



# Books on Buses Program in Granite City

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter  
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With the 2019-2020 school year, students in Granite City will be able to find a good book to read while traveling between home and school on select school buses. This pilot program is a partnership between Granite City Community Unit School District #9, North America Central School Bus, and Six Mile Regional Library District.

During the Spring of 2019, SMRLD Executive Director Tina Hubert contacted Don Harris, Director of Student Services for the Granite City School District, after reading an article about how a bucket of books was added to an Arkansas school bus to encourage students to read. Tina then met with Mr. Harris; Paula Hubbard, GCSD#9 Director of Special Education and Region 1; Pat Coleman, Granite City Contract Manager North America Central School Bus; and Erica Hanke-Young, SMRLD Youth Services Manager to discuss a new partnership and the logistics of bringing this pilot program to GCSD#9 students. It was decided to begin with a few select buses, in order to iron out any wrinkles in the program before it goes district-wide.

The Books on Buses program is similar to the Little Free Library concept where folks are invited to *Take a Book, Share a Book*. Six Mile Regional Library District is supplying the books for ages 5-15, and North America Central School Bus is providing safe containers to hold the books on the buses. Books are entirely free and do not have due dates – students can read the books on the buses, take books home, return the books to the buses to share with others and to choose new titles to read, or even keep favorite books. While every student in the Granite City School District is encouraged to get their free SMRLD library card, a library card is not needed for the Books on Buses program.

The enthusiasm for this new partnership was automatic. It's a win-win for everyone. The books give the kids something to do while on the bus and promotes literacy at the same time. GCSD Superintendent Jim Greenwald states, "*Books on Buses is another outstanding example of the many services offered by the Six Mile Regional Library District. They have many programs to make reading fun for the students, and what a novel way to continue the learning process to and from school.*"

All three organizations share the same service boundaries. Many people who grew up in Granite City fondly remember the Library's Bookmobile. While a full-fledge bookmobile is beyond either the School District or Library District budgets, this new Books on Buses program is a way to reach out in a somewhat similar fashion to students throughout the area.