
Pupil Transportation "Vehicle"

Provided by the Transportation Section within the Division of School Finance

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1. 2013 Legislative Updates

Following is a summary of some of the new laws affecting pupil transportation that were passed during the past legislative session in the 2013 Omnibus E-12 Education Act (Chapter 116).

Article 1 General Education Revenue

Transportation sparsity revenue (Section 31). Beginning in FY 2015, adjusts the transportation sparsity formula to account for the removal of marginal cost pupil unit accounting and the new pupil weights. This includes a change in the deduction factor from 4.85% to 4.66% of basic revenue.

Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) pupil transportation (Section 8). Allows school districts to transport PSEO pupils to and from the postsecondary institution or if the pupil is participating in an articulated program.

Pupil transportation definitions (Section 9). (b) For purposes of calculation the cost to a school district of providing transportation to children with disabilities and computing special education initial aid, allows a school district to transport a child who does not have a school of origin to the same school attended by that child's sibling if the siblings are homeless.

District reports; transportation data (Section 10). Allows a school district that contracts for transportation services to allocate certain transportation expenses based on contract rates under certain circumstances.

Article 4 – Charter Schools

General Education Revenue; Transportation Revenue (Section 2 and 3). Amends charter school general education revenue to align with the changes to the general education revenue and pupil weights.

2. Pupil Transportation Reporting – General Overview

School districts report the number of nonpublic school students transported to and from school, and bus ownership on the Pupil Transportation Annual Report (ED-01652-32) for fiscal year 2013. Districts will also report on mileage by category.

Districts report the number of public school students transported to and from school on the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS). The MARSS student record has fields in which districts must enter the student's to-and-from school transportation code and the "Transporting District Number and Type."

Expenditure data are reported on the Uniform Financial Accounting and Report Standards (UFARS) data submission.

As in the past, the Pupil Transportation Data Verification Report (DVR) will be posted to the Minnesota Funding Reports section of the department's website by mid-October. It will be titled "FY 12-13 Transportation Data Verification Report". The department plans to update the posting periodically throughout the fall. The DVR summarizes data from the annual report, MARSS and the UFARS data submissions. If there are any discrepancies among the data reported on these reports, districts will be asked to explain or correct them.

Districts that transported students to interdistrict desegregation and integration programs must complete the report titled "Transportation to interdistrict desegregation or integration schools or programs" (ED-02370-09). This report is available to districts that have been identified as racially isolated. Instructions have been developed to aid districts in completing this report.

Districts are required to enter the appropriate transportation code on each MARSS student record. See the section at the end of this memorandum for the website location for further instructions on reporting students on MARSS.

Districts are required to enter the "Transporting District Number and Type". District staff may have to contact other district staff to obtain information on which district is transporting the student. Do not assume that it is either the resident district or serving district. Sometimes students live in foster or group homes in a third district. The third district where the foster or group home is located is responsible for the transportation and should be listed as the "Transporting District Number and Type".

All transportation costs are obtained from the UFARS data submission. If a district reports students and/or miles in any category on MARSS or the annual report, then a cost must be reported in the corresponding finance number on the UFARS data submission. Sample cost allocation methods are available on our website.

Districts must allocate transportation expenditures among categories based on a cost per mile or cost per student regardless of whether districts own their buses or whether they contract for bus service. Information on this cost allocation method is available on the department's website. In addition, districts are limited on which district employees' salaries and fringe benefits can be included in transportation.

Districts will be required to submit the worksheets on how they determined their cost for each category of transportation service. The worksheets are due to MDE on September 15 each year. Districts will not have to re-submit updated worksheets after that date unless there is a substantial change between the costs reported on UFARS and the worksheets submitted on September 15.

Districts are reminded that the deadline for submitting audited financial data is November 30. School districts must submit their state reports early enough so that any financial errors discovered during the editing process can be corrected by the deadline.

If your district owns any school buses, an inventory listing was mailed out on June 3, 2013. If your district has purchased or disposed of a school bus between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013, and the transaction does not appear on this listing, please complete a District-Owned Transaction form and mail it to our office as soon as possible.

