



**Motor Carrier Attachment –School District Interviews**

**Rushville, IL**

**HWY24MH005**

**(66 pages)**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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FATAL SEMITRUCK & SCHOOL BUS \*

COLLISION AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE \*

Accident No.: HWY24MH005

IN RUSHVILLE, ILLINOIS ON \*

MARCH 11, 2024 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: DR. BEAU FRETUEG, Superintendent of Schools  
Schuyler-Industry School Board

KEVIN PRICE, Director of Transportation  
Rushville-Industry High School

740 Maple Avenue  
Rushville, Illinois

March 13, 2024

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FOX, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

WILLIE SMITH, Trooper  
Illinois State Police  
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Section

DANIEL BROWN, Special Agent  
FMCSA

DR. RAFAEL MARSHALL, Human Performance Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

BROCK LEWIS, Trooper  
Illinois State Police  
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Section

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Dr. Beau Freutueg and Kevin Price:

By Mr. Fox

5

I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. FOX: Good afternoon. This is Michael Fox, investigator  
3 with the National Transportation Safety Board out of Washington,  
4 D.C. Today is March the 13th, 2024. I am located at 740 Maple  
5 Avenue, Rushville, Illinois. We're located at the facility for  
6 the Board of Supervisors for the county school system. We're  
7 going to be interviewing the superintendent of schools, and also  
8 the manager --

9 MR. PRICE: Director of Transportation.

10 MR. FOX: Director of Student Transportation.

11 There's quite a few folks in the room. We're going to go  
12 around the room, and what I need you to do is say your name, your  
13 title, and then spell your last name.

14 Beau, we'll start off with you. Go ahead, sir.

15 DR. FRETUEG: It's Beau Fretueg, Superintendent of Schools of  
16 Schuyler-Industry School District. My last name is F-r-e-t-u-e-g.

17 MR. PRICE: Kevin Price, Director of Transportation at the  
18 Rushville-Industry High School, P-r-i-c-e.

19 TROOPER SMITH: Trooper Willie Smith, Illinois State Police,  
20 commercial vehicle enforcement section, S-m-i-t-h.

21 MR. BROWN: Dan Brown, special agent with the FMCSA, B-r-o-  
22 w-n.

23 TROOPER LEWIS: Trooper Brock Lewis, Illinois State Police,  
24 commercial vehicle section, L-e-w-i-s.

25 MR. FOX: Thank you all.

1           Let me start off by saying on behalf of the NTSB, the Chair  
2 Homendy, all of us here in the room, we offer our deepest  
3 condolences to you and your staff on this tragic event. As  
4 mentioned, we just want to go over a few things about the school  
5 system.

6           We're recording this conversation. Is that okay, sir?

7           DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

8                           INTERVIEW OF DR. FRETUEG AND MR. PRICE

9           MR. FOX: Okay. Let's start off with how the school is  
10 structured. Can you give me a basic overview of how the school  
11 board is set up? Is that an elected group of people?

12          DR. FRETUEG: Yeah, it's an elected group. There's seven  
13 board members. We are a unit district, but we also have  
14 districts, so each person is assigned to a district, so that's how  
15 they are voted upon. So there's District 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and  
16 if you're in District 1, you vote for the person that's in  
17 District 1, you have to be in that one. So seven school board  
18 members, and then of course they hire the superintendent, and then  
19 the superintendent is in charge of hiring from there down.

20          MR. FOX: And you said -- is it seven within the state or  
21 seven within the county?

22          DR. FRETUEG: Seven within the county. Within the school  
23 district, I'm sorry. It's not just the county because we're also  
24 in McDonough County and Fulton County.

25          MR. FOX: So you represent more than just this county?

1 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

2 MR. FOX: Okay. How long have you been in the position?

3 DR. FRETUEG: This is my ninth year.

4 MR. FOX: Ninth year. Now, is it completely county funded,  
5 or do you have state funding also?

6 DR. FRETUEG: We have state funding. We have evidence-based  
7 funding from the state that we get.

8 MR. FOX: And is the school system -- do you guys report to  
9 the state of pupil transportation? Is that how it's set up?

10 DR. FRETUEG: We do, through ISBE, through Illinois School  
11 Board of Education. Everything goes through Illinois School Board  
12 of Education. So when we do a transportation report every year,  
13 we send that to ISBE.

14 MR. FOX: They are the -- so is there a group or a body that  
15 provides oversight to the school system here?

16 DR. FRETUEG: It would be ISBE.

17 MR. FOX: And do they come in and audit your paperwork or do  
18 a review?

19 DR. FRETUEG: They do.

20 MR. FOX: How often?

21 DR. FRETUEG: Certain times. It just depends on if they're  
22 doing nutrition, if they're doing title program, if they're doing  
23 our early childhood program. We get audited at different times.  
24 It's nothing structured, I guess is what I should say. You get  
25 notified.

1 MR. FOX: Okay. How about as far as safety as far as the bus  
2 arena? Do they come in and audit any of the buses or your  
3 procedures for that?

4 MR. PRICE: Usually once a year they'll show up and go  
5 through my buses, check them all out and make sure they're all up  
6 to code, make sure my records are up to code.

7 MR. FOX: All right. Very good. When was your last audit?

8 DR. FRETUEG: For transportation?

9 MR. FOX: Yes.

10 DR. FRETUEG: Not since I've been here as far as the program  
11 itself.

12 MR. FOX: So not in nine years?

13 MR. PRICE: Well, through the ISBE, no. The state people  
14 will come and look at my buses. They usually try to do that once  
15 a year.

16 MR. FOX: Now, are they state police or?

17 DR. FRETUEG: No.

18 MR. PRICE: No. Like Mike Fitzgerald and stuff like that. I  
19 can go get his card if you'd like me to.

20 MR. FOX: We can look at it later, yeah.

21 MR. PRICE: Okay.

22 MR. FOX: So they're looking at vehicles or like to inspect  
23 the vehicles?

24 MR. PRICE: Yes, all the vehicles. Yes.

25 MR. FOX: So they're doing an annual inspection on the



1 vehicles?

2 MR. PRICE: Yes.

3 MR. FOX: Do they put a decal on the vehicle then?

4 MR. PRICE: No, they do not. If they find something wrong,  
5 they red flag vehicles and take it out of service and then I have  
6 to correct that, and then email them proof that that's been  
7 corrected, and the bus has to be retested and put back in service.

8 MR. FOX: Who is responsible for pupil transportation safety  
9 here? Is that your role?

10 MR. PRICE: Yes. I believe it would be, yes.

11 DR. FRETUEG: It would be both of our roles as far as that  
12 goes, working together.

13 MR. FOX: So you both are in charge of safety. Do you break  
14 it down, like you're vehicle safety and you're driver safety or  
15 just --

16 DR. FRETUEG: Just together as far as that goes.

17 MR. PRICE: We work together as much as we can on everything.

18 MR. FOX: All right. Do you have any safety manuals  
19 regarding your procedures?

20 MR. PRICE: As far as?

21 MR. FOX: SOPs, standard operating procedures. You don't  
22 have to get it now. We can --

23 MR. PRICE: Yeah, well --

24 MR. FOX: Do you have them? Do you have any written  
25 documents that describe your safety plan or procedures?

1 MR. PRICE: Yes. Yes, we have a bus rider rules and  
2 regulations, what's expected of the rider, what's expected of the  
3 driver. And we have an evacuation drill that we do for the back  
4 door, and we have a procedure on that.

5 MR. FOX: All right. Very good. Can you explain how drivers  
6 are hired?

7 MR. PRICE: Through the school's website or word of mouth.  
8 If we're needing help, we put the word out, and then they come in  
9 and we start going through the background checks.

10 DR. FRETUEG: They sign an application form. They get an  
11 application form here, but a lot of it is word of mouth. We have  
12 a very hard time getting drivers these days. We post it on our  
13 website, post it --

14 MR. FOX: Like messaging board --

15 DR. FRETUEG: Facebook. To be honest with you, that seems to  
16 work the best as far as getting everything out, and that's not  
17 just with drivers, but every position that we have. They then can  
18 come into this office just like anything, anybody else, and get an  
19 application, sign up, and that application goes to Kevin and the  
20 transportation department.

21 MR. FOX: Is there a minimum requirement to be a bus driver,  
22 like age and years of experience or things of that nature?

23 MR. PRICE: I believe it's age. No years of experience  
24 because they get trained.

25 MR. FOX: Is such a list of minimum standards and

1 qualifications in that safety book?

2 MR. PRICE: No.

3 MR. FOX: Okay. So is it just your -- here's our other staff  
4 members. We're being interrupted right now.

5 Dr. Marshall has come in, as well as Sarah Quinn.

6 This is Dr. Rafael Marshall. He is our human performance  
7 investigator. This is Beau, who is our superintendent.

8 DR. MARSHALL: Very nice to meet you.

9 MR. FOX: We're already recording in our interview.

10 Dr. MARSHALL: All right. I'm sorry about that.

11 MR. FOX: I think what we'll do is we'll take a break so that  
12 we can introduce Sarah to the staff here. So right now we're  
13 going off the record for a minute.

