

THE JOURNEY TO LAP/SHOULDER BELTS: The Iowa Story



***IPTA Annual Conference
Airport Holiday Inn
Des Moines, Iowa
July 19, 2021***



***Max Christensen
State Director
Iowa Department of Education***

***Chris Darling
Executive Director
Iowa Pupil Transportation Association***

This wasn't just a 10-month sprint.....

**Prior to 2007, seat belts were
..... just seat belts**



- ~ Expensive
- ~ Reduced Capacity
- ~ Could Be Used As WEAPONS!
- ~ Could Cause Abdominal Injuries and/or Whiplash

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*

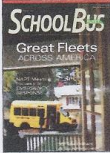


SOMETHING THAT STRUCK ME, & STUCK WITH ME...

feedback

Stand up for seat belts

Thanks to Frank Di Giacomo for his comments in "Clinging to the past?" in the January 2007 issue of *SCHOOL BUS FLEET* [The



Last Word, pg. 60]. I've been arguing for years, mostly to underwhelmed audiences, that the school bus industry is giving itself an unnecessary black eye with its stand on seat belts. All of our efforts and our record on safety go unrecognized the moment a parent asks why we don't have seat belts on buses. We should be in the lead demanding them and let the politicians face the heat for not funding them.

ment a parent asks why we don't have seat belts on buses. We should be in the lead demanding them and let the politicians face the heat for not funding them.

GEOFF RODGERS
Transportation Director
Los Alamos (N.M.) Public Schools

Be proactive about active restraints

First off, please do not use my name if you decide to print this letter. In my position, I'm trying to move the thinking in my state in the direction of active restraint systems, and I don't need the firestorm that would encircle me should my thoughts on this subject become public. This is a subject that needs to be moved along at a snail's pace and very gently.

Having said that, I couldn't agree more with Frank Di Giacomo's "Clinging to the past?" editorial in the January issue. Our industry is so determined that we don't need seat belts, don't want seat belts and won't have seat belts that I'm afraid we are shooting ourselves in the foot! When lap belts were the only option open to us, compartmentalization was the only game in town. But with the current lap-shoulder belt systems that are available, why does our industry continue to look the other way?

I know there is some cost involved — anywhere from \$7,000 to \$10,000 for a 65-passenger bus — plus the fact that we would lose some capacity, so we'd have to purchase new buses. With tight budgets all the way around, it's a good rationale for not installing restraints. We've been using this same reasoning for years, yet the new 2007 school bus models all went up in price by about that same amount due to the 2007 engines and the increasing cost of raw materials. Yet we

accepted it and are still buying new buses without a great deal of complaining.

That leads me to wonder if the "cost issue" is really a reason or more of an excuse. And if all buses were being equipped with lap-shoulder belt systems, the price would surely fall as it almost always does when things are being more mass-produced. We all have to live within a budget, but isn't the bottom line in school transportation to keep our kids as safe as possible?

Think of the PR we would receive if our industry was truly proactive in this area. And as Frank correctly stated, we might not save any additional lives, but the number of injuries would drastically decrease. Plus we'd remove one big chunk of the argument for why the yellow school bus should be relegated to dinosaur status.

I think the leaders in our industry need to take a real, hard look at this issue, and thus give us real leadership! Instead of hanging up the "Road Closed" sign and saying that we aren't going this way, how about putting up a "Reduced Speed Ahead" sign and at least starting us down the path we all know we'll eventually be going?

Ten years from now, if three-point restraint systems are mandatory on all of our buses, do we want our industry to be looked at as the professional group that was proactive and worked to increase the safety of our children and keep our industry vital? Or do we want our industry to be viewed as "that backward group that dragged its heels for as long as it could and was finally forced to swallow the seat belt pill"? At the rate we are going, we'll be viewed in the latter light.

A STATE DIRECTOR OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

2007 Fact Book corrections

- On pg. 58, Joy Winnie should have been listed as president of the Massachusetts Association for Pupil Transportation.

- On pg. 62, Wayne Johnston should have been listed as president of the Pupil Transportation Association of Pennsylvania.

- On pg. 77, the phone number for IC Corporation's David Harden should have been listed as (630) 753-2694.

- On pg. 144, the e-mail address for Hognund Bus Co. should have been listed as hognundbus@hognundbus.com.

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www.schoolbusfleet.com

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Titled: "Be Proactive About Active Restraints" from School Bus Fleet, March 2007

Please do not use my name. In my position, I'm trying to move the thinking in my state in the direction of active restraint systems, and I don't need the firestorm that would encircle me should my thoughts on this subject become public. This is a subject that needs to be moved along at a snail's pace and very gently.

...the leaders in our industry need to take a real, hard look at this issue Instead of hanging up the "road closed" sign how about putting up a "Reduced Speed Ahead" sign and at least starting us down the path we all know we'll eventually be going?

Ten years from now do we want our industry to be looked at as the professional group that was proactive Or do we want to be viewed as "that backward group that dragged its heels and was finally forced to swallow the seat belt pill"?

Signed **A State Director of Pupil Transportation**

MEANWHILE, BACK IN IOWA.....

2005 – HR 49

2007 – HB 1955

2008 – HF 2040

2009 - A Senate bill was introduced

2010 to 2013 – nothing

2014 – HF2117

2015 – HF 35

2016 – Senate inquiry asking if we were looking at seat belts

2017 – HF 599

2018 – HF 599

2019 – HF 366



12 12 2014

MONEY HAD A LOT TO DO WITH IT.....



~ 2009: \$8.6 - \$10.7 million
~ 2015: \$3.15 million
~ 2019: \$3.2 million

What if one of those “seat belt” bills actually takes off?

Would we end up with lap belts, lap/shoulder belts, or what??? To the rescue comes the “44 Update Group” !!

The 44 Update Group

- ~ Department of Education Staff
- ~ NCST Delegates
- ~ IPTA Members
- ~ Maintenance & Inspection Advisory Council (TD's & techs)
- ~ School Bus Dealers & Factory Reps

This group meets every five years after the NCST to develop and update school bus specifications in Iowa's Administrative Code Chapter 44 rules.

January 25, 2011

What if one of these bills gains traction and we DO get “seat belts”?

The 44 Update Group decided we wanted to control the narrative as much as we could via the rules process.

