



This publication is a member service of
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The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) was founded in 1964 by school bus contractors to "promote and foster the highest degree of safety in the transportation of school children"

14th National Conference

National Association Presidents

Make Opening Remarks at the 14th NCST conference

Since 1939 the National Conferences on School Transportation have been held periodically with the primary objective of ensuring safe, efficient transportation for school children. Since 1980 the 300-plus delegates from around the country who comprise the NCST have convened each five years. The 14th NCST met May 15-19, 2005, in Warrensburg Missouri on the campus of Central Missouri State University.

During the Conference, Presidents Pete Japikse (NASDPTS), Steve Kalmes (NAPT), and Dale Krapf (NSTA) addressed the delegation during its opening ceremonies.

The Presidents acknowledged the process of the Conference as being challenging, yet rewarding – indicating the objective of the group's collective efforts – as well as their own – is passenger safety.

The three Presidents backed up their comments with the following points:

- Although we do have different positions, we also have common interests
- Each of us can give up something in order for all of us to win
- You can walk away from the table a winner, even if you do not get everything you want
- Together, we are a most remarkable industry-with an incredible message for the nation. Together we are stronger, wiser, and more capable than each of us alone.

Statement of work – a review of successful cooperation between NASPTS, NAPT, NSTA



Several years ago, a group of representatives from the three national school transportation associations, NASDPTS, NAPT, and NSTA, met to discuss working together on some projects. Two members from NASDPTS, NAPT and IC, along with NSTA's Terry Thomas and Dennis Hammell, have been participating in a regular process that has spawned several initiatives.

During the meetings, which have continued on a regular basis, the following goals have remained in the forefront:

- We must demonstrate to ourselves, and others, that we are talking to each other and trying to develop consensus on important issues.
- We shall identify strategic similarities, and acknowledge our differences as strengths.
- This working group provides a forum to learn about the other organizations' positions on issues, and helps to clarify where we can stay out of each other's way when common goals are not in evidence.
- Whenever possible we shall speak with one voice when dealing with federal legislators and regulators.
- It is necessary for the three associations to communicate on legislative and regulatory matters, and this forum is the foundation for that communication to be effective.

To view the entire statement, please [click here](#). You can also go to the NSTA website or call 800-222-NSTA for a copy.



The three association presidents went on to comment on security and crash protection. The following are excerpts from their remarks

Addressing a New Need . . . Terrorism Preparedness

As custodians of the nation's future on a daily basis, namely 24 million of our children, all of us in the pupil transportation industry take great pride in the dedication, forethought, planning, and a great myriad of activities that we engage in on a regular basis to maximize the safety and security of our passengers.

With that responsibility comes the recognition that we have to be ever vigilant for new risks and threats so that we can study them, learn everything possible, and be proactive in our care of the children we transport.

The newest issue on the table is security – specifically with respect to terrorist activities.

For the complete statement, [click here](#). You can also go to the NSTA website or call 800-222-NSTA for a copy.

Passenger Crash Protection in Large School Buses

The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) and the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) take pride in providing the safest form of transportation for the nation's children, including their own. Whenever there are devices or procedures that have the potential to make pupil transportation even safer, the pupil transportation industry is at

the forefront of the debate. And if a safety device or procedure proves to be beneficial, the industry stands ready to provide its support to legislators and regulators.

In that light, the three national associations have been carefully monitoring the studies involving school bus passenger crash protection.

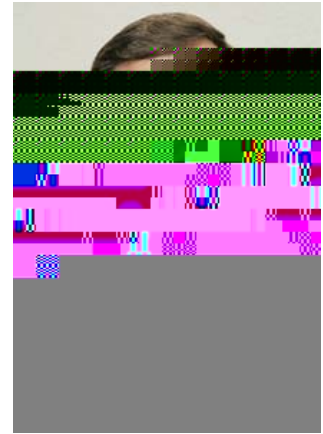
There is an overwhelming amount of information with respect to passenger crash protection. Our concern is that individuals and groups studying these issues may not know what to focus on, or even be aware of which issues are critical.

