

APPENDIX

OPENING STATEMENT
CHAIR/CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR SUE FULTON
MOTOR VEHICLE COMMISSION
Senate Transportation and Assembly Transportation and
Independent Authorities Joint Meeting
State House Annex
June 18, 2018

Good morning Chairman Diegnan, Chairman Benson, and members of the Senate Transportation and Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Joint Meeting. Thank you for the invitation to testify before your Joint Meeting on the very important matter of school bus safety.

The MVC has received numerous press inquiries regarding the driver of the school bus involved in the Paramus crash, Mr. Hudy Muldrow, Sr. With your indulgence, I'd like to review his driver record to clear up any possible misconceptions.

Mr. Muldrow's 43 years as a NJ driver included 8 speeding tickets dating back to 1975. The last was in 2001. Also on the record is a careless driving violation from 2009; improper right and left turn back in 1977; improper turn in 1996; and improper highway operation in 2010.

He did see his license suspended 12 times, though none of those were related to any moving violations. A half-dozen were related to failure to pay parking tickets, for example, while another – back in 1977 – was for not having liability insurance.

That said, the MVC runs a suspension report every night, Monday through Friday, of all school bus and passenger-endorsed drivers whose driving privileges have been suspended for any reason. That report is delivered electronically each night to the

Department of Education. Anyone appearing on that list is immediately barred from driving a school bus.

Because Mr. Muldrow's driving record has fueled considerable debate over who is allowed to drive our children's school buses, we at MVC welcome the opportunity to review the requirements that these drivers and their employers must meet. As it stands today, drivers must meet a set of requirements:

- Federal CDL requirements
- the "S" endorsement needed to transport school age children
- the "P" endorsement needed to transport passengers

Each of these has a list of requirements that I'm willing to review with you at length. Additional requirements in the state of New Jersey include:

- Bus inspections that occur twice annually that must include a driver abstract that was produced within the last year.
- Medical certification by a federally certified medical examiner at least every two years.

As you can see, our oversight of CDL and school bus drivers is more than a stop at the counter to pick up your license and we never see you again. There are several safeguards in place to ensure that school bus drivers maintain a record in good standing, or they are pulled off the road via license suspension.

However, we must never be satisfied when it comes to the safety of our citizens, especially our children. We take our mission at the MVC very seriously ... and our mission is to put driver safety and customer service at the very top of our priorities.

If there are ways we can improve our standards or our operations, we welcome any input you may have.

Thank you again for your invitation to speak here today and I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.



Testimony of

Robert Molloy, PhD
Director, Office of Highway Safety
National Transportation Safety Board

Before the

Senate Committee on Transportation
Assembly Committee on Transportation and Independent Authorities

New Jersey Legislature

— On —

School Bus Safety

Trenton, New Jersey • June 18, 2018

NTSB | National
Transportation
Safety Board

An Independent Federal Agency

Good morning Chairman Diegnan, Chairman Benson, and committee members. Thank you for inviting the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to testify before you today regarding our investigations and safety recommendations on school bus safety.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation—highway, rail, marine, and pipeline. We determine the probable cause of the accidents we investigate and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, we conduct special transportation safety studies and coordinate the resources of the federal government and other organizations to assist victims and their family members who have been impacted by major transportation disasters.

School bus travel is one of the safest forms of transportation in the United States. Every day, nearly 600,000 buses carry more than 25 million students to and from school and activities. Children are safer traveling in school buses than in any other vehicle. However, we continue to investigate school bus crashes in which preventable fatalities and injuries occur. We recommend that the New Jersey Legislature amend its statute to upgrade the state's seat belt requirement from lap belts only to lap/shoulder belts for all passenger seating positions in new large school buses. We also recommend that school districts provide improved information to parents and students regarding the importance of properly using seat belts on school buses.

We have recently completed investigations into the causes of two multifatality school bus crashes that identified recurring safety issues in school bus transportation safety. These crashes killed total of 12 people and injured 37 more.

On November 1, 2016, a Baltimore City school bus struck a private auto and a Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) bus, killing four MTA passengers and both bus drivers. Medical records from the school bus driver's primary care physician document the driver's history of seizures since childhood. Additionally, the driver experienced several (documented) incapacitating medical events while on duty as a school bus driver, including three incidents in the previous 5 years. We determined that the Baltimore school bus driver was likely incapacitated by a seizure due to his long-standing seizure disorder, which resulted in collisions with the car and transit bus.

On November 21, 2016, six students died, and more than 20 others were injured in Chattanooga, Tennessee, when a Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) school bus, operated by Durham School Services (Durham), struck a utility pole, rolled onto its right side, and collided with a tree. The bus was carrying 37 students and traveling 52 mph in a 25-mph zone at the time of the crash. The bus driver was transporting the students from the school to their drop-off locations when he answered a cell phone call. The cell phone call was still active when he lost control of the bus and departed the roadway. We concluded that the Chattanooga school bus driver's speeding, combined with his cell phone use while driving, led to the crash.

Although the specific safety issues differed, the Baltimore and Chattanooga crashes shared one common factor: poor driver oversight by both the school districts and the contracted motor carriers, which resulted in unsafe school bus operations. In both cases, the drivers continued to operate school buses unsafely with no remedial action being taken, even in the face of known

driver safety issues. Improved school bus driver oversight and enhancements to school bus design—such as installation of passenger lap/shoulder belts, electronic stability control, and automatic emergency braking—could prevent or mitigate future crashes.

DRIVER OVERSIGHT

Baltimore, MD

We have a long history of investigating crashes in which drivers who failed to report their medical conditions were issued medical certificates and were subsequently involved in fatal crashes in which their medical condition contributed to the event.

Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) records showed that the Baltimore school bus driver had repeated license revocations and suspensions over several decades. He fraudulently obtained his driver's license by providing documents with different name spellings or birth dates to circumvent the MVA verification system. We concluded that the Baltimore school bus driver understood his diagnosis of epilepsy and intentionally hid this disqualifying medical condition and his use of treatment medications during his medical examinations to prevent being denied certification. Further, although Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) was responsible for driver oversight, it failed to address multiple deficiencies and to identify the bus driver as high risk. Similarly, the MVA verification system failed to prevent the Baltimore school bus driver from obtaining a driver's license through fraudulent means.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration establishes regulations for commercial driver licensing, including licensing school bus drivers employed either by a local school district directly or by a contracted motor carrier that provides student transportation services. A person who operates a commercial vehicle in commerce must be medically certified as physically qualified to operate the vehicle. This regulation explicitly prohibits drivers with epilepsy from obtaining a medical certificate. Drivers who can demonstrate that they have been seizure-free and off antiseizure medication for a minimum of 10 years can apply for a waiver.

