



AMERICAN SCHOOL BUS COUNCIL™



LOVE THE BUS
A program of the
American School Bus Council

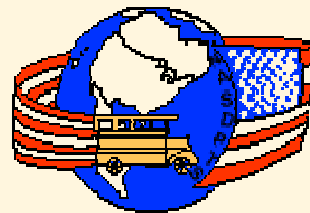
Introducing the American School Bus Council

Associations

- National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT)
- National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS)
- National School Transportation Association (NSTA)

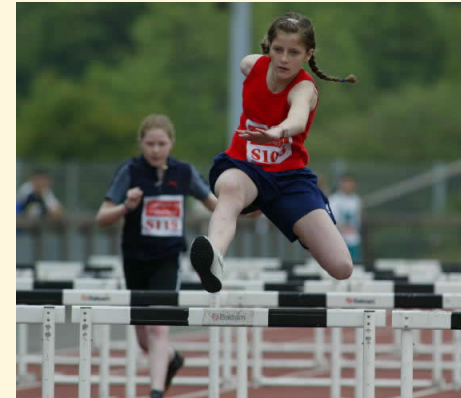
Manufacturers

- Blue Bird Corp.
- IC Corp.
- Thomas Built Buses



Challenges We Face

- School buses taken for granted
 - By parents, administrators, legislators, the public
 - Others assume it will always be there
 - Parents lack information, motivation to change behavior
- No federal commitment to school transportation
 - Many unfunded mandates
 - No direct, regular funding
 - Competing priorities threaten funding
- Industry often must play defense
 - Accidents, while rare, can take center stage in media
 - Interest groups attack school buses on health, safety, environment



Challenges We Face

Media, others control the message



**“Bus driver may have molested
100 young girls”**
– November 1, 2006



**“Diesel mandate has schools, trucking
firms concerned about costs”**
– October 23, 2006



**“Car Collides With School Bus;
Students Sent to Hospitals”**
– October 31, 2006



**“Boy, 15, Arrested After 'Bottle Bomb'
Blows Up Near School Bus”**
– November 1, 2006



**“Environmentalists worry about the effect of
pollution on children who ride school buses”**
– October 23, 2006



Our Purpose, Our Goals

- Our Purpose
 - Transporting as many children as possible in the safety of school buses
 - Inform parents and legislators about the advantages of dedicated school transportation
- Our Goals
 - Increased awareness
 - Increased ridership
 - Securing federal funding



Our Mission

Our Mission

The mission of the American School Bus Council is to educate parents, school officials and lawmakers about the essential role the yellow school bus plays in the safety, health, security and readiness of America's schoolchildren. Council members advocate for increased school transportation funding and advances industry standards on safety, security, environment, energy and access to education that are above and beyond state and federal law.



Introducing the American School Bus Council

Brand Identity

- American, patriotic, traditional
- Safe, secure, protective
- Responsible, trusted, reliable, proven, caring
- Valuable, essential
- Broad-based, democratic



**AMERICAN
SCHOOL BUS
COUNCIL™**



AMERICAN SCHOOL BUS COUNCIL™

Overall Research Findings

- **Parents Have Mixed Feelings About School Bus Transportation**
 - Positive associations exist that can be leveraged by the American School Bus Council and message platforms can be created to help mitigate the negative
- **Parents Cite *Convenience* and *Social Development Opportunities* as Advantages of the School Bus**
 - The school bus alleviates pressure placed on parents – they do not need to take time out of their schedule to transport their children to school
 - Parents also recognize the psychological and emotional benefits of socializing with other children



Overall Research Findings

- **Parents Say Riding the School Bus Promotes Independence for Younger Children While Constraining Older Children**
 - Younger students embrace the chance to talk with friends and enjoy time away from parents – and parents seem open to this experience
 - But, older children looking for more freedom and flexibility dislike the bus and dismiss it as not “cool”
- **According to Parents, Both Parents and Children Share Common Complaints**
 - Long bus routes with frequent stops, consistent lateness and lack of flexibility make parents and children consider other transportation options
 - Negative environment consisting of bullying and other “bad” behaviors are also causes for concern



