

Chapter 28A.160 RCW
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

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RCW 28A.160.010 Operation of student transportation program—Responsibility of local district—Scope—Transporting of elderly—Insurance. The operation of each local school district's student transportation program is declared to be the responsibility of the respective board of directors, and each board of directors shall determine such matters as which individual students shall be transported and what routes shall be most efficiently utilized except as provided in RCW 28A.160.240. State moneys allocated to local districts for student transportation shall be spent only for student transportation activities, but need not be spent by the local district in the same manner as calculated and allocated by the state.

A school district is authorized to provide for the transportation of students enrolled in the school or schools of the district both in the case of students who reside within the boundaries of the district and of students who reside outside the boundaries of the district.

When children are transported from one school district to another the board of directors of the respective districts may enter into a written contract providing for a division of the cost of such transportation between the districts.

School districts may use school buses and drivers hired by the district or commercial chartered bus service for the transportation of school children and the school employees necessary for their supervision to and from any school activities within or without the school district during or after school hours and whether or not a required school activity, so long as the school board has officially designated it as a school activity. For any extracurricular uses, the school board shall charge an amount sufficient to reimburse the district for its cost.

In addition to the right to contract for the use of buses provided in RCW 28A.160.080 and 28A.160.090, any school district may contract to furnish the use of school buses of that district to other users who are engaged in conducting an educational or recreational program supported wholly or in part by tax funds or programs for elderly persons at times when those buses are not needed by that district and under such terms as will fully reimburse such school district for all costs related or incident thereto: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That no such use of school district buses shall be permitted except where other public or private transportation certificated or licensed by the Washington utilities and transportation commission is not reasonably available to the user: PROVIDED FURTHER, That no user shall be required to accept any charter bus for services which the user believes might place the health or safety of the children or elderly persons in jeopardy.

Whenever any persons are transported by the school district in its own motor vehicles and by its own employees, the board may provide insurance to protect the district against loss, whether by reason of theft, fire or property damage to the motor vehicle or by reason of liability of the district to persons from the operation of such motor vehicle.

The board may provide insurance by contract purchase for payment of hospital and medical expenses for the benefit of persons injured while they are on, getting on, or getting off any vehicles enumerated herein without respect to any fault or liability on the part of the school district or operator. This insurance may be provided without cost to the persons notwithstanding the provisions of RCW 28A.400.350.

If the transportation of children or elderly persons is arranged for by contract of the district with some person, the board may require such contractor to procure such insurance as the board deems advisable. [2020 c 339 s 3; 1990 c 33 s 132; 1986 c 32 s 1; 1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 1; 1981 c 265 s 10; 1980 c 122 s 2; 1973 c 45 s 1; 1971 c 24 s 3; 1969 ex.s. c 153 s 3; 1969 ex.s. c 223 s 28A.24.055. Prior: (i) 1969 c 53 s 1; 1967 ex.s. c 29 s 1, part; 1967 c 12 s 1, part; 1965 ex.s. c 49 s 1, part; 1963 c 104 s 1, part; 1963 c 5 s 1, part; 1961 c 305 s 1, part; 1961 c 237 s 1, part; 1961 c 66 s 1, part; 1955 c 68 s 2, part; prior: 1943 c 52 s 1, part; 1941 c 179 s 1, part; 1939 c 131 s 1, part; 1925 ex.s. c 57 s 1, part; 1919 c 90 s 3, part; 1915 c 44 s 1, part; 1909 c 97 p 285 s 2, part; 1907 c 240 s 5, part; 1903 c 104 s 17, part; Rem. Supp. 1943 s 4776, part. Formerly RCW 28.58.100, part. (ii) 1965 ex.s. c 86 s 1. Formerly RCW 28A.24.055, 28.58.421.]

Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 61: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 9.]

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

Elderly persons defined—Program limitation: RCW 28A.160.070.

RCW 28A.160.020 Authorization for private school students to ride buses—Conditions. Every school district board of directors may

authorize children attending a private school approved in accordance with RCW 28A.195.010 to ride a school bus or other student transportation vehicle to and from school so long as the following conditions are met:

(1) The board of directors shall not be required to alter those bus routes or stops established for transporting public school students;

(2) Private school students shall be allowed to ride on a seat-available basis only; and

(3) The board of directors shall charge an amount sufficient to reimburse the district for the actual per seat cost of providing such transportation. [1990 c 33 s 133; 1981 c 307 s 1. Formerly RCW 28A.24.065.]

Severability—1981 c 307: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1981 c 307 s 2.]

RCW 28A.160.030 Authorizing individual transportation or other arrangements. Individual transportation, board and room, and other arrangements may be authorized or provided and, in whole or part, paid for or reimbursed by a school district, when approved by the educational service district superintendent or his or her designee pursuant to rules promulgated by the superintendent of public instruction for that purpose: PROVIDED, That the total of payments for board and room and transportation incidental thereto shall not exceed the amount which would otherwise be paid for such individual transportation. [1981 c 265 s 11; 1977 c 80 s 2; 1971 ex.s. c 66 s 10; 1969 ex.s. c 223 s 28A.24.100. Prior: 1965 ex.s. c 154 s 9. Formerly RCW 28A.24.100, 28.24.100.]

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

Severability—1977 c 80: "If any provision of this 1977 amendatory act, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act, or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1977 c 80 s 5.]

Severability—Effective date—1971 ex.s. c 66: See notes following RCW 28A.155.010.

RCW 28A.160.040 Lease of buses to transport children with disabilities and elderly—Limitation. The directors of school districts are authorized to lease school buses to nonprofit organizations to transport children with disabilities and elderly persons to and from the site of activities or programs deemed beneficial to such persons by such organizations: PROVIDED, That commercial bus transportation is not reasonably available for such purposes. [1995 c 77 s 16; 1973 c 45 s 2; 1971 c 78 s 1. Formerly RCW 28A.24.110.]

Elderly persons defined—Program limitation: RCW 28A.160.070.

RCW 28A.160.050 Lease of buses to transport children with disabilities and elderly—Directors to authorize. The directors of school districts may authorize leases under RCW 28A.160.040 through 28A.160.060: PROVIDED, That such leases do not conflict with regular school purposes. [1990 c 33 s 134; 1971 c 78 s 2. Formerly RCW 28A.24.111.]

RCW 28A.160.060 Lease of buses to transport children with disabilities and elderly—Lease at local level—Criteria. The lease of the equipment shall be handled by the school directors at a local level. The school directors may establish criteria for bus use and lease, including, but not limited to, minimum costs, and driver requirements. [1971 c 78 s 3. Formerly RCW 28A.24.112.]

