



**Transportation Issues Study Committee
The 163rd Meeting
February 25, 2009**

Next Meeting: March 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
Gary Botzek, Minnesota School Bus Operators Association (MSBOA)
Shelly Jonas, (MSBOA)
John Thomas, Chaska
Kelly Wosika, MDE Program Finance/Transportation
Randy Dukek, Rosemount
Jan Vanderwall, Roseville
Brad Lundell, Minnesota Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Lobbyist
Harry Kenerson, Osseo

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

Special Education Transportation Committee: Lori Jonason was not present. Kelly Wosika reported that the committee met on Monday, February 23, 2009. The committee continues to be a great networking tool for school district employees and contractors who provide special education transportation for students. The group has been going through the Question and Answer Book put out by Labor Relation's Press's (LRP) and discussing various topics surrounding special education transportation.

The nomination forms used to identify and recognize the best school bus drivers and transportation assistants serving Minnesota students with special needs must be received by March 13, 2009. The nominations will be reviewed and the winners will be chosen at the next Special Education Transportation Committee meeting on March 16, 2009.

Minnesota Department of Education: Kelly Wosika provided fiscal year 08 student transportation statistics and spreadsheets on cost per student and the miles, hours and routes per district. There was a discussion of some of the data elements and their definitions. There was also discussion regarding the increased cost of student transportation while the numbers of students that are provided transportation are declining. It was suggested that in the future more information about the charter schools should be provided by including the charter school name and the district in which they are located.

Office of Student Transportation Safety: No one from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) was present. The next meeting of the Office of Student Transportation Safety will be on March 16, 2009 at MDE. It was mentioned that the results of recent school bus inspections are available on the DPS Website.

Legislative: Gary Botzek and Brad Lundell provided information on current legislative initiatives.

Senate File (S.F.) 33 and House File (H.F.) 116, Type III Driver Modifications are still being discussed. The word “solely” was originally included in the bill. However the language was viewed as not being tight enough. There was a discussion regarding pre-employment versus random drug testing. Also, there were discussions surrounding the fact that Type III drivers are not included in the federal law definition of a Commercial Driver License. Education Minnesota does not want teachers to be drug tested. The proposed law is going to affect smaller contractors and taxi drivers to be more accountable for Type III driver requirements rather than teachers.

Discussions surrounding S.F. 287, and H.F. 430, Transit Assistant Fund will mostly likely be around for the next two years. Legislation will need to figure out how the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the federal stimulus bill, relates to student transportation and what the State of Minnesota needs to do to receive federal money. There is mention of federal transit money in the federal stimulus bill. Some factors that will effect how this will move forward is what other states doing, issues surrounding light rail and other transit system matters.

H.F. 875 was introduced 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 cost.

H.F. 895 was introduced which would create a grant program to allow rural school districts to share services and appropriate money. No specific funding stream was identified.

H.F. 668 clarifies post-crash procedures and aligns specification with federal procedure requirements.

S.F. 10 Shared Services Purchasing Program is a valuable plan for those situations when resources that are not always available become more available if school districts work together. One example of shared services that was presented was technology and how it relates to online learning. Some view this bill as a start to privatizing school bus transportation.

New Business: Jan Vanderwall explained a recent situation that involved students being dropped off by their parents on the exit ramp of Highway 36 in order for the students to access the school. He asked the DPS to patrol the area. DPS cited several instances where students were dropped off on the exit ramp. As a result of this unsafe practice a fence will be installed along the walkway to deter having the exit ramp used as a drop-off point.

Miscellaneous: There was a discussion on what school districts are doing to reduce expenditures in transportation and expenditures in general. Some suggestions were that busing distances were increased to 2 miles for secondary students. Some districts were charging fees, while others are looking at efficiencies in routing and putting a fuel escalator clause in the contract for services.

Future Meetings: Future meeting dates are:

March 25, 2009	Education Conference Ctr A., Rooms 1 & 2, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
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.