

Operational Services

Transportation ¹

The District shall provide free transportation for any student in the District who resides: (1) at a distance of one and one-half miles or more from his or her assigned school, unless the School Board has certified to the Ill. State Board of Education that adequate public transportation is available,² or (2) if adequate public transportation is not available, within one and one-half miles from his or her assigned school where walking to or from school or to or from a pick-up point or bus stop would constitute a *serious safety hazard* due to either (a) vehicular traffic or rail crossing or (b) *a course or pattern of criminal activity*, as defined in the Ill. Streetgang Terrorism Omnibus Prevention Act, 740

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¹ State law controls this policy's content. 105 ILCS 5/29-1 et seq. and 23 Ill.Admin.Code Part 120. **Important: The board of a district that does not provide transportation must amend this policy.** F/n 2 discusses when districts must provide free transportation. Please contact an IASB Policy Consultant for *gratis* help customizing this policy. You may also need to consult the board attorney.

Beginning 7-1-31, newly purchased school buses must be equipped with seat safety belts that meet State and federal standards, but districts will not have to: (1) ensure that the seat belt system is correctly adjusted and fastened or (2) give instruction on their use. 625 ILCS 5/12-826(a) and (b), added by P.A. 104-75.

A district that chooses to consider locations other than individual students' residences as pick-up and drop-off locations must adopt a policy establishing this practice to receive State reimbursement. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §120.30(a)(1)(B).

Each district must have a pre-trip and post-trip inspection policy. 625 ILCS 5/12-816(a). An Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE) rule requires boards to "institute policies and practices that promote the safety and well-being of school bus passengers." 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.510(g). To comply with these requirements, this policy lists relevant administrative procedures at the end.

The policy does not address an *automatic traffic enforcement* system which may be enacted by a municipality or county. An *automatic traffic law enforcement system* is a device that senses and records a motor vehicle that illegally fails to stop for a school bus. 625 ILCS 5/11-208.9. Each school board within that municipality or county's jurisdiction may approve the system's implementation. The board is then required to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the municipality or county and contract with vendors for the system's installation, maintenance, and operation. Each applicable school bus must be posted with a sign indicating that it is being monitored by an automated traffic law enforcement system. The proceeds from a school district's automated traffic law enforcement system's fines shall be divided equally between the school district and the municipality or county administering the automated traffic law enforcement system.

² The one and one-half miles distance is measured from the exit of the property where the student resides to the point where pupils are normally unloaded at the attendance center to which they are assigned. 105 ILCS 5/29-3; 23 Ill.Admin.Code §120.30(a)(1)(A). Only the following districts must provide free transportation as described in the sample policy: community consolidated districts, community unit districts, consolidated districts, consolidated high school districts, and combined school districts if the combined district includes any district that was previously required to provide transportation. 105 ILCS 5/29-3 and 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.510(a). Districts that are not required to provide free transportation may do so. Id. To qualify for State reimbursement, districts electing to provide transportation when they are not required to do so must afford the same service to all students in that same situation. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.510(b). Districts may provide transportation within one and one-half miles and may charge for such transportation. 105 ILCS 5/29-2.

Optional provision: (105 ILCS 5/29-3.1)

The District may provide transportation to and from school-sponsored activities and may charge for such transportation.

ILCS 147/.³ A student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may file a petition with the Board requesting transportation due to the existence of a serious safety hazard.⁴ Free transportation service and vehicle adaptation is provided for a special education student if included in the student's individualized educational program.⁵ Non-public school students shall be transported in accordance with State law.⁶ Homeless students shall be transported in accordance with Section 45/1-15 of the Education for Homeless Children Act.⁷ Foster care students shall be transported in accordance with Section 6312(c)(5)(B) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.⁸

