



THE BLUE BIRD

Driving Students To Success

Message from the Supervisor



Hi Team,

As we close out the first Semester, I am compelled to express my deepest appreciation for the unwavering dedication each of you demonstrates in ensuring the safe transportation of our students. Your commitment to excellence plays a pivotal role in the success of our educational community, and I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt thanks.

The role of a bus driver extends far beyond the act of driving a vehicle. You are the first smiling face our students see each morning, and the last reassuring presence before they return home. Your role in creating a positive and secure environment during these critical moments is immeasurable. I believe you are the unsung heroes of our school system; you contribute significantly to the overall well-being of our students.

Your dedication does not go unnoticed. Rain or shine, early mornings or late afternoons, your commitment to ensuring a safe and reliable transportation experience for our students is truly amazing. You play an important role in setting the tone for a successful academic year, and for that, we are extremely grateful.

Let's continue to build on the foundation of excellence you have established. Your professionalism, patience, and care are significant in fostering a sense of community among our students. I encourage you to continue inspiring them with your positive demeanor and reliability.

Please accept my sincerest thanks for your tireless efforts. Together, let's continue to make this academic year one of achievement, growth, and positivity for both our students and our entire school community.

Wishing everyone a safe and successful school year ahead.

Warm regards,

Chris



Fresno Unified School District

Welcome to your quarterly newsletter. This newsletter has been designed with you in mind. Our goal is to keep you updated and informed on what is happening in the **Transportation Department**.

Office Staff

Main Phone: 559-457-3138

Director: Paul Rosencrans 73103
Admin. Sec: Marianne Johnson 73179

Business Ops Manager:
Melissa Beltran 73384
Manager II: Ramiro Salas 73104

Supervisor: Chris Zamudio 73142
Supervisor: Jennifer Moren 71326
Supervisor: Robin Jenkins 73296
Supervisor: Tony Aboularge 73122

Dispatcher: Emma Fontes 73298
Dispatcher: Carlos Fonseca 73297

Accountant I: Mao Thao 73139
Office Asst. I: Keng Xiong 73199
Acct Clerk II: Allen Thaoxauchay 73132
Sub: Yang Thao 73193

We transport approximately **15,000 students** to and from school daily with a total of **1.67 million** miles on 106 buses.



HECTOR AREVALO

Name: Hector Arevalo
Title: Bus Driver Route: 62 Bus: 6
Years as a Bus Driver: 15
Years as an FUSD Employee: 14

FUSD Schools he serves:

- Easterby
- CART
- Computech Middle School
- Edison High School



Hector enjoys driving the bus and he learns about safety everyday.

The best advice Hector would share with a fellow driver is:

“Always be patient about traffic and kids, focus on your everyday assignments.”

He enjoys spending time with his family and sometimes relaxing at home.

Our Sunshine Committee radiates positivity and inclusiveness. Last quarter, they championed Breast Cancer Awareness, uniting us in pink to support survivors and those in the battle.

The Harvest Party they organized celebrated our department's tireless efforts in keeping the buses running. Kudos to the Nutrition Department for the delectable turkey, mashed potatoes, and gravy and all who contributed to the feast.

Their Winter Send-off, complete with food, photo booth and fun, was a grand finale to the semester.

This team's unwavering dedication and events have created a vibrant, close-knit workplace, reminding us that work can be more than just a job—it can be a community filled with gratitude and camaraderie.

Event Calendar

January— Welcome Back from
Winter Break

Jan. 8th-Donuts and Coffee

February— Black History Celebration

Feb. 21st-Potluck

March— Nacho Average Friday

Mar. 15th-Nacho Bar



Committee: Twyla Hunt, Leigh Jenkins, James Krebs, Corina Lozoya, Lisa Torres, Lanesha Ruben & Willie Woods.



Did you know to become a Bus Driver it takes a lot of training?

Our Drivers have to do 40 hours of training to be eligible for their Bus Driver Certificate.

