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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Maryland Recognizes National School Bus Safety Week October 18-22, 2021**

### ***Governor Larry Hogan Proclaims School Bus Safety Week in Maryland***

**BALTIMORE, MD (October 19, 2021)** Recognizing the critical importance of school bus operations in safely delivering students to in-person learning, Governor Larry Hogan issued a proclamation declaring School Bus Safety Week in Maryland, October 18-22. The proclamation celebrates school bus drivers, calling attention to their rigorous training, safety record, as well as their meticulous implementation of new safety practices and dedicated service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Transporting several hundred thousand students over millions of miles each and every day, our school bus drivers have played a critical role in ensuring the safety of Maryland’s children as they return to education buildings for full time in-person learning this school year,” said Governor Larry Hogan. “I thank them for their dedicated service to our students, schools and communities.”

“Maryland’s school bus drivers connect our students with their learning communities and are fundamental to our mission of offering every Maryland student a meaningful and equitable education,” said State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “School transportation personnel have demonstrated their commitment to Maryland students during our transition back to in-person instruction, and we thank them for their invaluable contributions to our education system.”

MSDE supports local school system transportation through its Office of Pupil Transportation and Emergency Management, which develops and implements statewide policies, procedures, and plans. The office also certifies driver instructors and provides guidance on training and best practices for recruitment and retention of school bus operators, an emerging important issue as local school systems throughout the State and country face bus driver shortages.

In collaboration with the Maryland Center for School Safety and the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), MSDE reminds parents to partner with school bus operators by reviewing school bus safety practices with their children.

NASDPTS has designated “Be Safe, Know the Danger Zone” the theme of this year's safety week. The safety message reminds parents and children that the danger zone is the area immediately around the school bus.

The Association emphasizes the following three safety measures students should practice when traveling on a school bus:

- Arrive at their school bus stop early, so they are not rushed.
- Remain three, giant steps back from the curb until the bus stops and opens the doors.
- Pay attention to the driver when they are boarding and exiting the bus.

As always, drivers are reminded to pay extra attention for students crossing roads near bus stops and to obey school bus traffic signals. When a school bus stops with flashing red lights and extended stop sign, drivers in BOTH directions are required by law to stop.

For more on MSDE's role in student transportation, visit:

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DBS/Pupil-Transportation/index.aspx>

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