From 2010 to 2012, the New York Department of Motor Vehicles conducted a study to determine whether drivers with multiple license records pose a serious traffic safety risk on state roadways. The State University of New York Institute for Traffic Safety Management and Research compiled data for more than 12,300 drivers with multiple license records and found that 24 percent did not have a valid license, 67 percent had been involved in a crash, 10 percent had been convicted of impaired driving, 27 percent had been convicted of a cell phone violation, and 34 percent had accumulated six or more points on their license records within an 18-month period.

In 2011, Maryland introduced a facial recognition program to prevent people identified as unqualified for licensure from continuing to operate a commercial motor vehicle under a fraudulently obtained license or from obtaining a commercial driver's license through fraudulent means. We recommended that Maryland continue to use the facial recognition program to help prevent driver license fraud.

The Baltimore crash might have been prevented had a coworker or a BCPS employee reported the driver to the MVA. We concluded that school districts and their contracted student transportation service providers would benefit from awareness training on federal and state commercial driver fitness regulations and on the avenues available to report drivers with medical conditions that may make it unsafe to operate a school bus.

Chattanooga, TN

At the time of the Chattanooga crash, the driver had about 5 months of school bus driving experience, during which he had accumulated numerous complaints about his driving performance. However, investigators found no record of disciplinary or corrective training in the driver's file. The day of the crash was not the first time the bus driver had exhibited unsafe driving maneuvers. Shortly after the beginning of the 2016 school year, he began reporting student disciplinary problems to HCDE school staff. As the school year progressed, the problems between the driver and the students continued, and the driver sent even more discipline referrals to school administrators, who told him he should not be submitting so many. About one week later, the HCDE and Durham received the first complaint that the driver was intentionally trying to make students fall.

After the crash, our investigators found e-mails and letters from parents and students about the bus driver's performance in the months leading to the crash, which provided insight into how the driver dealt with student behavioral issues during this period. Student passengers who normally rode this bus told our investigators that when there was excessive noise or when some students refused to sit down, the driver would slam on the brakes or swerve, causing them to fall. Durham did not take any action to relieve the driver of duty, nor were definitive steps taken to resolve the safety complaints.

We concluded that Durham had no systematic method for recording, tracking, or investigating complaints of driver behavior, and that it was deficient in driver oversight. Following this crash, the state of Tennessee enacted a law that establishes a program to monitor and oversee transportation services for local education authorities, school districts, and charter schools.

OCCUPANT PROTECTION

Because of their robust design and unique operating environment, school buses are one of the safest modes of transportation. School buses are designed with a passive form of occupant protection, termed "compartmentalization," which requires no action by the passenger and functions by forming a compartment around the bus occupant. Compartmentalization is designed to contain passengers within their seating compartments during frontal and rear impact collisions. A key aspect of this occupant protection system is that passengers remain within the compartment prior to and during an impact, so that they benefit from the energy-absorbing seat design. However, for many years, we have recommended enhancements to school bus occupant protection systems, particularly to address side-impact collisions and rollovers in which compartmentalization is incomplete and provides insufficient protection for occupants.

In February 2012, a school bus transporting students to Chesterfield Elementary School in, Chesterfield, New Jersey, was struck at an intersection by a roll-off truck, resulting in 1 bus passenger fatality, 5 serious injuries, and 11 minor injuries. The fatally and severely injured passengers were seated in the back half of the school bus, in the area of higher impact forces and accelerations. Some students on the school bus wore their lap belts improperly or not at all.

As a result of our investigation, we concluded that, in severe side-impact crashes like the Chesterfield crash, properly worn lap and shoulder belts reduce injuries related to upper body flailing that are commonly seen with lap belts only and, therefore, provide the best protection for school bus passengers. Further, better student, parent, and school district education and training may increase the use and proper fit of passenger seat belts in school buses. Thus, we recommended that school districts provide improved information to parents and students regarding the importance of properly using seat belts on school buses.

Although compartmentalization makes school buses extremely safe, passengers without lap/shoulder belts remain vulnerable to either ejection or injury within the school bus (for example, from being thrown into an intrusion area). To further protect large school bus passengers, some states require that all new school buses be equipped with passenger lap belts or lap/shoulder belts.

The Chattanooga school bus passengers were at risk due to the precrash vehicle motions that threw them from their seating compartments prior to the bus striking the utility pole. This rendered compartmentalization ineffective during the rollover sequence. Therefore, we recommended that each state require that lap/shoulder belts be installed in all new large school buses to provide the best protection for all their occupants.

New Jersey has been a leader among the states for many years by requiring that lap belts be installed on school buses. However, as a result of our recent investigations, we recommend that New Jersey and other states amend their statutes to upgrade the seat belt requirement from lap belts to lap/shoulder belts for all passenger seating positions in new large school buses.

CRASH PREVENTION TECHNOLOGIES

We have advocated for collision avoidance systems in commercial motor vehicles, including buses, for more than 20 years, beginning in 1995. Collision avoidance technology mitigates or prevents crashes by detecting moving, stopped, or stationary vehicles ahead. When appropriate, vehicles equipped with automatic emergency braking systems apply brakes to prevent or mitigate a collision. Research has shown the considerable potential of these systems to prevent crashes in both passenger and commercial vehicles.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued a final rule, effective in August 2015, that requires electronic stability control systems on most truck-tractors and buses weighing more than 26,000 pounds. However, the new requirement does not apply to school buses. In the absence of this requirement, some school bus manufacturers are beginning to install these systems in school buses. NTSB Our crash investigations and industry research have shown that collision avoidance systems significantly help prevent or mitigate the severity of crashes and

reduce the frequency of rear-end or loss-of-control crashes, such as occurred in Baltimore. In support of this effort, we recommended in our recent report that all school bus manufacturers install collision avoidance systems with automatic emergency braking as standard equipment. Similarly, school districts and school bus operators in New Jersey should make these systems a part of their specifications when purchasing new buses.

Although school buses are extremely safe, more needs to be done to ensure that our most vulnerable road users—our children—arrive at school and home again safely. Our investigations have shown that improved occupant protection, operator medical fitness, and collision avoidance technologies are needed to prevent crashes, deaths, and injuries on the nation's roadways. These issues are so critical to the safety of the traveling public that they are currently on the NTSB's Most Wanted List of transportation safety improvements.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our recommendations for improving school bus safety.

Senate and Assembly Transportation Committees
June 18, 2018
Annex Committee Room 6 @ 10:00am
Dr. Lamont O. Repollet, Commissioner

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dr. Lamont Repollet, Commissioner of Education and I am joined by my colleagues Bob Bumpus, Assistant Commissioner of Field Services and Kevin Dehmer, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Finance to discuss School Bus Safety.

