

# SafeGuard Case Study

## SafeGuard School Bus Seating Case Study Cumberland County Schools Fayetteville, North Carolina

Cumberland County Schools (CCS) in Fayetteville, North Carolina, was the first school district in the U.S. to operate a bus equipped with the SafeGuard FlexSeat™. The bus, provided to the school by the state, began its routes in November of 2007.

Derek Graham, Section Chief of Transportation Services for North Carolina, was asked to find a pilot site for FlexSeat, and selected Cumberland County. Graham said the state studied the seat belt issue for several years, with mixed results.

“The state of North Carolina began its pilot test of three-point belt seats in 2003, which highlighted both the benefits of improved discipline and the negatives of reduced capacity,” he explained. “As a result, we were anxious to add FlexSeat to our experience base. We have been pleased to see that the capacity problem can be virtually eliminated.”



**Derek Graham**  
Section Chief of Transportation Services



**Liz McGowan**  
CCS Executive Director of Transportation

CCS Executive Director of Transportation Liz McGowan explained the school system’s experience with flexible belted seating, emphasizing strong positive feedback from parents, transportation officials and drivers.

“The bus driver, Mr. Newsome, has seen a dramatic improvement in behavior on the bus,” she said. “In fact, when he was out for a few weeks due to a health issue, several other drivers wanted his bus. They’ve been asking about getting buses with seat belts since November when this pilot started.”

Cumberland County has taken a hard line on seat belt usage. “Either they comply, or they don’t ride,” McGowan said. “We’ve seen behavior is a lot better because students are forced to sit forward and talk to the people sitting beside them, rather than moving around in their seats and switching seats.”

Since the original pilot bus was added to the fleet, the school system has purchased an activity bus that is equipped with FlexSeat for transporting students to sporting events and other after-school activities.