They must complete 20 hours of classroom instruction and 20 hours of behind the wheel instruction.

Once they complete their training, there are several other processes including a CHP test in order to earn their 5 year certificate.

To keep their certificate valid they must document 10 hours of training every year and on the 5th year they must retest with the CHP to renew their Bus Driver Certificate.

It takes a lot of commitment to become a Bus Driver and we are very proud of all of our drivers.

They are dedicated to making sure our students get to school safe and on time.

**Thank you to our Drivers
for your commitment and
dedication!**



January

Abraham Cordova 1/1
 Jose Ceja 1/1
 Lisa Torres 1/3
 David Saucedo 1/6
 Stacie Valeriote 1/12
 Ramona Godinez 1/12
 Veronica Lopez 1/18
 Michael Alonzo 1/18
 Norma Sanchez 1/18
 Corina Lozoya 1/19
 Ramiro Sales 1/20
 Gabriel Castro 1/21
 Virginia Lozano 1/25
 Toni Cunha 1/29
 Lanesha Ruben 1/30

February

James De Witt 2/2
 Ranjit Singh 2/3
 Fortino "Tino" Meza 2/3
 Felipe Pineda 2/4
 Van Phrachanh Sav 2/5
 Chris Zamudio 2/10
 Kathy Sanders 2/10
 Stevan Fabela 2/21
 Twyla Hunt 2/22
 Victor Valdez 2/26
 MaryHellen Castro 2/26
 Sheila White 2/27

March

Mao Thao 3/2
 Victor Hernandez 3/2
 Kellie Cavazos 3/2
 Emma Fontes 3/5
 Lora Lanier 3/9
 Adelina Reyes 3/12
 Debra Trejo 3/13
 Brandon Reyes 3/16
 Robert Goins 3/22
 Ernest "Ernie" Lorta 3/27

**Happy Birthday to all our
 Drivers and Staff !**

Wearing Purple for a Purpose

In a world of challenges, small acts of solidarity can wield immense influence. Fresno Unified Transportation Department, in their purple attire, stands against domestic violence, one bus ride at a time. Purple Thursday, observed annually in October, is a day dedicated to raising awareness about domestic violence. It's a day when people all over the world wear purple to show their support for survivors and their commitment to ending this pervasive issue.

You might wonder, what do bus drivers have to do with domestic violence awareness? Well, more than you'd think. They play a crucial role in the lives of countless children, the simple act of picking a child up from their doorstep and safely delivering them to school can make a world of difference. It offers children a respite from the chaos of their home environment, if only for a short time. These moments can be vital in helping kids feel safe and supported during turbulent times.

Awareness is the first step to change. Learn more about domestic violence's impact on children through Marjaree Mason Center's resources at <https://mmcenter.org/stay-informed/domestic-violence-children>.

The Fresno Unified Transportation Department's initiative is a shining example of how small actions can lead to powerful change.



DEAN WENGER

Name: Dean Wenger

Title: Bus Driver Route: 53 Bus: 57

Years as a Bus Driver: 15 years

Years as an FUSD Employee: 2 years

FUSD Schools he serves:

- Powers Elementary
- Gaston Middle School
- Computech Middle School
- Edison High School



Dean appreciates the encouraging and friendly co-workers, supportive bosses and the ample overtime (if you want it).

The best advice Dean would share with a fellow driver is:

"Smile, be friendly, be firm, have fun, & don't take it personally."

In his free time he likes to tease his 4 grandchildren, walk 2-3 miles everyday, and he loves to travel. He hopes to go to Hawaii in the spring, then he will have been to all 50 states.

DISTRICT RESOURCE

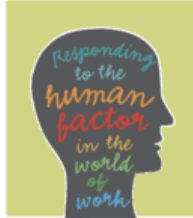
CLAREMONT

Powered by  uprisehealth

Claremont is a firm of select professionals who can help you with life's challenges. You will be referred to a conveniently located counselor or resource with expertise in your area of concern. These services are provided at NO charge to you as part of your benefits package.