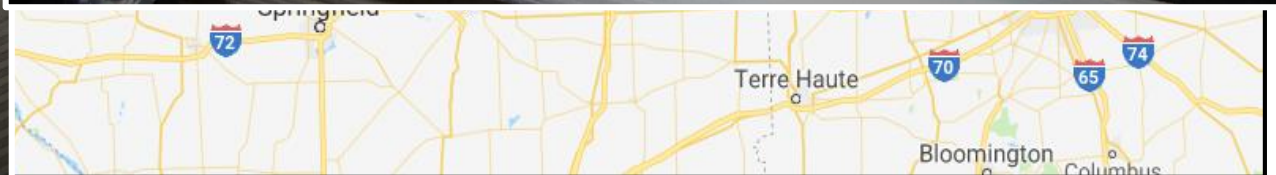
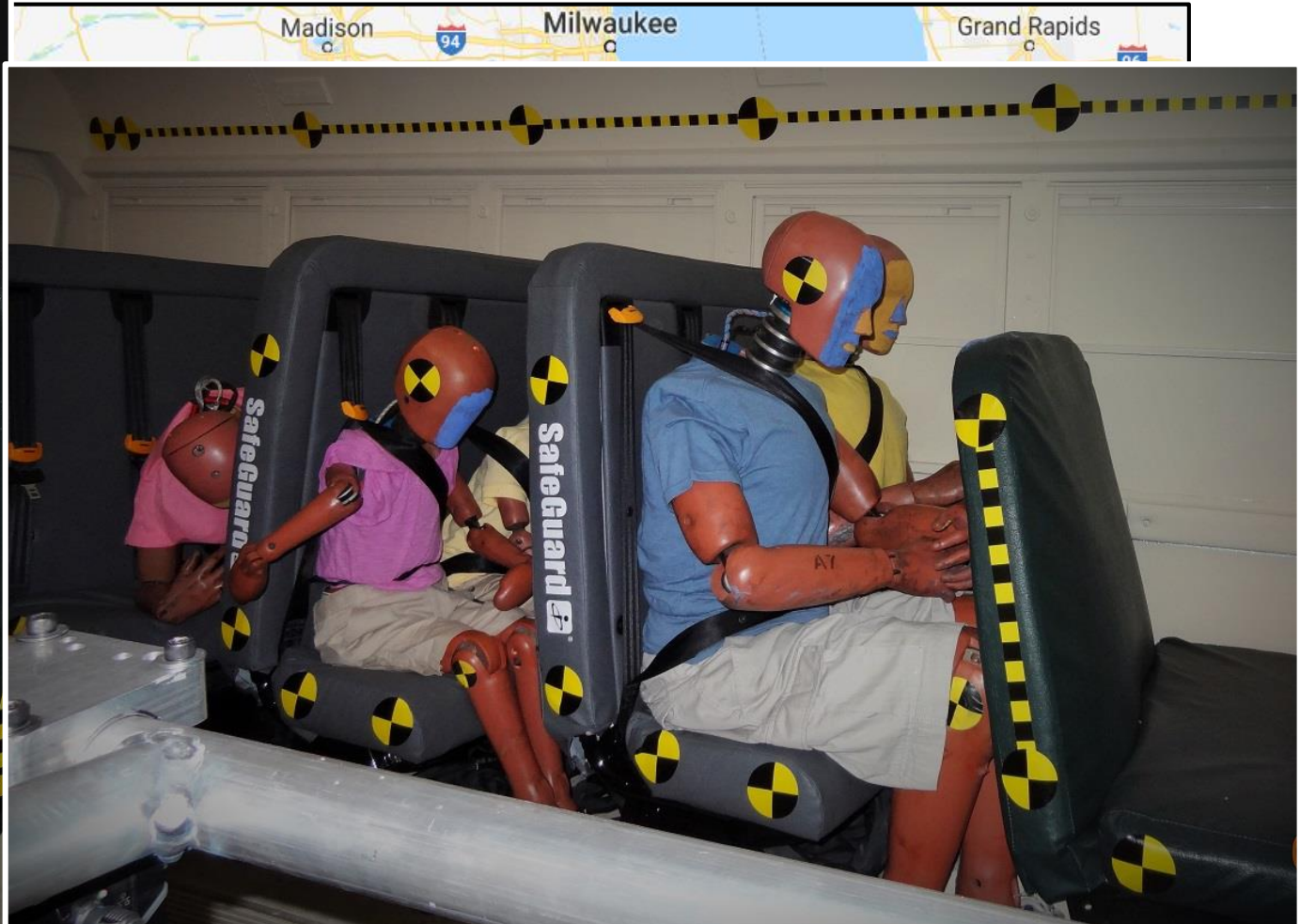
44.3(58) 44.3(57) *Seating, passenger restraints.*

- a. Lap belts shall not be installed on passenger seats in large school buses (over 10,000 pounds GVWR) except in conjunction with child safety restraint systems that comply with the requirements of FMVSS No. 213, Child Restraint Systems.
- b. Three-point (3-point) lap shoulder belts may be installed in all new buses. If installed, the restraint system shall include a flexible design feature, thus allowing three-two seating on the same 39-inch seat, depending on student size.

AUGUST 8, 2013



IT WAS A LONG DRIVE HOME THAT NIGHT



The next day – August 9, 2013



National Association
of State Directors
of Pupil Transportation Services

NASDPTS POSITION PAPER THE EQUIPPING AND USE OF PASSENGER LAP/SHOULDER BELTS IN SCHOOL BUSES February, 2014

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.

to seek information related to lap/shoulder belts in school buses (2). The NASDPTS executive director and two state directors were among industry representatives chosen to testify. Information gained from this forum and from previous years of research conducted by NHTSA led to the publication in the Federal Register on November 21, 2007 of a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) for lap/shoulder belts in school buses (Docket No. NHTSA-2007-0014) (3).

Pg. 1

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Pg. 6

From: **Christensen, Max [IDOE]** <Max.Christensen@iowa.gov>

Date: Wed, Feb 5, 2014 at 1:11 PM

Subject: RE: HF 2117

To: Fred McElwee <fred.mcelwee@fairfieldsfuture.org>, Danny Thede <Danny.Thede@indianola.k12.ia.us>, Owen Freese <oweniptaed@gmail.com>, <tvoy@ia-sb.org>

Cc: Christensen, Max [IDOE] <Max.Christensen@iowa.gov>

You know guys NASDPTS has moved forward with our thinking concerning lap/shoulder restraints. The old arguments just don't hold much water anymore, and anyone who sees the video put together by SafeGuard seats from the bus crash demos last summer would have a difficult time defending a position that seat restraints are bad.

I have no idea how the DE will fall on this one, but I personally will be pushing to at the very least not oppose it, and maybe even be in favor, with two provisions:

1. Not lap belts – must be lap/shoulder restraints
2. The driver must not be responsible for non-use.

The Next Day – an email to the IPTA regarding HF 2117

2015 NAPT Summit – Richmond, Virginia November 8, 2015

**NHTSA:
"SCHOOL BUSES SHOULD
HAVE SEAT BELTS.
PERIOD."**

Administrator Mark Rosekind,
November 8, 2015



"Is this a change in position? Yes," Rosekind said. "But it is consistent with NHTSA's role as the guardian of safety on America's roads."



53th Annual IPTA Conference/Trade Show!

Monday, July 18, 2016



NHTSA:
"SCHOOL BUSES SHOULD
HAVE SEAT BELTS.
PERIOD."

Administrator Mark Rosekind,
November 8, 2015



NHTSA's new position was shared. This began the process to inform and educate IPTA members.

We knew from the beginning that changing the mindset about compartmentalization was going to take some time.



Chris Darling

Executive Director, IPTA
Reviewed the new NHTSA
position on lap/shoulder seat belts




Max Christensen

DE Executive Officer/State Director
Q&A - Lap/shoulder belts on school buses?
YOUR THOUGHTS?

OCTOBER





2016







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#1
Seat Solution

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S3C
Lap/Shoulder Seat

S3C
Intergrated Child Seat

S3C
Restraint Seat

S3B
Base School Bus Seat


SynTec Seating Partners with Iowa's Largest District for a Test Project

High Point, NC, August 16, 2016 – [SynTec Seating Solutions](#), the largest school bus seat manufacturer in the industry, is partnering with the [Independent Community School District \(DMPS\)](#), Iowa's largest school district, and [Thomas Bus Sales Inc.](#) Iowa, for the [seating](#) in school buses.

To kick off the program, DMPS issued an order for two Thomas C2 buses equipped with SynTec's [S3C Restraint Seats](#) (delivered to SynTec's facility in High Point, North Carolina where they will be converted to [lap / shoulder seats](#) as part of the program) and two Thomas Buses of Iowa in Des Moines ready for delivery to DMPS.

DMPS will monitor the impact of the [lap / shoulder seats](#) on these buses during the 2016 – 2017 school year. The following





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DMPS Adds School Bus with Seatbelts to Fleet

DES MOINES, IA (October 27, 2016) – The Des Moines Public Schools transportation department is launching a bus seatbelt trial, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education, school bus seat manufacturer SynTec and Thomas Bus Sales.

The district continues to believe school buses are one of the safest forms of transportation available. Their size, color and lights make them highly visible to other motorists. Given buses transport tens of thousands of Iowa students every day, accidents are relatively rare. However, the DMPS transportation director Todd Liston believes that when new options in safety become available and they appear to be viable, a trial is warranted.

