
Education Committee

HB 2336

Brief Description: Changing the state formula for funding allocations for pupil transportation.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton, Haler, Hasegawa, B. Sullivan, Sells, Cox, Dunshee, Chase, Miloscia, P. Sullivan, Haigh, Green, Flannigan, Simpson, Moeller, Kilmer, McCoy, Sump, Orcutt, Wallace, Roberts, Holmquist and Woods.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the limitation that state pupil transportation funds for students who live within one mile of school are only provided for transportation services for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- Requires that, beginning in 2007-08, the standard student mile for determining the transportation allocation must be calculated using technology that enables the allocation to match actual distances.

Hearing Date: 1/25/06

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

The 2005-07 biennial budget appropriates \$414 million for the operating costs of pupil transportation. State funds for transportation operating costs are provided based on a standard student mile allocation rate for each eligible student.

Standard Student Mile. The standard student mile is measured as the straight-line distance between bus route stops and destinations. The allocation rate, however, can be adjusted to provide a differential for such factors as distance, passenger load, students with disabilities, or the need for special types of vehicles. The net result of these factors is a weighted student mile that is incorporated into state funding formulas for pupil transportation. Despite the inclusion of the differential for distance, the weighted student mile does not always match actual distances traveled by a school bus. One-way streets, geographic obstacles, or winding roads may make actual distances traveled greater than a straight-line distance.

Eligible Student. State funds are provided for all students served by a district's transportation program who live more than one radius mile from school. Funding for students who live less than a mile from school is only provided for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. This funding

is provided for transportation services that can include crossing guards or matching funds for roadway improvements to address hazardous walking conditions in addition to bus services.

The 2005-07 biennial budget directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to study the current pupil transportation funding formula and develop alternative formulas. The JLARC study is expected to be completed in September of 2006.

Summary of Bill:

The limitation is removed that provides state funds for pupil transportation for students living within one radius mile from school only for transportation services for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The definition of transportation services for these students is also repealed.

Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, the standard student mile for determining the transportation allocation must be calculated for each school district using a Global Positioning System or other similar technology that enables an allocation that matches actual transportation distances. The differential for "distance" in calculating the standard student mile allocation rate is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.