



**Transportation Issues Study Committee
The 167th Meeting
July 22, 2009**

Next Meeting: September 23, 2009 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
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CC- 1 & 2, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Roseville, MN 55113

Present:

Keith Paulson, Anoka-Hennepin Schools
Shelly Jonas, Minnesota School Bus Operators Association (MSBOA)
Kelly Wosika, MDE Program Finance/Transportation
Jan Vanderwall, Roseville Schools
Lieutenant Ed Carroll, Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Sargent Duane Bartles (DPS)
Sargent Paul Davis (DPS)
Heather Darby (DPS)
Dave Peterson, St. Paul Schools
Lori Jonason, Minnetonka Schools
Dave Tripp, Hopkins Schools
Derrick Agate, Eden Prairie Schools
Brad Lundell, Minnesota Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Lobbyist
Harry Kenerson, Osseo Schools
Cindy McKay, Spring Lake Park Schools
John Thomas, Eastern Carver County Schools

Summary: The summary of the June Transportation Issues meeting was approved with the deletion of the last sentence that begins on the bottom of page two.

Special Education Transportation Committee: Nothing to report.

Minnesota Department of Education: Kelly told the group that the Transportation Reports that are usually mailed out to districts will soon be available on the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System Web Edit System (MARSS WES). MDE is in the final stages of creating these reports. This will allow districts to view student transportation information in a more timely manner.

Kelly told the group that the Transportation Category in MARSS is going to be moved to the enrollment record which means that each student record will have a date-specific Transportation Category assigned to it.

There was a discussion that federal stimulus money is available for districts to use for student transportation. Districts should be aware of the various stipulations attached to the use of the funds. For instance the funds cannot be used for bus purchases or maintenance but can be used for repairs. Also, districts should be aware that if a district uses the federal stabilization funds for student transportation, funding calculations would be affected where student transportation state aid is based on costs.

The forms and instructions for the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Program, the Open Enrollment Program and charter school mileage reimbursement program have been updated for the 09-10 school year. [They are available on the MDE Website.](#)

Kelly explained that when a district uses a combination of federal and general fund dollars to purchase a vehicle, a portion of the time could be used for nonspecial education activities. For example, if general fund dollars covered 50 percent of the cost of the bus, 50 percent of the of the time could be used for nonspecial education activities. Likewise, if a district used federal and general fund dollars for a vehicle that was used 100 percent of the time for special education purposes, the amount of general fund dollars could be included in the special education bus depreciation aid.

Kelly has closed the Student School Bus Safety Training Survey. [Access the results of the survey.](#) Kelly hopes to use the results of the survey to come up with some suggested best practices and resources on how to provide students with school bus safety.

Office of Student Transportation Safety: Lieutenant Ed Carroll (Eddie) said that the maps and contact information on State Patrol Officers assigned to each area are available on the DPS Website. [Access information.](#)

Eddie told the group the Patrol Office Steve Peterson passed away recently. He was the DPS inspector for the south metro area. He was a wonderful person and will be deeply missed.

Eddie and Denny Coughlin of Minneapolis Schools will be presenting on the Cottonwood crash at the School Transportation News (STN) Conference in Reno, Nevada this month.

The next Stakeholders Meeting will be at MDE on August 17, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. The big topic of discussion will be seat belts.

Sergeant Paul Davis reported that the Train the Trainer event went well. There were many good comments and discussions.

Cindy McKay explained how DPS helped her district with a stop arm violation. Cindy explained the DPS provided assistance in communications with the prosecuting attorney. She felt DPS did a very good job with the situation. The offender got jail time because of the incident.

It was mentioned that the City of St. Paul has a good program in which all the different public safety groups are interactive with each other. Other cities and towns should follow their example.

Harry Kenerson described a school bus crash that occurred in his district. The crash that occurred in Maple Grove continues to be under investigation. DPS is currently checking records. Harry pointed out that the staff acted appropriately and evacuated the bus in a safe and efficient manner. The cameras on the bus were very helpful in analyzing the crash.

It was mentioned that cameras on buses have also helped in removing bad drivers.

The inspection manual is currently being worked on and should be available soon.

Legislative: Brad Lundell said that there is a meeting with the National Alliance on Mental Health Care and Treatment on Tuesday, August 18, 2009, that will include a discussion on the complications and issues surrounding transportation to care and treatment programs. Brad is open to ideas and suggestions surrounding this topic. Kelly suggested getting input from rural districts like Blue Earth. Many rural districts struggle with providing transportation to care and treatment programs.

The Shared Service Bill is coming back. There are concerns about having the three districts combine transportation services. There may be a more efficient ways to provide student transportation but it would involve loss of local control.

Brad mentioned that day care providers are questioning the use of seat belts with Type A vehicles. Sergeant Duane Bartles explained that the Department of Human Resources passed a statute three years ago that provides that all drivers that provide transportation to children in day care must be trained in seat belt use.

Dave Peterson explained a timeline established regarding how the Stakeholders Group, MAPT and MSBOA should work together on legislative initiatives. Ideally, it should begin in September so there is enough time for each group to meet on the issues.

Miscellaneous: The majority of the meeting was a discussion surrounding the amendment to Minnesota Statutes 169.685 that provides, in part, that every motorized vehicle operator when transporting a child who is both under the age of eight and shorter than four feet nine inches on the streets and highways of this state in a motor vehicle equipped with factory-installed seat belts, shall be equipped with a child passenger restraint system.

Heather Darby with DPS, Office of Traffic Safety explained that even though the spirit of the law was not to include school buses; school buses that have factory-installed seatbelts are not exempt.

DPS does not have the authority to provide an exclusion or interpretation of this bill. Only if a parent signs a written waiver stating that their student does not have to be in a booster seat would a district be exempt from this requirement. Usually parents only sign this type of waiver is there is a medical condition that prevents the use of a booster seat.

Districts are struggling with this requirement because it is an unforeseen mandate for which they didn't budget. The law requires some districts to purchase several hundred booster seats for their younger students. In addition, modifying the bus for booster seats will diminish capacity for transporting older students. More drivers, vehicles and para professionals would be needed to deal with the additional vehicles.

Dave Tripp suggested having the Attorney General take a look at this statute and provide an interpretation and possibly an exemption for school districts. Derrick Agate agreed.

Keith Paulson mentioned an article about Blue Bird Vision School Buses. Apparently there is a problem with the visibility on the right-hand side of the bus and the windshield wipers on the vehicle. Blue Bird is currently working on the problem and correcting the situation so that the mirror is not obscured by any portion of the windshield.

Future Meetings: Future meeting dates are:

September 23, 2009	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
October 28, 2009	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Adjourn: 11:30 a.m.