

Be Diligent; Be Aware for School Bus Safety!



Michigan School Bus Driver Continuing Education Curriculum Manual

Certification for
2021-2023



Acknowledgement

Section 51 of Act No. 187 of 1990 (Pupil Transportation Act), Section 257.1851 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, requires that a driver of a school bus transporting pupils to or from school or school-related events complete an entry level school bus safety education course and a six-hour continuing education course within two years after the entry level certification, as well as each succeeding two years thereafter. Each course must be completed at an educational agency approved by the Michigan Department of Education.

This continuing education curriculum, approved by the Michigan Department of Education for the training period July 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021, for certification through September 30, 2023, was compiled with the cooperation of many individuals concerned with the safe transportation of Michigan's children.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Michigan school bus driver biannual continuing education class. Michigan school bus drivers are professional drivers who are concerned about student safety. You are part of a statewide pupil transportation system that strives to safely deliver over one quarter of a million pupils each school day. This continuing education program was written with the goal of reviewing and sharing information that will help you to continue to provide safe travel for the pupils you transport.

The Michigan Pupil Transportation – *Be Diligent, Be Aware for School Bus Safety* curriculum that will guide you through your six hours of required continuing education training provides each participant with the opportunity to review and improve their bus driving knowledge and skills. As you proceed through the training, please consider future continuing education topics you would like to see provided and share these ideas with your instructor. A goal of this training is to be relevant to the current needs of you as a professional school bus driver, and that is best done with your input on topics that will assist you to be the best driver possible.

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Michigan Beginning School Bus Driver Manual

Every driver should maintain their *Beginning School Bus Driver Manual* in a fully updated status. The beginning school bus driver manual is updated and revised by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) as procedures or laws are changed. The most current version is always available on the MDE Pupil Transportation website. (Search the web for: Michigan Department of Education Pupil Transportation and look under Curriculum).

Driver Updates

Michigan's Emergency Vehicle Caution Law

More commonly known as the *Move over Law*; requires motorists to slow down for stationary vehicles with their lights activated and move over if safely possible.

PA 349 amends 257.653 (a) and (b) took effect February 13, 2019. The law requires drivers approaching and passing certain stationary vehicles giving a visual signal by means of flashing, rotating, or oscillating lights to exhibit due care and caution by reducing their speed by 10 mph below the posted speed limit and yield the right-of-way by moving at least 1 lane or 2 vehicle widths apart whenever possible - i.e. traffic, weather or road conditions.

257.653(a) includes the following emergency vehicles that have their red, blue, white or amber lights visible:

- Police
- Fire
- Rescue
- Ambulance
- Road Service
 - Includes tow trucks and courtesy vehicles operated by the Michigan Department of Transportation

257.653(b) includes the following vehicles signaling with their flashing, rotating or oscillating amber lights:

- Solid waste collection vehicle
 - Unit used for the curbside collection of municipal solid waste
- Utility service vehicle – owned and operated by a utility provider
 - Electric power
 - Sewage collection
 - Telephone service
 - Natural gas
 - Water distribution
 - Cable or video service
- Road maintenance vehicle – owned and operated by road maintenance authority:
 - Michigan Department of Transportation
 - Local road commission

On roads with two or more lanes of travel in the same direction

When approaching a stationary emergency vehicle with its emergency lights activated, carefully move over into an open lane.

- If this is not possible due to traffic, weather, or road conditions, slow down and pass with caution, allowing the emergency, road service etc. vehicle as much space as possible.

On roads with one lane of travel in each direction

When approaching a stationary emergency vehicle with its emergency lights activated, carefully move over into an open adjacent lane

- If this is not possible due to traffic, weather, or road conditions, slow down and pass with caution, allowing the emergency, road service etc. vehicle as much space as possible.

Michigan's Bicycle Passing Law

PA 279 and 280 went into effect 9/27/2018: Requires drivers passing a bicycle to stay at least 3 feet to the left or right of the bike when possible. Or, to pass at a safe distance at a safe speed if 3 feet is not practicable. It also allows passing a bicycle in a no passing zone.

Be Aware – of Cyclists and Pedestrians

Drivers need to divide their attention in several directions, whether it's other vehicles, pedestrians or road signs and traffic signals -- traffic safety instantly becomes a major concern. The University of Toronto Engineering research study using eye-tracking equipment, found that more than half of the drivers failed to make necessary scans for pedestrians and cyclists at right turns.

Be Diligent, Be Safe – Watch for Cyclists and Pedestrians

The University of Toronto study found that 57 percent of drivers had attentional failures and missed seeing cyclists or pedestrians by:

- Failing to gaze at an area of importance where cyclists would be before turning
- Not making frequent over-the-shoulder checks for them
- Being more diligent where parked vehicles may block their view
- Had more failures in areas they drive frequently

Hazard light speed limit change

Section 55 (3) (a) (b) of the Pupil Transportation Act was amended in 2019 effecting hazard "amber (yellow) light" bus stops. MCL 257.1855 increased the allowable speed limit from 45 mph to 50 mph. See Hazard Light section on page 31 for more details.

Insulin Dependent Diabetics

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations regarding insulin dependent drivers changed on November 19, 2018. Federal Regulation 391.46 was revised to permit individuals with a stable insulin regimen and properly controlled insulin-treated diabetes mellitus (ITDM) to be qualified to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). Previously, ITDM drivers were prohibited from driving CMVs unless they obtained an exemption from FMCSA.

The new rule enables a certified medical examiner (ME) to grant an ITDM driver a Medical Examiner's Certificate. To do so, the healthcare professional who manages, and prescribes insulin for, the treatment of the driver's diabetes, provides the Insulin-Treated Diabetes Mellitus Assessment Form (ITDM Assessment Form), MCSA-5870, to the certified ME indicating that the driver maintains a stable insulin regimen and proper control of his or her diabetes. The certified ME then makes the final determination if the driver meets FMCSA's physical qualification standards and can operate CMVs for up to a maximum of 12 months.

Michigan school bus drivers who are insulin dependent are no longer required to apply for a waiver.

Drug and Alcohol Testing Clearinghouse

The Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCSA) implemented the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) on January 6,

2020. The Clearinghouse is a secure online database that will give employers, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), State Driver Licensing Agencies (SDLAs), and State law enforcement personnel real-time information about commercial driver's license (CDL) and commercial learner's permit (CLP) holders' drug and alcohol program violations.

The Clearinghouse will contain records of violations of drug and alcohol prohibitions in 49 CFR Part 382, Subpart B, including positive drug or alcohol test results and test refusals. When a driver completes the return-to-duty (RTD) process and follow-up testing plan, this information will also be recorded in the Clearinghouse.

School bus drivers as well as any driver required to meet FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Testing Program requirements will be included in the Clearinghouse.

Register for the Clearinghouse

Registered drivers will be able to see the information that would be released to an employer before consenting to the release. Registration is available at <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/register> Drivers may use the Clearinghouse to:

- Provide electronic consent to release detailed drug and/or alcohol violation information in your Clearinghouse record to a current or prospective employer.
- Review your own Clearinghouse record and initiate the process to revise or remove incorrectly entered information.
- Identify a substance abuse professional (SAP) to report on Return to Duty activities, if you have an unresolved drug and alcohol program violation in your Clearinghouse record.

Important note: Drivers failing to consent to a query will result in a driver being prohibited from performing safety sensitive functions for the employer conducting the query.

How driver data will be protected in the Clearinghouse

- Clearinghouse information will not be available to the public; only authorized users will be able to register and access the Clearinghouse for designated purposes.
- The Clearinghouse will require authentication, via a login.gov username and password, to access records. Login.gov, a shared service which offers secure online access to participating government systems, also requires the completion of a user verification process to ensure the proper person is using those credentials.
- Drivers registered in the Clearinghouse will be able to access their Clearinghouse records at any time, and at no cost to them. Drivers will only be able to access their own information, not information about other drivers.
- FMCSA will only share detailed drug and alcohol violation information with a prospective or current employer, and/or their designated consortium/third-party administrator (C/TPA), when an employer or designated C/TPA has requested and received specific consent from the driver.
- Driver information will only be used by FMCSA and other enforcement agencies as required to enforce drug and alcohol testing regulations.

Be Aware of CBD Products

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the primary psychoactive component of marijuana. A psychoactive drug is a chemical substance that changes brain function and results in alterations in perception, mood, consciousness, cognition, or behavior.

The Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) final rule effective January 2017 established a new code to include Marijuana Extract (7350) in Schedule I of the Schedules of Controlled Substances. Marijuana Extract is defined by the DEA as an extract containing one or more cannabinoids that has been derived from any plant of the genus Cannabis, other than the separated resin (whether crude or purified) obtained from the plant.

The DEA also commented "Although it might be theoretically possible to produce a CBD extract that contains absolutely no amounts of other cannabinoids, the DEA is not aware of any industrially-utilized methods that have achieved this result".

A DOT Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance (ODAPC) Notice was issued in February 2020 that included the following reminders for safety sensitive employees including school bus drivers:

Any product, including "Cannabidiol" (CBD) products, with a concentration of more than 0.3% THC remains classified as marijuana, a Schedule I drug under the Controlled Substances Act.

1. The Department of Transportation requires testing for marijuana not CBD.
2. The labeling of many CBD products may be misleading because the products could contain higher levels of THC than what the product label states. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not currently certify the levels of THC in CBD products, so there is no Federal oversight to ensure that the labels are accurate. The FDA has cautioned the public that: "Consumers should beware purchasing and using any [CBD] products." The FDA has stated: "It is currently illegal to market CBD by adding it to a food or labeling it as a dietary supplement."* Also, the FDA has issued several warning letters to companies because their products contained more CBD than indicated on the product label.
3. The Department of Transportation's Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulation, Part 40, does not authorize the use of Schedule I drugs, including marijuana, for any reason. Furthermore, CBD use is not a legitimate medical explanation for a laboratory-confirmed marijuana positive result. Therefore, Medical Review Officers will verify a drug test confirmed at the appropriate cutoffs as positive, even if an employee claims they only used a CBD product.

Be Aware – Be Safe

It remains unacceptable for any safety-sensitive employee subject to the Department of Transportation's drug testing regulations to use marijuana. Since the use of CBD products could lead to a positive drug test result, Department of Transportation-regulated safety-sensitive employees should exercise caution when considering whether to use CBD products.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is working to answer questions about CBD products: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/what-you-need-know-and-what-were-working-find-out-about-products-containing-cannabis-or-cannabis>

Recreational and Medical Marijuana is Legal in Michigan – But NOT for Commercial Drivers

Even though the use of Recreational Marijuana by adults joined Medical Marijuana and is now legal in Michigan, marijuana remains a drug listed in Schedule I of the Federal Controlled Substances Act. This means that it remains unacceptable for any safety-sensitive employee subject to drug testing under the Department of Transportation's drug testing regulations to use marijuana. **In other words, all commercial drivers, including school bus drivers MUST NOT use marijuana in any form.**

Under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs), a person is not physically qualified to drive a CMV if he or she uses any Schedule I controlled substance such as marijuana. (See 49 CFR §§ 391.11(b)(4) and 391.41(b)(12)).

In addition to the physical qualification requirements, the FMCSRs prohibit a driver from being in possession of or under the influence of any Schedule I controlled substance, including marijuana, while on duty, and prohibit motor carriers from permitting a driver to be on duty if he or she possesses, is under the influence of, or uses a Schedule I controlled substance. (See 49 CFR §§ 392.2 and 392.4).

Legalization of marijuana use by States and other jurisdictions also has not modified the application of U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) drug testing regulations in 49 CFR parts 40 and 382.

The Department of Transportation's Drug and Alcohol Testing Regulation – 49 CFR Part 40, at 40.151(e) – does not authorize even "medical marijuana" under a state law to be a valid medical explanation for a transportation employee's positive drug test result.

Therefore, possessing or using marijuana for medical or recreational use will disqualify a driver from driving any commercial vehicle.

It is also important for all school bus drivers to remember these other key points of MCL 257.1849

- (3) A person shall not operate a school bus:
 - If they have 7 or more points on their driving record
 - If they have a restricted license under MCL 257.625
- (4) A CDL driver license skill test shall be administered by a state authorized examiner for a school bus driver who has 1 or more of the following:
 - a) Had driver or CDL license suspended, canceled or denied under MCL 257.303 or MCL 257.319
 - b) Has been disqualified from operating a commercial motor vehicle
 - c) Has been convicted of any of the disqualifying offenses in 49 CFR 383.51(b) while operating a commercial motor vehicle or any offense in a noncommercial motor vehicle that would be a disqualifying condition under 49 CFR 383.51(b) if committed in a commercial motor vehicle.
 - d) Has more than 1 conviction of any of the serious traffic violations defined in 49 CFR 383.51 (c), while operating a CMV within the last 3 years.
 - e) Has been convicted of any motor vehicle traffic violation that resulted in an accident while operating a commercial motor vehicle.
 - f) Has been disqualified from operating a school bus under subsection (3)
 - g) Driver shall not operate a school bus until driver has passed CDL skills test

Serious Convictions

MCL 257.1849 Section (4) (d) was also amended to specify serious conviction defined in 49 CFR 383.51 (C), (was 49 CFR 353.5). See **Table 1 Disqualification for Major Traffic Violations, Table 2 Serious Traffic Violations** table below for detailed information. **Table 3 Disqualifications for Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Offenses** can be found on page 26.

Disqualifications for major traffic violations				
Table 1 to 49 CFR §383.51b Excerpted				
List of the offenses and periods a person with a CLP or CDL is disqualified from driving a CMV for a conviction or refusal to be tested depending upon the type of vehicle the driver is operating at the time.				
	When operating a CMV		When operating a non-CMV, if CMV or Non-CMV license is revoked, cancelled or suspended	
	First Conviction	Second conviction	First Conviction	Second conviction
If the driver operates a motor vehicle and is convicted of:				
(1) Being under the influence of alcohol (state law)	1 year	Life	1 year	Life
(2) Being under the influence of a controlled substance	1 year	Life	1 year	Life
(3) Having 0.04 or up alcohol concentration	1 year	Life	Not applicable	Not applicable
(4) Refusing an alcohol test	1 year	Life	1 year	Life
(5) Leaving the scene of an accident	1 year	Life	1 year	Life
(6) Using the vehicle to commit a felony	1 year	Life	1 year	Life
(7) Driving CMV when CLP or CDL is revoked, suspended, or canceled, or driver is disqualified	1 Year	Life	Not applicable	Not applicable
8) Causing a fatality through the negligent operation of CMV	1 year	Life	Not applicable	Not applicable
(9) Using CMV in the commission of a felony involving controlled substance	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement
(10) Using CMV in the commission of felony involving trafficking in persons	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Life-not eligible for 10-year reinstatement	Not applicable	Not applicable

Disqualifications for serious traffic violations

Table 2 to 49 CFR §383.51c Excerpted

List of the offenses and periods a person with a CLP or CDL is disqualified from driving a CMV for a conviction of any combination of offenses in a separate incident within a 3 year period. Depending upon the type of vehicle the driver is operating at the time.

	When operating a CMV		When operating a non-CMV, if CMV or Non-CMV license is revoked, cancelled or suspended	
	Second conviction	Third or subsequent conviction	Second conviction	Third or subsequent conviction
If the driver operates a motor vehicle and is convicted of:				
(1) Speeding 15 mph or more above speed limit	60 Days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(2) Driving recklessly	60 Days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(3) Making improper or erratic traffic lane changes	60 Days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(4) Following the vehicle ahead too closely	60 Days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(5) Violating traffic control law in connection with a fatal accident	60 Days	60 days	120 days	120 days
(6) Driving a CMV without obtaining a CLP or CDL	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable
(7) Driving a CMV without a CLP or CDL in possession	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable
8) Driving a CMV without proper class or endorsements for vehicle, passengers or cargo	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable
(9) Violating law or ordinance prohibiting texting while driving a CMV	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable
(10) Violating law or ordinance restricting or prohibiting the use of a hand-held phone while driving CMV	60 days	Not applicable	120 days	Not applicable

<https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/title49/section/383.51>

Be Diligent, Be Aware of Distractions for Student Safety

Diligent *dil-i-gent* Adjective. Having or showing care and conscientiousness in one's work or duties. Constant in effort to accomplish something attentive and persistent in doing anything.