RCW 28A.160.070 Lease of buses to transport children with disabilities and elderly—Elderly persons defined—Program limitation. For purposes of RCW 28A.160.010 and 28A.160.040, "elderly person" shall mean a person who is at least sixty years of age. No school district funds may be used for the operation of such a program. [1990 c 33 s 135; 1973 c 45 s 3. Formerly RCW 28A.24.120.]

RCW 28A.160.080 School buses, rental or lease for emergency purposes—Authorization. It is the intent of the legislature and the purpose of RCW 28A.160.010, 28A.160.080, and 28A.160.090 that in the event of major forest fires, floods, or other natural emergencies that boards of directors of school districts, in their discretion, may rent or lease school buses to governmental agencies for the purposes of transporting personnel, supplies and/or evacuees. [1990 c 33 s 136; 1971 c 24 s 1. Formerly RCW 28A.24.170.]

RCW 28A.160.090 School buses, rental or lease for emergency purposes—Board to determine district policy—Conditions if rent or lease. Each school district board shall determine its own policy as to whether or not its school buses will be rented or leased for the purposes of RCW 28A.160.080, and if the board decision is to rent or lease, under what conditions, subject to the following:

(1) Such renting or leasing may take place only after the director of commerce or any of his or her agents so authorized has, at the request of an involved governmental agency, declared that an emergency exists in a designated area insofar as the need for additional transport is concerned.

(2) The agency renting or leasing the school buses must agree, in writing, to reimburse the school district for all costs and expenses related to their use and also must provide an indemnity agreement protecting the district against any type of claim or legal action whatsoever, including all legal costs incident thereto. [2023 c 470 s 2005; 1995 c 399 s 20; 1990 c 33 s 137; 1986 c 266 s 21; 1985 c 7 s 88; 1974 ex.s. c 171 s 1; 1971 c 24 s 2. Formerly RCW 28A.24.172.]

Explanatory statement—2023 c 470: See note following RCW 10.99.030.

Severability—1986 c 266: See note following RCW 38.52.005.

RCW 28A.160.100 School buses, transport of general public to interscholastic activities—Limitations. In addition to the authority otherwise provided in RCW 28A.160.010 through 28A.160.120 to school districts for the transportation of persons, whether school children, school personnel, or otherwise, any school district authorized to use school buses and drivers hired by the district for the transportation of school children to and from a school activity, along with such school employees as necessary for their supervision, shall, if such school activity be an interscholastic activity, be authorized to transport members of the general public to such event and utilize the school district's buses, transportation equipment and facilities, and employees therefor: PROVIDED, That provision shall be made for the reimbursement and payment to the school district by such members of the general public of not less than the district's actual costs and the reasonable value of the use of the district's buses and facilities provided in connection with such transportation: PROVIDED FURTHER, That wherever private transportation certified or licensed by the utilities and transportation commission or public transportation is reasonably available, this section shall not apply. [2006 c 263 s 907; 1990 c 33 s 138; 1980 c 91 s 1. Formerly RCW 28A.24.175.]

Findings—Purpose—Part headings not law—2006 c 263: See notes following RCW 28A.150.230.

RCW 28A.160.110 School buses, authorization for parent, guardian or custodian of a student to ride—Limitations. Every school district board of directors may authorize any parent, guardian or custodian of a student enrolled in the district to ride a school bus or other student transportation vehicle at the request of school officials or employees designated by the board: PROVIDED, That excess seating space is available on the vehicle after the transportation needs of students have been met: PROVIDED FURTHER, That private or other public transportation of the parent, guardian or custodian is not reasonable in the board's judgment. [1980 c 122 s 1. Formerly RCW 28A.24.178.]

RCW 28A.160.115 Bus routes. On highways divided into separate roadways as provided in RCW 46.61.150 and highways with three or more marked traffic lanes, public school district bus routes and private school bus routes shall serve each side of the highway so that students do not have to cross the highway, unless there is a traffic control signal as defined in RCW 46.04.600 or an adult crossing guard within three hundred feet of the bus stop to assist students while crossing such multiple-lane highways. [1990 c 241 s 11.]

RCW 28A.160.117 Transportation efficiency reviews—Reports. (1) The superintendent of public instruction shall encourage efficient use of state resources by providing a linear programming process that

compares school district transportation operations. If a school district's operation is calculated to be less than ninety percent efficient, the regional transportation coordinators shall provide an individual review to determine what measures are available to the school district to improve efficiency. The evaluation shall include such measures as:

- (a) Efficient routing of buses;
- (b) Efficient use of vehicle capacity; and
- (c) Reasonable controls on compensation costs.

(2) The superintendent shall submit to the fiscal and education committees of the legislature no later than December 1st of each year a report summarizing the efficiency reviews and the resulting changes implemented by school districts in response to the recommendations of the regional transportation coordinators. [2009 c 548 s 310.]

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

RCW 28A.160.120 Agreements with other governmental entities for transportation of public or other noncommon school purposes—Limitations. Any school district board of directors or any intermediate school district board may enter into agreements pursuant to chapter 39.34 RCW or chapter 35.58 RCW, as now or hereafter amended, with any city, town, county, metropolitan municipal corporation, and any federal or other state governmental entity, or any combination of the foregoing, for the purpose of providing for the transportation of students and/or members of the public through the use, in whole or part, of the school district's buses, transportation equipment and facilities, and employees: PROVIDED, That any agreement entered into for purposes of transportation pursuant to this section shall conform with the provisions of RCW 35.58.250 where applicable and shall provide for the reimbursement and payment to the school district of not less than the district's actual costs and the reasonable value of the use of the district's buses, and transportation equipment and supplies which are incurred and otherwise provided in connection with the transportation of members of the public or other noncommon school purposes: PROVIDED FURTHER, That wherever public transportation, or private transportation certified or licensed by the Washington utilities and transportation commission is not reasonably available, the school district or intermediate school district may transport members of the public so long as they are reimbursed for the cost of such transportation, and such transportation has been approved by any metropolitan municipal corporation performing public transportation pursuant to chapter 35.58 RCW in the area to be served by the district. [1974 ex.s. c 93 s 1. Formerly RCW 28A.24.180.]

RCW 28A.160.130 Transportation vehicle fund—Deposits in—Use—Rules for establishment and use. (1) There is created a fund on deposit with each county treasurer for each school district of the county, which shall be known as the transportation vehicle fund. Money to be deposited into the transportation vehicle fund shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) The balance of accounts held in the general fund of each school district for the purchase of approved transportation equipment and for major transportation equipment repairs under RCW 28A.150.280. The amount transferred shall be the balance of the account as of September 1, 1982;

(b) Reimbursement payments provided for in RCW 28A.160.200 except those provided under RCW 28A.160.200(3) that are necessary for contracted payments to private carriers;

(c) Earnings from transportation vehicle fund investments as authorized in RCW 28A.320.300; and

(d) The district's share of the proceeds from the sale of transportation vehicles, as determined by the superintendent of public instruction.

