



LAUNCHING YOUR *LOVE THE BUS* CAMPAIGN

This Valentine's Day and throughout the month of February, North Carolina and schools have been invited to participate in the American School Bus Council's *Love the Bus* (LTB) campaign. 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.

You are encouraged to work with schools in your district to generate publicity for school transportation. Following are some suggestions for participation:

- 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.
- Ask students to write and share stories about why riding the bus is important.
- 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.
- Work with 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 district, or for assistance in conducting other safety awareness activities, contact Derek Graham, section chief of NCDPI Transportation Services at dgraham@dpi.state.nc.us or (919) 807-3570 or visit www.ncbussafety.org.

BOOSTING PARTICIPATION AND PRESS COVERAGE FOR *LOVE THE BUS* EVENTS

The purpose of the *Love the Bus* campaign is to raise awareness about the many benefits of school bus transportation and the importance of school bus drivers. If no one knows, hears or reads about the *Love the Bus* activities going on in your school district, you are losing a valuable opportunity to highlight all the positive aspects of your district's transportation program for media, parents and other members of your community. The following are some tips for making the most of the *Love the Bus* efforts in your school district:

- Start planning today. Reach out to local legislators and school officials to get them on board for district-level *Love the Bus* activities and press events.
- Give all reporters advance notice about when and where *Love the Bus* events are happening and make follow-up calls to confirm attendance a day or two before all activities are scheduled to take place.
- Survey schools to compile a list of *Love the Bus* activities going on locally and make the information available on your district's Web site.
- Collect photos from *Love the Bus* activities at different schools to post online and send to local reporters with a press release about the *Love the Bus* campaign, the attached fact sheet and more information about bus safety efforts in your district.
- Write a Letter to the Editor of your local paper from your superintendent and/or school board members to highlight the benefits of school bus transportation for students, families and the community.
- Pitch feature/profile story ideas about local bus drivers with many years of experience and outstanding safety records to area reporters.

LOVE THE BUS RESOURCES

- The NCDPI Transportation Services Section provides leadership, technical assistance, service and support to school districts in all areas of pupil transportation. To support your local *Love the Bus* campaign efforts, Transportation Services staff members are available to help schedule bus safety speakers, arrange a visit from “Buster the Robotic Bus” and provide a limited number of bus safety pencils, posters and other materials. Contact Section Chief Derek Graham at dgraham@dpi.state.nc.us or (919) 807-3570 for more information.
- The Web site www.ncbussafety.org is maintained by NCDPI Transportation Services and offers bus safety posters, tips, games and statistics for students, educators and parents as well as information about bus transportation policies, laws and bus driver training in North Carolina.
- The American School Bus Council also maintains a Web site at www.lovethebus.com, which includes a “*Love the Bus* How To Guide,” sample lesson plans for teachers, templates for certificates of appreciation and Valentine’s cards for bus drivers, sample posters, name tags, t-shirts, magnets, fact sheets, safety tips and a template press release to distribute to media.
- Have you thought about how much fuel is saved when students take the bus to school? National data about gas and mileage savings attributed to school bus transportation are available at www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org under the “Fuel Calculator” section of the site. Because local statistics can strengthen any *Love the Bus* event or news story, you can download the fuel calculator available on this site to determine the specific total cost savings to your community for every child that rides a bus to and from school.

