School bus Driver Safety – Students with Disabilities Fatality File

Negligence in Monitoring Leads to Tragic Death of Student with Disabilities on School Bus

In July 2023, a heartbreaking incident occurred in Franklin Township, New Jersey, when 6-year-old Fajr Williams, a nonverbal student with Emanuel syndrome, died during her morning bus ride to an extended school year program. Fajr, who used a wheelchair, was secured with a four-point harness. As the bus traveled over a series of bumps, she slipped down in her seat, causing the harness to tighten around her neck and obstruct her airway. Tragically, she became unresponsive and was later pronounced dead at a local hospital.

The bus monitor, 27-year-old Amanda Davila, was seated at the front of the bus during the incident. Investigations revealed that she was wearing earbuds and using her cellphone, failing to supervise the students as required. Despite having received training on transporting students with disabilities, Davila did not notice Fajr's distress. She was subsequently arrested and charged with second-degree manslaughter and second-degree endangering the welfare of a child.

This tragic event underscores the critical importance of vigilant supervision and adherence to safety protocols when transporting students with disabilities. Proper training and attentiveness are essential to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Source: *Nbcnewyork.com*