



## *News Release*

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

### **ON THE ROAD TO SAFER SCHOOL BUSES**

*In Support of National School Bus Safety Week, Bendix Shares Efforts to  
Help Make the Safest Form of School Transportation Even Safer*

**AVON, Ohio – Oct. 12, 2023** – The iconic yellow school bus – well documented nationally as the safest form of student transportation in America – has earned that distinction. In support of 2023 National School Bus Safety Week (Oct. 16-20), Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC (Bendix) shares a look at how the company helps make school bus transportation across North America even safer – namely, through providing advanced safety technologies as well as information supporting fleets in their driver and technician training efforts.

National School Bus Safety Week is a public education program from the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) that is designed to promote school bus safety. It occurs the third full week of October each year.

School buses carry more than 25 million passengers every day. Students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely when traveling by school bus than when riding in a car, according to the American School Bus Council. NAPT is leading a charge for better numbers – its “Zip. Zero. Nada. None.” campaign is aiming for an entire school year free of fatalities no later than the school year ending June 30, 2025.

“At Bendix, we support NAPT’s mission by delivering a suite of the latest safety technologies to school bus OEMs to help keep student passengers safe and support the drivers responsible for their travels,” said Fred Andersky, director – demos, sales and service training at Bendix, the North American leader in the development and manufacture of active safety, air

## **ON THE ROAD TO SAFER SCHOOL BUSES**

Oct. 12, 2023/Page 2

management, and braking system technologies for commercial vehicles. “We further assist the mission by partnering with school districts across North America to deploy these technologies and offer support for driver education and technician training.”

### **ADAS Difference**

Encouraging the use of the latest vehicle safety equipment and technology – such as electronic stability control, forward collision warning, collision mitigation, air disc brakes, and electronic parking brakes – is part of NAPT’s strategy in its zero-fatality campaign.

“School bus manufacturers are making driver-assistance technologies – proven in the industry – increasingly available, and school bus fleets are adopting them in growing numbers,” said TJ Thomas, director of marketing and customer solutions – Controls at Bendix.

Since 2018, both Blue Bird Corporation and Navistar’s IC Bus have made the Bendix® ESP® Electronic Stability Program full-stability system standard equipment on air-braked buses, despite full-stability technology not being required for school buses. The technology has been mandatory on most motorcoaches and commercial vehicles.

That absence of a requirement could change based on recent action taken by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The agencies published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) that would require automatic emergency braking (AEB) systems on heavy vehicles – those with a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds), including school buses. Further, the notice proposes to amend FMVSS No. 136 to require nearly all heavy vehicles to have an electronic stability control (ESC) system. This amendment involving full stability would also include school buses.

“The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and NAPT support the adoption of full-stability and collision mitigation on school buses,” Andersky said. “These systems are effective and helping make a difference right now. We’re proud to work with our industry partners to make that happen.”

Bendix ESP utilizes a system of sensors and advanced algorithms to recognize and potentially mitigate conditions that could lead to rollover and loss of control. It functions in a wide range of driving and road conditions, including snowy, ice-covered, and slippery surfaces, and can activate the brakes in ways the driver cannot replicate.

Full-stability systems like Bendix ESP also provide the technological foundation for more advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS), including collision mitigation technologies such as

## **ON THE ROAD TO SAFER SCHOOL BUSES**

Oct. 12, 2023/Page 3

Bendix® Wingman® Advanced™ – A Collision Mitigation Technology and Bendix® Wingman® Fusion™, the company’s flagship system.

Bendix Wingman Advanced uses a single radar sensor mounted to the front of the vehicle that works with the Bendix® ESP® braking system to deliver active cruise control with braking features, providing both warnings and active interventions to help drivers potentially avoid rear-end collisions, or at least help reduce their severity.

Bendix Wingman Fusion integrates a forward-facing camera with the radar and the ESP braking system, combining and cross-checking the data from sensors that are working together and not just in parallel. The result is a comprehensive driver assistance system. With a suite of sensors working together, and not just in parallel, Fusion uses multisystem integration to create a more detailed data picture, distinguishing it from radar-only systems.

IC Bus became the first North American school bus manufacturer to offer collision mitigation as a standard feature in 2018, spec’ing Wingman Advanced on its CE Series and RE Series and offering the Wingman Fusion system as an option on the CE Series.

“It’s important to emphasize that Bendix safety technologies complement safe driving practices, and they are not intended to enable or encourage aggressive driving,” Thomas said. “No commercial vehicle safety technology replaces a skilled, alert driver exercising safe driving techniques and proactive, comprehensive driver training. Responsibility for the safe operation of the vehicle remains with the driver at all times.”

Thomas added, “Keep in mind that limitations exist in any safety technology, and the driver should become familiar with them before getting behind the wheel by reading the operator’s manual.”

### **Air Disc Brake Advantage**

More school districts are equipping vehicles with air disc brakes, which provide shorter, smoother, and more stable stops than drum brakes. In addition, air disc brakes perform with little to no brake fade. During stop-and-go usage – like a school bus route – or downhill applications, drum brakes can heat up and experience decreased performance. The design of air disc brakes all but eliminates fade.

“Adoption of the Bendix® ADB22X® air disc brake continues to gain ground rapidly since we introduced it to the school bus market in 2008,” said Mark Holley, Bendix director of marketing and customer solutions – Wheel-End. “A couple thousand new school buses are equipped with air disc brakes each year. School transportation safety managers are understanding the striking safety difference that air disc brakes bring.”

