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School Bus Drivers Nationwide Honored for Safe, Reliable Service during February's "Love the Bus"

*American School Bus Council encourages students, parents and teachers
to give heartfelt thanks to school bus drivers*

Washington, D.C. (February 1, 2010) – Thousands of school children across the country are making Valentine's cards for someone extra special in their lives this year—their school bus drivers. To thank the men and women who take more than 26 million children safely to schools each day, the American School Bus Council (ASBC) is encouraging students, parents and teachers to "love the bus" in February and recognize their school bus drivers.

The Love the Bus program, founded in 2007 and coordinated by the ASBC, is celebrated on Valentine's Day and throughout February in school districts across the country as a way to raise awareness and appreciation for the hundreds of thousands of school bus drivers who safely transport children to and from school each day on 480,000 buses, the largest and safest transportation system in the country.

"School bus drivers play a critical role in the lives and educations of the nation's students and the Love the Bus program is a fun way for us to recognize their dedication," said Charlie Hood, National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services. "While nationwide, communities will participate in a variety of activities and events that honor school bus drivers, we also encourage parents and students to simply take the time to say 'thank you' to their drivers during this celebratory month."

While school buses are among the safest vehicles on the road, there is a trained professional keeping student safety top of mind at every step of the trip – from dispatcher to mechanic to driver. All school bus drivers must obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and pass written and skills tests to obtain a School Bus Endorsement. In addition, drivers receive specialized classroom and behind-the-wheel training in driving a school bus, student loading/unloading procedures, student evacuation, student behavior and security management, and emergency medical procedures.

Love the Bus is also an opportunity for parents and children to learn more about the safety and environmental benefits of school bus transportation. According to the National Academy of Sciences, a child is 13 times safer in a school bus than the average of other ways to get to and

from school. Additionally, the nation's school bus system eliminates the need for an estimated 17.3 million cars each morning and 2.3 billion gallons of gas annually.

Parents, teachers and children are encouraged to visit the program's Web site, www.LoveTheBus.com, and participate in this year's program by sharing stories about their favorite bus drivers and making interactive Valentine's cards to email or print and give to their bus driver during the month of February. Educators can visit www.LoveTheBus.com to download a toolkit, which provides resources for implementing a *Love The Bus* program.

Throughout February, the American School Bus Council and its members will hold a series of local events across the United States to educate parents and children about school bus safety. To learn more about the benefits of school bus safety, visit www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org.

About the American School Bus Council

The American School Bus Council is a coalition of the school transportation industry -- including public and private transportation providers, school bus manufacturers and state officials responsible for pupil transportation. The Council is committed to providing safe, effective, efficient and healthy transportation for the more than 26 million schoolchildren who ride more than 480,000 school buses daily. The Council was formed in 2006 to educate parents, school officials and lawmakers about the essential role the yellow school bus plays in the lives and educational achievement of America's schoolchildren. In 2007, the Council began implementing the annual national Love the Bus campaign each February to promote appreciation for the school bus and school bus drivers. For more information, visit www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org or www.lovethebus.com.