Overall Research Findings

- **Parents Generally Trust School Bus Transportation, but Not the Bus Driver**
 - Parents are anxious about the bus driver’s qualifications and history because they have limited information and contact
 - Trust can be built by increasing communication and information-sharing with parents
- **Top of Mind, Safety is Not Viewed as a Key Advantage**
 - Although parents acknowledge the safety of the vehicle itself, they do not readily consider the whole experience of riding the school bus to be safe
 - Concerns about the bus driver affect perceptions of overall safety, as do the behavioral issues children encounter on the bus

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p data-bbox="338 1094 919 1127">Convenience / time-saving for parents</p> <p data-bbox="388 1143 869 1175">Socializing opportunity for kids</p> <p data-bbox="579 1192 678 1224">Safety</p> <p data-bbox="239 1232 1018 1305">(by virtue of traffic reduction or keeping kids out of bad weather)</p>	<p data-bbox="1350 1081 1593 1114">Late / unreliable</p> <p data-bbox="1398 1130 1545 1162">Long ride</p> <p data-bbox="1241 1179 1703 1211">Inflexible pick-up and drop-off</p> <p data-bbox="1262 1227 1682 1260">Misbehaving kids / bullying</p> <p data-bbox="1310 1276 1633 1308">Questionable drivers</p> <p data-bbox="1325 1325 1619 1357">Not free (for some)</p>

PARENTS AND DRIVERS

- Parents want to know their driver's name.
- Builds confidence in the system
- Look for ways to build a positive image.



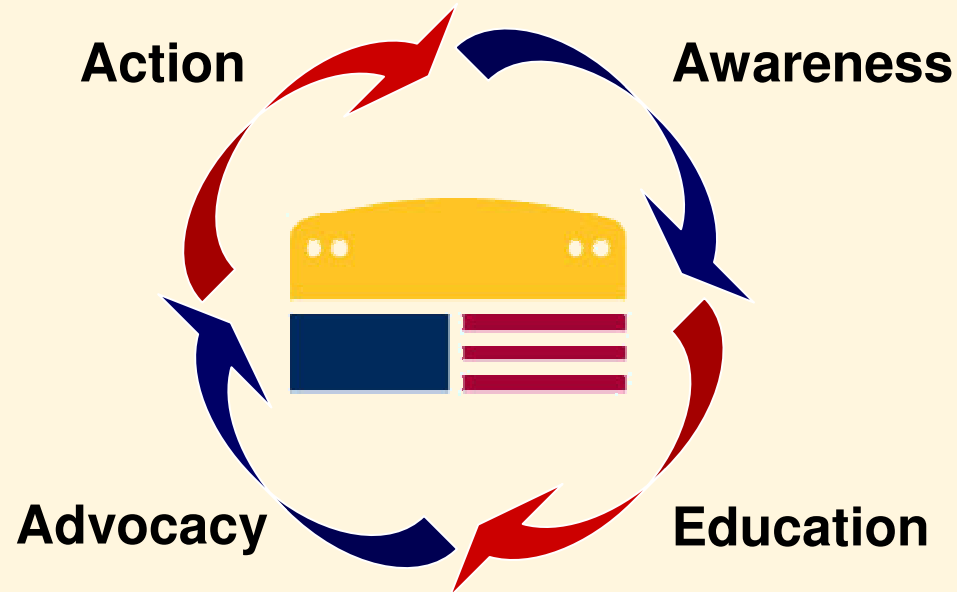
Overall Research Findings

- **Parents Recommend Improvements in Several Areas of School Bus Transportation**
 - Bus driver screening and training, standardized communication with parents, monitoring student behavior on the bus, and maintaining more punctual schedules would help win parents' trust and support
- **Parents Favor Federal Funding for School Buses**
 - Supporters believe the government has an obligation to contribute money to states and local districts to ease the financial burden and help with implementation of costly mandates
- **Parents May Become Advocates in Dire Situations**
 - Lack of funding to implement safety measures, maintain buses or pay bus drivers; bus route cuts or service elimination would spur action, especially if other parents are willing to get involved too