In its report to Congress in 2002, NHTSA cautioned that *"[I]n a very good restraint system like compartmentalization in school buses, extreme caution must be taken when considering any changes to the safety equipment that have provided high protection and safety benefits to children for over 24 years. Any change in vehicle safety systems must be weighed against the benefits that could accrue and the negative benefits [effects] that could result from those changes."*

The three national associations, along with all the members of the school transportation industry, support NHTSA's research and will continue to work with all available and viable resources to provide the safest form of transportation for all of our Nation's children as they participate in educational programs.

For the complete statement, [click here](#). You can also go to the NSTA website or call 800-222-NSTA for a copy.

**NCST has a New Name...
The National Conference on Student Transportation from this point further will now be called the National Congress on Student Transportation**



We Mourn the Loss of a Good Friend

Dennis Hammell, NSTA's Region 4 Director, Chairman of the Regulatory Subcommittee and Representative to the National Congress on School Transportation, passed away of an apparent heart attack last week.

Dennis recently sold his company, Village Bus Company, to First Student Transportation, Inc.

Dennis' background also includes memberships in: New Jersey School Bus Owners (Member and Regional Director), Sussex County School Bus Contractors Association (Member and Past President), New Jersey Exempt Firemen's Association, Ex-Chief of Sparta Township Fire Department and Instructor of Warren County Fire Academy.

Dennis leaves behind five children – Amy (32), Greg (30), Chris (27), Sarah (24) and Jenny (22) – and several grandchildren.

The viewing will be held for Dennis on May 23rd & 24th from 2PM - 4PM and 7PM - 9PM at the Goble Funeral Home in Sparta, New Jersey. The funeral service will be held on May 25th at 11AM in the same location.



Hooray for Our Heroes!

Many school bus drivers are making a positive difference in the lives of schoolchildren.

Do you have any drivers you would like to recognize for performing a heroic act on the job, helping students learn important safety lessons, or simply providing high quality service?

Please email us your story to ahenley@yellowbuses.org.



House Approves Clean School Bus Funding

This week, the House approved \$10 million in funding for the Clean School Bus program, an increase over last year's \$7.4 million. In doing so, the House also struck language which had been requested by the Administration that would have limited funding under the program so that only state, local or tribal governments could apply.

EPA funding this year was restricted allowing only public agency applications for grant assistance due to language in last year's funding bill. In fact, the EPA grant application process is underway now but contractors cannot apply directly and must work through their local school districts or state agencies. While NSTA encourages members to work

encourages their districts to apply under the existing program, we have been working to make the program more flexible and open to contractors as well. This includes working to enact more flexible grant application authorizing language which is now in both the House energy bill and the Senate highway bill (see related article on the Senate highway bill), as well as ensuring that the funds are not restricted as in last year's funding bill.

If the Senate goes along with the appropriations language change, contractors could be eligible to receive funding directly next year, rather than through their local school districts.



Legislation Requiring Seat Belts on School Buses Introduced in Congress

Congressman Joe Baca (D-CA) recently introduced legislation requiring seat belts on school buses. Co-sponsors of the bill include Congressmen Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH).

The Save Every Child Using Restraints Act of 2005 (SECURE Act) directs the Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations establishing a safety standard requiring that school buses with a gross vehicle weight of more than 10,000 pounds be equipped with 3-point safety belts on all seats.

The Secretary is directed to consider the compatibility of 3-point safety belts on seats designed according to compartmentalization. The Secretary is also directed to establish an elementary and secondary school traffic safety program, including providing education on the use and misuse of 3-point safety belts on all school buses.

The bill has been referred to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.



A Subsidiary of **FREIGHTLINER** CORPORATION

Thomas Built Buses Announces new Director of North American Sales

Thomas Built Buses is pleased to announce that Tom Schaaf has been named Director of North American Sales.

