

January 7, 2019
Unannounced On-Site Observations of
School Bus Safety Devices

April 19, 2019

Report #2019-08



MISSION STATEMENT

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January 7, 2019
Unannounced On-Site Observation of
School Bus Safety Devices
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuant to the *Office of Inspector General's (OIG) 2018-19 Work Plan*, and as part of the follow-up of our *Audit of School Bus Safety Devices* (Report #2017-03), we have performed unannounced observations of sample school bus safety devices. The primary objective of this follow-up was to determine if the safety devices on school buses were in working condition. These safety devices included (1) Post-Trip Passenger Check (Child Reminder) Systems, (2) Student Crossing Arms and Stop Sign Signal Arms, and (3) Video Camera Monitoring Systems.

Comparing the results of this follow-up to the results of the *2016 Audit*, there were some improvements in maintaining school bus safety devices. This follow-up review produced the following major conclusions:

**1. 10 Non-Working Safety Devices Found in Nine (15%) Sample Buses;
No Manual Tampering on Devices**

On January 7, 2019, the OIG performed unannounced site visits of all six District bus compounds to inspect certain safety devices on sample buses. The observations of 10 sample buses in each location revealed that nine (15%) of them had a total of 10 non-working safety devices, compared to 46% in the *2016 Audit*. There was no manual tampering in the Child Reminder Systems, compared to 35% of the samples noted in our last audit. The 10 non-working safety devices included: five Child Reminder Systems, three Student Crossing Arms and Stop Sign Signal Arms, and two Camera Systems. On February 18, 2019, we performed follow-up observations of all the nine specific buses and noted that all the safety devices were in working condition.

Management's Response: Concurs. Non-compliance is related to insufficient oversight of bus driver and attendant Pre-/Post-Trip inspections. Transportation has hired three additional team leaders and plans to hire two more supervisors who will focus on improving compliance. Pre-/Post-Trip monitoring procedures have been re-issued to all pertinent team members to improve monitoring capabilities. (Please see page 8.)

2. Mandatory Safety Inspections Completed

The OIG reviewed the latest *School Bus Safety Inspection Forms* for the 60 sample buses observed during this follow-up. We concluded that the mandatory inspections for all the 60 buses (100%) were performed within the 30-day interval required by *Florida Administrative Code (FAC) 6A-3.0171(8)(c) Responsibilities of School Boards for Student Transportation*, compared to 5% of inspections performed beyond the 30-day interval in the *2016 Audit*.

Management's Response: Concurs. (Please see page 8.)

3. 18% of Reports Not Available For Daily Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspections

Pursuant to *Florida Statutes Section 316.6135*, and *Florida Board of Education Rule 6A-3.0171, FAC*, all bus drivers are required to inspect the bus at least daily prior to the beginning of the first daily trip. We requested from Transportation the *Pre/Post-trip Inspection Report* specifically dated December 20, 2018, for each of the 60 sample buses, which was the last school day before OIG's on-site observations. However, a total of 11 (or 18%) *Reports* were not available for our review in five compounds.

Management's Response: Concur. (Please see page 8.)



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Chair and Members of the School Board
Donald E. Fennoy II, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Chair and Members of the Audit Committee

FROM: Lung Chiu, CPA, Inspector General

DATE: April 19, 2019

SUBJECT: January 7, 2019, Unannounced On-Site Observations of School Bus Safety Devices

PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

Pursuant to the *Office of Inspector General's (OIG) 2018-19 Work Plan*, and as part of the follow-up of our *Audit of School Bus Safety Devices* (Report #2017-03), we have performed unannounced observations of sample school bus safety devices. The primary objective of this follow-up was to determine if the safety devices on school buses were in working condition. These safety devices included (1) Post-Trip Passenger Check Systems, (2) Student Crossing Arms and Stop Sign Signal Arms, and (3) Video Camera Monitoring Systems.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective, the OIG performed the following:

- Interviewing staff.
- Unannounced on-site observations of safety devices for sample school buses.
- Reviewing the latest *Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspection Reports (PBSD 0454)*, *School Bus Safety Inspection Forms (MSI Form)*, *Supplemental Inspection Forms*, and *MSI and MSI Repairs Information Forms* for sample school buses.
- Reviewing relevant rules and regulations, including:
 - *Florida Administrative Code (FAC) 6A-3, Transportation*
 - *Florida School Bus Safety Inspection Manual, 2008 Edition*
 - *Florida School Bus Specifications (Revised 2013)*
 - *School Board Policy #2.29, Maintenance and Repair of Automotive Equipment*
 - School District's *School Bus Drivers and Bus Attendants Handbook*

The observation results were provided to Transportation staff during the on-site observations so that non-working safety devices could be repaired immediately. The draft report was sent to the Chief Operating Office and Transportation Department for review and comments. Management response is included in the Appendix. The final draft report was included in the April 19, 2019, Audit Committee Meeting Agenda.