Our Plan

- Coordinated, three-year communications plan



- Target audiences
 - Parents of school-age children
 - Lawmakers
 - School districts

Phase 2: Education

- Develop communication toolkits for districts, state officials and third-party allies
 - Template, customizable media materials
 - Industry standards and guidelines
 - How-to guide for events and advocacy
- Events
- Messaging
 - School bus transportation is, by far, the safest, healthiest, most secure way to transport children to and from school each day
 - The school bus industry is dedicated to the professionalism of its employees, high construction standards and technological advancements
 - School buses are school readiness vehicles, providing the access to education every child deserves and ensuring they arrive at school safe and ready to learn
 - School buses are valuable investments in the future of our children



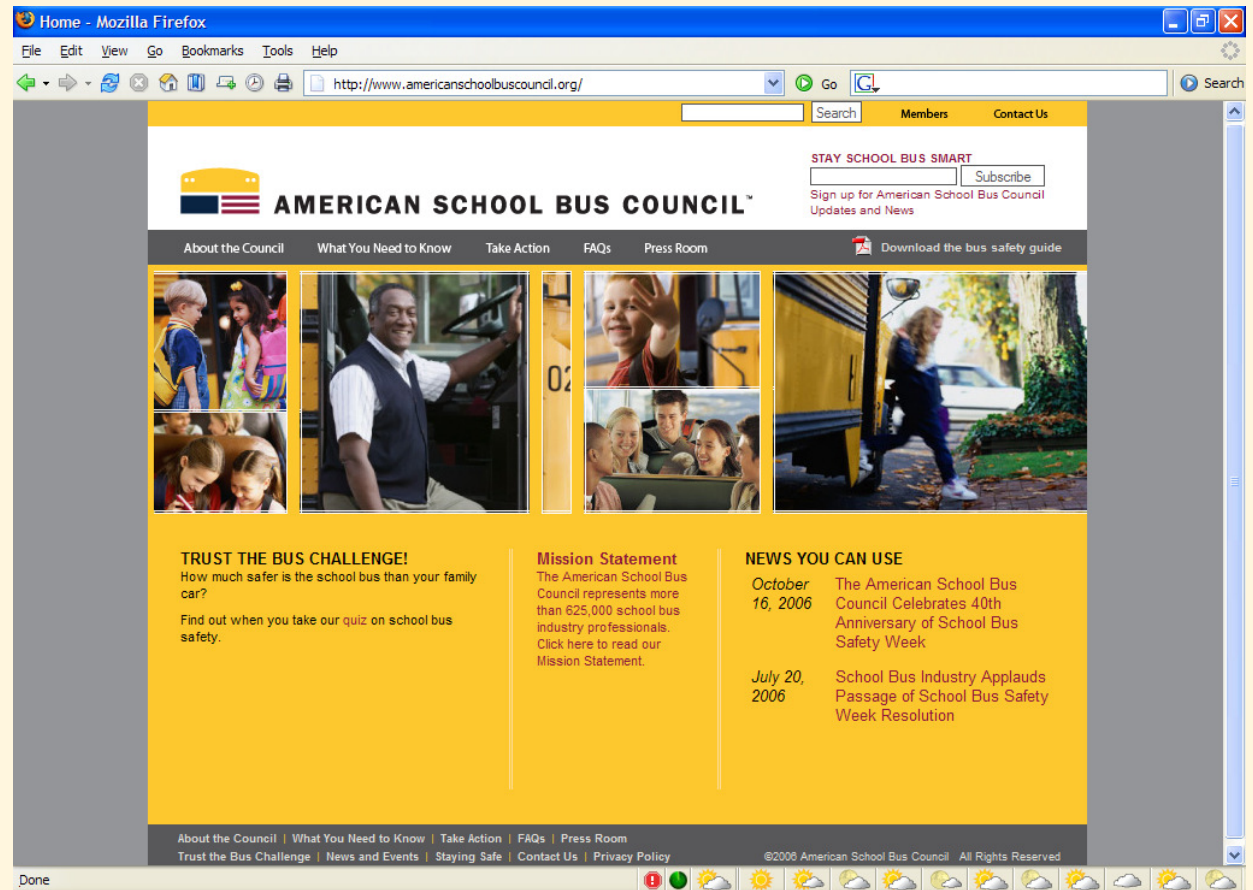
Your Role

- You are our messengers and ambassadors of the industry
- The Council will provide the tools necessary to allow you to be more effective in communicating to your constituencies
- You will have the ability to localize what the Council is doing at the federal level



Web Site

- Interactive information
- Educational resource
- Advocacy tools
- Press room
- Industry links



www.AmericanSchoolBusCouncil.org

LOVE THE BUS!

- Student Involvement
- Driver Appreciation
- Press Event





STAY SCHOOL BUS SMART

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Create Your Own Love The Bus Valentine!

You can e-mail it to your bus driver, teacher, school administrator, legislator or friend. Or, print it out and give it to your bus driver on Valentine's Day, February 14.

