

Charter School Transportation 101:

Providing Transportation to Charter Schools



Florida Charter School Conference

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Presented by Ronnie H. McCallister

Overview

- Florida statistics
- Transportation provisions (s.1002.33)
- Other applicable statutes
- Transportation service options
- Transportation safety requirements
- Safety record of school buses, other modes
- Eligibility of students for transportation



Overview

- Estimating cost of transportation
- Estimating state reimbursement
- Claiming state reimbursement
- Parent reimbursement
- Auditing and compliance monitoring
- Additional resources and contacts



Resources and Contacts



Charter Schools Transportation Resource Guide

Revised November 2006

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Florida's Numbers (2008-09)

- One million students transported (39.10 % of total enrollment)
- 15,496 buses in daily service
- 327,878 school bus stops
- 295 million total miles
- \$460 million state reimbursement (FEFP)
- \$1 billion total expenditures
- 43% state reimbursement (state average)



Transportation Provisions (s.1002.33)

- Transportation of charter school students shall be provided by the charter school **consistent with the requirements of subpart 1.e. of chapter 1006.** The governing body of the charter school may provide transportation through an agreement or contract with the district school board, a private provider, or parents. The charter school and the sponsor shall cooperate in making arrangements that ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students residing within a reasonable distance of the charter school as determined in its charter.



Sections of Law and Rule

- Sections 1006.21-.27, FS- Student Transportation
- Chapter 6A-3, FAC- Student Transportation
- Section 1012.32 and 1012.465, FS- Qualifications of Personnel (Criminal Background Checks)
- Section 1012.45, FS- School Bus Driver Training, Physicals, and Qualifications



Other Sections of Law and Rule

- Section 1011.68, FS- Funds for Student Transportation
- Section 316.172, FS-Traffic to Stop for School Bus
- Section 316.183, FS-Unlawful Speed (including School Buses)
- Section 316.6145, FS-School Buses; Safety Belts or Other Restraint Systems Required



CAUTION

**THIS SIGN HAS
SHARP EDGES**

DO NOT TOUCH THE EDGES OF THIS SIGN



ALSO, THE BRIDGE IS OUT AHEAD



Transportation Service Options

- Charter school owns and operates school buses
- School district provides school buses
- Private contractors provide school buses
- School or district provides certain smaller vehicles for isolated or disabled students
- Public transit
- Parent owned vehicles for isolated or disabled students



Transportation Safety Requirements

(Chapter 1006, F.S. and Chapter 6A-3, FAC)

- Transportation required beyond two mile limit; maximum 1.5 miles to bus stop
- Routes must be designated; stops established in most reasonably safe locations
- School buses required, not full size vans
- Buses meeting FL specs, inspected each 30 school days



School Bus Requirements

- School buses must:
 - meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards
 - meet Florida School Bus Specifications
 - be inspected at least each 30 school days by an inspector certified by the Department
 - meet inspection pass/fail criteria per Florida School Bus Safety Inspection Manual
 - be removed from service until deficiencies are **corrected**



Older Version Bus



Safety of Buses and Other Modes

- School buses much safer than other modes:
 - fatality rate of buses 0.2 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
 - cars 1.5 fatalities per 100 million VMT
 - light trucks/vans 1.3 fatalities per 100 million VMT

Data source: NHTSA



Safety of Buses vs. Other Modes

- **Per National Academy of Sciences**, over 800 school-aged children die each year because they walk, bicycle or ride to-and-from school in a passenger motor vehicle with a parent or friend -- a stark contrast to the six school bus passenger fatalities per year nationwide
- **Conclusion: Students are significantly safer in school buses than walking, bicycling, or riding/driving in private vehicles**



School Bus Occupant Protection

- All Florida buses have “compartmentalization” (FMVSS 222)
- NHTSA proposing rules that encourage states to require 3-point lap/shoulder belts
- 2001 and later Florida buses have lap belts to comply with s.316.6145, FS
- Future buses likely to have three-point lap/shoulder restraints; NHTSA has questioned value of lap belts



Standard Type C Bus



School Bus Occupant Protection



Transportation Safety Requirements

- School bus operators (drivers) must have:
 - 40 hours preservice training
 - 8 hours inservice annually
 - criminal background checks
 - drug and alcohol testing
 - annual physical examination
 - dexterity exam
 - Commercial Driver License
 - driving history checks



