



# NYAPT

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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*Our future is riding with us!*

## **School Buses Do More Than Keep Children Safe**

### **Many Reasons to Value the Yellow School Bus**

By [New York Association for Pupil Transportation](#)

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School is OPEN!

Did you ever take a moment to think that the very first contact a child will have with her local school will be in the form of a yellow school bus driven by a dedicated school bus driver!

Before the school principal welcomes your child to the front doors of the school building, his school bus driver will have welcomed him through the swinging door of the yellow school bus.

Before her teacher hands out the assignments for the day, a school bus driver will have instructed her on the ground rules for riding safely on the yellow school bus.

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation urges all New Yorkers, particularly parents of our school children, to take a moment to reflect on what an asset the yellow school bus is and the great work that is performed for our children by the school bus drivers who carry our children to and from school each day.

Consider what life would be like without that yellow school bus taking your children to school and bringing them home safely each day. We think you will agree that the school bus is an integral and valuable part of your child's school experience.

*Let's consider for a moment the yellow school buses that carry our children:*

- That yellow school bus is designed to exacting, time-tested national standards and further manufactured to meet additional safety standards set forth by the State of New York. Its distinctive "national school bus chrome" yellow coloring is further accentuated by scientifically-designed lighting and signage. Those factors are intended to ensure the visibility of the school bus on our highways and roadways and are part of the formula that keeps our children safe.

- The school bus is also constructed in ways that ensure the safety of the children and driver who are riding within its walls. Here again, every element and material and construction process is consistent with federal and state standards including the steel frame and seating configurations of the school bus.
- Each vehicle is inspected by law by the State of New York and is expected to meet the highest inspection standards twice each year. Inspections consider over 160 inspection points and school buses can be taken immediately out of service if they fail to meet certain of those points.

*Now let's consider the school bus drivers who drive those school buses:*

- It takes a lot to get behind the wheel of a yellow school bus. A school bus driver must first be licensed with a Commercial Drivers License that means they meet rigorous federal training, testing and licensing requirements. They must further attain a 'passenger' endorsement meaning that they can drive a commercial vehicle that carries human beings and then they must further receive an "S" endorsement meaning that they can drive a commercial vehicle that carries our students. Each step along the way requires additional learning and testing before they can move on to the next level.
- Once they are licensed appropriately, school bus drivers must undergo a criminal background check that screens their backgrounds to determine if they have been convicted of any crimes that would disqualify them to transport our children. They must complete a 10-hour Pre-Service training program and complete the 30-hour basic training program within a limited time period after their hiring. They are also subjected to random drug and alcohol testing to ensure that they are not using such substances as drivers. They must also participate in two 2-hour driver refresher programs to ensure that their skills are sharp and that they are aware of changes in laws as well as aware of current issues affecting children (school-based bullying, for example).

The school professionals who oversee and manage our school district transportation services pride themselves in ensuring the highest levels of safety for our children. However, we are ever mindful of the need to provide such safety for the children in the context of operational efficiency and high levels of performance for our schools.

We encourage Moms and Dads and other school officials to take some time to learn more about yellow school bus transportation in our school communities. It is an important part of the learning day and provides an efficient, energy-saving, and pollution-reducing means to bringing our children to school.

As the 2011-12 school year begins, the school transportation professionals in your school systems have all been hard at work making certain that all systems are "GO!" for the more than 2.3 million students who will climb aboard a yellow school bus on opening day! Our buses and our drivers are getting ready to say "Welcome Back to School!" to all our children!