(2) Funds in the transportation vehicle fund may be used for the following purposes:

(a) Purchase of pupil transportation vehicles pursuant to RCW 28A.160.200 and 28A.150.280;

(b) Payment of conditional sales contracts as authorized in RCW 28A.335.200 or payment of obligations authorized in RCW 28A.530.080, entered into or issued for the purpose of pupil transportation vehicles;

(c) Major repairs to pupil transportation vehicles;

(d) To complete a feasibility plan to transition from gas or diesel pupil transportation vehicles to electric or zero emission pupil transportation vehicles;

(e) Purchase, installation, and repair of electric pupil transportation vehicle charging stations and other zero emission pupil transportation vehicle fueling stations and for other costs necessary for station installation; and

(f) Converting or repowering existing gas or diesel pupil transportation vehicles to electric or zero emission pupil transportation vehicles.

(3) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules which shall establish the standards, conditions, and procedures governing the establishment and use of the transportation vehicle fund. The rules shall not permit the transfer of funds from the transportation vehicle fund to any other fund of the district. [2022 c 200 s 1; 2009 c 564 s 919; 1991 c 114 s 2; 1990 c 33 s 139; 1981 c 265 s 7. Formerly RCW 28A.58.428.]

Effective date—2009 c 564: See note following RCW 2.68.020.

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

RCW 28A.160.140 Contract for pupil transportation services with private nongovernmental entity—Competitive bid procedures—Requirement for health care and pension benefits. (1) As a condition of entering into a pupil transportation services contract with a private

nongovernmental entity, each school district shall engage in an open competitive process at least once every five years. This requirement shall not be construed to prohibit a district from entering into a pupil transportation services contract of less than five years in duration with a district option to renew, extend, or terminate the contract, if the district engages in an open competitive process at least once every five years after July 26, 1987. If a school district enters into a pupil transportation services contract with a private nongovernmental entity that uses zero emission school buses to transport students for the school district, the contract period may be up to seven years in duration.

(2)(a) A school district may only enter into, renew, or extend a pupil transportation services contract with a private nongovernmental entity if that entity provides the following to, or on behalf of, its employees who choose to opt in for coverage:

(i) An employer health benefits contribution equal to the employer payment dollar amount in effect for the first year of the contract for health care benefit rates (cockle rates), published annually by the health care authority, for the school employees' benefits board program for school employees; and

(ii) An amount equivalent to the salaries of the employees of the private nongovernmental entity multiplied by the employer normal cost contribution rate determined under the entry age cost method for the school employees' retirement system, as published in the most recent actuarial valuation report from the office of the state actuary for the first year of the contract.

(b) All pupil transportation service contracts entered into or modified after June 6, 2024, must include a detailed explanation of any contract cost increase by year, expenditure type, and amount, including any increases in cost that result from providing the benefits required under this section.

(c) For contracts entered into, renewed, or extended in the 2024 calendar year, the benefits required under this section must be provided to employees by the beginning of the 2025-26 school year.

(3) Once the total cost of ownership of zero emission school buses is at or below the total cost of ownership of diesel school buses, as determined under the formulas adopted by rule pursuant to RCW 28A.160.260, a school district may only enter into, renew, or extend a pupil transportation services contract with a nongovernmental entity that uses zero emission school buses to transport students for the school district. The office of the superintendent of public instruction must provide an exception to this requirement, upon request from the school district, if the school district meets the criteria in RCW 28A.160.260(3)(a)(ii) through (iv). The requirements of this subsection do not prohibit the use of externally vented fuel-operated passenger heaters from November 15th through March 15th annually until other viable alternatives become available.

(4) As used in this section:

(a) "Employees" means in-state employees of the private nongovernmental entity working sufficient compensated hours performing services pursuant to the contract with the school district to meet the eligibility requirements for the school employees' benefits board program if the employees were directly employed by a school district;

(b) "Open competitive process" means either one of the following, at the choice of the school district:

(i) The solicitation of bids or quotations and the award of contracts under RCW 28A.335.190; or

(ii) The competitive solicitation of proposals and their evaluation consistent with the process and criteria recommended or required, as the case may be, by the office of financial management for state agency acquisition of personal service contractors;

(c) "Pupil transportation services contract" means a contract for the operation of privately owned or school district owned school buses, and the services of drivers or operators, management and supervisory personnel, and their support personnel such as secretaries, dispatchers, and mechanics, or any combination thereof, to provide students with transportation to and from school on a regular basis;

(d) "School bus" means a motor vehicle as defined in RCW 46.04.521 and under the rules of the superintendent of public instruction; and

(e) "Zero emission school bus" means a school bus that produces zero exhaust emission of any air pollutant and any greenhouse gas other than water vapor. [2024 c 345 s 5; 2024 c 313 s 2; 1990 c 33 s 140; 1987 c 141 s 2. Formerly RCW 28A.58.133.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2024 c 313 s 2 and by 2024 c 345 s 5, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Findings—Intent—2024 c 345: See note following RCW 70A.15.4200.

Intent—2024 c 313: "The legislature recognizes that school bus drivers play a crucial role in ensuring students' safe passage to and from school, preventing absences, and extending a positive school climate beyond the classroom. By delivering this essential service, school bus drivers provide a significant time and convenience benefit to thousands of Washington families, remove cars from the road, reduce overall emissions, and increase traffic safety. However, a recent national survey revealed that 94 percent of bus contractors experience driver shortages, with 21 percent reporting their shortages as severe. With this act, the state of Washington intends to encourage the retention of bus drivers who provide vital services to local communities." [2024 c 313 s 1.]

Severability—1987 c 141: See note following RCW 28A.335.170.

RCW 28A.160.150 Student transportation allocation—Operating costs, determination and funding. Funds allocated for transportation costs, except for funds provided for transportation and transportation services to and from school shall be in addition to the basic education allocation. The distribution formula developed in RCW 28A.160.150 through 28A.160.180 shall be for allocation purposes only and shall not be construed as mandating specific levels of pupil transportation services by local districts nor the type of vehicle to be used for pupil transportation, except as provided in RCW 28A.160.195. School districts are encouraged to use a vehicle type deemed by a district to be a safe and cost-effective manner of transporting its students, including using school buses and other vehicles, and may use the student transportation allocation accordingly. Operating costs as determined under RCW 28A.160.150 through 28A.160.180 shall be funded at 100 percent or as close thereto

as reasonably possible for transportation of an eligible student to and from school as defined in RCW 28A.160.160(3). In addition, funding shall be provided for transportation services for students living within the walk area as determined under RCW 28A.160.160(5). [2025 c 372 s 1; 2009 c 548 s 304; 1996 c 279 s 1; 1990 c 33 s 141; 1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 2; 1981 c 265 s 1. Formerly RCW 28A.41.505.]

