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## Pupil Transportation "Vehicle"

Provided by the Transportation Section within the Division of School Finance

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## 1. Safe at Home

Safe at Home is an address confidentiality program offered through the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. It is available to people who fear for their safety and have an actual residential address in Minnesota. People in Safe at Home are assigned a Post Office Box address that they can legally use as their actual address for all of their interactions with others.

For transportation purposes, a district may ask for a specific address in order for the student to be provided transportation. This address should only be available to key personnel – a bus driver for example – in order for them to perform their jobs. This information is considered confidential information and must be safeguarded as such. A district may refuse transportation for a student if an actual address is not given, as having an actual address to provide transportation to-and-from school enhances the student's safety. [View the Safe at Home website for more information.](#)

## 2. Fostering Connections Act

The Education Stability Workgroup has been meeting about once a month for the last couple of years. The workgroup was formed after an initial discussion at the September 22, 2010, Issues Committee Meeting ([view minutes from the meeting](#)). The workgroup is made up of representatives from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, county case workers, MDE employees, school district employees and others. The Education Stability Workgroup has identified many goals to work toward including data collection, partnerships at the state and local level, transportation options, best practices and sharing resource information.

The workgroup has been discussing issues surrounding transportation of students that have been placed in foster homes. There are many issues surrounding this situation, especially when the student is placed outside the district of origin.

Some of the group's recommendations to promote educational stability for children in out of home care in regards to transportation are below.

### Child Welfare

- Draft legislation that will secure a funding stream to pay for the excess costs of transportation to school for youth in care.
- Identify a staff person to be designated as the Fostering Connections Specialist to help navigate transportation options and Title IV-E reimbursement.
- Identify school transportation staff in your community.
- Determine if child in care can utilize existing pupil transportation provided by the district where he/she attends school.
- Educate child welfare and corrections staff about existing transportation options.
- Recruit foster care providers in areas where youth in care attend school to increase educational stability.
- Consider working across counties to maximize transportation options available for youth in care.
- Research third party transportation providers in your community. Consider contracting with these providers for transportation to youth in care, allowing them to remain in the school they are attending when a placement change occurs.
- Review insurance liability umbrella for your agency.

### Education

- Educate school stakeholders about the provisions of Fostering Connections as it pertains to school stability and transportation.

- Consider including child welfare in transportation bids so all parties can get the most cost-effective rates for the provision of transportation to youth in care.
- Extend existing routes and consider all existing pupil transportation options for youth in care to allow them to continue attending their current school.
- Consider a Fostering Connections specialist per district.
- Develop cross-training strategies between systems.
- Consider a Fostering Connections Specialist at MDE.

[View the Department of Human Services Bulletin #10-68-05 \(June 14, 2010\) Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 – Education Provisions for more information.](#)

### 3. MARSS Transportation Category Clarification

Each public school student’s record on the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) will have a field in which districts will enter the student’s “to-and-from” school MARSS Transportation Code for the regular school term. “To-and-from” school transportation is defined as the student’s trip to school at the beginning of the school day and the trip home at the end of the school day. The school day will vary for the different types of students in the school. A school day could begin in the morning and end in the morning as it does for kindergarten students enrolled in a morning half-day kindergarten program. A school day could begin in the morning and end in the afternoon as it does for the majority of students. A school day could begin in the afternoon and end in the early evening as it does for students enrolled in alternative programs.

Students should be reported under a category depending on what type of transportation they are provided. So if on any given day the student could get a ride to school on the bus, the district is therefore providing it. The district considered the student when they set up their routes and therefore there is a cost associated with the transportation of the student.

If the district is certain that the student never rode the bus, the student should be coded 00-Walker or transportation does not apply. The district should have a process in place to document they are certain, either by transportation waivers or a daily ridership method.

[For more information regarding Transportation Categories, view the MARSS Transportation Category Manual.](#)

### 4. Transporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

The 2012 legislature changed state statutes that pertain to the McKinney-Vento Education for Children and Youth who are Homeless Act.

The following is a summary of the changes. The Legislature:

- Clarified the education and transportation responsibilities of independent and special school districts, charter schools and cooperative, joint powers and intermediate districts for students experiencing homelessness.
- Specified the responsible district for regular education students and students receiving special education enrolled in cooperative, joint powers and intermediate school districts.
- Eliminated differences regarding the district responsible for education and transportation based on a homeless student’s current residence, be it a shelter or another setting.
- Clarified and aligned the definition of resident district with the definition of resident district for students in other unique situations.