14 (Off the record)

15 (On the record)

16 MR. FOX: Okay. So we're back on record, and we left off on  
17 asking Beau on how drivers were hired.

18 DR. FRETUEG: Sure. Okay. Do you want me to repeat that  
19 or --

20 MR. FOX: Yes. Rafael didn't hear that.

21 DR. FRETUEG: Okay. So basically, when we have a driver  
22 opening, it gets posted on our website, it gets posted on  
23 Facebook, word of mouth. We're a very small community so we're  
24 pulling from a very small pool of drivers as far as that goes. We  
25 struggle to get drivers. But once they do commit to driving, they

1 would come in and then they would get an application for our  
2 transportation department, fill that out, and then that would be  
3 sent to Mr. Price at the transportation department.

4 MR. FOX: Okay. And we already went over if there was  
5 minimum standards for each driver.

6 DR. FRETUEG: And I think, too, and I don't -- again, I'm not  
7 sure, it's not part of my expertise as far as that goes, but the  
8 state outlines what a driver can be as far as that goes. There  
9 are regulations and from the state that outline all those  
10 transportation regulations, I guess is what I'd want to say, for  
11 bus drivers.

12 MR. FOX: And is there a training program once they -- after  
13 they get hired?

14 DR. FRETUEG: Yeah, they do. We have our own trainer, Calvin  
15 Phillips, who he utilizes our resources here to train them, take  
16 them out on a bus, drive the bus, work with the bus. It's very  
17 extensive. Mrs. Glick, who is our special service coordinator in  
18 the other room, she just went through it and spent hours and hours  
19 and hours of training. So it's, it's, it's extensive, I guess is  
20 what I want to say.

21 MR. FOX: How long does it take?

22 DR. FRETUEG: Sorry to put you on the -- Ms. Glick, how long  
23 did it take? And she was actually -- you were just -- oh, she's  
24 not even in there.

25 MR. FOX: We'll follow back up --

1 DR. FRETUEG: How long does a regular training take for a  
2 driver when they start training with Calvin and to the end?

3 MR. PRICE: Possibly a month. It's up to the discretion of  
4 my trainer, whether he thinks they're understanding it, getting --  
5 and, you know, how they perform on their pre-trip and the driving  
6 skills. It's up to the discretion of him.

7 MR. FOX: Are they paid during this time? Are they  
8 employees?

9 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

10 MR. FOX: And how about drug testing? Do you guys have a  
11 drug testing program?

12 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

13 MR. PRICE: They get drug tested when they come in. We're on  
14 periodic with Midwest Truckers for spot checking, for drug  
15 testing. I have her results right there if you need them.

16 MR. FOX: Yeah, we'll get to it. How about medical  
17 certificates or medical qualifications? Do you guys do that?

18 MR. PRICE: Yes. We do physicals, medical physicals every  
19 year. The state requires it. Yes.

20 MR. FOX: And is that through a local vendor or is it through  
21 the state?

22 MR. PRICE: It could be local, a local vendor.

23 MR. FOX: And do you have a particular, like a DOT medical  
24 examiner --

25 MR. PRICE: They can -- anybody that --

1 DR. FRETUEG: They choose.

2 MR. FOX: They can choose their own?

3 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

4 MR. PRICE: -- can do a bus driver.

5 MR. FOX: You guys pay for it?

6 MR. PRICE: Yes. That's her last one right there.

7 MR. FOX: Yeah, we'll look at all that. These are just some  
8 general questions. How about hours of service, or time cards, or  
9 do you do anything like that for hours?

10 DR. FRETUEG: It just depends on what they're driving. So  
11 this particular driver did other things for us, whether that  
12 was I think some aide work or whatnot, so they have timecards.  
13 Once they're driving, it's a regular paycheck as far as that goes.  
14 So it's hours, yeah.

15 MR. PRICE: But, yeah, there's no punching in or punching  
16 out. I mean, after they drove the route like a week or so, I sit  
17 down with the driver and say, okay, you got this many kids, you  
18 start now and you end now, that's kind of the timeframe of this  
19 route, as they get to learn it and drive through it.

20 MR. FOX: Okay. Trooper Willie, you had a question? Trooper  
21 Smith had a question?

22 TROOPER SMITH: Yeah, a Mike Fitzgerald question. Are we  
23 referring to the one who gave the Illinois Department of  
24 Transportation semi-annual school bus inspection report?

25 MR. PRICE: Um-hum.

1 TROOPER SMITH: Okay. Because on the -- I'm looking at that  
2 report, the latest one, and maybe they don't even put their names  
3 on there, I don't know. I see a CST name. I know what CST stands  
4 for, but it says Wayne Wagner.

5 MR. PRICE: That's the person inspecting the bus, Wagner  
6 Garage in Mount Sterling, Illinois.

7 TROOPER SMITH: Okay. So who's this Mike Fitzgerald?

8 MR. PRICE: He works for the state.

9 TROOPER SMITH: So these are two different things?

10 MR. PRICE: Yes.

11 TROOPER SMITH: Okay. I guess that answers that.

12 MR. PRICE: Yes, they are. Wagner is who we do our, you  
13 know, every so often in buses, so many miles everything has to be  
14 inspected. We have two garages we take them to, to do that. The  
15 state thing is they come in whenever they feel fit and they will  
16 look at my whole fleet.

17 TROOPER SMITH: These are -- what I'm looking at is you are  
18 physically taking that bus to a location.

19 MR. PRICE: Yes.

20 TROOPER SMITH: Got you.

21 MR. PRICE: But when the state does it, they come here.

22 TROOPER SMITH: They come here.

23 MR. FOX: What was his name again? Wagner?

24 TROOPER SMITH: Wayne Wagner. I can email you the school  
25 bus --

1 MR. PRICE: Wagner Garage or Belville's Garage in Beardstown,  
2 Illinois. We take them to both places.

3 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. This is Rafael Marshall, last name M-a-  
4 r-s-h-a-l-l. Can you tell me when the driver was hired?

5 DR. FRETUEG: May 23rd, 2024, on a school board meeting.  
6 That was her official date of hire.

7 DR. MARSHALL: I think you've already mentioned this, but who  
8 hired the driver?

9 DR. FRETUEG: I mean, the district hires. We recommend, and  
10 then the Board of Education hires. Does that make sense?

11 MR. FOX: So, oh, is it referred to the Board and they vote  
12 on it?

13 DR. FRETUEG: Yes. Yes. All our hires are recommended to  
14 the Board, and they hire.

15 MR. FOX: Okay.

16 MR. PRICE: It's not just like I can say, hey, we're going to  
17 hire this person. I've got to recommend, and then it goes on up  
18 the chain and get it voted on.

19 MR. FOX: And they all vote on it and its majority wins or  
20 something like that?

21 DR. FRETUEG: If you get four votes, you're in, or we could  
22 still vote you out.

23 MR. FOX: So how many is on the whole board?

24 DR. FRETUEG: What's that?

25 MR. FOX: Is it a total of four?



1 DR. FRETUEG: Seven.

2 MR. FOX: Seven. Okay.

3 DR. FRETUEG: So four is the majority.

4 MR. FOX: Four is the majority win.

5 DR. FRETUEG: Yeah.

6 MR. FOX: Okay. We know because we work for a board too.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was that hire date again? March  
8 the 3rd?

9 DR. FRETUEG: May 23rd, 2023. I think I said '24 yesterday,  
10 and it didn't happen yet, so.

11 DR. MARSHALL: And the supervisor of the driver is?

12 MR. PRICE: Me.

13 DR. MARSHALL: You.

14 MR. PRICE: Kevin Price.

15 DR. MARSHALL: Kevin. All right. And I think that's the  
16 driver's DQ file right in front of you.

17 MR. PRICE: Um-hum.

18 DR. MARSHALL: And does that include drug testing records as  
19 well?

20 MR. PRICE: Yes.

21 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. And we've already talked about medical  
22 certification. Did the driver ever receive any awards?

23 MR. PRICE: No.

24 DR. MARSHALL: Do you have that in here?

25 MR. PRICE: Just at the end when they retire, they get a

1 little something from us, but it's not like we do, you know, a  
2 10,000 mile, million mile, anything like that.

3 DR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

4 DR. FRETUEG: There's no incentive, I guess as far as the  
5 driving or what. We don't have any incentives for that, but they  
6 do -- if they work -- I'm sorry.

7 Terri, after five years -- no, there's nothing as far as the  
8 drivers? Okay.

9 Never mind, I'm sorry.

10 DR. MARSHALL: I guess the other side of that is whether the  
11 driver has received any disciplinary action during her time here?