"We have several questions," said Liston. "Among them, will the students use the seatbelts or are they a distraction? Can the students secure themselves, or would they need assistance getting in and out of their seats, possibly causing a hazard if quick evacuation of the bus became necessary? All of these



Lap/Shoulder Belt interest and sales in Iowa – October 2016

Re: Lap Shoulder Belts Pre-Google Mail/Inbox/Pilot Project - Lap Shoulder Belts x



cmasbs@aol.com <cmasbs@aol.com>
to Max ▾

Hi Max,

We have seen some interest. It has mainly been on lift units. We have had a few that have put 2 to 4 seats with lap/shoulder belts in the units. I can't think of any units sold that the entire bus was lap/shoulder belt equipped.

Thank you,

Charles Andrews
School Bus Sales Co.
319-296-1363

-----Original Message-----

From: Christensen, Max [IDOE] [IDOE] <Max.Christensen@iowa.gov>
To: cmasbs <cmasbs@aol.com>
Sent: Tue, Oct 25, 2016 12:19 pm
Subject: Lap Shoulder Belts

Hi Chuck,

Quick question for you. Have
how many would that be?

Thanks,
Max

“We have seen some interest mainly on lift units.”

Hello Max,

We have priced lap/shoulder belts half a dozen times this calendar year. The only customer we sold them to is North Iowa Bus Company (Mason City). This was a yellow type A unit.

Thanks,
Kevin M. Mote
Thomas Bus Sales
General Manager
1-800-362-2092 Office
515-371-8658 Cell
515-265-6590 Fax



“We have priced lap/shoulder belts half a dozen times this calendar year.”

“Have you seen any interest in equipping buses with lap/shoulder belts since the start of this calendar year?”

I haven't seen any call for full buses equipped with 3pt belts. There's been some that will install a seat or two with it, but not a whole bus.

Nicole Crum
Sales Coordinator | Hoglund Bus
D: 763.271.2983 | F: 763.295.499

“I haven't seen any call for full buses equipped with 3pt belts.”

IPTA Newsletter Article – February 1, 2017

Featured a side-by-side section with negative comments on one side and positive comments on the other side. This article attempted to dispel the myths with facts.

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IPTA School Bus Stop

Should We Have Lap-Shoulder Seatbelts On Iowa School Buses?

One of the more common concerns after a school bus accident is, "why don't we have seatbelts on school buses?" Believe me one of the most common calls we get here at the IPTA office from news reporters, superintendents, transportation directors, bus drivers and parents are either for or against seatbelts on Iowa's school buses. One side says, "Yes, we want them," and the other side says, "No definitely not. We never want them on our school buses." With such strong lines drawn in the sand, it makes it hard to find common ground to open up meaningful dialog on this serious subject.

Both sides would agree that school buses are the safest way to transport your children to and from school. The size, lighting and color of school buses make them easily visible and identifiable. Their height provides good driver visibility and raises the bus passenger compartment above car impact height. It's safe to say that emergency vehicles are the only other vehicle on the road that can stop traffic like a school bus.



Metal bar seat bracing replaced by high back padded seating

When I was working on school buses at a school district here in Iowa quite a few years ago, the common thinking was that most injuries inside of a school bus came from the metal bracing poles and the metal seat bracing located at the back of the bus seats. The bus seats were much lower than the seats today and were responsible for many of the injuries like bruises to the head area, broken arms and some extensive tooth loss during heavy breaking or sudden stops. It took years to correct this problem but manufacturers eventually removed the metal at those locations and replaced it with higher seat backs with soft foam backing on the seats and they eliminated the metal poles completely.



Compartmentalization with impact-absorbing, high-back, padded seats

It has been commonly accepted for many years that "compartmentalization" is one of the fundamental elements in the safety design for school buses. Compartmentalization is closely spaced, impact-absorbing, high-back, padded seats. Different from your personal car, it is a carefully designed protection model designed to protect children like eggs in an egg carton, compartmentalized, and surrounded with padding and structural integrity to secure the entire container. The seat backs are raised and the shell is reinforced for protection against impact. There is no arguing that it is much better than the metal bars that seat areas had in prior years.

Parents say our children are required to wear seat belts in our cars so why not have them on their school bus? Individuals have a hard time comparing personal cars to the school bus because there are very distinctive variations in size and the number of children being transported. The two vehicles are constructed differently and in your car, you can supervise your child and ensure that your child's belt remains properly secured. School bus drivers work in a "passive restraint," environment, meaning all a child must do to be protected is simply sit down and remain seated. School buses also must be designed as a multi-purpose vehicle used to transport students K-12, to and from school, educational field trips, including carrying support equipment for school bands and various team events.

One group says lap-shoulder belts are not needed on school buses!

One group says lap-shoulder belts are needed on school buses!

Which one is right?

Traveling around the State of Iowa for the 2016 IPTA regional meetings we had a chance to hear the pros and cons first hand from our association members as it pertains to lap-shoulder belts in school buses. At all nine locations we made notes of the comments that were shared. Listed on the next page are the more common comments that we received and a few more that were shared at the IPTA summer conference and trade show. You will find the most common comments listed in the first column and the response to those concerns from industry publications and other references in the second column.

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IPTA School Bus Stop

One group says lap-shoulder seatbelts are not needed on school buses!
Common concerns stated at regional meetings!

The other group says lap-shoulder seatbelts are needed on school buses!
From industry publications and other references.

1. Overall, travel on a school bus is the safest way to travel, 40 times safer than riding in a car, with only a handful of deaths occurring to passengers on school buses every year.

2. In compartmentalization, the seats on the school bus are placed very close to each other and have high backs that are very padded. As a result, in an accident, the student would be propelled forward a very short distance into a padded seatback that in a way is like an early version of an airbag.

3. Children sit high off the ground in school buses adds to the safety, as the impact location with an automobile would occur beneath the seats.

4. Lap-shoulder seatbelts would significantly increase the cost of school buses. It is estimated that adding lap-shoulder seatbelts to buses would add between \$7,000 and \$14,000 to the cost of each bus.

5. Lap-shoulder seatbelts would reduce the seating capacity on each bus. Adding lap-shoulder seatbelts would mean that bus fleets would have to increase by as much as 15% just to carry the same number of riders.

6. Children would hit each other with the seatbelt buckle, increasing rider injuries.

7. How would the school bus driver unbuckle all the children if the bus rolls over and there was a fire?

1. Agreed, school buses are 40 times safer than riding in a car, but they could be even safer with lap-shoulder belts. In a frontal or rear collision (or even sudden stops) children can be thrown into the seat in front of them. While they may be spared more serious injuries, they are often still injured, receiving everything from bumps and bruises to concussions. Lap-Shoulder Seatbelts could prevent a number of these injuries.

2. With only compartmentalization, during a rollover, students are tossed about the interior of the bus like clothes in a dryer. They strike other students, seats, windows, and even the ceiling. When a child is buckled up, they are far less likely to be seriously injured.

3. Children sitting high off the ground in school buses also adds to their safety, as the impact location with an automobile would occur beneath the seats. However in several high impact crashes over the years with larger vehicles, and solid roadside objects, lap-shoulder seatbelts could have kept children in their seat and reduced the seriousness of some of the injuries.

4. Lap-shoulder seatbelts will increase the cost of school buses. But we should treat that cost as a worthy investment to "further enhance the safety of the students," as NASDPTS put it, and not as a reason to oppose lap-shoulder belts for school buses. The life of a school bus can be between 12 and 18 years. Lap-shoulder seatbelts are a one-time cost for the life of the bus.

5. Installing lap-shoulder seatbelts will not reduce the number of seats. Newer style bus seats will seat three elementary school children or two high school students in a single seat, just like a regular school bus seat without lap-shoulder seatbelts.

6. Lap-shoulder seatbelts have been on school buses in several states for more than a decade and there have not been reports of them being used as a weapon. The seat belts are similar to what you use in your car. They're on a short strap under tension that retracts into the seat. If a student wishes to harm another student, there are unfortunately other items such as books, backpacks, tablets and lunchboxes that are far easier to swing.

