

TBN Reader Has Concerns over School Bus Safety

Posted by [petehurrey](#) On 10/27/2009

EDITOR'S NOTE: After receiving the letter below, TheBAYNET.com did some investigating into the allegation of school bus driver misconduct. The letter sent in by TBN reader, Melissa is reprinted in its entirety and is followed by a response from St. Mary's County Public Schools.

READER LETTER:

I have had a recent problem with a school bus in Saint Mary's county. My son goes to Park Hall Elementary School in Lexington Park. Last week he came home and told me that several kids noticed beer cans in the bus driver's purse.

Naturally this alarmed me and I called the school. They put me in touch with the transportation department and I relayed the story to them. This was around 4:30 so I caught the secretary as she was leaving for the day she said she'd pass on the message to her boss.

The next morning the same bus driver picked up my child and again she was there at drop off. I called to see what was going on and why this woman was still driving my child. I was told that they were looking into it and were trying to get a hold of the subcontractor the bus driver works for.

Long story short; I finally get a call back last Thursday, three days after I made the first phone call saying that they looked into it and determined that there was no evidence of any wrong doing.

Well of course there wasn't it was three days later. I was told they looked on her bus that day, which would've been unlikely because I had called after everyone was done for the day at the transportation department. I spoke my piece concerning why was the driver still allowed to drive her route while she was under investigation of such a serious allegation. I got a long pause and was told, "well we determined there was no evidence so the matter is dropped."

I was furious! She was allowed to drive while under investigation for drinking and driving a school bus. Am I the only one that sees a problem with this?

So, today I had to drive my son to school and low and behold this driver passes me while driving a bus full of kids to school talking on her cell phone in the pouring rain.

After I dropped him off at school she again passed me talking on her phone. Am I missing something? What is wrong with this picture? I again called the school and have yet to hear back from them.

Signed

Melissa

TheBAYNET.com contacted SMCPS Transportation Director, Jeffrey Thompson for a statement about the submitted letter and the incident involved.

Thompson indicated that while he could not comment specifically about this particular complaint and investigation, that all such complaints are taken seriously and that his department looked into the allegation. "In order for further investigation to occur, two supervisors have to substantiate the allegations."

Thompson indicated that because of federal, state and local laws, there could be no drug or alcohol testing without the two supervisor substantiation. "All drivers are tested before they can drive and we have a pool that we randomly test all drivers throughout the year," said Thompson.

He indicated that because no evidence was found, that nothing could be done to the driver in question. He also indicated that the Transportation Department will do follow-up to this as it does with all such investigations and based upon the school board's rules and regulations. "We can't search anyone's personal property without a credible reason to do so and there was no evidence leading us to that credible reason."