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: "Sections 304 through 311 of this act take effect September 1, 2011." [2010 c 236 s 16; 2009 c 548 s 805.]

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

Application—1996 c 279: "This act shall be effective for school transportation programs in the 1996-97 school year and thereafter." [1996 c 279 s 4.]

Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 61: See note following RCW 28A.160.010.

Effective date—1981 c 265: "With the exception of sections 8 and 13 of this amendatory act, the effective date of this amendatory act is September 1, 1982. The superintendent of public instruction and the office thereof prior to the effective date of this amendatory act may take such actions as necessary for the orderly implementation thereof and during such period may carry out such data collection activities and district notification provisions as provided for herein." [1981 c 265 s 16.]

Severability—1981 c 265: "If any provision of this amendatory act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1981 c 265 s 17.]

RCW 28A.160.160 Student transportation allocation—Definitions. For purposes of RCW 28A.160.150 through 28A.160.190, except where the context shall clearly indicate otherwise, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Eligible student" means any student served by the transportation program of a school district or compensated for individual transportation arrangements authorized by RCW 28A.160.030 whose route stop is outside the walk area for a student's school, except if the student to be transported is disabled under RCW 28A.155.020 and is either not ambulatory or not capable of protecting his or her own welfare while traveling to or from the school or agency where special education services are provided, in which case no mileage distance restriction applies.

(2) "Superintendent" means the superintendent of public instruction.

(3) "To and from school" means the transportation of students for the following purposes:

- (a) Transportation to and from route stops and schools;
- (b) Transportation to and from schools pursuant to an interdistrict agreement pursuant to RCW 28A.335.160;
- (c) Transportation of students between schools and learning centers for instruction specifically required by statute; and
- (d) Transportation of students with disabilities to and from schools and agencies for special education services.

Academic extended day transportation for the instructional program of basic education under RCW 28A.150.220 shall be considered part of transportation of students "to and from school" for the purposes of this section. Transportation for field trips may not be considered part of transportation of students "to and from school" under this section.

(4) "Transportation services" for students living within the walk area includes the coordination of walk-to-school programs, the funding of crossing guards, and matching funds for local and state transportation projects intended to mitigate hazardous walking conditions. Priority for transportation services shall be given to students in grades kindergarten through five.

(5) As used in this section, "walk area" means that area around a school with an adequate roadway configuration to provide students access to school with a walking distance of less than one mile. Mileage must be measured along the shortest roadway or maintained public walkway where hazardous conditions do not exist. The hazardous conditions must be documented by a process established in rule by the superintendent of public instruction and must include roadway, environmental, and social conditions. Each elementary school shall identify walk routes within the walk area. [2009 c 548 s 305; 1996 c 279 s 2; 1995 c 77 s 17; 1990 c 33 s 142; 1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 3; 1981 c 265 s 2. Formerly RCW 28A.41.510.]

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

Application—1996 c 279: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 61: See note following RCW 28A.160.010.

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

RCW 28A.160.170 Student transportation allocation—District's reports to superintendent. (Effective until September 1, 2026.) Each district shall submit three times each year to the superintendent of public instruction during October, February, and May of each year a report containing the following:

(1)(a) The number of eligible students transported to and from school as provided for in RCW 28A.160.150, along with identification

of stop locations and school locations, and (b) the number of miles driven for pupil transportation services as authorized in RCW 28A.160.150 the previous school year; and

(2) Other operational data and descriptions as required by the superintendent to determine allocation requirements for each district. The superintendent shall require that districts separate the costs of operating the program for the transportation of eligible students to and from school as defined by RCW 28A.160.160(3), non-to-and-from-school pupil transportation costs, and costs to provide expanded services under RCW 28A.160.185(1) in the annual financial statement. The cost, quantity, and type of all fuel purchased by school districts for use in to-and-from-school transportation shall be included in the annual financial statement.

Each district shall submit the information required in this section on a timely basis as a condition of the continuing receipt of school transportation moneys. [2021 c 234 s 3; 2009 c 548 s 306; 2007 c 139 s 1; 1990 c 33 s 143; 1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 4; 1981 c 265 s 3. Formerly RCW 28A.41.515.]

Intent—Effective date—2021 c 234: See notes following RCW 28A.160.185.

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

Effective date—2007 c 139 s 1: "Section 1 of this act takes effect September 1, 2007." [2007 c 139 s 3.]

Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 61: See note following RCW 28A.160.010.

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

RCW 28A.160.170 Student transportation allocation—District's reports to superintendent. (Effective September 1, 2026.) Each district shall submit three times each year to the superintendent of public instruction during October, February, and May of each year a report containing the following:

(1)(a) The number of eligible students transported to and from school as provided for in RCW 28A.160.150, along with identification of stop locations and school locations, and (b) the number of miles driven per vehicle type for pupil transportation services as authorized in RCW 28A.160.150 the previous school year; and

(2) Other operational data and descriptions as required by the superintendent to determine allocation requirements for each district. The superintendent shall require that districts separate the costs of operating the program for the transportation of eligible students to and from school as defined by RCW 28A.160.160(3), non-to-and-from-

school pupil transportation costs, and costs to provide expanded services under RCW 28A.160.185(1) in the annual financial statement. The cost, quantity, and type of all fuel purchased by school districts for use in to-and-from-school transportation shall be included in the annual financial statement.

Each district shall submit the information required in this section on a timely basis as a condition of the continuing receipt of school transportation moneys. [2025 c 372 s 2; 2021 c 234 s 3; 2009 c 548 s 306; 2007 c 139 s 1; 1990 c 33 s 143; 1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 4; 1981 c 265 s 3. Formerly RCW 28A.41.515.]

Effective date—2025 c 372 ss 2-4: "Sections 2 through 4 of this act take effect September 1, 2026." [2025 c 372 s 8.]

Intent—Effective date—2021 c 234: See notes following RCW 28A.160.185.

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

Effective date—2007 c 139 s 1: "Section 1 of this act takes effect September 1, 2007." [2007 c 139 s 3.]

Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 61: See note following RCW 28A.160.010.

