

TO: McLean County Unit 5 School Board  
CC: Dr. Weikle  
FROM: Shane Hill, Director of Safety  
DATE: June 11, 2025  
SUBJECT: **Annual Review of Identified Safety Hazards for Student Transportation**

As required under **Section 29-3 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/29-3)** and guidance from the **Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)**, Unit 5 conducts an annual review of serious safety hazards that may qualify students for district transportation despite living within 1.5 miles of school.

This annual process ensures we are providing transportation where legitimate safety risks exist, while also updating our records to reflect infrastructure improvements that reduce or eliminate those risks.

### **Why This Matters**

- **Safety:** Students should have safe, walkable routes to school when available.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Transportation costs continue to exceed funding, with Unit 5 currently facing a **\$2 million deficit** due to prorated state reimbursement. Removing outdated hazard designations helps reduce unnecessary busing costs.

### **2025–2026 Identified Hazard Areas**

The following schools continue to have conditions (e.g., rail crossings, high-traffic streets, or limited sidewalks) warranting transportation for students living under 1.5 miles:

- **Elementary Schools:** Carlock, Cedar Ridge, Fairview, Fox Creek, Glenn, Northpoint, Parkside, Pepper Ridge, Towanda
- **Junior High Schools:** Kingsley, Chiddix, Evans

### **Changes for 2025–2026**

Remove some areas near the following schools areas from the hazard list due to significant infrastructure improvements:

- **Normal Community High School (NCHS):** New sidewalks along school frontage completed in Spring 2025
- **Grove Elementary:** New sidewalk connections now provide safe walkable access from surrounding neighborhoods

### **How the Review is Conducted**

Our hazard identification and review process follows a structured, collaborative model:

- **Site Surveys:** Conducted by Shane Hill and Executive Director of Operations Joe Adelman (Aug 24)
- **Data Review:** Includes bus routing, ridership data, and updated maps (Oct 24 - Jan 25)
- **Stakeholder Input:** Meetings with First Student, district leadership, and communications team (Sep 24 - May 25)
- **Field Validation:** Follow-up drives and site inspections by safety and operations teams (March 25)
- **Final Review:** Infrastructure progress monitored through Spring 2025 with final decision meetings (Jun 25)

## Details for Annual Review of Identified Safety Hazards for Transportation (2024–2025)

**Schools with Confirmed Hazard Conditions** documented under Section 29-3 of the Illinois School Code and ISBE guidance, the District annually reviews identified hazardous conditions that justify transportation for students living within 1.5 miles of school. This consent item affirms current designations and reflects infrastructure improvements that support changes.

### Elementary Schools

- Carlock – Rail crossing, streets, limited sidewalks
- Cedar Ridge – Streets
- Fairview – Streets
- Fox Creek – Streets
- Glenn – Rail crossing, streets
- Northpoint – Streets
- Parkside – Streets
- Pepper Ridge – Streets
- Towanda – Rail crossing, streets, limited sidewalks

### Junior High Schools

- Kingsley – Rail crossing, streets, limited sidewalks
- Chiddix – Rail crossing, streets, limited sidewalks
- Evans – Streets, limited sidewalks

### Review Timeline – Annual Safety Hazard Assessment

- **August 7, 2024:** Shane Hill and Executive Director of Operations Joe Adelman conducted field surveys of previously identified hazard areas. Progress noted in the Benjamin, Grove, and NCHS zones.
- **August 7, 2024:** Initial coordination with First Student, including collection of rider data and mapping updates.
- **October 9, 2024:** Virtual Transportation Review Meeting with Shane Hill, Joe Adelman, and First Student representatives (Rhodes Uphoff, Jake Bochtold, Angela Weis) to evaluate mapping and software-based hazard areas.
- **October 2024 – January 2025:** Ongoing review of transportation data and mapping by Shane Hill, identifying areas affected by community growth and infrastructure changes.
- **January 29, 2025:** Review meeting with Superintendent Dr. Kristen Weikle, Marty Hickman, Joe Adelman, and Communications Director Dayna Brown to determine which areas required targeted re-evaluation in collaboration with IDOT.
- **February 27, 2025:** Shane Hill and Joe Adelman conducted follow-up site visits to reassess proposed changes.
- **March 18, 2025:** Sidewalk improvement project launched in front of NCHS.
- **February – June 2025:** Continued monitoring of infrastructure developments in identified areas.
- **June 10, 2025:** Final internal review meeting to confirm proposed changes and prepare recommendations for board approval.



**Shane Hill, Dir. of Safety & Security**  
Mclean County Unit 5 Schools

