



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## A Lesson in Staying Safe While School is in Session

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It's hard to believe that the end of summer is upon us and children and teachers are settling back into the classroom. As a mother and grandmother, I know that "back-to-school" isn't just an exciting time; it's also a time when we need to take extra steps to ensure children stay safe in the coming months.

Here are several tips you can follow to promote safety as the school year continues:

Safely share the road: Not only are buses out on the roadways moving students to and from school and sporting events, there are also more instances of children walking and on bicycles. That's why it's a good idea to slow down and be extra careful—especially on streets surrounding schools.

Be cautious around buses: Motorists must slow down when they see a school bus with flashing yellow lights and state law requires drivers to stop when red lights are flashing—even if the bus is in a school parking lot. And, it goes without saying that you should never pass any vehicle—school bus or not—that is stopped for young pedestrians.

Students be aware of surroundings: Smartphones are great for communication, however, they can be dangerous when they distract people from their surroundings. Teach your children that they should put away electronic devices while crossing the street and while getting into or off the school bus.

Don't overstuff backpacks: Heavy backpacks can pose a danger to children and their back health. Be sure your child's backpack weighs no more than 10 to 20 percent of his or her body weight.

As your state senator, I am proud to have been able to deliver funding that is promoting safety in our local schools. This special support is helping to improve school security systems, providing students with in-school anti-drug education and counseling programs and more.

Children learn best in environments that are safe. That's why it's so important that together, we take steps to promote safety in our local schools. As the school year continues, I would like to wish all teachers, students and families a safe and happy year of learning and fun!