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# News Release

## **FlexSeat Pilot Program Completed Cumberland County, North Carolina**

**Westfield, IN – June 23, 2008** – Last week at the North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association (NCPTA) annual conference, members received a report on the recently concluded six-month SafeGuard FlexSeat™ pilot program, managed by Cumberland County Schools in Fayetteville.

Executive Director of Transportation Liz McGowan explained the school system's experience with the nation's first bus equipped 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."

Derek Graham, Section Chief of Transportation Services for North Carolina, says the state has been studying 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."

The North Carolina state legislature recently requested a study of school bus lap and shoulder belts by the Child Fatality Task Force. "Their report contained no recommendations for action from a child fatality perspective, which was not a surprise," Graham said. "The benefits of improved discipline and improved parental confidence, though, are very real and could actually motivate more parents to make the decision to have their children transported to school in the safety of the yellow school bus."

SafeGuard Sales Director James Johnson said flexible seating is changing the dialogue in the school transportation industry. "Essentially, FlexSeat eliminates the capacity concerns related to the previous generation of school bus seats equipped with lap and shoulder belts. Due in part to this new technology, we are beginning to see an increasing number of individual school districts in states like Virginia, Texas, Indiana and Illinois voluntarily installing lap and shoulder belts on school buses," Johnson said.

The SafeGuard FlexSeat™ keeps kids on the school bus, safely transporting three elementary school children or two high school students on a standard 39-inch seat. This innovative bus seat with three lap and shoulder belts resolves capacity issues and enhances bus safety with its unique approach to maintaining compartmentalization. With the FlexSeat, one seat fits all™.

The SafeGuard FlexSeat™ is available today on buses by **Thomas Built Buses** and **IC Bus**.

### **About SafeGuard**

SafeGuard has been the leader in child passenger protection for more than 20 years and is the largest child seating safety products manufacturer in the world. Bus seats made by SafeGuard undergo the most rigorous testing in the school transportation industry. Engineers at SafeGuard utilize the company's modern testing facility to verify the performance of bus seating products, as well as support product development of its OEM customers in the school bus industry. Over the past decade, SafeGuard has conducted 12 full barrier crash tests on school buses to gain a full understanding of student occupant protection. To support the development of the company's bus seat products, SafeGuard has conducted more than 250 sled tests and 20 school bus rollover tests, as well as performing tests on thousands of components to assure performance and durability.

For more information on the SafeGuard FlexSeat, visit [safeguardseat.com](http://safeguardseat.com), or call 877-447-2305.