



# MEMO


**TO:** Superintendents

**RE:** Tragedy at Amy Beverland Elementary School

Our thoughts go out to the family of Susan Jordan and the staff/students at Amy Beverland Elementary School in the wake of the tragic bus accident this week. Though initial reports suggest this was driver error, let this be a reminder to all of us that accidents can and will happen in our schools. Please be aware that these types of accidents are extremely rare. Thanks to the diligence of our school administrators and bus drivers, bus stops and loading zones remain very safe. However, in our efforts to continually improve safety procedures for our students, here are a few points to consider:

- 1) Take this time to remind bus drivers, community members, staff and students to operate with increased care and awareness and please be considerate of pedestrians, student drivers, and the general school zone.
- 2) Review your parking lots and arrival/dismissal procedures with your safety team and local authorities.
- 3) A well placed vehicle bollard or barrier could be utilized in certain situations to increase safety (as seen below). Layout of your school, need for such barriers, and snow removal procedures should be considered prior to installation. Consideration for such barriers should be part of a comprehensive assessment for the safety needs of your school. Use of secured school safety funds for such barriers will be discussed at future secured safety meetings, and these could also be paid through capital improvement funds.



- 
- 4) Please note, the Office of School Transportation is available to assist your district, or school, and assess your parking lots and/or dismissal procedures. Please contact Michael LaRocco at (317) 232 – 0891 or [mlarocco@doe.in.gov](mailto:mlarocco@doe.in.gov) for more information.

Additional recommendations would be relevant regardless of the results from the investigation of this crash and should be something being done on a routine basis:

- 1) Assessment of bus pickup areas.
  - a) What are the traffic patterns in and around the school
  - b) If at all possible, do not combine car and bus traffic in the same lot
    - i) If you have a lot for combined pickup (buses and cars)
      - (1) Separate the dismissal for each group of student
        - (a) Buses should be first – the time frame is shorter and the number of student affected is more concentrated
        - (b) Do not allow any car pickups until the buses have fully cleared the school parking lot
        - (c) Walkers, if applicable, should be last after all bus and car pickup traffic has cleared
  - c) Are the lot lines easily discernible
  - d) Is there a possibility to install barriers between where the students are walking and bus parking slots
  - e) If possible, are the buses using the same assigned slots every single day
  - f) If there is a substitute bus is that information being communicated to the school, and then is that information being communicated to the teachers and student prior to dismissal
    - i) Does the substitute bus have signage indicating which bus is being replaced
- 2) Procedures for when the bus is pulling into the school lot.
  - a) Mandated low speed limit (10 mph)
  - b) Buses should be slotted in order of the routes furthest from the school at the front of the line
    - i) If the first bus out of the lot has a stop a half a block away that will cause traffic problems for all of the buses and other motorists
  - c) If at all possible student should not be allowed to enter the bus lot until all buses are parked and turned off
  - d) If possible do not allow any buses into the lot after dismissal as started
    - i) School will need to hold students in designated area away from the buses
  - e) One person at the school should designate when the students can be released from the building
  - f) Students should never be allowed to go anywhere in the lot except directly to the bus
  - g) Clear all individuals in front of the slot the bus is pulling into
  - h) Freeze all student movement whenever a bus is in motion
  - i) If the bus is routinely late, rearrange the slots so that late bus is at the end of the line and arrange pedestrian traffic so that does not pass in front of that bus
  - j) Students should walk on the sidewalk as far away from the bus as possible
  - k) Once the bus is parked
    - i) Driver puts the bus into neutral
    - ii) Driver sets the parking brake
    - iii) Driver turns off the bus
  - l) When those three steps are completed, then and only then, should the students be allowed to move
  - m) If a driver gets out of the driver's seat, for any reason, the driver should take the bus keys with them
  - n) The buses should be dismissed one at a time and no bus should be started until they are designated to dismiss
    - i) The same person dismissing the students from the school should be the same person dismissing the buses



- o) If there is an issue with a bus and/or student, the bus in question should circle the lot back to the designated slot after all buses have been dismissed
- p) If there is a mechanical issue with a bus that is blocking other buses from leaving, no bus should be moved and/or backed up until all students have boarded all of the buses and a 360 degree check is made around each bus that going to be moved
- q) Transportation supervisory personnel should be personally reviewing bus dismissal procedures at all of the schools in a district frequently – multiple times a month.