



# **NSTA Annual Meeting and Convention**

**JW Marriot Hotel  
Nashville, TN  
July 2024**







# Our Diamond Jubilee Anniversary (1964-2024)

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In 1964, our Association was humbly founded with a singular goal to advocate for school bus contractor operators across the United States. Sixty years later, as we retrace our journey as an organization, we marvel at the challenges we have faced and conquered, as well as the evolution that we have embraced as an industry and organization.

The development of the strong vibrant organization that we have become, would undoubtedly please our founders. Through six decades of perseverance, we have continually expanded member involvement, always with a keen and unwavering focus on improving student transportation. Along the way, we elevated our vision beyond legislation and contracting, and embraced expansion to become North America's pupil transportation experts.



Even though sixty years later, the National School Transportation Association may look different, the core mission remains the same – to support the safest mode of transportation for students to-and-from school each day. And this year, as we celebrate our Diamond Jubilee Anniversary, we ask that you take this opportunity to “pay it forward” in support of the next generation of contractor-operators, so they can carry on this proud legacy for many years to come.

From the NSTA family to you, we hope you enjoy your visit to Nashville, and everything that the NSTA 60th Anniversary Celebration has to offer.

# NSTA President's Welcome

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The 60th Anniversary of the National School Transportation Association represents a significant milestone, and I am proud to be a small part of this noteworthy achievement.

As you know, the Association was founded in 1964 with the primary purpose of fighting a 10% excise tax on school buses. Our founding members, when creating this Association, recognized that there exists common ground – even amongst competitors, and this recognition certainly rings true over sixty years later.

Above all, perhaps the single greatest legacy that our founders provided is that we are stronger together.

NSTA President Clarence Geiger said in September 1967:

“If the past is prologue, what of the future? Where does this National Association go? Having been so successful in its first three years of being, what happens now? How do you top the single accomplishment of the relief from the Excise Tax on school buses? You don't, of course...you don't even try. You recognize this as a great accomplishment of the early years of the National Association, and you go from there.”

As many of you know, the organization has advocated for and against many proposals through the years, including private contractor access to government funding, DERA grants, mass transit encroachment, investment tax credits, St. Germain Amendment, School Bus CDL, CARES Act, and Clean School Bus funding to name a few. Recently, our advocacy efforts helped defeat a potentially duplicative federal vehicle inspection program, we continue to support Third Party Testing whenever given the opportunity, and we continue to advocate for modernization of the CDL Process for school bus drivers.

As an organization, we continue to put student safety first, and this focus manifested itself with passage and enactment of the STOP for School Buses Act – that was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law on November 15, 2021. We continue to work with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to implement several provisions of this law, as well as enhance the overall focus on student transportation and safety.

Additionally, we continue to forge strong relationships with industry partners like the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), U.S. Department of Treasury, U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), and the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) to name several industry partners.

Our biggest achievement over the past decade was undoubtedly the passage and enactment of the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) Program. While our members were severely impacted financially by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, NSTA did not skip a beat by achieving this monumental goal, against a vast array of competing interests – all looking to garner their own support package on Capitol Hill. In the end, the interests of private school bus operators prevailed, a true testament to the efforts of the group we affectionately call the “NSTA Advocacy Team.”

According to the U.S. Department of Treasury:

“The CERTS program assisted over 1,400 eligible transportation service providers, which used more than 81% of grant funds on payroll costs. Over 90% of grants were awarded to small businesses, many of whom were left out of the larger pandemic relief programs for other transportation sectors. Nearly a quarter of the grantees were women-owned businesses, one-third were minority-owned businesses, and 7% were veteran-owned businesses. As of May 16, 2022, all grant amounts under the CERTS program have been fully disbursed.”

Celebrations of anniversaries give us the opportunity to recall fond memories. In this 60th Anniversary program, you will see a map of all the NSTA Annual Meeting & Convention and Midwinter Meeting locations, there will be a number of vintage and current photographs, and a few historical summaries for you to see. I hope that these remembrances provide you an opportunity to look back on a fond memory or two.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank our past NSTA presidents, board members, and committee members. You have given of yourself to make NSTA what it is today – a proud organization that truly supports and represents its members. To our members and supporters, I am personally honored to serve as president of NSTA during this Diamond Jubilee celebration, as I have thoroughly enjoyed the relationships I have built over the course of my participation with the organization.

Finally, I hope you enjoy the 60th Anniversary celebration of NSTA and take in the sights and sounds of Nashville while you are here. Thank you for your continued support, and I optimistically look ahead to what the future holds for us.

**With best regards,**

***Dan Kobussen***

**Kobussen Buses (WI)**

**NSTA President 2023-2025**









# NSTA...Who We Are

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Once operating a major portion of the nation's school bus fleets, private school bus operator - owners dropped to a mere 20% of the student transportation market in 1964, potentially becoming an endangered species. The impact of an excise tax on private operators buses, which was not levied upon public school buses, made the playing field unlevel, and it negatively affected growth. To combat this unfairness, our Association was created, and together we jointly gained victory over the 10% tax.

Since then, the National School Transportation Association (NSTA) has continued to make our mark in the student transportation industry. Over time, we have evolved from a membership with strong state interests to an association of individual companies and a broad-based Board of Directors representing small, mid-size, and large operators. This evolution was made strategically in order to support the necessary research, lobbying, legal work, and industry public relations that supports our members.

Our organization continues to be recognized for its credibility, expertise, and impact at the local, state, and national levels. While our challenges have always been present, the need to collaborate to positively impact change for students and communities endures.

In 2024, we celebrate 60 years of organizational accomplishments with our focus and a renewed determination that provides the platform for private school bus contracting to remain vibrant and viable. With that, NSTA promises to provide school transportation professionals with the tools and resources they need to make school buses safe, secure, affordable, and efficient nationwide.

## Founders: NASBCO / NSTA

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- Bill Betzold (IL)
- Robert Brown (NY)
- Bill Brunett (CA)
- Joe Cottrell (NY)
- Bob Crews (NM)
- Jim DeVeau (MN)
- Murray Dorsey (OR)
- Luther Ellison (OR)
- Andrew Fallert (MO)
- Clarence Geiger (NY)
- Ann Geiger (NY)
- Bruce Jones (KS)
- Charles Krapata (NY)
- Kenneth Lee (MN)
- Don Mannino (CA)
- Ray Orwick (NM)
- Bob Paradise (WI)
- Randy Paulson
- Paul Peterson (IL)
- Robert Reid (MA)
- George Romano, Sr. (PA)
- Ted Schaefer (MD)
- Mel Sherman (CA)
- Keith Steiner (WI)
- W.C. Thompson
- J.W. "Skip" Tinnen (MO)
- Ralph Weeks (NY)
- Ray Leibensperger (PA)

# School Bus Drivers Past and Present

Pupil names and faces change every year, but the steady hand behind the wheel of the school bus lends comfort to almost 25 million students who travel on the school bus each day. Our professional school bus drivers have become legendary, as much as the iconic yellow bus they operate. Overall, the position of school bus driver has evolved over the years, keeping up with ever-changing landscape of the student transportation system.

**Requirements:** Until the mid-1980's, there was little consistency in state license requirements for school bus drivers. Where licenses did exist, they varied greatly in the training required and the standard the driver needed to achieve and maintain.

This changed in 1986, when the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 established minimum requirements that must be met when a state issues a CDL, which is the system still in use today. While states still issue their own licenses, the Federal Government, through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), added a core set of minimum standards. Potential drivers now need to pass a written and practical (behind-the-wheel) test. Drug testing and physical tests also became mandatory, as did background checks in some locations. Drivers now are also required to be enrolled in an ongoing drug and alcohol-testing program that include random testing. Their off-the-job driving is also carefully monitored and can result in disqualification from driving a school bus.

