



## **PRELIMINARY REPORT**

**Rochester, Indiana**

**HWY19MH003**

**(3 pages)**



## PRELIMINARY REPORT HIGHWAY HWY19MH003

*The information in this report is preliminary and will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.*

About 7:12 a.m., on Tuesday, October 30, 2018, a 2014 Thomas Built school bus traveling north in the 4600 block of State Route 25 (SR-25) in Rochester, Fulton County, Indiana, stopped to pick up students at the designated location when a pickup truck traveling south struck the four children, who were crossing the roadway in the early morning darkness. The school bus, operated by the Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation, had its warning lights on, and the driver had deployed the stop arm. At this location, SR-25 is a two-lane highway with a posted speed limit of 55 mph. A mobile home park is located on the west side of the roadway, and an agricultural field is located on the east side (figure 1). There is no roadway lighting at this location. A “WATCH FOR SCHOOL BUS” and a “LEFT CURVE” warning sign are posted for southbound traffic on SR-25.



**Figure 1.** Crash location on SR-25, where students cross the road to the school bus pickup location (Source: Fulton County Sheriff's Office).

The four children were crossing the roadway in the southbound traffic lane when they were struck by the 2017 Toyota pickup, shown in figure 2. As a result of the crash, a 9-year-old female and two 6-year-old males were fatally injured. An 11-year-old male was transported by air ambulance to a medical facility in Fort Wayne, Indiana, for treatment of his injuries. The occupants of the school bus were not injured in the crash.



**Figure 2.** Crash-involved pickup truck that struck students crossing SR-25 (Source: Fulton County Sheriff's Office).

The NTSB continues to gather information on the student transportation policies of the Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation, the planning and development of bus routes, and the safety issues related to school bus loading and unloading of students on high-speed roadways.

In support of this investigation, the NTSB is also investigating two other crashes involving school bus loading and unloading. These crashes occurred in Hartsfield, Georgia, and Baldwin, Mississippi, and are briefly summarized below:

- **Hartsfield, Georgia:** About 6:50 a.m. on Thursday, October 25, 2018, a school bus traveling north in the 1000 block of Thigpen Trail, in Hartsfield, Georgia, stopped to pick up students at the designated location when a Kia car traveling south struck two children, who had started to cross the roadway in the early morning darkness. The school bus, operated by the Colquitt County School District, had its warning lights on, and the driver had deployed the stop arm. The posted speed limit is 55 mph. As a result of the crash, a 10-year-old male was fatally injured. A 7-year-old male suffered serious injuries and was transported by air ambulance to a medical facility.
- **Baldwyn, Mississippi:** About 6:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 31, 2018, a school bus traveling east on State Highway 370 near the intersection with County Road 2578 in Baldwin, Mississippi, stopped to pick up students at the designated location when a Toyota pickup truck traveling west struck a child, who was crossing the highway in the early morning darkness. The school bus, operated by the Baldwin School District, had its warning lights on, and the driver had deployed the stop arm. The posted speed limit is 55 mph. As a result of the crash, a 9-year-old male was fatally injured.

All aspects of the Rochester, Indiana, crash remain under investigation as the NTSB focuses on determining the probable cause, with the intent of issuing safety recommendations to prevent similar crashes. We are working in partnership with local law enforcement agencies.