Distractions are an Epidemic

According to the National Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), driver distraction is a specific type of driver inattention. Distraction occurs when drivers divert their attention from the driving task to focus on some other activity.

As smartphone use, digital dashboard displays and other mobile technology have proliferated, distracted driving discussions often center on cell phone use and texting. But, distracted driving also includes other activities including but not limited to:

- Eating
- Talking to other passengers
- Adjusting or using radio
- Adjusting climate controls

A distraction-affected crash is any crash which a driver was identified as distracted at the time of the crash. 2017 Distracted driving crash facts from (NHTSA):

- Nine percent of fatal crashes were distraction related
- 3,166 people were killed in crashes involving distracted drivers
- 599 non-occupants were killed in distracted-affected crashes
 - Including pedestrians, bicyclists and others

Distractions by other Motorists Prove Fatal for School Bus Passengers

Between Oct. 30 and Nov. 1, 2018 five children were killed and six were injured across five different cases in Mississippi, Indiana, Kentucky, Florida and Pennsylvania. Each death involved drivers and students loading or unloading the school bus.

October 31, 2018, Jeremy Thomas works along with his wife Miranda at the Pratts Friendship Fire Department in Guntown, MS. Shortly after arriving at work, Jeremy received a 9-11 notification on his phone about an accident near their home.

A school bus traveling east on State Highway 370 near the intersection with County Road 2578 in Baldwyn, Mississippi, stopped to pick up students at the designated location when a Toyota pickup truck traveling west struck a child, who was crossing the highway in the early morning darkness. The school bus, operated by the Baldwyn School District, had its warning lights on, and the driver had deployed the stop arm. The posted speed limit is 55 mph.

That child was Jeremy and Miranda's 9 year-old son Dalen. Dalen was airlifted to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis where he died from his injuries.

The driver of the pickup, Hunter Newman, 22, received two indictments by a grand jury, causing injury while overtaking a school bus and culpable negligence manslaughter. Each charge carries a sentence of up to 20 years in prison.

The incident happened on a flat, straight, open stretch of the two-lane highway east of Baldwyn. Witnesses described the lighting as “dusky” at the time the wreck happened about a half-hour before sunrise. Newman remained on the scene and talked to officers. He said he saw flashing lights but thought it was a tractor. When he finally realized it was a bus, it was too late to stop.

But the two motorists behind Newman’s westbound truck said they were able to tell it was school bus a lot farther away. The man right behind Newman said he saw the bus’s strobe light on the roof about a half-mile away. That witness said he never saw Newman’s brake lights.

A second driver, even further behind Newman, said she saw the yellow flashing lights of the school bus well before she got there and started slowing down.

October 25, 2018, About 6:50 a.m. a school bus traveling north in Hartsfield, Georgia, stopped to pick up students at the designated location when a car traveling south struck two children, who had started to cross the roadway in the early morning darkness. The school bus, operated by the Colquitt County School District, had its warning lights on, and the driver had deployed the stop arm. The posted speed limit is 55 mph.

As a result of the crash, a 10-year-old Noah Palmer, who pushed his younger brother out of the way when they were hit, was fatally injured. His 7-year-old brother Dylan Wolfe, suffered serious injuries and was transported by air ambulance to a medical facility.

According the Georgia State Patrol, the boys were crossing the road from their residence to their waiting school bus. It was still dark but vision was not otherwise obscured, the GSP said. The bus was stopped with all of its safety devices working.

Monica Mae Cutts, 26, of Tallahassee, Florida, failed to stop for the school bus, according to the GSP report at the time. She is accused of texting while driving when her car struck the boys. Cutts later plead guilty to vehicular homicide and serious injury by a vehicle. She was sentenced to 5 years in prison, 10 years of probation along with fines for medical and funeral costs. She was also sentenced to 15 years’ probation for the serious injury charge.

If Monica Mae Cutts had been aware, this crash may not have happened.

October 30, 2018, a school bus traveling north on State Route 25 in Rochester, Fulton County, Indiana, stopped to pick up students when a pickup truck traveling south struck four children, who were crossing the roadway in the early morning darkness.

Alivia Stahl, 9, and her six-year-old twin brothers, Mason and Xzavier Ingle were killed, Maverik Lowe, 11, was also hit and airlifted to the hospital with multiple broken bones and internal injuries.

According to a preliminary report by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the school bus had its warning lights on and the driver had deployed the stop arm. At

this location, SR-25 is a two-lane highway with a posted speed limit of 55 mph. A mobile home park is located on the west side of the roadway, and an agricultural field is located on the east side. There is no roadway lighting at this location. A "WATCH FOR SCHOOL BUS" and a "LEFT CURVE" warning sign are posted for southbound traffic on SR-25.

The driver of the pickup truck, Alyssa Shepherd, 25, was found guilty of three counts of reckless homicide, and a felony count of criminal recklessness. She was sentenced to four years in prison.

Shepherd said she had just dropped her husband at work. Her three-year-old daughter, two-year-old son, and 12-year-old brother were in the back seat of her Toyota Tacoma truck. Her brother had spent the night at her house, and she was taking him to her mother's home to get dressed so she could take him to school.

Shepherd said her children were sleeping and her brother was talking about schoolwork. She said her phone was on the truck's console.

If Alyssa Shepherd had been aware and diligent, these children may still be alive today.

Be Aware – Loading and Unloading can be Dangerous

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) the most dangerous part of the school bus ride is getting on and off the bus. Pedestrian fatalities (while loading and unloading school buses) account for approximately three times as many school bus-related fatalities, when compared to school bus occupant fatalities.

Be Aware - of Potential Hazardous Motorists at the Bus Stop

Motorists are more distracted than ever before. Drivers are often in a hurry and speed around stopped school buses. Many may think they don't have to stop for school buses. Some may claim they didn't see the bus until it was too late to stop. Those motorists pose a serious threat to schoolchildren, who often dart out or step into traffic unexpectedly. Plain and simple those motorists are putting children's lives in jeopardy every single day, either knowingly or — equally as concerning — unknowingly.

Be Aware – Understanding Distraction

As a professional driver, school bus drivers should understand potential distracted driving related hazards along their route. According to scientists the human brain, even in adults is only able to adequately focus on one task at time.

When a person's attention is engaged in another task, event or object they may fail to notice a fully visible, but unexpected object or person. Researchers suggest that unless they pay close attention, people can miss even the most conspicuous events. This is known as inattentive (or inattentive) blindness.

Texting isn't the only cause for inattentive or inattentive blindness. Studies revealed that drivers reaching for objects within the vehicle were nine times more likely to crash than those focused solely on driving. Talking to a passenger ranked right behind cell phone usage as the most common cause of distraction

Be Aware – Distraction Affects Focus

Multitasking, which has become a way of life, overloads our brains. Because our brains cannot focus on all information at the same time, some information is lost. When this happens, we are not aware of the information our brains have filtered out.

We subconsciously prioritize which to focus on and in what order. Circumstances of the day can change the order of priority. For example, when stopping to unload students and monitoring traffic, a student cries out. Your brain will likely filter, prioritize and respond this way:

1. Stop the bus
2. Check on the student
3. Continue to monitor traffic

Your brain automatically assesses the student crying out to be the critical task, and responds to it.

When we experience distractions in a rapid succession that are all nearly equal in priority, we lose some of them all together.

Be Aware – Situations Can Change the Prioritization

Responses depend heavily on the situation, and your brain is constantly aware of all this situational criteria. In the scenario above, your brain assessed that the student crying out was the critical task. However, your response order may be different if you had been warned earlier in the day about a suspicious person at the bus stop.

Be Aware – Remaining Focused is Critical when Loading and Unloading

During the process of loading and unloading students, our brain is experiencing input in rapid succession, seemingly all at the same time. Each detail of that task is nearly equal in priority and we cannot afford to lose any part of the process.

Be Aware - the Key to Preventing Dangerous Impacts of Distraction

School bus driver's jobs require the ability to do multiple things. They must maintain focus to combat distractions and stay aware of the potential of missing something critically important to keep their passengers safe. ***In other words, school bus drivers must always watch, check and double check.***

Be Diligent, Be Aware - of Distractions at ALL Bus Stops

Every detail both inside and outside the bus is critical at all school bus stops. Even the slightest distraction when loading and unloading their bus can have a deadly outcome. School bus drivers must always keep a close watch for distracted motorists and stay aware to limit student's exposure to hazards when loading and unloading by:

- Watching traffic carefully
- Making sure traffic is prepared to stop before activating overhead red lights
- Reminding students to:
 - i. Watch their bus driver
 - ii. Listen to any warning signals such as the beep of the horn, etc. if any danger approaches

Be Safe – When Approaching Bus Stops

To keep their students safe, school bus drivers must stay focused on following each and every step, each and every time they perform a school bus stop. They should be sure to include these actions when approaching each overhead red light bus stop:

- Activate the amber warning lights and tap the brakes at least 200 feet before the stop
- Activate the right turn signal 100 feet before the stop
- Stop no closer than 10 to 20 feet from waiting students
- Put the bus in neutral and apply the parking brake

Be Diligent – When Approaching Hazard Light Bus Stops

Even though students do not cross and the bus is not controlling traffic, in order to maintain the safety of students when performing hazard light stops bus drivers must:

- Provide adequate warning to other traffic that they are going to stop
- Activate hazard warning lights before the stop
- Make sure the bus is positioned properly
- Stop no closer than 10 feet from waiting students
- Pull to the far right of the roadway
- Put the bus in neutral and apply the parking brake
- Never allow any passengers on or off the bus without completely securing the vehicle first

Florida girl hit and killed in hit and run at bus stop

Cape Coral, FL March 2019. 8-year-old Layla Aiken was sitting with her older twin brothers on the edge of the roadway on the corner of Northeast 19th Terrace around 6:20 a.m. A truck traveling south on NE 3rd Avenue toward the intersection struck and rolled over Layla, and then took off away from the scene. Layla was taken to the hospital, where she died.

The truck's driver, 19-year-old Logan Hetherington was arrested in May 2019 and charged with leaving the scene of a traffic crash with a fatality. According to reports, numerous surveillance cameras captured Hetherington's path to work that morning. He climbed into his red truck and left home at 6:14 a.m. and failed to stop at three stop signs before arriving at the intersection one minute later. A home surveillance camera captured the moment the truck passed through the intersection where Layla was struck and rolled over. The truck did not stop.

Other cameras captured the moment Hetherington arrived at work and used a light to inspect the front of his truck. Investigators seized the phones of Hetherington, his girlfriend, and his father. Text messages from Logan indicate that he knew as early as 9 a.m. that his truck was suspected in the crash, but he made no effort to contact police.

In one series of text messages, he writes: "I looked on the news and it's the road where I take the back way," "It was the back street road I took this morning," and "I'm going to ****ing jail."

Hetherington reportedly later searched the internet for "How It Works: The Computer inside Your Car," "truck computer reads what," and "how hard do you have to hit a car to set off impact sensor."

Hetherington later was interviewed by investigators and admitted he drove his truck that morning along the route investigators say. When asked why he checked the front of his truck that morning, Logan said he was checking his tires to ensure he hadn't driven over a piece of wood or a nail.

Hetherington said he did not come forward because his lawyer told him not to speak to police because they would "twist his words."

Hetherington plead guilty in February 2020 and was sentenced to 24 months in prison, 24 months' probation, suspension of his license for a year and 120 hours of community service, along with court costs and fines.

Be Diligent – Students Must Be Aware and Be Safe at Bus Stops

For their safety, every student, from pre-school through high school must know how to keep safe at and around the bus stop. Student passengers must know to always be aware of their surroundings and watch for vehicles nearing the stop and always assume those vehicles may not stop. Drivers should instruct students to:

- Always stay in a safe place away from the road when waiting for the bus
- Stay at least 12 feet away from the bus
 - Until they receive a signal from the driver (if uniform signal is used by the district) that it is safe to approach
- Whether loading or unloading, students must be reminded to:
 - Pay attention to the bus driver
 - Watch for oncoming vehicles
 - If crossing, look left, right, then left again

Be Safe, Be Aware – Protect Students from Distracted Motorists

School bus drivers play one of the most critical roles in protecting students from distracted motorists. They must always be sure that they open the door only when it is safe to do so.

Before allowing students to approach the bus, drivers must:

- Make sure all traffic has come to a complete stop
- Make sure stop arm is fully extended and flashing
- Recheck that all traffic remains stopped

Before allowing students to step off the bus, drivers must:

- Recheck traffic to ensure no vehicles are approaching
- Look out for any items that could get caught in the door
 - Backpacks and adornments, jackets, scarves, etc.
- Remind students to:
 - Pay attention to the bus driver
 - Watch for oncoming vehicles

Be Aware, Be Safe – Recognize and Avoid Distracted Motorists

Several studies show distracted drivers pose a greater risk than drunk drivers. School bus drivers should always drive defensively and should all assume that every driver is distracted, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Drivers should watch for and avoid motorists:

- Weaving in and out of their lane

- Looking down at their lap/cell phone
- Moving in and out of the drivers compartment
- Braking erratically
- Who's speed doesn't match traffic flow
- Slowing down for no logical reason
- Eating, drinking, using make-up, brushing hair, looking at a map, etc.

Be Safe – Be Diligent – Avoid Distractions When Driving Your Bus

All drivers should follow these tips to maintain their focus while driving:

- Stay away from cell phones
- Make adjustments before you begin:
 - Adjust mirrors, temperature, seat, etc.
- Verbalize (out loud) what you are doing that requires concentration
 - Especially repetitive tasks
- Safely pull over if students demand your attention
- Get adequate rest before driving
- Eat before driving – not during
- Stay hydrated

Be Safe – Prevent Distractions in Your School Bus

- Stop the bus in a safe place to deal with distractions inside the bus
- Know the route, reduce dependency on the route book or maps
- Eliminate cell phone or other technology use while driving
- Limit use of the two-way radio to essential communication only

Be Safe – State Law Prohibitions

MCL 257.602 (b) Reading, typing, or sending text message on wireless 2-way communication device prohibited; use of hand-held mobile telephone prohibited...

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this section, a person shall not read, manually type, or send a text message on a wireless 2-way communication device that is located in the person's hand or in the person's lap, including a wireless telephone used in cellular telephone service or personal communication service, while operating a commercial motor vehicle or a school bus on a highway or street in this state. As used in this subsection, a wireless 2-way communication device does not include a global positioning or navigation system that is affixed to the commercial motor vehicle or school bus.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in this section, a person shall not use a hand-held mobile telephone to conduct a voice communication while operating a commercial motor vehicle or a school bus on a highway, including while temporarily stationary due to traffic, a traffic control device, or other momentary delays. This subsection does not apply if the operator of the commercial vehicle or school bus has moved the vehicle to the side of, or off, a highway and has stopped in a location where the vehicle can safely remain stationary. As used in this subsection, "mobile telephone" does not include a 2-way radio service or citizens band radio service. As used in this subsection, "use a hand-held mobile telephone" means 1 or more of the following:

- (a) Using at least 1 hand to hold a mobile telephone to conduct a voice communication.
- (b) Dialing or answering a mobile telephone by pressing more than a single button.

(c) Reaching for a mobile telephone in a manner that requires a driver to maneuver so that he or she is no longer in a seated driving position, restrained by a seat belt that is installed as required by 49 CFR 393.93 and adjusted in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's instructions.

(4) Subsections (1), (2), and (3) do not apply to an individual who is using a device described in subsection (1) or (3) to do any of the following:

(a) Report a traffic accident, medical emergency or serious road hazard.

(b) Report a situation in which the person believes his or her personal safety is in jeopardy.

(c) Report or avert the perpetration or potential perpetration of a criminal act against the individual or another person.

(6) An individual who violates this section is responsible for a civil infraction and shall be ordered to pay a civil fine as follows:

(a) For a first violation, \$100.00.

(b) For a second or subsequent violation, \$200.00.

(7) This section supersedes all local ordinances regulating the use of a communications device while operating a motor vehicle in motion on a highway or street, except that a unit of local government may adopt an ordinance or enforce an existing ordinance substantially corresponding to this section.

