



NAPT PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The yellow school bus is the **safest, most economical, energy-responsive and environmentally-friendly** way to transport our children to and from school each day, as well as for other school-related activities.
2. There is an important link between the yellow school bus and the performance of our children in the classroom; ensuring access to the school bus helps to ensure access to educational services and ultimately educational attainment.
3. The color of a school bus is an integral attribute of its unique design, and the industry must ensure that the color of a school bus continues to meet its role and objective as a safety factor.
4. On August 25, 2011, NHTSA issued regulations that established standards for seat belts on large and small school buses and required the installation of 3-point seat belts on all school buses under 10,000 pounds. The regulation also required emerging lap/shoulder belt equipment to be compatible with compartmentalization so as not to compromise existing safety standards. NHTSA did not, however, issue a requirement for states and local districts to install lap/shoulder belts on large school buses.

In November 2015, NHTSA issued a memorandum endorsing the installation and use of 3-point seat belts on large buses but stepping away from mandating their installation and use.

Since that time, new technologies have become available and attitudes toward seat belts have evolved in different directions. NAPT believes that, in the absence of a clear federal mandate on seat belts, local decision-makers are entitled to adequate and accurate information upon which to make their decisions and investments. To achieve this, NAPT will:

- Urge school transportation professionals to consider this issue from all relevant perspectives including the impact of seat belts not only on student safety in many crashes but also on student behavior management efforts.
 - Urge school transportation professionals to consider the various aspects of seat belts that have concerned the industry for years, including implications for evacuations during fire and water incidents and the timely evacuation of students with special needs.
 - Enhance our available resources, manufacturer partnerships, and educational offerings on this issue, thereby enabling informed discussions and decisions to be made at the state and local levels.
 - Continue to work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders and federal agencies to better inform our members and to bring this issue to resolution at the national level.
5. School transportation administrators should be fully qualified to perform their responsibilities and can accomplish this by engaging in continuous professional education and being certified in industry best practices and knowledge.
 6. Illegal passing of stopped school buses exposes our children to the risk of injury and death. This dangerous practice must be reduced and eliminated through standardized and meaningful penalties, stream-lined

enforcement procedures, use of appropriate technology, and enhanced public education efforts. The loss of one life is too many.

7. Bullying has no place in school transportation. Clear and well-considered school district policies, along with driver and attendant training for handling such situations and behaviors on the school bus are important to protecting our student riders.
8. Providing timely, relevant, and appropriate training to all individuals involved in pupil transportation, such as school bus drivers, attendants, dispatchers, technicians, trainers, supervisors, and others, is vitally important for ensuring pupil transportation safety. This training should cover the transportation of all students, with a particular emphasis on those with disabilities and special needs.
9. While it is always preferable that children ride on yellow school buses there are some areas and instances where this may not be possible. In such situations, it is crucial that children are transported in the safest possible vehicles and driven by qualified, trained, and well-regulated drivers.
10. Leaving children unattended on school buses must not be condoned. It exposes children to unnecessary risk. Moreover, is a frightening experience for the children and erodes public confidence in the safety and security of the yellow school bus.
11. Utilizing computer-based routing and scheduling systems, telematics, and other technologies allows school transportation leaders to attain maximum efficiency in their operations and increase overall safety for the children.
12. A high degree of transparency is necessary to assure taxpayers that pupil transportation operations are meeting safety expectations, benchmarked standards, and quality measures.
13. The use of electronic communications devices should be limited to approved purposes related to the operation of the school bus. School bus drivers must otherwise refrain from using personal electronic devices or engaging in activities which may distract them while operating a school bus.
14. While operating a school bus, the appropriate use of lap-shoulder belts is a standard requirement for drivers, and their use should be strictly enforced for the safety of the driver as well as their student riders.
15. As was originally legislated and intended, the federal government should appropriate full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in support of special education services, including costs related to transportation of students consistent with their Individualized Education Plans.
16. It is important that federal government continue to provide funding (E-rate, ESSER, Infrastructure) that will support internet service on school buses, ensure security of our student and routing data, and enable the purchase of clean-air school buses nationwide. School buses are a part of the education infrastructure and should be included in all such appropriations.
17. Recent episodes of school-based violence, including active shooter events, raise the concern that school buses are equally vulnerable to acts of violence not only by students but also by adults gaining access to the bus. To this end, it is important that the federal and state governments support efforts and provide funding to help ensure on-board safety and security for school buses, school bus drivers and student riders.
18. Our federal and state governments must continue to invest appropriately to evaluate and improve the safety of our highways and bridges to ensure safe passage of the nation's 500,000 school buses and the 25 million children we carry over those roads.