The change in regulations also included age requirements. Drivers must be over the age of 18 to drive in the state where they are registered, and 21 to drive outside of it, and this change put an end to a previous practice of high school students being hired as school bus drivers.



State training requirements for new drivers range from 10 to 40 hours in the classroom, plus 8 to 12 hours on the road. Additional annual training is also required to maintain the license, and private school bus operators provide their own internal requirements and training.

While the original training focused on driving a bus, new training modules added skills such as how to maintain a bus, manage students, and how to respond in a crisis or emergency situation. Topics covered in training evolved as the bus (and its technology) and the student population have changed over time. Today's typical training also includes behavior management, first aid and emergency procedures, communication skills, and vehicle inspection.

**Demographics:** In the early days of school busing, drivers tended to be men taking on extra work in addition to their primary employment, especially in areas outside of cities. By the 1960s, social and economic changes, plus population increases and movement meant that school bus drivers were likely to be married women with



school-age children to take advantage of the flexibility of the driver schedule.

Since the 1960s, some of the mothers who were the mainstay of the driver pool began to move to full-time jobs for a variety of reasons, and this dynamic decreased the number of available bus driver candidates, so the industry had to adapt. This situation is one of the reasons retirees now make up a significant percentage of the driver pool today; the part-time work supplements their income, and the schedule meets their desire to stay busy and remain active in the local community.

It is said that in poor economic times, there is never a shortage of school bus drivers, while drivers are harder to recruit in more prosperous periods. The introduction of the Commercial Driver's License also resulted in drivers garnering the qualifications needed to leave student transportation for higher-paying positions in motor truck.



This factor is one of the reasons behind NSTA's quest to develop a "School Bus Only - CDL" licensing platform. The organization was at the forefront of working with FMCSA to provide a waiver for the "under-the-hood" (UTH) portion of the CDL testing requirements. This area was seen as impediment to the recruiting of bus driver candidates and achieving a permanent exemption remains the goal of the NSTA Advocacy Team. While the initial part of our advocacy plan was focused in the regulatory realm, recently Rep. John Carter (TX-31) introduced the "Driving Forward Act" that seeks to make the "under the hood" exemption permanent.

**Technology:** Advances in technology mean that our drivers are now better supported, informed, and protected than they have ever been before. Buses are structurally safer, and the introduction of technological safety features mean drivers are better able to protect the students they transport. Stop arm cameras can provide a level of enforcement against drivers who violate the rules of the road, especially those passing a stopped school bus. GPS and routing software mean that routes are more organized, convenient, and easier to navigate - without being distracted. Regardless of where a driver is geographically, they are in constant contact with dispatch, supported with issues such as pupil behavior and traffic updates. On-board cameras and GPS also serve to protect drivers from damaging accusations regarding inappropriate behavior or traffic violations.

**The Future:** The illegal passing of school buses by motorists continues to be a vexing problem that the industry faces. While passage of the STOP for School Buses Act in 2021 was an important first step, more must be done. This is why NSTA has promoted H.R.3998 - The Jackie Walorski Enhancing Necessary Data (END) on Illegal School Bus Passing Act as the focal point of the 2024 NSTA Capitol Hill Bus-In. This bi-partisan legislation is sponsored by Reps. Rudy Yakym (IN-2) and Julia Brownley (CA-26).

# NSTA Presidents



| <u>President</u>   | <u>Service Period</u> | <u>State / Province</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| J.W. "Skip" Tinnen | 1964-67               | Missouri                |
| Clarence Geiger    | 1967-68               | New York                |
| Joseph Cottrell    | 1968-69               | New York                |
| Donald Regan       | 1969-71               | Minnesota               |
| Robert Crews       | 1971-72               | New Mexico              |
| James DeVeau       | 1972-73               | Minnesota               |
| Robert Doorley     | 1973-75               | Rhode Island            |
| Robert Graf        | 1975-76               | Wisconsin               |
| Burton Carver      | 1976-77               | Alaska                  |
| Larry Pierce       | 1977-78               | New York                |
| Terry Van Der Aa   | 1978-79               | Illinois                |
| John Murphy        | 1979-81               | Rhode Island            |
| Dick Harney        | 1981-83               | California              |
| Terry Van Der Aa   | 1983-84               | Illinois                |
| Leon Robinson      | 1984-85               | Illinois                |
| Larry Durham       | 1985-87               | California              |
| Don Hoffman        | 1987-89               | Minnesota               |
| Chuck Hey          | 1989-91               | South Dakota            |
| John Wilson        | 1991-93               | Maryland                |
| Noel Biery         | 1993-95               | Illinois                |
| Kyle Martin        | 1995-97               | Kansas                  |
| John Edney         | 1997-99               | Texas                   |
| Terry Thomas       | 1999-01               | Ohio                    |
| Bill Beck          | 2001-03               | Illinois                |
| Dale Krapf         | 2003-05               | Pennsylvania            |
| John Corr          | 2005-07               | New York                |
| Barry Stock        | 2007-09               | Ontario                 |
| Donnie Fowler      | 2009-11               | Missouri                |
| Magda Dimmendaal   | 2011-13               | Wisconsin               |
| Tim Flood          | 2013-15               | New York                |
| Todd Monteferrario | 2015-17               | Ohio                    |
| Blake Krapf        | 2017-19               | Pennsylvania            |
| John Benish, Jr    | 2019-21               | Illinois                |
| Carina Noble       | 2021-23               | Illinois                |
| Dan Kobussen       | 2023-25               | Wisconsin               |



# NSTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-2025



**DAN KOBUSSEN**  
Kobussen Buses  
*President*



**PATRICK DEAN**  
Dean Transportation  
*President-elect*



**KIM WORSTER**  
First Student  
*Vice President / Secretary*



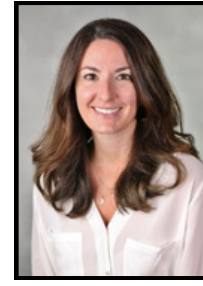
**JACOB IVERSON**  
Landmark  
*Treasurer-Director at Large*



**CARINA NOBLE**  
National Express  
*Immediate Past President*



**MIKE AHERN**  
Krapf School Bus  
*Region 1 Director*



**BREE ALLEN**  
National Express  
*Director at Large*



**JOHN BENJAMIN**  
Benjamin Bus  
*Director at Large*



**JUDITH CRAWFORD**  
Beacon Mobility  
*Director at Large*



**KELLIE DEAN**  
Dean Transportation  
*Director at Large*



**DAVID DUKE**  
Beacon Mobility  
*Director at Large*



**KIRK FLACH**  
Landmark  
*Region 2 Director*



**DONNIE FOWLER**  
Fowler Bus Company  
*Director at Large*



**DENIS GALLAGHER Jr**  
Student Transportation  
of America  
*Director at Large*



**SHANE JOHNSON**  
Palmer Bus  
*Director at Large*



**GENE KOWALCZESKI**  
Student Transportation  
of America  
*Director at Large*



**BLAKE KRAPP**  
Krapf School Bus  
*Director at Large*



**CLAIRE MILLER**  
First Student  
*Director at Large*



**COREY MUIRHEAD**  
Logan Bus Company  
*Director at Large*



**THOMAS SMITH**  
Suffolk Transportation  
*Director at Large*



**CHLOE WILLIAMS**  
B.R.Williams  
*Director at Large*



# The 3.4¢ School Bus - U.S. Postage Stamp

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A 3.4-cent foil stamp featuring a 1920s school bus was issued June 8, 1985 in Arlington, Virginia as part of the Transportation Series that was initiated in 1981. NSTA's Red Reynolds was actively involved in this project. The stamp was available in U.S. Post Offices nationwide on the next business day, June 10, 1985.

The 3.4-cent denomination met the new basic minimum per-piece rate for carrier route third-class bulk mailings by nonprofit organizations effective February 17, 1985. The School Bus Stamp was available in precanceled form for qualified bulk mailers and became part of the postal system platform.