Please use form ED-00186-13 for the purchase or disposal of a Type A, B, C or D school bus (yellow school buses). Use form ED-01658-11 for the purchase or disposal of a Type III school bus (car, station wagon or van). A Type III school bus can only be added to the inventory if it is used the majority of time for pupil transportation purposes. The bus transaction forms can be found on our website.

Do not complete a transaction form for vehicles that the district is leasing. The Certificate of Title of the vehicle must be in the name of the lease company during the lease period. Having title to a vehicle denotes ownership.

Districts will receive a separate inventory for school buses used primarily for special education purposes. The inventory will have the universal handicapped symbol at the top to differentiate it from the other inventory. Special forms have been developed to report these purchases. These forms also have the universal handicapped symbol on the forms. The value of these inventories will be used in calculating the district's special education funding. However, vehicles purchased with federal funds are not eligible for bus depreciation per Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.92, subd. (1) (a) (ii) and (iii) as the costs have already been covered 100 percent.

The Special Education School Bus Transaction Forms, both Regular and Type III have been modified so that districts must indicate whether or not the vehicle was purchased with federal special education funds. The district's Special Education Bus Inventory Reports will show the

selected indicator. The buses purchased with federal special education funds will not be included in the bus depreciation calculation in determining state program aid.

Do not submit a transaction form for Multi-Function School Activity Buses (MFSAB) as they are not used for to-and-from transportation. However, they are reported on the paper Annual Report under school bus type and ownership.

Districts may obtain information on reporting students on MARSS, allocating transportation expenditures, the Pupil Transportation Annual Report, the Transportation to Interdistrict Desegregation or Integration Schools or Programs, and the forms necessary to report purchases or disposals of school buses by visiting our website at: <http://education.state.mn.us/mde/> Select School Support > School Finance > Transportation > Resources.

If you have any questions about pupil transportation reporting, contact [Kelly Wosika](#), Student Transportation Specialist, at 651-582-8855.

3. Initial Foster Placements and Homelessness

It has been brought to our attention that students initially placed in the foster system in Minnesota may meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless until the required court hearings have been completed and the student is formally placed into permanent foster care. Each district's and charter school's homeless liaison needs to interview these families and students to make the actual determination. If the homeless liaison determines that a student does meet the homeless definition, whether through the initial foster placement or otherwise, the MARSS coordinator flags the student on MARSS as homeless.

The homeless designation stays with the student for the remainder of the school year. The student's status is re-evaluated at the beginning of the following school year by the homeless liaison. If the student has been placed in permanent foster care or the student's family has obtained stable housing, the student is no longer flagged as homeless. However, if the student's court hearings have not been completed or the family is still determined to be experiencing homelessness, the student is flagged as homeless during that school year.

Students experiencing homelessness are eligible for free meals, Title I services and transportation, if they remain enrolled in the school of origin. Changes made in Minnesota statutes during the 2012 session make the district in which the parent is living the resident district for all students experiencing homelessness. Refer to the article in the June 10, 2012 MARSS memo for more information.

Contacts: [Roberto Reyes](#), MDE's homeless liaison, for questions on the McKinney-Vento Act at 651-582-8302.

[Kelly Wosika](#), MDE Transportation, for questions on transporting students experiencing homelessness, at 651-582-8855.

marss@state.mn.us for questions on MARSS reporting.

4. Special Education Driver Awards

The Minnesota Special Education Transportation Committee, in cooperation with the Minnesota Association of Pupil Transportation, sponsored the eleventh annual awards program to identify and recognize the best school bus drivers and transportation assistants serving Minnesota students with special needs. The first place driver and first place transportation assistant were awarded the opportunity to receive valuable training at no cost to the school district or contractor.

[Visit the Minnesota Association of Pupil Transportation web page for a list of the winners.](#)

5. Determining Students Resident District

Do you have problems trying to find a resident district number for students? If you have the student's street name, number and zip code you can find the resident district number. The following website will give you the resident district number where the address is located; [view the Minnesota Secretary of State website](#).