12 DR. FRETUEG: No. No.

13 DR. MARSHALL: Did she ever receive any complaints from  
14 anyone, any parents or --

15 DR. FRETUEG: I have never received a phone call from a  
16 parent on that bus driver.

17 Have you?

18 MR. PRICE: No.

19 DR. MARSHALL: Do you know if the driver worked in any -- had  
20 any work outside of her position here?

21 MR. PRICE: Last summer she worked at Country Kids Daycare,  
22 but right now I don't think she did because she was driving three  
23 routes for us.

24 DR. MARSHALL: Oh, okay.

25 MR. PRICE: Morning PreK and an afternoon.

1 DR. MARSHALL: So was this the route that she had since the  
2 beginning of her hire?

3 MR. PRICE: The beginning of this year, school year.

4 DR. MARSHALL: This year.

5 MR. PRICE: Yes.

6 DR. FRETUEG: She didn't start with this route. She didn't  
7 start with the PreK route; is that correct?

8 MR. PRICE: Um-hum.

9 DR. FRETUEG: Yeah. She started with an a.m./p.m. We have  
10 a.m. obviously to get the kids here. We have p.m. to get them  
11 home. And then in the middle of the day, we're taking back PreK  
12 and picking up PreK for the switch between a.m. and p.m. PreK, if  
13 that makes sense.

14 DR. MARSHALL: Do you want to talk a little bit more about  
15 the schedule right now, Mike, or is that something you want to --

16 MR. FOX: Well, I mean, we'll want to get copies of her route  
17 history.

18 DR. FRETUEG: When you want copies of her route history, do  
19 you want the specific route that we are talking about?

20 MR. FOX: Yeah. So I don't know if it has a number or if  
21 it's called, you know, like you're saying a.m. and p.m. schedule.  
22 We don't have to pull all --

23 MR. PRICE: Do you want all of hers -- or like that's her  
24 PreK. There's a PreK in and a PreK out. It has the students, the  
25 address and everything.

1 MR. FOX: Exactly. So this is pretty much what we're looking  
2 for.

3 MR. PRICE: Okay. You want the whole day or just the PreK  
4 thing?

5 MR. FOX: No, the whole day.

6 MR. PRICE: Okay. I can go retrieve that for you.

7 MR. FOX: Okay.

8 DR. FRETUEG: So you want a.m., the middle route --

9 MR. FOX: Everything that she's been running for like the  
10 past month almost.

11 DR. FRETUEG: Sure.

12 MR. PRICE: Okay. I'll go retrieve that for you and bring it  
13 right back.

14 MR. FOX: You can get it in a minute.

15 MR. PRICE: Okay.

16 MR. FOX: That way we can keep the questions going and then  
17 we'll dive into the paperwork after we go off the record.

18 DR. MARSHALL: So we also want to know how familiar she was  
19 with each of the buses that she was driving. Was she assigned a  
20 bus?

21 MR. PRICE: Yes. Each of my drivers have a certain bus they  
22 drive every day.

23 DR. MARSHALL: And I think she had more than one bus, right?  
24 She had the PreK bus and then she had the regular --

25 MR. PRICE: Yes.

1 DR. FRETUEG: She had 89 and she has 62. Which means  
2 probably nothing to you guys.

3 MR. PRICE: 62 is 65 passenger Thomas. It's a big bus. 89  
4 was as 25 passenger minibus, what we call them, we use for PreK  
5 transportation.

6 DR. MARSHALL: And from what I understand, on Monday she was  
7 actually driving her normal route.

8 MR. PRICE: Yes. Normal route, normal bus.

9 DR. MARSHALL: And do you have a detailed explanation of the  
10 routes she ran, like sort of detailed documents with all the  
11 stops?

12 MR. PRICE: That's what this is.

13 DR. MARSHALL: That's all right. It's just a question I have  
14 here.

15 And how was the driver paid? Was it like bi-monthly or --

16 MR. PRICE: We get paid monthly.

17 DR. MARSHALL: Monthly. Okay. Were you aware if the driver  
18 had any health issues?

19 MR. PRICE: No.

20 DR. MARSHALL: Had she taken any time off recently?

21 MR. PRICE: No.

22 DR. MARSHALL: Did she have any life events? Was she  
23 married, divorced, death in the family?

24 MR. PRICE: Recently around this date?

25 DR. MARSHALL: Well, let's say within the past year.

1 MR. PRICE: No. She was divorced, but it's years ago. And  
2 nobody's died in her family that I know of here recently.

3 DR. MARSHALL: Do students receive any training on egress or  
4 bus safety training?

5 MR. PRICE: Yes. We train them on the emergency exit process  
6 in case of emergencies, where the emergency exits are on the bus  
7 and how to use them.

8 DR. MARSHALL: How does that work for three and five year  
9 olds?

10 MR. PRICE: It's difficult. We have to actually physically  
11 get them out of the seat, take them back and show them this is,  
12 you know, the back emergency door. We have to show them how to  
13 exit the bus and explain the scenario where we have to use the  
14 back door, side door. If the bus was on its top, get out the top  
15 hatch or the exit windows.

16 DR. MARSHALL: Seat belts. Yeah, how does that work for --  
17 how are the kids restrained, especially for the PreK kids?

18 MR. PRICE: Some of them are in our --

19 DR. FRETUEG: Five Star.

20 MR. PRICE: Five Star harness.

21 DR. MARSHALL: Okay.

22 MR. FOX: Is that integrated into the seat?

23 MR. PRICE: It's something we have to attach to the seat.

24 DR. FOX: Is it with a booster?

25 MR. PRICE: It's kind of a booster, yes.

1 DR. MARSHALL: And I guess the bus driver would be  
2 responsible for putting them in there?

3 DR. FRETUEG: Or a bus aide.

4 MR. PRICE: Bus driver or aide. Yes.

5 DR. FRETUEG: If the bus has a bus aide. We don't have bus  
6 aides on of all our buses.

7 DR. MARSHALL: How do you make that determination on which  
8 buses or routes have the -

9 DR. FRETUEG: Well, for some of our larger routes when we are  
10 doing the a.m./p.m., we use it because there might be some  
11 children on there that are disruptive more so than others, so we  
12 use that as a way to put an aide on. It's kind of hard to find  
13 aides as far to put on buses, but the PreK buses --

14 MR. PRICE: I think if their IEP says something about it or  
15 we have a behavioral issue, but none of our PreK routes had an  
16 aide on them.

17 DR. MARSHALL: IEP is what?

18 MR. PRICE: Christy, what is an IEP exactly?

19 DR. FRETUEG: Individualized Education Plan. So if they have  
20 certain -- they outline what is in that plan and we have to follow  
21 it.

22 MR. FOX: I'm very familiar with it. So just to follow up  
23 with what Rafael was saying, you do have some type of a booster  
24 seat with a harness that was equipped on this particular bus?

25 MR. PRICE: Um-hum.

1 MR. FOX: Are there procedures that the driver cannot engage  
2 the bus until everyone is in their seatbelt?

3 MR. PRICE: Yes.

4 MR. FOX: In their seat, seated, with the belt and buckled?

5 MR. PRICE: And buckled. Yes.

6 MR. FOX: Okay.

7 DR. MARSHALL: And I guess you have cameras facing backwards.

8 MR. PRICE: Um-hum.

9 MR. FOX: And did this bus, was it equipped with any type of  
10 video recording?

11 MR. PRICE: Yes. REI system.

12 MR. FOX: I'm not familiar with that. What does it do?

13 MR. PRICE: It has a hard drive in the bus that records  
14 everything. It records the driver. I think on them little ones,  
15 there's three cameras inside and one camera outside.

16 MR. FOX: Three cameras inside?

17 MR. PRICE: Yes.

18 MR. FOX: So driver facing --

19 MR. PRICE: Driver facing, all the way in the back, and in  
20 the middle. The one outside is basically to catch people running  
21 stop arms and stuff like that.

22 MR. FOX: And that is put on a hard drive in the bus?

23 MR. PRICE: Yes.

24 MR. FOX: Does it ever get downloaded?

25 MR. PRICE: Whenever one of the drivers -- there's a button



1 on there they can postmark it to say, hit that button and they'll  
2 radio in, say somebody just ran my stop arm.

3 DR. FRETUEG: Of if we have an issue --

4 MR. PRICE: Or we have an issue, anything. Any type of --

5 DR. FRETUEG: Disciplinary issue on the bus --

6 MR. PRICE: I pull that hard drive, bring it in and I view  
7 that.

8 MR. FOX: So do you have any previous recordings of that bus  
9 with that driver and those students?

10 MR. PRICE: It's still in the bus.

11 MR. FOX: So you have no previous recordings? The reason,  
12 we're going to try and image that machine, but it was, you know,  
13 it had a significant heat, with heat damage, so it's -- the reason  
14 why we're asking is we need to -- our other investigator who does  
15 survival factors will need to try to come with a seating chart.  
16 And if we had a previous -- typically, children are always going  
17 to sit in the same seat so if we could say who was seated where,  
18 and that's something we need to try to figure out.

