



Pupil Transportation "Vehicle"

Provided by the Transportation Section within the Program Finance Division

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Pupil Transportation
Division of Program Finance
500 Highway 36 W
Roseville, MN 55113
Room I-11

Phone: 651-582-8855

Fax: 651-582-8803

<http://education.state.mn.us>

1. Legislative Update

Following is a summary of some of the new laws affecting pupil transportation that were passed during the 2010 Legislative Session.

Complete Streets Bill. Chapter 279, HF 2231, Signed 4/26/2010.

Permits a road authority, including a statutory or home rule charter city, to remove snow from unopened or private roads in uncompleted subdivisions when the developer is unable to maintain the roads and public safety may be jeopardized the access to school buses and other public services is obstructed.

Omnibus Transportation Policy Bill. Chapter 351, SF 2540, Signed 5/15/2010.

Amends Minnesota Statutes Section 123B.92 to allow a school to transport students to designated after-school programs operated by a political subdivision of the state within the attendance area of the school the pupil attends.

The bill also permits towing of a vehicle when it is parked in a school zone on a public street where official signs prohibit parking on a school day during prohibited hours.

Changes are also made to requirements for Type III vehicle drivers. Type III vehicle drivers must be trained on escorting pupils across the road after the vehicle has been stopped, ignition key removed, and brake is set. Employers may also use a breathalyzer or similar device to fulfill random alcohol testing requirements on Type III vehicle drivers. Drivers must also meet physical requirements as determined by the commissioner of public safety. The commissioner of public safety may also exempt a Type III vehicle driver from the physical qualifications upon receiving evidence of the driver having been medically examined and certified.

Formally establishes the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access to make recommendations to improve coordination, availability, accessibility, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and safety of transportation services provided to the public including encouraging the use of school buses for the transit public.

Traffic Regulation Provisions Modified Relating to Highway Work Zone Speeds, Driving in the Right-Hand Lane, and Seat Belt Requirements for Persons Operating a Type III Vehicle as a School Bus. Chapter 356, HF No. 3263, Signed 5/17/2010.

Exempts school buses and type III buses that meet the seating and crash protection requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Standard 222, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 571 from the requirements of child restraint system under Minnesota Statutes Section 169.685 that was enacted in 2009.

2. 2009-2010 Special Education Driver and Assistant Awards

Each year the Minnesota Association of Pupil Transportation, Special Education Transportation Committee identifies and recognizes the best school bus drivers and transportation assistants serving Minnesota students with special needs. The following are the winners for the 2009-2010 school year:

WINNERS:

Special Education Drivers:

First Place: Rhonda Atchley, Royalton School District # 485

Second Place: Richard Brisbois, First Student, Mounds View

Third Place: Winona Carter, First Student, Mounds View

Special Education Transportation Assistants:

First Place: Steve Evenson, Robbinsdale Area Schools District # 281

Second Place: Lonny Krueger, First Student, Mounds View

Third Place: Vicki Dahlstrom, First Student, North Saint Paul

NOMINATION RECOGNITIONS:

Special Education Drivers:

Gary Lindberg, Robbinsdale Area Schools District # 281

Christina Davis, First Student, North Saint Paul

Jeanne Olson, First Student, North Saint Paul

Wendy McClellan, First Student, North Saint Paul

Nancy Stuart, Bloomington Public Schools District # 271

Sid Sauer, ADAMS Services

Special Education Transportation Assistants:

Robin Kleinendorst, First Student, North Saint Paul

Tanya Phillippi, First Student, North Saint Paul

Congratulations! Your work is appreciated.

3. School Bus Safety Poster Contest

Each year the Minnesota Pupil Transportation Association, Safety Committee sponsors the Minnesota School Bus Safety Poster Contest. Students submit a poster on a specific school bus safety theme. This year's theme was Be Aware Know the Danger Zone.

This year's poster contest winners were selected and recognized in each of the following categories: kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades and special needs students in kindergarten through third, fourth through sixth and seventh through eighth grades. The student in the winning grade for each of these categories received a certificate of recognition and a \$35.00 gift card to Barnes & Noble. If the entry is forwarded to the National Contest, the student will receive a \$50.00 gift card from Barnes & Noble instead. The following is a list of the 2010 Minnesota Safety Poster Contest winners. See the attachment for a listing of this year's winners.

4. Active Living and Safe Routes to School Information

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has taken initiatives to help to improve the health and well-being of the citizens of Minnesota. The department has developed Minnesota Physical Activity e-news that has valuable information on addressing the issue of physical activity.

