

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2333

Title: *An act relating to student transportation.*

Brief Description: *Requiring school districts to allow students who do not have disabilities to use student transportation designed or equipped to transport children with disabilities.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Hickel, Johnson and B. Thomas.*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: *January 23, 1998.*

Bill Analysis Prepared by: *Suz Morrissey (786-7111).*

Background: *By law, the operation of each school district's student transportation program is the responsibility of the local school board. The board may determine which students will be transported and what routes will be used. State funds for transportation must be spent for that purpose but the district may decide how to spend the funds.*

The Superintendent of Public Instruction determines the allocation system for state pupil transportation funds. SPI has adopted rules to create a uniform allocation system. In the allocation system, transportation for basic education students is funded at a different rate than transportation for students with certain disabilities. According to personnel at SPI, a school district will receive an average of \$295 annually for a basic education student. The district will receive an average of \$2000 for an eligible special education student. SPI has adopted workload reporting requirements to monitor the use of the state transportation funds and to ensure that the funds are spent for their intended purpose. According to the agency, certain requirements were intended to prevent school districts from over-reporting special transportation students due to the much higher funding rate provided for those students. The requirements discourage districts from transporting basic education and special education students on the same bus.

The agency has reported that it intends to change the reporting instructions at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year. The change will allow the districts to transport basic education and special education students on the same bus while protecting the integrity of the special funding.

Summary of Bill: School districts must allow children without disabilities to ride school buses and other forms of student transportation designed and equipped to transport children with disabilities. The districts may give seating priority to children with disabilities.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not requested.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*