First Observer has come to Oklahoma.

NewsOK.com reported that school bus drivers were being trained by the federal program unde r the auspices of the Transportation Security Administration to report suspicious criminal or potential terrorist activities that they observe on the roads, especially in remembrance of the 16th anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing . School bus drivers were also trained on the First Observer at the recently-concluded California Association of School Transportation Officials show in San Diego.

Last year, 36,000 school bus drivers nationwide were trained in counter-terrorism reporting.

Not only can drivers be the eyes and ears for law enforcement personnel but they could play a key role in protecting against an attack on a school bus. While a very rare occurrence in the United States, most attacks on a school bus are performed by "pranksters" or take the form student fights. And sometimes, the students can get very violent with each other, as was the case when a girl was recently stabbed on the bus .

But increasingly since 9/11 the student transportation industry has increased its vigilance for becoming more security conscious. There is a fear we could see an incident that those in the Middle East have become all too familiar with. There have been many terrorism attacks on buses transporting school children often because the vehicles also are transporting soldiers. For instance, in Israel armed soldiers are known to ride on school buses in an effort to protect the children.

That security practice can literally backfire. A 16-year-old boy in Jerusalem who was injured when anti-tank missile from the Gaza Strip struck his school bus earlier this month eventually died.

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Unfortunately, back home, a school bus driver in Parkland, Pa., died after his bus hit another car, swerved off the road and ran into a building. No children were on board at the time.

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More pleasant news come from the Tippecanoe School Corporation in Indiana, which swept the state's America's Best School Bus Techncian qualifier . Alan Fidler placed first, and fellow Tippecanoe technicians Chuck Schneidt and Kirk Brooks were second and third, respectively. Schneidt won last year's competition, then placed second in the national competition.

This year's NAPT America's Best School Bus Inspector and School Bus Training and Technician Skills Competition is scheduled for late September in San Antonio, Texas.