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### Safety of School Buses

- Yellow school bus transportation remains far safer than other modes
- For example, less than one percent of youth fatalities during school travel hours are in school buses, versus 57 percent when riding with teen drivers and 23 percent with adult drivers ([www.schoolbusfacts.com](http://www.schoolbusfacts.com))

**YOUTH FATALITIES DURING SCHOOL TRAVEL HOURS**

TEEN DRIVER 57% ADULT DRIVER 23% OTHER TRAVEL 19% SCHOOL BUS <1%

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### Student Transportation Overview

- **NASDPTS:** Who are we and what do we do?
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Effects and trends
- **The Great Seat Belts Debate:** Spoiler alert: it's almost history
- **Loading and Unloading Safety:** Vulnerabilities, challenges, and solutions

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### What is NASDPTS?



#### □ National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services

- ✓ Established in 1968
- ✓ 51 state directors (highest ranking student transportation official in each state and DC)
- ✓ Other membership categories include suppliers to industry, state student transportation association leaders, and interested parties

[www.nasdpts.org](http://www.nasdpts.org)

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### What does NASDPTS do?



- Policy direction and guidance
- Training workshops and conferences
- Develop and broker best practices for operations and fleet management
- Promote SAFETY, equitable access to school programs, and environmental stewardship

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### POSITION PAPERS

- [Lap/Shoulder Belts in School Buses](#)  
May 2020
- [America's Professional School Bus Drivers: Their Importance to Student Safety and Educational Success](#)  
May 2018
- [Non-Conforming Vans Used for School Transportation](#)  
December 2017
- [Repair or Replacement of Components on School Buses](#)  
November 2017
- [The Equipping and Use of Passenger Lap/Shoulder Belts in School Buses](#)  
February 2014

<https://nasdpts.org/Position-Papers>

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## The Elephant in Our Room



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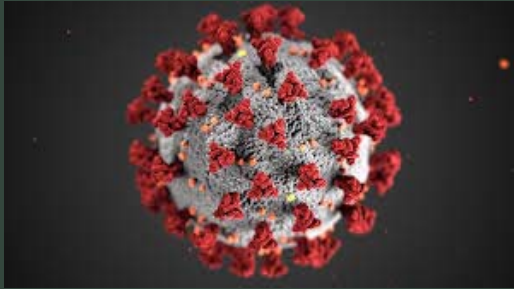
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### COVID and Student Transportation-2021

- Burbio.com School Opening Tracker tracks:
  - % US K-12 students attending "virtual-only" schools
  - % US K-12 students attending "traditional" in-person/every day schools
  - % US K-12 students attending "hybrid" schools



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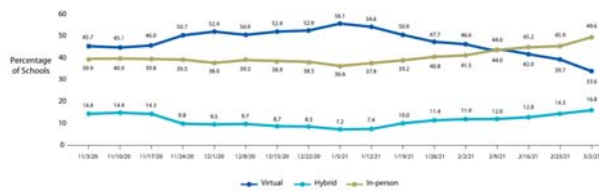
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### School Reopening Status in 200 Largest U.S. School Districts

March 2021



SOURCE: FutureEd Analysis of Burbio Data

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### Rewind to March 2020

- In-school learning ended virtually overnight
- Public and contracted school buses were parked
- School buses and drivers pivoted to:
  - Providing meals throughout communities
  - Distributing technology, lesson plans, and education resources
  - Serving as wifi "hotspots"
- NASDPTS and others disseminated guidance on prevention protocols and mitigation strategies (PPE, temp checks, symptom monitoring, quarantining, contact tracing, sanitation of buses, in-bus barriers and air purification/ventilation, etc.)
- Tracked federal stimulus bills and funding sources for displaced school bus drivers and idled employees and companies



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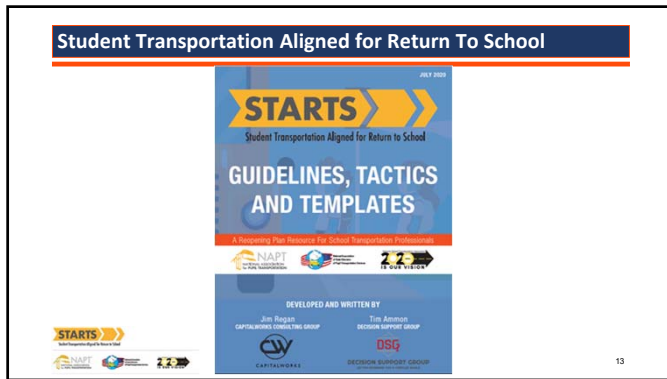
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### Sponsoring Organizations



The Student Transportation Aligned for Return To School (STARTS) Task Force (the "Task Force") was formed as a partnership of the three leading school transportation industry organizations; the National School Transportation Association (NSTA), the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) and the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS).