According to the Smithsonian Institute, "At the time of the stamp's issuance, a substantial portion of the nation's bus fleet was comprised of school buses that were used to transport approximately 50 percent of the nation's students. Millions of students had been transported for educational purposes since a school district first hired a farmer to convey children to school in a wagon in 1859."

The stamp was designed by Lou Nolan of Washington, DC; the typographer was Bradbury Thompson; the art director was Derry Noyes; the modeler was Ronald C. Sharpe; the engravers were Kenneth Kipperman (vignette) and Gary Slaght (letters and numerals). The intaglio process was used. Originally, the stamps were issued in coils of 500 and 3,000, and this unique endeavor became part of the history of the National School Transportation Association (NSTA).





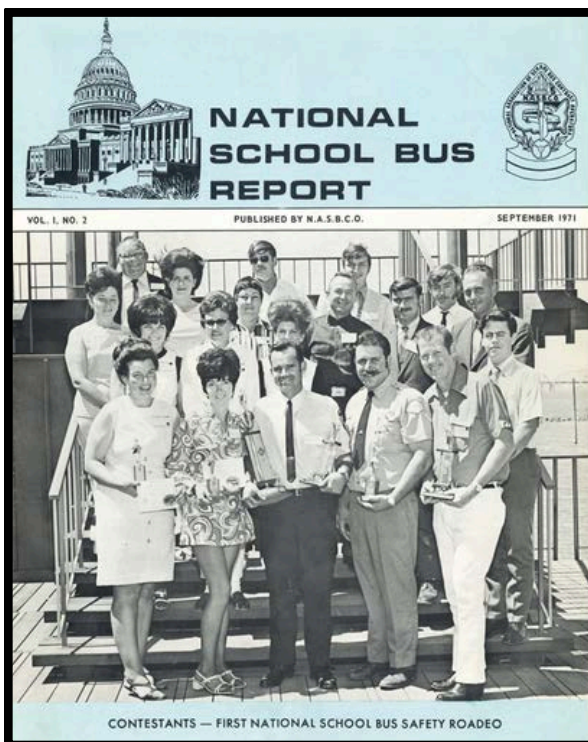
# NSTA School Bus Driver International Safety Competition



After a four-year hiatus, the NSTA School Bus Driver International Safety Competition made a successful return that culminated in the 50th Edition of the event – held on June 29-30, 2024 in Austin, TX. The competition allows bus drivers across the U.S. and Canada to demonstrate their skills and expertise in driving a school bus, and by doing so, they compete for top honors in their profession.

The “Safety Competition” includes a written exam on Saturday and a challenging obstacle course that tests skills that drivers use every day to transport students to and from school on Sunday. The purpose of the competition is to improve the competitors’ knowledge and skills, while recognizing excellence in the school bus driving profession.

The School Bus Driver International Safety Competition began in the early 1970s, when a group of individuals in the student- transportation industry including Billie and Red Reynolds, Bill Loshbough, Ray Leibensperger, and other industry leaders, discussed the idea of holding a national driving competition featuring a written examination and several stations that challenge drivers’ skills. Billie and Red were impressed with the competitions that other states hosted and therefore initiated the first National School Bus Safety Road-e-o in 1971. The “Road-e-o” became an opportunity for drivers who won at local and state levels to compete and gain recognition at a national level, showcasing the best drivers that student transportation has to offer



In its early years, the competition was loosely organized and lacked official standards. Organizers relied heavily on borrowed equipment, including oil drums, pieces of wood, and traffic cones for the course and the organizers assembled the obstacle course on-site. After realizing that permanent equipment and stations were necessary, the organization began building its own stations and shipping them to the competition sites. While the process was time-consuming and cumbersome at times, the competition finally included some standardized equipment.

As the equipment and obstacle course developed and continued to evolve in other driving competitions, so did the need for a more advanced design and equipment for the Road-e-o competition. NSTA hired the design firm that built the equipment for California’s competition to design and manufacture the pieces for the Road-e-o. NSTA continued to receive donations from industry leaders, including a trailer, and golf carts.

As school buses and their equipment evolved over the years, the need for competition stay current became a focus. This evolution manifested itself in changes to the Road-e-o course events, layouts, and competition rules. For example, the written test portion of the event changed to reflect new standards and procedures implemented in the student- transportation industry.

NSTA eventually changed the name of the event to the School Bus Driver International Safety Competition to accurately reflect the professionalism of the competition. Today, the competition, in its 50th year, presents awards in three main categories: conventional, transit and small bus. The written examination assesses the drivers' knowledge of laws regarding pre-trip inspection, vehicle components, and more.

The driving portion of the event tests their skills in various categories, including offset alley, railroad grade crossing right turn, straight line, diminishing clearance, back up stall, left turn, parallel parking, elementary student loading, curb line parking, stop line, and bus measuring point chart. The competition concludes with an awards banquet and ceremony, where each contestant receives a plaque, and all the competitors receive a plaque at the Drivers Awards Banquet. Additionally, the top three competitors in all three categories receive a special plaque.

Planning and hosting an event of this scale is not without its challenges, and we are proud to partner with the Hays CISD in Texas to offer a permanent location for this iconic event. This year, as we re-organized the event at Hays CISD, fifty-three drivers participated, and we would like to congratulate all the drivers who competed.

Special recognition goes to our 2024 winners:

#### **Small Bus (Type A):**

First Place: Dorthy Dorman, First Student (KS)

Second Place: Claudia Christen, Prairie Bus Lines (ALB)

Third Place: Gener Jaimes, First Student (WI)

#### **Conventional Bus (Type C):**

First Place: Wanda VanZonnevald, Cherry Creek School District (CO)

Second Place: Becky Craig-Johnson, Lakeland Joint School District. (ID)

Third Place: Jered Winnestaffer, Community Bus Services (OH)

#### **Transit Bus (Type D):**

First Place: Mark Miller, Bellingham Public Schools (WA)

Second Place: Luis Lopez, Bakersfield City School District (CA)

Third Place: Jeremy Klung, Canyons School District (UT)