19 MR. PRICE: Okay.

20 MR. FOX: So I don't know if there's someone else on staff  
21 that may be familiar, that might have done a substitute route that  
22 might know where those kids may have been seated.

23 DR. FRETUEG: Would the aides who get them on, get them off,  
24 or they probably get off.

25 MR. PRICE: Aides. We'll talk to the aides over at the

1 school.

2 MR. FOX: See if you can make an inquiry to see if someone  
3 might be familiar with where those children might have been  
4 positioned would be helpful. But you don't have any previous  
5 history of --

6 MR. PRICE: That does not download to anything except for the  
7 hard drive on that bus.

8 DR. FRETUEG: And we would only have it if it was on a  
9 flashdrive because we use a flashdrive to --

10 MR. FOX: Pull it off?

11 DR. FRETUEG: -- pull it off, and then we view it. Correct?

12 MR. FOX: You don't have anything here stored from previous  
13 runs?

14 DR. FRETUEG: Not that I've viewed that I know of, that I  
15 viewed.

16 DR. MARSHALL: So what's the primary purpose of having that  
17 camera and thing for you there?

18 MR. PRICE: Behavioral issues on the bus.

19 DR. MARSHALL: For the children or for the --

20 MR. PRICE: And then running our stop arms.

21 DR. MARSHALL: I see. Okay.

22 MR. PRICE: Yeah.

23 DR. MARSHALL: Have you considered using it for like training  
24 purposes for drivers or for --

25 MR. PRICE: No, I haven't considered it. You know, it could

1 give you some scenarios on a bus that might be helpful for a  
2 driver to say, you know, this is what's happening.

3 MR. FOX: Yes. And do you have maintenance records for the  
4 bus?

5 MR. PRICE: These buses are leased. I do all the maintenance  
6 on these buses.

7 MR. FOX: They're leased from where?

8 DR. FRETUEG: Central State and Midwest.

9 MR. PRICE: Yes.

10 MR. FOX: Is it a long term lease or --

11 DR. FRETUEG: Three year.

12 MR. FOX: Three year.

13 DR. FRETUEG: This is the last year of it. We're getting new  
14 ones next year.

15 MR. FOX: Do you have a copy of that lease? I don't need to  
16 see it, but I will in a minute.

17 MR. PRICE: Yes.

18 MR. FOX: So you have a copy of it?

19 DR. FRETUEG: Yep.

20 MR. PRICE: The oil, we run 7,000 miles. I put stickers in  
21 the buses, the drivers tell me. I check the tires. Once monthly,  
22 I go through all the little buses with a gauge and check them and  
23 make sure they're within specs, and if they're not, I change them.  
24 I haven't had to put brakes or anything on these buses yet.

25 MR. FOX: And I think we were mentioning with the trooper --

1 annual inspections are done by the state -- or repeat what your  
2 annual inspection program.

3 MR. PRICE: For the --

4 MR. FOX: Buses.

5 MR. PRICE: That's the Wagner garage and the Belville garage.

6 MR. FOX: Okay.

7 MR. PRICE: That's where we take them.

8 TROOPER SMITH: It's run by a certified Illinois Department  
9 of Transportation inspector. They're not necessarily employed by  
10 the State of Illinois. They are just certified by the State of  
11 Illinois.

12 MR. FOX: Yes, I know that. Virginia has that same type of  
13 program, and the state police audits their books.

14 TROOPER SMITH: IDOT does. State police does not. The  
15 Illinois Department of Transportation does it.

16 MR. FOX: And do they put a decal saying it's got a safety  
17 inspection?

18 MR. PRICE: Yes, on the windshield.

19 MR. FOX: Okay. So we'll need the documentation on all that  
20 stuff. And I guess we were mentioning that you do quite a bit of  
21 the maintenance yourself, or your staff does. And services are  
22 done by mileage then?

23 MR. PRICE: Yes.

24 MR. FOX: How many miles?

25 MR. PRICE: 7,000 miles on an oil change.

1 MR. FOX: Okay. And then when they're brought in for an oil,  
2 do you do like a Q service or --

3 MR. PRICE: I do a quick-over. I roll around it on a creeper  
4 and check it out. You know, I've got it in the air changing oil,  
5 so I look stuff over, check brakes and so forth.

6 MR. FOX: Okay. Was there any type of electronic equipment  
7 besides the video recorder, any kind of GPS or any kind of  
8 machinery like that on there?

9 DR. FRETUEG: No GPS on the buses.

10 MR. FOX: Nothing. We talked about seatbelts. I think the  
11 vehicle registration was burned up in the crash so there's no --  
12 you guys don't keep a copy?

13 MR. PRICE: No. When we receive that, it goes -- there's a  
14 compartment up there that has the information on the test, the  
15 registration, and the insurance card so it's all right there for  
16 the driver.

17 MR. FOX: Okay. Maybe we can get a copy from the state.  
18 How about pre-trip, post-trip inspections?

19 MR. PRICE: Yes. Well, we don't really do a post-trip. We  
20 do a pre-trip, and I have all the records. She'd only been  
21 driving that bus a little over a week. I just switched her from  
22 another bus to this bus, and I have all the records of her pre-  
23 trip inspection for that.

24 MR. FOX: It is the procedure though to write up any defects?

25 MR. PRICE: Yes. In terms of anything they find wrong in

1 that pre-trip, it's written on that, it's addressed to me, and I  
2 take care of the situation.

3 MR. FOX: Were there any known issues with the bus?

4 MR. PRICE: No. Nothing was noted on the pre-trip.

5 MR. FOX: One of the things that we would like to do if it's  
6 good with you all is get an exemplar vehicle. So if you have a  
7 sister vehicle similar to what maybe came off the assembly line  
8 that are --

9 MR. PRICE: I've got five more over there that are sisters.

10 MR. FOX: Okay. Perfect. And we would want to document  
11 that, scan it, and take pictures of it because the vehicle was  
12 burned up in the crash.

13 MR. PRICE: Sure.

14 MR. FOX: Those are all the questions I have. Willie?

15 TROOPER SMITH: Are your -- and I'm asking this just because  
16 it's a video question. Are your non-certified staff union?

17 DR. FRETUEG: No.

18 TROOPER SMITH: So you don't have -- you're not binded by a  
19 contract stating that video --

20 DR. FRETUEG: Non-certified are not.

21 TROOPER SMITH: -- cannot be used for disciplinary purposes?

22 DR. FRETUEG: They're not.

23 TROOPER SMITH: A lot of the questions, like the  
24 registration, we have that. I just actually emailed him the IDOT  
25 annual inspection so that can be forwarded to them or whatever.

1 TROOPER SMITH: Do you guys have the insurance information?

2 DR. FRETUEG: We do.

3 TROOPER SMITH: One thing, one discrepancy that I found on  
4 that IDOT inspection in conjunction with the Secretary of State  
5 registration, the Secretary of State registration showed that bus  
6 as a 2020. That shows a 2021. The VIN matches, but if there's  
7 any discretion at all that I've seen is that's the only  
8 discretion. And when it comes to our purposes, SOS is the be all,  
9 end all when it comes to what's the real year of that.

10 DR. FRETUEG: Correct. Okay.

11 TROOPER SMITH: So that may just be a typo on IDOT's part on  
12 that if you see that difference.

13 I can't think of anything else right now.

14 TROOPER LEWIS: And then going back, I know we kind of  
15 touched base on it a little bit, hours of service. It's basically  
16 for all intents and purposes you're paid by the day. You're  
17 showing up at 6 a.m. because your bus route starts at 6 a.m. and  
18 you're off at 4 p.m. That's how --

19 MR. PRICE: Well, they get paid by the trip. Like they do an  
20 a.m. trip so they'll get \$50 for the a.m. trip and they might take  
21 off in the afternoon. So they get paid by the trip for every  
22 trip: morning, noon, and afternoon.

23 TROOPER LEWIS: So then she -- did she have any other trips  
24 that day or the day before?

25 MR. PRICE: Yes, she did the morning.

1 TROOPER LEWIS: And then did she have any trips the previous  
2 day?

3 DR. FRETUEG: That was Sunday.

4 MR. PRICE: Sunday, no. Saturday, no. Friday --

5 DR. FRETUEG: No extra trips as far as that goes.

6 TROOPER LEWIS: And did you say did she have any other  
7 employment? Does she work on the weekend, do you know?

8 MR. PRICE: At this time, I don't think so. This last summer  
9 she did, but right at this time, I don't think she did.