7. Federal standards require that lap-shoulder seatbelts release easily with or without weight on them. Children of all ages can evacuate easily at the click of a button, even if they are upside down. When they are not buckled up and are thrown around the interior of the bus, resulting in more serious injuries, they are slower to evacuate if they are capable of evacuating the school bus at all.

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IPTA School Bus Stop

Should We Have Lap-Shoulder Seatbelts On Iowa School Buses? (Continued)

Reading through those two lists it becomes very clear that the lap-shoulder seatbelt debate is a complex and sometimes an emotional issue. Individuals that do not want to see lap-shoulder belts and individuals that want to see them installed in school buses both have some valid points. It's hard at times to figure out what is a myth and what is factual with many individuals already having their minds made up and distinctive lines drawn in the sand.

The two main concerns that the IPTA has heard from school bus drivers are:

1. Will the driver be held liable if a child is not wearing the lap-shoulder seatbelt, if there is an accident?
2. Will the school bus driver be expected to make sure that the students are wearing the lap-shoulder seatbelt during the regular scheduled routes or when driving sporting and educational field trips?

These concerns were not on the previous page lists because they may be the hardest to answer. This part of the equation will take some clear legislation. If lap-shoulder seatbelts are required to be installed in school buses then school bus drivers will need a strong commitment from Iowa law makers and school district officials. Once there is clear legislation in place protecting the school bus driver from liability, then school districts will need to have a policy in place that is supported by district officials from the building principals all the way to the superintendent. With that policy, training for the school bus driver, building staff, students and parents would be a very important component.

District's have zero tolerance policies for fighting and bullying, this is another area that there needs to be zero tolerance to protect the school bus driver and the school district or transportation contractor. If a student does not use the lap-shoulder seatbelt then they lose their bus riding privileges.

Some interesting information that I discovered was that in states that currently have seat belts as many as 93% of bus drivers report witnessing bullying on their school buses before lap-shoulder belts.

School districts with lap-shoulder belts, assigned seating, and an enforced usage policy have found that bullying and other disruptive behavior has been significantly reduced, and in some cases eliminated entirely, on their school buses.



Additionally with the lap-shoulder seatbelts, student discipline problems were also reduced by 90 to 95%. Without lap-shoulder seatbelts children can get a little rowdy at times, they walk the aisle, lean over their seat to talk to others behind them, and turn sideways to talk to the kids across the aisle. All of these things increase driver distraction, which is potentially dangerous for not only the students on the bus, but for everyone on the road. Lap-shoulder seatbelts ensure students are seated correctly.



Crash test, left side riders are secured in lap-shoulder seatbelts and on the right, three riders were unbelted

It has been said that if you put lap-shoulder seatbelts on all buses you may only save one life per year, however they could reduce approximately 15,000 injuries!

No one can or will assure anyone that if we install lap-shoulder seatbelts in every school bus in Iowa that we can eliminate any loss of life. However there has been extensive crash testing done and the findings show, if children are wearing lap-shoulder seatbelts injuries would be reduced significantly. It is also possible that student discipline and student management could be improved significantly. How our legislators approach the lap-shoulder seatbelt issue is an important safety issue to all 9,000 plus school bus drivers and to the approximately 243,283 students riding on Iowa school buses.



54th Annual IPTA Conference/Trade Show!

Monday, July 17, 2017



Christopher A. Hart

Chairman of the National
Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)



Todd Liston

Then current Transportation
Director, Des Moines Public
Schools. DMPS is doing a test
project with lap/shoulder belts thru
SynTec Seating



Monica Coburn

IMMI/Safeguard, 32 years in
Indiana as a transportation Director
at three school districts. She
promoted lap/shoulder seat belts
first hand in Indiana school buses.
Monica also traveled to all 9 IPTA
regional meetings in the spring of
2018, promoting l/s belts





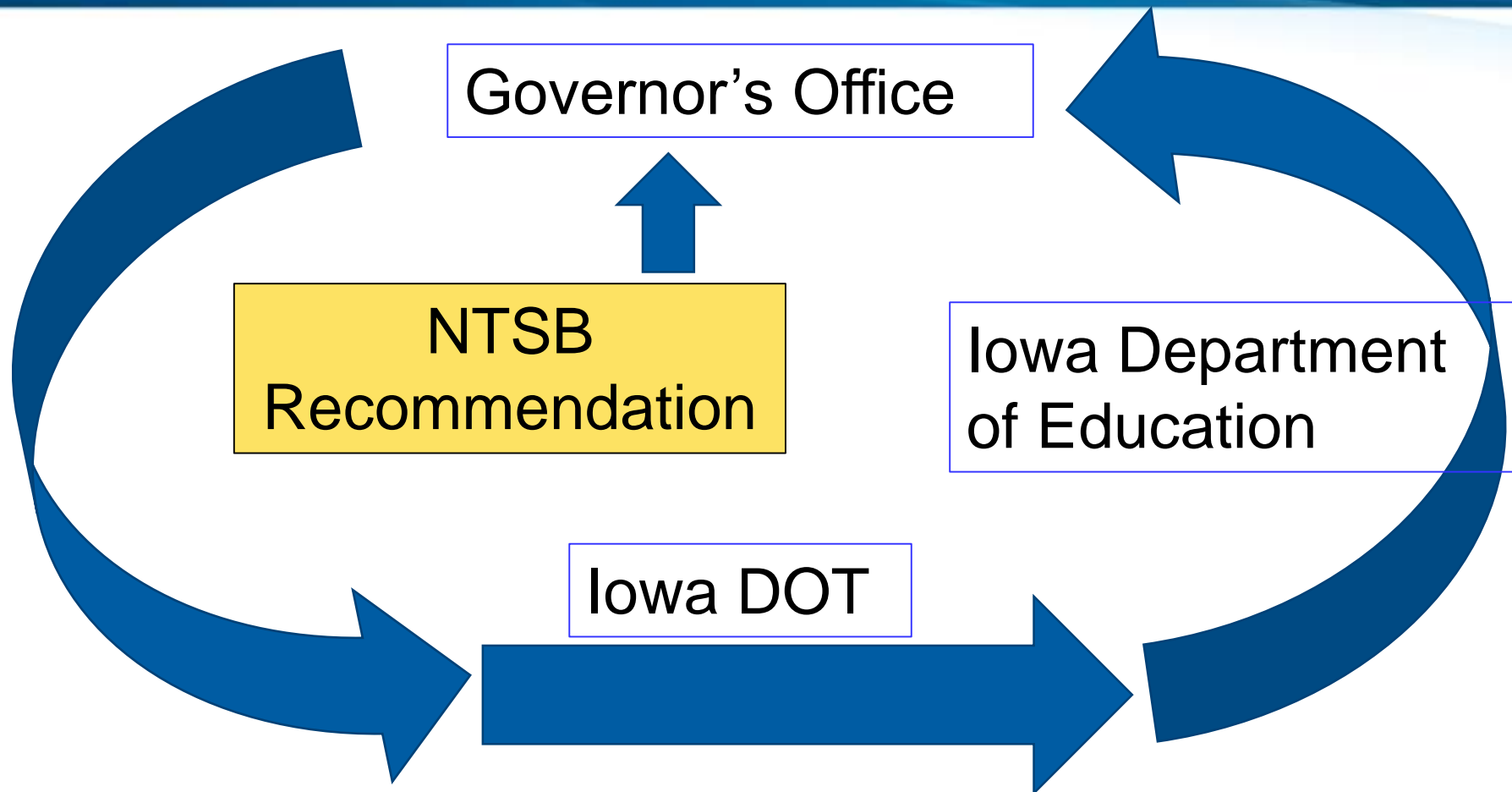
May 22, 2018 - NTSB



NTSB Board Chairman Robert L. Sumwalt – May 22, 2018

The NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) recommended for the first time that all new school buses in the U.S. be equipped with lap and shoulder belts.