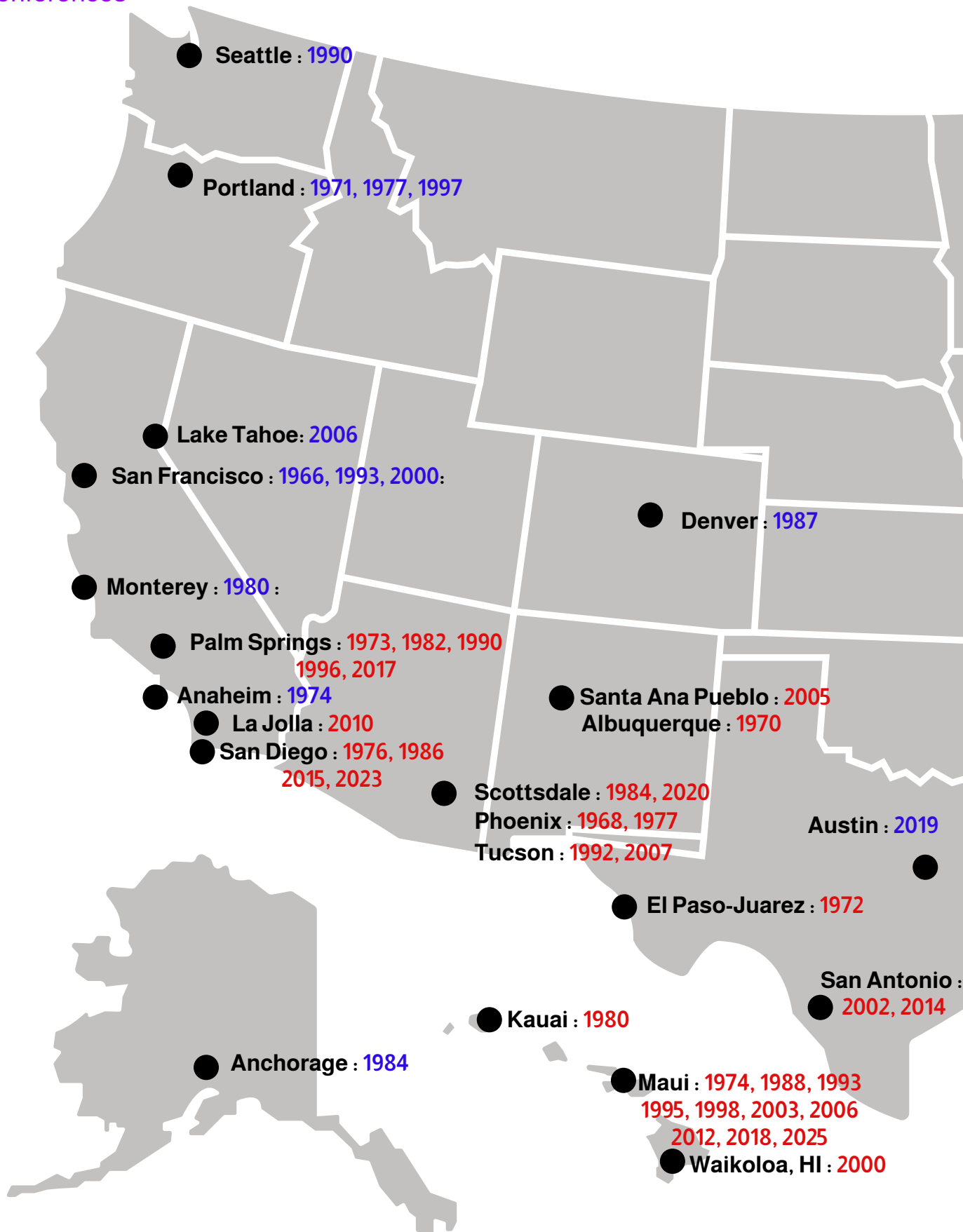


# Where We've Been...



NATIONAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION

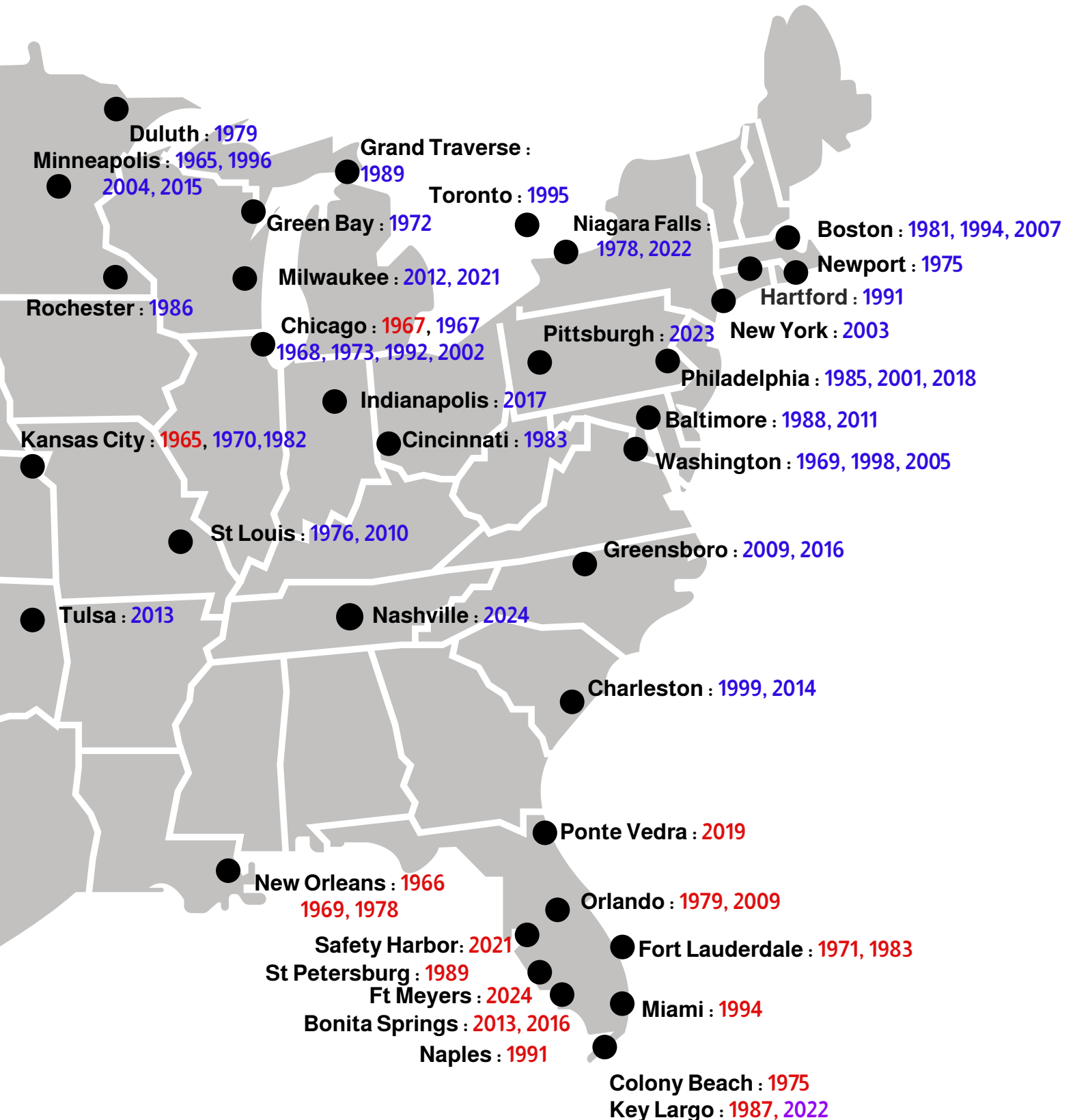
- Midwinter Meetings
- Annual Conventions
- Fall Conferences





## Other Locations:

- San Juan, Puerto Rico : 1985, 1997
- St. Tomas, VI : 1999, 2001
- Puntarnas, Costa Rico : 2004
- Cuaraco, Dutch Antilles : 2011
- SS Norway cruise ship : 1981
- Calgary, Canada : 2008
- Cancun, Mexico : 2008
- Virtual : 2020



# NSTA... Successfully Advocating Our Message

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Throughout NSTA's history, advocacy on behalf of private school bus contractors in the Halls of Congress and with federal agencies has been a key to NSTA's mission and success. NSTA set a goal of being the voice of the school bus industry in Washington and has successfully achieved it. Our track record highlights the many accomplishments we have seen in the advocacy realm.

Advocacy efforts have involved modifying or defending existing laws and regulations that benefit the industry, opposing laws and regulations that would be harmful, and promoting new policies that will help stimulate growth for private operators.

The Annual NSTA Capitol Hill "Bus-In" has grown steadily in size and effectiveness. This annual spring event has become a critical component of NSTA's overall government relations strategy and has proven to maximize our effectiveness on key NSTA issues. This program has been crucial to relationship building on Capitol Hill and utilizing the event to encourage NSTA Members to continue Congressional engagement in their home states and Congressional Districts of operation.

Over the years, NSTA has grown its Political Action Committee (PAC) to be an additional effective tool to augment our advocacy activities, so that we can support candidates who are champions for NSTA priorities. We have expanded our efforts to educate members on ways to foster effective relationships with their elected officials year-round, as well as during the annual NSTA Capitol Hill Bus-In.