10 TROOPER LEWIS: Bus driving is her only gig. Okay. And you  
11 guys said you have the insurance information. I'll get that.  
12 That's no big deal. I just want to make sure I get that.

13 MR. FOX: Any other questions? Dan, did you --

14 SA BROWN: How long you been doing this, Kevin?

15 MR. PRICE: Huh?

16 SA BROWN: How long have you been doing this as far as the  
17 maintenance? Two years?

18 MR. PRICE: I've been doing this job two years.

19 SA BROWN: Yeah. Okay. But you have previous experience  
20 with --

21 MR. PRICE: I was a forklift mechanic at DOT Foods for 20  
22 years. So I worked on a fleet of about 350 forklifts daily for 20  
23 years.

24 SA BROWN: That'll do 'er. As far as communication goes with  
25 the buses if they're out on a route, phones, radio?



1 MR. PRICE: No. Strictly no phones on the bus. I have a CB  
2 system with just us. Nobody else can hear it. The cops can't  
3 even hear us talk.

4 SA BROWN: Right. Okay.

5 MR. PRICE: It's just us to our channels of our buses. If I  
6 call and say, you know, this kid is not riding today, don't stop  
7 there, something like that. There is communications. Absolutely  
8 no phones.

9 SA BROWN: Who provides the -- you said the Five Star seating  
10 system, safety system, is that in all of your little buses or is  
11 that per student? Like how do you guys kind of regulate that --

12 DR. FRETUEG: So sometimes it's IEP. Obviously, yeah, we  
13 talked about that. But sometimes it's just we feel like it's  
14 needed for a student because they're having a hard time sitting  
15 and staying seated or going underneath the seats or, you know.

16 SA BROWN: Did these students have that?

17 MR. PRICE: Do they what?

18 DR. FRETUEG: Did they have the Five Star.

19 MR. PRICE: I believe two of the three may have. I'll have  
20 to do some more checking on that.

21 SA BROWN: Okay. And then do you guys provide those systems?  
22 I'm not familiar with that system at all so forgive me. Is that  
23 something you put into each seat, kind like a car seat?

24 MR. PRICE: Yes.

25 DR. FRETUEG: Yep.

1 SA BROWN: And then so do you guys own those?

2 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

3 SA BROWN: Put those through? Okay.

4 MR. PRICE: When we purchase buses, we can tell that bus  
5 company, you know, we may need 20 Star seats, can you give us 20  
6 Star seats, and then they'll give us some, but if we need some, we  
7 buy some.

8 SA BROWN: Is it kind of like a car where it's got the bars  
9 you latch onto type thing?

10 MR. PRICE: No, it's got a harness over top, two harness come  
11 over the middle --

12 SA BROWN: So it's built into the seat?

13 MR. PRICE: We can take it out of the seat and put it into  
14 the seat. I can show you one here in a little bit.

15 SA BROWN: Yeah, just for my own edification so I know what  
16 I'm talking about.

17 TROOPER SMITH: What did REI stand for? Do we know? Is it  
18 just a standard -- nobody knows? That's fine.

19 MR. PRICE: Sir, you're making me draw a blank right now.

20 MR. FOX: We'll research that, yeah, and get back.

21 Any other questions from our troopers? Not from CSA?

22 SA BROWN: No, sir.

23 MR. FOX: Rafael?

24 DR. MARSHALL: No.

25 MR. FOX: So at this time, we're going to go ahead and

1 conclude the interview. The time now is 1:42.

2 (Whereupon, at 1:42 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL SEMITRUCK & SCHOOL BUS  
COLLISION AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE  
IN RUSHVILLE, ILLINOIS  
ON MARCH 11, 2024  
Interview of Dr. Beau Fretueg  
& Mr. Kevin Price

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY24MH005

PLACE: Rushville, Illinois

DATE: March 13, 2024

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.



---

Terri Trauth  
Transcriber

**From:** [Dr. Beau Fretueg](#)  
**To:** [Michael Fox](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Transcript  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 9, 2024 12:19:04 PM  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)

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**Looks accurate to me.**

**Thank you.**

**Beau**

On Tue, Apr 9, 2024 at 7:24 AM Michael Fox <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Good morning Beau,

I hope this finds you well and you had nice Easter.

Attached please find a copy of the interview we conducted at your office with David Price. When you can, please review the document for accuracy. If no changes are required, perhaps you can let me know via email please.

I am available if you have any questions or concerns. Thanks,

Mike

Michael S. Fox  
Senior Highway Accident Investigator  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20594-2000  
Ph: [REDACTED]  
Cell: [REDACTED]  
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**"TEACHERS DON'T CHOOSE THE WRONG PROFESSION. SOCIETY CHOOSES THE WRONG HEROES."**

\*\*\*\*\*

**DR. BEAU FRETUEG  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
SCHUYLER-INDUSTRY SCHOOL DISTRICT #5**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

FATAL SEMITRUCK & SCHOOL BUS \*

COLLISION AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE \* Accident No.: HWY24MH005

IN RUSHVILLE, ILLINOIS ON \*

MARCH 11, 2024 \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: DR. BEAU FRETUEG, Superintendent of Schools  
KEVIN PRICE, Director of Transportation  
Schuyler-Industry School District

via Microsoft Teams

Thursday,  
May 30, 2024

## APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL FOX, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

DR. RAFAEL MARSHALL, Human Performance Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

CHARLES LeMOINE, ESQ.  
Legal Counsel for Schuyler-Industry School  
District No. 5  
Law Firm of Tressler, LLP



I N D E X

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By Mr. Fox	25

I N T E R V I E W

(12:11 p.m. EDT)

1  
2  
3 MR. FOX: Good afternoon. This is Michael Fox, investigator  
4 with the National Transportation Safety Board, out of Washington,  
5 D.C. Today is May 30th, 2024. The time is 12:11 p.m.

6 We are having a Teams conference call with the Schuyler-  
7 Industry School District, and there's several folks in the room or  
8 on this call. We're going to go around the room, and I'll ask you  
9 to state your name, spell your last name and then provide your  
10 title. So, we'll start with you, Dr. Fretueg.

11 DR. FRETUEG: Yes. It's Beau Fretueg, F-r-e-t-u-e-g, and I'm  
12 the Superintendent of Schools of Schuyler-Industry School  
13 District.

14 MR. PRICE: Kevin Price, P-r-i-c-e, Director of  
15 Transportation at Schuyler-Industry High School.

16 MR. FOX: Chuck.

17 MR. LeMOINE: Charles LeMoine, L-e-M-o-i-n-e, legal counsel  
18 for Schuyler-Industry School District No. 5. I'm with the Law  
19 Firm of Tressler, T-r-e-s-s-l-e-r, LLP, out of Chicago, Illinois.

20 MR. FOX: Dr. Marshall.

21 DR. MARSHALL: I'm Rafael Marshall. Last name is M-a-r-s-h-  
22 a-l-l. I'm the human performance investigator for the National  
23 Transportation Safety Board.

24 MR. FOX: Well, for your edification, we are recording this.  
25 Beau, do we have your permission to record this interview?

1 DR. FRETUEG: Yes, sir.

2 INTERVIEW OF DR. BEAU FRETUEG and KEVIN PRICE

3 MR. FOX: Okay. All right. so, thank you again for meeting  
4 with us. We just have several questions that we wanted to go  
5 over. During my visit or our visit when we were there, we were  
6 talking about different policies and procedures. And to my  
7 knowledge, the only one that we were able to locate was the ISBE  
8 Administrator Manual, like this one here. And, I'm showing a  
9 picture of the State of Illinois Administrator School Manual for  
10 Chuck's edification. I know you were under a lot of stress, and  
11 it was difficult to locate a couple items, but do you have --  
12 again, I'll ask you. Do you have any guidelines or a manual that  
13 describes your pupil transportation program, Kevin or Beau?

14 MR. PRICE: It would be in that, in that book that you just  
15 showed.

16 MR. FOX: This one.

17 MR. PRICE: Yes.

18 MR. FOX: Okay. So he's referring to the ISBE Administrator  
19 Manual, but you don't have an individual school district policy  
20 manual?

21 MR. PRICE: Not to my knowledge.

22 MR. FOX: All right. Very good. And during the interview, I  
23 was rereading it this morning, you mentioned that the students  
24 have to abide by the bus rider rules and regulations. Where are  
25 they Kevin?

1 MR. PRICE: We have copies of them in my office, and I  
2 believe they're handed out to the kids at the beginning of the  
3 year when they sign up for school.

4 MR. FOX: Now, are they the same ones -- I went on your  
5 website. There is some -- it's called a public policy on the --  
6 on your website under transportation. Is that the same one?

