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N.Y. School Bus, Plow Collide; 17 Kids Hurt

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Associated Press

SAVANNAH, N.Y. --

A school bus full of elementary school students slammed into the back of a town snowplow on a central New York road, injuring 17 children and the bus driver, authorities said Thursday.

Wayne County sheriff's officials said two of the most seriously injured children were sitting in the front seat on the right side of the bus when it hit the plow around 7:50 a.m. Thursday at an intersection in the rural town of Savannah, 30 miles west of Syracuse.

The front end of the Clyde-Savannah Central School District bus was heavily damaged, crumpled as far back as the windshield and the front door.

The two students, one of them an 11-year-old boy and the other a girl, were trapped for about 30 minutes. The bus driver was trapped for about an hour, Chief Deputy Bob Hetzke said.

The boy and the driver, a woman in her early 40s, were in serious condition at Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse, hospital spokeswoman Doretta Royer said.

Sixteen children were taken to nearby Newark-Wayne Community Hospital, where nine were treated and released and one was transferred to Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester. Six children were being evaluated midday Thursday, said Newark-Wayne spokeswoman Janine DeCook. She said some of the children had bumps and bruises, but she did not have more information on more serious injuries.

One of the students initially sent to Newark-Wayne Community Hospital was sent to Golisano Children's Hospital in Rochester and another was being sent there, said Heather Hare, a spokeswoman for the Rochester hospital. Hare said she was not able to provide conditions.

The students are all 5th or 6th graders.

Hetzke said the bus had dropped off students at Clyde Elementary School and was heading east on Route 31 to bring the rest to Savannah Elementary School when it slammed into the rear of a plow that was clearing a side road.

The collision happened at the crest of a hill surrounded by snowy fields, and glare off the snow may have prevented the bus driver from seeing the plow clearly, Hetzke said.

"It could be a speculation, but we've got the bus coming out of a curve that is in the shadows, entering into an environment of bright sun over two snow-covered fields on either side," he said. "With a wet road, sun low in the sky, I'm sure glare probably is a contributing factor."

Although it was snowing in the Syracuse area around the time of the crash, it wasn't known if that was a factor. The accident was in an area dotted by farms, forests and swamps along an upstate snow belt often hit hard by lake-effect storms off of Lake Ontario.

Savannah Highway Superintendent Allen Sherman said the plow driver wasn't hurt. He said he had no other information on the crash.



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