

**A GUIDE FOR  
TRANSPORTATION  
PROFESSIONALS TO  
CELEBRATE LOVE  
THE BUS MONTH**

**FEBRUARY 2024** 

# INTRODUCTION



**This guide has been written to accompany the Love the Bus Digital Toolkit.** Our goal is to share with you a variety of ways that you can celebrate our profession and our industry during the Love the Bus month. It is designed to give you easy access to information, templates, and ideas that can be implemented in your district or organization.

**While it is designed to support our Love the Bus campaign, it contains ideas that can be used year around** to build team spirit, enhance your reputation, brand your district, and to celebrate the wonderful work of your teams.

**A word of caution: Start out slowly!** You may wish to implement as many of these items or use as many of the templates as possible; while we love that enthusiasm, we know that your days are filled with professional obligations and that pupil transportation is an intense workplace! By selecting a few items to get you started this year, we hope that in the future you will build upon the campaign and find ways to utilize these ideas at Back to School or Open House events, recruiting fairs, and staff development opportunities.

Every school district or educational organization is different. Some of you may have multiple divisions serving pupil transportation. For example, special needs transportation may be a different division or unit than general transportation. Based on the size of your district, your culture, even your budgets - you may have access to resources that others do not! This is not a one size fits all campaign. It is designed to meet the needs of all NAPT members and their districts.

For decades, pupil transportation professionals - from directors, to drivers, to routers, to mechanics, to trainers, and support staff operate quietly in the background. While we support the amazing services you provide - it's time to bring forward recognition to our efforts, our industry, and our members. **Recognition is a valuable tool in creating positive cultures and in the hiring and retention of employees!**

In addition to this guide and toolkit, NAPT and the NAPT Foundation will be working fervently during February 2024 with a media campaign! Stay tuned! Our goal is to make Love the Bus Month a nationally recognized event!

Thank you for what you do daily for our industry and our profession.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly McGee Henitt".

CEO & Executive Director  
NAPT and the NAPT Foundation

# CREATING YOUR CAMPAIGN



In the introduction, we encouraged you to start slow! By successfully utilizing the toolkit and a handful of these ideas, you can start your district's Love the Bus campaign with success!

Here are the first things to consider.

## 01

GET WITH YOUR SUPPORT STAFF, DISTRICT COMMUNICATIONS STAFF OR OTHER TEAM MEMBERS TO EXPLORE THE TOOL KIT AND THIS GUIDE. SHARE IDEAS AND SELECT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO.

## 02

GET THE SUGGESTED PROCLAMATION TO YOUR SUPERINTENDENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HAVING YOUR SCHOOL BOARD ISSUE A PROCLAMATION IS A GREAT WAY TO KICK OFF THE CAMPAIGN.

It may require someone from your team to be at the school board meeting, but it is worth the investment of time!

## 03

TUNE INTO OUR NAPT WEBINARS LATER IN JANUARY. YOU WILL GET SOME NEW IDEAS ON HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE CAMPAIGN AND FIND OUT WHAT IS HAPPENING NATIONALLY.

## 04

CREATE A CALENDAR FOR LOVE THE BUS MONTH. WE RECOMMEND CREATING AN ACTION OR ACTIVITY FOR EVERY WEEK OF THE MONTH.

For example, Week One may be Driver/Staff Appreciation Week. Week Two may be emphasis on Safety Week. Week Three may be tied to Valentines Day and support Love the Bus ideas. Week Four may be directed at recruiting new drivers and educating the public about our industry. By dividing it into weeks, you are creating a workable campaign.



# CREATING YOUR CAMPAIGN



## 05

DETERMINE YOUR RESOURCES.

Do you have a budget? Can you access district support from your communications team? Do you have staff who are good with design or creating materials that you can call upon? Can you ask the PTA or student body officers for funding? You can do this campaign without funding, but it will make it much easier if you have resources! For example, your student bodies may have button machines you could borrow, or they could provide funds for an event or special materials.

## 06

GET YOUR MINDSET ON THE CAN-DO SIDE OF THINGS! YOU CAN DO THIS AND MAKE IT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR TEAM AND YOUR DISTRICT. REMEMBER, GETTING STARTED AND GETTING IN THE RIGHT MINDSET IS KEY!

## 07

PERSONALIZE THIS TO YOUR NEEDS. YOU KNOW YOUR PEOPLE, YOUR ORGANIZATION AND YOUR COMMUNITY! USE THIS KNOWLEDGE TO CREATE SOMETHING SPECIAL.