Be Aware – Federal Regulations for Violations of Michigan Law

49CFR 383.51c (9) Violating a State or local law or ordinance on motor vehicle traffic control prohibiting texting while driving a CMV will be disqualified from operating a CMV for 60 day to 120 days. See table page 8.

49CFR 383.51c (10) Violating a State or local law or ordinance on motor vehicle traffic control restricting or prohibiting the use of a hand-held mobile telephone while driving a CMV will be disqualified from operating a CMV for 60 days to 120 days.

Be Aware - Student Distractions Can Jeopardize their Safety

According to Safe Kids Worldwide one in five high school and one in eight middle school students were observed crossing the street distracted. Of the 374 pedestrians ages 5 to 19 who died after being hit by a motor vehicle in 2017, 241 of those, or 64% were 15 to 19 years old according to the National Safety Council.

A study has shown that children under 14 are more likely than adults to be 'blinded' to their surroundings when focusing even on simple things. Younger children have little capacity to spot things out of their area of focus. Findings suggest even something simple like zipping a jacket might be enough to make children 'blind' to oncoming traffic and other dangers when walking down the street. The capacity for awareness outside the focus of attention develops with age, so the younger children are at higher risk of 'inattentive or inattentive blindness'.

Be Diligent – Help Your Students Avoid Distractions

Kids often don't recognize the dangers of distracted walking. School bus drivers can help get them safely to and from the bus stop by reminding them of the following:

- Keep their **heads up and phones down** (put away) when they:
 - Get on and off the bus
 - Cross the road

- Walk to and from the bus stop
- Always be aware of their surroundings
- Never walk with headphones in their ears
- If they are crossers:
 - Only cross in front of the bus
 - Pay attention to and listen for a signal (such as the horn) from the driver
 - Look left, right, then left again before crossing
- Always walk on the sidewalk if one is available
 - If they must walk in the street, face oncoming traffic
- Cross at crosswalks if they are available

Michigan Student Honored for Lifesaving Actions at Bus Stop

Montcalm County, MI, October, 2018. Morley Stanwood High School senior Kory Knapp and his niece were crossing the street to get on the bus when a car failed to stop. Kory pushed Bella out of the way of the path of the car when he realized the car wasn't going to stop. Kory took the brunt of the car's impact, suffering a broken knee and ruptured spleen. Bella suffered a concussion.

Just days later, Kory and Bella were back in school as police honored Kory for his actions as Morley Stanwood High School gathered to celebrate the end of their homecoming week. After the ceremony, Kory shared some thoughts about the recognition and split second, lifesaving action. "I was speechless, I've never felt this before, like I felt everyone looked up to me at that point," said Knapp.

"There was this car coming that didn't stop, my niece ran out, so I heard the bus honk, I looked and I saw the car coming, I ran and I pushed my niece and I got hit," said Kory.

"Just go with your gut, and don't be afraid to sacrifice yourself because it works out in the long run," said Kory.

The Bus Driver's Awareness Was Key

It was just the third stop of the day for longtime bus driver Sherry Sarns.

"I was coming up on the stop, and I saw a car coming, and when I stopped and turned the lights on and opened the door. The car did not slow down, so I immediately started honking the horn and then the terrible sound of someone just got hit," said Sarns.

Sherry Sarns said that the best part of this ending is knowing she'll be able to pick Kory and Bella up for school again. "A feeling you can't explain, from going to I really thought they were gone in the minute it happened because it hit so hard to they're going to be okay," said Sarns.

Be Diligent, Be Safe at Railroad Crossings

School Bus Driver Indicted in Deadly Bus-Train Crash

A Texas school bus driver has been indicted for Injury to a Child causing serious bodily injury and Manslaughter/Criminally Negligent Homicide following the death of a passenger on his bus. At about 4 p.m. on January 25, 2019, John Franklin Stevens

was driving the Athens Independent School District bus when a Union Pacific freight train crashed into it.

The Henderson County District Attorney's Office and Athens police said the bus initially stopped at the crossing before it proceeded and was struck by the train. A witness heard the train's horn as it neared the intersection.

The body of 13-year-old Christopher Bonilla was found outside the bus, which had been pushed down the tracks about a quarter of a mile. The only other passenger, 9-year-old Joselyne Torres, was severely injured.

According to an investigation by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Union Pacific crew reported the bus, driven by John Stevens, did stop at the crossing. However, he continued across the tracks and was struck by the locomotive which pushed it down the tracks.

A report by Union Pacific said the train's horn blasted in the moments before impact.

The FRA says the cause of the crash was *inattentiveness* by Stevens.

The report says the train was traveling at about 40 miles per hour, carrying 54 cars weighing nearly 5,000 tons.

Drivers Must Be Diligent at ALL Railroad Crossings

Railroad crossings are an especially critical time for school bus drivers to follow established crossing procedures. Failure to diligently follow procedures every time can be catastrophic. A school bus will always lose if colliding with a train which outweighs a bus by many tons.

School Bus Drivers must follow Michigan state law and established safety procedures which are designed to eliminate catastrophic accidents at railroad crossings.

Be Aware - Know your Bus

Be aware of blind spots on your bus (mirrors, structural posts and pillars, fans, etc.) that could prevent you from seeing an approaching train. Compensate for sight obstructions on your bus by rocking forward and back, left and right, before you drive across railroad tracks.

Be Aware - Know the Route

Before you leave on a field trip or unfamiliar route, find out about highway-rail crossings you will encounter. Talk to other drivers who have driven to that destination before; or talk to your supervisor about any unique railroad crossing features you will encounter and safety tips they can share.

Highway-rail crossings should be noted clearly on all route sheets. Being a substitute driver is a difficult job. If you are a sub, check the route sheet ahead of time for any highway-rail crossings. Whenever possible, talk to the regular driver about highway-rail crossings on the route you will be driving. Ask ahead of time about any unusual or challenging features.

Be Aware – Make other Motorists Aware as you Prepare to Stop

Well before you arrive at a crossing, check traffic behind you. Ask yourself, are vehicles following your bus too closely? Are there large vehicles behind your bus that could possibly push your bus onto the tracks?

Follow these steps to alert other motorists:

- Activate four-way hazard flashers early enough to alert vehicles behind you
 - At least 200 feet before the tracks in town
 - At least 300 feet or more on higher speed roads
- If necessary, tap your brakes lightly to "wake up" motorists behind your bus
- Do NOT use overhead flashers when approaching or stopping at railroad tracks
 - School bus flashers are for passenger loading and unloading only

If possible, collect traffic behind your bus as you approach a railroad crossing. By slowing down well before the tracks, vehicles behind your bus will also be forced to slow down, preparing them for your stop.

Be Safe – As You Approach a Crossing on Multi-lane Roads

Move to the right lane. Stop at the tracks in the right lane so other traffic can go around your bus on the left. If you must be in the left lane in order to make a left turn immediately after crossing the tracks, take extra care to alert traffic behind you that you are going to stop at the tracks. Vehicles in the left lane are often traveling faster and may be less prepared to stop.

Be Diligent - When Stopping at Railroad Crossings

Michigan Law requires that school buses always stop no closer than 15 feet and no more than 50 feet from the nearest rail. Drivers should stop at the point between 15 and 50 feet that allows the best visibility down the tracks in both directions. If there's a stop line on the roadway, stop before it. Never stop your bus on the tracks, or in the danger zone within 6 feet of the tracks, for any reason.

Never make a "rolling stop" even at seldom-used tracks. Do not allow yourself to be rushed in any way at highway-rail crossings.

Be Aware – Check for Trains and Clearance

School bus drivers should follow these steps before proceeding across the tracks to ensure that it is safe to do so:

- Turn off the master switch before opening the bus door
- After the bus is stopped, open
 - Driver's window and
 - Entrance door

Opening the window and door is required by Michigan law and will help bus drivers hear and see approaching trains.

Be Diligent, Be Aware and Remain Alert

It may be easy to miss a train because it approaches from a fixed angle. Even though a train is very large, the field of vision it takes up as it approaches is small. Drivers must look directly and carefully in the train's direction and do the following:

- Look and listen carefully for trains in both directions
- Search carefully in both directions down the track more than once

- Drivers should always “rock before you roll”
 - Moving actively in their seat to be sure a train isn't hidden in a blind spot

Before beginning to cross:

- Check all warning signals (flashing lights, bells, gates)
- The flashing lights and bells should activate at least 20 seconds before the train arrives at the crossing
- Don't make the mistake of only checking for trains that are visible
- Drivers can't see signals they've already passed
 - They should watch the crossing gate on the opposite side of the road for signal activation as they proceed across the tracks

Be Aware – Know Your Bus and Containment Areas

Drivers must know the length of their bus and the size of the containment area at all rail crossings on their school bus route, as well as any crossings they may encounter in the course of a school activity trip.

When approaching a crossing with a signal or stop sign on the opposite side, pay attention to the amount of room there. Be certain the bus has enough containment or storage area to completely clear the railroad tracks on the other side if there is a need to stop. As a general rule, add 15 feet to the length of the school bus to determine an acceptable amount of containment or storage area.

Be Safe – Know your Crossings

The school bus train collision that occurred on October 25, 1995 in Fox River Grove, Illinois remains among the deadliest rail crossing crashes in U.S. history. The crash killed seven students and injured twenty-one people.

The crash occurred when the bus driver, who had never driven the route before, filled in for someone who called in sick. The substitute driver was running late and was not familiar with the intersection. According to a report by the National Transportation Safety Board, the intersection did not allow enough space for the bus to clear the tracks. The regular driver later said that when the bus was running on schedule, she did not usually have to contend with trains at that intersection.

Be Safe - If it won't Fit, Don't Commit

If you're not absolutely certain your bus will fit in the available space across the tracks. Don't begin to cross if traffic on the other side of the tracks is still in the process of clearing out the available space—a vehicle could stall or stop suddenly for some other reason, and your bus could be stuck on the tracks.

If you see or hear a train while stopped at a safe distance from the tracks, or the flashing lights, bells, or gates activate, secure the bus (set the parking brake). Leave your foot resting lightly on the service brake pedal so motorists will still see brake lights and realize you aren't moving forward. Once you are sure all traffic is stopped behind you, remove your foot.

Once a train has passed and completely cleared the crossing, repeat the process of silencing the bus and carefully checking for trains before proceeding. A second train could be closely behind the first; never proceed across the tracks immediately after one train has passed.

Be Safe - When Crossing the Tracks

If you are certain the tracks are clear in both directions, and warning signals do not indicate an approaching train, close the door and proceed across the tracks quickly. Don't move the bus with the door open. Once you have made an informed and considered decision to cross, don't hesitate.

Michigan law prohibits shifting gears while crossing the tracks. There is no need to downshift manually before crossing. Use "Drive" as you normally would when starting up from any stop. Attempting unfamiliar procedures increases the risk of a mistake.

Do not dawdle crossing the tracks. Even though tracks can be bumpy for your passengers, do not go so slow that you expose them to danger any longer than necessary. (When transporting children with special medical conditions, extra caution may be necessary to avoid injuring them on bumpy tracks.)

Be Aware – Of Warnings

If the warning signals (flashing lights, bells, or gates) activate just as you begin to cross, continue quickly across unless it is obvious a train is bearing down on the crossing.

Be Safe - Don't try to Back Up

It could take too long, or another vehicle behind the bus could trap you on the tracks. If you've already stopped and checked carefully for trains, you are not breaking the law to continue across at this point. It's the safest thing to do.

If the crossing gate comes down on top of your bus as you are going across, keep going. The gates are designed to break. If a gate does strike your bus as you cross, stop in a safe location after crossing and contact base by radio for guidance.

Be Safe – When Leaving the Crossing

Don't turn flashers off as soon as you've cleared the tracks. Your bus still represents a hazard until it has reached the speed of other traffic in the area.

Make it a habit to turn off your four-way hazard flashers while turning on the school bus master switch at the same time. Forgetting to turn the master switch back on could be a serious safety problem at the next bus stop. Train yourself to double-check your master switch to make sure it's "on" as you approach the first bus stop after crossing railroad tracks. Check periodically to make sure your school bus flashers are working along the route.

Be Diligent, Be Safe – Be Careful at Multiple Tracks

Multiple tracks can be more dangerous than single tracks. After one train has passed, a train on another set of tracks could be approaching, hidden behind the first train.

If multiple tracks are close together, without room to stop safely in between, and not guarded by separate warning signals (lights, bells, or gates), make only one stop before proceeding. Stop, look, and listen carefully just as at a single track. Check very, very carefully in both directions.

If you are sure there is adequate room to stop your bus between multiple tracks, stop and perform careful checks for trains at each set. Be sure you have at least 15 feet of clearance from the nearest rail for *both the front and rear of your bus*. Be aware of vehicles behind your bus that may not be expecting you to stop at the next set of tracks.

Be Safe – Check for Clearance across all Sets of Tracks

Do not proceed onto a multi-track crossing unless you are absolutely sure you can cross all tracks without stopping for any reason.

If traffic ahead of your bus is lined up and beginning to move across the tracks, wait until all vehicles are off all sets of tracks before beginning to cross.

If a train is passing at a multi-track crossing, wait until it's approximately 1,000 feet or 15 seconds beyond the crossing and you are certain it's not hiding another train approaching on another track before proceeding. After one train has passed, repeat the complete process of silencing the bus and looking and listening for trains carefully before proceeding. Don't be in a hurry.

Be Aware of Visibility Problems at Railroad Crossings

Visibility problems can represent a serious challenge to the school bus driver who must cross tracks with a bus load of children. Many crossings have limited visibility which can be obstructed by buildings, signs, trees or brush, signal boxes, railroad equipment, or even the angle at which the tracks intersect the roadway.

Each challenging crossing is unique, requiring its own specific strategy about exactly where to stop the bus for best visibility. Drivers should discuss any visibility problems with their supervisor to help determine the safest possible strategy for that crossing.

In some cases the railroad can improve visibility by cutting trees or brush, or moving or removing other obstructions.

Be Safe – Make a Second Stop if Necessary

It may be necessary to make a second stop after your initial mandatory stop between 15 feet and 50 feet, to increase your view down the tracks at a crossing with severe visibility problems.

If the second stop is past the warning gate, the gate could come down on your bus if the signals activate. Other vehicles not expecting you to make a second stop could run into the back of your bus. Discuss the entire scenario step-by-step ahead of time with your supervisor and work out details for the safest possible crossing strategy and to clarify any confusion.

Be Safe – Never Stop within the Crossing's Danger Zone

No matter what strategy you devise with your supervisor, never stop your bus 6 feet or closer to the nearest rail. Loosened shipping materials on a train can stick out several feet from the tracks, or you could be bumped from behind and knocked into harm's way if you're closer than 6 feet.

All railroad crossings and any specific crossing strategies for challenging crossings should be indicated in your route directions for substitute drivers. It may be necessary to include a diagram of the crossing.

Be Safe – Let Nothing Distract you at Railroad Crossings

Woodward School Bus Suffered Mechanical Failure

Woodward, Oklahoma Oct 1, 2019. A Woodward school bus loaded with children rolled into the side of a moving freight train when an emergency brake failed, initial accident investigations indicate.

"While the bus was stopped at the train intersection, a call went out over the Transportation Department radios that a student may have gotten on the wrong bus. While waiting for the train to clear the intersection, the driver engaged the parking brake to check her bus for the student."

"The bus rolled into the intersection approximately midway through the length of the train. The driver immediately disengaged the emergency brake and reversed the bus away from the train."

"After the train cleared the intersection, the driver was able to move the bus to a safe location. The driver then immediately contacted the authorities and her supervisor."

According to the report, of the 12 students on the bus, two were evaluated by EMS and all 12 refused transport and were released to their parents. One of the two students seen by EMS was later treated for symptoms related to a neck sprain.

Be Aware - Be Prepared for the Unexpected at Railroad Crossings

Bad weather can reduce visibility as well as mask the sound of an approaching train. Drivers should use extra caution when crossing tracks in snow, rain, or fog.

