



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

No. 16-070

July 27, 2016

MEDIA CONTACT: Rebecca Blessing

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4604 | Cell: (502) 330-5063 | E-mail: rebecca.blessing@education.ky.gov

BILLBOARDS REMIND DRIVERS TO STOP FOR SCHOOL BUSES

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – As a new school year approaches, Kentucky drivers will soon see reminders across the state to watch out for stopped school buses.

This week, approximately 45 billboards started going up that warn of the danger in passing a stopped school bus. The billboards feature an extended stop sign arm on the side of a school bus with the words, “It’s not JUST a stop sign, it’s a child’s life.”

“It is paramount that our children arrive at school and back home safely each day,” said Commissioner Stephen Pruitt. “While stopping for a school bus might be a minor inconvenience for drivers, it could be a matter of life or death for a child. I call on all Kentuckians to be especially cautious around school buses, not just at the beginning of the school year, but anytime they approach these big yellow vehicles.”

In the 2014-15 school year, 75 percent of the school bus-related fatalities occurred when a student was hit by a passing vehicle, according to the annual National School Bus Loading and Unloading Survey. While Kentucky has not recorded any such fatalities, bus drivers often see drivers illegally passing their buses as children attempt to get on and off the bus. According to a survey by the National Association of the State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services of more than 96,000 school bus drivers in 33 states, drivers recorded 74,421 vehicles illegally passing a stopped school bus.

In Kentucky, it is illegal to pass a stopped school bus in either direction on a two-lane road if the warning lights on the bus are on. School bus drivers use a “flashing signal light system” to alert motorists of pending actions:

- Yellow flashing lights indicate that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
- Red flashing lights and extended stop arms indicate that the bus has stopped, and that children are getting on or off the bus. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start moving again.

More than 385,000 children in Kentucky ride some 9,855 school buses each day. To keep those children safe during their travels, the National Transportation Safety Administration offers these tips to drivers:

- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
- When driving in neighborhoods with school zones, watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school, but may not be thinking of getting there safely.

(more)

Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>

Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kydeptofed and Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kydeptofed

Page 2 -- School Bus Campaign Safety

- Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood.
- Slow down. Watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.
- Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.
- Observe the posted speed limit in school zones.

The first 23 billboards will go up in Pikeville, Prestonsburg, Paintsville, Danville, Frankfort, Georgetown, Harrodsburg, Versailles, Lexington, Owensboro and Henderson with other communities to follow the first week of August.

The billboard space is being donated by Lamar Advertising Co. of Lexington, Outfront Media of Louisville and Fairway Outdoor Advertising in Eastern Kentucky. The Kentucky Department of Education is paying for the printing and installation.

The billboards are part of a Bus Safety Back to School Campaign undertaken by the Kentucky Department of Education. The campaign [website](#) features additional school bus safety resources including a school bus safety pledge, coloring pages and tips for parents.

###

Visit our website at <http://www.education.ky.gov>

Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kydeptofed and Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kydeptofed