



**Transportation Issues Study Committee
The 171st Meeting
January 27, 2010**

Next Meeting: February 23, 2010 9:30 a.m. -11:30 p.m.

**Minneapolis Schools, Department of Transportation Services
1001 2nd Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN, 55405**

Present:

Keith Paulson, Anoka-Hennepin Schools
Kelly Wosika, MDE Program Finance/Transportation
Jan Vanderwall, Roseville Schools
Lieutenant Ed Carroll, Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Dave Peterson, St. Paul Schools
Brad Lundell, Minnesota Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Lobbyist
Harry Kenerson, Osseo Schools
John Thomas, Eastern Carver County Schools
Rob Anderson, Minneapolis Schools
B.J. Ison, White Bear Lake Schools
Shelly Jonas, Minnesota School Bus Operators Association (MSBOA)
Linda Andert, Center for Efficient School Operations (CESO)
Tom (Ace) Oestreich, Bloomington Schools

Summary: The summary of the November Transportation Issues meeting was approved.

Special Education Transportation Committee: There was a discussion on the transportation responsibility when a special education student open enrolls. When a special education student has special education accommodations written into their IEP, the enrolling district is responsible for providing the special education transportation even if it means going outside the district. Open enrollment cannot be denied because the student has special needs. Once the student enrolls, the IEP may be re-evaluated to determine what special education transportation accommodations are needed.

John Thomas said that the Osseo School District hosted the meeting and they demonstrated one of their new vehicles that had been modified to transport a high-needs student.

Minnesota Department of Education: Kelly Wosika said that districts have been reporting their year-end student transportation data and once the information is final she will compile it into the 08-09 school year transportation statistics.

The method for cost allocating transportation cost to a federal program was revisited by the Advisory Committee on Financial Management, Accounting and Reporting. After some discussion it was felt that the formally introduced method of charging back transportation costs to the federal program was cumbersome and that MDE's existing way of tracking the transportation cost would satisfy the federal requirements on reporting. It was determined that districts may use Object 365, Chargeback Code in order to report transportation costs to the federal programs in the SERVS reimbursement system. Districts will need to determine a rate either in miles, hours or routes to allocate the transportation costs. Also, districts will need to document the miles, hours or routes related to the various federal programs on the supplemental sheet of the Pupil Transportation Annual Report.

MDE will change the UFARS Manual and programming to allow the federal programs to use the object code. Object Code 365's name will be changed to Allocation Code to clarify that it is used to identify a district's transportation costs that was determined by an allocation method based on miles, hours or routes.

The Minnesota State School Bus Purchasing Program Manual is being updated and should be posted to the MDE Website soon. The Excel spreadsheets on pricing from each of the participating dealers in this program are currently available on the MDE Website. [View spreadsheets.](#)

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety and Education, School Safety Center is having its 3rd annual Minnesota School Safety Conference. It is scheduled for February 24-25, 2010, at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, Plymouth, Minnesota. Barb Fonkert, from the Department of Public Safety, DPS asked Cindy McKay, Spring Lake Schools Transportation, Lawrence Hines, Adams Services and Kelly Wosika, MDE to present on school bus safety. The conference poses a conflict with the next Issues Committee Meeting on February 24, 2010. Because of this, the next Issues Committee Meeting will be Tuesday February 23, 2010 at 9:30a.m. Rob Anderson offered to have the meeting at Minneapolis Schools if there was not a room available at MDE.

The nomination forms are available for the 8th annual awards program to identify and recognize the best school bus drivers and transportation assistants serving Minnesota students with special needs. The forms must be received by March 12, 2010. Contact Kristin Johnson, Robbinsdale Area Schools Transportation at kristin_johnson@rdale.org if you have any questions. [Access nomination forms.](#)

The Charter Choice Survey, the form charter schools use to identify if they will be using district provided or charter school transportation for the next school year, will be available this week. The form is due to MDE and the district in which the charter school is located by March 1, 2010.

Office of Student Transportation Safety: Lieutenant Ed Carroll (Eddie) reminded the group to keep an eye on the school bus driver's license status and endorsements. He explained that some drivers start out the year with endorsements and lose them over the course of the year. Districts and contractors should check the status of drivers frequently.

Lieutenant Ed Carroll said that DPS is digging deeper into past convictions when a person asks for a school bus endorsement waiver. They are using other resources such as Bureau of Criminal Affairs (BCA) to determine if a person is fit to drive a school bus.

The next Stakeholders Meeting will be February 8, 2010, at 9:30 at MDE, Conference Center B Room 16. There will be a discussion of changing the current point inspection system to a pass/fail system. The pass/fail system is used as a national model for school bus inspections. There are concerns about the differences between an annual inspection versus an on-the-road inspection and what will stop a bus on a route. Lieutenant Carroll explained that a change like this would take a lot of time and would not take effect immediately.

The school bus annual inspection results that are available on the DPS Website have been updated through December 2009. There will be a new file to show the results of the 2010 calendar year inspections. [View annual inspection results.](#)

Legislative: Brad Lundell explained the delay in school district aid payments to address the state's cash flow problem. There is a projected state cash flow shortage in March, April, and May requiring the state to utilize a state law. This law allows the state to delay school district aid payments before looking to state short-term borrowing. School districts aid payments will be delayed by about \$400 million in March, April and May with a repayment expected by May 30, 2010. Next year this process may start earlier, perhaps in September.

The booster seat bill will be introduced again to clear up any misunderstandings. The school bus omnibus bill will be split between two bills. One will be for education that will touch on such topics as cost allocation and allowing the cost of a lift bus to go on a field trip to be included in special education transportation. The other bill will focus on issues regarding public safety including driver standards.

The issue with having seatbelts on school buses is that it needs to be funded. Most transportation directors are okay with having seatbelts on the bus but they would need to be funded.

Given the current financial situation with the state, there probably won't be any increases in funding for the next three years.

David Peterson asked if there could be a discussion of Head Start drivers and their training at the next Stakeholders Meeting. David also mentioned that he believes school districts and bus contractors would generally prefer to continue to allow all medical examiners to perform driver physicals (instead of a proposed limitation to only doctors). In addition, David believes that school districts and bus contractors would generally oppose a recommendation that only medical examiners on file within a government data base be allowed to perform physicals.

It was mentioned that one of the benefits of not having transportation as a state categorical funding source and included in the general fund especially in these hard financial times is that a specific transportation program could not be cut like what was done in Hawaii. Unlike Minnesota, Hawaii has a designated transportation budget.

Miscellaneous: There was a discussion of having the multi-function school activity bus (MFSAB) include on the paper Pupil Transportation Annual Report for informational purposes. A specific MFSAB inventory bus listing with transaction forms would not be necessary because they are not used for to-and-from transportation and therefore would not generate any transportation aid. It was agreed that the count of the number of MFSAB used in the state could be useful information. Kelly will work on putting the MFSAB as a line item on the paper Pupil Transportation Annual Report for FY10.

Dave Peterson explained that he is organizing a presentation for the Minnesota Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) Spring Conference on financing school bus purchases and school bus specifications. Tom Oestreich offered to help with the presentation. It was mentioned that Denny Coughlin, Minneapolis Schools would also be a good source of information.

Future Meetings: Future meeting dates are:

February 23, 2010	Mpls. Schools, Dept of Transportation Serv. 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
March 24, 2010	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
April 28, 2010	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Adjourn: 11:10 a.m.