SCHOOL BUSES TIMES ARE CHANGING

Denise Donaldson…..Safe Ride News
Charlie Vits…………SafeGuard
Beth Warren…………Texas Department of Public Safety
PART 1: Best Practice

• Learn who rides on school buses
• Describe best-practice occupant protection methods for these students
• Understand the bus environment
PART 2: Laws and Rules

Preschool Students
• Head Start
• NHTSA Guidelines
• Indiana and Oregon
• Training Resources

Seat Belts on Buses
• Changes in busing since 60s/70s
• Recent changes in seat belt laws
PART 3: Implementation

• TEXAS: 2017 vs. 2007 law
• How law is written
• How law is implemented
• Pitfalls to avoid
• National resources for states preparing bills
Who Rides the Bus?

Elementary-Age Children...
Who Rides the Bus?

Older Children...
Who Rides the Bus?

And, YES, these kids too...

- Head Start and Early Head Start (from 6 weeks)
- Teen Parent High School Programs
- Children of Bus Drivers
Who Rides the Bus?

Kids With Special Needs

Including:

- Physical conditions
- Neurological needs
- Mental and psychological/behavioral needs
COMPARTMENTALIZATION

Compartmentalization can provide proper protection to students in certain types of crashes involving a large bus and properly seated occupants who are elementary age and older and who are not medically fragile.
Compartmentalization protects these kids well, if:

- On a large bus
- Collision to front or rear
- Occupant properly seated
If seat belts are available, wear them!

• Protects in ALL types of crashes
• Helps keep kids properly seated
• Improves behavior/reduces driver distraction
On a bus, CPS has 3 stages...

**STAGE #1**
Rear facing in a CSRS with a harness

**STAGE #2**
Forward facing in a CSRS with a harness

**STAGE #3**
Riding on a school bus seat, with a seat belt whenever available.
Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS)

Devices used on school buses to provide child protection beyond basic compartmentalization, other than lap-only or lap-shoulder belts. These must meet the requirements specified in FMVSS 213.
Stage 1: Rear Facing CSRS

Stage #1
Rear facing in a CSRS with a harness

RF-only
Convertible
Stage 2: Forward-Facing CSRS

STAGE #2
Forward facing in a CSRS with a harness
Add-On CSRS Just for Buses
Attach Using a “Cam Wrap”

- Safety Vests
- Safety Harnesses
- School Bus-Only CSRS
Cam Wraps
Webbing Wrapped Around Bus Seating That’s Used to Secure a CSRS.

IMPORTANT LIMITATIONS

- NHTSA requires the seat behind a cam wrap restraint be unoccupied or used by a restrained passenger

Shown: “Portable Seat Mount” for Vests
Stage 3: On the school bus seat

Wearing a seat belt, whenever present!

STAGE #3

Riding on a school bus seat, with a seat belt if available.
Why No Booster Stage on a Bus?

**Passenger Cars**

Passenger-vehicle seats are sized for an adult’s body.

**School Buses**

School bus seats are sized to match kids’ bodies.
CSRS Made for Special Needs

Behavioral Issues

Do you have an Escape Artist?

Extra Support
Basic Approach to CSRS Selection

#1
List of CSRS types suitable for the CHILD

#2
List of CSRS types suitable for the BUS
Bus Considerations: Seat Row Spacing and Seatback Height

24” Minimum Seat Back Height

SRP = Seating reference point (the center of the test dummy’s hip).
Bus Considerations: Seat Row Spacing

It is easy to see why Minimum Seat Spacing presents challenges to CSRS use!
Bus Considerations: Seat Frame Strength

Standard (FMVSS 222)

Reinforced (FMVSS 210)
Bus Considerations: Anchorage Options*

LATCH

Lower Anchors

Tether anchor

Seat Belts

* Required on small buses ≤ 10,000 pounds only. Some state and municipal laws apply to larger buses.
Want to Learn More

• 8-Hour training course:
  CPS Restraint Systems on School Buses
  National Training (NHTSA)

• School Bus Safety Handbook
  (Safe Ride News, www.saferidenews.com)

• National Child Passenger Safety Board
  www.cpsboard.org
Helpful Resources

• Head Start Regulations
  Now CFR 45, 1303 Subpart F
  (formerly, prior to 2016, CFR 45 Part 1310)

• NHTSA: Guideline for the Safe Transportation of Pre-school Age Children in School Buses

• National School Transportation Specifications & Procedures http://www.ncstonline.org

• Safe Ride News: www.saferidenews.com
Resources:
Transporting Children with Special Needs

National Center for the Safe Transportation of Children with Special Health Care Needs
1-800-755-0912
www.preventinjury.org

“Ride Safe” informational brochure on transporting wheelchairs
www.travelsafer.org

SafeGuard STAR Special Needs CSRS

Crash-tested wheelchair
Changes to Advance Passenger Protection in School Buses

1. CPS
2. Lap-Shoulder Belts

Charlie Vits
Market Development Manager
Regulatory Affairs Manager
Legislated and Implemented

2

Years of Change

• Federal Activity
• State Activity
• Local Activity
Changes to Advance Passenger Protection in School Buses
Government Activity

