



SamTrans Board of Directors
Meeting June 3, 2026

Correspondence as of May 22, 2026

Subject

1. Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
2. Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
3. The World Is Buying Electric Buses while Hydrogen Fleets Collapse
4. Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
5. RE: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside – *Staff Response*
6. El Camino Transit Signal Priority
7. Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside – *Staff Response*
8. Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
9. RE: Unsafe driver – *Staff Response*
10. Letter re: San Mateo County Safety Applications For Every Traveler (SAFE-T) Project; Sent to Secretary Sean Duffy
11. Letter of Support re: City of Belmont’s Application to the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program, Sent to Secretary Sean Duffy

From: [M. Walker Wells](#)
To: [Chuang, Marie \[mchuang@hillsborough.net\]](#); [Canepa, David \[dcanepa@smcgov.org\]](#); [Gee, Jeff \[jgee@redwoodcity.org\]](#); [SMCSupSpeier@smcgov.org](#); [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)
Cc: [April Chan](#); [Casey Fromson](#); [Peter Skinner](#); [Jessica Epstein](#); [Jason Baker](#); [Devon Ryan](#); [Tasha Bartholomew](#); [Dan Lieberman](#); [Kevin Yin](#)
Subject: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
Date: Thursday, May 14, 2026 3:09:54 PM

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Board of Directors & Staff,

Sorry for including you all, but I am not sure who to reach out to. The current response from samTrans is "Contact Customer Service." Below is an email thread between the Portola Valley Elementary Principal, myself, and a samTrans representative.

Last week, I rode the bus with my Kindergartener son and I discovered that it makes a stop at Little People's Park (Town Center) in Portola Valley so the bus driver can take a bathroom break.

During these five minutes, the bus driver is not in the bus and the kids are left unattended with the door open. My son indicated that this is normal, but I am not sure. The route is very short and is exclusively used by elementary and middle school kids.

Is it possible to institute a policy that requires the driver to take a break at a different time?

Thank you,

Walker Wells
(650) 384-5229

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Lynette Hovland <lhovland@pvsd.net>
Date: Thu, May 14, 2026 at 9:14 AM
Subject: Re: San Mateo County Bus Route
To: M. Walker Wells <walker@wkwells.com>

Dear Walker,

I forwarded your concern to SamTrans and received this response.

Route 85 is a school-oriented route but it is still a public route which means anyone can also take this bus. Also, the operator is not responsible for supervising students but to stay focused on the road and drive safely.

Please ask the parent to call SamTrans Customer Service at 1-800-660-4287 if there are additional questions or concerns.

Lynette

On Thu, May 14, 2026 at 8:03 AM M. Walker Wells <walker@wkwells.com> wrote:

Hi Lynette, hope you're doing well!

I meant to connect with you last week, but I wanted to raise a concern regarding the bus route from Alice's restaurant to Corte Madera to Ormondale.

I rode it with Max last week and I discovered that it makes a stop at Little People's Park so the bus driver can take a bathroom break.

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Is it possible to get in contact with the right person at Samtrans to request that the driver take a break at a different time?

All the best, Walker

Sent from my iPhone
(650) 384-5229

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Ms. Lynette Hovland, MPA
Principal/District Title IX Coordinator

Portola Valley School District
Ormondale School
200 Shawnee Pass
Portola Valley, CA 94028
650-851-1777 ext. 2650

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Subject: Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
Date: Thursday, May 14, 2026 3:23:48 PM

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| message.

From: [Adrian Brandt](#)
To: [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)
Subject: The World Is Buying Electric Buses while Hydrogen Fleets Collapse
Date: Saturday, May 16, 2026 2:56:41 PM

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Honorable SamTrans Board Members & Staff,

The below linked video helps reinforce my recent public comment regarding what a mistake everything I've been able to find and know of for many years now points to what a big mistake I'm afraid your apparent continuing pursuit of hydrogen-powered buses is.

I urge you to avail yourselves of the best science & published books, videos, articles, and papers on the topic of hydrogen (vs. battery) powered ground transportation and its numerous economic, environmental, and practical pitfalls before making any further commitments to it.

