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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ISSUED: OCT 5 1984

Forwarded to:

Dr. Joseph C. Harrington
Superintendent of Schools
Town of Rehoboth School District
Horton Street
North Dighton, Massachusetts 02764

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

H-84-74

At 11:45 a.m., on January 10, 1984, a G & D Auto Sales, Inc., tow truck was turning right from the company's driveway onto westbound State Route 44 in Rehoboth, Massachusetts, when the rear-facing passenger car in tow, a 1981 Oldsmobile, was struck by an eastbound tractor-semitrailer operated by Branch Motor Express Company. The 76,950-pound tractor-semitrailer continued eastbound; crossed the centerline of the damp, two-lane, two-way roadway; and struck the left front of a westbound Town of Rehoboth schoolbus carrying 15 students, ages 5 and 6. The 1979 schoolbus overturned and came to rest on its roof off the roadway. The driver of the tractor-semitrailer, the driver of the schoolbus, and one student were killed; 12 students were injured. The driver of the tow truck was not injured. 1/

The 49-year-old schoolbus driver had operated schoolbuses for 13 years. She held a valid Massachusetts operator's license with an endorsement authorizing the operation of schoolbuses. The endorsement, which required renewal annually, had expired on October 4, 1983. The driver had failed to take the required physical examination which was required for renewal of her schoolbus endorsement

The fact that the schoolbus driver was operating her vehicle with an expired schoolbus operator's endorsement on her Massachusetts vehicle operator's license was not a factor in this accident. However, the Town of Rehoboth School District should institute procedures to ensure that all schoolbus drivers have valid operator licenses and schoolbus endorsements in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and to ensure that all licenses and endorsements are renewed when they are due to expire.

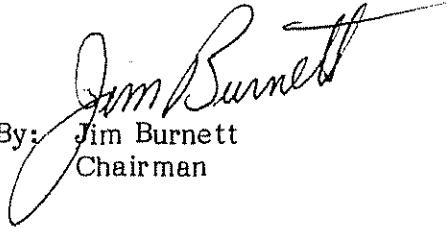
Therefore, as a result of its investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Town of Rehoboth, Massachusetts, School District:

1/ Highway Accident Report—"Collision of G & D Auto Sales, Inc., Tow Truck Towing Automobile, Branch Motor Express Company Tractor-Semitrailer, and Town of Rehoboth Schoolbus, State Route 44, Rehoboth, Massachusetts, January 10, 1984" (NTSB/HAR-84/05).

Implement procedures to notify schoolbus drivers of operator's license and endorsement expiration dates, and follow-up on these notifications to ensure drivers' compliance with the licensing requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (Class II, Priority Action) (H-84-74)

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with the statutory responsibility "... to promote transportation safety by conducting independent accident investigations and by formulating safety improvement recommendations" (P.L. 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any actions taken as a result of its safety recommendations and would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendation in this letter.

BURNETT, Chairman, GOLDMAN, Vice Chairman, and GROSE, Member, concurred in this recommendation. BURSLEY, Member, did not participate.

By: 
Chairman