



**Transportation Issues Study Committee
The 169th Meeting
October 28, 2009**

Next Meeting: November 25, 2009 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

CC- 1 & 2, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Roseville, MN 55113

Present:

Keith Paulson, Anoka-Hennepin Schools
Kelly Wosika, MDE Program Finance/Transportation
Dianna Stair, Office of Minnesota Secretary of State
Jan Vanderwall, Roseville Schools
Lieutenant Ed Carroll, Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Dave Peterson, St. Paul Schools
Lori Jonason, Minnetonka Schools
Brad Lundell, Minnesota Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Lobbyist
Harry Kenerson, Osseo Schools
John Thomas, Eastern Carver County Schools
Rob Anderson, Minneapolis Schools
Randy Dukek, Rosemount Schools
Duane Vornbrock, Sauk Center Schools
Matt Regan, American Transportation
B.J. Ison, White Bear Lake Schools
Shelly Jonas, Minnesota School Bus Operators Association (MSBOA)

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

Special Education Transportation Committee: The committee had its first meeting of the year at Eden Prairie Schools on October 19, 2009. Everyone got a chance to mention how their school year began. The group decided to meet on the third Monday of the month at 10:00 a.m. at various school districts throughout the year. It was suggested that the district hosting the monthly meeting invite the district's special education director to the meeting. The group decided that they would select a topic before each month's meeting for discussion. Some of the topics mentioned were DPS's rules for special education transportation, guidelines for standardized training, dropping off students when no one is home, and HINI and how it affects student transportation.

Minnesota Department of Education: The majority of the Issues Committee meeting was taken up with a discussion on the Safe at Home Program. Dianna Stair, Safe at Home Program Administrator explained the program. It is a Minnesota address confidentiality program for people who fear for their safety. When people join Safe at Home they are assigned a substitute

address which is a post office box. By law all private and public entities in the state of Minnesota must accept a Safe at Home address as a participant's actual address for residency, school and work.

The program has some existing guidelines but would like the members of transportation issues committee group to provide some insight on what some of the issues are when a family chooses to receive student transportation. It was mentioned that while the list of students on a bus route are not published, the listing is distributed openly within the district. The question was asked if the listing of students and their bus stops is regarded as public information. The districts could make up a dummy stops in the routing system that would accommodate the student and his/her privacy. Issues about residency and attendance areas were discussed. Also, there are instances in which the school bus contractor is in charge of routing and the district would need to give the student information to the bus contractor.

Issues surrounding the Safe at Home Program extend further than student transportation. There may be issues with student reporting, transfer of records, residency, charter schools and nonpublic schools. The suggestion was made that MDE should work on creating guidelines for districts to use in various areas when a student is part of the Safe at Home Program.

Dianna Stair mentioned that the program is expected to grow and level off at about 1500 families; the majority of the persons in the program will be children.

When a school within their district is not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) students may choose to attend a higher performing school in the district with transportation provided. Title I funds are available for the additional cost of transportation. Twenty percent of the Title I funds should be set aside for supplemental education services (SES). Of the 20 percent, five percent is for Choice which includes transportation and five percent is for SES which includes instructional expenditures, for example, tutoring. After that, the remaining 10 percent can be used for a combination of either Choice or SES. There is still some confusion about what is a Choice expenditure and SES expenditure. Kelly will look into this further.

Kelly explained that the Department of Human Services is determining a cost based reimbursement rate when districts provide transportation for students who are on Medical Assistance.

Kelly presented a document on transporting persons other than students and the various stipulations that exist. Kelly would like to know if anyone had any comments or corrections to the paper.

Office of Student Transportation Safety: Lieutenant Ed Carroll (Eddie) stated that many buses are not passing inspection. Districts and contractors are experiencing a ten-to thirty-percent non-passing rate.

There was a discussion on why so many buses are not passing inspection and what changed. Lieutenant Ed Carroll said that the point system is antiquated and should be updated. He also reminded the group that the Legislative auditors sited DPS for not doing a good job of bus inspection in the past and recommended that DPS do more consistent and thorough school bus inspections.

Districts and contractors stated that they want to be partners with DPS on bus inspections but felt the buses were being inspected subjectively rather than objectively. They agree that all safety issues should be fixed but felt that, for example, a dirty dash on buses that frequently travel on dirt roads was not a reason for a failed inspection.

DPS Motor Vehicle Services (DMV) is experiencing processing problems and commercial vehicle drivers license are not moving forward as they should. Lieutenant Ed Carroll is going to invite a representative from DMV to next Stakeholders Meeting in order to explain the situation and see how the problem can be resolved.

None of the legislative initiatives presented by the Office of Student Transportation Safety moved forward within the Department of Public Safety. Dave Peterson asked if MAPT/MSBOA should take them on instead. Lieutenant Ed Carroll said he would like to talk about it.

The next Office of Student Transportation Safety Stakeholders Meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2009, at the Public Safety Offices in Mendota Heights.

Legislative: There was some discussion on the new Care and Treatment legislation. Some of the language in the bill needs to be cleaned up to be consistent with other education language. There needs to be some clarification on what a year-round education is. Dave Peterson said that a person from the special education department of St. Paul Schools would be interested in attending the meetings. The next meeting will be October 29, 2009. Sue Abderholden, Executive Director at National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota is the contact on this new legislation. NAMI Minnesota is located at 800 Transfer Road, Suite 31 St. Paul, MN 55114. Sue's phone number is 651-645-2948 or 1-888-NAMI HELPS www.namihelps.org

Brad Lundell mentioned that there are still discussions on the booster seat requirement on school buses.

Dave Peterson said that there will be a MAPT and MSBOA legislative meeting after the Issues Study Committee meeting. Any new legislative initiatives will be brought to the Stakeholders Meeting on November 16, 2009.

Miscellaneous: There was a decision by the Minnesota State Academies to have a Sunday night 7:00 p.m. drop-off time starting in November. There were concerns with this change as it would cause late-night driving in potentially bad weather, sleep deprivation and driver fatigue. Brad spoke with Superintendent Linda Mitchell, Minnesota State Academies. The Academies are willing to work with districts because of this change. A central drop-off stop was suggested as a solution to the problem.

Another topic that was discussed was requiring a post-trip inspection to ensure no students are left on the bus and the need for consequences for the school bus driver if a student is left on the bus after the route.

Future Meetings: Future meeting dates are:

November 25, 2009	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
December 16, 2009	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 3 & 4, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
January 27, 2010	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Adjourn: 11:40 a.m.