7 MR. PRICE: Are you looking that up, Beau?

8 MR. FOX: If you go --

9 MR. PRICE: Beau's looking that right now. Hold on.

10 MR. FOX: Yeah, if you go to the school website, Schuyler-  
11 Industry website, under parents, on the far left-hand corner, at  
12 the bottom of the school page, there's a link that says  
13 transportation. And if you -- and it brings up a picture of the  
14 school bus, our drivers, when I need to stop, and then it says  
15 public notice. Is that the same one you're talking about, Kevin?

16 MR. PRICE: Yes, that's kind of our generic form, yes.

17 MR. FOX: Maybe you could email it to me just to make sure  
18 that there are no differences, but this is the only one that I  
19 saw. Does it look about right?

20 MR. PRICE: Yes.

21 MR. FOX: Right, Beau?

22 DR. FRETUEG: I think there is a different one. I think I  
23 have it in my files to be honest with you.

24 MR. FOX: Okay.

25 MR. FRETUEG: I thought it got it to you.

1 MR. LeMOINE: And, Beau and Kevin, this is Chuck LeMoine.  
2 Anything that you email to any of the investigators on this, would  
3 you please copy me on any such document.

4 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

5 MR. LeMOINE: Thank you.

6 MR. FOX: You don't have to get it now, Beau. Just, you  
7 know, make a list and if there is a different one, maybe you did  
8 give it to me, but I was going through all my documents this  
9 morning, and I don't believe that I saw it. So that's fine.

10 All right. We'll move on here.

11 MR. PRICE: We did kind of come up with that one. We'll  
12 email you a copy of that.

13 MR. FOX: Okay. Perfect.

14 MR. PRICE: Both of you, the lawyer and you.

15 MR. FOX: Yeah. So on the website I also was looking at the  
16 different school handbooks. So there's one for the high school,  
17 middle school and then one for the elementary school.

18 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

19 MR. FOX: The ones for the middle school and high school for  
20 -- specifically for like school bus and transportation, those  
21 items are the same.

22 MR. PRICE: Yes.

23 MR. FOX: So, for example, in the middle school, it says --  
24 on page 38, it has transportation. It has bus conduct, and it has  
25 six elements, 1 through 6. And then on the next page, it has bus

1 transportation, and it lists 1 through 11 items. But, there's --  
2 it's different for the elementary school. The elementary school  
3 just has a very small paragraph on school bus --

4 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

5 MR. FOX: -- transportation.

6 DR. FRETUEG: That would be accurate.

7 MR. FOX: Is there a reason for that?

8 DR. FRETUEG: Well, I would believe that the two -- the high  
9 school and the middle school stay on the same page with their  
10 handbooks.

11 MR. FOX: All right.

12 DR. FRETUEG: They go through the IPA which is the Illinois  
13 Principal Association. There's a model handbook that they go  
14 through. We would need to put our elementary model handbook or  
15 our elementary as well into our model handbook.

16 MR. FOX: Yeah. So it just -- on page 9, the pages are not  
17 marked, it just has transportation and safety I think is the  
18 title. It says transportation and traffic safety, and it has a  
19 thing on bicycles, talking about bicycles and then the next page  
20 it just has a small -- well, I has actually three small paragraphs  
21 on bus transportation, but it's very generic. It doesn't have --  
22 really doesn't get into any of the other specifics that are  
23 mentioned in the other guidance --

24 DR. FRETUEG: Okay.

25 MR. FOX: -- for the middle school and the high school. So

1 it just caught my eye as being different.

2 DR. FRETUEG: Okay.

3 MR. FOX: And why it's relevant is because, you know, we're  
4 dealing with the children who were on, you know, in elementary  
5 school or pre-K.

6 DR. FRETUEG: Right.

7 MR. FOX: So that's why I just saw a little disconnect there.  
8 But that starts on page 9. Okay.

9 MR. LeMOINE: Hey, Mike. Can I ask you a question here?

10 MR. FOX: Yeah, please.

11 MR. LeMOINE: So all of the inquiries on this, you know, this  
12 -- these questions on the handbooks, just because you're asking  
13 them doesn't necessarily mean there's any relevance at least at  
14 this point as to the accident. This is just sort of when you look  
15 at an accident overall, if you see some ways to improve things or  
16 to make suggestions, that's part of why you're looking at this.  
17 Am right?

18 MR. FOX: Yes.

19 MR. LeMOINE: Or, am I misreading this? Okay.

20 MR. FOX: Yeah. So that's a good point and, you know, I rush  
21 through our intro. The Safety Board is made up of -- or, excuse  
22 me. When we send a team, we sent out what we call subject matter  
23 experts. So there's five investigators that have a specialty  
24 area. I do operations and motor carrier factors. Rafael does  
25 human performance. We have another investigator that does

1 survival factors, another one that does vehicle factors, and  
2 another one that does highway factors. And then we have  
3 reconstructionist.

4 And all those folks write us a report, and then from that  
5 report, we generate a scholarly report. So it's a holistic  
6 approach to the crash. So we're looking at the highway, the  
7 driver, the laws, the regulations, the state oversight, all these  
8 components will all click together to show what was happening at  
9 the time of the crash.

10 MR. LEMOINE: Okay.

11 MR. FOX: So policies and procedures are very important just  
12 so we know, you know, was there restrictions or was there policies  
13 for the students? Was there policies and procedures for the  
14 driver? Those are the types of things that we want to look at,  
15 and we articulate that in our final report.

16 MR. LEMOINE: All right. So if weather happened to be a  
17 factor --

18 MR. FOX: Yep.

19 MR. LEMOINE: -- that would, that would be something that the  
20 reconstructionist --

21 MR. FOX: Yes.

22 MR. LEMOINE: -- would likely take into account?

23 MR. FOX: Yes.

24 MR. LEMOINE: Okay.

25 MR. FOX: Including like sunlight. You know, if the sun was



1 just rising and the sun was in the driver's eyes or if there was  
2 fog or snow.

3 DR. FRETUEG: Okay.

4 MR. FOX: Okay. All right.

5 MR. LeMOINE: Because -- okay. Go ahead. Thank you. Thank  
6 you for that clarification.

7 MR. FOX: Yes, sir. All right. So, when they -- when the  
8 kids -- when the students get these manuals and books, it says --  
9 it actually says student and parent handbook. Is there training  
10 or is there an acknowledgement for these documents?

11 DR. FRETUEG: They have to sign that they received the  
12 handbook online.

13 MR. FOX: Okay. The student or parent or both?

14 DR. FRETUEG: Parent.

15 MR. FOX: The parent. Okay. Very good. And I may be  
16 sounding redundant, but is there any document, handbook or policy  
17 for school bus drivers?

18 MR. PRICE: You mean what's expected out of them while  
19 they're driving.

20 MR. FOX: Yes, sir.

21 MR. PRICE: I don't think there is.

22 MR. FOX: Now, they get their initial training and, of  
23 course, what they do with Calvin.

24 MR. PRICE: Yes.

25 MR. FOX: And then, and then they have to do their annual

1 refresher training.

2 MR. PRICE: Yes.

3 MR. FOX: But -- and so refresh me -- refresh my memory, but  
4 I believe is that like first aid and the blood borne pathogens and  
5 all that kind of stuff in that training?

6 MR. PRICE: It covers pretty much everything, how you stop,  
7 how you drive the bus. It's pretty intense really, all the  
8 different parts of the bus. I believe it does cover phone usage  
9 and everything in that training, that you're not supposed to be on  
10 a phone at any time in a bus. It covers a lot of different  
11 criterias (ph.).

12 MR. FOX: Okay. I may need to get a copy of that curriculum.

13 MR. PRICE: Okay.

14 MR. FOX: Is that from the -- from that --

15 MR. LEMOINE: ROE.

16 MR. FOX: Pardon me.

17 MR. PRICE: The ROE. ROE in Macomb, Illinois.

18 MR. FOX: Okay.

19 MR. LEMOINE: It's the Regional --

20 DR. FRETUEG: -- Office of Education.

21 MR. PRICE: Yeah.

22 MR. FOX: Is that that Theresa or something. I saw a  
23 document. The Regional Superintendent of Schools.

24 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

25 MR. FOX: It looks like John Max (ph.) or something. Am I

1 reading that --

2 DR. FRETUEG: Meixner. John Meixner.

3 MR. FOX: Oh, okay. Okay. Gotcha. All right. So that is  
4 the -- that's the curriculum. All right. We may need to take a  
5 look at that, but as far as locally in the -- in your county or in  
6 your school district, you don't have a local policy regarding any  
7 of these procedures for your school bus drivers. Is that correct?

8 MR. PRICE: Not as like a written handbook that we'd hand  
9 them, no.

10 MR. FOX: Okay. All right. Fair enough. I had asked, when  
11 I was there, was there, was there any procedure or policy about --  
12 that they had to be -- that the students had to be seated or  
13 belted. It's on page 23 of the transcript. Is that written  
14 anywhere?