Signals may malfunction occasionally, or be vandalized. Drivers should not assume flashing lights, bells, or gates are functioning properly or timed correctly. It is the school bus driver's responsibility to make sure no train is approaching

Be Safe – Follow District Policies

If no train is in sight when a crossing gate is down or if flashing lights or bells are activated, radio your dispatcher and follow district policies. Never go around lowered gates unless a police officer at the crossing directs you across. Never ask a bus attendant or student to go out and check the tracks for trains. It may take some time for police or the railroad company to respond to problems at a crossing, but school bus drivers cannot take responsibility for crossing on their own, even if other motorists are doing so.

Be Aware – Trains May be Stopped near the Crossing

A train may be stopped near the crossing, close enough to trip the warning signals. Law enforcement and the railroad company should be contacted. If this is a recurring problem, your supervisor should work with the railroad, DOT, and Operation Lifesaver to correct the situation.

Be Safe – Evacuate your Students

If your bus stalls on the tracks, evacuate your students at once, even if no train is visible. If an approaching train is visible, perform a front/rear dual evacuation to empty the bus as quickly as possible.

Teach students to move away from the tracks as quickly as possible, in the general direction from which the train is coming, while moving away from the train. The reason to evacuate in that direction is because debris from a crash could fly ahead of the impact point in the direction the train is going.

MCL 257.1857 Railroad track grade crossings; requirements; “abandoned railroad track” defined; violation as civil infraction; fine; processing.

(1) Except as provided in subsections (2), (3), (4), and (5), the driver of a school bus, before crossing a railroad track at grade, shall stop the vehicle within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail, activate hazard warning lights, turn off all interior switches including fans, heaters, and radios, open the passenger door and driver-side window, and while stopped shall listen and look in both directions along the track for an approaching train and for signals indicating the approach of a train, and shall not proceed until the driver can do so safely. After stopping as required in this subsection, and upon proceeding when it is safe to do so, the driver of the vehicle shall cross only in a gear of the vehicle that does not require changing gears while traversing the crossing. The driver shall not shift gears while crossing the track or tracks.

(2) A stop need not be made at a railroad track grade crossing where a uniformed police officer or a traffic-control signal directs traffic to proceed.

(3) A stop need not be made at an inactive railroad track grade crossing. As used in this subsection, "inactive railroad track" means a railroad track that meets both of the following requirements:

(a) The track has been completely paved over or removed.

(b) All signs, signals, and other warning devices are removed.

(4) A stop shall not be made at a railroad track grade crossing on a freeway or limited access highway where the crossing is protected by a clearly visible signal, crossing gate, or barrier at a time when the signal, crossing gate, or barrier is not activated.

(5) A stop shall not be made at a railroad grade crossing marked with a sign reading "exempt". Exempt signs may be erected only by or with the consent of the state transportation department after notice to and an opportunity to be heard by the primary railroad operating over that crossing.

(6) A person who violates this section is responsible for a civil infraction and may be ordered to pay a civil fine of not more than \$100.00. A civil infraction under this subsection shall be processed in the same manner as a civil infraction under the Michigan vehicle code, 1949 PA 300, MCL 257.1 to 257.923.

Disqualifications for railroad-highway grade crossing offenses

Table 3 to 49 CFR §383.51d Excerpted

List of the offenses and periods a person with a CLP or CDL is disqualified from driving a CMV for a conviction of any combinations of offenses in a separate incident within a 3 year period when the driver is operating a CMV

If the driver operates a motor vehicle and is convicted of:	First conviction	Second conviction	Third or subsequent conviction
(1) Driver is not required to always stop, but fails to slow down and check that tracks are clear of an approaching train	No less than 60 Days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(2) Driver is not required to always stop, but fails to stop before reaching the crossing, if the tracks are not clear	No less than 60 Days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(3) Driver is always required to stop, but fails to stop before driving onto the crossing	No less than 60 Days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(4) Driver fails to have sufficient space to drive completely through the crossing without stopping	No less than 60 Days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(5) Driver fails to obey a traffic control device or the directions of an enforcement official at the crossing	No less than 60 Days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year
(6) Driver fails to negotiate a crossing because of insufficient undercarriage clearance	No less than 60 Days	No less than 120 days	No less than 1 year

School Bus Stops

The most essential responsibility for school bus drivers is to meet student's needs, keeping them safe, while following all state laws when performing school bus stops. During the 2017-2018 school year, over 217,576,800 trips were provided to and from school on school buses for students across Michigan.

Michigan school bus stops are located on almost every possible type of road including paved and unpaved, tree lined and open, hilly and flat, curved and straight and located in rural, urban and suburban areas.

Legal Bus Stops

School bus stop locations and stop procedures in Michigan must meet the legal requirements defined in section 257.1855 of Public Act 187 "The Pupil Transportation Act," as well as recommendations from state agencies.

Be Aware – Always Be Sure your Bus Stop Locations are Always Safe

As an important member of the safety team, one of the driver’s tasks is to be the eyes of the district and continuously assist in evaluating the safety of all bus stop locations. Even “legacy” stops that have been in the same location for many years can prove to be unsafe and illegal. Environmental changes such as trees, weather or road repair conditions may require route or stop location changes. It is critical that all drivers discuss all concerns about the legality and safety of school bus stops with their supervisor immediately.

Be Aware – Sight Distance Affects Bus Stop Safety

Just like a traffic signal, a school bus displaying its overhead red lights is controlling traffic. Michigan law requires a school bus performing an overhead red light stop be clearly visible to allow other motorists adequate time to stop. Visibility is crucial for the safety of students, especially in light of the tragic deaths of so many that have been killed by other motorists. School bus drivers must be aware of factors that can impact sight distance and may affect the safety of school bus stops, including:

- Curves and hills
- Trees and other vegetation
- On-street parked cars
- Residential or business driveways
- Recreational or large vehicles
- Approaching vehicles
- Buildings
- Snow drifts from snowplows
- Construction

When performing a school bus stop the bus drivers should see that other motorists have a clear view of their stopped bus. If you can’t see oncoming vehicles from the prescribed distances, they cannot see your bus or the students waiting for it.

Be Aware - Clear and Continuous Visibility Requirements

A school bus is clearly and continuously visible if both of the following standards are satisfied MCL 257.1855 (8):

- (a) Approaching traffic is able to see the front of a school bus extending from the roofline to and including the headlamps at the distances specified in subsection (5).
- (b) Approaching traffic is able to see the back of the bus extending from the roofline to and including the tail lamps and stop lamps at the distances specified



Photo credit:
Mac Dashney



Be Diligent – Your Bus Must be Clearly Visible to Approaching Motorists

MCL 257.1855 (5) The driver of a school bus, when using the alternately flashing overhead red lights shall not stop the bus on any highway or roadway for the purpose of receiving or discharging pupils under the following conditions:

Speed limit is more than 35 miles per hour

Bus shall not stop if the stopped bus is not clearly and continuously visible to approaching vehicles on that highway or roadway for at least 400 feet.

When the distance from the stopped bus to the end of the highway or roadway is less than 400 feet, clear and continuous visibility must be available from the bus to the end of the highway or roadway. MCL 257.1855 (5)(a)

Speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less

Bus shall not stop if the stopped bus is not clearly and continuously visible to approaching vehicles on that highway or roadway for at least 200 feet.

When the distance from the stopped bus to the end of the highway or roadway is less than 200 feet, clear and continuous visibility must be available from the bus to the end of the highway or roadway. MCL 257.1855 (5) (b)

Be Diligent - School Buses Shall Not Stop

The driver of a school bus **shall not stop** the bus for the purpose of receiving or discharging pupils in the following instances:

Within 200 feet of a public or private highway or roadway intersection unless the stop is approved by the school administrator or person or entity under contract with a school to provide pupil transportation services. MCL 257.1855 (4)(a)

Within 50 feet of a traffic signal: The bus shall not stop within 50 feet of an intersection controlled by a traffic control signal to receive or discharge pupils. MCL 257.1855 (4)(b)

On roadways with three or more lanes: Upon a roadway constructed or marked to permit 3 or more separate lanes of vehicular traffic in either direction if the pupils are required to cross the roadway. MCL 257.1855 (4)(c)

Be Diligent – Ensure Students have a Safe Path

The roadside conditions can affect student safety at some bus stop locations. Bus drivers should make sure the roadside should be suitably clear so students have room to wait safely off the roadway. Students who cross must also have a clear roadside on the opposite side. Considerations should be made for the age of students utilizing the stops.

Be Aware – Construction May Impact School Bus Stop Safety

It may seem to some that roads in Michigan are in a constant state of construction. Both road and building construction projects may impact the safety of students walking to or waiting at bus stops. Although new, smooth and pothole free roads are nice to travel on; living through the construction presents many challenges. In addition to increased time needed to complete routes, construction may necessitate

the relocation of school bus stops and possibly the addition of stops to keep students safe in those areas.

Building construction may also impact travel and student safety. The sheer size of some construction crews present challenges especially in residential areas. Vehicles and equipment may block access to school bus stops for both students and bus drivers trying to reach them.

Bus drivers should work with their supervisor to determine the safest options for students and bus stops that are affected by construction.

Be Aware - Supervisor's Permission is Necessary

Local school boards have the responsibility of establishing routes, bus stop locations, and passengers assigned to stops. This responsibility is that of the superintendent of schools or his or her designee. You should establish or change stops only with your supervisor's permission.

Be Aware – Your Bus is a Moving Traffic Signal

It is extremely important that drivers know the legal and proper use of the alternately flashing lights and the hazard warning lights. It is the drivers' responsibility to provide adequate warning to the other traffic that they are going to stop for loading or unloading. Knowing when not to use these lights will also contribute to the safety of students and motorists.

Be Diligent – Two Hundred Feet of Notice is Required

Regardless of the type of overhead alternately flashing stop, all buses are required to provide notice by activating their lights at least 200 feet before the bus stop to warn oncoming traffic. 200 feet is equal to nearly six lengths of a 65 passenger school bus.

The distance of not less than 200 feet required for light activation by this subsection shall be measured **on the roadway** or private road on which the stop is made for receiving or discharging pupils. Therefore, activating your overhead amber lights on one roadway before turning onto another to perform an overhead red light stop located less than 200 feet from the corner does not meet the legal requirement.

Because the overhead alternately flashing amber lights must be activated 200 feet in advance of the school bus stop, red light stops must be at least 200 feet apart.

Deactivation of the Bus Lights:

Before resuming motion at the bus stop, the driver shall deactivate the lights and allow congested traffic to disperse. The deactivation of the lights is the signal for stopped traffic to proceed.

Be Diligent – Follow the Requirements for Alternately Flashing Red Light Stops

MCL 257.1855(2) the school bus driver shall actuate alternately flashing lights only when the school bus is stopped or stopping on a public highway or private road for the purpose of receiving or discharging pupils.

Alternately Flashing Light Stops are Only for Pupils The school bus driver **shall not** actuate the alternately flashing lights when operating on a public highway or private road and transporting passengers other than school pupils. MCL 257.1855 (1)

Be Aware - Student Stop Procedures Vary

Student bus stop procedures for receiving and discharging pupils on public highways or private roadways will vary dependent on whether students are required to cross or are right side pickups and discharges.

Be Diligent – Follow Procedures When Students are required to Cross

If the pupils are required to cross the roadway, the driver of a school bus equipped with red and amber alternately flashing overhead lights shall activate the alternately flashing overhead amber lights not less than 200 feet before the stop, stop the bus on the roadway or private road to provide for the safety of the pupils being boarded or discharged, deactivate the alternately flashing overhead amber lights, and activate the alternately flashing overhead red lights while receiving or discharging pupils. **The bus shall stop in the extreme right-hand lane** for the purpose of boarding or discharging pupils.

Before resuming motion, the driver shall deactivate these lights and allow congested traffic to disperse where practicable. The deactivation of these lights is the signal for stopped traffic to proceed.

Procedures When Students are Not Required to Cross

If the pupils are not required to cross the roadway, the driver of a school bus equipped with red and amber alternately flashing overhead lights shall activate the alternately flashing overhead amber lights not less than 200 feet before the stop, stop the bus **as far off the roadway or private road as practicable** to provide for the safety of the pupils being boarded or discharged, deactivate the alternately flashing overhead amber lights, and activate the alternately flashing overhead red lights while receiving or discharging pupils.

Before resuming motion, the driver shall deactivate these lights and allow congested traffic to disperse where practicable. The deactivation of these lights is the signal for stopped traffic to proceed.

Traffic Light or Crossing Guard For the purpose of this section, “required to cross the highway or roadway” does not include crossing the highway or roadway with the assistance of a traffic control signal or with the assistance of a crossing guard as defined in section 257.57 of the Michigan Vehicle Code, Act. No. 300 of the Public Acts of 1949, being Section 257.57 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, and applies only to the highway or roadway on which the stop is being made.

Be Diligent - Maintain Safe School Bus Stop Habits

Each step of a school bus stop has a vital purpose. It is critical that all bus drivers execute each step the same way, each time so students and surrounding traffic know what to expect when you stop.

Be Diligent – Follow Procedures for Loading and Unloading Passengers at a “Yellow Light” (Hazard Light) Stop

Follow the same stopping procedure as the loading or unloading on a highway, street, or private road to bring the bus to a safe stop, except:

- Activate hazard warning lights before the stop
- Where the posted speed limit is 50 MPH or less pull to the far right side or off of the roadway or private road to provide for the safety of pupils.
- Where the posted speed limit is greater than 50 MPH pull off the roadway or private road or to the far right of the roadway.
- Continue activation of hazard warning lights. (Do not activate alternately flashing red lights).
- No pupils will be permitted to cross the road.
- Deactivate hazard warning lights. (Alternately flashing red lights are not to be activated.)

REMEMBER: When using a “hazard light” stop, the bus is not controlling traffic

Be Aware – of Penalties

Violations of MCL 257.1855 are punishable as a 90 day misdemeanor

Be Diligent – Know How and When to use Alternately Flashing Lights

Proper uses of the alternately flashing lights

- Activated only by the driver
- Required if school pupils must cross the roadway
- Used only when stopped or stopping on a highway, street, or private road
- Used only for the purpose of receiving or discharging school pupils
- Must be activated not less than 200 feet before the stop
- Alternately flashing red lights must be deactivated before resuming motion

Improper uses of the alternately flashing lights

- Not used for reasons other than loading or unloading school pupils
- Not used on private property, including driveways
- Not used while backing, or used in making turns or turnarounds
- Not used when stopping at railroad crossings
- Not used for inclement weather driving
- Not used to assist another bus driver who is loading or unloading school pupils

Be Aware - Intersection Stops are Illegal and Unacceptable High Risk

A school bus stopping either partially or completely in an intersection to receive or discharge pupils is not legal in Michigan. 257.1855(2) (g) indicates the bus driver must signal at least 200 feet prior to the stop on the roadway on which the stop takes place. Parts 8a and 8b of the same section describes the minimum sight distance requirement for a school bus stop. See “Clear and Continuous Visibility” on pages 26 and 27 of this manual.

Be Aware – Your Overhead Lights May Not Stop all Traffic in Intersections

Just like a red light at an intersection only stops traffic on the roadways they face, your overhead alternately flashing red lights may not legally stop all vehicles approaching a school bus stop.

When a school bus completely blocks the intersection, it is on two roadways. The bus can only signal traffic on one of the roadways. A school bus that turns and stops in the intersection to drop off or pick up schoolchildren, will not be positioned so approaching motorists on both roadways can easily see the overhead amber and red lights or hazard lights. It may also not meet the hazard light requirement to allow traffic to safely flow around the bus. It would also not meet the red light stop requirement for signaling traffic for 200 feet on the roadway where the stop will take place.

Be Diligent, Be Safe - Avoid the Risks of Intersection Stops

While stopped in an intersection:

- School bus simultaneously occupies and/or obstructs traffic on two roadways
- Bus driver cannot carry out the required traffic control on both roadways.
- Traffic cannot safely flow around the school bus
- Approaching motorists may not have a completely clear and continuous view of the school bus

Be Diligent – Follow Bus Driver Activities When Approaching Bus Stops

400 Feet from the Bus Stop

The driver should be able to:

- clearly see the bus stop,
- continuously see the bus stop,
- monitor activity at the stop,
- evaluate traffic and begin determining risks associated with the bus stop.