On May 17, 2018, a school bus carrying students and adults from Paramus Public School district was involved in a motor vehicle crash that injured dozens and took from the community the lives of one student and one teacher. It is a moment in time that seems frozen for Paramus. As a former superintendent and principal, you never want to be in this position that Paramus officials faced on that day. I will never forget what I witnessed that day. In Paramus, I saw school and district leaders rise to the demand placed upon them facing tragic conditions: I saw school and district leaders act passionately and decisively to begin to usher their community through grief and onto healing by providing student support services through counseling. What I saw was a community coming together to support each other in the time of heart ache and now we as a State must help them heal.

I am not here to discuss the details of the accident. Law enforcement is investigating the facts of the accident and I will allow those professionals to speak for themselves. My testimony will focus on NJDOE's reinvigorated commitment to enhance the safety and efficiency of student transportation.

As Commissioner of Education, I oversee a Department that ensures compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements for driving a school vehicle. The demand upon me, therefore, is to reflect on how our Department could improve implementation of these policies and protocols to better ensure safe transportation of students to and from school activities.

Since that day in May, the Department started the review of our policy and procedures and regulations regarding school bus safety. Many of you have heard me articulate my continuous improvement model ACE: Assess, Create, Execute. This is a model I have utilized in every professional position I've held to produce a culture of change. I am applying that model to short-term and immediate changes to improve student safety:

ASSESS:

Our assessment of student transportation procedures revealed room for improvement in the practices through which our county offices ensure that school bus drivers hired or contracted out by districts meet all of the licensure, criminal history background check, and other requirements of drivers dictated by statute and by the Motor Vehicle Commission. The process today can be slow and laborious, requiring districts to individually submit multiple forms to DOE, which are often stored by hard copy. We are taking deliberate steps to update this archaic process and roll out a new system for the 18-19 school year.

CREATE:

DOE anticipates that in the next few months, we will complete development of a more systematized and digitized system for monitoring compliance of district driver rosters with all applicable statutes and regulations.

EXECUTE:

Delivery of this digitized system in the 18-19 school year will deliver bus driver compliance information to districts more quickly and in a more accessible and user-friendly format, improving district decision-making around the drivers they employ or contract.

We are ACEing long term changes as well. This will include close collaboration with MVC to ensure we provide school districts with the most up to date and accurate information regarding school bus driver's history and profile. The systems are in desperate need for an upgrade.

Information sharing amongst these offices sometimes is hampered by bureaucratic logjams.

Digitizing our systems for monitoring compliance of district driver rosters has potential to vastly improve information sharing among these agencies and between agencies and school districts.

We have begun discussions with MVC to enhance our collaboration and information-sharing mechanisms and will continue to collaborate until we find solutions to these problems.

Student safety is not something we take lightly. It is my job to ensure that Department regulations, policies and procedures have the greatest potential to create a safe learning environment for all of NJ students. Again, I would like to thank the Committee for having me here today and I welcome any of the member's questions.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEES
ON SCHOOL BUS SAFETY
BY
MARIE BLISTAN, NJEA PRESIDENT
JUNE 18, 2018

Good morning. I am Marie Blistan, a classroom teacher from Washington Township in Gloucester County and president of the New Jersey Education Association. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this critical issue affecting student safety.

NJEA has always led the way in advocating for safety measures on school buses, from seatbelts to sensors and more. And there is more that should be done, including cameras outside of buses and aids on buses to help with student safety so driver can concentrate on driving.

But just as important as those safety measures, if not more important, we support thorough, high-quality and ongoing bus driver training. We can add all the safety features in the world to the inside and outside of our school buses, but if bus drivers are not properly trained, the students on the bus are not as safe as they could be.

Standards should be high and safety training should be ongoing. And drivers should be district employees. When a district employs and trains its own drivers, it can discipline them if they fail to adhere to the highest safety standards. When a school district contracts its bus routes, there is no guarantee of the quality of the drivers and the district loses much of its ability to ensure that high-quality training. In fact, there is nothing preventing drivers who are fired from one bus company from moving to another one.

We can, and should, add all the safety features we can to our school buses, because even the safest and best trained bus driver we cannot control other drivers on the road. But unless districts hire and train their own bus drivers and create a work environment where good drivers can thrive, we aren't doing all we can to make our students safer.

Sitting with me is Lois Yukna, who started driving a school bus in the late 70s and became a driver-trainer in her school district in Woodbridge. She insisted that her bus drivers be thoroughly trained, above and beyond what the existing regulations required. She made sure they were trained to insist that students put on their seat belts. They were trained on the safest way to operate a bus, knowing that they should not stop on the shoulder of the road, should only back up a bus with another trained person directing them, and should go to the next exit if they miss the correct one. She had her drivers watch safety films on a regular basis, and practiced bus evacuations with them. But she could only train the drivers who worked for the district.

Lois is going to share her expertise and speak about some of her experiences, which I believe will be very valuable for this committee as you are learning about this critical issue.

(over)

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEES
ON SCHOOL BUS SAFETY
BY
LOIS YUKNA, NJEA MIDDLESEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER
JUNE 18, 2018

School bus safety has been my passion since the first time I stepped foot in a bus. You see, when I started driving a school bus in 1978 I was not properly trained. I was handed the keys to the bus and told to teach myself how to drive it to pass my road test. I received my license. Then came the first day I was on the bus ready to pick up students when I looked in the rearview mirror and realized my bus would soon be filled with 54 students – and I was not prepared.

I promised myself that no one else should be behind the wheel of a school bus without being properly trained. I attended Brookdale Community College's NJ Pupil Transportation Supervisors Program and continued with other training programs. I have been training bus drivers since then because constant training is the only way we can protect the precious cargo on our buses, students.

I worked closely with NJEA, Senator Singer and the Division of Motor Vehicles to legislate the commercial driver's license for bus drivers. I then developed a program to train district bus drivers to obtain their commercial driver's license and endorsements.

As a trainer and safety coordinator, I was responsible for training the transportation department's bus drivers and bus attendants to improve their skills and techniques and keep them informed of new laws and policies affecting their careers. I provided daily school setting trainings to our bus drivers and attendants and then followed up with physical training on the vehicles.

I wanted parents to know how much we care about their kids' safety. I set up a school bus at a local street fair where children and their parents could see first-hand the school bus safety features. Incoming kindergarteners learned how to put on their seatbelts and evacuate a school bus in an emergency. At the same time, parents were asked to sign a petition that they would not text and drive.

I have continually and aggressively challenged management to address the needs and concerns of the Transportation Department by setting high standards with a commitment to professional development so that my colleagues could improve their skills. But as Marie said, it doesn't matter how many safety features we add inside or outside the bus. We have no control over other drivers.