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

RCW 28A.160.180 Student transportation allocation determination —Report. (Effective until September 1, 2026.) Each district's annual student transportation allocation shall be determined by the superintendent of public instruction in the following manner:

(1) The superintendent shall annually calculate the transportation allocation for those services provided for in RCW 28A.160.150. The allocation formula may be adjusted to include such additional differential factors as basic and special passenger counts as defined by the superintendent of public instruction, average distance to school, and number of locations served.

(2) The allocation shall be based on a regression analysis of the number of basic and special students transported and as many other site characteristics that are identified as being statistically significant.

(3) The transportation allocation for transporting students in district-owned passenger cars, as defined in RCW 46.04.382, pursuant to RCW 28A.160.010 for services provided for in RCW 28A.160.150 if a school district deems it advisable to use such vehicles after the school district board of directors has considered the safety of the students being transported as well as the economy of utilizing a

district-owned passenger car in lieu of a school bus is the private vehicle reimbursement rate in effect on September 1st of each school year. Students transported in district-owned passenger cars must be included in the corresponding basic or special passenger counts.

(4) Prior to June 1st of each year the superintendent shall submit to the office of financial management, and the education and fiscal committees of the legislature, a report outlining the methodology and rationale used in determining the statistical coefficients for each site characteristic used to determine the allocation for the following year. [2009 c 548 s 307; 1996 c 279 s 3; 1995 c 77 s 18; 1990 c 33 s 144; 1985 c 59 s 1; 1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 5; 1982 1st ex.s. c 24 s 2; 1981 c 265 s 4. Formerly RCW 28A.41.520.]

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

Application—1996 c 279: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 61: See note following RCW 28A.160.010.

Effective date—1982 1st ex.s. c 24: "Sections 2 and 3 of this amendatory act shall take effect September 1, 1982." [1982 1st ex.s. c 24 s 6.]

Severability—1982 1st ex.s. c 24: "If any provision of this amendatory act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1982 1st ex.s. c 24 s 7.]

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

RCW 28A.160.180 Student transportation allocation determination—Report. (Effective September 1, 2026.) Each district's annual student transportation allocation shall be determined by the superintendent of public instruction in the following manner:

(1) The superintendent shall annually calculate the transportation allocation for those services provided for in RCW 28A.160.150, inclusive of all vehicle types used. The allocation formula may be adjusted to include such additional differential factors as basic and special passenger counts as defined by the superintendent of public instruction, average distance to school, and number of locations served.

(2) The allocation shall be based on a regression analysis of the number of basic and special students transported and as many other site characteristics that are identified as being statistically significant.

(3) The transportation allocation for transporting students in district-owned passenger cars, as defined in RCW 46.04.382, pursuant to RCW 28A.160.010 for services provided for in RCW 28A.160.150 if a school district deems it advisable to use such vehicles after the school district board of directors has considered the safety of the students being transported as well as the economy of utilizing a district-owned passenger car in lieu of a school bus must be included in the overall determination of the district's annual student transportation allocation. Students transported in district-owned passenger cars must be included in the corresponding basic or special passenger counts, average distance to school, and number of locations served.

(4) Prior to June 1st of each year the superintendent shall submit to the office of financial management, and the education and fiscal committees of the legislature, a report outlining the methodology and rationale used in determining the statistical coefficients for each site characteristic used to determine the allocation for the following year. [2025 c 372 s 3; 2009 c 548 s 307; 1996 c 279 s 3; 1995 c 77 s 18; 1990 c 33 s 144; 1985 c 59 s 1; 1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 5; 1982 1st ex.s. c 24 s 2; 1981 c 265 s 4. Formerly RCW 28A.41.520.]

Effective date—2025 c 372 ss 2-4: See note following RCW 28A.160.170.

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

Application—1996 c 279: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 61: See note following RCW 28A.160.010.

Effective date—1982 1st ex.s. c 24: "Sections 2 and 3 of this amendatory act shall take effect September 1, 1982." [1982 1st ex.s. c 24 s 6.]

Severability—1982 1st ex.s. c 24: "If any provision of this amendatory act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1982 1st ex.s. c 24 s 7.]

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

RCW 28A.160.185 Student transportation allocation—Additional allowed uses under an emergency—Accounting. (1) If a school or school district is providing full remote or partial remote instruction

under the authority of RCW 28A.150.290 due to a local, state, or national emergency that causes a substantial disruption to full in-person instruction then, in addition to the transportation services allowed under this chapter, the district may use student transportation allocations to provide the following expanded services to students, regardless of whether those students would qualify as eligible students under RCW 28A.160.160:

(a) Delivery of educational services necessary to provide students with the opportunity to equitably access educational services during the period of remote instruction. Delivery of educational services include the transportation of materials, hardware, and other supports that assist students in accessing remote instruction, internet connectivity, or the curriculum;

(b) Delivery of meals to students; and

(c) Providing for the transportation of students to and from learning centers or other public or private agencies where educational and support services are being provided to students during the period of remote instruction. "Providing for" includes the provision of payments to allow students to use public transit to access the educational and support services.

(2) Nothing in this section is intended to limit a district's ability to use transportation allocations to pay for fixed transportation costs, such as school bus maintenance and basic administrative, regulatory, safety, or operational expenses.

(3) If a district provides expanded services under subsection (1) of this section, the district must track by a separate accounting code the expenditures incurred by the district in providing such services. This data must be included in the report required under RCW 28A.160.170(2). [2021 c 234 s 2.]

Intent—2021 c 234: "The legislature recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the delivery of education across the state, as school districts transition to remote learning environments to protect the health of students and staff. The legislature also recognizes that the role of transportation services has evolved alongside remote learning programs to help students equitably access the instructional program of basic education. As permitted by emergency proclamation, many school districts have adapted to remote learning by transporting meals, learning materials, and technology supports directly to students' homes or neighborhoods. Other school districts have used transportation resources to bring students to learning centers or other agencies where support services are provided.

This flexibility has allowed school districts to creatively use the resources at their disposal to equitably address the needs of students during an ongoing emergency.

With this act, the legislature intends to preserve this principle of flexibility for qualifying transportation services during a future local, state, or national emergency." [2021 c 234 s 1.]

Effective date—2021 c 234: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 10, 2021]." [2021 c 234 s 6.]

RCW 28A.160.190 Student transportation allocation—Notice—Payment schedule. The superintendent shall notify districts of their student transportation allocation before January 15th. The superintendent shall recalculate and prorate the district's allocation for the transportation of pupils to and from school.

The superintendent shall make the student transportation allocation in accordance with the apportionment payment schedule in RCW 28A.510.250. Such allocation payments may be based on the prior school year's ridership report for payments to be made in September, October, November, December, and January. [2009 c 548 s 308; 1990 c 33 s 145; 1985 c 59 s 2; 1983 1st ex.s. c 61 s 6; 1982 1st ex.s. c 24 s 3; 1981 c 265 s 5. Formerly RCW 28A.41.525.]