June 25, 2018 – Iowa Department of Education



The NTSB's recommendation that all new school buses in the U.S. be equipped with lap/shoulder belts started in the Governor's office, and went full circle.



55th Annual IPTA Conference/Trade Show!

Tuesday, July 17, 2018



Monica Coburn

Presented:

“NTSB Crash Report & Lap/Shoulder Seat Belt Overview”

sharing that enhancing compartmentalization with
lap/shoulder belts means:

- Safer bus rides for students
- Behavior improvements
- Reduced bullying
- Driver satisfaction



November 7, 2018

Back in the hands of the '44 Update Group'

The 44 Update Group

- ~ Department of Education Staff
- ~ NCST Delegates
- ~ IPTA Members
- ~ Maintenance & Inspection Association (TD's & teachers)
- ~ School Bus Dealers

It's been 7 years since we passed the rules. It's time to do it again! At the meeting, the group is going to have to talk about the rules process.

44.3(57) Seating, passenger

a. Lap belts shall be installed on passenger seats in large school buses (over 10,000 pounds GVWR) with child safety restraint systems that comply with the requirements of the Child Restraint Systems.

Three-point (3-point) lap-shoulder belts shall ~~may~~ be installed in all new buses. ~~If installed,~~ The restraint system shall include a flexible design feature, thus allowing three-two seating on the same 39-inch seat, depending on student size.

Thus began what many think was the 10-month sprint..

The Rules Process Is Six Steps

- ~ Give notice to the State School Board
 - ✓ ***May 9, 2019***
- ~ Public Comment Period
 - ✓ ***May 9 – June 25, 2019, with a public meeting on June 25***
- ~ Give notice to the ARRC (Administrative Rules Review Committee)
 - ✓ ***July 9, 2019 – told us it should be a “legislative process”***
- ~ Final Adoption from the State School Board
 - ✓ ***August 1, 2019***
- ~ Final Adoption from the ARRC
 - ✓ ***September 10, 2019***
- ~ Rules become effective
 - ✓ ***October 2, 2019***

Keep in mind – other things were still going on.....

2019 – HF 366

11 EXPLANATION

12 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with

13 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

14 This bill requires new school buses ordered for purchase on

15 or after July 1, 2019, that were manufactured on or after July

16 1, 2019, to be equipped with safety belts or safety harnesses

17 for every seating position. The bill also requires the use

18 of safety belts or safety harnesses by the driver, front seat

19 passengers, and all passengers under 18 years of age on such

20 school buses. Current requirements for the use of child

21 restraint systems for children under 18 years of age also apply

22 to school buses equipped with safety belts or safety harnesses

23 under the bill.

Would have required belts
and usage after July 1, 2019

BUS CAPACITY & TOTAL BUS NUMBER

Full Model Years 2016-2018 / Partial Model Years 2019-2020
Revised 2/15/19

NOTE: 2016-2018 would be considered full model years; 2019-2020 are only partial model years.

* Information per Iowa school bus dealers as of today's date

modelyear	capacity	capCount	totalcap
2020	84	3	252
2020	78	2	156
2020	77	30	2310
2020	72	2	144
2020	71	13	923
2020	65	4	260
2020	60	1	60
2020	53	1	53

TOTAL BUSES: 56
TOTAL CAPACITY: 4158
AVERAGE CAPACITY: 74

AVERAGE CAPACITY PER BUS 2016-2018:

68

AVERAGE BUSES PURCHASED PER YEAR 2016-2018:

371

*AVERAGE COST PER SEATING POSITION FOR LAP/SHOULDER BELTS:

\$123.00

AVERAGE COST TO EQUIP AN AVERAGE IOWA SCHOOL BUS WITH LAP/SHOULDER BELTS:

\$8,382.00




AVERAGE COST PER YEAR TO EQUIP ALL NEW IOWA SCHOOL BUSES WITH LAP/SHOULDER BELTS:

\$3,112,515.00

modelyear	capacity	capCount	totalcap
2019	84	34	2856
2019	83	6	498
2019	78	6	468
2019	77	103	7931
2019	74	1	74
2019	72	4	288
2019	71	18	1278
2019	65	72	4680
2019	60	1	60
2019	59	2	118
2019	56	2	112
2019	54	1	54
2019	51	1	51
2019	46	2	92
2019	41	3	123
2019	40	1	40
2019	38	1	38
2019	36	1	36
2019	33	1	33
2019	32	4	128
2019	31	1	31
2019	30	2	60
2019	29	1	29

IPTA Lap/Shoulder Seat Belt Position Paper

Unanimously approved by the IPTA Board of Directors on **January 16, 2019**. It was released to the public on **February 4, 2019** - five years to the day after the original NASDPTS position paper was released!



IPTA Position Paper

Passenger Lap Shoulder Seat Belts in School Buses

February 4, 2019

The Iowa Pupil Transportation Association (IPTA) was established in 1963. The membership represents community school districts in almost all 99 counties in the State of Iowa. The mission of the Iowa Pupil Transportation Association is to serve as a resource for school administrators, supervisors, mechanics, drivers and the Iowa Department of Education in the upgrading of Iowa's pupil transportation program. For the past 56 years the IPTA has continued to forge strong relationships with local, state and federal governing bodies, policy makers, and our partners in the education community. The IPTA's primary goals are to provide information and assistance to school transportation departments to help them maintain an effective and efficient transportation operation, and to keep children's safety first!

The installation and use of passenger lap-shoulder belts in Iowa school buses has been a controversial issue for almost 40 years. The IPTA has studied this issue and has concluded that Iowa's children would be safer if school buses included lap-shoulder seat belts as standard equipment.




Safety experts agree that school buses are the safest way to transport students. According to the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPPT), approximately 485,000 school buses carry more than 25 million children to and from school and related activities in the United States every day. Accident statistics demonstrate that riding a school bus is much safer than riding in a personal car. However, this does not mean that school buses could not be made much safer. There are children injured in school bus crashes every year.

Over the years, national and state groups have been cautious about committing their support for mandatory seat belt laws for school buses. In the past 15 years, due to improved seat belt technology and reduced cost, most organizations strongly recommend lap-shoulder seat belts as standard equipment on all new buses. In 2015, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the agency responsible for writing vehicle safety rules, announced that it was launching a nationwide effort to install lap-shoulder seat belts in school buses. NHTSA stated, "Every child on every school bus should have a three-point seat belt."

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a nonprofit research group funded by auto insurance companies, favors putting three-point seat belts on school buses. In February 2014, the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) wrote a position paper recommending the installation of lap-shoulder seat belts in school buses nationwide, with the purpose to provide guidance and assistance to professionals and policy makers charged with making that significant decision. The National Safety Council has supported personal restraint use for decades, and continues to be adamant about making them standard equipment on school buses. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) have also recommended lap-shoulder seat belts on every new school bus for many years.

"Serving Iowa Pupil Transportation Programs Since 1963"

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Web Site: www.4ipta.org



The arguments against requiring lap-shoulder seat belts in school buses over the years have focused on the following: (1) the safety of compartmentalization and (2) cost.

It has been commonly accepted for many years that compartmentalization, which is closely spaced, impact-absorbing, high-back, padded seats for riders, has been one of the fundamental elements in the safety design for school buses. Compartmentalization offers protection in frontal and in rear crashes assuming all children are properly seated. It offers only limited protection, however, in rollover and side impact crashes. During a rollover or a side impact event, students are tossed about the interior of the bus like clothes in a dryer. They strike other students, seats, windows, and even the ceiling. When passengers are restrained by lap-shoulder seat belts, they are more likely to be properly seated during all types of crashes, and will remain seated in the seating compartment during rollovers or side impacts, thus minimizing injury.