BACKGROUND

1. School Bus Safety Devices

To protect the safety of students, school buses are equipped with certain safety devices specifically designed for school buses as required by Florida Department of Education's (DOE) **2013 Florida School Bus Specifications**. This follow-up review covered the following safety devices on sample District school buses:

- (a) Post-Trip Passenger Check (known as Child Reminder) Systems. The Child Reminder System is required for all buses manufactured since 2005. Specifically, **Inspection Procedures A.16.d.** of the DOE's **School Bus Safety Inspection Manual** states "*Check for proper operation of post-trip passenger check system (required on buses manufactured since 2005)*", and repair the system if it "*does not operate according to manufacturer's specifications, or is not working*".

The requirements for the Child Reminder System contained in the DOE's **2013 Florida School Bus Specifications**, states that "*The bus must be equipped with a system to require the driver to walk to the rearmost interior of the bus after each trip to deactivate the system via a push button and to ensure that no passengers are left on the bus.*"

- (b) Student Crossing Arms and Stop Arms. As required by the **2013 Florida School Bus Specifications**, each school bus is required to be equipped with a Student Crossing Arm mounted to the right front bumper and Stop Arm Signals mounted to the left outside of the vehicle. Each device fully extends perpendicular to the vehicle when the bus is stopped and the red student warning lights are flashing. After activation, the Stop Arm Signals is to be extended on the left side of the bus which requires all oncoming vehicles to stop behind and in front of (for vehicles from opposite direction on undivided roads) the bus to allow students to cross the road. The Student Crossing Arm should also require students to be seen by the bus driver while crossing in front of the bus.
- (c) Video Camera Monitoring (Camera) Systems. Each District school bus is equipped with a Camera System, although this system is optional pursuant to the **2013 Florida School Bus Specifications**. The Camera starts automatically in approximately 20 seconds after the bus ignition is turned on; and the LED amber light on the Camera's panic button will flash, indicating that the system is recording. The bus driver is required to check the panic button of the Camera before and after every trip to ensure the Camera System is in proper working condition.

2. OIG Audit Report #2017-03

During Fiscal Year 2016, the OIG audited the School Bus Safety Inspections Program (OIG Report #2017-03 *Audit of School Bus Safety Inspections*). The audit conducted two on-site observations of selected safety devices for sample buses during May 2016 and September 2016. The OIG’s observations revealed that significant deficiencies in the inspections and maintenance of school buses performed by the District’s Transportation Department. During the *2016 Audit*, we inspected the Surveillance Cameras and Child Reminder Systems on a total of 150 in-service sample buses and found that some of sample buses had non-working devices (please see Table 1.)

Table 1
Summary of OIG Report #2017-03 On-Site Observations Results

Date of OIG On-Site Observations	No. of Sample Buses Inspected	No. of Buses With Non-Working Devices			
		Non-Working Camera	Non-Working Child Reminder System (CRS)		
			System Failure	Manually Disconnected	Total Non-Working CRS
<i>May 2016</i>	89 (100%)	6 (7%)	27 (30%)	31 (35%)	58 (65%)
<i>September 2016</i>	61 (100%)	2 (3%)	10 (16%)	1 (2%)	11 (18%)
Total	150 (100%)	8 (5%)	37 (25%)	32 (21%)	69 (46%)

CONCLUSIONS

Comparing the results of this follow-up with the results of the *2016 Audit*, there were improvements in school bus safety devices. This follow-up review produced the following major conclusions.

1. 10 Non-Working Safety Devices Found in Nine (15%) Sample Buses; No Manual Tampering on Devices

On *January 7, 2019*, the OIG conducted unannounced site visits of all six District’s bus compounds to inspect certain safety devices on 10 sample buses for each location. The safety devices we reviewed included: (1) Post-Trip Passenger Check (Child Reminder) Systems, (2) Student Crossing and Stop Sign Signal Arms, and (3) Video Camera Monitoring (Camera) Systems. The observations revealed that nine (15%) of the 60 sample buses had a total of 10 non-working safety devices (please see Table 2), compared to 46% in the *2016 Audit*.

- Five (8%) with non-working Child Reminder Systems
- Three (5%) with non-working Student Crossing Arms or Stop Sign Signal Arms
- Two (3%) with non-working Camera Systems

Table 2
Summary of OIG January 7, 2019, Observation Results

Bus Compound	Number of Sample Buses	# of Sample Buses With Non-Working Safety Devices			
		Camera	Child Reminder	Student Crossing Arm / Stop Sign Signal Arm	Total
Royal Palm	10	–	3	1	4
North	10	–	1	2	3
South	10	1	–	–	1
Central	10	1 (Note)	1 (Note)	0	1
East	10	–	–	–	No Exceptions
West	10	–	–	–	No Exceptions
Total	60 (100%)	2 (3%)	5 (8%)	3 (5%)	10 (17%)

Source: OIG On-Site Observations January 7, 2019.

