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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 16, 2023

Release #2022-2023 – 019

Contact: Jennifer C. Jones, Director of Community & School Affairs, (478) 988-6390, Jennifer.C.Jones@hcbe.net

Houston County School District Recognizes the Importance of Transportation Staff and School Bus Safety

HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – October 16 is Georgia Bus Driver and Bus Monitor Appreciation Day. Bus drivers and monitors play an important role as they transport over 15,000 Houston County students every day and drive over 3.5 million miles annually.

“Our bus drivers and monitors are a vital part of what makes our District a success,” said Dr. Cheryl Thomas, Assistant Superintendent of School Operations for the Houston County School District. “Their dedication to making sure our students are safely delivered to and from school every day is essential to fulfilling our number one priority of safety.”

Additionally, the District will celebrate National School Bus Safety Week (NSBSW) October 16-20. NSBSW is a great time to remind students and families to observe all safety recommendations while boarding, riding, and exiting a school bus. “Driving Safely Into the Future” is the theme for this year’s National School Bus Safety Week. Students throughout the District will also participate in this year’s NSBSW poster contest. Last school year, Bella Dollar, currently a ninth grader at Perry High School, won first place at the state level in the Division 3 competition.

The District shared these tips from the National Association of Pupil Transportation.

Getting Ready for School

- Have your children put everything they carry in a backpack or school bag so that they won’t drop things along the way.
- Encourage them to wear bright, contrasting colors so they will be more easily seen by drivers.
- Make sure children leave home on time so they can arrive at the bus stop before it is due, ideally at least five minutes early. Running after or in front of a bus is dangerous.

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Walking to the Bus Stop

- Walk young children to the bus stop or encourage children to walk in groups. There is safety in numbers; groups are easier for drivers to see.
- Practice good pedestrian behavior: walk on the sidewalk, and if there is no sidewalk stay out of the street. If you must walk in the street, walk single file, face traffic and stay as close to the edge of the road as you can.
- Stop and look left, right and then left again if you must cross the street. Do the same thing at driveways and alleys. Exaggerate your head turns and narrate your actions so your child knows you are looking left, right and left.

At the Bus Stop

- Have children wait in a location where the driver can see them while driving down the street.
- Try to avoid waiting in a house or car.
- Do not let children play in the street. Playing with balls or other toys that could roll into the street is also dangerous.

Getting On and Off the Bus

- Warn children that if they drop something getting on and off the bus, they should never pick it up. Instead, they should tell the driver and follow the driver's instructions.
- Remind children to look to the right before they step off the bus.
- If you meet your child at the bus stop after school, wait on the side where the child will be dropped off, not across the street. Children can be so excited to see you after school that they dash across the street and forget the safety rules.

Mobile Devices

- Cell phones and other electronic devices are often permitted on the school bus as long as:
 - They are in backpacks or other holders, keeping hands free to use handrails while boarding and departing the bus.
 - Sound is muted or headphones, ear buds or similar devices are used.
 - Content does not violate the law or school district policy and procedures.
 - Use does not create a distraction for the driver.

For more information about the Houston County School District's Transportation Department, visit www.hcbe.net/transportation.

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