200 Feet from the Bus Stop

The driver will:

- activate alternately flashing lights,
- monitor student activity at the bus stop,
- evaluate traffic for risk factors,
- activate right turn signal (100 feet) if pupils do not cross the road,
- begin the correct positioning of the bus on or off the roadway.

At the Bus Stop

The driver will:

- stop short of the students,
- place the vehicle in neutral,
- apply the parking brake,
- monitor student behavior,
- monitor traffic and evaluate risks,
- signal students (if appropriate),
- monitor traffic as students enter,
- prepare to deactivate lights,
- prepare to leave bus stop,
- allow traffic to clear, signal to re-enter traffic lane.

Be Diligent, Be Safe – Make these Steps a Forever Habit

There is a safe technique in making stops that protect all involved. These steps should be practiced in the same sequence so they become habit.

Annotated Loading/Unloading Procedure

1. Check mirrors and traffic.

Students will be loading soon and we must scan the traffic scene to locate students and traffic hazards. A mistake here could be tragic!

Drivers should be aware of all blind spots, using all mirrors to the fullest extent. Drivers should lean forward and move side to side in the driver's seat to help them ensure the surrounding area is clear of traffic, students and other hazards.

2. Apply brakes lightly and slow down.

As you approach the bus stop, you must have your bus under control. Slowing down gradually will give you the control you need in case someone runs out in front of your bus.

3. Activate alternately flashing amber lights at least 200 feet in advance of the stop (4 light system buses use red lights).

Driving an eight light system bus means that the amber lights come on when you activate the switch and the red lights come on when you open the service door. If you are driving a four light system bus, the red lights will come on as soon as you activate the switch.

Remember that 200 feet is the minimum distance. You may activate your lights earlier. Always watch for other large vehicles that take additional distance to stop. Give them enough distance to stop or let them pass before you activate your lights.

4. Do not pull closer than 10 – 20 feet from waiting pupils.

Stop short of the line of waiting students for their safety. You must teach your students to stay back 10 – 20 feet from the bus and wait for your signal to board the bus. In winter weather your bus could also slide during the stopping procedure. Train your students well for their survival.

5. If pupils do not cross the road to get to their home or to the bus, activate right turn signal. Stop the bus as far to the right, all or part way off the roadway or private road as practicable.

It is important to consider a safe bus stop where pupils will wait for the school bus. It may not be possible to pull off the roadway.

6. If pupils cross the road to get to their home or to the bus, stop the bus on the roadway or private road.

It is required that you stop on the roadway or private road to provide for the safety of your pupils who are being boarded or discharged from the bus.

7. Shift the bus to neutral and apply the parking brake.

It is possible that your foot could slip off the brake and the bus could move. Place your bus in neutral or park and set the parking brake at every student stop.

Annotated Loading/Unloading Procedure (continued)

8. Cancel turn signal if activated, check mirrors and traffic.

Check to see what the traffic around your bus is doing before you open your door. Hopefully, all traffic has stopped or is stopping for your bus.

9. Open the door (8 light system will change amber lights to red) as a signal for students to enter the bus. Pupils crossing the road may require an additional signal. NOTE: signal must be uniform for the district/agency.

If you are driving an eight-light bus and open the door, your lights will change to red. This could be the signal for students to load the bus. The students may need an additional signal from you. If you signal the students to load the bus, the signal must be uniform for your district/agency.

10. Have students enter or leave the bus in an orderly manner. Be sure all students are accounted for.

This is the most dangerous step in our loading and unloading procedure. You must account for every student. Drivers are responsible for the safety of all their pupils, including those that must cross the roadway or street. Instruct pupils in safe use of the handrail.

Be Diligent - Count the students as they get off the bus and count them again as they move away from the bus. It is especially important to count and track students who must cross the road at the bus stop.

11. Check to see that students are seated and close the door (this will deactivate the red lights on the 8 light system buses).

Students may fall if you start up before they are seated. Do not rush the seating procedure. Remember that small children may take considerable time to enter the bus and climbing the steps is a major event. Help them if you can!

Be Diligent - After boarding, check the right mirror zone again before closing the door. Then using the mirrors again, ensure that there are no more approaching students, all students are seated and there are no students or hazards in front of the bus. Then recheck the right mirror zone again for students.

12. Deactivate the alternately flashing red lights (4 light buses).

This step is necessary if you are operating a bus with the four light systems. This is the signal for stopped traffic to proceed. Please be alert to traffic that will begin to move.

13. Allow traffic to clear, where practicable.

If it is possible, you must allow stopped traffic to clear. This is a requirement of the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code. Failure to allow traffic to clear may result in a motorist trying to pass unsafely because they do not want to get trapped behind your bus.

Annotated Loading/Unloading Procedure (continued)

Sec. 257.1855 (2a) and (2b)...Before resuming motion, the driver shall deactivate these lights and allow congested traffic to disperse where practicable. The deactivation of these lights is the signal for stopped traffic to proceed.

14. Activate left turn signal.

Your stop procedure is almost complete and you must move back into traffic. Your left turn signal is your signal that indicates that you will be re-entering the traffic flow.

15. Check mirror and traffic.

16. Enter the traffic lane.

Everything looks good and it is time to get back on the road. A second look in the mirrors may help to avoid a collision.

17. Cancel left turn signal.

Be Aware, Tragedies have Happened!

Student Killed After Being Pinned Between Van and School Bus

Queens, NY, April 2019. 7-year-old Camron Brown and his sister had just embarked from the school bus and were crossing behind it when he was hit by a van. Camron was pinned between the van and the school bus.

Camron was rushed to the hospital in extremely critical condition after police attempted to resuscitate him, but he could not be saved. Camron's 9-year-old sister was put back on the bus while she waited for family to arrive.

The 22-year-old van driver, who was waiting to transport him to his aunt's home, thought he was braking but hit the accelerator instead.

Be Diligent - Remind Students about Dangers around the Bus

Students, especially the youngest, must be reminded that all areas close to the bus are dangerous. Remind them that they are NEVER to go into these zones, except when loading and unloading. When crossing, they must only cross in front of the bus and NEVER go behind the bus.

6-year old Wyoming girl dies after running alongside school bus

Sheridan, Wyo. — Family members say a 6-year-old Wyoming girl involved in an accident with a school bus is in a coma and on life support at Children's Hospital Colorado in Aurora. The crash occurred shortly after 3 p.m. on April 22, 2019 in front of Coffeen Elementary School.

According to Sheridan Police, officers found the student lying directly in front of the driver's side rear tires of the school bus. Police say the accident occurred when the child attempted to catch her bus home from school by running alongside it while trying to get the driver's attention. She ended up being pulled under the bus.

The Sheridan Press reports that the mother and stepfather of Esperanza Lagunes-Aarstad say she had brain swelling and was in a coma as a result of the accident before she died.

Be Aware - Always Expect the Unexpected from Children

Drivers should always err on the side of caution and trust their intuition. Children's lives have been saved when bus drivers "just didn't feel right" and checked under their buses. Young children will do almost anything around a bus. Children have crawled under buses, crawled into wheel wells, climbed on bumpers, played with crossing gates, grabbed hold of mirrors, etc. In some of these incidents, an attentive bus driver discovered the child; in others, the child was run over by the bus and killed.

- Watch out for children running after a bus they missed as it pulls away from the bus stop. If a child isn't at the bus stop in the morning, be especially careful as you pull away. The child may be late and chase after the bus. Check the surrounding area carefully **before** you pull away.
- Snow banks near bus stops can be dangerous. Check carefully for children playing or climbing on snow banks, or hiding behind banks. Never discharge a child directly into a snow bank or any other unsafe situation.
- Be alert for last-second warnings from others just before moving your bus away from a bus stop. Other motorists, other bus drivers, parents or teachers outside the bus, or even children on board your bus might have seen a child under or near your bus. Take warnings seriously.
- Never wear headphones or ear buds while driving your bus.
- Silence students and turn the AM/FM radio down at each bus stop, so you can hear warnings. It's also a good idea to open the driver window at the bus stop, to be able to hear well.
- Use your bus's horn to get students, parents or other driver's attention when needed.

Be Diligent – Bus Driver's Role in Preventing Danger Zone Accidents

School bus drivers need to be highly aware of the possibility of children chasing after the bus. This can occur when a child mistakenly believes they have missed his or her bus and tries to catch it, or approaches the bus to meet a sibling getting off. To prevent accidents bus drivers should:

- Make sure all of mirrors are always properly adjusted
 - Check adjustment throughout the day
 - Scan mirrors properly
 - Rock and roll in the seat to avoid blind spots
- Be aware of what is happening around the bus, and pay attention to the danger zones.
- When unloading, count the students and watch to see which direction they head.
 - Before moving the bus, count them again to make sure they're safely out of the danger zones.

- NEVER move the bus until you are sure the danger zones are clear – even if that means getting out of the bus to check.
- Park bumper-to-bumper with the other buses, to stop students from walking between buses.
- If in any doubt as to where a child may be, get out and check.

Be Diligent – Teach Lifesaving Steps to all of your Students

Children learn by repetition, repetition, repetition! Remind them of safe crossing procedures every time they get off your bus. Preaching isn't necessary, but daily reminders will keep safety in the forefront of their minds as they exit the bus and may save their life.

All School bus drivers must ensure that all students learn to be safe school bus riders by providing regular instruction throughout every school year.

The following lifesaving tips are excerpted from New York State Education Department Education Management Services "**School Bus Safety is One Bus Stop at a Time**":

#1 Check before you Step:

Students should be looking out the door for passing motorists and a safe space to step before they exit the bus. REASON: Buses are sometimes passed on the right side by inattentive or impatient motorists. If students step off the bus without checking first, they could be hit by a passing vehicle.

The second reason for "check before you step" is the student should be sure the driver has stopped the bus in a place that is safe to disembark. The student should tell the driver if the bus is stopped in a deep puddle, close to a snow bank, or if there is no access to a safe space for the student to wait while the bus pulls away. This is especially important for a substitute driver is who might not know the route well.

The third reason for "check before you step" is for drivers and students alike to be conscious of the possibility of drawstrings, scarves, or backpack straps, which can get caught on bus handrails, in the door as it closes, on a fire extinguisher, or anything else in the step-well. Too many children have been dragged and killed in such accidents around the country. All school bus drivers must remain extremely vigilant about this danger!

#2: I see the driver, the driver sees me

Students should be looking at the driver's face while waiting to cross in front of the bus. REASON: If a student can see the driver's face, the driver should, therefore, be able to see the student, which means the child has moved out of the driver's blind spot in front of the bus. No accident report ever indicated the driver could see the child he or she ran over. "**I SEE THE DRIVER, THE DRIVER SEES ME**" is a phrase that's easy for children (and adults) to learn and remember. Eye contact between driver and student is extremely important in the "crossing" situation.

#3: Wait for the Driver's Signal to Cross

Students cannot see through the school bus when looking back to see if cars are coming. The school bus driver, using all mirrors properly, is in a position to analyze what traffic is doing. It is only when the bus driver is convinced traffic is controlled

that the driver gives the child the signal to cross the highway, using proper crossing procedures while doing so. Be sure to follow Michigan law below:

MCL 157.1855 (3) Pupils crossing the roadway upon being discharged from a school bus shall cross in front of the stopped school bus. If a school district authorizes its school bus drivers to signal pupils to cross in front of the stopped school bus, ***the signal shall be uniform throughout the school district.***

#4: Look left, right then left again

Students need to stop and look both ways as they cross in front of the bus. REASON: If students see a passing motorist early enough, they may be less likely to be hit and more likely to retreat to safety if properly taught to do so.

When crossing a roadway as a pedestrian, or entering an intersection when driving, the traffic that will reach us first is always coming from the left. This being the case, children should be taught to look "LEFT, RIGHT, AND THEN LEFT AGAIN." It is also logical as children move to the outside edge of the bus to cross the road that they look left first, because the view to the right has been clear as they entered the roadway initially.

Students should practice stopping at the outside edge of the bus to check for oncoming traffic as they cross in front of the bus. REASON: stopping encourages children to look carefully for motorists, and not to run across the highway immediately upon discharge, which is very dangerous.

Be Aware - Other Important Safety Lessons

Stress to children they should never return if they drop something near or under the bus. However, be prepared for the unexpected—children may do so anyway. Training is very important, but children will always be unpredictable.

- Teach children they must ignore grandparents, parents, or friends, and pets while crossing in front of the bus. A distracted child could run across the road without waiting for the driver signal and be struck by a passing motorist—it has happened. If parents or grandparents don't understand the safety reason for this, ask your supervisor to give them a courtesy call.
- Teach children not to place too much faith in red school bus flashers. Remind children the road is a dangerous place, and cars will drive by the bus!
- Train students to wait for the bus safely back from the road, in an orderly line. Many school bus drivers have been very successful at teaching children to wait in an orderly fashion.
- Teach children about mail box dangers. Don't let students stand at the mail box right next to the road as your bus pulls away from the stop. Don't let them run across the street behind your bus to pick up the mail. If their parents permit it, children can get the mail after the bus has left the area.

Be Diligent – Teach Students to Stay Out of Danger Zones

All areas close to the bus are danger zones and students are NEVER to go into these zones, except when loading and unloading. Students should be instructed to wait

away from the curb and away from the street. They may not approach the bus until it comes to a complete stop and you open the door.

Waiting for the Bus

When waiting for the bus, the students should:

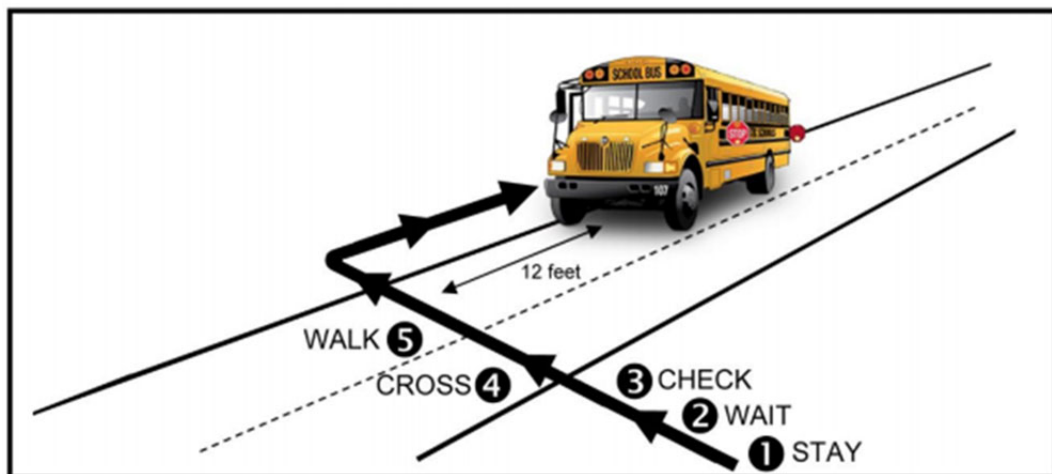
- Stay at least ten (10) feet away from where they board the bus.
- Not engage in horseplay, pushing, shoving or running when the bus is arriving, waiting or leaving.
- NEVER run after the bus, this is very dangerous. NEVER bang on the side of the bus.