Note: The non-working Camera and Child Reminder Systems noted at the Central Compound were found on the same school bus.

No Manual Tampering on Devices. The May 2016 OIG observations conducted during the **2016 Audit (Report #2017-03)** found 35% of the sample buses had the Child Reminder Systems manually disconnected. Our January 7, 2019, observations found no sample buses had the Child Reminder Systems manually disconnected.

OIG Observation Results Provided to Staff for Immediate Corrective Actions. To ensure the safety for all students and employees, the OIG provided all observation results to the Maintenance Foreperson of each compound for immediate corrective actions during the January 7, 2019, on-site observations.

February 18, 2019, Follow-Up Observations. On February 18, 2019, we performed follow-up observations of all the nine specific buses at the four compounds and noted that all the safety devices were in working condition.

Recommendation

Transportation should ensure all safety devices are in proper operational conditions when the buses are transporting students.

Management’s Response: *Concurs. Non-compliance is related to insufficient oversight of bus driver and attendant Pre-/Post-Trip inspections. Transportation has hired three additional team leaders and plans to hire two more supervisors who will focus on improving compliance. Pre-/Post-Trip monitoring procedures have been re-issued to all pertinent team members to improve monitoring capabilities. (Please see page 8.)*

2. Mandatory Safety Inspections Completed

During the *2016 Audit*, we examined a sample of *School Bus Safety Inspection Forms* and found that 5% of the inspections occurred beyond the required maximum 30 school-day interval. *Florida Administrative Code (FAC) 6A-3.0171(8)(c) Responsibilities of School Boards for Student Transportation*, requires, “*Inspection of buses shall be scheduled and performed at a maximum interval of thirty (30) school days.*”

The OIG reviewed the latest *School Bus Safety Inspection Forms* for the 60 sample buses observed during this follow-up. We concluded that the mandatory inspections for these 60 buses (100%) were performed within the required 30-day interval.

Management’s Response: Concur. (Please see page 8.)

3. 18% of Reports Not Available for Daily Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspections

Pursuant to *Florida Statutes Section 316.6135*, and *Florida Board of Education Rule 6A-3.0171, FAC*, all bus drivers are required “*to inspect the bus at least daily prior to the beginning of the first daily trip or more often as required by the school district.*” District’s procedures require bus drivers to perform daily Pre- and Post-Trip Inspections and document the inspection results on the *Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspection Report* (please see Exhibit 1 on page 7).

We requested from Transportation the *Pre/Post-trip Inspection Report* specifically dated December 20, 2018, for each of the 60 sample buses, which was the last school day before OIG’s on-site observations. However, a total of 11 (or 18%) *Reports* were not available for our review in five compounds. (Please see Table 3.)

Table 3
Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspection Reports
For December 20, 2018

Bus Compound	No. of Sample Buses Inspected	Pre/Post-trip Inspection Report Found?	
		Yes	No
North	10	7	3
South	10	9	1
East	10	10	0
Royal Palm	10	7	3
Central	10	7	3
West	10	9	1
Total	60 (100%)	49 (82%)	11 (18%)

Recommendation

Transportation coordinators/supervisors should monitor and review all daily *Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspection Report (PBSD 0454)* to ensure full compliance with daily reporting. Transportation should ensure that (1) the *Reports* are properly completed daily, and (2) repairs of defective safety devices as noted on the *Reports* are performed before the buses are put back into service.