Claremont EAP services include:

- Counseling visits
- Work/Life referrals
- Legal consultation
- Financial consultation
- Confidentiality



If you are needing services please call 800-834-3773 or go to:
claremonteap.com

If you would like a brochure please see the staff in the
Transportation office

NICOLE WILLIS

Name: Michelle Nicole Willis
Title: Bus Driver Route: 55 Bus: 2
Years as a Bus Driver: 22 years
Years as an FUSD Employee: 5 1/2 yrs

FUSD Schools she serves:

- Delmar Kinder
- Manchester Bullard Talent
- Cooper Middle School
- Fort Miller Middle School
- Hover High School
- CART



Nicole loves the great leadership and that she gets along with everyone. She has built great friendships working here. Oh and the department parties are fun!

The best advice Nicole would share with a fellow driver is:

“Always drive defensive. Safety comes first before schedule. If you run late, don't sweat the small stuff. Somethings are out of your control. Be nice and pleasant, the kids behave better.”

In her spare time she enjoys watching sports “Go Cowboys!” Shopping, spending time with family, cooking and traveling.

LET'S GO ON AN ADVENTURE!

Did you know in the first half of our 2023/2024 school year our FUSD's yellow fleet fulfilled **1,122** trip request on **1,557** buses?

Where did our Buses go?

- 111 buses to Fresno State (69 trips)
- 64 buses to the Pumpkin Patch
- 62 buses to the Fresno Chaffee Zoo (31 trips)
- 37 buses to The Big Fresno Fair
- plus a whole lot more!

This does not include charter bus trips.

Adventure

The Transportation department is happy to fulfill bus trip request.

Only 25 trips are available a day. Don't miss out on the opportunity to take your students on an adventure.

To learn more on how to [Request a School Bus](#) please visit the Transportation Staff website.

Email your request forms to Transportation.trips@fresnounified.org

Our Drivers asked and we listened! Our Transportation Administration recently collaborated with the Department of Prevention and Intervention (DPI) to provide essential training on student management to our bus drivers.

On October 9th, approximately 30 drivers gathered at our bus shop to participate in the first of a series of trainings. The event was facilitated by Kathy Frye from the DPI team, who shared valuable insights on student management techniques employed in the classroom, which could be seamlessly transferred to the school bus environment.

This collaboration not only highlights the dedication of our drivers but also exemplifies the administration's unwavering commitment to student well-being and consistency between the classroom and the bus ride. We extend our sincere gratitude to Kathy Frye and the DPI team for their support in this endeavor.



Transportation Department helping our students learn about what we do.

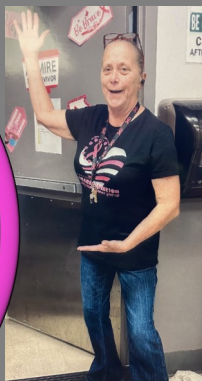
Gibson Elementary Career Fair

The Transportation Department was invited to participate in the Gibson Elementary Career Fair on October 20, 2023. Bus Drivers Lanesha Ruben and Stevan Fabela stepped up to introduce students to the world of bus driving, offering them not only swag and insights but a thrilling ride in our FUSD Bus wagon.

The event was more than fun; it was an opportunity to instill a lesson in gratitude. The students, after their journey on the "Bus wagon," were encouraged to "Thank your Bus Driver." This simple message left a positive mark, reminding them to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of those who ensure our safe travels.

Kudos to our Transportation Department for making a lasting impact on FUSD students.





In a heartwarming display of community spirit and support, the Sunshine Committee at the bus yard organized a Breast Cancer Awareness potluck on October 12, and it was nothing short of spectacular. The event was a testament to the power of unity and a heartfelt tribute to those who have faced or are currently battling breast cancer.