Just press "Go" to get started! 



Stories from the Road

The yellow school bus gets millions of kids to and from school safely and reliably each day.

Send us your stories about the unsung heroes who keep your kids safe and out of harm's way. Or read what others have sent.

Love Your Kids. Love The Bus.

Facts to learn and share


The National Academy of Sciences, the U.S. Department of Transportation and other authorities agree that school buses are the safest form of transportation for getting children to and from school.

[Read more here](#)

Safety tips for students

- Be alert to traffic. Check both ways for cars before stepping off the bus.

Educators' Toolkit

Teachers and administrators can  [download toolkit items](#) to help share school bus safety tips with students and parents, incorporate interactive valentines and thank-you letters into lesson plans, and reward drivers with certificates of appreciation, name tags and...

Read Stories from the Road

Safety Superhero

It was anything but a routine drive for Winkle Bus Service Driver Janette Murray. On Nov. 16, 2004, while bringing 42 students home from Mathewson School in Milford, Conn., Ms. Murray smelled smoke in the bus and felt heat building up on the floor...[\(read more\)](#)

True Professional

I have a wonderful story about my child's school bus driver, Phyllis. Phyllis has now retired and has moved



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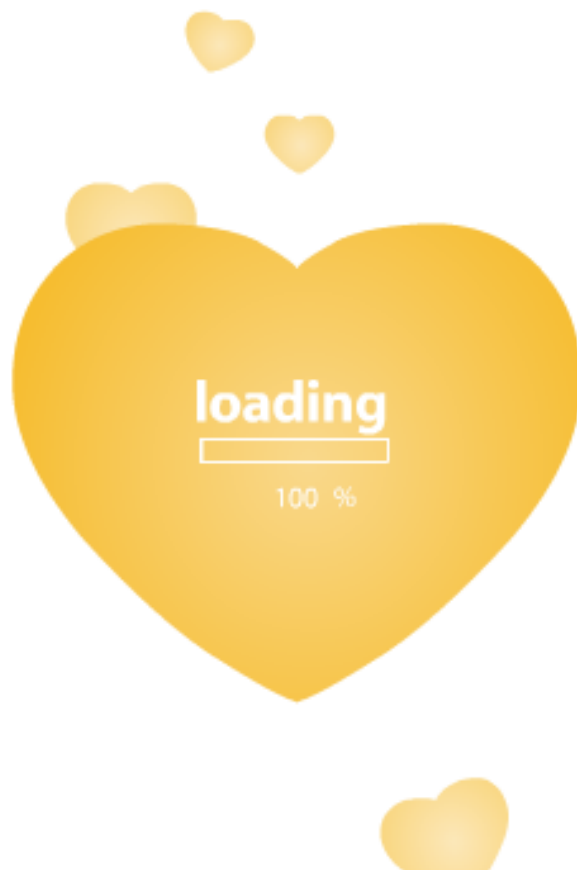
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Create Your Own Love The Bus Valentine

Show your school bus driver how much you appreciate him or her by making your own, personalized Valentine's Day card!