The cost of making lap-shoulder seat belts standard equipment on school buses is a factor. However, lap-shoulder seat belts have become more affordable in this past decade. Ten years ago the cost was approximately \$15,000 to equip a 65 passenger school bus. In today's market, the cost is approximately \$7,500. It is no longer prohibitively expensive considering the overall cost of the bus and the average life of the vehicle. When considering lap-shoulder seat belts or other safety measures, the State of Iowa and local school districts must prioritize available funding to provide the greatest safety for all students. The \$7,500 cost to equip a school bus with lap-shoulder belts can be calculated by taking the total cost divided by the average life span of a bus (15 years), divided by the number of passengers (65), and the number of school days per year (180). This results in a little over 4 cents per passenger per day for this added student safety.




California, Florida, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Nevada and Texas have laws requiring passenger lap seat belts or lap-shoulder seat belts on school buses. Over the last 2 years, more than 18 school districts in Iowa are voluntarily installing lap-shoulder seat belts on all new buses purchased. A list of these school districts is available upon request at the IPTA office.

School districts using lap-shoulder seat belt equipped school buses with a mandatory usage policies report noticeable improvements in student behavior and a reduction in behavior incident bus referrals. The use of lap-shoulder seat belts creates an environment that has less potential for student-to-student bullying and harassment and significantly reduces driver distraction. Equipping Iowa school buses with lap-shoulder seat belts is a safety feature that can significantly reduce minor and serious injuries. If a child has the additional protection of a lap-shoulder seat belt, they are far less likely to be seriously injured. Seat belts help in evacuations, as uninjured children can evacuate much more quickly than an injured or an unconscious child.

(Iowa Code 321.445 - Safety Belts and Safety Harness - Use required) Seat belt installation in personal cars has been required in Iowa since 1966, and in 1986 seat belts were required to be used. Currently all states require children in the back seat of a personal car to be restrained by a car seat or a seat belt. School bus usage of seat belts has lagged behind.

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The Iowa Pupil Transportation Association recommends that the State of Iowa equip school buses with lap-shoulder seat belts, issue a mandatory use policy, and require training on proper seat belt usage along with proper evacuation training. Districts have zero tolerance policies for fighting and bullying. This zero tolerance philosophy should apply to the use and wearing of seat belts on the bus. If a student does not use the lap-shoulder seat belt, then they should lose their bus riding privileges.

IPTA Position Statement

On January 16, 2019, the IPTA Board of Directors unanimously voted to recommend that lap-shoulder seat belts should be added as standard equipment on all new school buses purchased in Iowa. With the understanding that along with this requirement, there needs to be guidance for Iowa school districts and legislators when considering the requirements for the installation of lap-shoulder seat belts in school buses. The rules that guide us should encompass:

- Require lap-shoulder seat belts as standard equipment on all new Iowa school buses,
- A usage policy for school buses equipped with passenger lap-shoulder seat belts,
- A training program for proper usage and adjustment of passenger lap-shoulder seat belts, and
- A training program for lap-shoulder seat belt emergency evacuation.

This association has a primary leadership obligation in issues relating to our members, the public, school staff, and students in regard to safety. Iowa school districts have begun to put lap-shoulder seat belts on school buses in several communities. We believe this clearly shows a proactive safety consideration, and that it is time to reconsider and promote lap-shoulder seat belts as standard equipment on all new Iowa school buses.

Summary

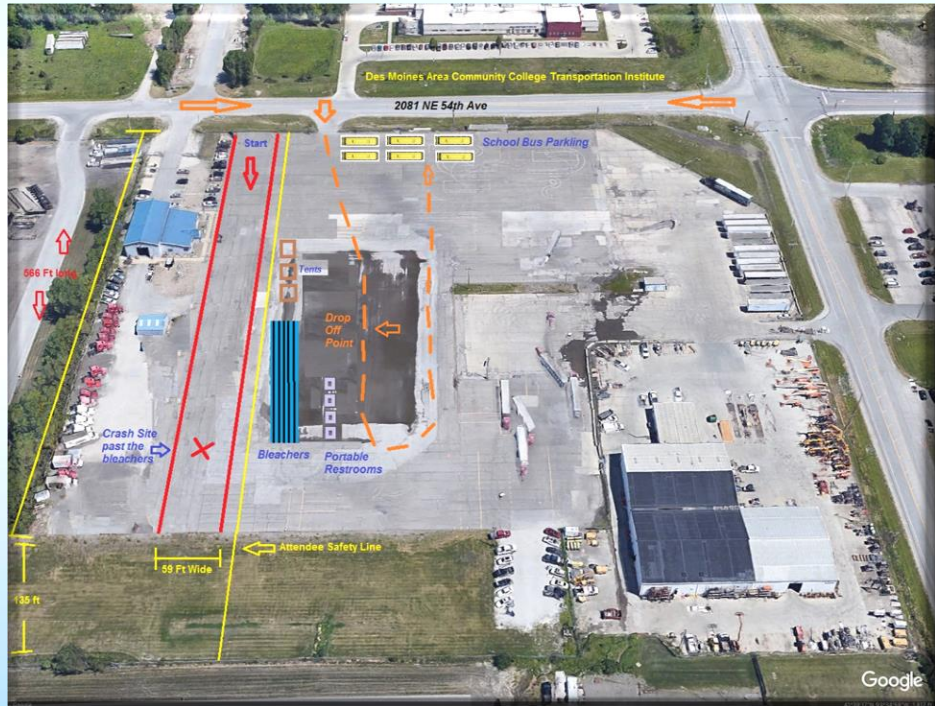
The Iowa Pupil Transportation Association fully supports and recommends that lap-shoulder seat belts should be added as standard equipment on all new school buses purchased in Iowa. Properly seated students are a huge factor for the more than 9,000 school bus drivers transporting approximately 243,283 students on Iowa's school buses every day. Student discipline and student management could be improved significantly with the installation of lap-shoulder seat belts. Should the State of Iowa or a local school district decide to equip their school buses with lap-shoulder seat belts, IPTA believes that a mandatory usage policy should also be in place with necessary training on the importance of wearing and proper usage of the seat belts along with proper evacuation training.

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2019 IPTA Regional Meetings

It was announced that we were going to have a school bus rollover crash demonstration on July 15, 2019 at the IPTA Conference & Trade-Show



DMACC Transportation Institute Site
Bleachers that will seat 250 conference attendees.

- Using fully electronic crash test dummies in the bus, belted and unbelted, for real time impact data analysis pertaining to the use or non-use of lap/shoulder belts.
- Seven on board cameras to document activity inside the bus.
- Remote driving system will be used during the crash test.
- Side-by-side evacuation drill demonstrations using two school buses furnished by the Des Moines CSD. One bus equipped with lap/shoulder belts and one without.
- Will include a follow up meeting the next morning to provide preliminary test results to conference attendees.

More bus crash demo's were being done in June near Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This one was a rear-end collision.....



