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*Pupil Transportation "Vehicle"*

*Provided by the Transportation Section within the  
School Finance Division*

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April 2012

Volume 27 Issue 1

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## 1. May is National Bike Month

Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN) in coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), Safe Routes to School MN Partnership (SRTS), Greater Minnesota Commuter Challenge and Explore Minnesota Tourism are hosting a series of webinars to help communities plan local events for National Bike Month in May. View the [Bike Month Guide](#) that highlights past Minnesota success stories. Bike Month partners hope to see dozens of events statewide this May. For more info, [check out the event planning webinar page](#).

## 2. Reference Guide to Transporting Students with Disabilities and Special Transportation for Selected Students in Minnesota

The Reference Guide to Transporting Students with Disabilities and Special Transportation for Selected Students in Minnesota has been updated. The following is a list of the updates.

- Updated MDE logo and website links
- Updated Table of Content
- Added new Q&A on care and treatment and spec-ed students with temporary disabilities
- Added new situation on open enrolled/charter school students that are placed in care and treatment
- Cleaned up language on tuition billing
- Transportation cost allocation changes due to legislation
- Glossary updates

The manual was specifically designed for school district administrators of transportation and special education. Its primary purpose is to assist them in arranging for and providing special transportation for students with disabilities and for those students that require special transportation because of special situations. The guide has four parts:

- Questions and answers often asked about a school district's responsibility for special transportation.
- Situations where education or transportation variables sometimes obscure a clear understanding of school district responsibilities for providing the education programs or special transportation.
- Funding of special education transportation and special transportation.
- A glossary of terms, titles and acronyms are located at the back of the guide. Also a simplified flow chart and a grid to assist in MARSS coding is provided.

[View the updated manual on the MDE website.](#)

### 3. School Bus Purchases

When a school district purchases a bus, the expenditure is coded to Finance Code 000-District-Wide, 302-Operating Capital or 733-Non-authorized Transportation. Once the district has title, a school bus transaction form should be submitted to MDE to put the bus on the inventory listing.

There are four types of school bus inventory listings:

1. Regular School Bus includes Type A, B, C and D. They depreciate over eight years. The depreciation amount or 12.5 percent of the total value of the inventory is included in the calculation of nonpublic transportation aid as an expense.
2. Type III School Bus includes suburban, vans and cars. The vehicles depreciate over 5 years. The depreciation amount or 20 percent of the total value of the inventory is included in the calculation of nonpublic transportation aid as an expense.
3. Special Education Regular includes Type A, B, C and D that are used primarily (more than 50 percent of the time) to transport students that require special education transportation. The buses depreciate over 8 years. The depreciation amount or 12.5 percent of the total value of the inventory is included in the calculation of special education regular and special education excess cost aid.
4. Special Education Type III includes suburban, vans and cars that are used primarily (more than 50 percent of the time) to transport students that require special education transportation. The vehicles depreciate over 5 years. The depreciation amount or 20 percent of the total value of the inventory is included in the calculation of special education regular and special education excess cost aid.

Bus transaction forms are available at the MDE website. From the home page <http://education.state.mn.us> go to School Support > School Finance > Transportation > Resources. There are four forms; Regular Bus ED-00186, Type III – Regular ED-01658, Special Ed – Regular ED-02387 and Special Ed Type III ED-02388. Here is the link: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/SchFin/Trans/Res/index.html>.

Every district that has previously reported bus inventory will receive a vehicle inventory listing from MDE, which is mailed around mid-June. Please review the listing for accuracy and completeness. Please review the listing for accuracy and completeness. If your district has purchased or disposed of a school bus during the year, 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.

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.

Federal funds can be used to purchase a bus. When federal funds are used the vehicle can only be used to transport special education students. The vehicle cannot generate special education aid entitlement because the cost was covered with federal funds. Check the “Yes” box on the form to indicate federal funds were used.

A district can pay for a bus with a combination of federal and general fund dollars. A portion of the time could be used for non-special education activities. For example if general fund dollars covered 25 percent of the costs of the bus, 25 percent of the time could be used for nonspecial education activities. Likewise, if a district used federal and general funds dollars for a vehicle that was used 100 percent of the time for special education purposes, the amount of general fund dollars could be included in the special education bus depreciation aid.

Regular buses can be used as long as they are passing Department of Public Safety inspections. Type III vehicles 12 years or older must not be used to transport school children.

School districts may lease vehicles.

1. Operating lease. The district does not have title. It is considered a rental of the vehicle. May direct charge the lease expense to the appropriate category if the vehicle is used for one purpose. For example use Finance Code 723 if the vehicle is only used for transporting special education students. If the vehicle is used for multiple purposes, for example regular, special education and field trips, the lease expense must be allocated among categories based on miles, hours or routes of the vehicle. The vehicle is not included on the bus inventory.
2. Buyout option. The district may choose to purchase the leased vehicle. Once the district has the title the vehicle can be put on the school bus inventory. The net cost to be used on the forms should be the buyout amount.
3. Capital (installment type) purchase. The district has the title of the vehicle and there is a terminal date that will result in acquisition of the vehicle. Add the vehicle to the school bus inventory at the time of the initial agreement.

