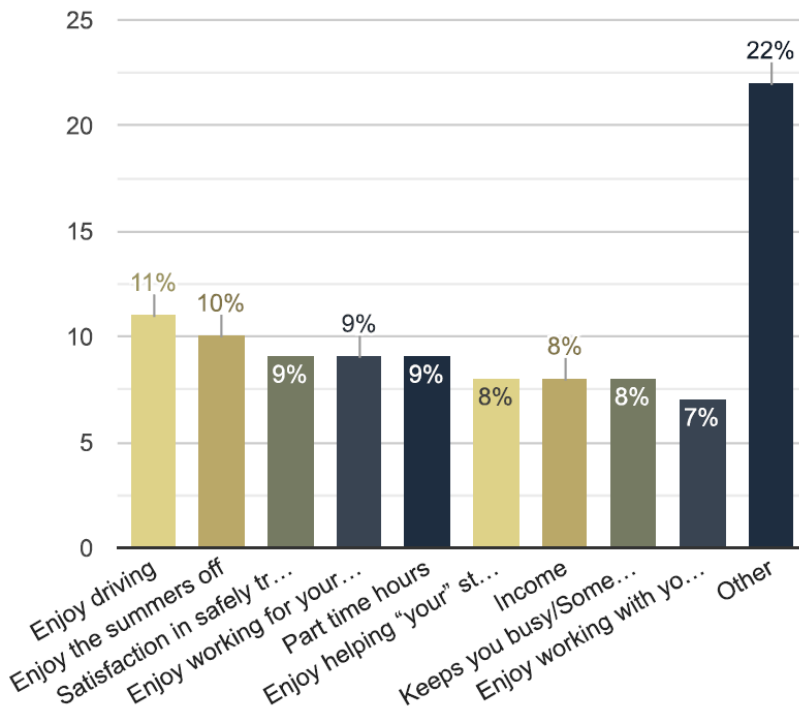
**Note 5:** After the completion of the survey the MTO announced regulatory changes to make it easier to obtain convictions on charges related to blow-bys.

5. ....

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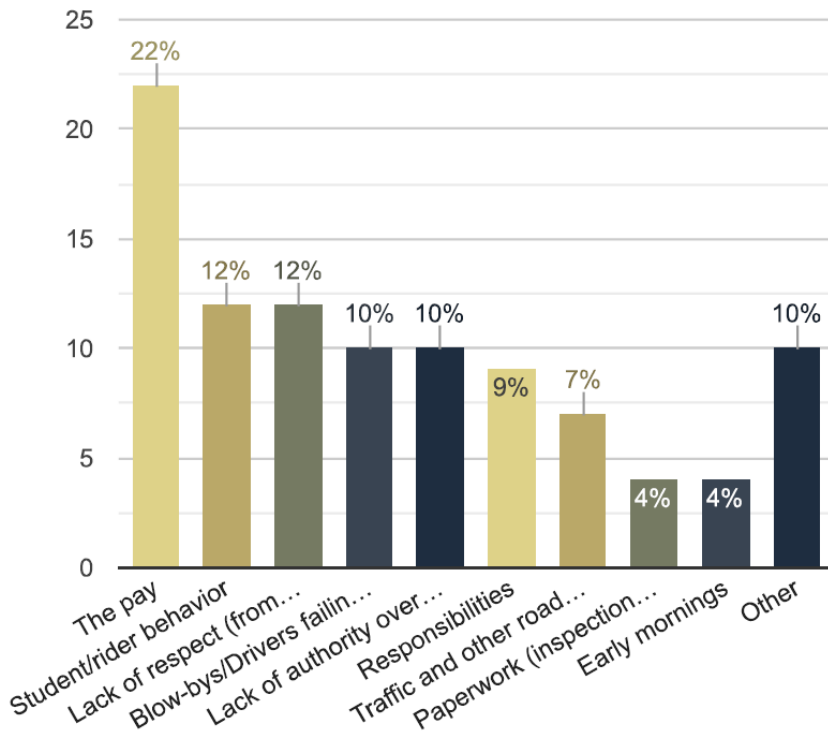


Why you applied to become a school bus driver



Why you continue to drive school buses

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Reasons that make you consider leaving