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 61: See note following RCW 28A.160.010.

Effective date—Severability—1982 1st ex.s. c 24: See notes following RCW 28A.160.180.

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

RCW 28A.160.191 Student transportation allocation—Adequacy for certain districts—Adjustment. The superintendent of public instruction shall ensure that the allocation formula results in adequate appropriation for low enrollment districts, nonhigh districts, districts involved in cooperative transportation agreements, and cooperative special transportation services operated by educational service districts. If necessary, the superintendent shall develop a separate process to adjust the allocation of the districts. [2009 c 548 s 309.]

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

RCW 28A.160.192 Student transportation allocation—Distribution formula. (1) The superintendent of public instruction shall phase-in the implementation of the distribution formula under this chapter for

allocating state funds to school districts for the transportation of students to and from school. The phase-in shall begin no later than the 2011-2013 biennium and be fully implemented by the 2013-2015 biennium.

(a) The formula must be developed and revised on an ongoing basis using the major cost factors in student transportation, including basic and special student loads, school district land area, average distance to school, roadway miles, and number of locations served. Factors must include all those site characteristics that are statistically significant after analysis of the data required by the revised reporting process.

(b) The formula must allocate funds to school districts based on the average predicted costs of transporting students to and from school, using a regression analysis. Only factors that are statistically significant shall be used in the regression analysis. Employee compensation costs included in the allowable transportation expenditures used for the purpose of establishing each school district's independent variable in the regression analysis shall be limited to the base salary or hourly wage rates, fringe benefit rates, and applicable health care rates provided in the omnibus appropriations act.

(2) During the phase-in period, funding provided to school districts for student transportation operations shall be distributed on the following basis:

(a) Annually, each school district shall receive the lesser of the previous school year's pupil transportation operations allocation, or the total of allowable pupil transportation expenditures identified on the previous school year's final expenditure report to the state plus district indirect expenses using the federal restricted indirect rate as calculated in the district annual financial report;

(b) Annually, the amount identified in (a) of this subsection shall be adjusted for any budgeted increases provided in the omnibus appropriations act for salaries or fringe benefits;

(c) Annually, any funds appropriated by the legislature in excess of the maintenance level funding amount for student transportation shall be distributed among school districts on a prorated basis using the difference between the amount identified in (a) adjusted by (b) of this subsection and the amount determined under the formula in RCW 28A.160.180; and

(d) Allocations provided to recognize the cost of depreciation to districts contracting with private carriers for student transportation shall be deducted from the allowable transportation expenditures in

(a) of this subsection. [2011 1st sp.s. c 27 s 3; 2010 c 236 s 8; 2009 c 548 s 311.]

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 27 ss 1-3: See note following RCW 28A.150.220.

Effective date—2010 c 236 ss 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 13, and 14: See note following RCW 28A.150.260.

Effective date—2009 c 548 ss 304-311: See note following RCW 28A.160.150.

Intent—2009 c 548: See RCW 28A.150.1981.

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.

RCW 28A.160.193 Transportation alternate funding grant program.

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, a transportation alternate funding grant program is created.

(2) As part of the award process for the grants, the superintendent of public instruction must include a review of the school district's efficiency rating, key performance indicators, and local school district characteristics such as unique geographic constraints, low enrollment, geographic density of students, the percentage of students served under the McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act from outside the district, or whether the district is a nonhigh district. [2018 c 266 s 103.]

RCW 28A.160.195 Vehicle acquisition—School bus categories—Competitive specifications—Purchase—Reimbursement—Rules. (Effective until September 1, 2026.)

(1) The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the regional transportation coordinators of the educational service districts, shall establish a minimum number of school bus categories considering the capacity and type of vehicles required by school districts in Washington. The superintendent, in consultation with the regional transportation coordinators of the educational service districts, shall establish competitive specifications for each category of school bus. The categories shall be developed to produce minimum long-range operating costs, including costs of equipment and all costs in operating the vehicles. The competitive specifications shall meet federal motor vehicle safety standards, minimum state specifications as established by rule by the superintendent, and supported options as determined by the superintendent in consultation with the regional transportation coordinators of the educational service districts. The superintendent may solicit and accept price quotes for a rear-engine category school bus that shall be reimbursed at the price of the corresponding front engine category.

(2) After establishing school bus categories and competitive specifications, the superintendent of public instruction shall solicit competitive price quotes for base buses from school bus dealers to be in effect for one year and shall establish a list of all accepted price quotes in each category obtained under this subsection. The superintendent shall also solicit price quotes for optional features and equipment.

(3)(a) The superintendent shall base the level of reimbursement to school districts and educational service districts for school buses on the lowest quote for the base bus in each category. School districts and educational service districts shall be reimbursed for buses purchased only through a lowest-price competitive bid process conducted under RCW 28A.335.190 or through the state bid process established by this section.

(b) Once the total cost of ownership of zero emission school buses is at or below the total cost of ownership of diesel school buses, as determined under the formulas adopted by rule pursuant to

RCW 28A.160.260, school districts may only receive reimbursement for the purchase of zero emission school buses, unless the district has been granted an exception under RCW 28A.160.260(3). For the purposes of this subsection, "zero emission school bus" means a school bus that produces zero exhaust emission of any air pollutant and any greenhouse gas other than water vapor.

(4) Notwithstanding RCW 28A.335.190, school districts and educational service districts may purchase at the quoted price directly from any dealer who is on the list established under subsection (2) of this section. School districts and educational service districts may make their own selections for school buses, but shall be reimbursed at the rates determined under subsection (3) of this section and RCW 28A.160.200. District-selected options shall not be reimbursed by the state.

(5) This section does not prohibit school districts or educational service districts from conducting their own competitive bid process.

(6) The superintendent of public instruction may adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW to implement this section. [2024 c 345 s 4; 2005 c 492 s 1; 2004 c 276 s 904; 1995 1st sp.s. c 10 s 1.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 345: See note following RCW 70A.15.4200.

Severability—Effective date—2004 c 276: See notes following RCW 43.330.167.

Effective dates—1995 1st sp.s. c 10 ss 1 and 2: "(1) Section 1 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [June 14, 1995].

(2) Section 2 of this act shall take effect September 1, 1995." [1995 1st sp.s. c 10 s 5.]

