



New HSM Seat Announced for Blue Bird & Microbird Sales Update #17-05



NextGen Seat – Exclusive to Blue Bird & Microbird

In an announcement made at the [Transporting Students with Disabilities \(TSD\) Conference](#) in Frisco, Texas, Blue Bird and supplier partner, HSM, announced an exclusive seating option that will be available for order for all Blue Bird and Micro Bird school buses in summer of 2017. This convertible solution allows the customer to change the seat back frame to have a three point or child-restraint seat without having to purchase all new seats for reinstallation into the bus.

The seat back frame of the convertible NextGen seat is secured by four bolts, which can be easily removed, in order to replace it with one of the other options offered, including 3-point seat belt, 3-point with child restraint, lap belt ready and child restraint only options. The bottom cushion of the seat also tilts completely up, allowing the area under the seat to be more accessible. Just one seat leg down the aisle on gusset-mounted seats also reduces the floor space used for easier cleaning, and reduces the amount of parts used.

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The seats were also designed to take up less space. “Based on seat spacing tests, the new seats were able to increase the maximum passenger capacities on many bus configurations,” said Tony Everett, president of [HSM](#). “Some bus configurations were able to fit up to six additional passengers, due to the space savings these seats provide.”

Comfort was a major factor when designing the new school bus seats. “Our goal for our new school bus seats was to offer best-in-class comfort for the students – and we’ve done just that,” says Dennis Whitaker, vice president of product development at Blue Bird Corporation. “We’ve included an integrated headrest, a contoured seat back for enhanced knee clearance, and have lumbar support molded into the back panel. There is a noticeable difference in comfort when you sit in one of these convertible seats versus a traditional school bus seat.”

“We wanted these seats to answer every request we have received over the years,” said Mark Terry, chief commercial officer of [Blue Bird Corporation](#). “We have made it more comfortable for students, economically friendly for school districts, and easy for drivers to work around. I’d say we have made the perfect school bus seat!”

The NextGen Seat will be offered on all Blue Bird school buses. Steve Girardin, president of Micro Bird, immediately saw the value in offering the same seats in the Micro Bird line of products. “Commonality of parts between Blue Bird and Micro Bird ultimately provides a better value for our customers,” added Girardin. “We believe that many customers will take advantage of the convertible seats, especially in Micro Bird buses, which are often used to transport younger children.”

The seats come with a standard 3-year warranty on the foam, and a 5-year warranty on the workmanship and seat frame paint. “We realize this is one of the best the industry has to offer,” added Jay Rojek, executive director of purchasing at Blue Bird. “We want our customers to know that we stand by the quality of these seats and that they will withstand the rigor that students put them through.”

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About Blue Bird Corporation: Celebrating its 90th year in business, Blue Bird is the leading independent designer and manufacturer of school buses, with more than 550,000 buses sold since its formation in 1927 and approximately 180,000 buses in operation today. Blue Bird's longevity and reputation in the school bus industry have made it an iconic American brand. Blue Bird distinguishes itself from its principal competitors by its singular focus on the design, engineering, manufacture and sale of school buses and related parts. As the only manufacturer of chassis and body production specifically designed for school bus applications, Blue Bird is recognized as an industry leader for school bus innovation, safety, product quality/reliability/durability, operating costs and drivability. In addition, Blue Bird is the market leader in alternative fuel applications with its propane-powered and compressed natural gas-powered school buses. Blue Bird manufactures school buses at two facilities in Fort Valley, Georgia. Its Micro Bird joint venture operates a manufacturing facility in Drummondville, Quebec, Canada. Service and after-market parts are distributed from Blue Bird's parts distribution center located in Delaware, Ohio. For more information on Blue Bird's complete line of buses, visit <http://www.blue-bird.com>.

About HSM: One of North Carolina's largest employers, HSM is a privately held company that brings together approximately 2,500 employees in more than 50 manufacturing plants in 17 states and Canada to serve a wide array of diverse customers and markets. Based in Hickory, North Carolina, the company has expanded its global presence and moved beyond core furniture and bedding markets to embrace new growth opportunities in transportation, healthcare, packaging and government sectors. Please visit <http://www.hsmsolutions.com> for additional information.

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