Transportation Safety Requirements

- Safety training/procedures required by schools for school bus riders:
 - emergency evacuation drills first six weeks of each semester; FAA-style safety and evac instructions at beginning of each field/activity trip
 - transported students must receive instruction in safe riding practices during first six weeks of 1st semester
 - schools must ensure safety of school bus and parent loading/unloading areas and bicyclists/pedestrians



Eligibility for Transportation

- All Pre-K to 12 students ≥ 2 miles walking distance
- Students with disabilities as specified in IEP and consistent with Transportation General Instructions
- All teen parent program participants
- Elementary grade hazardous walking



Reasonable Distance Provision

- Section 1002.33: “The charter school and the sponsor shall cooperate in making arrangements that ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students residing within a **reasonable distance** of the charter school as determined in its charter.”
- “Reasonable distance” can be determined based on comparable local practice for similar public schools



Estimating Transportation Cost

- Determine local school district transportation cost per student
- Determine **charter school** transportation cost per student (may be higher)
- Cost will depend on numerous variables that should be discussed/included prior to signing sponsor agreement



Florida Department of Education
School Business Services and
Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services

Student Transportation General Instructions 2010-2011



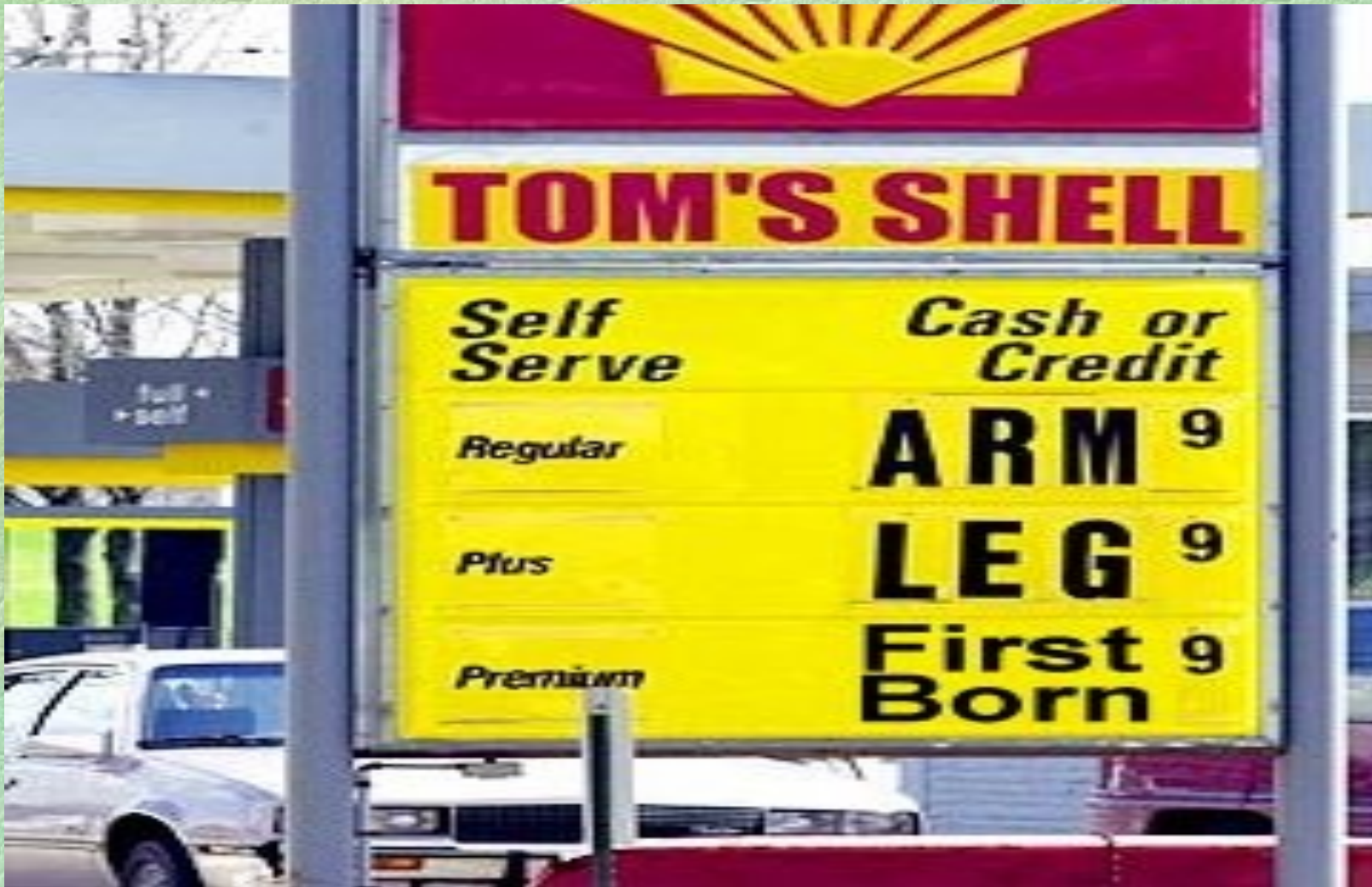
Florida Department of Education
Eric J. Smith, Commissioner