Respectfully,
Adrian Brandt

The World Is Buying Electric Buses While Hydrogen Bus Fleets Collapse

Cities and transit agencies around the world are rapidly expanding electric bus fleets as falling battery costs, lower operating expenses, and improving charging infrastructure make BEVs more practical and superior to hydrogen alternatives in every way but refuel/recharge range. Meanwhile, several hydrogen bus projects are struggling with high fuel costs, complex maintenance, and limited refueling networks, raising new doubts about hydrogen's future in public transport.

Watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/78GnhTYkXT8>

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Subject: Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
Date: Monday, May 18, 2026 2:26:06 PM

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Surely, someone cares enough to respond?

Thanks, Walker

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Date: Thu, May 14, 2026 at 9:14 AM

Subject: Re: San Mateo County Bus Route

To: M. Walker Wells <walker@kwells.com>

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From: [SamTrans BOD Public Support](#)
To: walker@wkwells.com
Cc: [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)
Subject: RE: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
Date: Monday, May 18, 2026 4:04:28 PM

To Walker Wells,

Thank you for taking the time to bring this issue to our attention. We apologize for not getting back to you sooner, but we are still investigating the matter. The safety of our service is a top priority for us at SamTrans, so we wanted to be sure the appropriate staff could give this concern the due time and attention.

As soon as we know more, we will get back to you. Thank you for your patience.

Your SamTrans BOD Public Support Team

From: M. Walker Wells <walker@wkwells.com>
Sent: Monday, May 18, 2026 9:25:49 PM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik
To: Chuang, Marie [mchuang@hillsborough.net] <MChuang@hillsborough.net>; Canepa, David [dcanepa@smcgov.org] <dcanepa@smcgov.org>; Gee, Jeff [jgee@redwoodcity.org] <jgee@redwoodcity.org>; SMCSupSpeier@smcgov.org <SMCSupSpeier@smcgov.org>; Board (@samtrans.com) <Board@samtrans.com>
Cc: April Chan <ChanA@samtrans.com>; Casey Fromson <fromsonc@caltrain.com>; Peter Skinner <SkinnerP@samtrans.com>; Jessica Epstein <epsteinj@samtrans.com>; Jason Baker <bakerj@caltrain.com>; Devon Ryan <ryand@caltrain.com>; Tasha Bartholomew <bartholomewt@samtrans.com>; Dan Lieberman <liebermand@samtrans.com>; Kevin Yin <yink@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside

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From: [Benjamin Mangiafico](#)
To: [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)
Subject: El Camino Transit Signal Priority
Date: Monday, May 18, 2026 4:55:31 PM

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Hello Board members,

My name is Ben, and I am a high schooler and vice chair of the CAC, speaking as an individual.

I'm writing you this email because of a frustrating first hand experience I had today that validated years of complaints I've heard and expressed about Transit Signal Priority (TSP) along El Camino.

I recently completed my trip from Ralston Avenue to the Redwood City Transit Center on route ECR, bus 820. This bus was over half an hour late, and, as a result was bunching with another southbound bus, greatly increasing the effective headway of the route. It should go without saying that having a 45 minute service gap on SamTrans's flagship route at the start of rush hour when it is supposed to run every 15 minutes is unacceptable.

However, thankfully, there appears to be some low-hanging fruit. Two different times, my bus missed the green light by only a couple of seconds, in spite of the fact that El Camino supposedly has TSP that extends green lights for late buses (the two intersections in question were with Harbor Street and James Street). I would strongly recommend looking into whether TSP is actually active, if it can be made more aggressive, or if it only needs fixing on this one bus or these two intersections. I and others have been asking about better TSP for years only to be rebuffed that it's already active, and I think my experience today disproves that it is active to its full potential.

Thanks so much,
Ben Mangiafico

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For abuse, misuse, or objectionable content concerns, please contact abuse@seq.org.

