

FINAL BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5128

C 234 L 21
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning student transportation funding during a local, state, or national emergency.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Wilson, C., Conway, Dhingra, Hunt, Keiser, Lovelett, Nguyen and Saldaña).

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

Background: Student Transportation. The state's program of basic education includes transportation for some students to and from school, including transportation to learning centers and special education services. Students are eligible for transportation if they live beyond a one-mile walk area from the school or have a qualifying disability.

Transportation Allocations. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) calculates each school district's transportation allocation using the Student Transportation Allocation Reporting System (STARS). The STARS model uses a regression analysis of student ridership numbers and district characteristics to calculate an allocation amount, which is adjusted for certain qualifying factors. This STARS allocation amount is then compared to the district's transportation expenditures from the prior year. The school district receives the lesser of the two calculated amounts, plus salary and benefit allocations as appropriated by the Legislature.

OSPI must notify districts of their student transportation allocation before January 15th. Allocation payments made from September through January may be based on the prior school year's ridership report.

Governor Proclamation. On August 26, 2020, Governor Inslee signed Proclamation 20-70, which authorized school districts to spend transportation allocations on an expanded list of permissible activities. These activities included delivering learning materials, meals, and

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technology solutions to students in their remote learning locations, as well as transporting students to and from learning centers or other agencies where educational and support services are provided. School districts must track and document the specific time and use of drivers and buses to deliver these tools and services.

Summary: Expanded Transportation Services. If a charter school, state-tribal compact school, or school district is providing full remote or partial remote instruction due to a local, state, or national emergency that causes a substantial disruption to full in-person instruction, the school or school district may use student transportation allocations to provide expanded services to students, regardless of whether those students would qualify as eligible students. The allowable expanded services include:

- delivery of educational services necessary to provide students with the opportunity to equitably access educational services during the period of remote instruction, including the transportation of materials, hardware, and other supports that assist students in accessing remote instruction, Internet connectivity, or the curriculum;
- delivery of meals to students; and
- providing for the transportation of students to and from learning centers or other agencies where educational and support services are being provided during remote instruction, including providing payment to allow students to use public transit to access such services.

Schools and districts must track expanded service expenditures by a separate accounting code and report the data to OSPI. Schools and districts are not precluded from using transportation allocations for those services already permitted by law, as well as fixed transportation costs such as school bus maintenance and basic administrative, regulatory, safety, and operational expenses.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	35	14	
House	97	0	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur)
House	96	1	(House receded/amended)
Senate	49	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: May 10, 2021