If you have questions about the purchase of vehicles with federal funds contact Mike Landers at 651-582-8810 or [mike.landern@state.mn.us](mailto:mike.landern@state.mn.us). If you have questions about bus transactions forms or bus inventories contact Kelly Wosika at 651-582-8855 or [kelly.wosika@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.wosika@state.mn.us).

## 4. Transportation Reporting

Districts and charter schools (that provide their own transportation) will no longer be able to report by hours or routes on the paper Pupil Transportation Annual Report. This is effective with 2011-12 school year. The 2011 legislation amended the statute on student transportation reporting to provide a more consistent method to measure transportation provided by the schools. Cost allocation by hours and routes has been eliminated. It also provided an exemption to the allocation if actual costs are known. If you are not currently reporting by miles, please take measures to your track your mileage during the year. Districts and charter schools that contract for school bus service must obtain the mileage records from the contractor.

Districts must maintain daily records of miles in order to properly allocate costs at year end. The miles reported at year end will be a cumulative total of the daily miles. The starting mileage is the odometer reading when the vehicle starts its route. The ending mileage is the odometer reading when the vehicle terminates its route. The starting or ending mileage may be taken at a school or at the vehicle storage area.

The law provides an exemption from the standard cost allocation method for authorized and nonauthorized transportation categories for districts that contract for transportation services when the listed criteria are met:

1. The district bids its contracts separately for authorized and nonauthorized transportation categories and for special transportation separate from transportation from regular and excess transportation.
2. Receives bids or quotes from more than one vendor for these transportation categories.
3. The district's cost-per-mile does not vary more than ten percent among categories, excluding salaries and fringe benefits of bus aids.

If the costs reported by the district for contractor-owned operations vary by more than ten percent among categories, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) shall require the district to reallocate its transportation costs, excluding salaries and fringe benefits of bus aides, among all categories.

Only if the district chooses to be exempt from the standard cost allocation would the district be required to go out for new bids in order for the contracts to be for separate categories.

The manual on Financial Accounting for Student Transportation Services has been updated to reflect the changes made in the 2011 legislation.

[View the updated Financial Accounting for Student Transportation Services Manual on the MDE website.](#)

## **5. Minnesota Physical Activity e-news**

Keep in touch with what is happening around the state of Minnesota and beyond in the area of physical activity by receiving the free Minnesota Physical Activity e-news (MN PA e-news). This electronic newsletter includes physical activity information on grants, research, programs, conferences and more.

Minnesota PA e-news is a free statewide information network open to individuals and organizations interested in physical activity. The newsletters are distributed to all those interested in promoting physical activity. [To subscribe or view archives, visit the Minnesota Department of Health's website.](#)

## **6. School Bus Safety, Special Education Transportation and Issues Study Committees**

The School Bus Safety Committee, Special Education Transportation Committee and the Issues Study Committee are great informational meetings on important student transportation topics. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The School Bus Safety Committee and Special Education Transportation Committee committees meet the third Wednesday of the month at various locations across the state. The School Bus Safety Committee meets first at 9:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. and the Special Education Transportation Committee meets from 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at the same location.

The School Bus Safety group discusses topics related to student safety training, school bus driver requirements and vehicle safety. Eric Schaffhausen is the chairperson, his e-mail is [eschaffh@bloomington.k12.mn.us](mailto:eschaffh@bloomington.k12.mn.us).

The Special Education Transportation Committee discusses issues related to transporting students with IEPs and the related service of transportation. Kala Henkensiefken is the Chairperson, her e-mail is [Kala.Henkensiefken@isd181.org](mailto:Kala.Henkensiefken@isd181.org).

The Issues Study Committee meets monthly to discuss student transportation issues. Any individuals interested in student transportation are welcome to attend the monthly meetings. The committee consists of school district transportation administrators, school bus contractors and other interested parties. The meetings fall on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Keith Paulson is the chairperson, his e-mail is [keith.paulson@anoka.k12.mn.us](mailto:keith.paulson@anoka.k12.mn.us).

Please contact the chairpersons for meeting locations.

## **7. MnDOT Seeks Applicants for Safe Routes to School Grant Funds**

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Minnesota elementary and middle schools and their partners are invited to apply for Safe Routes to School grant funds for projects that will help more children safely walk and bicycle to school.

Applications are due Friday, April 27, at noon 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 two categories:

- 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.
- Implementation grants – Schools will receive grant funds to support education, encouragement, enforcement or evaluation activities related to safe walking and bicycling to school.

Minnesota has \$1.2 million available in these categories for 2012-13. All SRTS grants use federal funds, and no local match is required. Grants for infrastructure projects, such as sidewalks and crosswalks, are not available at this time.

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.

Since 2005, MnDOT has awarded \$10.8 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).