How to Cross the Road Safely

Adapted from the *National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures*

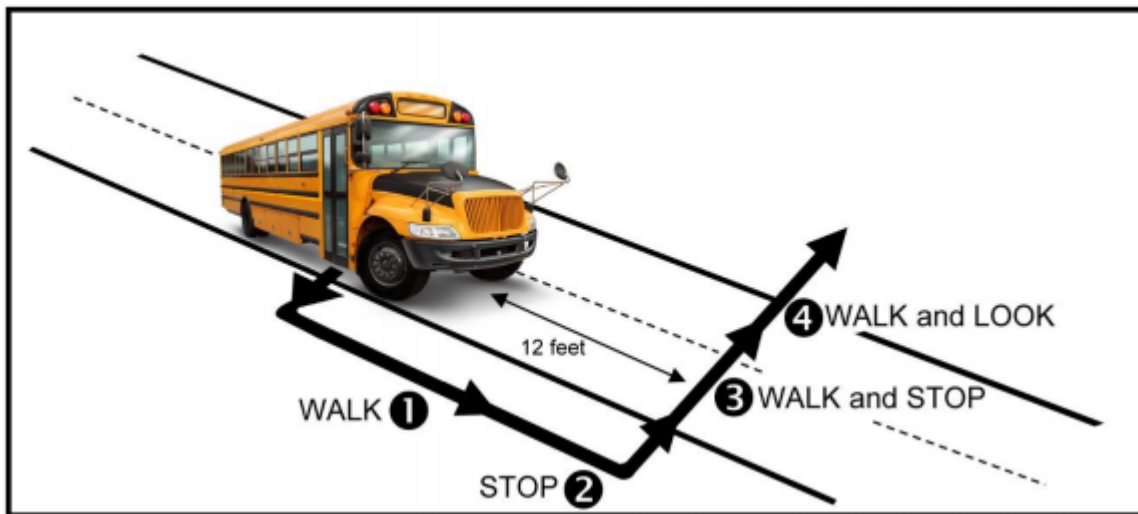
How to Cross Safely When Boarding the Bus

- STAY – on your side of the road, far away from traffic.
- WAIT – for the bus to stop and for your driver's signal to cross.
- CHECK – traffic both ways, then check again.
- CROSS – walk directly across, checking traffic both ways
- WALK – approximately 12 feet ahead of the bumper and board the bus quickly.



How to Cross Safely When Leaving the Bus

- WALK – along the side of the road until you can see your driver.
- STOP – Wait for the signal to cross.
- WALK & STOP – Go to the driver's side cross view mirror and look both ways
- WAIT for the driver's signal to cross.
- WALK & LOOK – For traffic both ways
 - If you see a vehicle that has not stopped, go back to the bus
 - If all vehicles have stopped, cross the road quickly.



Late Students

Many fatalities have been caused by students running after the bus and falling under the wheels or being hit by a car as they run across the street.

- Know your district policies on late students.
- Teach your students expectations for timely arrival at the bus stop.
- Enforce timely arrival at the bus stop.

Buses in the Headlines - Don't Be THAT Driver

Child rescued after bus was swept away; driver arrested

WILLIAMSON COUNTY, Texas — A school bus driver and a middle school student had to be rescued after the driver went around a barricade and tried to go through a flooded low-water crossing.

The sole student on the bus was treated by EMS and released to family. The driver, 57-year-old Nathan Deyoung, was arrested after he was rescued and is no longer employed by the district.

The driver was charged with failing to obey warning signs/barricades over roads and abandon/endangering a child. Bond has been set at \$7,500.

The student's mother took to social media to thank everyone who has reached out to her concerned about her son. "I hope no one ever has to listen to their child or loved one preparing to die because of a stupid decision that should of never have happened," the mother said in a Facebook post. "I finally understand the feeling of being numb and in shock."

Dash cam video shows the bus driving around a caution sign before entering the low water crossing. Within seconds, the hood of the bus is nearly completely submerged.

From there, the bus was carried by the water's current for about two minutes — rocking from the force of the water and knocking into tree branches and other debris — before finally coming to a rest in a group of trees. The video ends with the bus stranded in the creek with water gushing over its hood.

Be Aware – Flooded Roads are More Dangerous than they May Appear

More than half of flood-related drownings occur when someone drives into hazardous water, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Weather Service (NWS). Almost 100 people die each year in flooding-related incidents, the CDC says.

Drivers are urged to turn their vehicle around if they encounter water on the road that looks to be 6 inches or deeper, or if they cannot tell how deep it is. Be especially cautious in the dark, when it is harder to recognize the flood danger.

Even water that's 12 inches deep can move a small car, and 2 feet of raging water can dislodge and carry most vehicles, the NWS says.

Be Diligent – Turn Around, Don't Drive Through Water

As proven by this instance, deep water is also a threat to trucks and school buses even with their increased ground clearance.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration drivers should NEVER take risks and go through water on the road, whether it is standing or moving. Even if you are familiar with roads, don't drive through water on them. You cannot see the danger. There may be debris, tree branches or power lines in the water. Roadway and bridges may have been washed away.

Drivers should watch for flooding conditions, even in places where water does not usually accumulate. If the ground is saturated, flooding may occur even if there is not heavy rain or significant snow melt. Water can come from torrential rains somewhere else and cause flash floods. It may not be raining where you are.

Student killed when school bus rolled into a ditch and caught fire

October, 2018, a Mesquite, Texas ISD middle-schooler died after she was trapped in an overturned school bus that crashed and burned Wednesday while taking students home from school, according to a police report.

According to witnesses, before it tipped, the back tires on the right side of the bus left the roadway, so the driver steered to the left into oncoming traffic. He then overcorrected, swerving back to the right before the bus left the roadway and rolled onto its side and slid into a utility pole. A power supply line fell from the pole onto the bus and ignited a fire.

The victim was identified Thursday as 12-year-old Jazmine Villareal. Jazmine's 11-year-old sister, Jaylene, was also on the bus. She said she saw her sister but couldn't reach her.

Three students were hospitalized, and 38 were taken to Terry Middle School and reunited with their families.

The bus driver was hospitalized in good condition, the district said. Three police officers who pulled students from the bus were treated for smoke inhalation.

According to the NTSB report on average nearly one school bus fire occurs daily. 68% of the school bus fires start in the engine compartment or wheel area.

Be Diligent - Avoid a Rollover

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 280,000 rollover crashes occur annually in the United States. Buses and larger trucks are at a greater risk of being in a vehicular rollover. This is why it is critical that drivers are aware of the dangers of overcorrection. Here are a few tips to avoid being in an oversteering accident:

- Steer INTO skids caused by slippery roads
- Slow down, even if it means driving on the shoulder for a short period
- If on the shoulder of the road, do not steer back onto pavement right away
- While slowing down, straddle the pavement edge
- Counter-steer carefully to prevent veering into the opposite lane
- DO NOT hit the brakes
- Accelerate to normal traffic speed as soon as you've fully recovered

Be Aware – School Bus Fires Happen

A 2016 study has shown that between one and two bus fires occurs every day. Causes of fires include engine, mechanical and brake failures; wires loosen or rub against engine parts; old parts lose their integrity; tires explode; circuit boards become overloaded; and leaks release inflammatory fluids.

Be Safe – Preventing and Dealing with Fires

School bus drivers play an important role in reducing/preventing fires on their buses. Federal and state laws require that drivers inspect their vehicles. Drivers should conduct complete pre-trip and post-trip inspections beginning with a walk around the bus. Looking closely to make sure there are no leaks under the bus or in the engine compartment. Make sure to report all defects immediately.

Be Diligent - Check Your Fire Extinguisher

Hopefully, you'll never have to use the fire extinguisher but it's not something you can ignore during your pretrip inspection. Fire extinguishers can lose pressure over time and need to be serviced on a regular basis. Check the tag to see when it was last serviced, make sure the safety pin has not been tampered with and ensure the fire extinguisher is firmly secured.

School bus driver smells smoke, evacuates vehicle, bus breaks out in flames

February 2019. A school bus driver in Hayes Center, Nebraska, quickly evacuated his bus because he thought he smelled burning wires while out on his route.

Within minutes after he and seven students got off the bus, flames broke out and consumed the vehicle.

Smoke started to come out of the bus's electrical panel after all the students were off the bus. The driver grabbed the fire extinguisher, but the smoke got too thick and the driver decided to get out.

The driver then spotted flames and called for help.

No one panicked, Superintendent Tony Primavera said. After Primavera found out that all the students were safe, he drove to the location behind the fire trucks.

"We get out there and there's flames coming out (of the bus)," Primavera said. "My bus is gone. It probably burned for a half hour, 45 minutes."

The driver's quick actions prevented what could have been a disastrous situation, Primavera said. "We're very fortunate, and I'm pleased as punch my bus driver did a great job," Primavera said. "He was able to get the kids off and they were never in any real danger due to his quick action."

Be Safe – Follow your Nose and Keep an Eye out for Smoke or Flames

There are many potential causes of onboard fires - including leaking fluids or electrical system problems. These will often produce distinct "burning" smells. These should never be ignored, as they're an early warning that something under the hood is combusting when it shouldn't.

Watch for smoke from the instrument panel or engine compartment. Also watch for smoke when you do your frequent mirror checks. Fires originating from student's backpacks/laptops have also been reported. Remind students to pay attention to any smells or signs of smoke or fire when carrying electronics.

'Hero' Student Saves Bus Driver, Students during Medical Emergency

March 2019, JIM THORPE, Pa. -- A high school student in Carbon County is being hailed a hero by his school community for saving not only his bus driver but also a busload of students.

Jim Thorpe Area freshman Matt Stauffer was boarding his school bus when he noticed something was wrong with the driver. "I wasn't really thinking. I was just acting, just doing what I thought was right," Stauffer said.

For 14-year-old Stauffer, Tuesday was just any other school day. He got on his school bus at Church Road and Jeans Drive about eight miles from the borough around 7:30 a.m. But when he walked to his seat, he noticed students on the bus had panicked expressions.

"So I turned around, and the bus driver was like leaning out of his seat and only his seatbelt was holding him up," said Stauffer. Stauffer says he ran to help the man, and then realized the man's foot was stuck on the gas pedal.

"I reached up, turned the bus off, and then I put the keys in my pocket. No one else could get them," said Stauffer.

Still holding the driver, Stauffer told the other students to get off the bus and call 911. "Once they saw I was taking control, they all listened to me, and they got off the bus, and they all stayed in one area," Stauffer said.

Helped soon arrived, and the driver was taken to a hospital.

The superintendent says students are routinely given bus evacuation drills, so they know what to do in case of an emergency. They just had one of those drills last week.

"It's refreshing to know that the students paid attention and employed the skills that we gave them last week, but also just snapping into action and the focus that he and the other students exhibited," said Superintendent Dr. Brian Gasper.

The school district is now planning to recognize all the students on that bus in some way. Still, Stauffer says he's no hero. "I just helped him. I just tried to help everyone the best I could."

Be Diligent – Practice Bus Evacuations

Emergencies such as fires or danger of a fire, bus stopped in an unsafe position due to an accident, mechanical or human failure or road conditions may endanger school bus drivers and their passengers. In the event of an emergency, school bus drivers must immediately determine whether it is safer for students to remain in or evacuate the bus. In the event of a fire, a school bus may be fully engulfed in flames in less than three minutes.

Students must know how to properly vacate a school bus. It is possible for students to block the emergency door if they are all trying to get out at the same time. Also, there is a possibility of danger when students jump from the rear emergency exit. To avoid these situations, evacuation drills should be conducted for all students, even those that occasionally ride the bus. School bus evacuation drills can make a world of difference in preparing students to safely escape a burning bus.

Be Safe – Teach your Students about Bus Evacuations

The speed of the evacuation and the safety of the children involved are directly related to how well they have been trained. Performing evacuations drills on a regular basis and educating the students as to how to do it correctly is so very important. When preparing for drills, students should learn:

- When to evacuate a bus.
- The types of evacuations (front, rear door, roof, and side window).
- The importance of evacuating in a calm and orderly fashion.
- How to operate emergency equipment and open the emergency exits.
- Where to go and what to do once the bus has been evacuated.

Bus drivers should designate teams to help in case an evacuation is necessary. Each team should include the following:

- A passenger assigned to set the parking brake, turn off the engine, turn on warning flashers and call on the radio or other means and report the incident to the Transportation Department, in case the driver is unable to do so;
- A passenger assigned to lead passengers to a safe location at least 100 feet from the bus and to take the first aid kit off the bus;
- Two passengers assigned to stand outside the bus, next to the entrance door, to help students exit the bus and to take the fire extinguisher; and
- Two passengers assigned to stand outside the bus, next to the emergency exit door, to help students exit the bus.

Michigan Department of Education Advisory Practices and Guidelines - Evacuation Procedure

In order to strengthen student safety for pupils that are transported on school buses, it is recommended that each local and intermediate school district (in coordination with contracted pupil transportation providers, if applicable) develop policies and

procedures that every school bus driver conduct an emergency evacuation of pupils from the school bus at least three (3) times per year (front, rear, and front/rear combination). If an evacuation drill is unable to be performed due to the pupil's physical/mental limitations, a written evacuation plan should be developed and accessible to any driver of a school bus with such pupils. Records of these school bus evacuation drills should be maintained in the transportation office for a period of two (2) years.

Student safety is a top priority of the Michigan Department of Education. It is important for students to be aware of, and understand school evacuation procedures for all educational settings, including the school bus. The Michigan Department of Education, upon the recommendation of the Pupil Transportation Advisory Committee, recommends the implementation of this practice for all pupil transportation providers.

Information for students:

- Walk, don't run
- Use hand rails
- Remain quiet
- Follow the instructions given by your driver
- Remain seated until told to move
- Do not shove or push
- Always allow the outside assistant to help you safely exit the bus
- Follow the lead person in a direct line to a designated location away from the bus
- When leaving the bus during an emergency or emergency drill, all books, backpacks, lunch boxes, and any other extra items, are to be left on the bus

Prior to activity trips, a brief explanation shall be given to passengers regarding emergency evacuation procedures. Students and school personnel shall be shown the location of emergency exits in case of an emergency.

Driver Cited for Texas School Bus Crash

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Tex. October 2019. A school bus driver is being cited for crashing his bus which was carrying students to a freshman football game at Montgomery High School. According to the Texas Department of Public Safety said the driver of the bus was going too fast based on the conditions of the road. The crash happened when the bus went off the road and rolled on its side in the ditch.

State troopers say all 23 people onboard a Huntsville ISD bus were taken to a hospital Thursday afternoon after it rolled over in Northwest Montgomery County. Ten students and the bus driver were taken by ambulance for evaluation and treatment for minor injuries. The remaining students on the bus were taken by another bus.

Be Safe - Drive According to Conditions

Speed limits posted on curve warning signs are intended for passenger vehicles, not large trucks and buses. Buses should reduce their speed even further. Studies have shown that large trucks entering a curve, even at the posted speed limit, have lost control and rolled over due to their high center of gravity.

Braking in a curve is dangerous because it's easier to lock the wheels and skid. When approaching curves, drivers should slow to a safe speed before the curve. Drivers should never exceed the posted speed limit for the curve.

Driving too fast for conditions is defined as traveling at a speed that is greater than reasonable for safe driving. 23% of crashes occurred when CMV drivers were driving too fast for conditions which included: Wet roads (snow, ice, and rain), fog, curves, intersections, gravel or uneven roads, construction zones and heavy traffic

Be Diligent - Reduce Your Driving Speed in Adverse Road and/or Weather Conditions

Adjust your speed to safely match weather conditions, road conditions, visibility, and traffic. Excessive driving speed is a major cause of fatal crashes; higher speeds may cause more severe crashes. The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) recently reported that 25 percent of speeding-related large-truck fatalities occurred during adverse weather conditions.

Reduce your speed according to conditions

Drivers should reduce their speed by 1/3 on wet roads and by 1/2 or more on snow packed roads. For example, if you would normally travel at a speed of 55 miles per hour on dry pavement, then on a wet road you should reduce your speed to 37 mph, and on a snow-packed road you should reduce your speed to 27 mph.

Be Aware - Slick and Icy Roads

When it first starts to rain, water mixes with oil on the road making it particularly slippery. When you come upon slick, icy roads you should drive slowly and cautiously and pull off the road if you can no longer safely control the vehicle.

Basic Speed Law

Michigan's Basic Speed Law (MCL 257.627) requires motorists to drive at a "careful and prudent" speed in all driving conditions to be able to stop within the clear distance ahead. It may require driving slower than the posted speed limit.

Note: Proceed with caution when changing or merging lanes. Merge slowly. Sudden movements may cause vehicles to skid. Keep plenty of distance between you and the vehicle in front of you, and always wear your seat belt.

School Bus Driver Sentenced in Connection With Fatal New Jersey Crash

MORRISTOWN, N.J. — A school bus driver who was criminally charged in a crash in May 2018 that killed a student and a teacher and injured over 40 passengers has been sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Hudy Muldrow Sr., 78, who was indicted according to a news release from the Morris County Prosecutor's Office. In addition to the initial two counts of reckless vehicular homicide, the indictment also charges Muldrow, who drove for Paramus Public Schools, with 25 counts of assault by auto and 16 additional counts of assault by auto as a disorderly person's offense.