## **ON THE ROAD TO SAFER SCHOOL BUSES**

Oct. 12, 2023/Page 4

School fleets understand another advantage of specifying air disc brakes as well – namely, the technology helps optimize performance of the higher-level safety systems.

All of North America’s major school bus makers – including Blue Bird, IC Bus, and Thomas Built Buses – offer the industry-leading Bendix® ADB22X® as a factory-installed option.

### **Smart Parking**

The Bendix® Intellipark® Electronic Parking Brake is another technology to help enhance safety and driver convenience. The system helps prevent rollaway crashes by automatically setting the brakes when the system interlocks are met, indicating the driver has forgotten to do so.

“The system monitors inputs in critical areas – for example, the status of the foot brake, the accelerator pedal, and the wheel speed may be monitored (each OEM application may be different) – to help determine when the driver inadvertently forgot to set the parking brakes and the vehicle should be parked,” Thomas said.

In addition, the Intellipark system replaces the familiar yellow push-pull dash valve with an easy-to-engage electronic switch, making it more ergonomically friendly and eliminating the “stinging” feel of engaging a 120-psi hand-controlled park brake valve. The switch maintains the recognizable yellow symbols and text and includes built-in LED indicator lights that show the status of the brake immediately.

In 2021, Thomas Built Buses was the first school bus manufacturer to make Intellipark available, on two models. Intellipark is available as an option on the Saf-T-Liner® C2 equipped with a Cummins diesel or Detroit Diesel powertrain and an air brake package, and it comes standard on the Saf-T-Liner C2 Jouley® electric bus. In addition, Intellipark is available on select IC Bus models.

Other school bus manufacturers are in the process of making Intellipark available.

### **Training Is Key for Drivers and Technicians**

With school bus technologies rapidly advancing, up-to-date training on their use and maintenance has become even more important to keeping drivers and passengers safe.

Bendix offers a combination of hands-on experiences, continuous education, and ongoing communications to help school bus fleets and drivers understand new technologies, learn what these technologies do in traffic situations to help, and, overall, keep their skills sharp.

In-person demonstrations, for example, guide drivers through the actual experience of how these systems work and feel. Other resources include the Bendix YouTube channel, a

## **ON THE ROAD TO SAFER SCHOOL BUSES**

Oct. 12, 2023/Page 5

training portal at [brake-school.com](http://brake-school.com) that provides no-charge access to a wide array of technical courses, and the Knowledge Dock™ at [knowledge-dock.com](http://knowledge-dock.com), which has archived resources like the Bendix Tech Tips series, podcasts, blogs, and white papers.

“To help keep school bus passengers safe, we remain committed to working with our valued manufacturer safety partners in our mission to provide school districts and drivers with the best safety and driver convenience technologies, tools, and educational material,” Andersky said. “Across the country, students and parents are depending on it.”

### **About Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC**

Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems, a member of Knorr-Bremse, develops and supplies leading-edge active safety technologies, energy management solutions, and air brake charging and control systems and components under the Bendix® brand name for medium- and heavy-duty trucks, tractors, trailers, buses, and other commercial vehicles throughout North America. An industry pioneer, employing more than 4,400 people, Bendix – and its wholly owned subsidiary, R.H. Sheppard Co., Inc. – is driven to deliver the best solutions for improved vehicle safety, performance, and overall operating cost. Contact us at 1-800-AIR-BRAKE (1-800-247-2725) or visit [bendix.com](http://bendix.com). Stay connected and informed through Bendix expert podcasts, blog posts, videos, and other resources at [knowledge-dock.com](http://knowledge-dock.com). Follow Bendix on X, formerly known as Twitter, at [twitter.com/Bendix\\_CVS](https://twitter.com/Bendix_CVS). Log on and learn from the Bendix experts at [brake-school.com](http://brake-school.com). And to learn more about career opportunities at Bendix, visit [bendix.com/careers](http://bendix.com/careers).

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## TOWARD A SAFER FUTURE FOR SCHOOL BUSES

National data supports that school buses are the safest way to transport students to and from school.<sup>1</sup> But crashes do happen, and even a single school bus accident is one too many. Advanced safety technologies – increasingly available on school buses – can help make school buses even safer. Here are four:



### Autonomous Emergency Braking

- Helps potentially mitigate rear-end collisions or potentially lessen their severity
- Built on the full-stability brake system
- Can use a radar sensor alone or be “fused” with a camera and full-stability system for additional functionality
- Warnings and active brake interventions

### Full-Stability Brake System

- Helps potentially mitigate rollover or loss-of-control situations
- Also known by its generic term, Electronic Stability Control (ESC)
- Adds additional sensors and capabilities to ABS to deliver automatic brake interventions
- Works in a range of conditions, including rain, ice, and snow



### Electronic Parking Brake

- Automatically sets parking brake when interlocks are met to help potentially mitigate unintended rollaways
- Offers safety and driver convenience features like easy-to-operate electronic switches that take the “sting” out of releasing the parking brake

### Air Disc Brakes

- Significantly shorter stopping distances
- Passenger car-like feel
- Consistently straight, stable stops
- Virtually eliminates brake fade



Bendix is a leading supplier of safety technologies for school buses. Technologies include the Bendix® ADB22X® air disc brake, Bendix® ESP® Electronic Stability Program full-stability system, Bendix® Wingman® Advanced™ – A Collision Mitigation Technology, Bendix® Wingman® Fusion™, and the Bendix® Intellipark® Electronic Parking Brake.

<sup>1</sup><http://schoolbusfacts.com/benefits/>

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