April 24, 2023

Dr. Ronald Grevera: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dr. Ronald Grevera Superintendent of the Greater Nanticoke Area School District. I'd like to welcome everyone here today for the press conference concerning our one and a half million-dollar grant to allocate 15 electric school buses to our current fleet of school buses. I'd like to welcome Senior White House official Mitch Landrieu, EPA Administrator Michael Reagan, Senator Casey, Congressman Cartwright. I want to thank them for the support for the funding for this grant. In addition to our visitors today, I’d also like to acknowledge our Board of Education; specifically, Mr. Tony Prushinski, our Board President, who is unable to attend today’s event. I would also like to thank members, Wendy Wiaterowski-Graves and Mr. Mark Cardone, who are with us today. Additionally, I would also like to welcome the City Council and Mayor Coughlin for attending today's event. And I want to welcome officials from the bus manufacturer Rohrer, and folks from White Transit who are in attendance today, Mr. Rick Andraco, Scott Henry and John Henry. Prior to the press conference, we had the opportunity to ride the electric bus wth a number of our students. The funding for this program is from the Clean School Bus Program. Our students today are learning about green technology, and also the importance of preserving our environment for future generations, as they do their part in preserving the environment by eliminating greenhouse gases. These electric school buses will help eliminate carbon emissions and theoretically will help clean up our environment. These harmful greenhouse gases continue to increase the temperatures on our planet. And although we are a small community, our students are becoming good stewards of the earth and preserving our local ecosystem. We have the great honor to have Mitchell Landrieu with us today. Mr. Landrieu served as Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana from 2004 to 2010. He was the mayor of New Orleans from 2010 to 2018. Mitch Landrieu is the son of the former New Orleans Mayor and Secretary of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Moon Landrieu, and the brother of former U.S Senator Mary Landrieu. President Joe Biden announced that Landrieu would serve as Senior Advisor, responsible for coordinating implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. At this time, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Senior White House Advisor to President Biden, Mr. Mitch Landrieu. (Applause)

Senior Advisor Mitch Landrieu: Mr. Superintendent thank you so much and thank all of you for being with us today. I'm thrilled to be with my partner and my friend Administrator Michael Regan, of course Senator Bob Casey who has helped lead this effort, along with Representative Matt Cartwright. And it's great to be in Nanticoke with all of you today and of course with all of the incredible students that we just had a great experience on this brand-new bus with. So, I'm thrilled to be here on behalf of President Biden. You know the President said that the only way to have a really strong country is to have a strong economy and the only way to do that is to have strong infrastructure. And the President, with the leadership of Senator Casey and Representative Cartwright and a lot of other folks, passed the historic Infrastructure Bill that provided 1.2 trillion dollars to rebuild the roads, the bridges, the airports, the ports, make sure that everybody has high-speed internet so that as we like to say a little girl shouldn't have to sit in the back of a mama's car at McDonald's trying to do her homework because they didn't have internet at their home. Clean air and safe water, and then a clean energy economy. And as many of you know, in just two years, the president not only has delivered on the promise but in a very big way. 12.5 million jobs created, 800 000 manufacturing jobs, $425 billion of private sector investment. But one of the most important parts of this bill is clean air and safe water. The President, the Vice President, the administrator, everybody up here really understands and knows that every person deserves an opportunity to have clean air and safe water, and the Administrator has been working really hard in that regard. One of the things that is in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is $5 billion to make sure that as we electrify the economy, that one of the things that happens is that we electrify all of the school buses in America. Because I don't know about you guys, but I when used to ride the bus to school in the morning. I vividly remember having a public bus ride off and be stuck in a cloud of exhaust that made my head spin. And of course, the Administrator has been leading this effort on behalf of the President to make sure that we get money out of the door into school districts all across America to make sure that everybody gets a chance to ride on a bus like this. When we were riding around all the kids were like man this is really quiet, they can hear what I'm saying, and it was a glorious experience. But as this money gets out of the door, I can just tell you that I have been to Pennsylvania actually a lot more times than I can count. The President has delivered on his promises, whether it is the Montgomery Locks and Dams, Senator, which he wants to call it the Casey Locks and Dams now (laughter) or Congressman Cartwright, I think billions of dollars have hit the streets in Pennsylvania. Whether it is cleaning up abandoned mine lands or often wells, or the clean water to clean up the lead pipes or whether like it was the other day, rebuilding a bridge or rebuilding a train station, like we have done many, many, many times. This money is just beginning to hit the ground so that the livelihoods of the people here are going to change dramatically. Because at the end of the day it's not just about public health and safety, it's about jobs as well. So, the folks that manufacture these buses, the folks that manufacture the batteries that go in these buses, are as important and critical to the future of the country as everyone else is. And of course, at the end of the day, though for all the students that are listening, I want you to know that your president sees you. Each and every day he thinks about all of you and he thinks in terms of you individually and the impact that these clean buses are going to have on not only your ability to get back and forth to school, but to do so in a healthy way, that gives you the greatest opportunity to realize your God-given potential, and to actually lead the country because we're relying on you to make it better than what we gave it to you. So, I want to thank all of you for being here. I'm going to leave it to the Administrator to make the announcement today. This district has already received, I think, $6 million for 15 buses that are coming your way, but the announcement today is on top of that. Now let me just end with this, none of this is possible without great partnerships. And this is your federal government working with your state and your local authorities, but it wouldn't have happened if congress wouldn't have passed this. And so Congressman Cartwright is going to come up now to be followed in a minute by Senator Casey, but both of these individuals help lead this effort on behalf of the President of the United States so that the people of the great state of Pennsylvania could have the benefits of what we're talking about today. So, please let me turn it over to the Congressman from this District. Congressman thanks for having us. (Applause)