- Clarified that:
  - transportation must be provided from the district of residence to the school of enrollment;
  - the serving/enrolling district is responsible for transportation to and from the district of residence;
  - for charter school students, the district or school that provides transportation for other students at that charter school is responsible for transportation.
- Provided a uniform definition, and therefore, a uniform assignment, of responsibility for the education and transportation of homeless students.
- Clarified that when there is a dispute between school districts as to the responsible party, the commissioner of education has authority to assign responsibilities.

[View the updated Transportation of Homeless Students document on the MDE website.](#)

## 5. Poster Contest

This year's state safety poster contest will be hosted by St. Cloud Public Schools in St. Cloud, Minnesota on April 17, 2013. This contest is sponsored by the Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation and the Minnesota Association of School Bus Operators. This is an opportunity for districts to provide a mid-year opportunity to remind all students about the importance of bus safety.

The theme this year is - **“At My Stop – You Stop!”** and it is meant to remind students to make sure that they are safe at their school bus stop and to pay attention to traffic around them.

[View the 2013 Minnesota School Bus Safety Poster Contest form, poster specifications, and contest rules.](#)

## 6. MDE-ORG Now Available

The Minnesota Department of Education-Organization Reference Glossary (MDE-ORG) is now available on the MDE website. This searchable database includes a variety of Minnesota school, district and education-related organization directories and replaces the information formerly available on the Contacts-Schools and Organizations page.

Users can generate files using search parameters to create listservs, mailing lists, and more. Historical information on districts and schools, including the names and terms of administration can also be found here. You may also find districts or organizations listed by region, such as city or legislative district. Tagged collections allow you to filter for school or district type, such as Alternative Learning Centers or Higher Education institutions.

[Visit the MDE-ORG page for more information and a link to the database.](#)

## 7. Safe Routes to School

Minnesota elementary and middle schools and their partners are invited to apply for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant funds for projects that will help more children safely walk and bicycle to school. Applications are due Friday, February 15, 2013, and are available at [www.mndot.gov/saferoutes/](http://www.mndot.gov/saferoutes/).

Kindergarten through eighth-grade schools in Minnesota may apply for grants in three categories:

- Infrastructure implementation grants – Schools, in partnership with cities or counties, will receive grants to support infrastructure that improves safety or access for children walking and bicycling to school.
- Non-infrastructure implementation grants – Schools will receive small grants to support education, encouragement, enforcement or evaluation activities related to safe walking and bicycling to school.
- Planning assistance – Schools will receive expert assistance to complete a Safe Routes to School plan, which will analyze existing conditions, gather public input and identify potential infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions.

Minnesota has \$3.2 million available for infrastructure grants and \$800,000 available for non-infrastructure and planning grants for 2013-14. All SRTS grants use federal funds, and no local match is required.

All non-profit organizations and government entities in Minnesota may be eligible partners, including tribal nations, schools, school districts, cities, counties and regional planning organizations. Infrastructure grants require a city or county sponsor.

Since 2005, Minnesota Department of Transportation has awarded \$11.3 million in federal funds to communities to support SRTS. The majority of funding—\$9.9 million—was awarded for infrastructure projects. The remainder is allocated for non-infrastructure items and activities, such as SRTS planning, education, encouragement and enforcement. Funding for Safe Routes to School is available in all 50 states.

For more information, visit [www.mndot.gov/saferoutes/](http://www.mndot.gov/saferoutes/) or contact Lisa Bender at 651-366-4195 or [lisa.bender@state.mn.us](mailto:lisa.bender@state.mn.us).

## 8. Revenue and Expenditure Analysis

[Please read the memo which explains the revenue and expenditure analysis that is available on the MDE website.](#)

[View spreadsheets analyzing pupil transportation revenues and expenditures](#) for each school district and charter school for FY 2009 and FY 2011. Go to School Finance Spreadsheets > Transportation

Questions regarding the expenditure data shown on the spreadsheets should be directed to Kelly Wosika at [kelly.wosika@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.wosika@state.mn.us).

Questions regarding the revenue data and analysis shown on the spreadsheets should be addressed to Bob Porter at [bob.porter@state.mn.us](mailto:bob.porter@state.mn.us).