RCW 28A.160.195 Vehicle acquisition—Student transportation vehicle categories—Competitive specifications—Purchase—Reimbursement—Rules. (Effective September 1, 2026.) (1) The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the regional transportation coordinators of the educational service districts, shall establish a minimum number of student transportation vehicle categories considering the capacity and type of vehicles required by school districts in Washington. The superintendent, in consultation with the regional transportation coordinators of the educational service districts, shall establish competitive specifications for each category of vehicle. The categories shall be developed to produce minimum long-range operating costs, including costs of equipment and all costs in operating the vehicles. The competitive specifications shall meet federal motor vehicle safety standards, minimum state specifications as established by rule by the superintendent, and supported options as determined by the superintendent in consultation with the regional transportation coordinators of the educational service districts. The superintendent may solicit and accept price quotes for a rear-engine category school bus that shall be reimbursed at the price of the corresponding front engine category.

(2) After establishing vehicle categories and competitive specifications, the superintendent of public instruction shall solicit competitive price quotes for base vehicles from dealers to be in effect for one year and shall establish a list of all accepted price quotes in each category obtained under this subsection. The superintendent shall also solicit price quotes for optional features and equipment.

(3)(a) The superintendent shall base the level of reimbursement to school districts and educational service districts for vehicles on the lowest quote for the base vehicle in each category. School districts and educational service districts shall be reimbursed for vehicles purchased only through a lowest-price competitive bid process conducted under RCW 28A.335.190 or through the state bid process established by this section.

(b) Once the total cost of ownership of zero emission school buses is at or below the total cost of ownership of diesel school buses, as determined under the formulas adopted by rule pursuant to RCW 28A.160.260, school districts may only receive reimbursement for the purchase of zero emission school buses, unless the district has been granted an exception under RCW 28A.160.260(3). For the purposes of this subsection, "zero emission school bus" means a school bus that produces zero exhaust emission of any air pollutant and any greenhouse gas other than water vapor. This subsection (3)(b) applies to other vehicles used in lieu of school buses.

(4) Notwithstanding RCW 28A.335.190, school districts and educational service districts may purchase at the quoted price directly from any dealer who is on the list established under subsection (2) of this section. School districts and educational service districts may make their own selections for vehicles, but shall be reimbursed at the rates determined under subsection (3) of this section and RCW 28A.160.200. District-selected options shall not be reimbursed by the state.

(5) This section does not prohibit school districts or educational service districts from conducting their own competitive bid process.

(6) As used in this section, "student transportation vehicle" and "vehicle" mean a school bus or other vehicle used in lieu of a school bus.

(7) The superintendent of public instruction may adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW to implement this section. [2025 c 372 s 4; 2024 c 345 s 4; 2005 c 492 s 1; 2004 c 276 s 904; 1995 1st sp.s. c 10 s 1.]

Effective date—2025 c 372 ss 2-4: See note following RCW 28A.160.170.

Findings—Intent—2024 c 345: See note following RCW 70A.15.4200.

Severability—Effective date—2004 c 276: See notes following RCW 43.330.167.

Effective dates—1995 1st sp.s. c 10 ss 1 and 2: "(1) Section 1 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [June 14, 1995]."

(2) Section 2 of this act shall take effect September 1, 1995."
[1995 1st sp.s. c 10 s 5.]

RCW 28A.160.200 Vehicle acquisition—Reimbursement schedule—Maintenance and operation—Depreciation schedule. (1) The superintendent shall develop a reimbursement schedule to pay districts for the cost of student transportation vehicles purchased after September 1, 1982. While it is the responsibility of each district to select and pay for each student transportation vehicle purchased by the district, each district shall be paid a sum based on the category of vehicle, anticipated lifetime of vehicles of this category, and state reimbursement rate for the category plus inflation as recognized by the reimbursement schedule established in this section as set by the superintendent. Categories and reimbursement rates of vehicles shall be those established under RCW 28A.160.195. The accumulated value of the payments and the potential investment return thereon shall be designed to be equal to the replacement cost of the vehicle less its salvage value at the end of its anticipated lifetime. The superintendent shall revise at least annually the reimbursement payments based on the current and anticipated future cost of comparable categories of transportation equipment. Reimbursements to school districts for approved transportation equipment shall be placed in a separate transportation vehicle fund established for each school district under RCW 28A.160.130. However, educational service districts providing student transportation services pursuant to RCW 28A.310.180(4) and receiving moneys generated pursuant to this section shall establish and maintain a separate transportation vehicle account in the educational service district's general expense fund for the purposes and subject to the conditions under RCW 28A.160.130 and 28A.320.300.

(2) To the extent possible, districts shall operate vehicles acquired under this section not less than the number of years or useful lifetime now, or hereafter, assigned to the category of vehicles by the superintendent. School districts shall properly maintain the transportation equipment acquired under the provisions of this section, in accordance with rules established by the office of the superintendent of public instruction. If a district fails to follow generally accepted standards of maintenance and operation, the superintendent of public instruction shall penalize the district by deducting from future reimbursements under this section an amount equal to the original cost of the vehicle multiplied by the fraction of the useful lifetime or miles the vehicle failed to operate.

(3) The superintendent shall annually develop a depreciation schedule to recognize the cost of depreciation to districts contracting with private carriers for student transportation. Payments on this schedule shall be a straight line depreciation based on the original cost of the appropriate category of vehicle. [1995 1st sp.s. c 10 s 2; 1990 c 33 s 146; 1987 c 508 s 4; 1981 c 265 s 6. Formerly RCW 28A.41.540.]

Effective dates—1995 1st sp.s. c 10 ss 1 and 2: See note following RCW 28A.160.195.

Effective date—Severability—1981 c 265: See notes following RCW 28A.160.150.

Transportation vehicle fund—Deposits in—Use—Rules for establishment and use: RCW 28A.160.130.

RCW 28A.160.205 School bus replacement incentive program—Rules.

(1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall implement a school bus replacement incentive program. As part of the program, the office shall fund up to ten percent of the cost of a new 2007 or later model year school bus that meets the 2007 federal motor vehicle emission control standards and is purchased by a school district by no later than June 30, 2009, provided that the new bus is replacing a 1994 or older school bus in the school district's fleet. Replacement of the oldest buses must be given highest priority.

(2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall ensure that buses being replaced through this program are surplused under RCW 28A.335.180. As part of the surplus process, school districts must provide written documentation to the office of the superintendent of public instruction demonstrating that buses being replaced are scrapped and not purchased for road use. The documentation must include bus make, model, year, vehicle identification number, engine make, engine serial number, and salvage yard receipts; and must demonstrate that the engine and body of the bus being replaced has been rendered unusable.

(3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may adopt any rules necessary for the implementation of chapter 348, Laws of 2007. [2007 c 348 s 101.]

