

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

about the

School Bus Driver Retention Program (DRP)

1. What is the DRP?

Answer: The DRP is the School Bus Driver Retention Program. It is a pilot project initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Education which is comprised of a series of three separate bonus payments made directly to eligible Ontario school bus drivers. The purpose of the DRP is to enhance school bus driver recruitment and retention rates by providing a financial incentive for school bus drivers to stay on the job throughout the school year.

2. What are the periods of the bonus payments?

Answer: Bonuses will be paid based on eligibility in three separate Payment Periods (see below). You must meet the eligibility criteria in each period to receive the bonus for that period. If you are not eligible in one period, you may become eligible in the next period.

- (a) Payment Period #1 - The first school calendar day in January 2018 to the last school calendar day in June 2018. The 95% attendance requirement (see below) in this period begins on May 1, 2018.
- (b) Payment Period #2 - The first school calendar day in September 2018 to the last school calendar day in December 2018. In this period, the 95% attendance requirement will apply from the day that you begin work, which must be before the last school calendar day of September.
- (c) Payment Period #3 - The first school calendar day in January 2019 to the last school calendar day in June 2019. In this period, the 95% attendance requirement will apply from the day that you begin work, which must be before the last school calendar day of January.

3. What are the bonus payments based on?

Answer: Please see the specific criteria details listed on the separate web page called “Eligibility Criteria” posted on the OSBA website the following link: <http://www.osba.on.ca/school-bus-driver-eligibility-criteria>

You must meet all of the eligibility criteria in order to receive a bonus. As a summary only, DRP eligibility involves 4 major requirements:

- (a) “Continuous Employment” – this is the minimum period of time during a Payment Period that a school bus driver must be continuously working for a school bus operator or driving substantially the same route. The eligibility criteria require “continuous employment” from the last school calendar day of the first month of the Payment Period through to and including the last school calendar day of the final month of the Payment Period.
- (b) “Attendance” – this is the minimum number of days that a school bus driver must work during an employment period (e.g. 95%). See criteria #6 (a) For the first Payment Period, the attendance requirement applies from the date that the eligibility criteria are

published (May 1, 2018). You must still meet all the other eligibility requirements to receive a bonus, including continuous employment from the last school calendar day of January.

- (c) “Employment Period” – this is the time that a school bus driver is employed and paid by a school bus operator. To be eligible, your “employment period” must begin during the first month of a Payment Period and continue to the last day of the Payment Period.
- (d) “Primary Employment Responsibility” – individuals receiving a bonus must either have an agreement with a school bus operator that states that they are employed as a school bus driver, or work in the capacity of a school bus driver for the majority of their working time for the school bus operator each week.

4. **How do I know if I am eligible to receive a bonus payment?**

Answer: Your employer will determine your eligibility for each Payment Period based on the eligibility criteria posted on the OSBA website at the following link:

<http://www.osba.on.ca/school-bus-driver-eligibility-criteria>

5. **As a School Bus Driver, what do I need to do to receive my bonus?**

Answer: All you will be required to do is sign a consent form and provide it to your employer. Your signed consent will allow your personal information to be shared with OSBA, the Service Provider (Deloitte) and the Ontario Ministry of Education. Personal information will be used to administer the bonus payments, complete required tax forms and conduct research and analysis on the DRP and School Bus Driver workforce.

6. **Where do I obtain a consent form?**

Answer: Your employer will have the consent form for you to complete and return to them (either manually or electronically). The form is also available on the OSBA website which can be downloaded and returned to your employer from the following link:

<http://www.osba.on.ca/files/Consent-Form-DRP-School-Bus-Drivers-Final.pdf>

7. **For the first Payment Period, if I became a school bus driver in February 2018 or later and did not miss a single day of work through to the end of June 2018, will I meet the eligibility criteria?**

Answer: No. In order to qualify you must be employed as a school bus driver on or before the last school calendar day of the first month of the Payment Period. For the Payment Period ending in June 2018, this means you will need to have been an employee with a school bus operator employer on or before January 31, 2018. However, you may be eligible during the subsequent Payment Periods as long as you meet the eligibility criteria at that time.