The purpose of the Task Force was to develop materials that would be useful to the school bus community as it works to respond to the unprecedented challenges of developing transportation plans to support school reopening plans in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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### Core Activities of the Task Force

- "Mined" action items and guidelines from:
  - each state's school reopening plan
  - other transportation reopening plans (paratransit, transit, rail and airlines)
  - corporate reopening plans from Starbucks, McDonalds, Walmart, Disney, Apple...
- Surveyed to understand the needs and requirements of:
  - State Directors of Student Transportation
  - Bus Contractors
  - Local School District Transportation Directors
  - School Superintendents
- Developed a Master List of Guidelines
- Developed a "Menu of Tasks" for each Guideline
- Developed a Guideline and Task Assessment Matrix Tool and Gantt Chart
- Wrote the Task Force Findings report, available at <http://www.startstaskforce.com>



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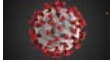
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### COVID and Transportation-2021

- CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) classifies school bus drivers as "essential workers" ([Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers Guidance](#), v. 4.0)
- NASDPTS and others encouraged states to prioritize essential workers, including school bus drivers, in early phases of the vaccine rollout, once front-line health care and emergency response personnel received vaccines
- Supported President's Executive Order 13998 requiring mask use by all passengers and drivers on public transportation
- Supported safe resumption of school bus service; discouraged temporary, less safe transportation options



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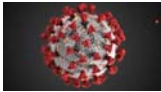
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### COVID and Transportation-related Resources

- CDC and FEMA: [www.coronavirus.gov](http://www.coronavirus.gov)
- CISA: [www.cisa.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cisa.gov/coronavirus)
- USDOT "waivers" sites:
  - FMCSA: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/COVID-19>
  - NHTSA: [www.nhtsa.gov/coronavirus](http://www.nhtsa.gov/coronavirus)



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### School Bus "Seat Belts"

- Prior to 2007, seat belts were...just seat belts
- Only two-point lap belts were available
- Common misperceptions were that belts:
  - Were expensive
  - Reduced capacity
  - Would be used as weapons
  - Could cause abdominal injuries and/or whiplash



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**Then in 2007.....everything changed!**

**A thing called “flexible seating” was introduced.....**

- ~ Lap/shoulder belts had been introduced in 2002
- ~ Flex seating was introduced at the NAPT trade show in 2007
- ~ Flex seating went into production in February 2008



Iowa Department of Education

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**February, 2014 - NASDPTS fully supports the installation and use of lap-shoulder belts in school buses. NASDPTS is not advocating that the installation and/or use of lap-shoulder belts be required.**

Iowa Department of Education

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**November 8, 2015 - NHTSA**

