



**School Board Meeting Agenda Item**

Topic: National School Bus Safety Week  
Presenter(s): Bob Jaszczak, Superintendent

Nature of Action Requested

Board Action

Board Information or Report

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Background Information

National School Bus Safety Week is October 21-25, 2024. The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is urging drivers to slow down and be aware of school buses in their communities. Although school buses are one of the safest modes of transportation, injuries and fatalities do occur outside of or near the buses. Most often, these tragedies occur because a motorist has failed to slow down and obey the bus's stop sign, or to follow local traffic laws. Nationally, school bus passing is illegal and it is a deadly risk to bus riders and their caretakers. Drivers should always come to a complete stop when a school bus stop-arm is extended and the red lights are flashing.

From 2013 to 2022, there were 1.5 times more fatalities among pedestrians (169) than occupants of school buses (111) in school-bus-related crashes. A total of 111 school-age children (18 and younger) died in school-bus-related crashes during that period, either as occupants of school buses or other vehicles, or on foot or bike. Of the 111 deaths, 25 were children who were walking. From 2000-2022, there were 55 fatalities in crashes that involved a driver illegally passing a stopped school bus. Almost half of those fatalities (25) were pedestrians who were 18 years old or younger.

When a school bus's red lights are flashing and the stop-arm is extended, drivers must slow down and come to a complete stop. This is not a suggestion — it's the law. In fact, yellow flashing lights indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. This is when motorists should begin to slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles. Motorists may begin moving only when the red flashing lights are turned off, the stop-arm is withdrawn, and the bus begins to move. School bus riders and their caretakers are relying on drivers to follow the law to keep them safe.

**Respect the "Danger Zone"**

The school bus loading and unloading area is called the "Danger Zone." Specifically, this is any side of the bus where the bus driver can't see the child and, therefore, the child is in the most danger. These areas include:

- 10 feet in front of the bus, where the driver may be sitting too high to see a child
- 10 feet on either side of the bus, where a child may be in the driver's blind spots

- Behind the school bus

For more information about school bus stop safety, please visit <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/school-bus-safety#the-topic-bus-stop-safety>.

### Recommendation

None