15 MR. PRICE: It's not handwritten or written in any book, is  
16 it?

17 DR. FRETUEG: I don't think it's written in any book.

18 MR. PRICE: It's just something you guys adopt.

19 DR. FRETUEG: Right.

20 MR. PRICE: I don't believe it's in a manual or anything  
21 anywhere.

22 MR. FOX: Okay.

23 MR. PRICE: It was just proposed and by the board for the  
24 pre-K kids.

25 MR. FOX: Okay.

1 MR. PRICE: As far as like a seating arrangement on the bus,  
2 we don't have that unless we have a kid that is behaving bad, and  
3 then the driver puts them in a certain seat so they can keep an  
4 eye on them.

5 MR. FOX: Okay. Is there any --

6 MR. LeMOINE: I can't remember --

7 MR. FOX: Yeah.

8 MR. LeMOINE: Can I ask a question while we're on this  
9 subject?

10 MR. FOX: Yes.

11 MR. LeMOINE: So, Kevin or Beau, you said -- I think it was  
12 Kevin said this issue of being belted is adopted by the board. Is  
13 that done at a board meeting or how does that get done? Can  
14 you --

15 MR. PRICE: I believe that was brought up by the previous  
16 director of transportation at a board meeting. Am I correct? I  
17 think that was before me and Beau both come into these positions.

18 MR. LeMOINE: Okay. So when you guys came on, it was your  
19 understanding from -- somebody told you that at a prior board  
20 meeting this is the procedure that these kids should be belted.  
21 That was your understanding.

22 MR. PRICE: On the pre-K kids, yes.

23 MR. LeMOINE: Okay. All right. Go ahead.

24 DR. MARSHALL: I have a question. Chuck, are you done?

25 MR. LeMOINE: Yeah. Yep.

1 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. Sorry. I didn't want to step over you.  
2 But if -- when it comes to seat assignments or belt usage, are the  
3 school bus drivers given any like informal or even formal  
4 procedures on how to -- on what they should do if a child is not  
5 sitting in an assigned seat or is not belted properly?

6 MR. PRICE: Yes. If they, if they -- they're instructed on  
7 how to use the belts, get them in and out, but some of these kids  
8 are Houdini. You can put them in that bet and it could be on  
9 perfect. You drive half a block and look up, they're out and  
10 they're gone. They're in another seat.

11 DR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

12 MR. PRICE: We just have to, at the next stop, get them back  
13 in that say, you've got to stay here.

14 DR. MARSHALL: Right. Do you have an idea --

15 DR. FRETUEG: And, of course --

16 DR. MARSHALL: I'm sorry. Go ahead.

17 DR. FRETUEG: I was just going to say, if they don't or  
18 they're a continued safety hazard, then the administrators step in  
19 and they basically discuss it with the kids and the parents about  
20 their behaviors.

21 MR. FOX: Okay.

22 DR. FRETUEG: Does that make sense?

23 DR. MARSHALL: So that the bus driver isn't supposed to  
24 discipline the kids themselves. They just need to report --

25 DR. FRETUEG: Yes.

1 DR. MARSHALL: -- the student to the administrator.

2 MR. PRICE: If the kid does it two or three times or  
3 something, they'll write it up or tell me, and then me and Beau  
4 have a meeting and they -- he talks to the parents and says this  
5 is what the student's doing on the bus. For safety reasons, we  
6 need to, you know, get this under control.

7 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. Thank you. Is there any -- I know we  
8 keep talking about policy. But is there any pointing that you're  
9 aware of about playing music on the bus or is there a restriction  
10 or no restriction? And this would be for both the driver and the  
11 students.

12 MR. PRICE: The buses are built to where there's no speakers  
13 by the driver. The radio for the bus is -- the speakers are  
14 behind the driver. So the radio on the bus is really not for the  
15 driver. They're not supposed to be, you know, turning music up  
16 loud enough to where they can blast the whole thing and hear it up  
17 in front of the bus. I guess I could say I don't think there's no  
18 -- I don't think there's any written policies anywhere on that  
19 that I know of.

20 MR. FOX: So they can, they can turn on the radio for the  
21 students?

22 MR. PRICE: Yes, they can.

23 MR. FOX: Okay. Yeah.

24 MR. PRICE: And the radio in the bus aimed for the students  
25 and not the driver --

1 MR. FOX: Right.

2 MR. PRICE: -- because there's no speakers in the front of  
3 the bus for them to hear.

4 MR. FOX: Gotcha. And is there any policies about cell phone  
5 use on the bus for the driver?

6 MR. PRICE: I believe it's in the ROE training. I'll have to  
7 look through that and make sure of that.

8 MR. FOX: Okay.

9 MR. PRICE: But I'm pretty sure in our training with Calvin,  
10 too, that's pretty much taught, that you can't be on a phone or  
11 anything. That's an immediate, you're out.

12 MR. FOX: Gotcha.

13 MR. LeMOINE: Can I ask a question while we're on this  
14 subject. Do you have -- have you been able to retrieve any cell  
15 phone records from the bus driver from the time of the accident?

16 DR. MARSHALL: Yeah. We were able to subpoena her cell phone  
17 records, and we also have her physical cell phone which was  
18 extensively damaged during the crash. So we haven't been able to  
19 extract any information from that cell phone. We're still working  
20 on it though. So we're hopeful.

21 MR. LeMOINE: All right. Can you shed any light on what the  
22 cell phone records show that you did obtain?

23 MR. FOX: Off line.

24 MR. LeMOINE: Okay. All right. No problem. All right.

25 MR. FOX: In her paperwork, in her initial paperwork, and I

1 think even over the past year, there was some -- there was  
2 documents in there talking about her having restricted payroll  
3 because I believe of a Social Security disability. Were you guys  
4 aware of that?

5 DR. FRETUEG: Yes, she could only be paid so much. It was --

6 MR. FOX: It was like 17-5 or 17-9, Beau.

7 DR. FRETUEG: Yeah, something like that. You're correct.

8 MR. FOX: Right. Did you guys question her about here  
9 disability at all?

10 DR. FRETUEG: Not to my knowledge.

11 MR. PRICE: We didn't because she passed the physical that's  
12 given to her for a bus driver.

13 MR. FOX: Okay.

14 MR. PRICE: So a doctor said she was well enough to drive a  
15 bus.

16 MR. FOX: Gotcha.

17 DR. MARSHALL: So while we're on that subject --

18 MR. FOX: You take over, Rafael.

19 DR. MARSHALL: Yeah. I just wanted to find out, do you have  
20 -- do you, do you actually suggest or require your drivers to go  
21 to certain medical examiners?

22 MR. PRICE: No, they can go to any doctor of their choice.

23 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. Also, once you got the medical  
24 examination form back from the medical examiner, do you, do you or  
25 anybody in your staff review the medical examination form?



1 MR. PRICE: I look over it, and then it's put in their file  
2 to keep.

3 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. Is there anything in that medical  
4 examination form that you're sensitive to? For example, like, you  
5 know, what their abilities or capabilities are or what drugs they  
6 might -- what prescription drugs they might use or anything like  
7 that. What exactly are you looking for when you examine those  
8 forms?

9 MR. PRICE: To see if there's anything on there that pops out  
10 as they shouldn't drive, you know, as to narcotics or anything.  
11 Well, that would be in the blood test that comes I get when I get  
12 their physical but if there are any physical limitations of not  
13 passing them as a school bus, then the doctor won't pass them.

14 DR. MARSHALL: So do you --

15 MR. LeMOINE: Can I make a comment here?

16 DR. MARSHALL: Sure.

17 MR. LeMOINE: You know, sort of insisting that a school  
18 district, you know, challenge a doctor's report seems a little bit  
19 -- seems a little unnecessary because the people in our school are  
20 not doctors. You know, if a person goes and gets a legitimate,  
21 you know, physical examination and that person makes a medical  
22 determination that that person can drive, that should be the end  
23 of it unless, of course, that driver comes in and, you know, after  
24 the examination and points out some sort of disability that would  
25 change that result. So, again I understand your looking into

1 things here but, you know, sort of suggesting that the district,  
2 you know, should, you know, look at these reports in a different  
3 fashion, it seems a little, you know, unnecessary. That's my  
4 comment. So.

5 DR. MARSHALL: I completely understand, Chuck. I think --

6 MR. LeMOINE: Okay. All right.

7 DR. MARSHALL: And these lines of questions are not  
8 necessarily faulting the district at all. What we're doing is  
9 we're making comparisons about how Illinois in general does its  
10 medical -- or what the process is for medical review of their bus  
11 drivers compared to, for example, how that FMCSA requires  
12 commercial drivers be examined. So this is, this isn't really --  
13 we're not really challenging how the district is doing it. We're  
14 really just making comparisons right now on how school districts  
15 all over do it versus how the FMCSA requires the commercial  
16 drivers do the medical examinations.