**NHTSA:  
“SCHOOL BUSES SHOULD  
HAVE SEAT BELTS.  
PERIOD.”**

Administrator Mark Rosekind,  
November 8, 2015



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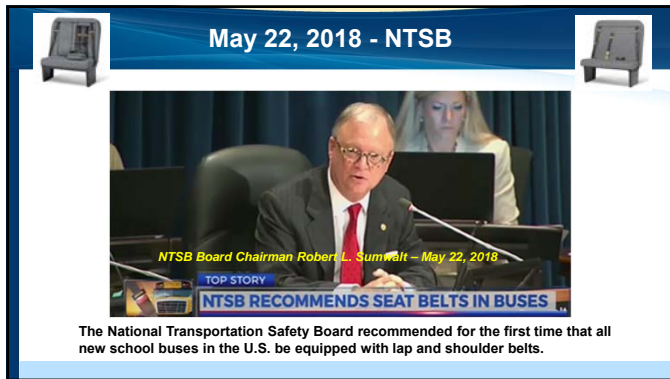
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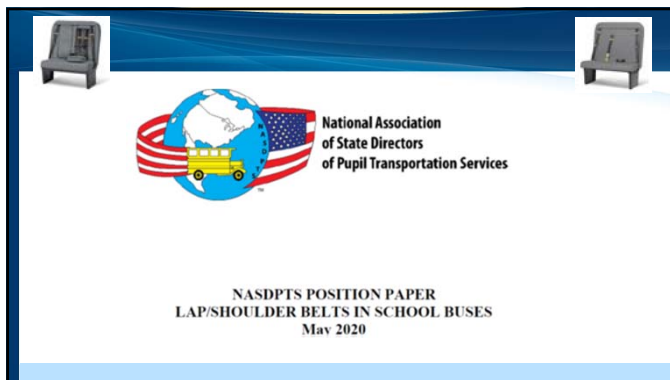
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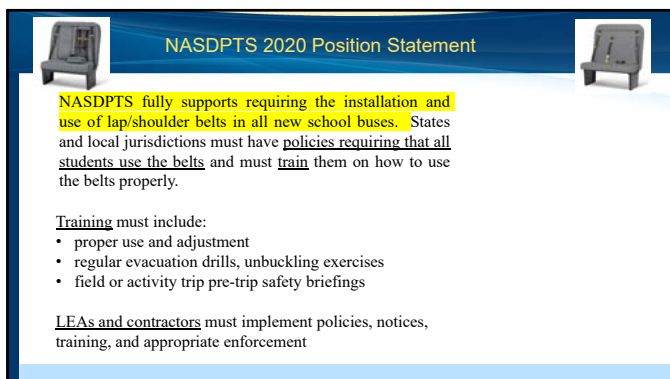
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## States With School Bus "Seat Belt" Laws

- **Arkansas**- Lap/shoulder (L/S) belts, if authorized by local petition (started Jan. 1, 2018)
- **New York** – Lap belts, use not required
- **New Jersey** - Lap belts, use required; L/S belts started Feb. 21, 2019
- **California** – Lap/shoulder belts, use required
- **Iowa**: Lap/shoulder belts, usage policies required (started October 2, 2019)
- **Louisiana** – Few in use, never funded
- **Florida** – Lap belts, use required
- **Texas**- Lap/shoulder belts unless districts vote to opt out (started Sept. 1, 2017)
- **Nevada**- Lap/shoulder belts (started July 1, 2019)

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## Breaking News



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## Purpose and Findings of NHTSA Study

**Purpose:** To determine how school districts maximize effectiveness and benefits of belts by improving proper usage

**Major Findings:** Through surveys and interviews, NHTSA found that:

- Usage policies, backed by training, education, and enforcement are important.
- Belts contributed to a calmer bus environment with less distractions for school bus drivers.
- Drivers and supervisors who devoted more time and energy into training and enforcement of required use derived the most benefit.



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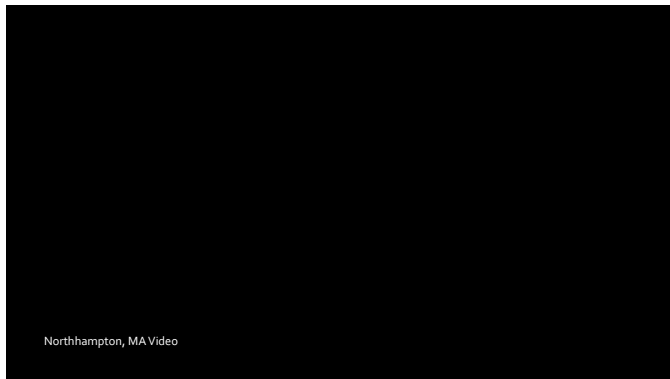
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### Loading/Unloading Safety

**Getting to Zero:** While school buses are incredibly safe, students remain most vulnerable as pedestrians outside the bus.

**Kansas Survey-**

- Kansas State Dept. of Education (formerly KDOT) surveys fatalities to students during loading and unloading
- Reports students killed while bus was approaching, within, or leaving a school bus stop
- Survey conducted for over 50 years
- <https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Fiscal-and-Administrative-Services/School-Finance/School-Bus-Safety>

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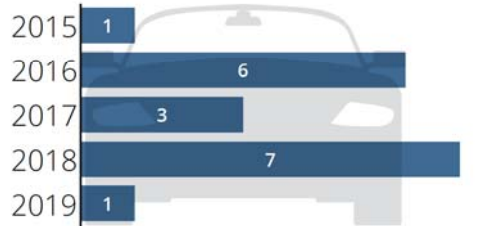
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## School Children Killed by Vehicle Passing School Bus



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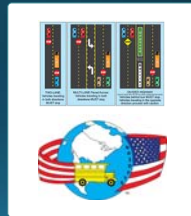
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## 2019 NASDPTS Illegal Passing Survey