What we can control is the training – if the drivers work for the district. I can ensure drivers are ready when I train them. When I became a driver-trainer in Woodbridge, the chargeable, at-fault, accident rate in Woodbridge was 120 per year. By the fourth year, it was only four. All that training paid off. But contracted drivers? I don't know that they have the same level of training. I can't guarantee their readiness to drive 54 students on the bus.

June 14, 2018

To the Senator Diegnan, Members of the NJ State Senate Transportation Committee and Whomever Else it May Concern,

My name is Gabrielle Bailey and I am currently a resident of Parsippany, and a lifelong resident of New Jersey. I am also a NJ licensed K-8 teacher and a mother of two children, ages 7 and 3. There are many reasons I am highly invested in school bus safety, and all of them from my own personal and professional experiences. In our own district, over the past 15 months, we have experienced first hand dangerous and reckless behavior of bus drivers driving our children, resulting in several children being physically and emotionally injured, a police report being filed and hundreds of hours of investigation into school bus regulations and safety oversight. What my neighbor and I found in our research is that there is no governing body that oversees bus safety or concerns in New Jersey or federally. We contacted local, state and federal agencies to find out who could help us, and we were passed along with no conclusion. We are shocked and terrified that millions of children in NJ are riding on busses daily and there is no set of best practices for drivers or bus companies. One of the most disturbing findings was that there is no available information on the drivers showing past driving records or current driving credentials, including the name of the driver.

During the scheduled 6 week vacation of our much beloved driver in Winter of 2017, we were assigned a substitute who was a dangerous driver physically and emotionally. *Children were physically and emotionally hurt.* As parents we tried to have our concerns addressed and while the driver was removed from our district busses, he was simply moved to another local district.

The situation was traumatic at first from the fear of harm to our and other kids, and secondarily by the level to which we felt unheard by the school district, STA, and the police. The driver was eventually removed from our route, but still continues to drive for a neighboring school district.

This makes the accidents we have seen so far this year in New Jersey that much more upsetting, as we were actively trying to improve safety only months before the accidents occurred. Here are some of the concerns from our neighborhood over the the past two school years:

- Children were not seated while bus was in motion.
- Children were left at the *wrong bus stop, repeatedly.*
- The driver did not wait to allow a kindergartener to cross safely in front of the bus before driving away. (leaving the child to cross traffic by herself.)
- The driver spoke inappropriately to the kids, and disproportionately harshly to their age-typical behavior.
- The driver drove too fast through our narrow, windy roads.
- Children got off the bus emotionally distraught

- The driver called the children names, including saying to a deaf student “ What’s wrong with you? Are you slow?”
- Driver ignored parents’ requests to drive more safely and have students seated and buckled while driving. He grew increasingly agitated as we continued to speak to him. He was also spoken to about our concerns by our school Principal.
- The driver would speed up, and then slam on the brakes purposely, bouncing their heads on seats and windows, get the kids attention and then warn or quiet the kids by yelling on the PA. This resulted in injuries to at least 4 children.
- The driver would scream at the kids, sometimes using the PA speaker, and verbally berate them.
- The driver ignored their requests to be dropped off at their own stop.
- Used the phrase “ Oh my God, will you be quiet!” This was repeated to siblings in a family which does not use the name of God in vain as per their religious convictions.
- The assigned bus stop is at an intersection where there is no sidewalk and no safe easement by the road on which to stand. It is at a point where there are sight line difficulties and is not a safe place to wait. I requested that this be formally changed last year, and that request was not quickly acknowledged. This has now been fixed by the district.
- Driver never introduced himself to children to ask their names or have them know his. While I know this takes time, He will never know them if he doesn’t ask. Unless he is checking them against a list, he doesn’t know if he is even collecting the right children.
 - **Why does this matter?** He can’t learn the names of the children on his route if he never asks them. While on the bus they are in his charge, and he needs to know who is on his bus at all times, just as a teacher needs to know who is in a classroom at all times. In case of a lost child or an emergency he has to be able to identify each child in his care, as well as the children communicate with him.
 - Also, when children feel known, or watched, they tend to behave better. When he can call to them by name, they will respond more quickly.
- Driver never articulated his expectations for the bus (ie seatbelts, remaining seated, proper conduct, where each grade level sits, etc.)
 - **Why does this matter?** Children who are new to riding busses either as kindergarteners, or new to school district, need to know the rules, and that there is someone in charge. This will cut down on behavior problems.
 - Also, it helps the younger students to find their seats, and be safe, especially as this is their first time on a bus.
 - Allowed the kindergarteners to walk to the back of the bus to be seated. Didn’t remind them to stay in front. Had to be reminded by the responsible adult to call them back.
- Did not use yellow warning lights 300 feet from stop, nor the red warning lights until stopped. Did not indicate to the children when it is safe to cross.
 - **Why is this important?** The roads in our neighborhood are hilly and twisty. Unfortunately, cars drive too fast. If the yellow lights are not on far enough in

advance of the stop, there is a danger to cars coming over the hill and around the bend behind the bus.

- The red lights also indicate to the children that it is safe to cross in front of the bus.
- On the third day of school the driver released my daughter to my mother, whom he had never met or seen.
 - (I understand our district policy is that only kindergarteners must be met by an adult, but this is a policy I take issue with. I believe that it is not safe to let a child off the bus without an adult until at least 3rd grade, preferably 5th, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents or guardians of the child.) **Why does this matter?** Anyone can intercept a child at a bus stop. Sadly, there are people who seek to do harm to children, even those close to children. Or there may be dangers in the neighborhood that the child is not aware of and can't handle on their own. In our neighborhood we have an active bear population, as well as lakes and streams that can be dangerous if not supervised. Also there might be unforeseen dangers in the home that a child would not be able to manage, such as intruders, gas leaks, fires, burst pipes etc.
- Several parents have had to board the bus to assist students with seat belts. While this is against district policy, if I know about an unsafe situation for my child or another child I feel compelled to help fix it. Policy also states that the driver cannot stand up to assist the children. Who is responsible to be sure the children are belted in correctly? Many of these children are still in car seats and boosters in their family car, and do not understand how to operate the seat belts.
- Bus turned in front of our stopped bus while it was stopped and the red lights were on.
- Several parents witnessed a child hanging out of the window of the moving bus. From how he was positioned, there is no way he could have been in a seatbelt, or even seated. His arms, legs and upper body were all fully outside of the bus as he passed our stop.
- On several days the driver appeared to be lost, and was seen to drive around the neighborhood in a way that indicated he was lost.

After addressing these concerns to the district for months, the new Superintendent, Dr. Barbara Sargent, has renegotiated the district contract with STA busses to include working camera on all District busses beginning in September 2018.

