

Ohio School Boards Association

8050 North High Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43235-6481
(614) 540-4000 • fax (614) 540-4100
www.ohioschoolboards.org

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For more information contact:

Angela Penquite

deputy director of communication services

(614) 540-4000

apenquite@ohioschoolboards.org

Ohio schools and communities focus on school bus safety Oct. 19-23

Every day in Ohio, more than 15,000 school buses transport 800,000 children between home and school. School bus drivers, parents and school officials constantly work to maximize the safety of these students; however, they are at increasing risk when outside of the bus at their bus stops.

This year's National School Bus Safety Week campaign, Oct. 19-23, focuses on reminding the community that when school buses are stopped with their red lights on, traffic must stop around the bus to safeguard children. This year's theme is Red Lights Mean STOP! OSBA has compiled a number of safety week resources at <https://www.ohioschoolboards.org/national-school-bus-safety-week>.

Anytime a school bus is stopped, children leave the safety of the sidewalk and attempt to board their bus. Sometimes children have to cross the street at their bus stop. Bus drivers are trained to watch traffic and signal to students when traffic stops. But when motorists deliberately drive around a stopped school bus, it can be difficult for drivers and students to react in time to stay safe.

"More than 1,500 motorists every day illegally pass school buses that are stopped to load or unload children," OSBA Senior Transportation Consultant Pete Japikse said. "These buses all have flashing red lights on the front and back and a stop sign with flashing red lights on the traffic side of the bus. Those lights notwithstanding, motorists continue to disregard the laws requiring them to stop, placing children in jeopardy."

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The big yellow school bus has become an institution in our country, Japikse said, with students and families benefiting from the safe transportation service accomplished with these vehicles and the staff who operate them. Often, we take for granted the benefit of this service, even while school and transportation staff continue to focus on maximizing safety and efficiency.

Founded in 1955, the Ohio School Boards Association leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.