

Memo



DATE: January 5, 2026

TO: All Staff, Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

FROM: Dan Lowndes – Superintendent SD28

Happy New Year Everyone!

In September, I shared with staff, students, parents, and our community an approach we would undertake district-wide to recapture learning environments and ensure safe, effective spaces for both staff and students. I am deeply grateful for the commitment from our staff to this initiative, and we are already seeing the results in our schools: fewer distractions, fewer behavioral incidents, and improved learning environments. This is challenging work—but it is the right work. Thank you to all staff, parents, and caregivers for your collective support in making this possible!

Now it's time for our next phase of this work...

We have long recognized that one of the most impactful parts of a student's day is the time spent riding the school bus. The bus ride can set the tone for the entire day—starting it off calmly or creating a rough beginning, depending on how the ride goes. Unfortunately, it's not uncommon to see students running, jumping over seats, diving from one seat to another, yelling, hitting others, and ignoring the bus driver's requests. These behaviors make for a challenging start and end to the day—not only for students but for drivers and schools as well.

Equally important, these behaviors are unrealistic for our bus drivers to manage. Their primary responsibility is the safe transport of all children, and we want them focused on the road ahead—not constantly checking the mirror to manage student behavior.

We will be asking staff and parents to remind all students of the expected behaviors on buses. These expectations are similar to what we follow in any other vehicle:

- Remain seated during the ride
- Keep hands to yourself
- Do not throw objects from windows
- Enjoy the ride responsibly

This simple request can have a significant impact—not only on the safety and focus of our drivers but also on how students "show up" at school each day.

Transportation is a privilege for students—a privilege we are proud to provide. However, if students are unable to travel to and from school safely on the bus, we will work with parents to find alternate transportation options. Our goal is always to ensure safety for every child and maintain a positive experience for all riders.

We will work to support all students in understanding these expected behaviors. But, just as I shared in my September message, the more of us who consistently reinforce these expectations with children, the easier—and quicker—the results will come.