[Access the MN PA e-newsletter.](#) This electronic newsletter includes physical activity information on grants, research, programs, conferences and more. Sign up for MN PA e-news by sending an e-mail to health.activeliving@state.mn.us and request to receive MN PA e-news. Please include your name, address, and phone number to be added to our database. [View archived MN PA e-news.](#)

5. Complete Streets Legislation

Complete Streets legislation was signed into law by Governor Pawlenty as part of the omnibus transportation policy bill during the 2010 legislative session. The law takes effect August 1, 2010.

Complete Streets means that our streets and roadways are designed and operated to be safe and accessible for pedestrians, transit riders, bicyclists, drivers and all kinds of users, regardless of age or ability. Complete Streets is a design process not a prescriptive roadway design. Final Complete Streets designs vary based on context depending on the speed of traffic, road function, pedestrian and bicycle demand, and other factors.

[Please view the National Complete Streets Coalition Website](#) to learn more about the Complete Streets legislation.

6. Transportation Cost of a Federal Program Revisited

The method for allocating transportation cost to a federal program was re-examined by MDE and conclusions presented to the Advisory Committee on Financial Management, Accounting and Reporting. After some discussion a consensus was reached that the previous method of charging back transportation costs to the federal program as described in Business Bulletin 42 was cumbersome and that MDE's current way of tracking the transportation cost would satisfy the federal requirements on reporting. The decision was made that districts may use Object Dimension, Interdepartmental Transportation (Chargeback) 365 with the appropriate federal finance code to report transportation costs of the federal programs. Districts in turn would report the costs of the transportation in the State Educational Record View and Submission (SERVS) system in order to receive reimbursement.

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.92, Subd. 5, requires school districts to allocate student transportation expenditures among categories by miles, hours or routes. Districts will need to determine a rate based on the district's total transportation expenditures for the entire school year in order to allocate the cost correctly. In addition, districts will need to document the miles, hours or routes that relate to the various federal programs on the

supplemental sheet of the Pupil Transportation Annual Report (ED-01652). In the interim, before final rates are determined, districts may use estimated or prior year rates to report costs in SERVS. Once final rates are determined, the district would need to align reported expenditures with final rates.

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

Object Code 360, Transportation Contracts With Private or Public Carriers would be used to report expenditures incurred from contracting for transportation of pupils to a federal program for contracts under \$25,000. Object Code 364 will be created to identify transportation cost associated with contracted services for federal programs over \$25,000. Object Code 364 would only be used to identify the cost of a federal program and not for regular to-and-from student transportation.

The Interdepartmental Transportation (Allocation) Object Code 365, Transportation Contracts With Private or Public Carriers Under \$25,000 Object Code 360, and Transportation Contracts With Private or Public Carriers Over \$25,000, Federal Programs Object Code 364 will be allowed to identify transportation costs paid with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, Finance Code 151. The miles, hours and routes associated with ARRA Funds should be reported on the supplemental sheet of the Pupil Transportation Annual Report.

When a district reports student transportation expenditures in UFARS under the federal or ARRA finance codes, the expenditures will not be included in state aid calculations of Nonpublic Student Transportation, Special Education Aid Entitlement or Desegregation/Integration Transportation Aid. These aid formulas will continue to use the expenditures reported in the traditional student transportation finance dimensions (700 series). State transportation aid is based on categorical expenditures in only certain finance dimensions.

Please disregard the procedure for reporting transportation expenditures to a federal program that was presented in the School Business Bulletin Issue 42. If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Wosika at 651-582-8855 or e-mail kelly.wosika@state.mn.us.

7. Transportation Reports Available on the MARSS Web Edit System (WES)

There are four reports (for most districts) that are available on MARSS WES Statewide Reports that show the number of public school students transported to and from school. These numbers will be obtained from districts' end of year, Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) submission.

These reports will no longer be mailed out to districts. The MARSS Coordinator should distribute the reports to appropriate district staff in order to determine whether public school student's transportation data is being reported correctly in MARSS.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) sorts students on the "Transporting District Number and Type" fields on MARSS. If a district's student counts are either understated or overstated, some other Minnesota school district may have listed the wrong district number and type as the "Transporting District." (See the "Totals by School" report to determine the districts that listed your district as the Transporting District.) You will have to contact the MARSS Coordinator at the district and ask him/her to correct the data. A list of the MARSS Coordinators can be found on MDE's website at: <http://education.state.mn.us> > Accountability Programs > Program Finance > MARSS Student Accounting.