- One-day snapshot captured by school bus drivers
- Completed annually since 2011 to document incidence of other vehicles illegally passing their buses
- 2019 survey results:
  - 131K school bus drivers in 39 states
  - 95K motorists illegally passed their buses
  - Equates to over 17M violations per year nationally
- Complete results available at [www.nasdpts.org](http://www.nasdpts.org)



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## Multi-year Summary

Survey Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
Number of States	28	26	29	29	26	33	31	39	39	31
Number of Drivers	111,914	99,930	108,436	97,265	102,371	96,540	106,976	108,623	130,879	106,993
Total Vehicles Passing Illegally	76,685	88,025	85,279	75,966	78,518	74,421	78,239	83,944	95,196	81,808
Vehicles Passing per Bus	0.69	0.88	0.79	0.78	0.77	0.77	0.73	0.77	0.73	0.76

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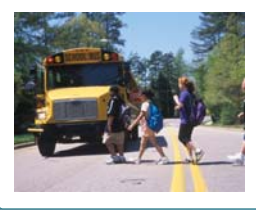
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## Survey Takeaways



- Results unfortunately consistent over nine years
- About 27 percent of the nation's school bus drivers participated
- AM and PM passes close to equal
- About 60% of passes from front, 40% from rear
- Equates to over 17M per year
- 2.2% are on right side of bus where students enter and exit!

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## Model Policies and Best Practices

- Is there a need for?:
  - Uniform national law on stopping for buses?
  - National priority on illegal passing enforcement (e.g., targeted grants)
  - Model training curricula for school bus drivers and student riders (e.g., standardized signaling procedure)
  - Model state law on photo/video enforcement
  - Better promotion of safety-related vehicle technology and operational procedures of National Congress on School Transportation (ncstonline.org)



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## Illegal Passing of School Buses: Study Objectives

- Assess knowledge of drivers about laws regarding passing of school buses
- Assess current stop arm violation initiatives, and
- Demonstration project: implementation of HVE and camera systems
- Use the results to create a report and guide



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### Illegal Passing of School Buses: Study Approach

1. A **national survey of motorists** to determine their knowledge of and attitudes towards laws regarding passing of school buses
2. A **field study** to examine the effectiveness of an **automated school bus camera enforcement** system combined with **HVE and education** in two communities



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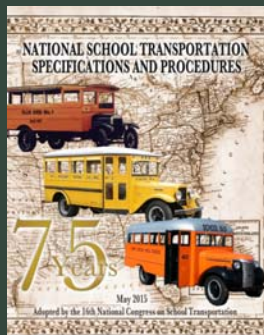
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Free PDF download at  
[www.ncstonline.org](http://www.ncstonline.org)



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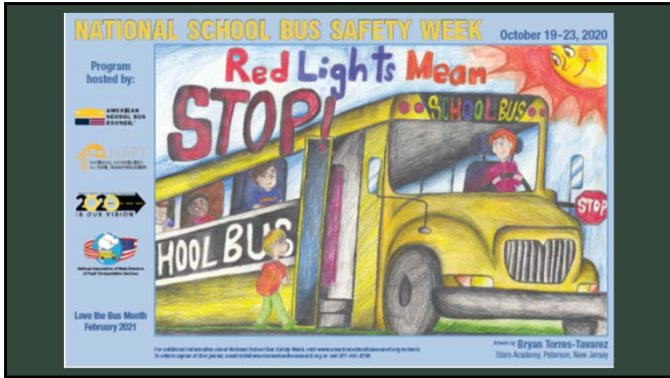
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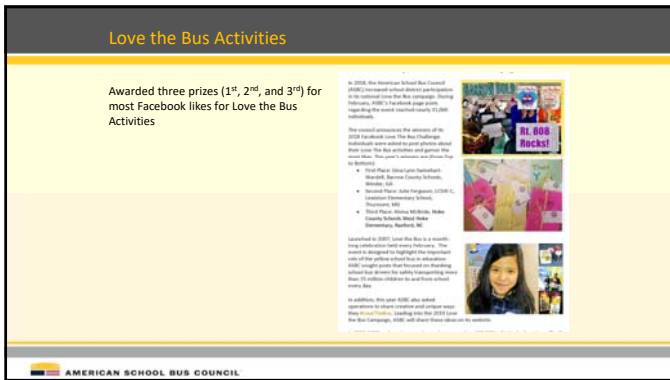
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