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³ 105 ILCS 5/29-3 and 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.510. The determination as to what constitutes a *serious safety hazard* regarding vehicular traffic or rail crossings is made by the board, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Ill. Dept. of Transportation, in consultation with the State Superintendent of Education. The Ill. Streetgang Terrorism Omnibus Prevention Act defines *course or pattern of criminal activity* as two or more gang-related criminal offenses committed in whole or in part within Illinois when: (1) one or more of the offenses was committed after 1-25-13, (2) both offenses were committed within five years of each other; and (3) at least one offense involved a felony or forcible felony under the Ill. Criminal Code of 1961 or 2012. 740 ILCS 147/10. It also includes criminal defacement of property that includes a streetgang sign or symbol. *Id.* The determination as to what constitutes a *serious safety hazard* due to a *course or pattern of criminal activity* under 105 ILCS 5/29-3 is made by the board, in accordance with guidelines determined by local law enforcement, in consultation with the State Superintendent of Education. ISBE guidance on safety hazards due to criminal gang activity is available at: www.isbe.net/transportation.

⁴ Required by 105 ILCS 5/29-3. Another statute provides a process for *qualifying students* to seek reimbursement from ISBE for *qualified transportation expenses*. 105 ILCS 5/29-5.2; 23 Ill.Admin.Code §120.240. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §120.230 requires, among other things, that each attendance center designate a representative to assist parents/guardians with this process. This process does not need to be in board policy and is not covered herein.

⁵ 34 C.F.R. §300.34 and 23 Ill.Admin.Code §226.750.

⁶ 105 ILCS 5/29-3.2 and 5/29-4.

⁷ 105 ILCS 45/, Education for Homeless Children Act. State law implements the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §11431 *et seq.*

The School Code and the Education for Homeless Children Act permit school districts to use their State transportation funds to provide financial assistance to children that are defined as homeless or *at risk of becoming homeless*, provided certain criteria are satisfied. 105 ILCS 5/29-5, ~~amended by P.A. 102-539~~; 105 ILCS 45/1-17. Financial assistance may include: (1) mortgage or rental assistance that will allow a child to remain permanently in his/her living situation or obtain a new living situation; and/or (2) assistance with unpaid bills, loans, or other financial debts that result in housing being inadequate. 105 ILCS 45/1-17(a). For further detail see 6:140-AP, *Education of Homeless Children*.

⁸ Required if the district receives Title I funds. 20 U.S.C. §6312(c)(5)(B). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires the district to collaborate with the State or local child welfare agency to develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation to maintain children in foster care in the school of origin (when in their best interest) will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of their time in foster care. ISBE guidance on transportation procedures for students in foster care is available at: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Guidance_on_Foster_Care_Transportation_Procedures.pdf. The U.S. Depts. of Education and Health and Human Services, in *Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care* (6-23-16) at: www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/non-regulatory-guidance-ensuring-educational-stability-children-foster-care, opine that ESEA requirements apply to students who meet the definition of *foster care* set forth at 45 C.F.R. §1355.20(a):

Foster care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the title IV-E agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition regardless of whether the foster care facility is licensed and payments are made by the State, Tribal or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption, or whether there is Federal matching of any payments that are made.

ESEA foster care transportation requirements also apply to students *awaiting* foster care placement.

If a student is at a location within the District, other than his or her residence, for child care purposes at the time for transportation to and/or from school, that location may be considered for purposes of determining the one and one-half miles from the school attended. Unless the Superintendent or designee establishes new routes, pick-up and drop-off locations for students in day care must be along the District's regular routes. The District will not discriminate among types of locations where day care is provided, which may include the premises of licensed providers, relatives' homes, or neighbors' homes.⁹

Bus schedules and routes shall be determined by the Superintendent or designee and shall be altered only with the Superintendent or designee's approval and direction. In setting the routes, the pick-up and discharge points should be as safe for students as possible.¹⁰

No school employee may transport students in school or private vehicles unless authorized by the administration.¹¹

Every vehicle regularly used for the transportation of students must pass safety inspections in accordance with State law and Ill. Dept. of Transportation regulations.¹² The strobe light on a school bus may be illuminated only when the bus is actually being used as a school bus and (1) is stopping or stopped for loading or discharging students on a highway outside an urban area, or (2) is bearing one or more students.¹³ The Superintendent shall implement procedures in accordance with State law for accepting comment calls about school bus driving.¹⁴

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105 ILCS 5/10-20.59, amended by P.A. 102-199, requires school boards to, by the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, appoint at least one employee to act as a liaison to facilitate the enrollment and transfer of records of students in the legal custody of the Ill. Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS) when enrolling in or changing schools. Liaison responsibilities may include, among other things, working with DCFS to help students maintain their school placement, if appropriate.

