

THE COFFEE COUNTY BUS MARSHAL PROGRAM

A Professional Student Safety & Mentorship Initiative

SUBMITTED TO:

Dr. Morris Leis, Superintendent
The Coffee County Board of Education

PRESENTED BY:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Coffee County Bus Marshal Program is a proactive safety initiative designed to secure the "unsupervised gap" in student transit. By deploying vetted, mission-driven professionals, primarily veterans, on high-incident routes, we alleviate the impossible burden placed on drivers who must currently navigate 15-ton vehicles while managing up to 70 students. This program ensures Coffee County meets the safety mandates of the 2026-2027 school year while establishing a new national standard for pupil transportation.

THE CRISIS OF THE UNSUPERVISED GAP

- ▶ **The Supervision Gap:** National data indicates that 19% of students experience bullying, with school buses serving as primary unmonitored "hotspots."
- ▶ **The Felony Stake:** Under **O.C.G.A. § 16-11-37**, students aged 13+ can face felony charges for terroristic threats. Marshals provide the de-escalation necessary to prevent life-altering legal consequences.
- ▶ **Safety Vulnerabilities:** Without a second adult, drivers cannot verify student destinations or prevent unauthorized exits, leading to "Chain of Custody" failures.

OPERATIONAL MODEL & CHAIN OF CUSTODY

Professional Standards

Marshals occupy a strategic position on the bus to maintain active line-of-sight supervision. They are trained in non-contact de-escalation, trauma-informed care, and supporting students with special needs.

Destination Verification Protocols

To eliminate the risk of unauthorized drop-offs and "forged note" security breaches, the following rules apply:

1. **Positive Parent Verification (PPV):** No student may change their registered drop-off location based on a written note. Deviation requires direct verbal or digital confirmation from a registered guardian to the school administration.
2. **The "Safe-Stop" Authority:** Marshals hold the final authority to deny a student's request to exit at any stop other than their designated home if proper verification is missing. This protocol directly addresses gaps identified in the Jada West incident.

- 3. **Manifest Management:** Marshals maintain a real-time log of authorized "Exception Clearances" provided by school dispatch.

FISCAL STRATEGY & PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

90-Day Pilot Budget (5 High-Incident Routes)

Item	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
Marshal Salaries (Part time, 5 Routes)	\$15,000	FY2026 Safety Grants (\$21k/school)
Training & Vetting	\$3,000	Pupil Transportation Grants
Equipment (Radio/Vest)	\$2,000	District Budget Reallocation
Evaluation (Surveys, Logs)	\$500	Included in Grants
Contingency Funding	\$5,000	Community Donations/PTA/VFW
Total Pilot Cost	\$25,500	

Success Metrics:

- * **Quantitative:** Targeted 25% reduction in bus-related disciplinary referrals.
 - **Qualitative:** "Driver Focus" and "Parental Peace-of-Mind" surveys conducted post-pilot.
 - **Compliance:** 100% success rate in "Chain of Custody" drop-off audits.

EVIDENCE OF NEED: LOCAL & STATE PRECEDENT

Coffee County Incidents

- **August 2025 (WALB News):** A hit-and-run collision involving a Coffee County bus with 20+ children.
- **January 2022 (WALB News):** A collision at the Highway 206 Connector involving middle and high school students.
- **District Trends:** Coffee County historically reports suspension rates for disorderly conduct that exceed state averages, necessitating intervention at the point of origin: the bus.

Personal Witness

As a parent in this district, I have navigated the failure of the current system for over two years. My children have faced persistent harassment that "marginal" measures have failed to stop. We must transition from recording tragedies on cameras to preventing them with human presence.

REGULATORY ALIGNMENT (HB 268 & HB 409)

- **HB 268 (Ricky and Alyssa's Law):** Mandates Behavioral Threat Assessment Management (BTAM) for the 2026-2027 school year. Marshals serve as the "mobile extension" of these teams.
- **HB 409 (Addy's Law):** Prioritizes safety in loading zones. Marshals provide the vital "second set of eyes" to ensure no student is at risk from distracted drivers or improper stop behavior.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Coffee County is at a crossroads. We can continue to rely on cameras that only record tragedies after they happen, or we can invest in the human element that prevents them. As I advance systemic education reform leading into 2028, I want to point to my home county as the district that led the way. Let's make Coffee County the safest place in America for a child to ride the bus.

REFERENCES

Georgia House Bill 409 (2024): "Addy's Law" - Student Transit Safety.

Georgia House Bill 268 (2025): "The School Safety and Student Well-being Act."

NCES (2024 Report): 2021-22 School Crime and Safety Data.

WALB News: Report on August 2025 Coffee County Bus Hit-and-Run.

GOSA Dashboard: Coffee County K-12 Student Discipline Data.