It's easy! Just choose from one of our three card designs, then add your own note about why you love the yellow school bus!

You can e-mail your valentine directly, or print it out and give it to your school bus driver on Valentine's Day!

Just press "Go" to get started!



Choose Your Card

Step 1 of 5

Select one of our three Love The Bus valentine designs by clicking the one you want. Then, click "Next" to write your own message!



CARD 1



CARD 2



CARD 3

Next



Write Your Message

Step 2 of 5

Enter your name, then select from the options in the "To" field.

Then, tell your school bus driver why you appreciate him or her! You can use one of our quick messages, or write your own in the space provided.

When you're finished, click "Next" to review your valentine. Do not worry – you'll be able to make changes if you need to!

Your Name

To

Or Add A Personal Salutation

Headline

- I love the yellow school bus because...
- I love the school bus driver because...

Choose A Quick Message

Or Write Your Own



Back

Next



Review Your Work

Step 3 of 5

Here's what your valentine will look like!
If you want to make some changes, click "Back."

Otherwise, click "Next" to e-mail or print out your valentine!



Back

Next



Send or Print Your Valentine

Step 4 of 5

To e-mail your valentine, enter your e-mail and the recipient's e-mail, then click "Send".

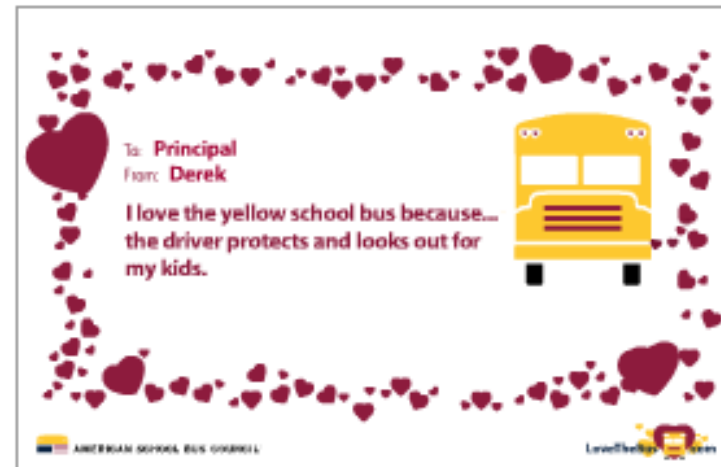
If you'd rather print your valentine out and deliver it personally, simply click "Print".

Your E-mail

Recipient's E-mail



Print



Back

Send



You're Done - Success

Step 5 of 5

Your Love The Bus valentine has been sent to principal@countyschools.org

Thank you for taking the time to show your bus driver that you care.



Create New Card





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E-mail Address

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Facts to learn and share:

- The National Academy of Sciences, the U.S. Department of Transportation and other authorities agree that **school buses are the safest form of transportation** for getting children to and from school.
- Some **475,000 school buses carry 25 million children** — more than half of America's schoolchildren — each day, rarely with any serious accident. Learn more [here](#).
- **Safety features** including the color and size of school buses, height, reinforced sides, flashing red lights, cross view mirrors, and crossing and stop sign arms **ensure children are protected and secure on and off the bus.**
- **School bus drivers are highly trained professionals** who have your child's safety in mind. They receive **specialized training** in student behavior management, loading and unloading, security and emergency medical procedures.
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- The **school bus industry operates** by a set of **safety, security, health and driver qualification guidelines** that meet, and in some cases exceed, federal and state laws, and ensure that school buses are the safest mode of transportation for our nation's schoolchildren.

