Mobile Data Terminal Guidance

A “mobile data terminal” shall be defined as any electronic device that assists with any of the following functions:

- School bus routing
- Capturing student ridership and/or routing information
- Providing the school bus driver with school bus passenger identification.

These devices can include but are not limited to electronic tablets, GPS units, etc. As this technology evolves, additional guidance may be forthcoming. The guidance provided below should not be viewed as a definitive document, but rather as an evolving and living document.

MOBILE DATA TERMINAL
Approved Criteria for Mounting Location and Use

A school bus may be equipped with a mobile data terminal that meets the following requirements:

(a) The device shall be mounted within the driver's compartment. Iowa Department of Education school bus inspection staff shall have final authority to accept or deny the mounting location.

(b) The device shall be mounted in a location to allow the driver to see it at a glance, but shall not obstruct the driver's view in any direction when the driver is seated in a normal driving position. This would include but not be limited to impeding the view of the road, mirrors, highway signs, signals, other instruments, entrance door, and passengers. Overhead mounting of the device is not acceptable.

(c) The device may not impede space within the aisle, nor shall it be mounted in such a way as to be a snagging hazard in the student loading area of the service door.

(d) The device shall be securely mounted to the vehicle when in use in such a way as to minimize sharp edges. The device may be easily removable when not in use.

(e) The display screen may have the ability to go dark while the school bus is in motion. The audio turn-by-turn instructions may remain active while the bus is in motion. Audio directions shall not use speakers within the passenger compartment.

(f) Distractive manipulation of the device is prohibited while the school bus is being driven. For the purposes of these criteria, ‘driven’ means operating a motor vehicle, with the motor running, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic control device, or other momentary delays such as picking up or discharging students. ‘Driven’ does not include operating a school bus, with or without the motor running, when the school bus is legally stopped or parked upon the highway for a prolonged period of time.

(g) Software programs loaded on the device, if utilized, shall be specific to school bus operations such as, but not limited to, passenger accountability, routing, navigation, emergency notification, tracking, messaging and equipment monitoring.