What still looms large in my mind is that there is virtually NO oversight, or regulation about Bus driver training, and performance beyond their driving certifications. Even their driving records are not accessible to the public or the districts. And while there is a publicly available record of the inspection and maintenance of all School busses in NJ, there is no way for a district or bus company to examine past driving records and performance records from previous employers. As a teacher, I know how seriously school districts take the personal records of all staff and faculty who have student contact. There are regular observations, announced and unannounced. The whereabouts of all people who enter the school building is monitored and

the supervision of all students, at all times, is of utmost importance. The exterior and interior of schools are monitored with cameras, along with other methods to do what is possible to monitor staff, students, and visitors. This is not the case on our school busses when they are even more vulnerable on the road. Seat belts are important, very important, and I'm so grateful that NJ requires them on all school vehicles. We need to do more.

By working in a proactive manner to improve safety guidelines and procedures on behalf of all students in New Jersey, and the country, we can enact life saving changes. There are so many critical safety measures at each of our school buildings, we think it's time we included the busses. The bus is an **extension of the school day** and as such is to be treated with the same, or greater, measures of caution that we use at all the school buildings. I want to know that when I put my first grader on the bus that *from the moment she leaves my care*, she is under the same standard of care as in the school building itself. *I want to work with the districts, not against.* I want the experience of riding the bus, the first and last experiences of each school day, to be positive and safe for all students, drivers, and families. I want New Jersey to be a visionary for school bus safety and put in place policy and procedures for busses and drivers that make our state shine. I really do think that this is possible, with some time and effort. *The important thing is preventing another tragedy.* We don't have time to waste.

Lastly, I have made a list of possible solutions to the problems we see which we will share with you if you are interested. I have also included a link to some of the Television news interviews my neighbors and I participated in last year.

CBS News:

<https://youtu.be/cahAfMsTzHM>

Arnold Diaz speaking with kids about getting hurt:

<https://youtu.be/So8Q2RWIAh8>

Arnold Diaz- Camera Follow up Report:

<https://youtu.be/updWKCjxld0>

(Again, please note, that after these reports cameras are set to be installed on our busses beginning in September 2018)

Thank you for hearing my concerns and working on behalf of our children. I look forward to conversation and action alongside you and your colleagues in the New Jersey State Senate. I am willing and eager to share all that I have learned to assist you in vital changes to our system.

Peace,

Gabrielle Bailey



Denville, NJ 07834

June 15, 2018

Dear Senator Diegnan, Members of the NJ State Senate Transportation Committee & Whom It May Concern:

Why I am submitting testimony:

I have spent over 250 hours advocating for school bus safety (cameras, driver oversight/ accountability & training) since two of my kids were hurt in a series of preventable incidents here in Parsippany. Due to the absence of a governing entity over drivers- several kids were hurt after weeks of complaints about a driver (who remains behind the wheel of a school bus today) despite his history and losing his job twice for 'dangerous and wreckless' driving. I want to highlight that even with dozens of written emails and phone calls by parents and students, a police report filed, complaints to the Morris County prosecutors office, NJ Office of the Attorney General, NJ Dept of Education/Office of Finance-Student Transportation Unit, Office of the Governor, and even the NTSB- we have been unable to get this driver off the road. Disturbingly we have found out that the driver has **significantly** more rights than do the children as he was extremely protected during the multitude of complaints and reports- even once kids were hurt. This is why at least FIVE news reports have been broadcast from my home – interviewing myself and my children along with several other parents and kids by networks including NBC, CBS and 'shame' reporter Arnold Diaz who has done 3 reports about the problems and our fight to improve bus safety. *Consider this letter a 'case study' of all that happened and the tremendous efforts put forth by many parents that revealed a serious problem that needs immediate attention in terms of driver accountability. Although many details about our bus driver experience will be given- this is not a 'witch hunt' or effort to specifically pursue one driver but rather repair and improve the overall system.*

Why I am now a School Bus Safety Advocate:

I am an EMT and member of the Parsippany Volunteer Ambulance Squad- with many years experience and have responded to school bus accidents and even Ground Zero on 9/11 (I am now sick with several illnesses related to my exposure, but thankfully nothing life threatening). Kids safety has always been a priority and once my own kids were hurt **intentionally** (more on that below) as a retaliation by a driver who was clearly having an emotional break down with weeks of warning signs I knew I needed to stay committed. I honestly never would have dreamed I'd spend hundreds of hours on fighting to improve school bus safety to only be literally be passed from one agency to the next without anyone willing to take charge of what is now a very obvious problem. In early 2017 Arnold Diaz ran a news report with me making the following statement in referring to the serious problem of NO DRIVER OVERSIGHT or accountability (self governing by each school bus entity):

"Do we have to wait until someone gets killed before we do something?" - Brian Wheelock March, 2017

I honestly forgot I made that statement publicly until a few weeks ago when the media re-ran that clip of me making that claim. You can imagine how devastating this experience has been for me and other parents since the recent crash- it has been hard to sleep since the accident knowing that myself and other parents tried to bring attention to the problem of no driver oversight and how we literally got passed from one agency to another repeatedly or were simply ignored. I will include links to 5 of those news reports below (however if you are reading this on paper simply Google "Brian Wheelock school bus" many of the reports should show up. After my kids were hurt I was desperate and had an incredible backing of parents and students who were either also hurt or witnessed the unthinkable actions of a our driver here in Parsippany –I assumed all I had to do was report this to the proper authorities and this driver would be taken off the road for good. But that is when I realized not only is our system is broken-

we don't have a 'system' in place whatsoever and there was no entity to report the erratic, bullying behavior to which is why this driver remains behind the wheel today.

A big 'win' for Parents in Parsippany- a major first step:

After hundreds of hours of effort and an appearance before our local Board of Ed- two weeks ago Gabrielle Bailey and I celebrated a major win when our superintendent announced that all contracted busses would be equipped with cameras for the 2018-19 school year which we have been advocating for. When my kids were hurt- cameras could have easily prevented the incidents as lack of 'proof' kept our horrific driver behind the wheel for weeks as dozens of students and parents complained of his increasingly erratic behavior which finally resulted of the driver 'snapping' and repeatedly 'brake-checking' the kids- slamming on the brakes to intentionally hit their heads on seats and windows for 'talking.'

The Broken School Bus System Here in New Jersey (a few highlights):

We saw it coming. We tried and tried to get him out of the driver seat BEFORE anyone got hurt. But we realized a serious problem existed- there is NO ENTITY in the state of New Jersey that oversees school bus drivers. Yes, the DMV issues their license -but in terms of a personnel file to keep track of training and incidents – we found nothing exists. Even after 4 students were intentionally hurt by 'Mark'- he continues to be behind the wheel of a full size school bus to this day. Perhaps more disturbing is that we also learned that he was 'fired' from his 2 previous school bus driving jobs for 'wreckless and dangerous driving.' I will fill you in on some important details- but despite police reports, complaints to several state and local agencies about his extremely wreckless driving (he would nearly run over his own students as he let them off the bus and accelerated before they could cross with red lights flashing- leaving them on the wrong side of the street)- even calls to the Governors office and the NTSB- 'Mark' remains fully licensed with a clean record because none of the complaints and hundreds of hours of advocating to get him and other 'bad drivers' off the road go with him when he repeatedly changes jobs (he is now at his at least 4th employer that I am aware of still driving) We need an entity that can keep track of a situation like this where a mile long list of complaints and reports exist- we were even told my daughter had PTSD from the experience and would cry at the thought of getting on a bus. Some parents have permanently removed their kids from the bus and drive them because they cannot trust the safety of our broken 'system.'

