



Department
of Education

John R. Kasich, Governor
Dr. Richard A. Ross, Superintendent of Public Instruction

October 2013

Dear Colleague:

National School Bus Safety Week will be October 21-25 this year. This is a unique opportunity for transportation and school administrators across the country to promote the outstanding safety record of school bus transportation.

The idea of a school bus safety week began in 1964 and has grown to a national event. In 2007 the US House of Representatives passed a resolution (HR498) to honor the goals and ideals of National School Bus Safety Week.

Each transportation administrator in the state can help make National School Bus Safety Week an effective campaign for our industry. A sample brochure has been created and posted to the ODE pupil transportation webpage for your use. Also located on the same web page is a printable copy of the *Oliver the Owl* safety coloring book that has been popular with younger students.

To emphasize school bus safety week, many districts hold extra activities. You may consider teaming up with a neighboring district to reduce the amount of work required.

Some suggestions of activities that you could use are as follows:

- Notify all district staff of this special week. Encourage extra cautious driving and bus safety vigilance during this week.
- Contact your local law enforcement agency and ask them if they will participate in school bus stop and school zone monitoring.
- Run your annual school bus emergency evacuation drills during safety week.
- Stage a bus and driver at school parent's nights or PTA meetings to allow parents to see "today's" school bus with all of its safety features.
- Hold transportation "Open Garage" and invite parents or district staff to visit your facility and see what you and your staff do on a daily basis to transport children safely and efficiently. (Provide a handout on your safety record, or list some impressive statistics.)
- Stage a bus and a driver at your local shopping center with signs to promote safety week and allow community members to see what their tax dollars are providing. Place signs on the bus to point out safety features, special items and possibly mark off the 'danger zone' on the pavement with chalk, a fire hose, cones or tarps.
- Hold a school bus inspection competition with another district. Use drivers in a road-e-o style inspection or ask your MVI team to participate if they are available.
- Distribute safety materials to your students. (Various materials can be had online and from bus vendors.)



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- Issue your own press release to local newspapers and media sources. A sample press release has been included that you may feel free to use.
- Encourage your Board of Education to pass a resolution recognizing School Bus Safety Week and ask your Mayor and/or City Council to pass similar proclamations.
- Encourage drivers to wear school colors or black and yellow during the week.
- Hold an essay contest and ask students to write about why school bus safety is important, what they can do to keep their bus safe and how they can help the bus driver each day.
- Invite your local fire department to “smoke” the inside of a bus and hold evacuations for drivers and district personnel.
- Invite parents, children and community members to write “thank you” notes to bus drivers.
- Invite parents to review safety rules with their children. Allow them to ask questions about the rules and stress the importance of following ALL rules.

Hopefully, you will make safety week a very important part of your week, October 21-25. If timing is a problem, try to fit it in when you can—we earn immeasurable points by being proactive with our safety and publicity efforts. **Let your customers know what you do to provide them with quality and safe service.**

On behalf of all the partners in pupil transportation safety,

Eric Bode, Executive Director
Quality School Choice and Funding
Ohio Department of Education