When necessary to achieve our goals, NSTA participates in coalitions with other industry partners, trade associations, non-profits, corporations and public entities. NSTA's legislative successes over the past 60 years are too numerous to count, but some key ones critical to the thriving of the industry include defeat of a federal excise tax on contracted buses; creation and preservation of the prohibition against unfair competition in home to school service by public transit entities; federal fuel tax exemption for school bus transportation; and the creation of the Clean School Bus USA/DERA program; increasing school bus safety with provisions from the STOP for School Bus Act included in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act; direct access to funding for school bus contractors for the Clean School Bus Program.

Once Congress passes a law, Federal agencies must implement the law through regulations. These agencies also implement the policies of the President through their own initiatives. Private school bus contractors are heavily regulated, and NSTA has faced a myriad of regulatory issues across a broad spectrum of federal agencies, including the Departments of Transportation, Education, Homeland Security, Environmental Protection, Justice, Labor, Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Health and Human Services, and others, as well as independent agencies such as the National Transportation Safety Board, National Labor Relations Board, Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and others.

NSTA continues to engage with these agencies with an eye toward achieving the goal of maintaining and enhancing the most reasonable and rational regulatory environment possible for the industry. NSTA play a vital role in a variety of ways in the regulatory process, including directly with political appointees and career staff, submitting comments on rulemakings, and participation in advisory committees, negotiated rulemaking committees, and issue-based coalitions.

Whenever possible, NSTA provides oral testimony to policymakers on issues of importance to student transportation. Examples of this are NSTA John Benish, Jr. testifying before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee – Subcommittee on Highways and Transit by "Examining the Federal Role in Improving School Bus Safety" on July 25, 2019, and NSTA Executive Director Curt Macysyn testifying before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on November 23, 2020, about classifying school bus drivers as "essential employees" in the deployment of the Covid-19 vaccines.

Without NSTA's close attention and expertise to help members understand how existing and newly proposed regulations will impact the industry and advocating vigorously for change, when necessary, the industry would not be as strong as it is today. NSTA was founded for the purpose of defeating an unfair federal excise tax on contractors, as well as to level the playing field for contract operators, a mission it still carries on today.







# NSTA Awards

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Each year, the NSTA Awards Dinner provides an opportunity for the organization to recognize its members in several categories that highlight their achievements and contributions to the Association, as well as student transportation. The Dinner is held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting and Convention, and it has become the highlight of the summer program.

NSTA's first form of recognition was established in 1969 as the Golden Merit Award for contractors' achievements in areas of safety, driver training, and business practices as well as superior service to their school district, the community, and the pupil transportation industry. Since its inception, over 400 Golden Merit Awards have been presented.

In 1992, NSTA developed the NSTA Hall of Fame and the Distinguished Service Award. Induction into the NSTA Hall of Fame Award recognizes sustained excellence on behalf of pupil transportation, requiring 10 consecutive years of NSTA membership, and if applicable, membership in their state association. The Distinguished Service Award recognizes those with recent, significant, or special contributions to pupil transportation.

In 2002, the Outstanding Driver Service Award was initiated to highlight school bus drivers who demonstrate exemplary safety performance and who is also a role model in their community. Recipients are recognized for going beyond required safety expectations and for setting a new standard of excellence within the communities they serve.

The Meritorious Service Award, established in 2009, recognizes individuals who have worked directly with the NSTA and who show unparalleled support and leadership in pupil transportation.

In 2022, several additional awards were added to the program that serve to honor NSTA volunteers for their service to the organization. These are the "Committee Chair of the Year" award and the "Committee Member of the Year" award that are now given out annually. A "Vendor Partner of the Year" recognition has also become part of the portfolio of awards.

Also in 2022, while the organization was in Niagara Falls, NSTA President Carina Noble presented the first-ever "President's Award" to Prime Policy's Becky Weber in acknowledgement of her contributions to the Association over the years. This award will be given out biennially by the sitting NSTA President to an individual of his or her choosing.

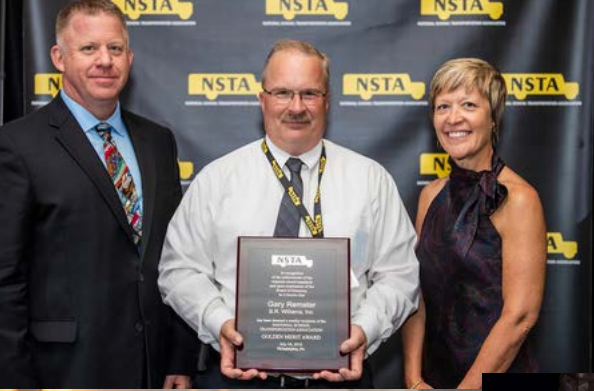
NSTA also promotes protecting and improving the environment through two forms of recognition: the Go Yellow, Go Green Award and Green Fleet Certification. Go Yellow, Go Green was created to recognize contractors with initiative and commitment to pursuing positive responses to growing environmental concerns.

At the 2021 NSTA Annual Meeting and Convention at The Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, the organization added the installation of newly elected Board of Director members and Board Officers to the program, and the name of the program was officially changed to the Awards and Installation Dinner.

Finally, no discussion of NSTA Awards would be complete without mentioning the charity game of "Heads or Tails" that has become a staple of the program. Program attendees compete in a game of chance, but the big winner is a local charity that receives monetary support from the gracious contributions of NSTA members and their families on the night of the Awards and Installation Dinner.









# NSTA Board of Directors - Complete List

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Lindy Akita (HI)  
Norman Akita (HI)  
Bree Allen (NY)  
George Arthur (DE)  
Clark Baisdon (NM)  
John Balzano (RI)  
Rochelle Bast (WI)  
Robert Baumann (NY)  
Greg Beach (MT)  
Robert Beach (MT)  
John Beal (NM)  
Bill Beck (IL)  
Jack Beebe (CT)  
John Benjamin (MN)  
John Benish, Sr. (IL)  
John Benish, Jr. (IL)  
Otto Berchtold (NJ)  
Roscoe Bernard (MO)  
Shaun Berry (NH)  
Noel Biery (IL)  
Joe Blackard (AK)  
Charles Bruce (IL)  
Art Brunner (NJ)  
Linda Burtwistle (OH)  
Richard Byrne (IL)  
Michael Cappuccio (MA)  
George Carroll (NY)  
Burton Carver (AK)  
Tom Casey (IL)  
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Kevin Clifford (NY)  
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John Corr (NY)  
Seth Corwin (NY)  
Joseph Cottrell (IL)  
Judith Crawford (RI)  
Robert Crews (NM)  
T. N. Cunningham (MD)

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Lee Dean (DE)  
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Patrick Dean (MI)  
Mary Lee Dell (NY)  
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Magda Dimmendaal (WI)  
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John Dorr (FL)  
Murray Dorsey (OR)  
Jim Dudney (MD)  
John Dufour (CT)  
David Duke (IL)  
Larry Durham (TX)  
Peter Dworkis (CA)  
John Edney (CA)  
J. B. Edwards (MD)  
Dan Eichner (AK)  
John Elliott, Sr. (TX)  
John Elliott, Jr. (MI)  
Jim Ellison (OR)  
Kevin Endres (TX)  
Andy Fallert (MO)  
Robert Feiler (ID)  
Kirk Flach (ON)  
Doug Flatt (OR)  
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Don Fowler (MO)  
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Denis Gallagher, Jr. (FL)  
Clarence Gast (KS)  
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Roy Gould (IL)  
Robert Graf (WI)  
John Grainger (ON)  
George Gregory (MD)  
Mike Grius (CA)  
Bob Hach (IL)  
Joe Hamilton (OH)

