

Statement from VAPT on NHTSA Announcement

On Sunday, November 8, 2015, at the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) Summit in Richmond, Virginia, Dr. Mark Rosekind, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) emphasized that the yellow school bus is the safest way for children to get to and from school. He also called for lap and shoulder belts on large school buses and stated his agency's plans to communicate the benefits to state and local decision makers and possibly pursuing regulations requiring seat belts on all school buses.

We thank Dr. Rosekind for his thoughts and his opinions on this matter. We are happy that he acknowledged and stressed that seat belts are one area of the agency's interest in improving the safety of school buses. Other areas of concern for his agency are loading zone safety, school zone speeding, illegal passing of school buses and school bus messaging.

VAPT supports the NAPT's stance that "absent a federal requirement for belts, NAPT continues to agree with NHTSA that it is most appropriate if the decision to order seat belts on large school buses were left to the States and local jurisdictions." We also feel that the States and local officials would be in the best position to make that determination taking into consideration all of the factors associated with making that decision.