## 08

SET PERSONAL GOALS FOR YOURSELF DURING THE MONTH. YOU WILL SET THE TONE FOR THE CAMPAIGN AND YOUR TEAM.

## 09

HAVE FUN! THIS CAMPAIGN IS A POSITIVE WAY TO SUPPORT OUR PROFESSION AND OUR TEAM!



# SAMPLE PLAN



Meet with your support staff and transportation leadership. Provide them with access to the Digital Tool Kit and this guide. Share the information and generate ideas for your Love the Bus Campaign. List the ideas and activities you decide upon.

Develop a calendar for the month. Be specific about what is going to happen, when, where, what is needed to make this happen, and any logistical considerations. Identify who will be responsible for what.

If appropriate, share the plan with your immediate supervisor.

Email your supervisor and/or Superintendent's Office and attach a copy of the sample proclamation for Love the Bus Month.

In your email, share your plans for the month and encourage the support of the Superintendent and district administration.

Attend the Board meeting when your proclamation is approved.



# SPECIAL APPRECIATION EVENTS

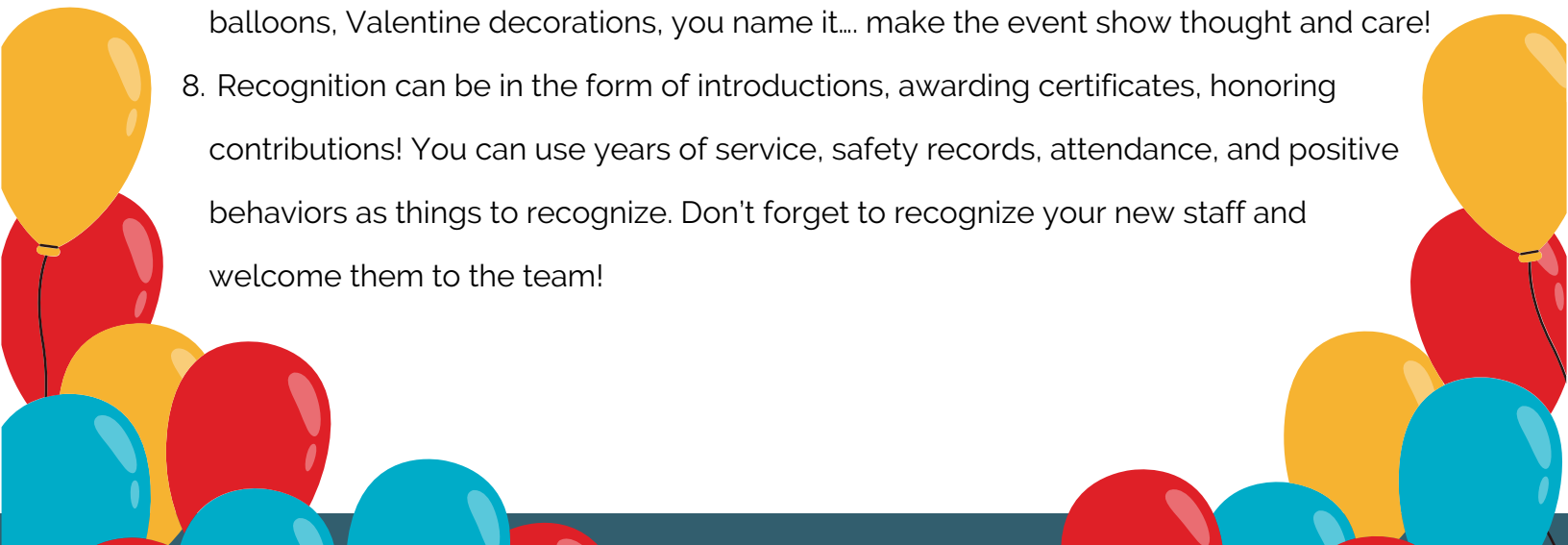


If your budget allows, you may wish to host special events during Love the Bus month. These could include:

- Driver/Staff Appreciation Breakfast, Lunch or Reception
- Awards Presentations

## **FOOD AND RECOGNITION ARE TWO GREAT MOTIVATORS! THEY BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER! HERE ARE SOME IDEAS:**

