



**Transportation Issues Study Committee
The 164th Meeting
March 25, 2009**

Next Meeting: April 22, 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
Shelly Jonas, Minnesota School Bus Operators Association (MSBOA)
John Thomas, Eastern Carver County Schools
Kelly Wosika, MDE Program Finance/Transportation
Jan Vanderwall, Roseville Schools
Captain Ken Urquhart, Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Rob Anderson, Minneapolis Schools
Dave Peterson, St. Paul Schools
Derrick Agate, Eden Prairie Schools
Ray Kroll, Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT)

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

Special Education Transportation Committee: Lori Jonason was not present.

Minnesota Department of Education: Kelly Wosika presented a letter from State Representative Lyndon Carlson. In the letter the Representative Lyndon Carlson asked the Transportation Issues Study Committee and MAPT to provide feedback on two issues for the 2010 legislative session. The two issues were 1) Requiring seatbelts on school buses and 2) requiring school buses to have "How's my driving" bumper stickers to allow citizens to call a hotline to report concerns.

There is current legislation introduced concerning seat belts on school buses that is consistent with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) requirements. Those requirements mandate the installation of lap/shoulder belts for all small school buses of 10,000 pounds or less, manufactured after October 21, 2011. The Office of Pupil Transportation Safety recommends the adoption of these standards requiring lap/shoulder belts for all school buses manufactured after October 21, 2011.

The group discussed the proposed requirement that school buses have a “How’s my driving?” bumper stickers on them. Some issues that were discussed were which staff members were going to answer the calls, how is the program going to be funded, what would the process be regarding a driver mentioned in the call and would there be an insurance reduction if a district complied with the program.

Captain Ken Urquhart will follow up by visiting with Representative Lyndon Carlson on the issues.

There was a discussion of some of the data elements and their definitions in the Pupil Transportation Data report that is available on the MDE Website.

Office of Student Transportation Safety: Captain Ken Urquhart explained that the Type III Driver Modification Bill is being heard in the House of Representatives. The bill is being modified to say that school district personnel that do not have the sole responsibility to provide student transportation are exempt from drug and alcohol testing and the physical exam.

DPS recently hired school bus inspectors and they are going out into the field to perform inspections. The new inspectors will be equipped to do presentations which may be useful at MAPT Regional meetings. More troopers will be hired at the end of July. Lieutenant Carroll has created a panel to interview and hire the candidates.

There continues to be updates to the DPS Website. They are currently working on updating the inspection manual and making it available online. Bus inspection results are now available on the DPS Website. As time moves on, the data will be come more comprehensive. They are working on developing better data collection techniques so that the information can be immediately posted to the DPS Website. Eventually a person will be able to sort the report by type, manufacturer and bus number along with other topics.

There was a discussion on the mandate of seat belts and the dollar amount that will be needed to conform. It was mentioned that we haven’t felt the increase of the 2007 emission requirements because of the bus purchase turnover rate. There will be some decrease in capacity but not as much as what was first estimated. Districts will need to increase fleet numbers to accommodate all of the students currently transported. Parents will be involved in pushing for buses with seat belts.

Legislative: Dave Peterson provided information on current legislative initiatives. S.F. 1665, the school tech bill that relates to Type A bus weights, seat back heights, field trip costs, care and treatment transportation and cost allocation, is going to be heard at the legislative session Friday morning.

The Shared Services bill that would provide bus routing software to all school districts would be beneficial. There was a discussion on the differences of district versus state driven transportation programs and the funding differences pertaining to the two.

Minnesota school districts and other non-profit entities are eligible to apply for the Clean Diesel grants and the National Diesel Emissions Reduction Program Appropriations grants. In addition, school bus contractors may receive heaters for the buses but a school district or other non-profit organization must submit the grant application for the heaters. [View additional information including contacts on the Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) Website](#) .

It was suggested to invite a representative from the Safe Routes to Schools organization to discuss available funding options. Keith Paulson will look into this.

Keith Paulson said that he was asked to provide information on H.F. 875 that would amend Minnesota Statute 123B.88 and 123.92 and would modify the state requirement for pupil transportation for elementary pupils and authorize a levy to pay for certain transportation costs.

New Business: There was a discussion on depreciation aid that is available for districts that own their own vehicles that are used 50% or more of the time for special education transportation.

There was a discussion on the district's responsibility to transport students to extra-curricular activities and how to develop a transportation policy on this. There are statistics on increased crashes when students drive themselves to school in their own vehicles. There was discussion of liability issues when parents car pool to transport their students and how to include this situation in the district's transportation policy.

Miscellaneous: Kelly Wosika is working with a group from the School Bus Safety Committee on putting together a tool-kit for districts to use when providing school bus safety training to the students. Kelly asked the School Safety Center with the Department of Public Safety if they would like to be involved in the project, too.

Future Meetings: Future meeting dates are:

April 22, 2009	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
May 27, 2009	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Adjourn: 11:30 a.m.