Congressman Matt Cartwright: Thank you, Mitch. And folks, in case you didn't realize it, we have some big heavy hitters here. Let me tell you about Mitchell Landrieu. I was there in the fall of 2021 on the south lawn of the White House, Senator Casey was there too, and we were there to watch the signing of the IIJA, Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act, and this was something that was a long time coming. There were voices in the congress who said, well come on, infrastructure big deal, anybody can do Infrastructure, well that's not true. In fact, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity that that the Administration capitalized on. I'm here to tell you, the last time the federal government did infrastructure at a level of that this reached was during the Eisenhower Administration, which was before I was born, (laughter) I promise. (laughter) which means by definition for me, it is a once in a lifetime occurrence that we got this $1.2 trillion across the goal line. This is money that invests in us, and it helps us believe in ourselves here in this country, and rebuilds our roads, our bridges, our water systems, our sewer systems, our rail systems, broadband internet, as Mr. Landrieu mentioned. And I'm here to tell you, he was appointed the Senior Advisor to the White House in charge of Infrastructure Investment the day before we had that announcement on the south lawn of the White House. This is the infrastructure Czar before you here today, and the reason I'm here is to tell you Senator Casey and I are going to do our dead level best to make sure that Nanticoke and Luzerne County and Northeastern Pennsylvania and all of Pennsylvania is not going to be left behind in all of this investment money, that's not going to happen. (Applause) So, you're going to see all of these Investments we're going to get every penny of our fair share of these tax dollars working here in Northeastern Pennsylvania and the $6 million that Mitch Landrieu just mentioned, it’s just the beginning. $6 million for clean buses, and it’s a wonderful thing. So, I'm here to say, this is a great celebration. Thank God for people like Mitch Landrieu and Administrator Regan, thank you for being here, and I look forward to your comments. And I'm here to introduce one of my heroes in politics, Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, everybody. (Applause)

Senator Bob Casey: Well thanks very much everybody. I want to commend and salute the work of Matt Cartwright. As a member of the United States House of Representatives, and not just voting for the Infrastructure Investment in Jobs Act but voting for so many other initiatives in just a two-year period, that is helping to transform the United States, and we're here to celebrate one of those. One of the many investments that the Biden Administration is making in Northeastern Pennsylvania, and I want to commend and salute the work of and welcome back to Pennsylvania, Mitch Landrieu, for his good work, not only serving prior to this the people of Louisiana, and New Orleans, but now serving the entire nation. And we're honored by the presence here today of Administrator Regan and for his leadership in leading the effort to bring about a clean energy future. Many of you might know this, but our state's constitution, way back in 1971, the voters of our Commonwealth passed a new Constitutional Amendment Article 1 Section 27, reads as follows, the people have a right to clean air, to pure water and the preservation of the natural scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the environment. The Amendment goes on to talk about each of us as citizens being trustees of the common property of the Commonwealth. We have a duty to provide clean air. And if you are an elected public official, especially at the federal level, you too have a duty to vote and to advocate for policies that will result in clean air. What better investment could we make in the lives of our children, not only here in Nanticoke area, but also any school district in the country, then makes an investment in the clean energy provided by, like the new bus behind me. So I'm grateful to be part of this today, and I have the high honor to introduce someone who's going to leave that future not only in this region, but I predict well beyond this region. And I have a biographical sketch that I'm going to read, it's going to take a while because there's so much to brag about when it comes to the introduction I'm making of Sophia Lukowski. Sophia is a senior, she

just told me she'll be attending King's College next year, she's the president, that's going to take a while so get out your list, this is our list, she is the President of the National Honors Society, she’s a member of Student Council, she's Editor-in-Chief of the Yearbook, she's an honor student and a participant in the Youth Scholars Program at Wilkes University, she is a peer tutor and she's lettered in the following sports, here's the list, soccer, where you set a record, what's the record? (inaudible)

Sophia Lukowski: No that’s football.

Senator Bob Casey: Oh football (laughter) for football, soccer, cross country football, what's the record?