- Download and print [Guidelines on Pupil Transportation](#) [here](#).

School Bus Safety Tips

For students:

- Be alert to traffic. Check both ways for cars before stepping off the bus.
- Make eye contact with the bus driver, and wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing the street. Learn more [here](#).
- Walk in front of the bus; never walk behind the bus to cross the street.
- While waiting for the bus, stay in a safe place away from the street.
- Before leaving the sidewalk, look for the flashing red lights.
- Never go near or under the bus to retrieve something you've dropped.

For parents:

- Have your child ride the school bus to and from school instead of driving or riding with teenage passengers.
- Review the safety tips with your child regularly. Learn more [here](#).
- Get to know the parents of other riders. You will learn about the other children who are riding along with your child.
- Team with other parents to get involved and monitor bus stops and bus routes. Voice concerns immediately to your school district.
- Attend "back to school" nights and tour your child's school bus.
- Get to know your school's transportation coordinator and your child's bus driver. He or she is a trained professional who sees your child every day.
- Keep phone numbers handy in case the bus is delayed or in the event of an emergency.





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LOVE THE BUS! STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

- www.lovethebus.com
 - Send on-line Valentine Greetings
- Hand-made Valentine Cards
- LOVE THE BUS – autographed lips to Kiss the Bus
- Welcome the Drivers
- School Bus Safety (e.g. Buster the Bus)





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Lesson Plan

Have you thanked your school bus driver lately?

The yellow school bus gets millions of kids to and from school safely and reliably each day. It's time to say thank you to the unsung heroes who keep our kids safe and out of harm's way.

Objective: On Valentine's Day, February 14, the American School Bus Council, a unified voice of the school transportation industry — including public and private transportation providers, school bus manufacturers and state officials responsible for pupil transportation — would like the nation's schoolchildren to say "thank you" to the 475,000 bus drivers that keep them safe each day by presenting them with a valentine created on www.LoveTheBus.com.

Outline of Activity: The American School Bus Council is asking teachers and students to participate in the activity by logging on to www.LoveTheBus.com and having students customize and print or e-mail a Love The Bus valentine to their bus driver.