Based at Thomas' corporate headquarters in High Point. Tom, will be responsible for sales management including development of sales plans, programs and policies; directing the sales force and interfacing with the dealer network to provide support and obtain commitment for sales and service programs and financial objectives. His areas of responsibility encompass all dealer sales activities at Thomas Built and the company's 56 dealers. He reports to Ken Hedgecock, Vice President of Sales & Marketing.

Important Dates to Note...

July 17, 2005

International Safety Competition
Washington, DC

July 17 - 20, 2005

41st Annual Meeting and Convention
Renaissance Mayflower Hotel
Washington, DC

July 21-22, 2005

NSTA Safety and Security Workshop
NTSB Academy
Ashburn, Virginia



SAFETEA Passes the Senate

On May 17, 2005, the Senate passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA) by a vote of 89-11.

The bill includes \$295 billion in guaranteed spending obligations for highway, transit and safety programs over the next five years (Fiscal Years 2005 – 2009). The House bill, which passed on March 10, 2005, includes \$284 billion for the same five years. The difference in funding will have to be resolved in Conference, as will the many programmatic differences between the two bills.

The current extension expires on May 31, 2005, leaving little time for the House and Senate to appoint Conferees and resolve these differences. Thus, it is widely expected that Congress will pass an extension next week, most likely of one month – extending the program until June 30, 2005, although a two-month extension has also been discussed.

The White House has stated it will veto legislation with funding levels over \$284 billion, but it is believed that a compromise may be possible in an effort to complete the legislation.

The legislation contains several private sector provisions in the transit title that NSTA is supporting, including 13© labor protection reform; enforcement of planning and grantee provisions requiring participation by the private sector; inclusion of private sector as subrecipients of transit grants; and protection of existing charter bus

protections. The bill also includes several provisions addressing 15-passenger van safety including a revised dealer prohibition provision, increased penalties for violation and required rollover testing.

Finally, the bill includes a revised Clean School Bus program authorization that we had been pursuing previously in the energy bill. The new \$110 million, two-year authorization incorporates more flexible language, including authority to provide grants to private contractors and trade associations such as NSTA representing the school bus industry. In addition, the language includes expanded authority for grants to fund biodiesel projects for school buses.

Head Start Reauthorization Legislation Moves Through House Committee



The House Education and the Workforce Committee approved legislation reauthorizing Head Start this week. The reauthorization has been stalled for more than two years.

Legislation which passed the House by one vote in the 108th Congress was controversial as it contained a pilot program proposed by the White House which would have allowed eight states to take over their local Head Start centers. Opponents to the provision feared it would essentially turn the program into a block grant without Federal standards. The current legislation moving through the House does not contain this provision. The bill does, however, include provisions requiring operators to establish a local governance board to monitor all program activities; work with the local school districts to ensure that children entering kindergarten are well prepared for academic work; and align curricula with state academic standards.

Legislators changed the focus of the bill following tales of financial irregularities and abuse in local programs. A subsequent Government Accountability

Office (GAO) report on the program found that 76 percent of local Head Start operators surveyed in 2000 had some form of financial irregularity.

The bill is expected to be tougher to pass the House Floor as Committee Chairman John Boehner (R-OH) is expected to attach religious preference in hiring language to the bill. Most Democrats oppose the provision saying it would lead to religious discrimination with the use of Federal funds.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee is still writing its Head Start legislation.



NSTA Reminders At-a-Glance

NSTA's 41st Annual Meeting & Convention...will be in Washington, DC, **July 17-20th**.

Room rates are \$165 single or double occupancy. Room reservations may be made by calling the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel directly at (202) 347-3000 or toll-free at (800) 468-3571.

For a copy of the **convention brochure**, [click here](#) or call 800-222-NSTA. It is also available on the NSTA website. A copy of the brochure will be mailed to you within the next week.

NSTA's Safety & Security Seminar...is **July 21st & 22nd** at the NTSB Academy in Ashburn, Virginia.

Brochures for the workshop were mailed earlier this week but you can get a copy by [clicking here](#) or calling (800) 222-NSTA. The brochure is also available on the NSTA website at www.yellowbuses.org. Space is limited so be sure to register early!