

DCAS and Public Schools Announce Safe Fleet Plan for School Buses

By: Keith T. Kerman



This week, DCAS and NYC Public Schools released a [Safe Fleet Transition Plan for School Buses](#). The plan was developed in partnership with the US DOT Volpe Center. School bus companies, including NYCSBUS, Pioneer, Leesel/Selby, Hoyt, L&M/Quality, Logan, and representing half of NYC's school buses participated in the study. It's the sixth report that DCAS and US DOT Volpe have published on a safe and sustainable fleet in accordance with [Mayoral Executive Order 53](#).

Initial report results were first presented at the 8th Annual DCAS Vision Zero Fleet Safety Forum at Queens Theatre on November 2, 2023. DCAS produced the event in partnership with Together for Safer Roads (TSR), an international

member organization focused on fleet and road safety. We will discuss the forum more broadly in an upcoming newsletter.

As outlined in the DCAS release, DCAS and Public Schools will take a series of steps to enhance school bus safety. These include:

- **Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA):** Adding 50 electric school buses from the non-profit school bus company NYCSBUS to the DCAS Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) initiative. You can learn more about ISA in [Newsletter 416](#). This will be the nation's first rollout of ISA for school buses in the nation. In December 2023, Mayor Adams announced that NYC had received a grant from the US DOT to expand the ISA initiative to 2,000 vehicles.
- **Safety Training:** Adding school bus operators to the all-day safety training already conducted with City fleet operators. DCAS and Public Schools will develop a school-specific curriculum and aim to train all bus operators by the start of school in 2025.
- **Eliminating high-risk driving through telematics:** Using telematics to eliminate high-risk driving. Through telematics, the safe driving performance of each bus can be determined through analysis of speed, driver seatbelt use, hard braking, cornering, and accelerating. Today, every city fleet vehicle receives a monthly safety scorecard, and we will extend the initiative to school buses. The goal is to eliminate high and moderate-risk driving.
- **Audible Alerts for Pedestrians:** Working with the non-profit school bus operator NYCSBUS, DCAS will pilot audible sound alerts on fifty buses to protect the public when buses are turning. MTA has adopted similar safety devices.



- **High Vision Buses and Trucks:** While surround cameras are a helpful



- **Bus Surround Cameras to Improve Visibility:** DCAS and NYSCBus will

tool, DCAS will also advocate for industry changes to design school buses, especially electric school buses, as high or direct-vision models in the future. In a conventional truck, the engine is in front of the driver, who can not see the ground, sometimes 15 feet or more. In a high-vision truck, the engine or batteries are placed under or away from the driver, allowing full vision of the roadways, pedestrians, bicyclists, and children. The school bus on the cover of the new report is a higher vision model. At the conference, DCAS announced the registration of a new contract for direct vision all-electric box trucks that will improve vision by over 75% from current diesel models.

also pilot surround cameras to provide the bus operators with a full view around the bus and address visual obstructions. At the forum, DCAS announced that 2,000 City trucks were now outfitted or ordered with surround cameras and that all trucks would be ordered with them going forward. DSNY recently ordered its first 183 sweepers that will come with surround cameras.

- **School Bus Design of the Future, Safe, and Electric:** DCAS and Public Schools will use these pilots to develop new specifications for school buses going forward, combining electrification and the highest level of safety. As per Local Law 120 of 2021, all school buses must be electric by 2035.

Thanks to Kevin Moran at Public Schools, Matt Berlin of NYCSBUS, Alexander Epstein at US DOT Volpe, Eric Richardson of DCAS Fleet, and all our school bus company representatives for their work and commitment to this project. DCAS looks forward to discussing additional fleet safety steps in upcoming newsletters. And, happy new year.



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[NYC Fleet newsletter 444, December 28, 2023](#): **Fleet In Review 2023: Fleet's Biggest Year in Sustainability Ever**

[NYC Fleet newsletter 443, December 21, 2023](#): US DOT and DCAS to Partner on Expansion of Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA)

[NYC Fleet newsletter 442, December 11, 2023](#): Fleet Spotlight: Spiro Kattan, DSNY Fleet Sustainability

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 441, December 1, 2023](#): Renewable Diesel Replaces Fossil Fuel For New York City Fleet Trucks

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