

Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE OF MONTANA

Putting Montana Students First **A⁺**



September 10, 2020

Transportation Interim Committee
Montana State Capitol
P.O. Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706

Chairman Vance and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to provide you with an update on school bus safety measures and discussions that have been occurring with the start of the school year. As you know, 6-year old Jordana Hubble was seriously injured in 2019 when she was struck by a vehicle after exiting the school bus in Flathead County. While Jordana is making a strong but slow recovery, community members and state officials have taken the lead in promoting school bus safety to ensure that this tragedy doesn't happen to other Montana children.

We especially want to recognize the efforts of Griz Wold to bring Flathead communities and state leaders together to come up with statewide solutions to protect our children and educate drivers about bus safety. Together, we have had numerous in-person and virtual meetings to discuss public awareness campaigns and potential changes in state law or rule.

Griz led a bus safety poster contest this spring that was promoted by our offices and judged by the Montana Association of Student Councils. One of Jordana's classmate's won. We are also working on an essay contest and potentially a public service announcement with the Montana Highway Patrol. Additionally, the OPI has communicated to local schools that extended bus arms are an option that is currently allowed. Some schools have begun installing them.

While we don't have any specific requests at this time, we do want to keep you updated with our children going back to school. Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Elsie Arntzen

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Representative Frank Garner

House District 7- Kalispell