Management's Response: *Concurs. (Please see page 8.)*

– End of Report –

Exhibit 1

Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspection Report

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspection Report

Vehicle #	Odometer/Beginning #	Odometer/Ending #	Time/Pre-trip	Time/Post-trip	Date
CHECK PRE TRIP DEFECTS				CHECK POST-TRIP	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Brakes	<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Windows; Windshield	<input type="checkbox"/> 21. Air Leaks	<input type="checkbox"/> 31. Air Conditioning	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. All electrical systems off <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Searched for children/lost items <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Displayed empty sign <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Swept floor; cleaned bus as needed <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Emptied trash can <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Closed all windows, hatches and doors <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Exterior has no leaks or new damage <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Checked tire condition; lug nuts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Lights	<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Emergency Door	<input type="checkbox"/> 22. Fuel Odor	<input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Back		
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Horn	<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Emergency Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 23. Exhaust Fumes	<input type="checkbox"/> 32. Belt Cutter(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Wipers	<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Emergency Exit Buzzer	<input type="checkbox"/> 24. Muffler; Tail Pipe	<input type="checkbox"/> 33. Seat Belts		
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Gauges	<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Steering	<input type="checkbox"/> 25. Student Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/> Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Studt.		
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Heaters	<input type="checkbox"/> 16. Tire condition	<input type="checkbox"/> 26. Exterior Mirrors	<input type="checkbox"/> 34. Car Seats		
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Defrosters	<input type="checkbox"/> 17. Rims; Seals; Lug nuts	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. Body Dents	<input type="checkbox"/> 35. Safety Vests		
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Seats	<input type="checkbox"/> 18. Fluid Leaks	<input type="checkbox"/> 28. Stop Signs	<input type="checkbox"/> 36. Wheelchair Occupant Security System		
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Engine	<input type="checkbox"/> 19. Transmission	<input type="checkbox"/> 29. Crossing Arm	<input type="checkbox"/> 37. Wheel Chair Lift		
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. GPS	<input type="checkbox"/> 20. Camera System	<input type="checkbox"/> 30. Child Alert			
SHOP REPORT			REMARKS		
Bus in service <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
Defect Corrected <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
Signature of Mechanic _____ Date _____					
			<input type="checkbox"/> Post-trip completed (Required) _____		
			Signature of Driver _____ Date _____		

PBSD 0454 (Rev. 7/20/2016)

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
Bus Driver and Attendant Pre/Post-trip Inspection Report

Vehicle #	Odometer/Beginning #	Odometer/Ending #	Time/Pre-trip	Time/Post-trip	Date
CHECK PRE TRIP DEFECTS				CHECK POST-TRIP	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Brakes	<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Windows; Windshield	<input type="checkbox"/> 21. Air Leaks	<input type="checkbox"/> 31. Air Conditioning	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. All electrical systems off <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Searched for children/lost items <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Displayed empty sign <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Swept floor; cleaned bus as needed <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Emptied trash can <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Closed all windows, hatches and doors <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Exterior has no leaks or new damage <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Checked tire condition; lug nuts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Lights	<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Emergency Door	<input type="checkbox"/> 22. Fuel Odor	<input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Back		
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Horn	<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Emergency Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 23. Exhaust Fumes	<input type="checkbox"/> 32. Belt Cutter(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Wipers	<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Emergency Exit Buzzer	<input type="checkbox"/> 24. Muffler; Tail Pipe	<input type="checkbox"/> 33. Seat Belts		
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Gauges	<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Steering	<input type="checkbox"/> 25. Student Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/> Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Studt.		
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Heaters	<input type="checkbox"/> 16. Tire condition	<input type="checkbox"/> 26. Exterior Mirrors	<input type="checkbox"/> 34. Car Seats		
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Defrosters	<input type="checkbox"/> 17. Rims; Seals; Lug nuts	<input type="checkbox"/> 27. Body Dents	<input type="checkbox"/> 35. Safety Vests		
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Seats	<input type="checkbox"/> 18. Fluid Leaks	<input type="checkbox"/> 28. Stop Signs	<input type="checkbox"/> 36. Wheelchair Occupant Security System		
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Engine	<input type="checkbox"/> 19. Transmission	<input type="checkbox"/> 29. Crossing Arm	<input type="checkbox"/> 37. Wheel Chair Lift		
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. GPS	<input type="checkbox"/> 20. Camera System	<input type="checkbox"/> 30. Child Alert			
SHOP REPORT			REMARKS		
Bus in service <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
Defect Corrected <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
Signature of Mechanic _____ Date _____					
			<input type="checkbox"/> Post-trip completed (Required) _____		
			Signature of Driver _____ Date _____		

PBSD 0454 (Rev. 7/20/2016)

Management's Response



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL

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WANDA F. PAUL
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

DONALD E. FENNOY II, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Lung Chiu
Inspector General

From: Wanda Paul
Chief Operating Officer *WFP*

Date: March 15, 2019

Subject: Management Response – January 7, 2019 Unannounced On-Site Observation of School Bus Safety Devices

RECEIVED
MAR 19 2019
INSPECTOR GENERAL

Following is the Management Response to the January 7, 2019 Unannounced On-Site Observation of School Bus Safety Devices, requested on February 26, 2019.

1. Nine (15%) Sample Buses with 10 Non-Working Safety Devices; No Devices Manually Disconnected

Management concurs. Non-compliance is related to insufficient oversight of bus driver and attendant Pre-/Post-Trip inspections. Transportation has hired three additional team leaders and plans to hire two more supervisors who will focus on improving compliance. Pre-/Post-Trip monitoring procedures have been re-issued to all pertinent team members to improve monitoring capabilities.

2. Required Mandatory Safety Inspections Completed

Management concurs.

3. 18% Daily Bus Driver and Attendant Pre-Post-Trip Inspection Reports Unavailable

Management concurs. Please refer to response provided for finding #1.

WFP/SS/SK

Cc: Shane Searchwell

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