The success of this potluck wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the Sunshine Committee. Their commitment to creating an inclusive and caring environment deserves our utmost appreciation. We also extend our gratitude to all those who generously donated to make this event a reality. Your contributions made a significant difference and sent a powerful message of support.

Let's continue to support their endeavors and spread the warmth of the Sunshine Committee's mission throughout our workplace and beyond. Together, we can make a difference, one potluck at a time.





The Fresno Unified Transportation Department proudly participated in the Veteran's Day Parade on November 11, 2023, by showcasing two of our buses.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Drivers Stevan Fabela, who piloted Bus 84, and Ismael Lopez, behind the wheel of Bus 3, for volunteering to be a part of this meaningful event. Another special thank you goes to Deputy Superintendent Mao Misty Her for coming out to support us.

Bus 84, our longest-serving member, serves as a living tribute to veterans of the past, reminding us of their sacrifices and dedication.

On the other hand, Bus 3, one of our most recent additions, represents our commitment to honoring the dedication of current and future service members.

We wish to convey our deep gratitude to all veterans, regardless of their era of service, for their selfless dedication to our nation.

This year's participation in the parade was an exciting opportunity for our Transportation Department to show our unwavering support for the armed forces.



**VETERANS
DAY**



Kudos to our stellar Sunshine Committee! The Harvest party was a hit, uniting our Drivers for a delightful Thanksgiving feast. Huge thanks to everyone who contributed to the festivities! Your efforts made it a joyous celebration.



**FALL HARVEST
CELEBRATION**

**SunShine
Committee**



WINTER SEND OFF



Our Transportation department embraced the season's end with a flourish, beginning with an insightful in-service hosted by Claremont/EAP. The event served as a compass, guiding us through the often challenging terrain of stress management and steering us towards a winter send-off marked by camaraderie and festive cheer.

The in-service, led by Gia Kazarian with Claremont/EAP, provided our team with valuable tools to navigate the inevitable stressors of our demanding roles. Stress, we learned, is not merely an unavoidable byproduct of our profession; it is a road sign, signaling the need for a detour towards healthier habits and coping mechanisms.

Following the in-service, our winter send-off was a celebration of the unity and strength of our Transportation team. We gathered for moments of food and fellowship, sharing laughter and stories that transcended the challenges of our work. The festive atmosphere served as a reminder that, just as winter gives way to spring, moments of stress can be followed by periods of joy and connection.

As we embark on the road ahead, let us continue to apply the lessons learned from the in-service, steering our way towards a future where stress is a passenger rather than a driver. May the changing seasons bring new opportunities for growth, resilience, and shared success.



Winter Camp

We're thrilled to take a moment to give a resounding shout-out to our incredible Extended Learning Team! The winter camp season has come and gone, leaving behind a trail of laughter, learning, and unforgettable experiences.

This year, they doubled down on their commitment to providing diverse and exciting opportunities for our campers. With an expanded array of options, our students had the chance to explore activities that ranged from conquering Rock Climbing walls, and unveiling their culinary talents in cooking sessions, to getting hands-on with ceramics and showcasing their skills on the bowling lanes. For those with a taste for the chilly thrills, our ski camps offered the perfect downhill adventure, while river camps provided an opportunity to connect with nature.

Behind the scenes, our unsung heroes—the Transportation Team—played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of this winter's escapades. This year, we are grateful for the exceptional efforts of our 14 dedicated 12-month drivers, who navigated the roads with skill and precision, ensuring our campers arrived safely at each destination. Additionally, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the 25 volunteer drivers who generously stepped up to the plate, embodying the spirit of community and support.

Here's to our Extended Learning Team and our Transportation Team—the architects of joy, the facilitators of discovery, and the unsung heroes of our winter wonderland. Your commitment to enriching the lives of our campers does not go unnoticed, and we are truly grateful for the magic you bring to every camp experience.