The indictment stems from the May 17 crash between Muldrow's bus and a dump truck in Mount Olive Township. Muldrow was part of a three-bus caravan heading to Waterloo Village for a fifth grade school field trip when he allegedly missed the exit for

the town and attempted to steer the bus across three westbound lanes of Route 80 to reach the official-use-only turnaround in the grassy median. The bus collided with a dump truck and flipped over.

The force of the crash sheared the bus cab from the chassis and killed student Miranda Vargas, 10, and teacher Jennifer Williamson-Kennedy, 51. Forty other passengers and the driver of the dump truck were also injured.

As a result, the Prosecutor's Office alleged that Muldrow's reckless operation of a school bus caused the deaths of a teacher and a student aboard the bus, and caused injuries to 40 additional bus passengers, plus the driver of a dump truck.

Muldrow pleaded guilty to two counts of second-degree reckless vehicular homicide, one count of third-degree endangering the welfare of children, five counts of fourth-degree assault by auto, and one count of disorderly persons assault by auto.

A New Jersey state Superior Court judge sentenced Muldrow to an aggregate term of 10 years in state prison. The first five years of the sentence are ineligible for parole according to provisions of the state's No Early Release Act. He still faces more than a dozen civil lawsuits filed by parents and teachers.

According to prosecutor Frederic M. Knapp ""The pain and suffering caused by this defendant are immeasurable and will continue forever. The mass casualties and carnage caused by his criminal acts required the New Jersey state prison sentence imposed by the court today," Knapp said. "We sincerely hope that the courageous surviving victims, mostly children, and their families will be able to accept this small measure of closure and solace for their collective and individual loss."

Be Safe – Be Prepared, for Field Trips

Michigan school bus drivers typically drive day in and day out on the same streets and roads. The potential challenge arises when the rural driver is asked to drive the school bus in a different environment, such as in an urban area like Detroit or Grand Rapids. The same challenge holds true for the driver who may be very familiar with urban driving and is asked to drive on rural dirt or gravel roads. These roads also have additional challenges, such as bridges with low weight limitations.

Be Safe – Plan Your Trip Route

It is crucial that school bus drivers be fully prepared before leaving for all field trips. First and foremost, they must know exactly where they will be traveling to and by which route. They should be extra cautious if driving in unfamiliar areas and use tools such as online mapping programs or GPS if allowed, to map their route.

Construction can pose additional challenges. Most county road commissions list construction projects on their webpages. Additionally, drivers can see a list of Michigan Department of Transportation road construction projects at:

<https://mdotjboss.state.mi.us/MiDrive/construction>

Be Aware - Special Situations along the Trip Route

Drivers should know any special situations that may occur along the way such as bridges and tunnels. Drivers must be sure there is nothing along the way that they cannot get over, under, or through. The Michigan Department of Transportation Truck

Operator Map includes very helpful information including bridges, tolls, load limits and roads with low overhead clearances. You can find the map at this link:
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/2017_Truck_Operator_Map_WEB_59966_6_7.pdf

Be Aware – Parking at the Destination

Know what parking options are available at your destination and which area will support school buses prior to leaving for your trip. Prepare for charges for parking and who will pay for them. Frequently at special events there may be a special parking area for school buses.

Be Diligent - Maintain Your Space

Drivers need a “cushion” of space all around their bus to stay safe. The area ahead of your vehicle is the most important. Proper following distance allows for more time to make good, well-planned decisions and affords other drivers the opportunity to scan the sides, look far enough ahead, and view the vehicle in front.

When traveling with multiple buses, drivers should maintain a safe distance between their buses as well as other vehicles:

- When traveling less than 40 mph leave 4 seconds
 - Between your bus and the vehicle ahead
- When traveling more than 40 mph
 - Add at least one additional second of space
- Double your space in adverse weather conditions, including rain, snow and fog.

When stopped behind another vehicle at an intersection, allow extra space between. You should remain far enough back to see their tires touching the pavement. Wait four seconds after they begin to pull away before starting.

Be Safe – Instruct all Passengers

Before leaving on your trip, passengers should be aware of emergency evacuation procedures and an evacuation team should be assigned as described earlier. Additionally, the following information should be discussed and/or demonstrated prior to each activity trip or field trip:

1. Location and use of the fire extinguisher;
2. Location of the first aid kit;
3. Location of the warning reflectors;
4. Location and use of all emergency exits;
5. How to shut off the engine and set the parking brake;
6. How to open the entrance door, to include, safety releases on manual, air or vacuum doors, if so equipped; and
7. The importance of passengers keeping aisles clear at all times and not blocking emergency exits

Be Diligent – Keep Emergency Exits Clear

Make sure nothing blocks emergency exits, including sports equipment, coolers, etc. According to Michigan law, MCL 257.1811(10) All baggage, articles, equipment, or medical supplies not held by individual passengers shall be secured in a manner that assures unrestricted access to all exits by all occupants, does not restrict the driver's ability to operate the bus, and protects all occupants against injury resulting from falling or displacement of any baggage, article, or equipment. Oxygen cylinders

secured to a wheelchair shall be considered to be in compliance with this subsection if they do not impede access to any exit.

Busing on the Lookout

Michigan Woman Survived Being Trafficked

Her nightmare started with a high school crush.

It was the middle of her freshman year when Theresa Flores' ever-moving family followed her father's business to a suburb just outside Detroit. As a newcomer to town, Flores said she didn't have many friends and wasn't allowed to date. But shortly after arriving, she became infatuated with a boy at her school, Birmingham Groves High.

"For six months he was really nice, he was really sweet, but I wasn't allowed to go out with him because I wasn't old enough," Flores said. "So one day he asked me if I needed a ride home from school, and we got into his car and he didn't take me home. Instead took me to his house and I felt really weird about it."

Flores said she agreed to come inside, but was then drugged, raped and photographed by her rapist's older cousins.

"I went home and I decided not to say anything to anybody," Flores said, fearing her religious family would be upset with her for what had just occurred.

"Unfortunately, that led to two years of being sold to men that they forced me to be with because they had pictures of it, and they blackmailed me and said, 'We're going to share these with your father and your priest.' And for two years I was stuck in this," Flores said.

She was finally able to break free after police rescued her one night at a motel. Her parents learned what was happening and soon moved again when her father was relocated for work.

Be Aware, Human Trafficking Exists

Around the country and right here in Michigan, men, women and children are forced into prostitution, domestic servitude and other labor for little or no pay. Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery and is a large and growing criminal industry worldwide.

Victims of human trafficking are in bondage through force, fraud or coercion, for the purpose of sex or labor exploitation.

Be Aware – in Michigan

383 cases of human trafficking were reported in Michigan in 2018 alone. Our children are especially at risk, a staggering number of human trafficking cases involve the sexual exploitation of a child.

Be Aware - Bus Drivers May Play a Key Role in Fighting Human Trafficking

Human traffickers use bus terminals and bus stops as recruiting areas when they are looking for vulnerable people, primarily minors and young adults, to exploit.

Human traffickers also recruit out of schools, and some victims continue to attend school during the day, and ride the school bus, while they are being trafficked or groomed at night.

Human traffickers count on people not paying attention and not knowing the signs to look for or the questions to ask.

To help potential human trafficking victims, school bus drivers should be on the lookout for:

Changes in patterns. Students who have begun to accumulate frequent absences. A new or different person, likely older, dropping off or picking the student up from the bus stop; this person may demonstrate controlling behavior.

Changes in moods. Symptoms of anger, panic, irritability, phobia or hyperactivity that weren't there before. Mood swings, such as frequent crying, temper tantrums or clingy behavior.

Changes in physical appearance. Signs of bruises, physical trauma, malnourishment or drug use. Inappropriate dress for the weather or school. Markings or tattoos that could be a pimp's branding.

Signs of grooming. Students who suddenly have the latest gadgets, new clothes, manicured nails or other material possessions.

Signs of control. Acknowledgement of a pimp or making a quota. Any comment about exchanging sex for money or any other good or service.

If you have suspicions, do not delay. Know and follow your agencies' protocol on reporting. You can call the hotline directly at 888-3737-888. All calls are anonymous and confidential. An expert is there 24/7 to help you. **IT'S OKAY TO BE WRONG!**

For more information visit, www.busingonthelookout.org

Be Aware – Michigan's Child Protection Law

1975 PA 238, MCL 722.621 et. Seq., requires the reporting of child abuse and neglect by certain persons (called mandated reporters). The law also permits the reporting of child abuse and neglect by all persons to Children's Protective Services.

The Child Protection Law requires mandated reporters who have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect make an immediate oral report to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHSS), followed by a written report within 72 hours.

Mandated reporters include medical personnel, school administrators, counselors or teachers.

Be Aware – You Too are Permitted to Report Child Abuse or Neglect

MCL 722.624(4)... any person, including a child, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, may report the matter to the department or a law enforcement agency.

If you suspect abuse or neglect, report it any time day or night online or by calling 855-444-3911.

Youth Mental Health Awareness for School Bus Drivers

Mental Health is a term that is defined in different ways. It refers to how a person thinks and feels. It is possible for people to have good mental health, or mental illness. It is possible for people to experience ups and downs in their mental health. Mental health is different than physical health because sometimes it is harder to identify or treat the problem.

Two people can experience the same thing, but interpret the experience differently and have different feelings and behaviors as a result. Two people can witness the same traumatic event and one may experience anxiety after but return to normal soon after. On the other hand the other can experience severe anxiety and may not be able to leave their home, be around others and require therapy meds to manage thoughts and feelings

Mental health is personal thing and impacts people differently. Because children are rapidly growing and changing, it may be confusing to know what normal development is or what is a mental health problem.

Mental Health in children often focuses on resiliency

Resiliency is a term that refers to how a person successfully overcomes life's challenges. Because children are dependent on the adults that are raising them, certain parts of their life are out of control. Sometimes things happen to children that are not because of a choice the child made. When a child is able to overcome this, it is referred to as "being resilient."

There is still a lot to learn about mental health in children and adolescents. The discussion about mental health often focuses on mental wellness and mental illness.

Mental Wellness

Is a term that describes a person who manages their mental health well. Some of the things that people do for mental wellness includes:

- Eating healthy foods
- Getting regular sleep
- Exercising regularly
- Having a positive support system
- Being creative and participating in hobbies
- Identifying problems but not dwelling on them
 - Asking for help when needed - it's stressful to try to manage alone.

Other Ways to Achieve Mental Wellness

- Make healthy lifestyle choices
- Pay attention to the mind and body

- If something does not feel right, do not just ignore it.
- Try to prevent illness in the mind like you would prevent illness in the body.
- Educate yourself about mental health and wellness so you feel more in control of your health.

Many times young people experience times in their life when they are neither mentally well nor mentally ill, but they are somewhere in the middle.

Mental Illness is a diagnosed illness

It affects a person's thinking, emotions and behaviors. It affects a person's ability to perform daily functions at school or work, or with people in the home and the community.

Mental illness is diagnosed by a professional trained to recognize symptoms. In children, mental illness can be difficult to identify because children are still growing and changing rapidly. Some of more common mental illnesses in children or teenagers are depression and anxiety.

Mental illness can begin in early childhood but may not be seen or diagnosed until adolescence or young adulthood. When it starts in childhood, it affects a young person's education and ability to make and keep healthy relationships and ability to work. People might label the child as being lazy, disrespectful, argumentative or hyper. It's possible that the child is experiencing a mental health problem or mental illness that has not yet been identified.

Mental illness is not usually understood by people who have not experienced the illness themselves or have lived with someone who has mental illness. This can cause people to react harshly toward youth with mental health problems or mental illness.

Mental Health Stigmas

Even though there is more information about mental health in today's society, there is still a negative stigma attached to mental health issues. Some of the common stereotypes of people with mental illness are that they are violent, lazy, making up their symptoms or will never improve.

Some Reasons that Youth and Family Avoid Help

Because their behaviors are sometimes unpredictable, bizarre, or seen as "attention seeking" many people dismiss them. These attitudes can cause people with mental health problems to avoid getting the treatment they need. Reasons to avoid getting health include:

- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Feeling weak or like a failure
- Worry or fear of what others will think
- Unsure what might happen if they admit they need help

Mental Health Care

There are different types of professionals that can help a young person with a mental health problem. School counselors, therapists, psychiatrists and pediatricians are just a few of the types of professionals that can help.

Case managers are professionals that can coordinate mental health care for children and families. They coordinate services such as mental and physical health, academic, legal, transportation, advocacy, respite or recreational services.

Places to go for Mental Health Care for Young People

Schools have some resources for youth with mental health needs and often provide school, outreach or crisis counselors to help students and families.

Sometimes, youth may go to a clinic or mental health center to meet with a therapist or counselor. Youth may also receive care from a doctor, nurse or social worker at a hospital. Residential facilities are alternate learning arrangements that are used for youth with mental health problems.

Barriers to Seeking Treatment

In some cases, there are things that get in the way of a person seeking mental health care. They include:

- Lack of transportation to appointments
- Not having insurance coverage that pays for the cost of services
- Family members that do not see the need for the services
- Not understanding the terminology and the different types of services
- Fear of what might happen when receiving mental health care

Natural Supports

Natural support systems often encourage a young person to use self-help strategies like making lifestyle changes, reading about mental health and illness and making different choices can be effective. There are times when a young person with a mental health problem needs more than self-help and a natural support system. At those times, it is important to refer them to a mental health professional.

Child/Adolescent Development

It's important to know developmental milestones. Children and teens go through a series of rapid changes because their brains and bodies are developing and growing. Youth are sometimes expected to do things that they are not able to do because of their age. Their behavior might be concerning, but their behavior might also be a natural part of the growing process. Some children mature slower than others. If children have learning disorders, that can impact how they develop over time.

Normal 5 to 6 Year old Development: Children begin to reason and argue, start to understand the difference between today, yesterday and tomorrow, can sit still and do simple tasks for a short period of time. They start to understand their own feelings, show jealousy toward siblings, play alone or with friends, show empathy toward others and learn how to take turns and share.

Normal 7 to 8 year old Development: Children develop longer attention spans, are willing to take on more responsibilities like chores or classroom duties. They become more competitive when playing games, form a sense of humor, befriend people of the opposite gender, can tell the difference from fantasy and reality.

Normal 9 to 12 year old Development: "Tweens" go through several quick changes because their bodies experience puberty, and they move from elementary to middle school. There are several new expectations placed on them and they are often

torn to prove that they are unique and independent, but also wanting to fit in with the group, and have someone else make decisions for them.

9 to 12 year olds also shift from play centered activities to academics, begin understanding abstract concepts, like love, war and poverty. They also tend to take on more responsibility like babysitting, chores, jobs, etc. and continue to learn how to make decisions on their own and experience the consequences for their actions.

9 to 12 year olds also want to fit in with others, have concerns about their appearance, become self-conscious and self-centered. They also start to give their friends more importance over their family.

Adolescents and young adults 13 – 20

Adolescence is a time of change and self-discovery. There are some things that are common to all youth – the physical, mental social and emotional changes that take a young person from childhood into adulthood. Some of the behaviors that occur in adolescence can look like mental health disorders. Also, symptoms of mental health disorders might be influenced because of the developmental changes that occur in adolescence.

Mental, Social and Emotional Changes in Adolescents

Mental changes: the way teens think about themselves becomes more abstract, their developing brain and life experiences impacts their thoughts about self. The last part of the brain to develop controls decision making. Adolescents are impulsive and make poor decisions. They begin to use more reasoning logic to solve problems. While they are learning to solve problems they make many mistakes.

Adolescents also begin to question beliefs, the meaning of life and spiritual ideals. This leads to questioning adult authority figures or social norms, becoming passionate about certain causes or debating topics that are important to them.

Social changes occur during Adolescence. They are preparing to live independently so they begin to turn to friends more than family. Learning how to solve problems and cope with peer pressure is important. To develop themselves, they may experiment with different looks or styles to connect with different cultural groups. They start to see themselves as sexual beings and learn how to manage relationships with others, including romantic relationships.

