



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

WWW.NCPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG

January 25, 2010

TO School Principals

FROM June St. Clair Atkinson *JSA*

LOVE THE BUS - 2010

I am excited to invite your school to participate in the American School Bus Council's *Love the Bus* (LTB) campaign this Valentine's Day and throughout the month of February. The American School Bus Council created the campaign in 2007 to encourage schools to hold activities that highlight the safety of our school bus transportation system and to recognize the many dedicated bus drivers who take our students to and from school safely.

In North Carolina, more than 14,000 yellow buses transport nearly 795,000 students while more than 26 million students travel in 480,000 buses nationwide. It is no surprise that, according to the National Academy of Sciences, the U.S. Department of Transportation and many other authorities, school buses are the safest form of transportation for getting children to and from school. Research also has shown that students are as much as 13 times safer in a school bus than in other modes of travel. In addition, by eliminating the need to drive students to and from school individually, buses save families time, mileage on their vehicles and money in fuel costs while also helping the environment.

I will be riding a bus to a school here in Raleigh in early February to officially kick off this campaign in our state and I encourage you to host *Love the Bus* activities and events at your school during the week prior to or following Valentine's Day. The following are great examples of events some school districts have held. You can do something similar or create your own.

- Work with the district's local director of transportation and the NCDPI Transportation Services Section to conduct school bus safety programs for students. For more information on how to invite bus safety speakers or "Buster the Robotic Bus" to your school, or for assistance in conducting other safety awareness activities, contact Derek Graham, section chief of Transportation Services at dgraham@dpi.state.nc.us or (919) 807-3570 or visit www.ncbussafety.org;
- Invite state legislators or local officials to ride a bus route or participate in a LTB media event to highlight bus safety and the importance of school bus transportation;
- Provide breakfast, or hold a special reception for bus drivers;
- Have students prepare and present Valentine's cards, candy or other small gifts for school bus drivers;
- Encourage students to sign their name on *Love the Bus* "lips" or other decorations that they can attach to the side of the bus to show their appreciation;

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

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- Have students write and share stories about why riding the bus is important; and
- Decorate the hallways to the bus areas with posters about bus safety and notes from students about why they like the bus and/or their bus drivers.

For more ideas and resources to help your school participate in this nationwide campaign, please visit www.lovethebus.com and www.ncbussafety.org. These Web sites offer “*Love the Bus* How To Guides,” sample lesson plans for teachers, templates for certificates of appreciation and Valentine’s cards for bus drivers, sample posters, name tags, t-shirts, magnets and fact sheets, safety tips and a template press release to distribute to local media. Your school district’s transportation directors and public information officers will receive additional information to assist with Love the Bus activity planning and, depending on availability, the NCDPI Transportation Services Section can provide a limited number of school bus safety pencils and posters to elementary schools conducting *Love the Bus* activities.

In addition, we are compiling a database of all LTB events in North Carolina and will post this information online and make it available to media on Feb. 8. You can e-mail information about your event to dgraham@dpi.state.nc.us or register your event online at <http://www.ncbussafety.org/LoveTheBusNC.html>. On Feb. 1, 2010, elementary schools that have registered events will be selected to receive school bus safety pencils and a laminated 22”x 36” *Love the Bus* poster; so please send in your events as soon as possible.

We hope that you will join us in taking time this month to remind those in your community that the school bus is the safest, most economical and environmentally-friendly form of transportation for all students traveling to and from school. If you have any questions about the campaign or how to get involved, please contact NCDPI Transportation Services at (919)807-3570 or e-mail Section Chief Derek Graham at dgraham@dpi.state.nc.us.

c: Derek Graham

Attachment

See how NC schools “Loved the Bus” last year? Let’s make this year an even bigger success!



Transportation director addresses the media explaining the benefits of school bus transportation



Students with the LOVE THE BUS cake



Drivers cut the LOVE THE BUS cake



School Bus Driver Appreciation Breakfast



Drivers display student-made valentine card holders at appreciation breakfast



Students welcome buses/drivers to campus



School bulletin board featuring drivers



This school loves its bus!



Buster the Bus talks School Bus Safety during Love the Bus week