GLORIA CASTELLAN

Name: Gloria Castellan

Title: Bus Driver Route: 40 Bus: 5

Years as a Bus Driver: 19

Years as an FUSD Employee: 16

FUSD Schools she serves:

- Baird Elementary
- Herrera Elementary
- Vang Pao Elementary
- Bullard Talent



Gloria says it is an honor and a privilege working for FUSD. I love my job, I love driving, & I love the kids. This is the place to be.

The best advice Gloria would share with a fellow driver is:

“Be kind and Patient.”

In her spare time she enjoys reading and spending time with her kids and grandkids.

ENHANCING SAFETY

We are excited to share with you the latest development in our ongoing commitment to student safety – the upgrade of our school bus cameras.

The upgraded school bus cameras bring state-of-the-art technology to the heart of our school transportation system. With high-definition resolution, these cameras provide a clearer and more comprehensive view. This means better monitoring of student behavior.

The presence of advanced cameras is a powerful deterrent against inappropriate behavior and potential misconduct. Knowing they are under constant surveillance, students are more likely to adhere to proper conduct, creating a safer atmosphere on board. Additionally, the upgraded cameras ensure accountability by capturing high-quality footage that can be used in investigations, disciplinary actions, or as evidence in the event of an incident.

Upgrading our school bus cameras is a testament to our commitment to not only maintain but elevate the safety standards we uphold. With clearer and more detailed footage, parents can rest assured that their children are in safe hands during their daily commute to and from school.

In the unfortunate event of an incident, the upgraded cameras streamline the process of incident investigation and resolution. The improved image quality allows for quicker

and more accurate identification of the parties involved, facilitating a more efficient response from both school authorities and law enforcement if necessary.



We believe that investing in the latest technology is an investment in the well-being of our community, and we look forward to continuing to explore innovative ways to enhance the safety of our students.

STEVEN BAIRD

Name: Steven Baird

Title: Lead Bus Mechanic

Years as an FUSD Employee: 14 years

Departments served:

- Transportation-Bus Shop

What Steve likes about FUSD is that it feels more like a family.

Steve enjoys helping our Drivers. They spend hours in their buses and he wants to make sure everything works properly for them. It is Steve's goal to have the best fleet of buses.

In his spare time he enjoys fishing on his boat in Morro Bay. He also loves to travel with his wife. They enjoy cruises to Mexico and Alaska.



Transportation is Hiring! Fresno Unified Welcomes Five New Bus Drivers to the Team

Fresno Unified Transportation has successfully expanded its team with the addition of five dedicated individuals, including Anthony Balderas, James De Witt, Virginia Lozano, Gabriel Vela, and James Wells. Under the leadership of Operations Manager Melissa Beltran, Supervisor Jennifer Moren lead these new drivers to completed a rigorous 20-hour classroom session, equipping them with the essential knowledge and skills required for their roles.

Supervised by Robin Jenkins, with the help of Trainer Lanesha Ruben and Delegates, Efrain Carmona and Anita Jones, the subsequent 20-hour behind-the-wheel training program ensured that the drivers not only gained expertise but also practical skills to navigate real-world driving scenarios. This comprehensive training approach reflects both the personal dedication of the drivers and the high standards maintained by the Fresno Unified Transportation training team.

A significant achievement was reached as these individuals successfully passed the California Highway Patrol (CHP) test, officially earning their certification as Bus Drivers. This success underscores the dedication and effectiveness of the training team, ensuring that the new drivers not only meet but exceed the stringent standards set for the role.



Fresno Unified Transportation's commitment to growth and excellence remains unwavering as they continue to enroll aspiring drivers into their monthly training program. This ongoing effort ensures a steady influx of skilled individuals ready to responsibly transport students to and from school, maintaining the commitment to safe and reliable transportation.

Training Corner

Did you know our training team is here to help you stay compliant and up to date on all your driver requirements?

