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Buffalo Public Schools Commits to equip entire fleet with belted seating

Westfield, Ind. – September 3, 2010 –Today IMMI® announced the company has completed an order to supply seating for the 630 buses serving the Buffalo Public Schools in New York as part of a new transportation contract. With this order, the district has equipped its entire fleet with the SafeGuard Integrated Child Seats (ICS) and 20 percent of its fleet with the SafeGuard FlexSeat. Through a phase-in schedule, by the 2014 school year, all buses will be equipped with the SafeGuard FlexSeat, offering lap-shoulder belt protection to all student riders.

Former Assistant Superintendent John Fahey managed the bid process that led to equipping the fleet with belted seating. A key goal of the bid was to create specifications that provided for the highest levels of safety, service and efficiency for children being transported. The decision to include lap-shoulder belts on the Buffalo fleet started with Fahey's personal experiences investigating an average of 80 school bus accidents each year.

"I have witnessed firsthand how compartmentalization works, but during the course of my investigations, I saw way too many accidents where the kids were jostled around the compartment and I wish they had been restrained," Fahey explained. "There's a longstanding dichotomy about seat belts in this industry. Seat belts are everywhere else. That never sat well with me."

In relation to specifying ICS for the transportation of preschool children, Fahey says the district had used child seats in the past. "We transport more than 500 three year-olds in child seats each year, and we were forced to use a standard car seat, fishing the lap belt of the bus through the back of the seats to secure them," he explained. "We found child seats to be awkward and difficult to use, and we were never able to be fully confident they were always installed properly. Integrated Child Seats will be a huge improvement."

The new seating technology was specified as part of a recent transportation bid. The district's incumbent contractor was the successful bidder, retaining its long standing partnership with the Buffalo Schools. "The process resulted in an almost ideal result," Fahey recounted. "Among the benefits, our children get to be transported in state-of-the-art buses with all the newest technology. And in the end, transportation costs to the school system actually decreased because of the competitive nature of the bidding process."

Fahey is retired from Buffalo Public Schools and now works for the Tyler Technologies School Division as a Versatrans Consultant. Director of Transportation Al Diamico will handle the implementation phase of the project when school begins on Sept. 8. In advance of the school year beginning, IMMI provided training on the proper use of the ICS and FlexSeat for the school system's transportation department and the contractor.

"IMMI applauds John Fahey and his visionary team," said James Johnson, IMMI Vice President of president of business development and corporate sales. "The Buffalo contract is another example of how IMMI is working hand-in-hand with transportation contractors and school administrators to improve the safety of the children they are transporting."

About IMMI

IMMI, based in Westfield, Ind., has been the industry leader in child and bus passenger protection for more than 30 years. Within the past decade, IMMI has introduced belted seating under its SafeGuard brand to the U.S. school bus and motorcoach industries. Utilizing a modern crash-test facility, sophisticated engineering and advanced manufacturing operations, IMMI develops and supplies innovative, proven SafeGuard restraint systems and seating solutions for customers worldwide. For more information about SafeGuard products, visit safeguardseat.com or call 877.447.2305.