Estimating Transportation Cost

- Variables affecting cost include:
 - Lead time to school opening (buses, drivers)
 - Location of school
 - Location of students
 - Opening/closing (bell) times of school
 - Reasonable distance boundary established
 - Special needs of students
 - Mix of grade levels on buses
 - Compatibility with existing routes





Estimating State Reimbursement

- Students eligible for transportation funding will generate district's formula-calculated annual per student reimbursement
- Same “per student” reimbursement rate, regardless of mode (e.g., parent car, public transit, school bus)
- State reimbursement rate rarely covers cost
- Estimating worksheet available from DOE



Claiming State Reimbursement

- Riders (bus “enrollment”) surveyed in July, October, February, June (Surveys 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Students must be eligible for transportation funding (including parent-transported if isolated or disabled)
- Auditor General requires data collection worksheets, other documentation
- Funding claims must be submitted by districts and funding is distributed to them



Funding

- Starts with annual Legislative Appropriation
- Distributed per Transportation Funding Formula (Section 1011.68, FS)
- Claimed via Automated Reporting System
- Recalculated throughout year based as data is updated (from new surveys, district amendments, lately incl. reduced state funds)



AUDITING GUIDELINES

- Auditor General audit cycle every three years
- FDOE compliance monitoring every four years



FDOE Compliance Monitoring

- FDOE monitors districts each four years
- Self-evaluation completed before on-site visits
- Includes monitoring of core safety requirements
- Districts required to monitor charter schools and include in self-eval sample sent to FDOE; on-site monitoring includes charters



AUDITING GUIDELINES

- **6A-1.04513 Maintaining Auditable FTE Records.**

Each school district shall maintain documentation adequate to support the full-time equivalent student membership of the district. Such documentation shall include, but is not limited to, all student membership survey forms, all student attendance records, and all student schedule records. These records shall be maintained in auditable condition, shall be made available to the Department for auditing, and shall be kept for a period of three (3) years or until the completion of audit by the Department, whichever period is longer.



AUDITING GUIDELINES

- Source Documents
 - Bus driver reports of student counts during survey weeks
 - Bus driver signatures on survey reports
 - Checkerboard form is recommended to record transported students



AUDITING GUIDELINES

- Attestation
 - Supervisor / Coordinator verifies/attests by signing after driver signs driver survey reports
 - The AG will not look favorably at reports that have erasures, strikethrough words or unauthorized changes to source documents

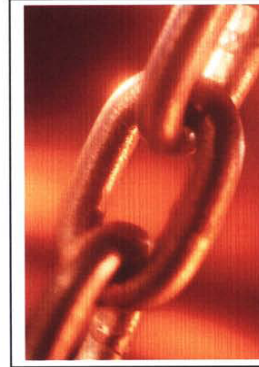


The **Q**uality
Link

Florida School District Transportation Profiles

Volume 19

May 2010



School Year
2008-2009



Resources and Contacts

- Charter Schools Transportation Guide
- The Quality Link: Florida School District Transportation Profiles
- Florida School Bus Safety Inspection Manual
- Florida School Bus Specifications
- Florida Basic School Bus Operator Curriculum



Resources and Contacts

- Student Transportation Survey General Instructions
- <http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/fteinstr.asp>
- <http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/>
- www.fldoe.org/transportation
- www.FAPTFlorida.org
- FDOE School Transportation:
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QUESTIONS???