⁹ This paragraph should be deleted if a district will not seek State reimbursement for transportation to and from locations other than individual students' residences. As a condition for receiving State reimbursement, an ISBE rule requires boards to have a policy with the provisions in this paragraph. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §120.30(a)(1)(B). This rule also contains the non-discrimination language.

¹⁰ The paragraph is optional. As an alternative, a board may state that pick-up and discharge points "should be as safe and convenient as possible."

¹¹ Optional. This presents an opportunity for each board to discuss this issue with the superintendent and direct the superintendent to include it in the curriculum for the required in-service on educator ethics, teacher-student conduct, and school employee-student conduct for all personnel. 105 ILCS 5/10-22.39. See 5:100, *Staff Development Program* (f/n 3), and 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest* (f/n 2), for more detailed discussions. Include policies 5:100, *Staff Development Program*, and 5:120, *Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest*, in the Cross References when this sentence is used.

¹² 625 ILCS 5/13-109. The vehicle and other requirements for transporting students to and from interscholastic or school-sponsored activities, including curriculum-related or career-related activities, are found in 105 ILCS 5/29-6.3 and 625 ILCS 5/11-1414.1, amended by P.A.s 104-256, eff. 7-1-26, and 104-367, eff. 1-1-26. These statutes also contain requirements for the use of multi-function school activity buses (defined at 625 ILCS 5/1-148.3a-5, amended by P.A. 104-367, eff. 1-1-26). The legislature frequently amends these statutes, along with many transportation laws; they should be double-checked before relying on them.

¹³ 625 ILCS 5/12-815. The statute, like the policy, identifies the conditions in which illuminating the strobe light is permissible instead of mandating when they must be illuminated.

¹⁴ 625 ILCS 5/12-821(b) requires districts that own school buses and multifunction school activity buses to establish procedures for accepting comment calls and responding to them. In accordance with good governance principles, this duty is delegated to the superintendent. For a sample procedure, see 4:110-AP2, *Bus Driver Communication Devices; Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Inspection; Bus Driving Comments*.

All contracts for charter bus services must contain the clause prescribed by State law regarding criminal background checks for bus drivers. ¹⁵

Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Vehicle Inspection ¹⁶

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement a pre-trip and post-trip inspection procedure to ensure that the school bus driver: (1) tests the two-way radio or cellular radio telecommunication device and ensures that it is functioning properly before the bus is operated, and

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¹⁵ 105 ILCS 5/10-20.21a, requires all contracts for providing charter bus services to transport students to or from interscholastic athletic or interscholastic or school sponsored activities to contain clause (A) except that a contract with an out-of-state company may contain clause (B) or clause (A). The clause must be set forth in the contract's body in at least 12-point typeface and all upper case letters:

(A) "ALL OF THE CHARTER BUS DRIVERS WHO WILL BE PROVIDING SERVICES UNDER THIS CONTRACT HAVE, OR WILL HAVE BEFORE ANY SERVICES ARE PROVIDED:

(1) SUBMITTED THEIR FINGERPRINTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE IN THE FORM AND MANNER PRESCRIBED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE. THESE FINGERPRINTS SHALL BE CHECKED AGAINST THE FINGERPRINT RECORDS NOW AND HEREAFTER FILED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE AND FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS DATABASES. THE FINGERPRINTING CHECK HAS RESULTED IN A DETERMINATION THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN CONVICTED OF COMMITTING ANY OF THE OFFENSES SET FORTH IN SUBDIVISION (C-1)(4) OF SECTION 6-508 OF THE ILLINOIS VEHICLE CODE; AND

(2) DEMONSTRATED PHYSICAL FITNESS TO OPERATE SCHOOL BUSES BY SUBMITTING THE RESULTS OF A MEDICAL EXAMINATION, INCLUDING TESTS FOR DRUG USE, TO A STATE REGULATORY AGENCY."

