

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 5114

C 139 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing student transportation funding.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rockefeller, Parlette, Eide, Weinstein, Fairley, Keiser, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Murray, McAuliffe, Rasmussen, Kauffman, Kilmer, Franklin and Holmquist).

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The current student transportation funding formula provides allocations to districts based on the number of eligible students transported and the weighted radius distances between route stops and schools. Districts receive a state allocation for transportation to and from home and school beyond one radius mile. Additionally, the formula includes an allocation for kindergarten through fifth grade students living within one mile of their school. The state does not provide funding for field trips, extracurricular trips, extended school day take-home trips, or after school activity take-home trips.

The standard student mile is measured as the straight-line distance between bus route stops and school. However, the allocation rate 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 state funding formula for student transportation that incorporates a weighted student mile.

Summary: The Office of Financial Management (OFM), in consultation with Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC), will contract for the development of two options for a student transportation funding methodology that reflects actual costs and builds incentives for an efficient use of resources, and provides school districts with a formula for predictable levels of funding. In developing the two options, OFM and the contractor will consult with the OSPI, regional transportation coordinators, school business managers, school administrators, and classified staff. OFM will report to the education and fiscal committees of the Legislature with a detailed description of options and legislation that is required to implement options and any accompanying legislation to implement the funding methodology by December 1, 2008. The OFM report on the new funding formula is required to include an evaluation of the feasibility of having some or the entire pupil transportation program supported by the transportation budget, including utilizing local transit agencies. Starting with the 2007-08 school year, school districts are required to account for "to and from" spending costs separately from other pupil transportation spending.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 45 3
House 68 30

Effective: July 22, 2007
September 1, 2007 (Section 1)