1. Check with your district food service team. Can they provide food? Do they have any resources you could use?
2. Ask your superintendent or supervisor for support and resources!
3. A pancake breakfast is one of the least expensive events you can host! Think about what would work for your group. All you need are electric griddles, pancake batter, butter and syrup along with paper goods! Add in coffee, juice, or even sausages if possible.
4. A coffee break or reception is another avenue. Punch, coffee and sweets are a welcome treat.
5. A lunch can be a casual BBQ or as fancy as your budget allows. The idea is to get them together and honor them!
6. If you use your own resources and we know that many of you do, make sure you keep receipts and talk to your tax professional about possible deductions.
7. Decorate and make whatever event you do as special as you can! Dollar store balloons, Valentine decorations, you name it.... make the event show thought and care!
8. Recognition can be in the form of introductions, awarding certificates, honoring contributions! You can use years of service, safety records, attendance, and positive behaviors as things to recognize. Don't forget to recognize your new staff and welcome them to the team!



# IDEAS TO CONSIDER



A shopping cart of potential!

<b>1.</b>	Weekly contest for transportation department staff. A drawing for a gift card, lunch with the director, a gift. People love contests! Even a small gift card can be a winner! Again, checking your resources is a key.
<b>2.</b>	Dress Yellow Day. During Love the Bus Month or even after, designate one day a week where the Transportation team flies our colors! Wearing yellow on the day is a good way to show recognition. You might even encourage kids to participate.
<b>3.</b>	Theme days. So many of our drivers love to celebrate holidays, maybe a special Love the Bus Day on Valentine's Day. Encourage them to dress a certain way, maybe even decorate their buses. Some ideas could be Paw Patrol Days, Disney themes, Crazy hat days, Superhero days.
<b>4.</b>	Honor your drivers. If you have military veterans, get a crafty person to help you make a large magnetic sticker for their bus with Veteran and their arm of the military identified. You can also use these large magnetic signs to honor long-time employees, safety winners, or other designations.
<b>5.</b>	Logo wear. If your drivers do not wear uniforms, logo wear is a great idea. Design an annual special T shirt or a patch. If they wear uniforms, look for a pin or patch to celebrate their employment.
<b>6.</b>	Use your signage to your advantage. Signs of encouragement or thanks in the check in and out areas, the breakrooms, or even at the entrance or exit to the bus yard. An investment in a sign that you can change regularly is a bonus. Use names and be specific in your signs. People read things that capture their attention.



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<b>7.</b>	Ask schools to add Love the Bus month to their school marquees! If possible, have a poster for the front offices or public areas.
<b>8.</b>	Use your social media. Be super positive toward your team and your district! Use pictures when you can.
<b>9.</b>	If you have automated systems for calling drivers or parents, create special messages for Love the Bus month or special events.
<b>10.</b>	Take advantage of inter and intra district communication. Make sure that you share what you are doing with your district colleagues. Do not assume they know!
<b>11.</b>	Offer VIP bus tours to the community or staff. Show off a new bus, an electric or propane or hybrid. Use the tour as a way to teach people about school bus safety and the construction of our buses. We are the safest means of transportation.
<b>12.</b>	Create a school bus trivia contest. Use this as a teaching tool for information about the bus.
<b>13.</b>	Meet with student newspaper editors. Give them information and invite them to write about your transportation department and employees. A good way to build your brand but also to share information.





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<b>14.</b>	Join the PTA or other key parent groups. Make sure that they are aware of what is happening in transportation. A VIP tour for them would be great as well.
<b>15.</b>	Examine your parent communication. Share Love the Bus activities with them as well as solicit their participation and feedback.
<b>16.</b>	Explore some ideas for Back to School Nights. Have a bus at each school site with a person to give them a custom tour of the bus. Set up a selfie pictures station. Let them take their pictures as drivers or passengers. Create a handout on bus etiquette or information to hand out.
<b>17.</b>	Prepare for the next school year and new students. A publication with ways to prepare your child to ride the bus, a welcome to the bus day where they can come and experience the bus before the start of school, a meet the driver opportunity.
<b>18.</b>	Create your own videos. Work with student journalism or other groups to create your own information videos.
<b>19.</b>	Blog or vlog every month but especially in February. Share your passion for the profession with our crew and the district.
<b>20.</b>	At the holidays, see if you can involve your team in a philanthropic project. Bringing cans or adopting families. Share this with the team and your community. Transportation people are very generous and care about the communities they serve.