(B) "NOT ALL OF THE CHARTER BUS DRIVERS WHO WILL BE PROVIDING SERVICES UNDER THIS CONTRACT HAVE, OR WILL HAVE BEFORE ANY SERVICES ARE PROVIDED:

(1) SUBMITTED THEIR FINGERPRINTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE IN THE FORM AND MANNER PRESCRIBED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE. THESE FINGERPRINTS SHALL BE CHECKED AGAINST THE FINGERPRINT RECORDS NOW AND HEREAFTER FILED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE AND FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS DATABASES. THE FINGERPRINTING CHECK HAS RESULTED IN A DETERMINATION THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN CONVICTED OF COMMITTING ANY OF THE OFFENSES SET FORTH IN SUBDIVISION (C-1)(4) OF SECTION 6-508 OF THE ILLINOIS VEHICLE CODE; AND

(2) DEMONSTRATED PHYSICAL FITNESS TO OPERATE SCHOOL BUSES BY SUBMITTING THE RESULTS OF A MEDICAL EXAMINATION, INCLUDING TESTS FOR DRUG USE, TO A STATE REGULATORY AGENCY."

¹⁶ 625 ILCS 5/12-816(a) requires school districts to have a school bus pre- and post-trip inspection policy with the components as contained in this policy. See also 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.510(i)(3) and 92 Ill.Admin.Code §458.1030. For a sample procedure, see 4:110-AP2, *Bus Driver Communication Devices; Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Inspection; Bus Driving Comments*. School districts that contract with a private sector school bus company must require the company to have a pre- and post-trip inspection policy that is equivalent to this section of the policy. 625 ILCS 5/12-816(b).

Each school bus must contain an operating two-way radio or cellular radio telecommunication device while the school bus driver is in possession of a school bus. 625 ILCS 5/12-813.1(e). "Cellular radio telecommunication device" means a device capable of sending or receiving telephone communications without an access line for service and which requires the operator to dial numbers manually; it does not include citizens band radios or citizens band radio hybrids. 625 ILCS 5/12-813.1(a). The two-way radio or cellular radio telecommunication device must be turned on and adjusted in a manner that would alert the driver of an incoming communication request. 625 ILCS 5/12-813.1(e). A school bus driver may not operate a school bus while using a cellular radio telecommunication device except in the following situations: (1) in an emergency situation to communicate with an emergency response operator; a hospital; a physician's office or health clinic; an ambulance service; a fire department, fire district, or fire company; or a police department; (2) in the event of a "mechanical breakdown or other mechanical problem;" (3) to communicate with school authorities about bus operation or the safety of a passenger on the bus; and (4) when the bus is parked. 625 ILCS 5/12-813.1(c). However under no circumstances may the cellular radio telecommunication device be used for anything else including personal use. 625 ILCS 5/12-813.1(c)(2).

(2) walks to the rear of the bus before leaving the bus at the end of each route, work shift, or work day, to check the bus for children or other passengers in the bus.

LEGAL REF.: 20 U.S.C. §6312(c)(5)(B), Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq., McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
105 ILCS 5/10-22.22 and 5/29-1 et seq.
105 ILCS 45/1-15 and /1-17.
625 ILCS 5/1-148.3a-5, 5/1-182, 5/11-1414.1, 5/12-813.1, 5/12-815, 5/12-816,
5/12-821, and 5/13-109.
23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.510 and 226.750; Part 120.
92 Ill.Admin.Code Part 440.

CROSS REF.: 4:170 (Safety), 5:100 (Staff Development Program), 5:120 (Employee Ethics; Code of Professional Conduct; and Conflict of Interest), 5:280 (Duties and Qualifications), 6:140 (Education of Homeless Children), 6:170 (Title I Programs), 7:220 (Bus Conduct)

ADMIN. PROC.: 4:110-AP2 (Bus Driver Communication Devices; Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Inspection; Bus Driving Comments), 4:110-AP3 (School Bus Safety Rules), 4:110-E (Emergency Medical Information for Students Having Special Needs or Medical Conditions Who Ride School Buses), 6:140-AP (Education of Homeless Children)

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