



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Fifth Legislature, Second Regular Session

FACT SHEET FOR S.B. 1630

school buses; student transportation; vehicles

Purpose

Authorizes a school district, charter school or contracted private entity to use a motor vehicle designed to carry at least 11 and up to 15 passengers to transport students (minibus) on a regularly scheduled basis and include the route mileage and students transported to calculate the Transportation Support Level (TSL). Authorizes the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to prescribe rules relating to minibuses and modifies the School Bus Advisory Council.

Background

The School Bus Advisory Council consists of nine members appointed by the Governor. The School Bus Advisory Council must advise DPS in developing rules relating to school bus safety, school bus driver certification, school bus driver training and standards for the design and equipment, periodic inspection and maintenance and procedures for the operation of school buses. (A.R.S. §§ [15-922](#); [28-900](#); and [28-3053](#)).

A school district is eligible to receive TSL funding for transporting students to or from home or school on a regularly scheduled basis. TSL is calculated for each school district based on approved daily route mileage, the number of days the school is in session and the number of eligible students transported in the fiscal year prior to the current year ([A.R.S. § 15-945](#)).

If including minibus route mileage and the number of eligible riders transported via minibuses in TSL calculations results in an increase in TSL costs, there may be an increase in Basic State Aid costs to the state General Fund.

Provisions

School Transportation

1. Authorizes a school district, charter school or a contracted privately-owned and operated entity in Arizona to use a minibus to transport students to or from home or school on a regularly scheduled basis.
2. Increases, from 20 miles to 30 miles, the limit, for receiving state aid, on daily route mileage each way to and from the school of attendance or to and from a pickup point for eligible students who reside in nonadjacent school districts.
3. Authorizes a school district to include minibus route mileage and the number of riders in calculating TSL funding for transporting eligible students.

4. Prohibits the Arizona Department of Education from denying transportation funding or state aid for a school district that transports pupils via minibuses.
5. Authorizes a governing board to purchase public liability and property damage insurance to cover minibus operators and allows the governing board to require an operator to carry public liability insurance as prescribed for a school bus driver.
6. Requires a school's annual report card to include the total number of specified incidents that occurred at minibus stops and on minibuses that required the contact of a law enforcement officer as prescribed for school bus incidents.
7. Authorizes DPS school transportation rules to include minimum standards for the:
 - a) design and equipment of minibuses that are substantially different from the minimum standards for school buses;
 - b) periodic inspection and maintenance of minibuses;
 - c) establishment of procedures for the operation of minibuses; and
 - d) to allow for a variety of vehicles to be used to meet the needs of students and systems of varying sizes and locations.
8. Requires DPS to adopt rules that establish minimum standards for the certification of minibus drivers and applies the requirements for the minimum school bus driver certification standards to the minibus driver minimum standards.
9. Requires DPS school transportation rules to allow for a variety of vehicles to be used to meet the needs of students and systems of varying sizes and locations.
10. Excludes an applicant to drive a minibus from the requirement to possess or obtain a commercial driver's license.
11. Adds charter schools to entities with which DPS must cooperate to provide school transportation safety and training courses.
12. Specifies that a charter school officer or employee who violates any of the school transportation rules or fails to include the obligation to comply with the rules in a contract executed on behalf of the charter school is guilty of misconduct and subject to removal from office or employment.
13. Applies breach of contract procedures for school district school bus drivers to:
 - a) school bus drivers contracted with a charter school; and
 - b) minibus drivers contracted with a school district or charter school.

School Transportation Advisory Council

14. Renames the *School Bus Advisory Council* as the *School Transportation Advisory Council*.
15. Requires the School Transportation Advisory Council to advise and consult with:
 - a) DPS regarding the certification and safety of minibuses;

- b) DPS regarding modernizing and innovating K-12 student transportation to reduce transportation barriers for students, increase access to public school options and provide more transportation options for school districts and charter schools; and
 - c) the Arizona Department of Administration regarding purchasing strategies to maximize transportation resources and find efficiencies to modernize and properly size transportation vehicles and systems.
16. Increases the Student Transportation Advisory Council membership, from 9 to 13, by removing a member from a school district with a student count of 10,000 or more and adding:
- a) a member representing the State Board for Charter Schools;
 - b) a member from a charter school with a student count of fewer than 600;
 - c) a member from a charter school with a student count of more than 600; and
 - d) two public members.
17. Modifies existing Student Transportation Advisory Council membership requirements by:
- a) allowing a member to represent a private sector student transportation service provider in lieu of a member representing a private sector school bus service provider;
 - b) requiring the member from a school district with a student count of fewer than 600 to be in a county with fewer than 300,000 persons; and
 - c) requiring a member to be from a school district with a student count of more than 3,000, rather than between 3,000 and 10,000.

Miscellaneous

18. Makes technical and conforming changes.
19. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Prepared by Senate Research
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LB/MS/slp