

Patrol: Human Error Caused School Bus Crash

(KNZA)--Human error is to blame for the Brown County school bus rollover wreck that sent 22 students, and the driver, to local hospitals

That word comes in a press release issued by the Kansas Highway Patrol Tuesday night following a private meeting with the parents of the injured students.

Noting that the investigation is ongoing, the Patrol reveals that the investigation has ruled out mechanical failure and instead places the blame on driver error, saying he failed to stop at a stop sign.

Behind the wheel of the Hiawatha USD 415 bus, carrying all ages of students on that November 18th morning, was 74-year-old Hiawatha resident Lawrence Gnagi.

The bus was eastbound on 170th Road and failed to stop at the stop sign at the intersection of U.S. Highway 73, as the driver attempted to turn north. That caused the bus to travel off the east side of the highway, overturning once before coming to rest on its wheels.

The students suffered non life-threatening injuries in the wreck, as did Gnagi.

The Patrol says once the full investigation is completed, the findings will be forwarded to the Brown County Attorney's Office for a review regarding any possible charges.

The complete press release is below:

On Wednesday, November 18, 2015, at approximately 7:47 a.m., troopers from the Kansas Highway Patrol responded to the scene of a rollover crash involving a loaded school bus in Brown County. The bus was transporting elementary and high school students from USD 415, the Hiawatha School District. All occupants of the bus, 22 students and one driver, were transported to local hospitals with injuries.

The investigation has revealed the following facts:

The bus was traveling eastbound on 170th Street, approaching the intersection of US-73 Highway. For an unknown reason, the bus driver failed to stop at the stop sign at the intersection. The bus attempted to turn north onto US-73 Highway. The bus traveled off the east side of US-73. After leaving the highway, the bus overturned one time, coming to rest on its wheels. Whether injured or not, all students and the driver were transported to local hospitals. During the investigation, it was determined that all mechanical functions of the bus were working properly. The Kansas Highway Patrol has determined this crash to be the result of a driver error, failure to stop at a stop sign.

This crash continues to be under investigation. Upon the completion of the investigation, the report will be submitted to the Brown County Attorney's Office for any charging purposes.

The investigation of this crash was truly a team effort, with first responders from Brown County, as well as Sabetha, Troy, and Doniphan West responding to the scene to assist. The Horton School District sent a vehicle to the scene to assist with the transportation of injured students. The Patrol appreciates the help from all who assisted with the crash. The Hiawatha School District has worked to provide anything the Kansas Highway Patrol needs throughout this investigation, and their cooperation is greatly appreciated.

It is important to note that the evacuation drills performed by the school districts greatly assisted

with the post-crash performance of the students who were on the bus.

Many Signals Communications