

To: Haverhill Public Schools

From : Judith Crocker, Statewide Coordinator

Massachusetts Safe Routes to School program (MA SRTS)

Date: December 12, 2024

RE: Dismissal Assessment for the Hunking School

Summary: The MA SRTS program was contacted by the school district following an incident in the Hunking K-8 School's driveway, where a sixth grader entered the crosswalk nearest to Revere Street and was struck by a vehicle. The vehicle in question had stopped at the crosswalk to allow other students to cross within the crosswalk. The student involved in the incident entered the same crosswalk at an oblique angle from behind the driver in their blind spot, traversing on the driveway not sidewalk, and entered the crosswalk at the vehicle's left front area in the middle of the two-way roadway. Most unfortunately, the student entered the crosswalk as the driver was beginning to move forward.

MA SRTS had completed and Arrival Dismissal Assessment from late 2019 at the school and the report was re-distributed as a means of understanding previous concerns.

Observation: Tuesday, December 10 at 2:45 p.m. (dismissal). The weather was darkly overcast and 34 degrees Fahrenheit.

Attendees:

- HPS Safe and Supportive Schools Liaison Maureen Irons
- Principal Timothy Betty
- Officer Jason Pearl
- SRO Gillian Privitera
- MA SRTS Coordinator Judy Crocker

Recommendations:

1. **Separation of transportation modes on school property** - While the school does a good job separating most modes of student transportation, there are a few areas of concern. It is important for walkers, bikers, and bussers to be able to navigate their way safely within the school zone.
 - a. Many family vehicles have students in both the elementary and middle school wings. With the current dismissal practice of collecting students at their respective buildings, the result is family vehicles traveling back and forth during (arrival and) dismissal.

To lessen the family vehicle congestion, consider having middle school siblings meet in the elementary school playground for siblings and their family rides. They

could walk thru the building or exit at the main entrance. The suggested order is G6-8 dismissed first, followed by G5, and finally GK/1-4.

- b. Delineate true walkers/bikers being dismissed first from those walkers traveling to local vehicles as part of an educational campaign, as the latter families attempt to bypass the school pick-up queue.
- c. Consider creating a true pedestrian plaza that is inviting for families to gather at arrival and dismissal. The current gathering of families on the sidewalk of the school driveway (GK and G1-4) and interior lots leads to some parents searching for their students and we witnessed one leave school property without their parent. This suggestion encourages families to meet in a safer environment and create a sense of school community.

2. **Consider improving signage on school property**

- a. To highlight the location of the two school driveway crosswalks on its long straight-away, consider installing reflective CROSSWALK with down-pointing arrows regulatory signage and reflective pole strips to indicated both the Revere St/school driveway and the Winchester St/school driveway on both sides of the driveway.
- b. To make the school crosswalks more visible especially in low light, consider repainting using white-only thermoplastic paint in a bold ladder pattern.
- c. Due to the multiple neighborhood entrances to the campus, consider installing SCHOOL ZONE signage on Revere and Winchester Streets as well as a gentle reminder on the Guard House.
- d. M.U.T.C.D. “NO IDLING“ signage is suggested throughout as most family vehicles idled. Replace and add to the “NO IDLING” signage inventory to better inform drivers along the entire school building, school driveways, and parking areas. Consider joining the MassDEP Green Team to qualify for free signage:
<https://thegreenteam.org/>
- e. Consider using an inroad pedestrian crosswalk sign in each school driveway crosswalk. The PTO may consider financing it.
- f. Consider installing a STOP line at the STOP sign when leaving the rear staff lot.

3. **Driver and student education** - While families appear to follow the school’s arrival and dismissal procedure, it was observed that school rules did not apply to everyone.

- a. Consider having all staff that are working arrival and dismissal wear reflective vests.
- b. Develop an arrival/dismissal plan that describes what is expected for each transportation mode and communicate it with families through newsletters and the school website.
- c. Consider a “Rules Apply to Everyone” *safety* campaign for families, staff, and students to educate all about the circulation plan and modal expectations.
 - Students
 - Consider having Safe Routes to School conduct DESE-approved pedestrian and bicycle safety instruction to ALL grades. Also,

- consider having the Hunking Student Council or other youth group help lead select classes as a peer-on-peer learning model.
 - Create a poster, video, persuasive writing, or similar Public Safety Announcement around school safety for use around the school and the community (local paper, cablevision, town library or town hall display).
 - Consider participating in the SRTS Yard sign contest, Jan 3-Feb 21. This year's theme is helmet use. [2025 Student Yard Sign Design Contest | Mass.gov](#)
 - Consider participating in the SRTS Winter Walk on February 3: [Winter Walk & Roll to School Day | Mass.gov](#)
- Families
 - Distribute Safe Routes to School Driver Awareness fliers and/or use parts thereof in school newsletters. Each are available in ten languages. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safe-routes-to-school-education#driver-education-resources->
 - Consider educating families on dogs on school property, using the designated circulation pattern, parking only in designated areas, cell phone use, jaywalking by students, students not being allowed to ride in vehicle front seats, student seatbelt use, and the proper side to egress a vehicle.
 - Enlist the energy of the PTO/PTA with safety efforts. For example, installing new benches or banners promoting safety inside and outside the school.
- School
 - Consider beginning a safety campaign in January as a “New Year, New Safety Start” campaign.
 - To emphasize that safety is a priority, consider conducting a Parent Travel Survey. Families are being encouraged to participate in a two-minute, multi-language, anonymous survey to understand how students arrive/depart school and approximately where they live.

Suggested principal newsletter language:

How do the Hunking Elementary and Middle School's 1,100 students arrive and depart school? To improve safety for all, the Hunking would like to better understand our student transportation choices. Please complete this two-minute MA Safe Routes to School Family Travel Survey and if half of our school's families participate, the Hunking will be awarded a safety incentive package from the state!

- **Survey Date: Suggest two week window**
- *Access the portal*
<https://masaferoutessurvey.org/schools/> (link becomes live on the opening date)



- *Choose your language and school*
- Consider NOT allowing family vehicle queuing prior to 15 minutes before dismissal. Elementary family vehicles started queuing one hour prior to dismissal and are waiting for the middle school recess to end at 2pm.
- To promote sustainability and not be a one-time educational opportunity, consider offering DESE-accredited Professional development of ped and bike education. This way the PE teachers or nurses will adopt the curriculum.
- To promote equity in cohort education programming across the district, consider offering DESE-accredited Professional development of ped and bike education.
- After the safety campaign has been undertaken well communicated, only then request the local police to help with enforcement.