The four reports include:

- **MARSS #47 Total Public Students Transported By Category:** This report shows the number of students reported by category for the past four years. Districts can use this report to determine whether the numbers of students reported in 2009-10 are comparable to data reported in previous school years.
- **MARSS #48 Pupil Transportation – Totals By School:** This report shows the breakdown of students transported by category for each school. The District Total line on this report should agree with the numbers reported for 2009-10 on the Total Public Students Transported by Category Report.
- **MARSS #45 Transporting District:** This report is a detailed list of some of the students who are included in your counts. Only students with State Aid Categories 05, 06, 08, 10, 14, 19, 26, 27, and 28 are included in this report. Remember MDE only counts a student once in transportation. If a student attended both your district and another district, only one of the records will be counted. Not all districts will receive this report.
- **MARSS #49 Nonresident Student with MARSS Transportation Code 03-Disabled:** To help districts with the tuition billing process which includes unreimbursed transportation expenses.

Note: Students included on these reports had your district listed as the Transporting District Number and Type.

Please review the reports for completeness and accuracy. If errors are found, your district must:

1. Review the MARSS Transportation Category assigned to each student, make corrections as needed, and resubmit your MARSS data.
2. Review the Transporting District Number and Type assigned to each student, make corrections as needed and resubmit your MARSS data.

3. Contact other districts where your students attend to make sure those districts have assigned the proper transportation code to your students and have listed your district as the Transporting District Number and Type.

If you have any questions about these data or need any help in determining the proper MARSS Transportation Codes for your students contact Kelly Wosika at 651-582-8855 or e-mail kelly.wosika@state.mn.us.

8. MARSS Transportation Excess Category Overview

The excess category, MARSS Transportation Category 02 consists of two groups of students. They are:

- 1) Secondary students (Grades 7-12) who live one mile or more from school but less than two miles; and
- 2) Students (Grades K-12) who live less than one mile from school and who are transported because, if they were to walk, they would encounter traffic, drug or crime hazards.

It is a local school boards decision to determine what areas in their districts would be classified as hazardous areas. The districts' transportation directors or contractors provide transportation services in the areas that are identified in the board's policy as hazardous.

For the students living less than one mile from school, there has to be a documented hazard (according to board policy) and the students provided daily transportation before the students would qualify in this category. However, for secondary students living one mile or more from school but less than two miles, no hazard has to be present. As long as the secondary one-to-two-mile students meet the requirements for grade level and distance from school, a district can count the student in the Excess Category as long as the student is provided daily transportation service.

Districts must report the total cost of transporting the Excess students in the Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards (UFARS) Finance Dimension 720.

For questions regarding Transportation Categories refer to the MARSS Transportation Category Manual on the MDE website or contact Kelly Wosika at 651-582-8855 or kelly.wosika@state.mn.us

9. Transportation Annual Reporting

School districts year-end pupil transportation data are collected from different sources. The number of nonpublic students transported to and from school, school bus ownership and annual mileage are collected on the Pupil Transportation Annual Report. The number of public school students transported to and from school is collected on the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS). Expenditure and revenue data are

collected on the Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards (UFARS) data submissions. All three sources (Annual Report, MARSS, and UFARS) have different reporting due dates.

Pupil Transportation Annual Report. The Report ED-01652 is sent to districts around early-June. The report is due to MDE August 15th.

MARSS. Final End-of-Year (EOY) student data is due the end of October. Only selected manual changes will be allowed until the end of December. Districts MARSS personnel who want to avoid making a lot of corrections to individual student's transportation records should have all of the transportation coded correctly by the EOY deadline.

UFARS. Minnesota Statutes section 123B.77 provides that districts must submit unaudited financial data by September 15 for the preceding fiscal year. By November 30, districts must submit audited financial data for the preceding fiscal year.

It is very important that districts comply with these reporting deadlines. MDE Program Finance Division needs final fiscal year data in order to make timely final payments and for preparing reports for legislators and state administrators. Further, Minnesota Statutes section 127A.49 subdivision 1 provides, in part, that no adjustment to any aid payments resulting from omissions in district reports shall be made for any school year after December 20 of the next school year unless otherwise specifically provided by law. Failure to meet the December 30 date may cause aid payment to be withheld or delayed.

If you have any questions on completing the pupil transportation annual report, reporting the transportation code for students on MARSS, or reporting transportation expenditures, contact Kelly Wosika at 651-582-8855 or at kelly.wosika@state.mn.us.

10. Transportation Director Listserv

The Minnesota Department of Education Pupil Transportation Unit has a Transportation Director E-mail list serv. The listserv will provide information to Minnesota school districts regarding pupil transportation. The e-mail messages will include topics such as state pupil transportation reporting, legislative and MDE policies regarding pupil transportation and the "Vehicle Newsletter."

If you would like to be included in the Transportation Director Listserv, please send an e-mail to kelly.wosika@state.mn.us indicating you would like to receive e-mail news regarding pupil transportation. If you think someone at your district should be included on the Transportation Directors listserv, have that person send an email to kelly.wosika@state.mn.us.