Emotional changes occur during Adolescence. Emotions can be more intense and quick to change and may lead to bad decision-making. They are more likely to take risks, be impulsive and look for new ways to have fun without thinking about the consequences. Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether someone is experiencing normal changes because of adolescence or a mental health problem.

Teens will withdraw from family to spend more time with friends which is a normal part of adolescence. If the teen is withdrawing from everyone, (even friends), there might be a cause for concern.

Many teens become more private during adolescence, but, privacy might also be hiding a mental health problem, alcohol or drug problem or a more severe mental illness. Other signs of a mental health problem if a teen:

- Is struggling with school, avoiding peers or social events
- Is showing patterns of concerning behavior over time
 - Makes comments about wanting to hurt themselves or others or has hurt themselves or others

There may be times when a young person is experiencing problems that are not considered normal development or times when you observe a young person who is having a meltdown or crisis situation. There are things you can do to help a young person who is having a mental health problem or a crisis. It's important to remember if a young person is experiencing a crisis, refer them to a professional immediately. Become familiar with your employer's expectations and procedures and follow them during critical situations.

Be Aware - Steps to Help a Young Person Having a Mental Health Problem

Step one - assess for risk of suicide or harm, where the young person:

- May harm themselves
- May experience extreme distress
- Behavior is disturbing to others

If they are at risk of harming themselves or others, seek professional help immediately.

Step two - listen non-judgmentally

This is very important. Most people want to be heard when they are experiencing problems. Ways to show someone you are listening include:

- Use verbal and non-verbal skills that show you are paying attention.
- Make it easier for young person to talk to you without feeling judged.
- Respect the youth's culture.

Some ways to effectively communicate with youth include:

- Be genuine
- Be careful about using slang
- Allow for silence
- Do not trivialize their feelings or thoughts
- Do not ask them to justify or explain their behavior
- Provide positive feedback

Step Three – Give reassurance and information.

Reassurance includes emotional support, like empathizing with how the young person must feel. Offer practical tasks that could help them or provide information about who may be able to help them if they need assistance.

Step Four - Encourage appropriate professional help.

Young people with mental health problems will generally do better if they receive professional help. They don't always know what their options are and you may have an opportunity to talk to them about those options. If you are unsure of the options, you can point them in the direction of a school staff member who can assist them.

Any youth under 18 years old will need a parent or guardian to make decisions about treatment with a professional. Consult your employer's procedures and policies to learn more about how to involve the family in this decision.

Step Five - Encourage self-help and other strategies.

Young people may not be aware of self-help strategies they can use because they are distressed about their situation. Encourage them to seek natural supports. They may need help identifying who their support system is and who they would like to include in their support system. Peer supports from others who have experienced mental health problems can be helpful.

Be Aware - How to Care for Yourself

After you have helped a young person in distress, it is important to care for yourself. Be aware of common feelings you might experience such as worry, frustration, anger or fear. You may be emotionally worn out. Find someone to talk to about the situation, but do so in a respectful way and do not disclose private information about the young person. Again, consult with your employer's procedures and guidelines after you have helped a young person in distress.

Be Aware - Mental health in children and teens is important to build resiliency

Children and teens experience many changes in their thoughts, abilities, bodies and relationships. These changes impact their mental health. When a person is managing their mental health well, they experience mental wellness. When they are having a mental health problem, they might experience mental illness.

Young people can recover from mental illness: by adopting healthy lifestyles, asking for help when they need it, relying on natural support systems and seeking professional help.

You may find yourself in a position to help a youth who might be having a mental health problem. The best ways you can help that youth is to assess their situation, listen non-judgmentally, Give reassurance and information and encourage them to seek appropriate professional help

Be Diligent – Take Care of YOU!

Seeking help is a sign of strength — not a weakness. If you're feeling sad or down, highly stressed, or are experiencing things such as mood changes or loss of appetite that aren't going away, especially if it's interfering with your daily life, it's important to know that treatment is effective. Talk to someone and get help, a primary care doctor, a friend, a therapist, or even your human resources department. Your employer may offer an employee assistance program that offer free and confidential assessments, counseling and referrals to employees.

Proactive Response Training for School Bus Drivers

These documents represent information of a general nature and are intended only to provide a general understanding of school bus safety.

West Shore Educational Service District cannot and does not guarantee the elimination of every risk for injury on or related to a school bus. Any action taken based upon this information is strictly at your own risk. Except as otherwise noted, these documents may not be reproduced or redistributed, in whole or in part, without the express permission of West Shore Educational Service District

During this training, you may see and hear things that are emotionally distressing. Please bring any concerns to the attention of your instructor.

DON'T APPROACH LIFE'S CHALLENGES BY BEING "REACTIVE". BE "PROACTIVE".

PREPARE FOR THE POSSIBILITIES BEFORE THEY ARRIVE

It is not a matter of "if" but rather "when". From Columbine to Marjory Stoneman Douglas 215,000 students from 217 schools have experienced gun violence, resulting in 141 fatalities and 287 casualties. One student having to experience gun violence is one to many. Is your school prepared? Is transportation involved?

The video that we are about to show is a video that was taken by Nikolas Cruz, the shooter at Marjory Stoneman Douglas. His plan was to take an Uber to the school, what if had taken the school bus? Would you have recognized something different that day; the clothes he was wearing to conceal the weapon, his mood?

Violence is a reality. 98% of all incidents occur with a single shooter, with 96% of the shooters being male. 40% of the incidents ended by shooter suicide, while 46% ended with an outside applied force. That applied force may not always be from law enforcement. In 78% of the incidents there was a connection between the shooter and at least one of the victims.

The average response time for law enforcement is 3-5 minutes. But that time can be greater based on where you are geographically located. 44 of 63 incidents ended within five minutes or less and 23 ended in two minutes or less. What are you doing to protect yourself and your students in a case of violence?

So, what do we do with this new reality that we live in? Do we pretend that it will never happen here? What are your options? What does your District allow? What is your policy? What steps is your district taking to prepare for an act of violence inside the building?

- Are there SHELTER IN PLACE plans?
- Do they only EVACUATE for a fire drill?
- What are the LOCKDOWN procedures?
- Does the training allow you to try to STOP it?
- Can you only do NOTHING?

How well do you know your District's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)? Per Michigan's Revised School Code, all school districts are to have an emergency operations plan which must include guidelines and procedures for school violence, attacks or threats at school sponsored events, and an active violence protocol. Is transportation included in the plan? Do you know your role?

The new reality of active violence incidents occurring in our schools has shifted some school's response strategies in their EOP. The traditional response is to be reactive and lockdown the school until emergency responders arrive to deal with the issue. The new strategy is for school staff and students to be trained in proactive response options.

As a parent, would you rather have your child do something to increase survivability, or do nothing and be an easy target or statistic?

Proactive Response Strategy: Trained to respond to acts of violence. Acting before you're in a situation.

Reactive Response Strategy: Respond in the moment with no real plan. More fear and panic because you haven't been pre-trained on how to respond.

HOW WILL PEOPLE REACT??

Upon encountering or hearing of an act of violence, people often react by:

- Panicking
- Running away from the threat
- Disbelieving it is happening

How can we influence people's reactions to a threat to increase the chances of survival?

- Have a clearly defined plan of action.
- Conduct regular trainings
- Re-evaluate procedures
 - Sustain what is working
 - Change what is not successful

TRADITIONAL vs PROACTIVE RESPONSES

Archilochus once said, "We don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training."

TRADITIONAL

Before 2000, the traditional response for schools was to lockdown and hide in place until rescued by law enforcement.

Columbine High School, Colorado; 4/20/1999

- Staff members instructed students to hide.
- Not all staff and students left the building. Some waited inside the building to be rescued for up to 4 hours.
- Did not try to stop the attackers.
- 13 Fatalities; 24 injuries

Can we expect staff and students to respond in a way they haven't been trained to do?

PROACTIVE

Proactive response options include any actions staff and students can take to separate themselves from a threatening situation and/or increase their chances of surviving an act of violence. Past incidents have shown that proactive responses can save lives. Several proactive response training programs have been developed and adopted by Federal, State, and local responders.

An example of a Proactive Response occurred on 11/14/2017, at Rancho Tehama Elementary in California. Teachers heard gunshots a ¼ mile away and placed the school on lockdown. The gunman rammed his truck into the school yard and opened fire on the building. Had the school not taken Proactive measures, lives would have been lost.

IS THE SCHOOL BUS AN EXTENSION OF THE CLASSROOM?

Do you feel that this is true in your schools?

Do you feel that your position is valued as a bus driver?

Do you receive information and training on a consistent basis?

Do you feel enabled to provide the safest transportation to your students?

IS THIS TRAINING NECESSARY FOR THE SCHOOL BUS?

School bus drivers are the first and the last to see the students each and every day. School bus drivers go into areas and open their doors where people in a car would not go without their windows rolled up and their doors locked. We transport approximately 700,000 kids on 15,000 school buses which travel over 900,000 miles every day.

Here is a list of incidents that have happened on or around school buses that made it into the news:

- Yazoo, MS: Girl with a gun on the bus in 2009.
- Charlotte, NC: Seventh grader brings 2 guns on school bus and demands the driver take him to Washington DC to kill government officials May 10, 2011.
- Midland City, AL: Driver Shot, Child Kidnapped in 2013.
- Seminole County, FL: Third grader brings a .45 caliber gun on the bus in his backpack on May 1, 2014.
- Burlington, KY: 16-year-old waved a gun and pointed it at other students on a school bus-January 3, 2017.
- Riviera Beach, FL: 16-year-old was charged with having a gun on a school bus-October 12, 2017.
- Mobile, AL: 16-year-old arrested for bringing gun on bus. Caught on camera with gun in his pocket- January 22, 2018.
- Cantonment, FL: 13-year-old brought loaded semi-automatic gun to school. SRO intervened as student exited bus February 15, 2018.
- Jackson Memorial Middle School in Ohio: 13-year-old boy brought a weapon on the school bus and planned to shoot everyone. Instead he committed suicide in the school bathroom Feb. 20, 2018.
- Whitehall, AR: 18-year-old brought loaded 9mm pistol on the bus. SRO intervened at school May 4, 2018.
- San Diego, CA: Man, boards bus and holds knife to driver May 25, 2018.
- Lakewood, NJ: 9-year-old fourth grader brings loaded gun on bus to shoot another student. Security intervened-June 5, 2018.
- Tampa, FL: Hillsborough student arrested after bringing a loaded gun on the bus February 10, 2016.
- York, PA: Eastern York High School student arrested after bringing gun on bus January 29, 2018.
- Franklin Lakes, NJ; 16-year-old charged with felony counts of 2nd degree criminal possession of a weapon September 20, 2016.
- Jefferson City, MO: Student brings loaded gun to Jefferson City Middle School on school bus January 11, 2017.
- Jacksonville, FL: Two students wounded after 5 shots fired into a school bus May 2015.
- Mobile County, AL: 11-year-old arrested for bringing a gun on the school bus and pointing it at another student September 7, 2016.

As humans we are taught to be trusting and look for the good in people. In this next video clip, can you see yourself doing what the driver did? This video is about the bus driver in Alabama, Chuck Poland. Jimmy Lee Dykes had shoveled out a spot for him to turn around and had befriended Chuck. When Chuck said thank you to Jimmy, Jimmy asked him if he like carrots or broccoli to which Chuck responded. The next day, Jimmy brought Chuck the vegetables to the school bus, and that was how he was

able to gain entry. He shot and killed Chuck, and then took a five-year-old boy and held him hostage in a bunker.

In this next video you will see a girl pull out a gun on the bus and load it. Are there any actions the driver could have taken to defuse the situation?

In this next video, you will see two boys playing with a gun on the bus, loading a clip and handing the gun back and forth. This situation lasted for over 10 minutes. Are there any actions that the driver could have done to stop this incident? Could the other students on the bus have done anything? Does your District have policies in place that could have been used in this situation?

After reviewing these examples, are you convinced that this training is important in keeping our most precious cargo safe? How does being proactive fit on a school bus?

PROACTIVE RESPONSES IN A SCHOOL BUS

AVOID	Avoid the situation.
RELAY	Radio information to your dispatch, Contact 9-1-1.
SECURE	Keep the threat outside of the bus.
ENGAGE	Your drivers, aides, and students to help protect themselves.

AVOID

Be Aware of Your Surroundings:

- Vehicles
- Students approaching the bus stop
- Adults approaching the bus stop
- Things out of the ordinary

Have an Escape Plan:

- Drive around
- Drive through
- Create space between bus and danger

Be Aware of Body Language:

- Frequent body adjustments - they will typically touch and adjust the weapon numerous times
- Unnatural gate- they may not bend their knees because a rifle is in their pants
- Jacket sag- Handguns are heavy. The coat will sag to one side when a gun is placed in the pocket
- Hunchback stride- When trying to conceal a gun under a coat when walking, the butt of the weapon will cause a noticeable bulge
- Weapon outline

RELAY

Give your district's dispatch your location & pertinent information.

Have the kids use their cell phones to call or text 911.

911 will ask for the following information:

- Exact address of incident location
- Number of shooters, descriptions
- Number and type of weapons seen
- Number and location of potential victims

- During an emergency, don't forget to communicate with you students.
- Provide direction and situational awareness
- Tell the students & aides what to do
- Shout out the location & description of the assailant
- Encourage teamwork to help make everyone safe

SECURE

WHEN to Secure the Bus:

- The assailant has blocked you in
- Students cannot exit on their own (special needs, preschool)

HOW to Secure a Bus:

- Shut doors
- Use straps shown to secure bus doors
- Put backpacks to add shielding against the sides of the bus

ENGAGE

Engage drivers in trainings that will enhance their response in an emergency.

- Train the drivers to know themselves well enough to make the best decision for their capability.
- Every situation is unique; Every load of students is unique. Constant training can make them successful.

Empower drivers to make the tough decisions when it comes to the safety of their students.

- Hitting the assailant with the bus.
- Brake checks and swerving to disrupt and attack
- Donkey kick an assailant

Drivers make split second decisions every day when they're driving on the roadways. They have been provided training on general bus safety their whole career. They also need to be engaged in training that will enhance their ability to make a decision during an emergency. What is right for one driver may not be right for another. Each person's experiences and training will provide a different reaction to an emergency.

Encourage drivers to discuss these concerns with their districts. Sometimes it will take the sacrifice of a few to save the many. Drivers should have an opportunity to discuss these life and death concerns in order to prepare.

PRACTICAL TRAINING SECTION

The remainder of today's training will DEMONSTRATE hands-on sessions conducted on a school bus. This will be your opportunity to observe what you've learned.

Each scenario will be introduced by the trainers and then discussed after each scenario. Key lessons learned will be shared with the entire class at the end of the sessions.

Hands-on scenarios may be physically or emotionally charged. While the intent is to provide a realistic training environment, everyone's safety is the utmost priority. Please follow ALL safety directions of the trainers.

Those participating in hands-on scenarios should inform their instructors:

- If you have health concerns.

- If you have extenuating circumstances that may require special attention.
- If you have concerns that you should not participate in the exercise.

SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY SAFETY

When you hear this, immediately stop all activity.

There will be a pat down prior to the drills. Please secure all valuables and weapons in your vehicle.

Please remove all jewelry or personal items that may become damaged or may injure a person during the training.

NO HORSEPLAY

Train the way you fight because you will fight the way you train.

If you don't take this seriously, you'll decrease the value of training for your fellow drivers.

References

Michigan Department of Attorney General

Busing on the Lookout

State of Michigan "What Every Driver Must Know"

Office of Drug & Alcohol Policy and Compliance

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, CMV Driving Tips

Safe Routes to School

Operation Lifesaver

National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures

New York State Education Department • Education Management Services "School Bus Safety is One Bus Stop at a Time":

John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, "Motorcoach and School Bus Fire Safety Analysis."

The Missouri Association for Pupil Transportation – "Mental Health Awareness for Bus Drivers"

Proactive Response Training for School Bus Drivers, Westshore ESD

NOTES

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PAGE

(TAKE NOTES ON PAGES 63)

Test Answer Sheet (CE 2021-2023)

Name: _____ District: _____ Date: _____

True or False

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

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16. _____

17. _____

Multiple Choice

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

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