Our School Bus Nightmare of March, 2017:

In early March of 2017 our regular driver "Mr. Ted" was going on a 6 week extended trip and a permanent sub named Mark took over his route. We immediately became concerned when he would race around corners approaching the bus stop and would accelerate while kids were still walking to their seats (and clearly not seated and buckled). We initially tried talking to him directly asking him to slow down and wait for kids to sit and buckle. This only seemed to make him angry as his behavior became more aggressive. He yelled and screamed and asked if one student was 'slow' and used words my family considers offensive. Mark would let kids off the bus and accelerate away BEFORE they would even be able to cross the road with red lights flashing (nearly hitting the students with the bus). He would even leave a Kindergartner on the wrong side of the road and accelerate away- leaving her to cross the road by herself. Myself and a half dozen other parents began writing emails and making calls to our transportation coordinator demanding this driver be removed from our rote.

Here are a few excerpts from those letters- highlighting how we were trying to prevent injuries -but couldn't get anyone to move quickly:

Part of my March 9 letter to school/principal.

" In our 4 years experience with Parsippany Schools/ transportation this is the first time I have had a child 'scared' to take the bus and go to school. I ask you to please take this matter very seriously before someone is injured. "

The email response from the district:

From: Tammy Ziemba
Date: March 9, 2017 at 1:25:08 PM EST
To: Brian Wheelock
Subject: Re: Major Concern- 3071 Bus Issue

Hello Mr. Wheelock,
I am sorry I can not guarantee this driver will be replaced. However all your concerns are being addressed.
Tammy

Excerpt from another parents letter (Noelle R) to the district:

we still feel that is important that you are given another written notice of our complaint. Sadly, in November of 2016, a school bus driver in Tennessee killed 5 children, after several complaints were made by parents regarding his reckless driving. It is our hope that the Parsippany School district and Department of Transportation will respond differently that of the Hamilton Country School District - and take action that will prevent an avoidable accident to occur.

A few parents have expressed fear that if we continue to complain that this bus driver will "retaliate" as it seems there is no plan for his removal.

Exactly one week after these letters were sent, my kids and others would be injured in a series of horrific incidents where the driver apparently snapped and repeatedly 'brake checked' the kids to get them to be quiet

Despite all of the above complaints and several more filed with our school district (a few highlights in the reference section of this letter) this driver was allowed to remain on the road- and grew more and more aggressive. We believe he was retaliating for getting in trouble with all the complaints and on March 16th ramped up his 'break checking' to quiet the kids so aggressively that 4 kids were hurt including 2 of my daughters. The kids got off the bus literally crying – after the driver slammed on the brakes causing them to hit their heads on windows and seats he picked up the PA system and yelled at them saying inappropriate things that were then repeated to my 4 year old by her sisters.

Police Report Filed:

The following morning I filed a police report and asked them to charge the driver with 'assault' as he intentionally hurt the kids and at the very least wreckless/careless driving. The principal offered to have all 37 kids on the bus come to the gym to give statements to the police. But the response from the police was super surprising: "**Minors are not permitted to give statements in this kind of case**" and none of their testimony was included in the police report (I did make video testimony of several of the kids statements as did the media so there are plenty of first hand accounts). The bus company contracted by Parsippany (STA) claimed that the 3 video cameras on the bus were 'not working' even though the red lifts were on indicating that they were recording (and our normal driver confirmed they

were working before he left for his trip and still working when he returned -the sub used the same bus). Due to lack of 'proof' Parsippany Police confirmed that the driver was 'banned' from driving in our town but they would not be pressing any further charges. STA simply transferred him to another route where he continued to drive other students in another town. This was very upsetting to hear especially after all we witnessed – we knew it would only be a matter of time before this driver hurt more kids. I then took the following actions to try to get this driver off the road- but realized no one felt they had authority over this driver since we do not have a governing body that handles such matters:

Parsippany Police:

Stated they could not press any charges due to lack of proof (even with a dozen parents who witnessed most of the aggressive behavior and 37 kids). Because STA is based in neighboring Pine Brook, NJ they felt they could take no action against the driver. After much pressure a request for a subpoena for the camera footage was issued by our police Captain- but then denied by our township judge. I was able to take pictures and video of the cameras and our regular driver demonstrated how they worked and confirmed they were recording. STA repeatedly denied that any of their busses had cameras including to the police- finally I gave the photos to the media who asked STA to explain the cameras in the pictures. The next day our regular driver reported muddy footprints were found on his bus that morning and all of the cameras had been disabled, the red lights turned off and presumably the hard drive removed. After much much pressure from myself, another subpoena was issued and this time served to the bus company. They returned it simply stating they did not have cameras on their busses. Parsippany police refused to go look at the bus involved or even interview the driver due to the fact that they were based in another town. In fact the drivers name was not even included on the police report- when I inquired why the police stated: "STA would not release that to us." Here is where oversight and who has authority became a huge question and concern for me.

Incredibly concerned I continued to try to rally to get this driver off the road and searched furiously to find out who to report this driver to.

Morris County Prosecutors Office:

They became involved via the Parsippany Police in order to secure the second subpoena but would also not get involved any further. Once STA stated their busses do not have working cameras (despite me having photos I took of the cameras in working order) and returned the subpoena the prosecutors office would not pursue further. They sent me a letter stating they also do not believe the Parsippany Police committed any crimes by their lack of willingness to get involved (I'm not sure who made a report to them about the actions of the police).

NJ Dept of Transportation:

I called to make a report to see if they could help. They stated they didn't know who handled school busses in New Jersey but to try the DMV since it was not them.

NJMVC:

I called them to make a report but they stated they generally handled bus inspections and license but did not keep individual files and could do nothing to help.

NJ office of the Attorney General:

Made an official report with state investigators – Detective Eiker called back for more information. They stated they would be looking into this case and would call as soon as they had more information. My detailed letter to the detective is included at the end of this report. I have NOT heard a response in the 15 months since I filed the case.

NJ Dept of Education/ Office of Finance- Student Transportation Unit :

After many many hours of searching who and where to report this problem to I finally found this department which seemed like the perfect agency to get involved. I called and left a message of how concerned I was and that it was an absolute emergency and I needed an call back right away. I have NOT heard a response in the 15 months since I called.