17 MR. LeMOINE: No, and I, and I appreciate that. And, you  
18 know, frankly, you know, maybe it is something that, you know,  
19 there should be some sort of national standard as it relates to  
20 this. And, you know, unfortunately, you know, the districts, you  
21 know, do the best with what they have.

22 DR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

23 MR. LeMOINE: And if they want to regulate it, they can.  
24 That's, you know, certainly their choice to do.

25 DR. MARSHALL: Right.

1 MR. LEMOINE: So. All right. Go ahead. I'm sorry to  
2 interrupt you.

3 DR. MARSHALL: So do you actually have -- do you provide  
4 applicants with like a list of physical activities they're  
5 expected to perform as a bus driver?

6 MR. PRICE: No. You know, drive a bus but as far as  
7 something written on papers, no. I don't know what you'd put on  
8 that. They know what they're signing up for, to drive a bus.

9 DR. MARSHALL: Okay.

10 MR. PRICE: Are you looking for something, Beau, that --

11 MR. LEMOINE: We don't have a job description, Beau or Kevin,  
12 do we? Like, you know, something --

13 MR. PRICE: Beau's looking for that right now to see if we do  
14 have.

15 MR. LEMOINE: Yeah, if we have a job description, if you  
16 could supply that to them, that would be helpful.

17 DR. FRETUEG: We have a job description but it's not given to  
18 the bus drivers, Chuck.

19 MR. LEMOINE: It's just something we keep internally?

20 DR. FRETUEG: Yeah.

21 MR. LEMOINE: And what do we use it for?

22 DR. FRETUEG: Just to have. The job description, just to  
23 have. We don't give it to the bus drivers though.

24 MR. LEMOINE: Okay.

25 DR. FRETUEG: That's something maybe we should change.

1 DR. MARSHALL: Mike, do you want me to continue with my  
2 questions?

3 MR. FOX: Yes, yeah, you go right ahead.

4 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. As Mike mentioned, it looks like this  
5 driver was on disability. And, I was just wondering how many  
6 other drivers do you have on staff that are on disability?

7 MR. PRICE: None to my knowledge.

8 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. Have you ever had any other drivers on  
9 disability before?

10 MR. PRICE: I wouldn't know how to answer that. I've only  
11 been here 2 years.

12 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. So, considering that this might be the  
13 first driver you've had with a disability or who is receiving  
14 disability from Social Security, did you call Social Security at  
15 any time to see what requirements they had for hiring a driver  
16 with a disability?

17 MR. PRICE: No.

18 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. Just so you know, there's no  
19 requirement to do so, but I was just wondering. Did you --

20 MR. LEMOINE: Can I ask a question, Rafael? Have you  
21 obtained any Social Security disability records on the driver?  
22 Have you issued a subpoena and gotten records from them yet?

23 DR. MARSHALL: Yes, we have, and we could discuss that a  
24 little bit offline.

25 MR. LEMOINE: Okay. All right. Thank you.

1 DR. MARSHALL: So did you contact any of her previous  
2 employers prior to hiring her?

3 MR. PRICE: No, I didn't.

4 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. Just a few more questions. So, this is  
5 with regards to what her route was. Can you tell me a little bit  
6 about what the driver's routine was prior to starting her morning  
7 route and prior to starting her late morning route and her other  
8 routes?

9 MR. PRICE: They come in. They go out. They pre-trip their  
10 bus. They come in with their inspection sheets (ph.), turn the  
11 inspection sheets in. They, you know, some of them sit around and  
12 talk for a little bit, drink coffee, get water, whatever. They  
13 all have a certain time that they know they have to leave by to go  
14 get -- to make the route work. And then when it comes that time,  
15 she leaves.

16 DR. MARSHALL: So when does she get -- who is she in contact  
17 with prior to driving her route and after she's done driving her  
18 route?

19 MR. PRICE: She would see me. She would see about a quarter  
20 of the drivers. She was one of my first leavers in the morning.  
21 She was one of the early, early people leaving. So she would see  
22 me, Denise Curless, Wayne Deznern (ph.) and maybe two or three  
23 other drivers would be there at that time.

24 MR. FOX: Okay. And they also have to do a radio check?

25 MR. PRICE: Yes. Yes, that's part of their routine. They

1 have to do a radio check.

2 DR. MARSHALL: Can you tell me what -- in general, what her  
3 demeanor would be when she, when she arrives in the morning?

4 MR. PRICE: She's always usually happy go lucky.

5 DR. MARSHALL: Yeah.

6 MR. PRICE: In a good mood.

7 DR. MARSHALL: Okay.

8 MR. PRICE: She was never one to be a bad mood. She was  
9 always happy to come to work. She liked her job.

10 DR. MARSHALL: Did you notice any differences between all the  
11 other days and that Monday, March 11th?

12 MR. PRICE: No.

13 DR. MARSHALL: Did you see her March 11th?

14 MR. PRICE: In the morning. It would have been just for like  
15 3 to 5 minutes or so when she was coming in doing her check and  
16 stuff.

17 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. And she acted totally normal like any  
18 other day?

19 MR. PRICE: Yeah, she usually stopped right by the door where  
20 me and Wayne were sitting in the office and say hi, give Wayne a  
21 little bump, you know, how you doing, rough him a little morning,  
22 and off she'd go.

23 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. So no differences between that day and  
24 any other day.

25 MR. PRICE: No.

1 DR. MARSHALL: Did she ever speak to anyone about her -- any  
2 health issues or maybe fatigue or tiredness or anything like that?

3 MR. PRICE: No.

4 DR. MARSHALL: Okay.

5 MR. PRICE: She always seemed happy and in a good mood and  
6 everything. She never said anything to me out of the ordinary,  
7 you know, hi, how you doing and all that stuff.

8 DR. MARSHALL: Okay. Thank you. Mike.

9 MR. FOX: The only other question I have for you guys is has  
10 the school district implemented any new policies or procedures  
11 since the crash?

12 MR. PRICE: We're working on a few different ones. I went  
13 through since this and made sure I was in contact with Midwest  
14 Truckers to make sure all my drivers are in the lottery, and they  
15 sent me new forms. I had all my new drivers sign them forms again  
16 and put it in their folders.

17 MR. FOX: You mean for the drug testing?

18 MR. PRICE: Yes.

19 MR. FOX: Yeah. Okay. I believe those are the questions  
20 that we have at this time. Rafael, do you have anything else?

21 DR. MARSHALL: No, I think I've exhausted my questions.  
22 Thank you so much.

23 MR. PRICE: I have come up -- I've come up with folders for  
24 maintenance schedules on everything now, paperwork.

25 MR. FOX: Okay.

1           MR. PRICE: Everything. Every vehicle has a registration  
2 folder now and a maintenance folder.

3           MR. FOX: Good.

4           MR. PRICE: So I'm working on stuff, what you told me to, you  
5 know --

6           MR. FOX: Good.

7           MR. PRICE: -- trying to get a handle on all this. It's all  
8 new to me.

9           MR. FOX: I'm proud of you. You did a good job. All right.  
10 Well, I think that we've answered all our immediate questions.

11           So, I think we're going to go ahead and conclude the  
12 interview. The time is now 12:43, and we are going off the  
13 record. Thank you all.

14           (Whereupon, at 12:43 p.m., the interview was concluded.)  
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

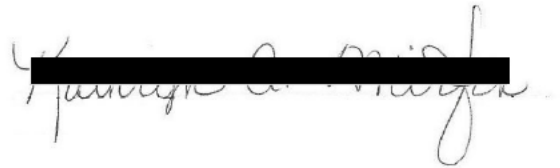
IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL SEMITRUCK & SCHOOL BUS  
COLLISION AND SUBSEQUENT FIRE  
IN RUSHVILLE, ILLINOIS, ON  
MARCH 11, 2024  
Interview of Dr. Beau Fretueg and  
Kevin Price

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY24MH005

PLACE: via Microsoft Teams

DATE: May 30, 2024

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.



---

Kathryn A. Mirfin  
Transcriber

# National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Highway Safety

Washington, DC 20594



## Interview Clarification Form

Sheet 1 of \_\_\_\_\_

NTSB Interview of: Superintendent of Schools & Director of Transportation

Date of Interview: 5/30/2024

NTSB Case Number: HWY24MH005

INSTRUCTIONS: After reading the transcript or summary of your interview, please note any clarifications or additions on this sheet. If additional space is needed, make as many additional copies of the second page as necessary. When completed, please sign the bottom of each sheet. DO NOT make any marks or notations on the actual transcript.

If there are no changes, please check this box  and sign the bottom of this sheet.

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I declare that I have read my foregoing interview transcript or summary and, together with any clarifications and/or additions made above, the facts stated herein are true.

Name: Dr. Beau Fretueg

Signature: 

Date: 10 October 2024