From: [April Chan](#)
To: [M. Walker Wells](#); [Chuang, Marie \[mchuang@hillsborough.net\]](#); [Canepa, David \[dcanepa@smcgov.org\]](#); [Gee, Jeff \[jgee@redwoodcity.org\]](#); [SMCSupSpeier@smcgov.org](#); [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#)
Cc: [Jessica Epstein](#); [Ana Vasudeo](#); [Emily Beach](#); [Lisa Peabody](#)
Subject: Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
Date: Monday, May 18, 2026 5:12:26 PM

Dear Mr. Walker,

We have received your email, and it was forwarded to Customer Service for review and investigation. You should be getting a response soon.

Regards,
April Chan

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Subject: Re: Kids left alone on school bus routes — Bus driver leaves bus with kindergarteners alone inside
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 11:45:13 AM

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Really appreciate the response!

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Board of Directors & Staff,

Sorry for including you all, but I am not sure who to reach out to. The current response from samTrans is "Contact Customer Service." Below is an email thread between the Portola Valley Elementary Principal, myself, and a samTrans representative.

Last week, I rode the bus with my Kindergartener son and I discovered that it makes a stop at Little People's Park (Town Center) in Portola Valley so the bus driver can take a bathroom break.

During these five minutes, the bus driver is not in the bus and the kids are left unattended with the door open. My son indicated that this is normal, but I am not sure. The route is very short and is exclusively used by elementary and middle school kids.

Is it possible to institute a policy that requires the driver to take a break at a different time?

Thank you,

Walker Wells
(650) 384-5229

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Lynette Hovland <lhovland@pvsd.net>
Date: Thu, May 14, 2026 at 9:14 AM
Subject: Re: San Mateo County Bus Route
To: M. Walker Wells <walker@wkwells.com>

Dear Walker,

I forwarded your concern to SamTrans and received this response.

Route 85 is a school-oriented route but it is still a public route which means anyone can also take this bus. Also, the operator is not responsible for supervising students but to stay focused on the road and drive safely.

Please ask the parent to call SamTrans Customer Service at 1-800-660-4287 if there are additional questions or concerns.

Lynette

On Thu, May 14, 2026 at 8:03 AM M. Walker Wells <walker@wkwells.com> wrote:

Hi Lynette, hope you're doing well!

I meant to connect with you last week, but I wanted to raise a concern regarding the bus route from Alice's restaurant to Corte Madera to Ormondale.

I rode it with Max last week and I discovered that it makes a stop at Little People's Park so the bus driver can take a bathroom break.

Max indicated that this is normal, but I am not sure. During this five minutes, the bus driver is not in the bus and the kids are left unattended.

At least this was the case when I was on the bus last week.

Is it possible to get in contact with the right person at Samtrans to request that the driver take a break at a different time?

All the best, Walker

Sent from my iPhone
(650) 384-5229

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Ms. Lynette Hovland, MPA
Principal/District Title IX Coordinator

Portola Valley School District
Ormondale School
[200 Shawnee Pass](#)
[Portola Valley, CA 94028](#)
650-851-1777 ext. 2650

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From: [SamTrans BOD Public Support](#)
To: jvtrucksafety@yahoo.com
Cc: [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](mailto:board@samtrans.com)
Subject: RE: Unsafe driver
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 12:51:05 PM

To Julio Velasquez,

Thank you for contacting SamTrans, though we are sorry to see it was due to a scary experience you had on our service. Please rest assured that SamTrans expects operators to remain mindful of their responsibilities at all times, not just in maintaining their schedules but in adhering to the rules of the road. And, as you noted, maintaining the safety of our service is very important to us at SamTrans.

As such, we appreciate you taking the time to send us your feedback on your recent trip on our Route EPX. To ensure we can continue to provide our community with safe service, know that your concerns with this EPX operator and his driving was provided to our Bus Operations team for review. Additionally, a copy of this correspondence will be provided to our Board of Directors.

SamTrans staff will continue to strive to provide our community with a high-quality transit system. We hope your recent travels with us have proven more pleasant experiences, but please do not hesitate to reach out again if you have further comments or concerns with our service.

Your SamTrans BOD Public Support Team

-----Original Message-----

From: Julio Velasquez <jvtrucksafety@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 8, 2026 12:56 PM
To: Board (@samtrans.com) <board@samtrans.com>
Subject: Unsafe driver

[You don't often get email from jvtrucksafety@yahoo.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Hello. I wanted to reach out and let you know about a scary experience with your driver on bus #1016.

