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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Tony Wood, Commissioner

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ADE ANNOUNCES SCHOOL BUS SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

LITTLE ROCK - Getting ready to go back to school is always an exciting time for Arkansas students and their families. While academic achievement is always a top priority, it is just as important to be mindful of student safety in and around school buses.

B.U.S. (Be aware. U stay alert. So kids don't get hurt) Awareness is the theme for this year's school bus safety awareness effort, which began today and will continue through Aug. 29. The campaign is sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Education in conjunction with the Arkansas Association of Pupil Transportation and concerned parents, educators and citizens across the state. This special effort seeks to remind motorists to obey all traffic laws whenever they are near a school bus. The campaign will also seek to remind motorists that it is illegal to pass a stopped school bus whenever its red lights are flashing and students are getting on or off the bus.

"Most of our public school students will be returning to the classroom Aug. 18, which means the yellow school buses will be returning to our streets and highways," ADE Commissioner Tony Wood said. "We want to remind motorists to be especially attentive whenever they are near a school bus. We must all work together to keep Arkansas students safe."

In Arkansas a fleet of more than 6,000 school buses transport over a quarter of a million students to and from school and school-related activities each school day. The fines, penalties and punishment for anyone found guilty of illegally passing a stopped school bus were dramatically increased by Arkansas Act 2128 of 2005, also known as Isaac's Law. The legislation was named for Isaac Brian, an elementary student in the Bryant School District who was struck and killed when a driver illegally passed his school bus while students were unloading.

“This campaign also serves to remind students and parents about the simple safety measures they can take while going to and from the bus stop, getting on and off the bus, and riding the bus,” Wood said. “It also gives us a chance to thank Arkansas school bus drivers and school district transportation directors for their professionalism and hard work.”

B.U.S. Awareness materials, which include a sample news release, sample letter and safety tips for parents, are available on ADE’s website:

<http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/communications/pressroom>.



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