



NEWS

Office of the
New York City Comptroller
William C. Thompson, Jr.



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THOMPSON DEMANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ADDRESS SCHOOL BUS INCIDENTS

In the wake of yet another incident involving a child left on a school bus, New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr. today called on the Schools Chancellor to immediately review its transportation policies to end the “confusion and mismanagement.”

“I was deeply troubled to learn of the recent reports regarding a three-year-old autistic child who was left in a school bus for more than six hours,” Thompson said in his letter, available at www.comptroller.nyc.gov. “The confusion and mismanagement that continues to plague our City’s school transportation initiatives is simply unacceptable and must be addressed.”

“I believe this situation once again illustrates DOE’s ongoing failure to anticipate foreseeable risks and properly administer its resources through the use of appropriate procedural safeguards,” the Comptroller added.

On October 16, a school bus driver and a bus matron were arrested after the child – a student at P.S. 194 in the Bronx - was left unsupervised on the bus throughout the day, according to authorities. They were charged with reckless endangerment, endangering the welfare of a child and endangering an incompetent person.

During his tenure, Comptroller Thompson has repeatedly questioned DOE policies and mismanagement of its transportation initiatives, citing numerous instances where disabled students suffered unconscionable delays while being transported to school.

“Yet another more recent example of these failures concerns a school bus driver who, several months ago, discharged an unaccompanied five year old child miles away from the child’s home,” Thompson said. “I am advised that this same bus driver has been reinstated to his position after the Office of Pupil Transportation found that the driver had complied with DOE rules. I am truly shocked by this situation as you should be.”

Thompson also called on the DOE to provide him with the results of their review of the recent incident.

The Comptroller called it “unfathomable” that the DOE does not have a policy that obligates bus drivers to wait until every child has been met by a parent or guardian before a school bus drives away.

“Indeed, it is my understanding that bus drivers are not even provided with a list of children that are on board their bus,” he said. “Our children, their parents and our City demand better.”

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