Dennis Hammell (NJ)  
Richard Hammell (NJ)  
Ed Haole (HI)  
Bob Harmon (MO)  
Dick Harmon (MO)  
Dick Harney (CA)  
Enoch Harris (KS)  
Leland Harris (NY)  
Robert Hatchett (IL)  
E. P. Hayes, Sr (CT)  
Esther Helweg (NM)  
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Marvin Hey (MN)  
Chuck Hey (SD)  
Steve Hey (SD)  
Ken Hill (IL)  
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Maurice Howe (WI)  
Tom Hubbard (CT)  
Paul Hyman (CA)  
Gail Wilson Hyser (MD)  
Earl Itel (OR)  
Jacob Iverson (ID)  
Don Jensen (OR)  
Ralph Jett (MO)  
Mickey Johnson (CA)  
Shane Johnson (MN)  
Jim Johansen (MN)  
Bruce Jones (KS)  
Leonard "Mac" Jones (MA)  
Robert Keifer (CA)  
Tim Kiefer (WI)  
Eloise Kilby (OR)  
Don Kincaid (KS)  
Lou Klug (OH)  
William Knight (AK)  
Dan Kobussen (WI)  
Dale Krapf (PA)  
Blake Krapf (PA)  
Bradley Krapf (PA)  
Gene Kowalczeski (NY)







Don Lamoreaux (AK)  
Everett Lange (WI)  
Leland Larson (IL)  
Ed Larson (MN)  
Ted Leclerc (CT)  
Bud Lee (CA)  
Ray Leibensperger (PA)  
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John Lockwood (NJ)  
John Loeb (NH)  
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Paul Lumsden (MA)  
E.O. Lunsford (KS)  
Jim Lunsford (KS)  
Ken Lyons (ON)  
Mr. MacDiarmid (IL)  
Whitney Manseld (MA)  
Dennis Maple (OH)  
Ernie Markitell (PA)  
Kyle Martin (KS)  
Keith Matthews (MO)  
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Abe Merrill (MN)  
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A. T. Meyers (KS)  
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Floyd Monroe (CT)  
Bud Monroe (CT)  
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Roger Moore (OH)  
Roy Morin (MT)  
Einar Mortenson (SD)  
Corey Muirhead (NY)

John Murphy (RI)  
Henry Muthig (NY)  
Charles Napier (MO)  
Carina Noble (IL)  
Wendell Nelson (WI)  
Rob Nelson (WI)  
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John Pace (MO)  
Lorraine Pahlke (IL)  
Phil Paige (IL)  
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Pat Paponi (NJ)  
Carey Paster (MA)  
Chuck Peterson (MN)  
Larry Pierce (NY)  
Bob Pudlewski (IL)  
Bob Ramsdell (IL)  
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John Wilson (MD)  
Charles Wilson (WI)  
Gene Wittenberger (WI)  
Kim Worster (CA)









# National Congress on School Bus Transportation (NCST)

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**History and Accomplishments:** The first National Conference on School Bus Standards was convened in 1939 to advance recommendations resulting from the National Survey of Pupil Transportation. Conflicting school bus standards among and within states had created inefficiencies and excessive costs without necessarily improving student safety.

“[T]here exists a definite need for cooperative action in the development of minimum standards and (the National Council of Chief State School Officers) unanimously favored a conference composed of representatives of the forty-eight states, of both chassis and bus body manufacturers, engineers, and other interested agencies for this purpose.” (Background on the National Conference on School Bus Standards, 1939)

NCST regular meetings were held over the years, and the decision was made to hold the Congress every five years beginning in 1980. Due to the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Congress did not meet in 2020.

All Congresses have been comprised of official representatives of state departments of education, public safety, motor vehicles, and police or other state agencies having state-wide responsibilities for the administration of student transportation. Each Congress has resulted in one or more publications containing the specifications and procedures recommendations for school buses and their operations of that particular Congress.



Conference participants considered pupil transportation costs as a key determinant of the quality of school facilities and instructional programs, highlighting the importance of attaining and practicing “all possible economies consistent with pupil safety”.

Moving forward, NCST will convene student transportation leaders and stakeholders to prescribe and update U.S. school bus standards; these recommendations are the basis for current National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures. Congress participants are comprised of official representatives of state departments of education, public safety, motor vehicles, and police or other state agencies having state-wide responsibilities for the administration of student transportation; local school district personnel; contract operators; and advisors from industry and representatives from other interested professional organizations and groups. The Congress maintains its longstanding nature of the proceedings, involving deliberation and decision-making following parliamentary procedure.

Each conference has resulted in one or more publications that contain the Delegates’ recommendations pertaining to current major issues facing our industry. Contributions have included standards for various sizes and types of school buses, transporting students with disabilities, revisions to the Uniform Vehicle Code and Traffic Laws, record-keeping, driver training programs, bus operations, compliance with federal regulations and school bus accident data reporting. Over the years, NCST Delegates have passed resolutions calling for future research and implementation of important policy measures on safety, loading and unloading, emergency procedures and special education as well as developed guidelines for highway safety and alternative fuels.

The 2025 NCST will be held May 3-7, 2025, at the Des Moines Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines, Iowa. This is the same location as the 2015 NCST. Registration information will be available closer to the event.

# American School Bus Council

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NSTA is proud to have been one of six founding members of the American School Bus Council (ASBC). Formed in 2006, ASBC served as a unified voice for the school transportation industry, including state transportation officials, public and private transportation providers, and school bus manufacturers – a collaboration numerous yellow school buses that transport millions of children to and from school each day. Overall, ASBC supported the mission to provide safe, effective, efficient, and healthy transportation for our nation’s schoolchildren.

In 2011, ASBC co-sponsored the [www.schoobusfacts.com](http://www.schoobusfacts.com) campaign with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to advocate on behalf of the quintessential American icon: the yellow school bus. The website includes graphics and facts to showcase the safety features and safety statistics of school bus transportation. Since ASBC dissolved in 2023, the responsibility of updating the website has been taken over by NSTA.

ASBC was probably best known for its Love the Bus program, which is held in schools across the country every February. The event highlights school bus safety and gives school children an opportunity to thank their bus drivers for their service. Along with satellite events across the country, ASBC hosts a Love the Bus Main Event each year, and the 2014 Main Event featured U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx. The Secretary spoke to an auditorium filled with elementary school kids about the importance of being good school bus riders and thanked those who drive the yellow school bus every day. Previously, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood spoke at the 2011 and 2013 Love the Bus events.

ASBC has also presented several Champion Awards to those who have had a significant effect on the industry in the specific areas of safety; access to education; environmental benefits and stewardship; and community impact. NSTA member Dale Krapf of Krapf Bus Companies in West Chester (PA) received the ASBC Champion Award in 2013 for his tireless efforts to ensure reduced school bus emissions and his tireless commitment to the industry.

In 2020, ASBC collaborated to form the Student Transportation Aligned for Return to School (STARTS) Task Force, as a conduit to provide information as a way to ease the burden of a return to the classroom for student transportation professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Then NSTA President John Benish, Jr. spoke about the potential impact of the task force.

“The importance of the STARTS Task Force cannot be overstated. Student transportation is the largest transit system in the country, but the system that we left in mid-March will be dramatically different than the one we re-engage with in August and September. The professionals who will dedicate their time and expertise in this endeavor have the knowledge and experience to make sound judgements as we plan a return-to-school. We believe this information that comes from our collaboration will be embraced by policymakers and the general public,” stated Benish.



**AMERICAN SCHOOL BUS COUNCIL™**







# National School Bus Safety Week

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHSTA), “students are significantly safer riding to and from school in a school bus than walking, riding bikes, or riding/driving in their family car. The number of fatalities of school age children traveling to and from school, per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), is 70 times higher in passenger vehicles than in school buses.”

In order to raise public awareness regarding student safety, the annual National School Bus Safety Week (NSBSW), held each year on the third week of October, promotes safety on school buses. Its aim continues to be to increase attention amongst students, teachers, parents, bus drivers, and the general public of how their actions on the road can ensure that 25 million students who travel on school buses continue to arrive safely at school each day.

