

TAPT School Bus Driver Safety Competition

Thank you for your interest in the TAPT Texas School Bus Driver Safety Competition, proudly known as the School Bus Safety Competition “Rodeo”. Each year, this exciting and meaningful event brings together the very best school bus drivers from across the great state of Texas to compete for top honors and well-deserved recognition. More than a competition, the School Bus Safety Competition “Rodeo” is a celebration of the professionalism, pride, and unwavering dedication that drivers demonstrate every day in service to students and their communities.

The event consists of written General Knowledge and Vehicle Inspection tests, designed to challenge contestants’ understanding of school bus certification standards, commercial driving laws, and critical safety regulations. From there, drivers take to the course to demonstrate their ability to skillfully and safely maneuver a school bus through a series of timed and precision-based driving obstacles. Each element is carefully measured to ensure fair and accurate scoring.

In addition, the Special Transportation Team Competition, “Rodeo” challenges driver and attendant teams to demonstrate excellence in precision driving, pre-trip inspections, child safety seat installation, and emergency evacuation procedures. Teams must also show a strong understanding of the diverse conditions and behavioral considerations associated with transporting students with special needs, reinforcing the importance of safety, care, and specialized knowledge in pupil transportation.

Achieving excellence in this competition requires extensive preparation, focus, and commitment. Many drivers devote countless personal, non-compensated hours practicing and refining their skills in pursuit of perfection. Their dedication reflects the heart of pupil transportation, an unwavering commitment to student safety and professional excellence.

We are honored to welcome each participant, volunteer, and supporter who makes this event possible. Thank you for being part of a tradition that highlights the very best of school transportation in Texas.

2026 ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) The Texas School Bus Driver Safety Competition hosts one (1) State Competition welcoming both private and public sector contestants. In order to be eligible, contestants must have competed at the regional level in which their district resides.
- 2) The Texas School Bus Driver Safety Competition will have the following categories of competition:
 - School Bus Conventional – Type C
 - School Bus Transit – Type D
 - Special Needs Transportation- (Driver and Monitor Team)
- 3) Each region is allowed up to three (3) contestants in **each** school bus category totaling a maximum of six (6) contestants. A pre-registered alternate may compete only in the event the registered contestant is unable to do so. The Alternate must compete in the same category as the absent driver. A contestant is only eligible to enter one category of competition and must register in the category in which he/she won at the regional level. Additionally, each region is allowed up to three (3) special needs teams (each team includes both a driver and monitor

contestant). Each special transportation team must register and compete as they competed in their respective regional competitions. Drivers and Monitors may not switch roles before, during, or at any time in the competition.

All alternate contestants (4th place) must be registered in order to compete as a fill-in. **Do not pay for alternate contestants.**

- 4) To qualify for competition, contestants must meet the following criteria:
 - a. **Driver and Monitor:** Must be involved in the daily transportation of students
 - b. **Drivers:** Hold a valid Texas Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with a "P" and "S" endorsements
 - c. **Drivers:** Hold a valid State of Texas School Bus Certification Card
 - d. **Drivers:** Hold a valid Department of Transportation (DOT) Medical Certification (Physical) Card
 - e. **Drivers:** Must not have had a preventable school bus accident (*as defined by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA*) since August 1, 2025.
(Definition of a Preventable Accident) "An occurrence involving an employer owned or leased vehicle that results in an accident in which the driver in question failed to exercise every reasonable precaution to prevent it."
 - f. **Driver and Monitor:** Must be pre-registered and fees paid by the close of business day April 10, 2026
 - g. No contestant will be eligible unless he/she meets **ALL** the above criteria
- 5) All contestants and judges must report to the competition registration and judge's check-in **Saturday, April 25th** at Sheldon Lake Elementary School. Check-in will start promptly at 7:30am. All contestants must be seated and ready for orientation by 8:15am.
- 6) Lunch will be provided for contestants and registered judges only. If you have family or friends observing the competition, please plan for their lunch accordingly.
- 7) Each contestant must be **pre-registered and fees paid** by the close of business day **April 10, 2026.**
- 8) First place contestants in all three competition categories must see the TAPT Executive Director immediately following the awards ceremony to review next steps for moving to the International and National Safety Competitions.

No scores will be provided prior to the Awards Ceremony on Saturday evening, April 25, 2026. A Scoring Summary will be provided to each contestant after the awards presentation. Copies of individual sheets will be handed to the contestant's following the TAPT Awards Banquet. A Scoring Summary will be placed on the TAPT Web site approximately two weeks after competition.

No changes will occur on the course set-up once competition starts. However, the Competition Chairman may disqualify any event during competition and apply the point value equally to all contestants.