Am not much for complaining but this driver was acting extremely unsafe and unprofessional.

Monday evening I boarded bus at veterans Blvd in Redwood City towards San Bruno BART.

Pick up time was @5:27 P. M.
Route EPX.

I don't think there's a camera onboard this bus (seems fairly new)

Your driver was speeding, he got in the freeway and went across all lanes in one single movement to the express lane.

Once there he was speeding and following other vehicles externally close. (1 seconds) following distance.

Once we were close to our SFO Airport exit he waited until the last minute to sweep across all lanes again cutting other vehicles off to get to the exit.

During his turns and driving in rural streets extremely fast and unsafe.

I didn't think he's portraying the Safe Motto that SamTrans claims and is known for.

I didn't want the driver in trouble, but someone might need to give him some secret ride eval, a trail check, perhaps some coaching, and even retraining.

Thank you.

Good day.

Sent from my iPhone

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166 N. ROLLINS ROAD
MILLBRAE, CA 94030
(650) 508-6200

May 20, 2026

Secretary Sean Duffy
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA), I am writing in support of the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) FY 2026 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grants Program to fund the **San Mateo County Safety Applications For Every Traveler (SAFE-T)** project.

Designed based on a careful analysis of the Countywide High Injury Network, SAFE-T will develop and deploy a suite of innovative technologies that will improve road safety and enhance emergency response operations in both urban and rural (coastal) locations – supporting SS4A safety and emergency management priorities.

This will be accomplished by integrating new detection technologies with existing signal control systems at intersections to support both dynamic safety interventions at the intersection, and emergency vehicle preemption to support emergency vehicles response, while minimizing delay and impacts to drivers. This unique project will provide a blueprint for jurisdictions across the nation to address similar safety and emergency management needs.

SamTrans and SMCTA support the SAFE-T Project because it focuses on HIN intersections—where the most serious crashes happen and where many people walk, bike, and roll to reach transit, schools, jobs, and other key destinations. Project improvements will better protect these people while reducing crash-related delays that disrupt bus service and community travel.

The applications developed through this effort will create safer streets for drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and emergency responders, and we welcome USDOT's support to fund these safety improvements.

Thank you for your consideration of this project. Please contact Government and Community Affairs Director, Jessica Epstein, at EpsteinJ@samtrans.com if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "April Chan".

April Chan
General Manager/CEO, Executive Director

CC: San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transportation Authority Board of Directors

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

166 N. ROLLINS ROAD
MILLBRAE, CA 94030
(650) 508-6200

May 20, 2026

Secretary Sean Duffy
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans) and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA), I am writing in support of the City of Belmont's application to the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program for the Alameda de las Pulgas Multimodal Safety Project - Phase 1.

Alameda de las Pulgas is a vital regional corridor serving residents, students, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and commuters traveling through Belmont and neighboring San Carlos. The corridor provides important connections to schools, neighborhoods, and transit services, and has long presented safety and accessibility challenges for vulnerable roadway users.

The proposed project will implement critical Complete Streets and safety improvements, including mini-roundabouts, upgraded pedestrian crossings, ADA improvements, new traffic signal infrastructure, sidewalk gap closures, and Class IV separated bikeways designed to improve comfort and safety for bicyclists of all ages and abilities.

SamTrans supports this project because safe, accessible streets improve access to transit and strengthen first- and last-mile connections for riders traveling to schools, jobs, and essential services. By making Alameda de las Pulgas safer for people walking, biking, and rolling, the project will help SamTrans serve the corridor more effectively and support a more connected transportation network in San Mateo County.

These improvements will help reduce vehicle speeds, improve multimodal connectivity, enhance accessibility, and create a safer transportation environment for the community. The project strongly aligns with the goals of the SS4A program by advancing roadway safety, multimodal mobility, and equitable access to transportation options.

Thank you for your consideration of this project. Please contact Government and Community Affairs Director, Jessica Epstein, at EpsteinJ@samtrans.com if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "April Chan".

April Chan
General Manager/CEO, Executive Director

CC: San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transportation Authority Board of Directors