*Midwest Association of Technical Accident Investigators
Annual Conference – Cedar Rapids, Iowa
June 3-5, 2019*

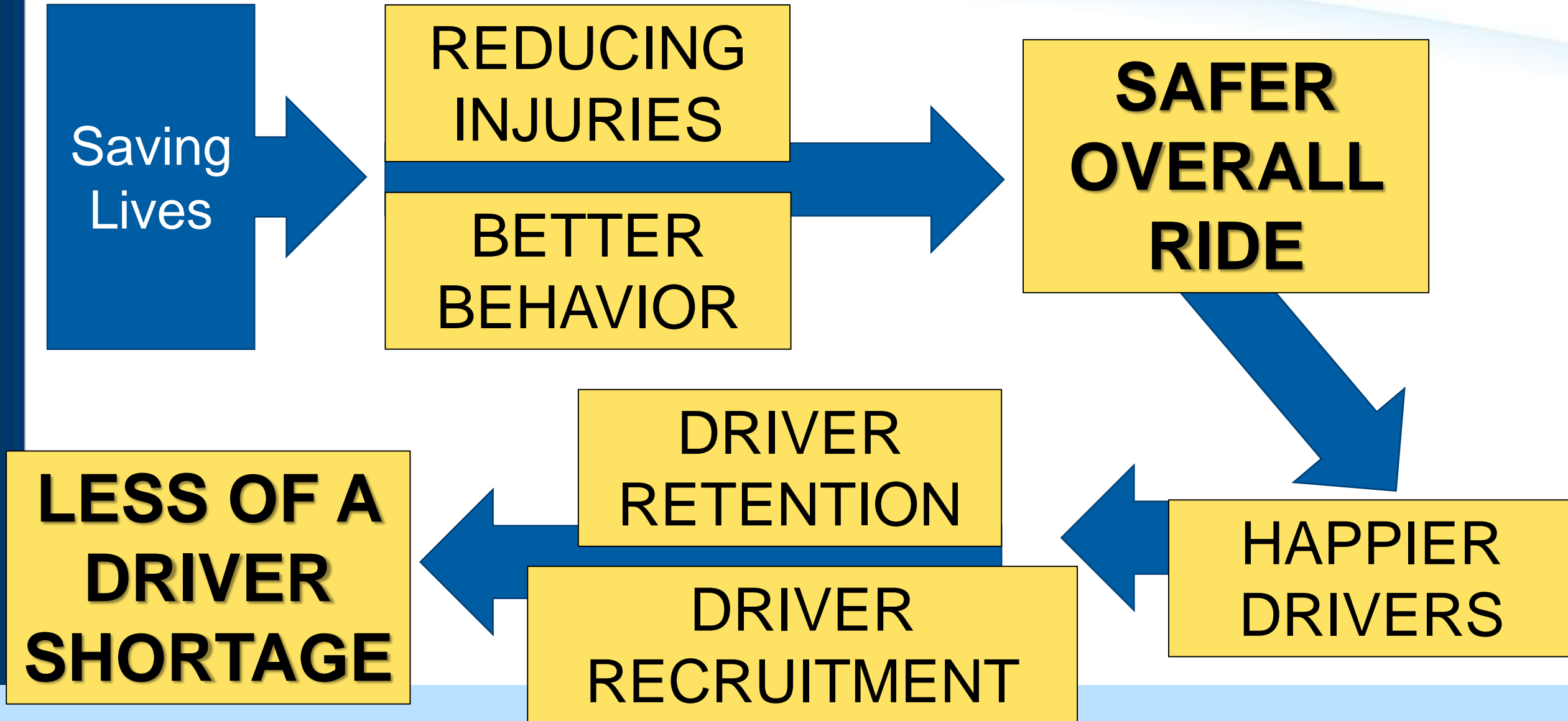


This one was a side impact collision.....



*Midwest Association of Technical Accident Investigators
Annual Conference – Cedar Rapids, Iowa
June 3-5, 2019*

Our messaging also changed





56th Annual IPTA Conference/Trade Show!

Monday, July 15, 2019



The conference opened with **Michele Beckjord**, Senior Project Investigator for the NTSB. She reviewed accidents from all over the nation and here in Iowa. **Max Christensen** then led a discussion during this session pertaining to lap/shoulder seat belts.



During the morning sessions **Dave Hallman** and his team of crash specialists were out at the DMACC Transportation Institute Site preparing the school bus and the eight (8) crash dummies for their ride later in the afternoon.



The evacuation drills used two doors - the service door and the rear door.

Evacuation #1

No lap/shoulder belts – 66 seconds

Evacuation #2

With lap/shoulder belts – 42 seconds

These tests seemed to show little or no different in evacuation times between belted and un-belted students.



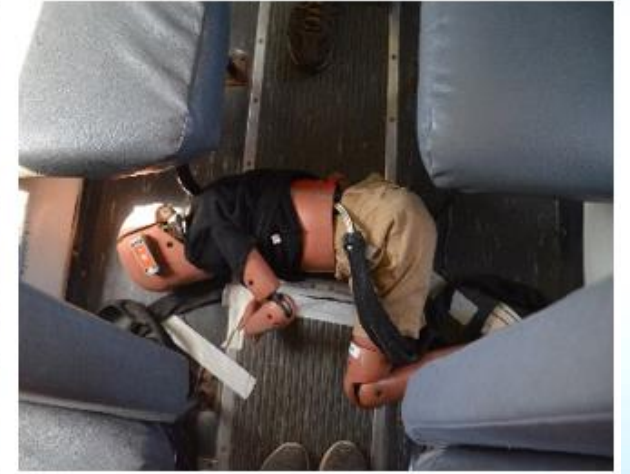
“School Bus Crash Demonstration!”



Before



During



After

What happened?

- The 3 non-belted crash dummies disappear from view while being tossed out of their seats and hitting the floor.
- The 2 belted crash dummies with lap/shoulder seat belts are still in their seats before, during and after the crash.
- This test seemed to demonstrate that lap/shoulder belts **will** improve student rider safety!

HEADLINE – AUGUST 1, 2019

Iowa Is One Step Away From Requiring Seatbelts On New School Buses



The Iowa State Board of Education has adopted rules requiring seatbelts on new school buses ordered on or after Oct. 2, 2019. The rules will return to the state's Administrative Rules Review Committee for final review, which is preliminarily scheduled for sometime next month.

The rules were adopted unanimously by the State Board of Education on Thursday. The rules require lap-and-shoulder seatbelts and other safety equipment on newly purchased school buses.

One last letter!

"It is time to vote for Lap-Shoulder Seat Belts in Iowa's School Buses!"



It is time to vote for Lap-Shoulder Seat Belts in Iowa's School Buses!

The State board of Education has recently adopted rules requiring seat belts on new school buses. This issue has been debated for over 40 years and the time is now for the installation and the use of passenger lap-shoulder belts in Iowa school buses. We always focus on the cost, but we know that there are other factors that need to be considered. Iowa's children would be safer riding in school buses using lap-shoulder seat belts as standard equipment. Here are 5 reasons why:

1. Properly seated students are a huge factor for the more than 9,000 school bus drivers transporting approximately 243,283 students on Iowa's school buses every day. Lap-shoulder seat belts will reduce student injuries, bus driver distractions and accidents by having students properly seated.
2. Student discipline, bullying, and student management can be significantly reduced and behavior issues will be improved with the installation of lap-shoulder seat belts.
3. Wearing lap-shoulder seat belts during a crash allows children a much greater probability of having a less severe injury. Students will remain conscious, mobile, capable of evacuation, understanding instructions, and able to help others.
4. A 10-year North Carolina study found that less than 0.1% of all school bus crashes involved fire emergencies. A much more critical need exists for lap-shoulder seat belt protection when typical minor or major school bus crashes occur. In a school bus crash, children without seat belts move like clothes in a dryer and in many cases will be projected into other students or have an impact with the steel reinforced seat supports in the floor area.
5. (Iowa Code 321.445 - Safety Belts and Safety Harness – Use required) Seat belt installation in personal cars has been required in Iowa since 1966, and in 1986 seat belts were required to be used. Therefore kids today are very comfortable using lap-shoulder seat belts and not having them in school buses exposes them to unnecessary added risk.

Based on research and experience, the federal agencies responsible for school bus safety and many medical and safety organizations have recommended lap-shoulder belts for all school buses. Several states, cities, and many school districts now require lap-shoulder belts in their new school buses. Since 1968, seat belts in cars have saved hundreds of thousands of lives, are a proven safety tool, and their absence in school buses exposes children to substantial risk.

At the 2019 IPTA School Transportation Conference the bus crash demonstration on July 15th was witnessed by 240 transportation directors and mechanics from almost all 99 counties here in Iowa. It clearly showed the need for lap-shoulder seat belts. You can see the bus crash demonstration and other videos at www.4ipta.org the IPTA Website in the area labeled Quick Links.