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<b>21.</b>	Get your Superintendent and key district leaders more involved. Invite them to give welcomes, speak at staff meetings, share writings, or attend events. Do not assume they know what you are doing or that they will not participate.
<b>22.</b>	Surprises are great! Whether it is a small token on the bus or at a desk, a personal note, a candy bar...find ways to recognize and honor people. How fun to arrive at your bus or your desk to find a small gift or card!
<b>23.</b>	Get to know your principals. So much is happening at the arrival and departure times for our buses. Know their interests, concerns and invite them to offer suggestions. Find out about their discipline protocols and issues.
<b>24.</b>	Share a link to the Poster Contest winner and encourage your district to participate in our annual Poster Contest. The link is in your tool kit.
<b>25.</b>	Look at what other organizations and agencies have to offer you. Online courses, graphics, materials that you can replicate!
<b>26.</b>	Business cards, either printed or digital, are a great way to show appreciation and a professional nod to staff. If we expect people to be professional, we need to treat them like professionals.
<b>27.</b>	Adopt a mascot, a motto or even a mission statement for your department. People love to rally around things they can believe in or enjoy!



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<b>28.</b>	Make sure your team understands emergency protocols and what to do in the event of a disaster or event. They are boots on the ground and people consider them a good source of information.
<b>29.</b>	Celebrate whatever you can! Number of days without accidents. Number of students served. Number of miles driven. You name it, if you can put a positive spin on it, celebrate it. Our world is fairly negative at the moment and people appreciate some light!
<b>30.</b>	Know your team. Take time to recognize them by name. Strike up a conversation. Know them as people and let them know you!
<b>31.</b>	Use your staff development opportunities to build the team and to celebrate. Continuing education is a bonus! Approach it with a positive spin!
<b>32.</b>	Have stay interviews. Invite staff members to a specific meeting. Ask them why they like working there and why they stay! Also ask them what they need. Always take notes and when possible, follow up. They have amazing ideas if we listen!
<b>33.</b>	Rethink staff meetings. Can you do anything to turn them into a more meaningful and engaged session? Can you build positive activities into every staff meeting? Can you add a video or other media to the meeting? Can you add employee recognition? Remember, share success!
<b>34.</b>	Visual reminders matter. Your bulletin boards, memos, emails and everything you send out conveys a message. Can you add the Love the Bus logo or other materials?



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<b>35.</b>	Find ways to make everyday activities reflect the Love the Bus month. Decorate the offices or areas where your drivers and team congregate. Balloons, banners, streamers...something to change the daily grind into a special occasion.
<b>36.</b>	Celebrate the anniversary of your drivers' or team's hire dates. Recognition in the form of a note, a shout out at a meeting, or even an anniversary balloon! Find ways to honor and recognize!
<b>37.</b>	Create an honorary bus driver program. Make a big deal out of it at your meetings. Recognize district office administrators, school board members, local first responders, parent leaders. Let them see firsthand what a driver does daily! Give them a certificate and a name tag!
<b>38.</b>	Explore ways to promote driver and staff health. Maybe a health minute at your staff meetings? A walking or weight loss challenge? Stress relieving techniques presentation? The choices are limitless!
<b>39.</b>	Write up short paragraphs or blurbs that can be used in site bulletins or district publications honoring Love the Bus month. If you write it, they may use it. See an example in our tool kit!
<b>40.</b>	Find a staff member, retiree or volunteer who loves to decorate, has a Cricket machine, or who would love to help you with the campaign.
<b>41.</b>	If you have time, put together a committee to look over these ideas and help you create the activities. This will build buy in and can help you use your time wisely.



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<b>42.</b>	Copy and share the 101 Ways to Practice the Art of Encouragement! It can help everyone be more positive and represent transportation well.
<b>43.</b>	<p>Here is a quick list of places to explore that can help you find materials, decorations, or other items that can help with your campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oriental Trading Company</li><li>• Dollar Store</li><li>• Dollar General</li><li>• Big Lots</li><li>• Party City</li><li>• Teacher Supply Stores</li></ul>
<b>44.</b>	Included is a list of agencies that have online materials available. These range from free courses and information for your staff, photos and materials you can reprint and use, and a wide variety of resources.

## ATTACHMENTS

- NAPT Digital Toolkit
- 101 Ways to Practice the Art of Encouragement

## QUESTIONS?

Contact NAPT Headquarters