Here are some of the ways they can help you:

- Classroom instruction
- Behind the Wheel instruction
- Proficiencies
- Retraining
- In-Service
- Insure Driver Validity
- Help prepare for CHP test and renewal
- DOT FMCSA
- Keep the department updated on all new bus regulations



Need help preparing for your pre-trip inspection test?

Reach out to one of your team members today!

Certified Pre-Trip Team

Gabriel Castro
Kellie Cavazos
Darrell Clarke
Stevan Fabela
Carlos Fonseca
Elva Fonseca
Stacie Valeriote

FROM THE BUS SHOP



We are committed to making sure our students have a good experience on their bus ride to school or home. When a student loses an item we want them to be able to reclaim their items in a timely manner.

With our new policies and procedures regarding lost and found, we hope to make the process of reclaiming items easier.

For items that are not claimed at the end of every semester, we are partnering with Eco World. Proceeds will be donated to the FUSD Scholarship Fund.

For more information on how Eco World can help you fundraise for your school, contact Marianne in the Transportation Department.



Embarking on a new day at the Bus Shop, the dedicated team of vehicle maintenance professionals initiates their tasks promptly at 5:30 am. The leadman takes the helm, processing work orders from the previous day and inputting data into Samsara, our sophisticated GPS system. Samsara goes beyond simple tracking, serving as the linchpin for our Preventive Maintenance Schedules and Service Logs. This system ensures that buses receive timely servicing before reaching the critical 45-day or 3,000-mile limit, tracking vital intervals for engine oil, transmission filter/oil, hydraulic, fan drive, and rear end oil changes, among other essentials like fuel tank inspections, spark plugs, tune-ups, DEF filters, and coolant changes.

Beyond the digital realm, our mechanics are hands-on in addressing driver needs, ranging from jump-starting buses to fixing inoperative headlights and addressing minor issues before the morning routes commence. The fleet undergoes meticulous inspection for the mandatory 45-day examinations, and the team is ever-ready to respond to road call requirements. Simultaneously, our utility worker, doubling as a tire specialist, embarks on their day by managing flat repairs and changing tires for both yellow buses and the broader white fleet. Their inventory spans a diverse range of tire sizes and rims, ensuring comprehensive coverage for the entire fleet's tire needs, from hand truck tires to substantial tractor tires.

As the clock nears 9 am, the next wave of mechanics and the other utility worker, guided by leadman Steve Baird, tackles assignments ranging from driver defect reports to morning run issues. Afternoons see the team responding to road calls, with the Friday night sports rush presenting notable challenges.

Regular Motor Carrier inspections three times a year and a random check in June validate the team's prowess, with the last inspection in October showcasing exemplary performance. Safety takes precedence, especially with CNG fuel tanks requiring annual inspections. In December, recertification efforts included a rigorous 7-hour refresher course and a 2-hour written test, reinforcing our unwavering commitment to safety for both our team and the students relying on our buses.



Tony

Tony Aboularage, Supervisor of Vehicle Maintenance

off the mark .com

by Mark Parisi



FUSD ROAD-EO TEAM



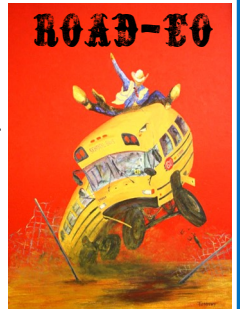
The more training and practice a driver has the safer he or she will be.

At the Road-EO drivers compete against each other using their skills in precision driving. Each event is either timed or measured to determine the score. The events consist of an obstacle course which includes backing, parallel parking, student loading/unloading, right and left hand turns, and written exams on rules and regulations and vehicle inspection.