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August 15, 2019 - IPTA sent one last letter to every member of the ARRC (Administrative Rules Review Committee)

- The IPTA board voted unanimously for lap/shoulder belts to be added as standard equipment on all new Iowa school buses.
- The IPTA fully supports and recommends lap/shoulder belts be standard equipment on all new Iowa school buses.
- Research statistics, recommendations, nationwide trends, and laws favoring lap/shoulder belts to protect our most precious cargo are not wrong.
- Do not let this issue be decided in the future by a serious injury or death of a student on a school bus.
- This very important issue is in your hands and the time to begin making students safer is today!

SEPTEMBER 10, 2019 – Voting Day!



Nicole Proesch, Legal Counsel, DOE on the left and Max Christensen, Executive Officer DOE on the right answering questions from the ARRC members.



From the left; Jack Ewing, House Member Megan Jones, Chair and Senate Member, Waylon Brown, Vice Chair asking questions during the review session.



From the left: Chad Duncan, IC, Marc Steele, and Brian Watley, Hoglund Bus Co, Chris Darling, IPTA, Wade Campbell, School Bus Sales, Merrill Mueller, Algona CSD & IPTA Board Member, Mike Kennedy, Boone CSD and Max Christensen, Department of Education.

September 10, 2019

- Will be remembered as one of the most historic days in Iowa school transportation history.
- The rule for requiring lap/shoulder belts on all new school buses was fully adopted by the ARRC.
- Iowa became the 5th state in the nation to require lap/shoulder belts on new school buses, effective with new school buses ordered on or after October 2, 2019.

WE DID IT!!



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Iowa to Require Seat Belts on All New School Buses

Nicole Schlosser



Posted on September 10, 2019



In Iowa, lap-shoulder belts will be required on new school buses ordered as of Oct. 2. File photo by [unclear] (Iowa) Public Schools

DES MOINES, Iowa — Iowa is joining eight other states in requiring seat belts, as well as mandating other safety equipment on new school buses this fall.

The requirement also extends to other safety equipment, such as one additional stop arm per bus, hand rails, exterior boarding lights, and fire-resistant crash barriers between the front bus seat and the bus driver, on new school buses. Additionally, fire suppression systems will be allowed, Max Christensen, an executive officer for school transportation at the Iowa Department of Education, told *SBF*.

The requirement also extends to other safety equipment, such as one additional stop arm per bus, hand rails, exterior boarding lights, and fire-resistant crash barriers between the front bus seat and the bus driver, on new school buses. Additionally, fire suppression systems will be allowed, Max Christensen, an executive officer for school transportation at the Iowa Department of Education, told *SBF*.

Iowa Department of Education

School Transportation
News



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News Seatbelts

Iowa Becomes Fifth State to Require Lap/Shoulder Seatbelts In School Buses

By Taylor Hannon · September 10, 2019

< Share



A new rule in Iowa will require that lap/shoulder seatbelts are installed in all new school buses ordered on or after Oct. 2, 2019.

The Iowa State Board of Education adopted the rules earlier this summer and was awaiting a final review by the state's Administrative Rules Reviews Committee. Max Christensen, state director of student transportation at the Iowa Department of Education, said the legislative panel approved the rule on Tuesday morning. The rules update **Chapter 44** of the Iowa Administrative Code.

Many Iowa officials have spoken in favor of lap/shoulder seatbelts and have been advocating for the requirement for years.

The new rule estimates the cost of adding a three-point lap/shoulder belt to be \$123 per seating position on a school bus. Based on that calculation, the additional cost to install lap/shoulder seatbelts in a 68-passenger school bus that is purchased in Iowa during 2016-2018, would be \$8,364.

If anyone tells you it's easy it's not.
If anyone tells you it can't be done it can.

SOMETHING THAT STRUCK ME, & STUCK WITH ME...

feedback

Stand up for seat belts

Thanks to Frank Di Giacomo for his comments in "Clinging to the past?" in the January 2007 issue of *SCHOOL BUS FLEET* [The Last Word, pg. 60]. I've been arguing for years, mostly to underwhelmed audiences, that the school bus industry is giving itself an unnecessary black eye with its stand on seat belts. All of our efforts and our record on safety go unrecognized the moment a parent asks why we don't have seat belts on buses. We should be in the lead demanding them and let the politicians face the heat for not funding them.

GEOFF RODGERS
Transportation Director
Los Alamos (N.M.) Public Schools

Be proactive about active restraints

First off, please do not use my name if you decide to print this letter. In my position, I'm trying to move the thinking in my state in the direction of active restraint systems, and I don't need the firestorm that would encircle me should my thoughts on this subject become public. This is a subject that needs to be moved along at a snail's pace and very gently.

Having said that, I couldn't agree more with Frank Di Giacomo's "Clinging to the past?" editorial in the January issue. Our industry is so determined that we don't need seat belts, don't want seat belts and won't have seat belts that I'm afraid we are shooting ourselves in the foot! When lap belts were the only option open to us, compartmentalization was the only game in town. But with the current lap-shoulder belt systems that are available, why does our industry continue to look the other way?

I know there is some cost involved — anywhere from \$7,000 to \$10,000 for a 65-passenger bus — plus the fact that we would lose some capacity, so we'd have to purchase new buses. With tight budgets all the way around, it's a good rationale for not installing restraints. We've been using this same reasoning for years, yet the new 2007 school bus models all went up in price by about that same amount due to the 2007 engines and the increasing cost of raw materials. Yet we

accepted it and are still buying new buses without a great deal of complaining. That leads me to wonder if the "cost issue" is really a reason or more of an excuse. And if all buses were being equipped with lap-shoulder belt systems, the price would surely fall as it almost always does when things are being more mass-produced. We all have to live within a budget, but isn't the bottom line in school transportation to keep our kids as safe as possible?

Think of the PR we would receive if our industry was truly proactive in this area. And as Frank correctly stated, we might not save any additional lives, but the number of injuries would drastically decrease. Plus we'd remove one big chunk of the argument for why the yellow school bus should be relegated to dinosaur status.

I think the leaders in our industry need to take a real, hard look at this issue, and thus give us real leadership! Instead of hanging up the "Road Closed" sign and saying that we aren't going this way, how about putting up a "Reduced Speed Ahead" sign and at least starting us down the path we all know we'll eventually be going?

Ten years from now, if three-point restraint systems are mandatory on all of our buses, do we want our industry to be looked at as the professional group that was proactive and worked to increase the safety of our children and keep our industry vital? Or do we want our industry to be viewed as "that backward group that dragged its heels for as long as it could and was finally forced to swallow the seat belt pill"? At the rate we are going, we'll be viewed in the latter light.

A STATE DIRECTOR OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

2007 Fact Book corrections

- On pg. 58, Joy Winnie should have been listed as president of the Massachusetts Association for Pupil Transportation.
- On pg. 62, Wayne Johnston should have been listed as president of the Pupil Transportation Association of Pennsylvania.
- On pg. 77, the phone number for IC Corporation's David Harden should have been listed as (630) 753-2694.
- On pg. 144, the e-mail address for Hoglund Bus Co. should have been listed as hoglundbus@hoglundbus.com.

SCHOOL BUS FLEET
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BPA
Magazine of the Year
Maggie Awards

**Titled: "Be Proactive About Active Restraints".....
from School Bus Fleet, March 2007**

Please do not use my name. In my position, I'm trying to move the thinking in my state in the direction of active restraint systems, and I don't need the firestorm that would encircle me should my thoughts on this subject become public. This is a subject that needs to be moved along at a snail's pace and very gently.

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Ten years from now do we want our industry to be looked at as the professional group that was proactive Or do we want to be viewed as "that backward group that dragged its heels and was finally forced to swallow the seat belt pill"?

Signed Max Christensen, State Director of Iowa



THANK YOU!



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***IPTA Annual
Conference
Airport Holiday Inn
Des Moines, Iowa
July 19, 2021***