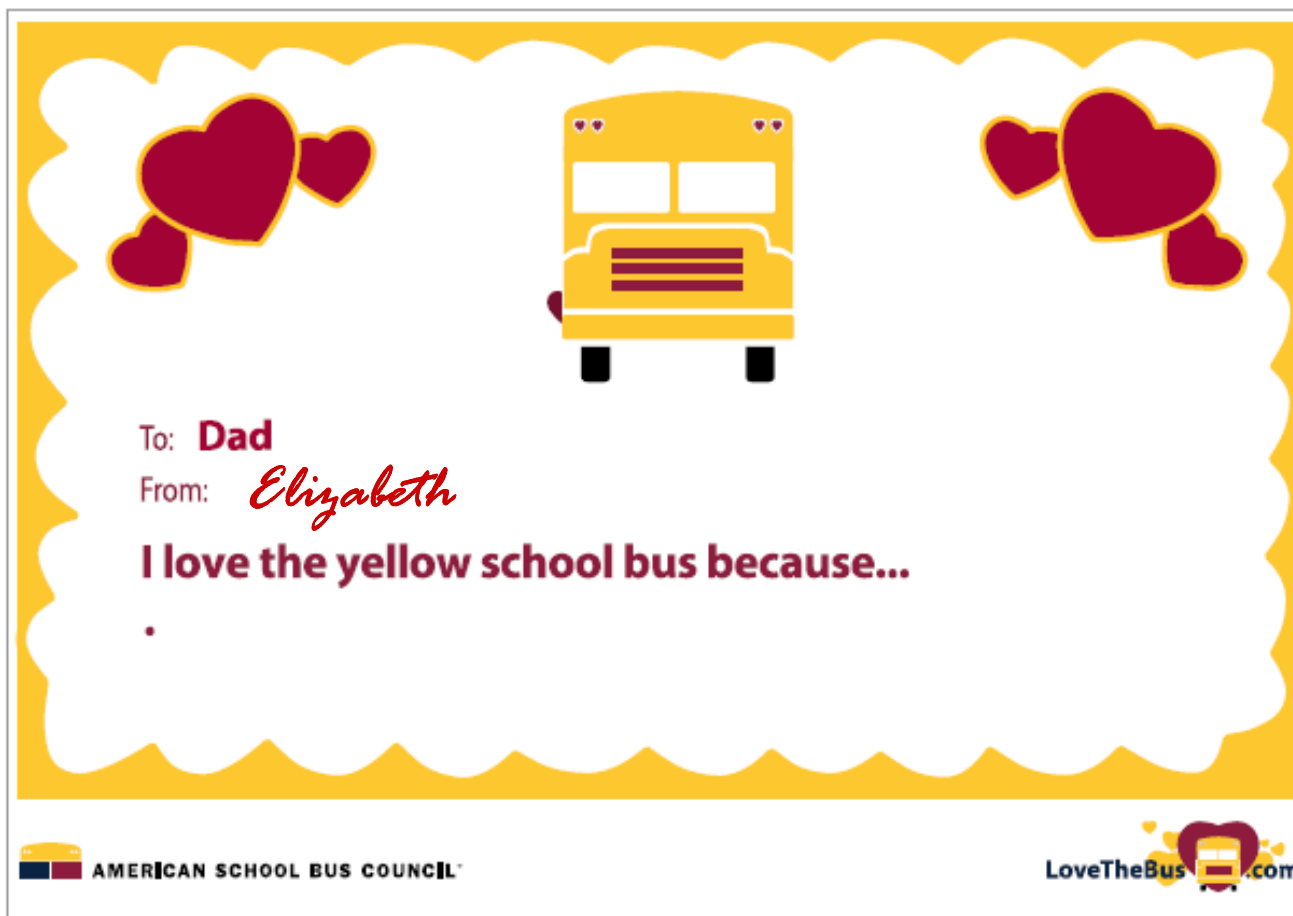
Students can choose from a wide variety of valentine styles, colors and graphics. They can customize their valentine with their name and their bus driver's name. The only requirement is that students complete the phrase, "I love the yellow school bus because..."

Students can also share a story about their bus driver at www.LoveTheBus.com.

