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Teens stable after being struck at bus stop

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A 13-year-old girl and a 16-year-old boy are in stable condition today after a minivan hit them as they crossed the street to board their Avondale Schools bus in Rochester Hills.

The students, both conscious at the accident scene, were taken to two area hospitals with non-life-threatening injuries, said Sgt. Dennis Wandrei of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

Their bus, headed east on South Boulevard, was stopped at Donaldson at 6:56 a.m. with lights flashing. The woman, driving the opposite direction, hit the teens as they crossed South Boulevard. The woman driving the minivan told Crash Investigation Unit deputies that she didn't see the stop sign folded out from the side of the bus, Wandrei said.

"That's all she said, that she didn't see the sign," Wandrei said, adding that a boy who was a passenger in the minivan was not injured. "She appeared to be very, very concerned about the persons who were hit. She was very shaken up, which is understandable if you see the vehicle."

The tan Chrysler minivan's front bumper and grille area were bent in. It was towed away on a flatbed truck. The windshield was caved in where one of the teens hit. The speed limit in that area of South Boulevard is 45 m.p.h.

A woman dressed in business attire who got out of the back of one of the sheriff's cars declined to comment as she left the scene with a man who arrived to pick her up. Police declined to identify her as the driver.

But Wandrei acknowledged the driver had been released pending the results of the investigation. Investigators could either cite the driver or forward the case to the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office for review if they feel the accident warrants more serious charges, he added.

Avondale Schools Superintendent George Heitsch said the accident brings up memories of a tragic bus stop death of an Avondale student three years ago.

Avondale High School student George Kostruba, 16, died waiting for the bus in 2006 when a driver veered 15 feet off the road and into a group of students.

"You worry about the safety of your students anytime there's an accident," Heitsch said. "We're grateful that it appears they're going to be healthy. And we're very sorry and disappointed that any of our students get injured like this."

Rick Desotell, who heard the commotion from his home a few doors down, says he drives his 11- and 12-year-old children to school so they don't have to cross busy South Boulevard.

"You have to be here to believe how much traffic there is around here," he said. "That's why we don't allow our children to ride the bus."

As they pulled out of their driveway, Desotell decided to drive the opposite direction, going around the accident site to avoid the backpack and items lying in the road.

"We saw things laying there, and I didn't want my children to see that," he said.