Federal

• NHTSA – No New Activity
• Head Start – Update of Regulations – Waivers still issued

State

• Indiana – Required for all Pre-K’s in school buses
• Oregon – Impact of rear facing requirement
Growth in Training

NHTSA

Eight hour course update 2015

Online videos

Businesses and organizations

Proposal to NASDPTS

National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation
Changes to Advance Passenger Protection in School Buses

2 Lap-Shoulder Belts
Changes in how we use school buses

**Compartimentalization**
41 Year old technology

**Bus Routes**
Past: Short / Local
Now: Long Distance / Busy Roads

**Activity Trips**
Past: Short / Local
Now: Cross State Trips

**Behavior**
Past: Manageable
Now: Can be chaotic
Changes in how we use school buses

Parents’ safety expectations

Today’s safety technology

School transportation leadership
## Lap-Shoulder Belt Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Design Performance Standards FMVSS</td>
</tr>
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<td>“Every child should be in school bus seat with lap-shoulder belts” - Admin. Mark Rosekind</td>
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Daily crashes
Causing injuries and fatalities

21 Rollovers
In first 3 months of 2018
SOURCE: Internet News (IMMI)

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Changes in Attitudes

• Individuals/communities nationwide now demanding

• School districts pursuing belts for behavioral improvements

• Districts with belts influencing surrounding districts

• Successful implementation processes studied and taught

• Regulators responding
State Regulations

• 2005 California
• 2007 Texas
• Crashes occur daily causing injuries and some fatalities
• States propose legislation - defeated due to funding
• 2016 States respond to Mark Rosekind - legislation still defeated
• 2017 over 30 states propose legislation
State Regulations

• 2017 Arkansas Legislation puts power with parents

• 2017 Texas – Removes state funding requirement, school district can opt out - vote in public venue they can not afford

• 2019 Nevada – Required effective July 2019

• Local districts – Main growth nation wide reducing state legislative resistance

• 2018 and 2019 – More to come
School Bus Seats

School bus seat evolution resolved issues:

- Capacity
- Design/features
- Service

One Seat Fits

3 Smaller Students

OR

2 Larger Students
School Bus Seats

• Current seats convert to lap-shoulder belts with seat back exchange

• Bus bodies manufactured with structure to accept lap-shoulder belts seats even if bus not equipped
Children need to be protected in **EVERY** vehicle
Discussions

- Texas law history
- New (current) law
- Issues
- Recommendations
Texas Law History - 2007

• Texas Statute 547.701 (e)

• A bus (school bus and school activity bus) operated or contracted by a district for the transportation of school children shall be equipped with a three-point belt for each passenger
Texas Law History – 2007 (con’t)

• Purchased on/after 09/01/2010

• School-chartered bus contracted on/after 09/01/2011

• Districts may, at their own initiative/expense, adapt any/all existing fleet with three-point belts
Texas Law History - 2009

- New subsection added in 2009

- A school district is required to comply with (e) only to the extent that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) pays or commits to pay the districts for expenses incurred in complying

- TEA may make grants of appropriated money for this purpose
Texas Law History – 2009 (con’t)

• $10 million in grant budget
  • Only $416,582 distributed in 2011 - the rest of the funding was re-allocated to other areas of the agency’s budget

$416,582 Distributed

Re-allocated
Texas Law Change - 2017

• SB 693 passed into law: Statute 547.701

• Bus definition includes: school bus, school activity bus, multifunction school activity bus, school-chartered bus
Texas Law Change – 2017 (con’t)

• Bus operated by, or contracted for use by school district for the transportation of school children – SHALL BE EQUIPPED WITH A 3-POINT SEAT BELT FOR EACH PASSENGER
Texas Law Change – 2017 (con’t)

• Does NOT apply to:

• (1) Buses purchased by school district that are model year 2017 or earlier
Texas Law Change – 2017 (con’t)

• (2) Buses purchased by school district model year 2018 or later IF

  School board determines budget does not permit $ increase in price

  Votes to approve that decision in public meeting
Issues

• Model year vs. date purchased

• ~1,200 model year 2018 buses already were on TX roads before law passed

• ~2,400 model year 2018 buses already built to TX specs by vendors before law passed
## Issues

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<tr>
<th>COST</th>
<th>TRAINING</th>
<th>LIABILITY</th>
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<td>Balancing cost increase ($8,000 - $10,000/bus) with other district needs – both on and off the bus</td>
<td>Lack of statewide standardized school bus occupant seat belt use training</td>
<td>Drivers concerned about liability if student/s injured while not wearing seat belt</td>
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Recommendations

• MY 2018 buses already on road without 3-point belts – document open school board meeting and record vote for exemption

• Members of state legislature work with states’ pupil transportation associations and state directors BEFORE drafting language of proposed bills
Recommendations (con’t)

• Have a robust training curriculum to teach proper seatbelt use with all students

• Enforce violations as with all other school policy violations
Changes in the role of the CPST

- Strong role to assure protection of children in all vehicles
- Need for protection is not just in passenger car
- With same passion, they can be a voice in the community demanding lap-shoulder belts in school buses
Thank You

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