Its origins, however, can be traced back to 1962 in Centralia School District in Orange County, California. Richard ‘Dick’ Fischer began to promote a school bus safety week in his region, and by 1964, he had established a national safety committee, and was sending brochures of safety information to state Directors of Transportation nationwide.

Participation grew as Dick’s ideas spread further, and when the National School Bus Safety Week Committee was formed, it was able to combine the loosely connected state-level events into the National School Bus Safety Week we have today. On April 23, 1969, President Richard Nixon and the U.S. Congress sanctioned National School Bus Safety Week. The week as we know it began in the early 1990s, as a joint venture between the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), and the National School Transportation Association (NSTA).



Stakeholders across the industry are encouraged to use the week to hold safety-related events and increase publicity and awareness of the issues surrounding safety on and around school buses. Each year, NSTA provides awareness toolkits on social media to help spread awareness and amplify the year of National School Bus Safety Week, and on Oct. 23, 2019, NSTA hosted a “School Bus Illegal Passing Technology Showcase,” on the Capitol Grounds in Washington, D.C. during National School Bus Safety Week.

This event involved live demonstrations of various technology solutions to prevent the epidemic of stop-arm violations. The event will also highlight the STOP for School Buses Act of 2019 (STOP Act) (H.R. 2218/S. 1254), a bipartisan bill introduced in the House by Reps. Jackie Walorski (R-IN) and Julia Brownley (D-CA), and in the Senate by Sens. Todd Young (R-IN) and Gary Peters (D-MI).

Another important feature of National School Bus Safety Week is the safety poster competition. Throughout the country, many school districts take part in local and state-level competitions, with the winners going forward to the national competition.

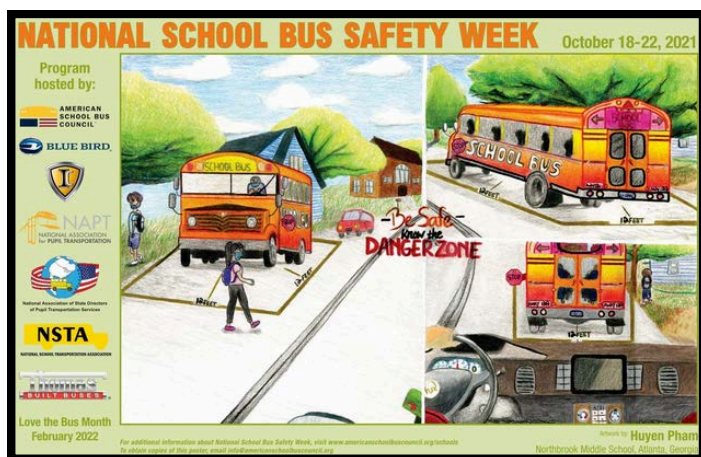
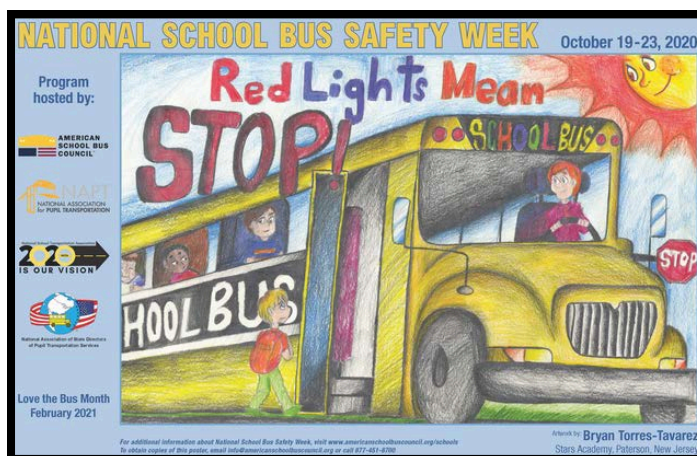


A winner is chosen for each of the 6 divisions (Grades K-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Special Education, International Entries, and Computer Aided Drawing) before an overall winner is chosen.

The Poster Contest and National School Bus Safety Week are two different events, but the poster theme becomes the theme for the following year's National School Bus Safety Week, which is an active and evolving public education program designed to promote school bus safety.

The theme for the poster competition is carried forward as the theme for the next year's event, and the winning entries are used throughout the upcoming year to promote safer school transportation, and NSTA joins with NAPT and NASDPTS in judging poster contest winners.

Avrie Siedschlag of Coon Rapids Middle School in Coon Rapids, MN was the 2023 poster contest winner - with a themed entry on "Safely Rolling to My Destination." The theme for the 2024 contest was "Driving Safely into the Future," and NSTA participated as part of the judging panel.