Office of the Governor: Finally called the governors office and notified one of the governors aids of all that had happened. They did not seem interested in helping but gave an email address to write up the story and send to.

NTSB:

Finally...after well over 100 hours of filing reports and trying to determine how to properly report an incredibly high risk driver I called the NTSB. That conversation will haunt me the rest of my life. After notifying them of the seriousness of the problems and that several kids had gotten hurt after a driver intentionally 'roughed them up' and was driving incredibly erratically and that lives were at risk- they simply said they couldn't help. As I questioned them further they stated that they could do nothing PREVENTIVE but would only get involved AFTER a bus crashes. I felt sick to my stomach and said "so you'll come out here after a big crash and do a big investigation and find out it was all due to a problem driver and he had dozens of complaints but no one would do anything but you can't do anything ahead of time to stop them?" **They confirmed that was correct.** I told them 'you're going to have kids in body bags before you people will realize the problem we are facing.' That statement also haunts me based on recent events.

Driver Oversight/Training Issues Continue into this school year:

Driver oversight and training is a huge problem here in New Jersey and continued for us here in Parsippany into this school year. Despite the issues we had last year, our first week of school couldn't have been worse. A driver hesitantly pulled up to the stop on the first day of school- but didn't initially turn on the flashing warning lights, passed the stop by at least 20 feet and had trouble opening the door. He was with a 'trainer' and was incredibly nervous. After leaving our neighborhood he had lots of trouble and hit multiple curbs. We immediately complained that our driver was obviously new and seemed obvious he had never driven a bus before – yet here he was 'practicing' with our kids on board! After researching I realized NJ has no minimum requirement for any hours behind the wheel whatsoever before a new school bus driver is allowed to transport students. Over the next several days our new driver was a mess...truly unable to operate the bus in a safe matter or even remember to turn on the warning lights. The final straw was when he missed the entrance to the school and ended up rolling over the curb resulting in kids hitting their heads on the window and getting hurt. He was removed and another driver was given to us.

Based on our previous history we expected to get the best of the best -but yet another seriously problematic driver was assigned. She last only days before she decided to **stop the bus in the middle of a busy highway turn lane (Route 46) get out of her seat to yell at the kids for talking and told the kids she would NOT move the bus until they stopped talking.** She blocked traffic on a busy highway and caused traffic congestion to back up potentially into travel lanes (I happened to be driving behind the bus and witnessed the incident with my own eyes). Moments later she resorted to also 'brake checking' the kids for talking- slamming on the brakes so hard a 5th grader hit her head on the seat and her earring pierced her neck (this student, Jade- was hurt 3 times in 3 separate bus incidents since March of 2017). My kids also jerked their necks but thankfully not as bad as last years issue. This time a 'working' camera

caught all of the actions on tape (Our New Superintendent this year has been amazing and ordered a camera on our bus route at the start of the year due to all the issues). The principal and superintendent reviewed the camera footage and called me to say the kids had told the truth and they could see everything just as the kids reported- including Jade hitting her head. This time I demanded that I be able to review the footage so I could determine if I wanted to file criminal charges. **I was told that due to privacy laws parents are not allowed to view footage.** Other parents agreed we would want to see it since this was the 3rd serious incident- I suggested they get permission from all parents and let them all see it together. This is a law that needs to be looked at- when your child is so scared of riding the bus after a year of emotional and physical harm a parent needs to have the right to see what really is really happening to their children. We must do something to make this permissible in situations like this. **But most importantly I implore you to mandate cameras on all busses in New Jersey-** having video proof limited this years problem driver to a few days instead of several weeks it took last year due to lack of 'proof.' Cameras can be another means to prevent another tragedy.

In Closing:

We need to do something and to do it now. We need more driver oversight and accountability- an agency that can be over the drivers and ensure they are vetted properly and current file kept up to date on their performance. We need to set minimum standard on how many hours a driver must have behind the wheel with experience before students can ride on board. And we need to set standards for training that can be enforced statewide as school busses are like 'the wild west' in the varying degrees of training each bus company offers. I understand our drivers don't make a lot of money in many places and perhaps this is something that needs attention. Perhaps we need to determine how much more we have to pay to increase the quality of drivers who are willing to take a more active role in child safety. As a parent with 3 young daughters I can tell you whatever that cost is- I and probably most parents would wholeheartedly agree it is worth paying. **Lets keep our kids safe and alive – and set the example for the rest of the country to follow.**

Thank you so much for taking the time to review- I want to play an active role in helping improve this system and look forward to further discussion. **(Note: links to news reports and other reference info below).**

All the best,

Brian Wheelock

Cell: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Denville, NJ 07834

References: (letters and links to TV news reports):

NBC News (May 2018): Brian Wheelock & Gabrielle Bailey interviewed about their efforts and hundreds of hours advocating for better school bus oversight:

<https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Paramus-School-District-Unaware-Bus-Driver-Record-Violations-Deadly-School-Bus-Crash-New-Jersey-483499211.html>

WPIX Arnold Diaz (June 2018): Brian Wheelock & Gabrielle Bailey interviewed as they celebrate a big 'win' in Parsippany with cameras finally being approved for the 2018-19 school year:
<http://pix11.com/2018/05/30/parents-in-nj-fight-for-cameras-on-school-buses-and-win/>

CBS News (March 2017): Brian Wheelock, Gabrielle Bailey and other parents/students interviewed about the dangerous school bus driver in Parsippany with kids hurt:
<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2017/03/24/dangerous-school-bus-driver/>

WPIX Arnold Diaz (March 2017): Students At Risk: Brian Wheelock, Gabrielle Bailey and several students /parents interview about the 'crazy bus driver' in Parsippany:
<http://pix11.com/2017/03/30/parents-fear-substitute-bus-driver-is-putting-their-kids-safety-at-risk/>

WPIX Arnold Diaz (June 2017): Brian Wheelock/Gabrielle Bailey and other parents and students react to Parsippany's decision to NOT place cameras on busses for the 2017-18 school year:
<http://pix11.com/2017/06/21/kids-and-parents-fight-for-cameras-on-n-j-school-buses-after-alleged-rough-rides/>

Letter to Detective Eiker who contacted me after I reported the incident to the Attorney Generals office (since Parsippany felt the driver was out of their control working for a bus company based in another town):

Hi Detective Eiker-

March 22, 2017

Sorry for the delay in getting this to you- one of my kidsgot sick (I am a stay at home dad to my 3 daughters).