Sophia Lukowski: Most extra points kicked in a game. (Applause)

Senator Bob Casey: Most extra points kicked in a game. I'm not done yet, she also participates in basketball as well as track and field, she serves as an advisor for the junior leadership Northeast, and she has used the skills she's attained to be a positive leader in both her school and the community. Help me welcome Sophia. (Applause)

Sophia Laskowski: Good afternoon, everyone, my name is Sophia Laskowski and I'm a senior here at the greater Nanticoke Area School District and I'm very excited because I'm a part of the Green School Bus Initiative that will help assist in eliminating greenhouse gases that are

produced by the emissions of school buses and contribute to the depletion of Earth's ozone layer. Today I have the distinguished honor and privilege of introducing the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Mr. Michael Regan. Michael Regan was sworn in

as the 16th Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, becoming the first black man and second person of color to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. Administrator Regan is a graduate of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, making him the first EPA Administrator to have graduated from a historically black college. He earned a master’s degree in public administration from the George Washington University. Administrator Regan is a native of Goldsboro North Carolina where he developed a passion for the environment. Prior to his nomination of the EPA Administrator, Michael Regan served as the Secretary of North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. As Secretary, he spearheaded in the development and implementation of North Carolina's Seminole Plan to address climate change and transition the state to a clean energy economy. Under his leadership he secured the largest coal ash cleanup in United States history. He led complex negotiations regarding the cleanup of the Cape Fear River which had been contaminated for years by toxic chemicals. In addition, he established North Carolina's first of its kind Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Board to better align social inequities, environmental protection, and community empowerment. Previously Administrator Regan served as Associate Vice President of the U.S. Climate and Energy and as Southeast Regional Director of the Environmental Defense Fund, where he conveyed energy companies, business leaders, environmental and industries groups and elected officials across the country to achieve pragmatic solutions to the climate crisis. He began his career with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, eventually becoming a National Program Manager responsible for designing strategic solutions with industry and corporate stakeholders to reduce air pollution, improve energy efficiency and address climate change. Throughout his career he has been guided by a belief in forming consensus, fostering an open dialogue rooted in respect for science and the law, and in an understanding that environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand in hand. At this time, it serves me a great pleasure to introduce the great the EPA Administrator Michael Regan. (Applause)

Administrator Michael Regan: Well, thank you Sophia for that introduction I really appreciate that although I am more impressed by your bio. (laughter) I want to thank the folks at Rohrer and the White Transit Company for letting us experience the next generation electric buses. It was a great experience, it was a great ride, great conversation with the students while we were driving, so thank you for that. Dr. Grevera and Principal Scibek, thank you for hosting us here at the outstanding Greater Nanticoke Area High School Senior High School. It is an honor to be here today with my good friend Mitchell Andrew. it's always fun to travel the country with Mitch. There's a lot of stories to be told a lot of fun to be had, so thank you Mitch. Mitch is doing a great job representing what the president has led and championed for this country so glad to have him. Senator Casey thank you for being here today and thank you for your leadership and your unwavering commitment to the environment and being such a strong partner to EPA. Congressman Cartwright, it's good to be here with you and your district, thank you for your leadership in the Congress. You know, one of the most rewarding parts of my job is the opportunity to meet and interact with young people. After all, the young people are why we do what we do, they are our future leaders; their passion is contagious, and I recognize that so much of our work at EPA. So many of the decisions that I have to make on a daily basis impact directly their future. Every day, kids across this country ride the bus to and from school. Seeing and hearing the bus pull up to the stop in the morning, watching those double doors open, it's a quintessential experience for millions of children, millions of children all across this country, and a trip down memory lane for many of us adults in the audience today. But traditional school buses that rely on the internal combustion engines emit toxic pollutants in the air. Not only are these pollutants harmful to the environment but they can also be harmful to the health and well-being of every student, every bus driver and every resident in the surrounding communities. So, folks it's time to reimagine what riding to school in a yellow school bus means. Thanks to the leadership of President Biden in support of congressional partners like Senator Casey and Congressman Cartwright. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides as Mitch said an unprecedented $5 billion, billion with the b, investment for low and zero emission school buses. And today right here I'm pleased to announce the availability of an additional $400 million in school bus grants for the United States of America. (Applause) Now this is the first round of grants this year that follow $1 billion that we've already awarded through our Clean School Bus Rebate Competition which was launched just last year. I'm also thrilled that as part of the Rebate Program the Greater Nanticoke School District is set to receive 15 electric school buses, thanks to President Biden's historic Investment in America, 15 school buses. (Applause) And we were just talking earlier about why and how special these Investments are. As Mitch said, the President sees each and every one of you. Typically, these bigger announcements happen in larger cities like New York, LA, places of that nature but no, we're in communities like this one here 10 000 people population or less that are leading the way. 15 electric school buses. Transitioning to a clean transportation future means cleaner air, it means less pollution, it means healthier children, it means healthier communities, it means less time away from school, and increased focus and productivity, and it means good paying jobs in American manufacturing. Our Agency is also committed to ensuring this funding reaches schools that need it the most. EPA's Clean School Bus Program will prioritize school districts and underserved and tribal communities, covering both bus and infrastructure costs for all awardees. Not only are these historic Investments transforming how millions of children will get to and from school, but they help position our nation to achieve our climate goals and will protect our public for generations to come. I couldn't be more optimistic about where we're headed together, and I couldn’t be more grateful to President Biden and Vice President Harris who are working every single day to build a cleaner healthier future for all of our children. Mark my words, zero emission school buses can and one day will be the American standard. Now it's time to hit the accelerator, let's go. Thank you. (Applause)

(Inaudible speaking)