You will need to enter the zip code, and then select GO, enter the house number, tab down and enter the street name or navigate down to street name, then select "GO." Under the third column you will find the school district number. This is the resident district number for the student.

6. Revenue and Expenditure Analysis

View spreadsheets analyzing pupil transportation revenues and expenditures for each school district and charter school for FY 2012. Go to School Finance Spreadsheets > Transportation.

Questions regarding the expenditure data shown on the spreadsheets should be directed to [Kelly Wosika](#).

Questions regarding the revenue data and analysis shown on the spreadsheets should be addressed to [Bob Porter](#).

7. Sales Tax on the Purchase of Vehicles

Minnesota Statutes, sections 168.013 Vehicle Registration Taxes, requires school district to pay sales tax on the purchase of vehicles. Please make sure you include the sales tax on a district-owned transaction form. Please check your records to see if the sales tax was paid to the dealership or to a deputy registrar. If the tax has not been paid, please contact your local deputy registrar to pay the tax. Once the tax has been paid, please submit the transaction form including the tax.

8. Stopping for a School Bus

Motorists are often unclear about whether or not to stop for a school bus with flashing red lights and an extended stop arm. Following is a review of the school bus stop laws.

Flashing Yellow Lights

Flashing yellow lights will be activated at least 100 feet before a school bus stops in a speed zone of 35 mph or less, and at least 300 feet before it stops in a speed zone of more than 35 mph. The flashing yellow lights (at the top of the bus) warn the motorists that the school bus is about to stop to either load or unload children. It is against the law to pass on the right side of the school bus while it is displaying red or yellow flashing lights.

Flashing Red Lights

Flashing red lights warn motorists that the school bus is loading and unloading students. When a school bus is stopped with its red lights flashing and its stop arm extended, you must stop your vehicle at least 20 feet from the bus. Oncoming traffic, and motorists approaching the bus from behind, may not move until the stop arm is retracted and the red lights are no longer flashing. You are guilty of a misdemeanor if you break either of these laws. The penalty for this violation is a fine of not less than \$300, and your driver's license may be suspended.

Exception for Separated Roads

You are not required to stop for a school bus with its red lights flashing if it is on the opposite side of a road that is separated by a safety isle or safety zone. The safety isle or safety zone includes a grass median or cement barriers.

Passing a School Bus

It is illegal to pass a school bus on the right side when its red lights are flashing and its stop arm is extended. It is also illegal to pass a school bus on either side when one or more children are outside of the bus, red lights are flashing, and the stop arm is extended. A law enforcement officer with probable cause to believe a driver has violated this law may arrest the driver within four hours of the violation.

Vehicle Owner May Be Penalized

When a vehicle is used to violate the school bus stop arm law, the owner or lessee of the vehicle is guilty of a petty misdemeanor. However, if the owner or lessee of the vehicle can prove that another person was driving the vehicle at the time of the stop arm violation, the driver – not the owner or lessee – will be charged with the violation.

When you apply for a driver's license, you must certify, by signing the application, that you understand that you must stop for a school bus and are aware of the penalties for violating this law.

[Please view the Minnesota Driver's Manual located on the Minnesota Department Public Safety Division of Driver and Vehicle Services for more information.](#)

9. Special Transportation Services

Special Transportation Services (STS) is under the authority of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. STS is provided for recipients who are not able to safely use transportation services such as personal mileage reimbursement or common carrier (bus or light rail, taxi or volunteer driver) because of physical or mental impairment. Certification for STS also requires "door through door" or "station to station" service needs to be delivered directly to the recipient by the STS driver. This is a significantly higher level of service than is typically provided by the school district.

Under Minnesota Department of Education guidelines, if the parents want their child to be provided the STS services, they would need to work through their Minnesota Health Care Program provider in order to receive the STS transportation. If the school district provides the transportation, they would provide the service based on their policies. An exception would be if the escort to/from the door was written into the IEP; only then would the district be required to provide the higher level of service.

[View more information regarding STS on the Minnesota Department of Human Services website.](#)