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Minnesota schools to see \$3.7 million boost for bus safety arm cameras

The funding is set to go out to 42 schools and is the latest effort to prevent accidents involving motorists and school bus drivers and riders.



Motorists must stop at least 20 feet from a school bus that is displaying red flashing lights or a stop arm when approaching from the rear and from the opposite direction on undivided roads.

Tyler Schank / 2019 file / News Tribune

By [Dana Ferguson](#)

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ST. PAUL — A state traffic safety office on Tuesday, July 12, announced that it would send out \$3.7 million to schools around the state for stop-arm camera systems on school buses.

The grant funds from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety are set to flow out to 42 schools as part of the latest push to promote student safety. And they come as part of a larger \$14.7 million effort from the state Legislature to prevent accidents involving motorists and school buses.

State officials have tracked an overall decline in stop-arm violations since 2017, with annual violations cited decreasing from 1,120 in 2017 to 769 in 2021. But citations jumped between 2020 and 2021, they said, from 512 to 769.

And an annual survey of Minnesota bus drivers indicated that illegal passings were on the rise, despite the trend of fewer citations. The National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services reported that Minnesota drivers observed 1,003 violations in one day, up from 625 violations observed in 2019.

“Schoolkids shouldn’t have to worry when getting on and off the bus, and no parent should have to fear losing their child to a careless driver,” Office of Traffic Safety Director Mike Hanson said. “The cameras will help keep kids safe, hold selfish or inattentive drivers accountable, and change dangerous driving choices.”

School districts are set to be reimbursed for purchasing the cameras and related software products for their school buses.

Drivers who fail to stop for a school bus with an extended arm and flashing lights face a \$500 fine as well as additional possible charges.

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By **Dana Ferguson**

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