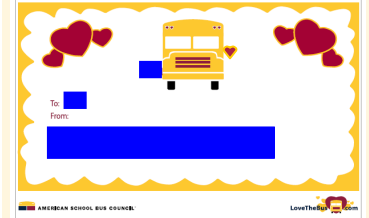
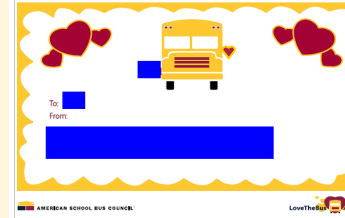
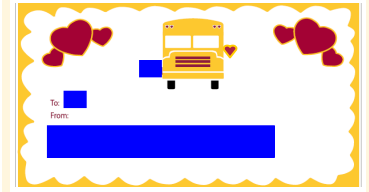
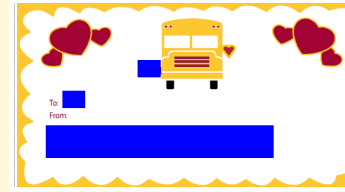
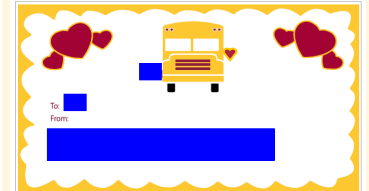
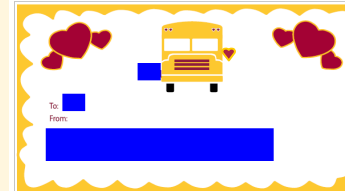
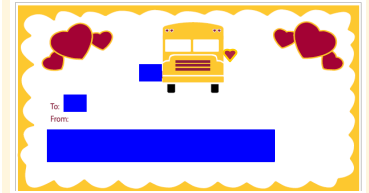
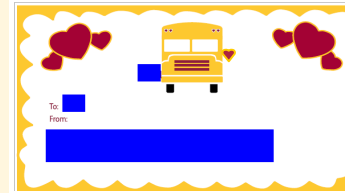
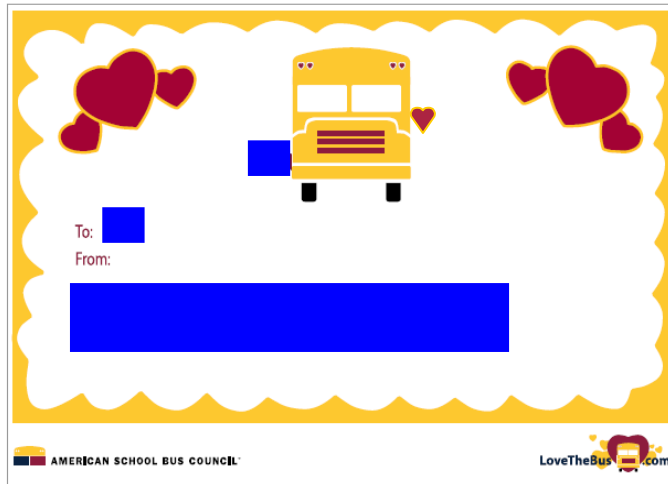
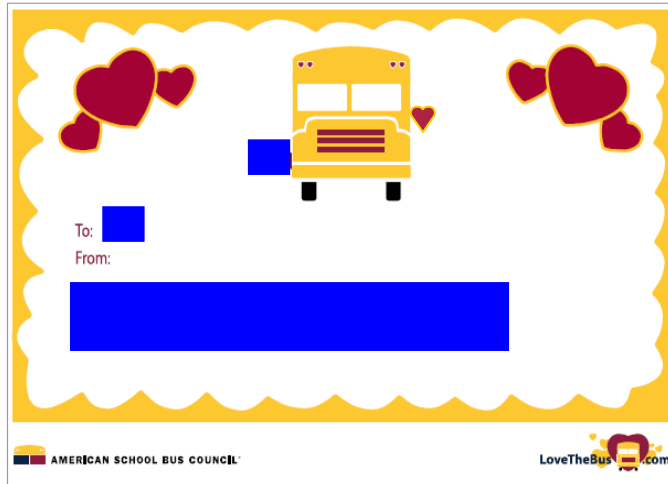
Downloads

- [Love The Bus Driver Certificate of Appreciation](#)
- [Love The Bus Driver Name Tag Template](#)
- [Love The Bus Driver T-Shirt Template](#)
- [Love The Bus Driver T-Shirt Artwork](#)
- [Love The Bus Blank Card Template](#)
- [Love The Bus Blank Card Artwork](#)
- [Love The Bus Driver Blank Card Template](#)
- [Love The Bus Driver Blank Card Artwork](#)
- [Love The Bus Bumper Magnet](#)
- [Love The Bus Lip Magnet](#)

Personalized Valentine Cards



Print Blank Cards in Various Sizes



Student Involvement – Decorated Card Holders



Student Involvement – Put their Lips on the Bus





Student Involvement – Greeting the Drivers



LOVE THE BUS - Driver Appreciation

- **Food for Drivers**
- **Candy for Drivers**
- **Gifts for Drivers**
- **School Bus Safety Items for them to hand out**



LOVE THE BUS! “Gifts” for Drivers



LOVE THE BUS! T-Shirts



LOVE THE BUS! Older Students, too!



LOVE THE BUS! Drivers Love Food (Don't we all!)



LOVE THE BUS!



LOVE THE BUS! Safety Training Opp



LOVE THE BUS! Media Event



Communicating About Pupil Transportation

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- www.ncbussafety.org/documents/Lovethebusnapt2008

