Quarter of buses had safety violations

The state police inspect all public and private bus fleets, giving the districts overall rating of excellent, good, fair or poor, Schembri said.

Districts are only given a day or two notice before inspection. Red digg mean a serious problem that could include defective brakes, tires, statying systems, faulty lighting as well as either exhaust or fuel leaks.

Yellow tags are usually an aesthetic problem with the bus, Schembri said.

IN FARMINGTON'S CASE, some IN FARMINGTON'S CASE, some of the problems during last year's inspection included burned-out flashers and, dashboard lights, a brake chamber problem and adjustment to steering pressure. The most serious problem took half an hour to fix, Terry sald. State inspectors have

any to re-inspect a bus, no added.

Schembri came to Farmington
this year to discuss the most recent
figures with Terry, because of the
district's concern with the increased
number of red tags. Schembri said
officials had "a few complaints
about our inspection process," but
that the decision was made not to
revise the inspection report.

"I'm not saying there wasn't any intention of making any changes," he sald. "We decided not to make any. I guess it didn't turn out the way they wanted it to."

Manted It to.

Districts across the state are already undergoing the 31-category, 179-Hern bus safety inspection by the Michigan State Police for the 1989-90 school year. It takes the better part of a school year to inspect and

THE CLARENCEVILLE School District was rated "poor," he lowest rating, and Walled Lake Consolidated Schools, which includes northwest Farmington Hills, was among 28 Michigan school districts recognized for outstanding bus maintenance. During the past school year, no Walled Lake buses were tagged. The district won a "most improved" citation for upgrading overall maintenance of its school bus fleets over the past year.

some of the problems during last year's inspection included: burned-out flashers, dashboard lights, a brake chamber problem and adjustment to steering pressure.

Bus safety an evervday item with schools

Despite last year's increase in violations on Farmington school buses, bus garage supervisor Malen Terry shid his crew and bus drivers inspect buses daily for problems — and handle them Immediately. "Terry and his people also developed and custom installed special mitrors last spring, now on nearly every bus, to give drivers before visibility." Terry said. "It made their job a lot easier and it made me hippy too."

Drivers use daily check lists when inspecting their buses, including a visual vehicle check, interior and exterior bus check, safety equipment, passenger compariment details and a vehicle operation check. These forms are turned in daily and help the department's five technicians monitor basic safety.

"We try and fix the small things before they become big things," Terry said. "Anything that looks serious, we jirk the keys right out."

[Routine maintenance is also done regularly. Oli is changed on busses every 4,000 miles and they are lubri-

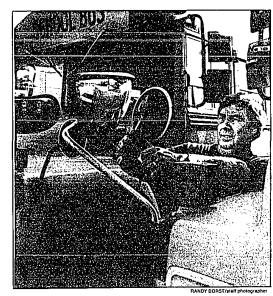
Routine maintenance is also done regularly. Oil is changed on buses every 4,000 miles and they are lubricated every 2,000.

days when the district didn't have any spare buses, and mechanics had to repair them along the side of the road. The Farmington fleet currently has 96 buses total,

and 18 spares.

'The district regularly purchases nine new buses each year, reliring the oldest ones in the fleet, according to Beyverly Hausman, who manages transportation operations and purchasing. That was not done last year, the cause of the increase of the increase of the increase of the increase, and the Highmeadow Common Campus program, she

AIRCUT



Malen Terry, supervisor of the Farmington Public Schools bus garage, adjusts a mirror one of the district's fleet of 96 buses. Terry and his employees custom-designed the mirrors for each bus last spring, after drivers com-plained of vision problems while driving.



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