Findings—2007 c 348: See RCW 43.325.005.

RCW 28A.160.210 School bus drivers—Training and qualifications—Rules.

(1) In addition to other powers and duties, the superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules governing the training and qualifications of school bus drivers. Such rules shall be designed to insure that persons will not be employed to operate school buses unless they possess such physical health and driving skills as are necessary to safely operate school buses: PROVIDED, That such rules shall insure that school bus drivers are provided a due process hearing before any certification required by such rules is canceled: PROVIDED FURTHER, That such rules shall not conflict with the authority of the department of licensing to license school bus drivers in accordance with chapter 46.25 RCW. The superintendent of public instruction may obtain a copy of the driving record, as maintained by the department of licensing, for consideration when evaluating a school bus driver's driving skills.

(2) By no later than September 1, 2026, the superintendent of public instruction shall develop rules for drivers transporting students in a Washington state patrol-inspected school vehicle other than a school bus. A driver that exclusively transports students in such a vehicle must have the appropriate driver's license for the vehicle, and may not be required to hold a commercial driver's license. [2025 c 372 s 5; 2006 c 263 s 906; 1989 c 178 s 20; 1981 c 200 s 1; 1979 c 158 s 89; 1969 ex.s. c 153 s 4. Formerly RCW 28A.04.131.]

Findings—Purpose—Part headings not law—2006 c 263: See notes following RCW 28A.150.230.

Effective dates—1989 c 178: See RCW 46.25.901.

RCW 28A.160.225 Condensed compliance reports—Second-class districts. Any compliance reporting requirements as a result of laws in this chapter that apply to second-class districts may be submitted in accordance with RCW 28A.330.250. [2011 c 45 s 5.]

Conflict with federal requirements—2011 c 45: See note following RCW 28A.330.250.

RCW 28A.160.230 Maintenance and repair of school buses by fire protection districts—Authorized. The maintenance and repair of school buses may be provided by a fire protection district pursuant to RCW 52.12.031(1). [2019 c 402 s 2.]

RCW 28A.160.240 Transportation of infants. (1) By July 1, 2021, at the request of an eligible student, a school district:

(a) May allow the student to transport his or her infant on a school bus or other student transportation vehicle provided by the district. The infant must be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system as defined in the federal motor vehicle safety standards in 49 C.F.R. Sec. 571.213;

(b) Must, in cases where a district denies a student's request to transport his or her infant by school bus, authorize other arrangements for individual transportation in accordance with RCW 28A.160.030.

(2) For the purposes of this section, "eligible student" has the same meaning as in RCW 28A.160.160. [2020 c 339 s 2.]

RCW 28A.160.250 Supplemental transportation allocation—Health care and pension benefits. (1) A school district that experiences an increase in costs to a pupil transportation services contract as compared to prior year contract costs as a result of the provisions in RCW 28A.160.140 is eligible for supplemental transportation allocations as described in this section.

(2) Beginning September 1, 2024, school districts that provide pupil transportation through a contract with a nongovernmental entity under RCW 28A.160.140 must annually provide the office of the superintendent of public instruction with the following information:

(a) A breakdown of the total contract cost increase, including a detailed explanation of the increase by expenditure type demonstrating dollar equivalency as required in RCW 28A.160.140(2)(a)(i) and percentage equivalency as required in RCW 28A.160.140(2)(a)(ii), as defined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction, and amount;

(b) A breakdown of cost from the contractor that shows the cost to provide health care and pension benefits to employees prior to June 6, 2024, and the cost to provide health care and pension benefits to

employees after the implementation of benefits as described in RCW 28A.160.140;

(c) The amount of funding received through transportation allocations under RCW 28A.160.150 through 28A.160.192 prior to the implementation of school employee benefits under chapter 41.05 RCW and the amount of funding received through the same transportation allocations for the period immediately following the implementation of school employee benefits under chapter 41.05 RCW, to determine the amount of funding for health care that is already being included in allocations.

(3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may suspend the reporting requirements under subsection (2) of this section on or after September 1, 2027, for districts that do not request supplemental transportation allocations under this section.

(4) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must reimburse a school district for the increased cost that is directly attributable to increased benefits as required under chapter 313, Laws of 2024, using the following formula: The total contract cost increase, less any amounts not attributable to benefits required under RCW 28A.160.140, less the amount the allocation was increased based on the actual cost increase through the transportation funding formula. [2024 c 313 s 3.]

Intent—2024 c 313: See note following RCW 28A.160.140.

RCW 28A.160.260 Zero emission school buses—Cost of ownership formula—Qualified reimbursement—Exceptions. (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the department of ecology, must develop preliminary guidance for school districts regarding the formula factors used to calculate the total cost of ownership for zero emission school buses and diesel school buses. After considering feedback to the preliminary guidance, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the department of ecology, must adopt rules to establish the formulas. Such formulas must, at a minimum, address the initial cost of the bus at the time of purchase, the cost of maintenance, the cost of fueling and charging, and the cost of replacing zero emission school bus batteries, if applicable.

(2)(a) Once the total cost of ownership of zero emission school buses is at or below the total cost of ownership of diesel school buses, as determined by the formulas in subsection (1) of this section, school districts may only receive reimbursement under RCW 28A.160.195 and 28A.160.200 for the purchase of zero emission school buses.

(b) The requirements of this subsection do not prohibit the use of externally vented fuel-operated passenger heaters from November 15th through March 15th annually until other viable alternatives become available.

(3)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must make exceptions to the requirement under subsection (2) of this section in the following circumstances:

(i) The reimbursement is for a diesel school bus that was purchased prior to the total cost of ownership determination;

(ii) The school district has bus route mileage needs that cannot be met by the average daily mileage achieved under actual use conditions in Washington for zero emission school buses;

(iii) The school district has other unique needs that may not be met by the technological capabilities of zero emission school buses; or

(iv) The school district does not have, or have access to, the appropriate charging infrastructure to support the use of zero emission school buses. If a school district qualifies under this exception it must submit documentation indicating it has applied for grant funding to install charging infrastructure under available federal grant programs or the zero emission school bus grant program established under RCW 70A.15.4200, or documentation from a public utility district or utility company indicating the school district does not have enough electric capacity to support the appropriate charging infrastructure.

(b) Exceptions granted by the superintendent of public instruction under (a)(ii) through (iv) of this subsection may not exceed five years. A school district may apply to renew an exception if the need for such an exception still exists after the initial exception has expired.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "zero emission school bus" means a school bus that produces zero exhaust emission of any air pollutant and any greenhouse gas other than water vapor. [2024 c 345 s 3.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 345: See note following RCW 70A.15.4200.