Thank you so much for taking the time to look into this- our community is super upset that despite our repeated complaints, calls, and letters about this driver- even after he intentionally harmed them with the slamming on the brakes issues- he is on the road today driving other peoples kids. I also spoke to the police officer (Officer Torres) who is handling the matter (case # 17-6642). She is saying at this point even though 2 schools (Intervale Elementary and Brooklawn Middle) made the same complaints about this driver, there is not much else the police can do. I requested some type of child endangerment or assault charge be made against the driver- multiple kids report that in order to get the kids to be quiet he has been slamming on the brakes causing them to hit their heads on the seats and then yelling at them (sometimes YELLING over the loudspeaker which kids are reporting hurts their ears) "OH MY GOD BE QUIET." The officer says that because they are all minors, even if all 60 or so students report the same allegations of him intentionally roughing them up and injuring at least 2 (one of my daughters and another child on the bus with a neck injury) they won't file charges without video evidence etc. I asked that Parsippany Police at least include my 7 year old daughters statement that she hurt her head and face in these acts- but the officer says she cannot even include that statement in the report without proof. As a member of our Parsippany Ambulance Squad of for years, it baffles me that they won't include a statement because she is a child and we didn't have an emergency room visit as proof etc. Certainly she didn't split her head open...but he is 'roughing' up these kids on purpose which is insane! I have now made 3 requests for that statement to be included and the officer has said no. She suggested I file civil chargers against the bus driver, which my wife and I may do. I said I only have the drivers name as "Mark" at STA and asked her include his last name on the report so I can file if needed. She advised me that STA only gave her the first name and she at this time can't give me his last name. I

asked her to follow up but she doesn't seem to think this is necessary for our police dept to do. If my child is making accusations against an adult don't I have the right to his full name so I can go to a Civil court if needed? These police problems are not at all the goal of my writing to you- truly the goal is to get this driver off the road. I am just very surprised by the lack of anyone wanting to assist in a matter so serious. Officer Torres said the police won't be pressing charges even if all 37 kids on the bus come forward and give statements because there is no video proof which seems crazy to me. Even the parents witnessed many of the problems but they say even with their statements it is only 'hearsay.' They said I can file civil charges which we are considering- but it does seem like the police are really dropping the ball on this and not taking it seriously (especially considering the bus company confirmed in the video below that they simply moved the driver to another district so he is on the road today with a bus load of other kids).

Just to start documenting some of the issues I recorded the following with my 7 year old Katelyn describing some of the issues:

<https://youtu.be/f-qGRvUheFw>

My conversation with Wilson Almanzar at STA in Pine Brook, which is the bus company contractor : (he admits the driver is on the road today with other kids):

<https://youtu.be/2HQRaieMszk>

Below is a compilation of several of the letters that were sent to the town that were cut and pasted as well as some screen shots from the PTA Facebook page etc highlighting the concerns for this driver. As I mentioned on the phone- Parsippany is now 'safe' as according to our police, the driver is banned from driving students in our town. But per my conversation with STA in the link above (recorded legally from everything I have researched) they simply moved this problem driver to another town. Seems so insane to me! Please help us - if you need to sit down with all the kids that ride this bus to hear these horrible stories in person, please do so...but please don't allow this driver to remain on the road. I have been unable to sleep thinking about the major disaster that happened in Tennessee in November...so many parents and students complained and documented just as I am doing but nothing was done. Let me know how else I can help.

I'll paste the letters below- my contact info is:

Brian Wheelock

[REDACTED]

Denville NJ 07834 (Parsippany township)

Cell: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Excerpt from parent Noelle Rhodes to the district:

we still feel that is important that you are given another written notice of our complaint. Sadly, in November of 2016, a school bus driver in Tennessee killed 5 children, after several complaints were made by parents regarding his reckless driving. **It is our hope that the Parsippany School district and Department of Transportation will respond differently than that of the Hamilton Country School District - and take action that will prevent an avoidable accident to occur.**

A few parents have expressed fear that if we continue to complain that this bus driver will "retaliate" as it seems there is no plan for his removal. I have the same concern as I do not feel he has fully responded to Mr. Waack's reinforced expectations. It is unsettling as a parent that this bus driver

believes he is above the standards and requests of Mr. Waack and this school district. After discussing my concerns with a third party, I feel it is my duty as a parent, neighbor, and citizen of Parsipanny to keep you informed and express our concern for the safety of the children on Bus 307 (Intervale).

Our children said that he has stopped screaming at them but now will slam on the brakes very hard while driving to get everyone to stop talking. This was confirmed to me by another parent, fourth grader and fifth grader that take the same bus.

Note from parent Noelle R to other parents:

Hi all! Just an update - Troy spoke to the supervisor Of the department of transportation, Nancy, who told Troy that **she thought the bus driver situation was already handled**. She is coming out to our stop tomorrow morning to introduce herself to us and to observe the bus driver. She did tell Troy that **she encourages us as parents to send as many emails possible because she needs to build the case of to have the bus driver removed. She said the more documentation of our concern - the better**. The email addresses I have been sending the complaints to are: taziemba@pthsd.net, nlrosikiewicz@pthsd.k12.nj.us, cwaack@pthsd.net, superintendent@pthsd.net
Thanks so much!

I don't have any objections. I think it would be helpful. I somehow get the sense that the Supervisor of the Department of Transportation is disconnected from the drivers. Maybe they are contracted out? It sounded to Troy that she needed to make a case because the last time she suggested that he was removed.

Dawn F.wrote:

Ming Yang-just to understand your post, in order for the transportation department to build a "case" against this guy, parents need to send emails to the people listed?? What happens to the students on that bus while they are compiling their "emails"? That's unacceptable! The students on that bus should be the transportation departments 1st and only concern!

Brian Wheelock:

So for now we are not personally filing any charges but just making record of all the issues - **I would just feel awful if something serious happens in another district and I didn't at least make a report**. But I do appreciate Nancy and her coming out and actually called her before I went in to the police to give her the heads up.

Hi guys - my daughter got off the bus today upset because he was yelling over the loud speaker at the kids and has said words not appropriate to my kids that they then repeated to my 4 year old. She said he is also continuing to speed and according to other kids at stop since he got in trouble he is now slamming on the brakes when they talk so they bounce around on purpose. I have already written a very serious letter to Nancy and mr Waack - I just called them today and totally blasted them again. I told them this is unacceptable and I may be going to the police next to see if we can sign complaints against the driver for reckless driving and purposely trying to harm these kids. The transportation department assures me they didn't realize it was this bad but as of this afternoon the superintendent is now also involved. **I asked them if we have to wait for a child to be seriously injured or worse before we remove this driver - he should not even be driving a bus period let alone any of our kids if his is all true!!!! Nancy is supposedly going to be observing him tomorrow which I don't understand how that will help**. But yes please call as write - this is seriously something you see on the news and I know at least 5 or 6 letters have been sent and several phone calls made. Very very disappointed in our system here. -Brian Wheelock