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**Sheriff Bailey urges Safety when heading Back to School...**

Whether they're ready or not, Berrien County students are headed back to school!

Of the 301 school-age children killed from 2006 to 2015 in school-transportation-related crashes in the U.S., 102 were pedestrians and eight were cyclists, according to the most recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

With more than 16 public school districts in the county, drivers and pedestrian's need to put their phones away and pay attention to their surroundings, Sheriff Bailey said.

Deputies will be monitoring school zones, but here are some additional tips from the Sheriff's Office for a safe trip back to school.

**If you drive your children to school:**

- Know your districts instructions and follow the rules to make Drop-Off and Pick-Up smooth & stress free.
- Be Alert and Drive Defensively - Always anticipate the possibility of a child darting out in front of you.
- Slow down and pay attention especially in school zones. Watch out for children walking, biking and waiting at bus stops.
- Remember buses make frequent stops. It's against the law to pass a school bus while it's stopped on the roadway picking up or dropping off students.
- When turning at an intersection, be sure to yield to pedestrians and cyclists.

**If you're a student riding the bus:**

- Stay out of the street while waiting for the bus and allow the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the bus from the curb.
- Make sure you remain in clear view of the bus driver. Never walk behind the bus.
- Look both ways before getting on and off the bus. When you get off the bus, look both ways and move immediately onto the sidewalk and out of traffic.

**If you're a student walking or biking to school:**

- Make sure to have some type of reflective equipment/material on your bike, backpack or clothing. Be Seen – Be Safe!
- Walk on sidewalks where available and always cross at intersections.
- Bike riders should ride on the right, in the same direction as traffic, and use appropriate hand signals. Bicyclists should also respect traffic lights and stop signs.