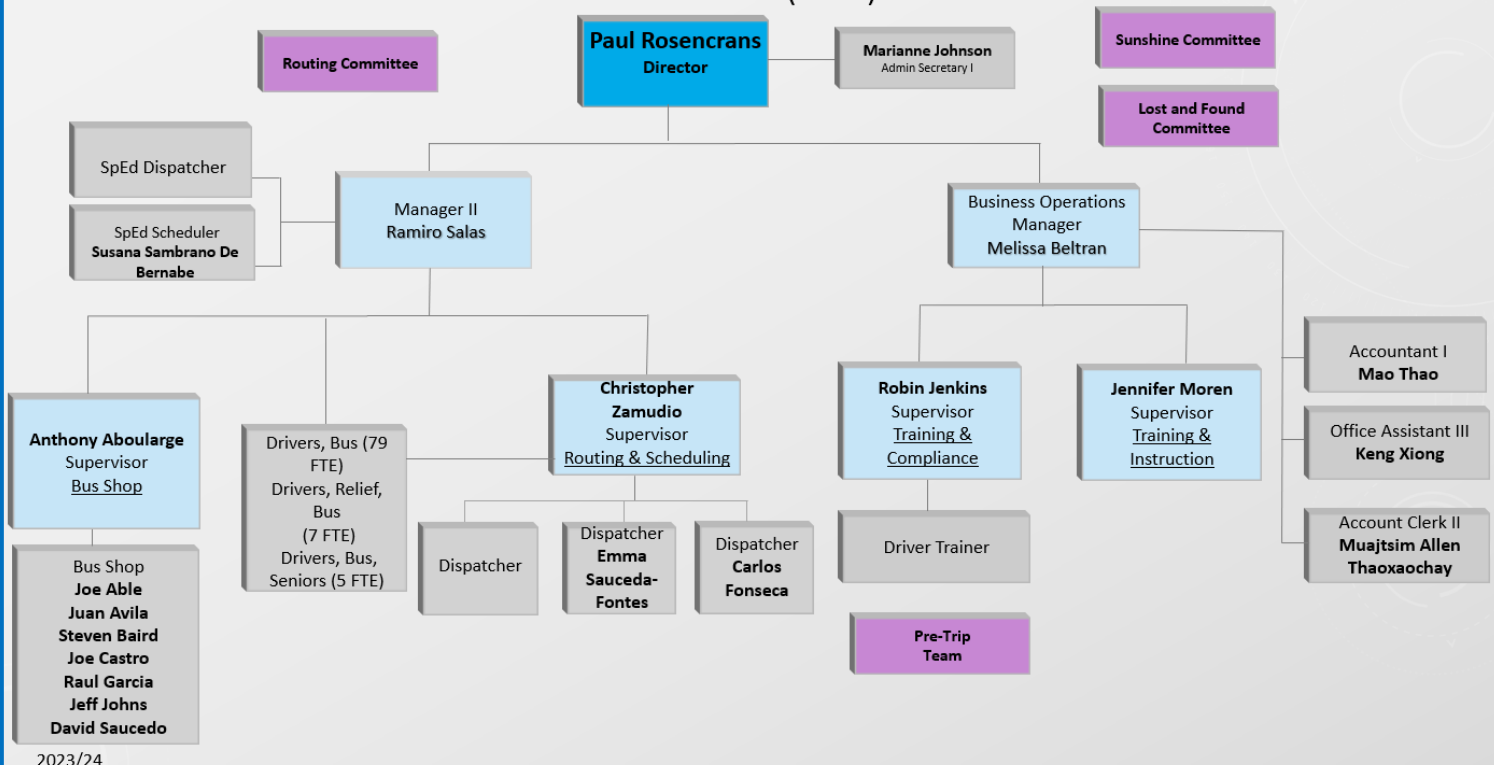
Road-EO is a great skill builder that is beneficial to the drivers, school district and the students that ride the bus.

Fresno Unified's Team will be competing in their first Road-EO of the year on **March 16, 2024** in Garden Grove, CA. Garden Grove is down south and is one of the larger Road-Eos that our team will compete in.

We wish our team the best of luck at this event!



TRANSPORTATION-(559)457-3138



Join our Team!!

transportation.fresnounified.org

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