8. **For the first Payment Period, if I was in unpaid training to be a school bus driver on February 1, 2018 or later, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: No. In order to be eligible you need to have been a paid employee of a school bus operator employer (not an unpaid trainee) on or before January 31, 2018. However, you may be eligible during the subsequent Payment Periods as long as you meet the eligibility criteria at that time.

9. **If I change employers during a Payment Period, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: Maybe. Even though your employer will have changed, you may still be eligible to qualify as long as you continue driving substantially the same route throughout the Payment Period. See criteria 5(b). If you are not driving substantially the same route, you will not be eligible. However, you may be eligible during the subsequent Payment Periods as long as you meet the eligibility criteria at that time.

10. **If I miss a month of work for any reason, but otherwise had a perfect attendance record, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: The eligibility criteria requires that you must work 95% of the school calendar days within the specified time period. For the first Payment Period, the attendance requirement applies from the date that the eligibility criteria were first announced (May 1, 2018) to the last day of the school calendar year. If you miss a month of work prior to May 1, 2018 in the first Payment Period, but otherwise meet the other eligibility criteria, you will be eligible for a bonus. If you miss more than the permitted absences after May 1, 2018, you will not meet the 95% threshold.

11. **If I drive students to a private school, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: No. In order to qualify for the bonus you must drive students for a school bus operator that provides services to an eligible education organization. Private schools are not eligible. Please go to the OSBA website for a full list of eligible education organizations at the following link: <http://www.osba.on.ca/files/DRP-list-of-educational-organizations-2018.pdf>

12. **If I am a standby driver and do not drive the same routes every day, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: Yes. As long as you meet all other eligibility criteria.

13. **If I work every day as a school bus driver but also work in my employer's office or maintenance area doing other jobs, will I be eligible to receive the bonus?**

Answer: Yes. If: (a) you have an employment agreement that explicitly states that you are employed as a school bus driver; or (b) if the time you spend driving each week constitutes the majority of the time you work for the school bus operator, then you would receive the bonus.

14. **I work part-time at another job in addition to driving a school bus, will I receive the bonus?**

Answer: Yes. The eligibility criteria is concerned with the period of time you work for the school bus operator, not the time you work for others.

15. **I have worked every day as a school bus driver. I have never missed a day but in April I chose to move to a new community and I applied to work with a new school bus company. Will I still receive the bonus?**

Answer: No. In order to meet the eligibility criteria, you must work for the same school bus operator or drive substantially the same route(s) throughout the Payment Period. If you meet the eligibility criteria in subsequent Payment Periods, you may qualify for the bonus at that time.

16. **When will I receive my bonus payments?**

Answer: Significant paperwork must be completed before your bonus can be processed and mailed. All bonuses in respect of the same Payment Period need to be processed at the same time. It is anticipated that you will receive your bonus approximately 3 months after the end of the Payment Period. The specific payment dates will be communicated by OSBA as they are confirmed.

17. **How will I receive my bonus payment?**

Answer: If you are eligible, you will receive a cheque directly mailed to your home address issued by the Service Provider (Deloitte).

18. **How do I know if my employer is participating in the program?**

Answer: You need to speak with your employer directly and enquire with them.

19. **Will the bonus payment affect my ability to collect employment insurance in July and August?**

Answer: No. The bonus will not affect your ability to obtain employment insurance in the months of July and August because the bonus payment will relate to services you provided prior to July 1.

20. **If I receive a bonus payment, do I need to report it as income for income tax purposes?**

Answer: Yes. A T4 slip will be issued to each school bus driver from OSBA (not your employer) by the end of February in the year following the payment of the bonus.

21. **Who do I contact if I have any questions about the DRP?**

Answer: A 1-800 Call Centre and email address will be available soon. These will be listed on the OSBA website at www.osba.on.ca when established. In the meantime, please contact OSBA at 416-695-9965 Ext. 6 if you have any further questions. This FAQ list will be updated periodically.