

## Welcome to the FastLane: The Official Blog of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation

The Official Blog of Ray LaHood, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation

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### The familiar yellow bus, a safe ticket to opportunity

It's difficult to believe it, but in less than a month, our local roadways will once again be populated by yellow school buses, moving America's most precious cargo to and from schools and neighborhoods. The folks who provide that essential service are not just carting passengers back and forth; they are connecting America's children with all of the great opportunities that come from the chance to learn, grow, and succeed at school.

That's right, *succeed*. Because research indicates that a good day at school begins with a positive experience *getting* to school. And for many families, that familiar yellow school bus is the only reliable way their children can get to and from the schoolhouse door.



So last week in Baltimore, I was happy to talk with members of the [National School Transportation Association](#) and thank them for their hard work.

I wanted to let them know that we at DOT appreciate the many benefits their buses and drivers provide.

Most importantly, school buses are safe. At a celebration of "[Love the Bus Month](#)" last February, I visited the young bus riders of a Maryland elementary school. One young student asked me, "Are buses really the safest way to get to school?" And that was one of the easiest questions I've ever had to answer. Yes, traveling by bus is absolutely the single safest way for children to get to and from school.

But school buses also provide environmental benefits. New diesel standards make today's buses 98 percent cleaner than those made two decades ago. And thousands of the older buses have been modified to cut their emissions by up to 90 percent.



Plus, because each bus does the work of 36 cars, America's school buses help keep more than 17 million cars a day from pulling into and out of school driveways. That reduces a lot of gasoline demand and tailpipe emissions. And, by replacing cars that would otherwise have to be on the road near schools, buses help cut congestion near schools, which lowers the tailpipe emissions of the vehicles that are on the road.

You can see it's an easy case to make: As long as groups like the National School Transportation Association continue to work with DOT to ensure that their vehicles are safe and well-maintained, and that their drivers are well-trained and focused, our partnership can continue helping America's schoolchildren pursue their dreams and become educated participants in our society.

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