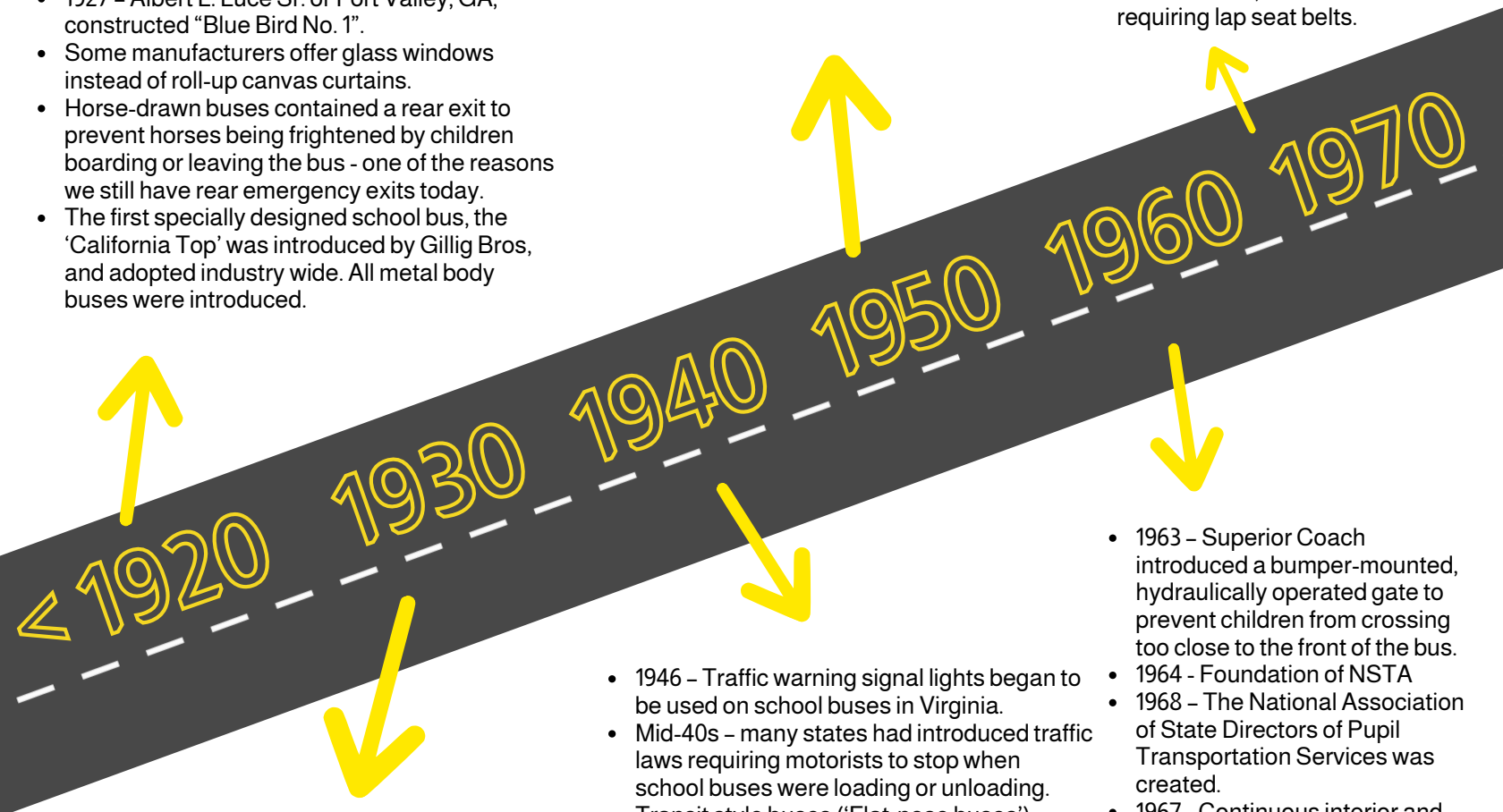
# History of School Transportation

- 1869 – Massachusetts becomes the first state to approve public funding for pupil transportation.
- 1890 – School hacks began to be mass-produced to standard designs. Most were about 12 feet long and carried 12-15 children.
- 1900 – Eighteen states had laws that approved public funding for pupil transportation. The most prevalent transportation mode: horse-drawn wagons.
- 1904 – Crown Coach began custom building “business wagons for business- men.” In 1915, the company entered the school bus market.
- 1915, the company entered the school bus market.

- 1920 – International introduced its 1st school bus, a 20-passenger vehicle.
- 1927 – Albert L. Luce Sr. of Fort Valley, GA, constructed “Blue Bird No. 1”.
- Some manufacturers offer glass windows instead of roll-up canvas curtains.
- Horse-drawn buses contained a rear exit to prevent horses being frightened by children boarding or leaving the bus - one of the reasons we still have rear emergency exits today.
- The first specially designed school bus, the ‘California Top’ was introduced by Gillig Bros, and adopted industry wide. All metal body buses were introduced.

- 1950 – States began requiring mechanical stop signal arms on buses, which the driver would manually swing out.
- 1953 – Air suspension, which enables the level of a vehicle to remain constant as its passenger load changes, was first used on buses.
- 1954 – The landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*.
- 1956 – NY adopted a law requiring motorists to halt for stopped school buses.
- 1959 – What was to be the first diesel school bus in the US was put into operation in Burlington, NC.
- 1959 – Plastic lenses replaced the colored bulbs used on stop arms. They reduced costs and increased visibility.

- 1970 – The first National School Bus Safety Week, organized by Dick Fischer.
- 1972 – The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) issued Standard #17 – a set of guidelines for school bus operations, maintenance, inspections and training.
- 1974 – The National Association for Pupil Transportation became a formal organization.
- 1975 – Passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, guaranteeing a “free and appropriate public education” to all children, and for the first time, children with disabilities.
- 1977 – Federal Motor Vehicle Standards for School Buses went into effect, mandating taller seats with thick padding on the front and back. Standard 222 mandated passive restraint and structural integrity standards on school buses, rather than requiring lap seat belts.



- 1936 – Parley A. Thomas Car Works won a contract to manufacture 200 school buses for the state of North Carolina.
- 1939 – First National Conference on School Transportation was held at Columbia University. It included transportation officials, manufacturers, and paint experts, and introduced 44 standards including interior dimensions and seating configurations.
- The conference also made the decision to paint all school buses yellow - the easiest color to see at both dusk and dawn.

- 1946 – Traffic warning signal lights began to be used on school buses in Virginia.
- Mid-40s – many states had introduced traffic laws requiring motorists to stop when school buses were loading or unloading.
- Transit style buses (‘Flat-nose buses’) carrying up to 97 passengers gained popularity as school districts faced more demand for school transportation.

- 1963 – Superior Coach introduced a bumper-mounted, hydraulically operated gate to prevent children from crossing too close to the front of the bus.
- 1964 - Foundation of NSTA
- 1968 – The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services was created.
- 1967 - Continuous interior and exterior panels began to be used.
- The new ‘Lifeguard’ design used single sheet pieces that extended the full length of the bus, reducing the number of places where the bus could separate in a collision.
- 1967 - Collins Bus introduced the first small bus



- 1991 – NHTSA’s Office of Defects Investigation began investigating reports of incidents involving students snagging drawstrings, book bags and other items on handrails as they exited school buses.
- 1992 – Stop arms were required on all new school buses after September 1.
- 1992- New Jersey was one of the very first states in the country to require all school buses to have seat belts. At that time, lap-only belts were the only type available for school buses, so the law specified the use of lap-only belts.
- 1995 – School bus fleets with 50 or more drivers implement drug and alcohol testing.
- 1999 – Anti-lock brakes required on all buses.
- 1999 onwards - states including Florida, Louisiana and California mandate seat belts on all new small buses.
- 2002- NHSTSA issues its “School Bus Crashworthiness Research Report.”
- California and Texas mandate seat belts on large buses in ‘02 and ‘07 respectively.
- NHTSA issued a report to Congress on occupant protection, validating the effectiveness of compartmentalization and warned against lap belts on large buses.
- 2007 - NHTSA calls for seat belts on small buses and voluntary use on large buses, plus an increase in seat back heights.

- 1986 – NY became the first state to mandate seat belts in all new school buses.

1980

1990

2000

2010

2020

- 2011- FMVSS defined “Flex Seating” as it relates to lap/shoulder belted seats to allow for no loss of capacity with 39” seats using a 13” rump room as the spec.
- 2011- FMVSS defined the minimum amount of force subjected to seat belt assemblies, seats and the bus structure when testing simultaneously instead of individually.
- 2011- NHTSA denies a petition for rulemaking from the Center for Auto Safety (CAS) and 21 others asking that the Agency mandate the installation of three-point seat belts (lap/shoulder belts) for all seating positions on all school buses.
- 2012- MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141), was signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012. The new law required a new Entry Level Driver Training program, as well as a Training Provider Registry (TPR).
- 2015- The National Congress on School Transportation (NCST) was relocated from Warrensburg, Missouri to Des Moines, Iowa. The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) accepted responsibility for the NCST website as well as managing the budget and funding. The changes also shifted the responsibility for congress document preparation as well as the editing and publishing of the final document to the steering committee.
- 2015- NHTSA hosts “Seat Belts on School Bus Public Meeting” to review the Agency position on seat belts on school buses, rulemaking actions since the 2007 public meeting, and seek new information on the subject in order to facilitate discussion.
- 2015- On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) into law—the initiative included a directive for FMCSA to conduct an analysis of the current Safety Management System (SMS) and Safety Fitness Determinations (SFD) systems.

- 2020- Congress passes and President Trump signs the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, it contains the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) program which authorized \$2 billion in grants to support payroll and other expenses of transportation providers that suffered revenue loss due to the pandemic.
- 2021- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention issues an order requiring masks on public transportation conveyances and at transportation hubs. The order is later struck down in court, and in 2023, the CDC says it “is no longer in effect.”
- 2021- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act enactment by President Biden provided for a five-year \$5 billion “Clean School Bus Program” that seeks to convert the nation’s school bus fleet to zero emissions or nearly zero emissions vehicles.
- 2021- Provisions of the STOP for School Buses Act were approved as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The STOP Act would create a comprehensive federal program for preventing motorists from illegally passing school buses. The U.S. D.O.T. is required to review illegal passing laws, penalties and levels of enforcement in all 50 states as well as various technologies and driver education materials.
- 2022- FMCSA provides for three separate temporary waivers for the “under-the-hood” testing requirement and provides for a K-restricted “School Bus Only – CDL.” The Agency later approves a two-year exemption application for “under-the-hood” portion of school bus driver testing that expires in 2024.
- 2024- The 50th Edition of the School Bus Driver International Safety Competition was held at Hays CISD (TX) on June 29-30. Hays becomes the permanent host of the event.



**Thank You For Your Sponsorship of this  
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