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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6031**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Braun, Dozier, Kuderer, Rivers, and Schoesler)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to modifying the student transportation  
2 allocation to accommodate multiple vehicle types for transporting  
3 students; and amending RCW 28A.160.150, 28A.160.170, 28A.160.180, and  
4 28A.160.195.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.160.150 and 2009 c 548 s 304 are each amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 Funds allocated for transportation costs, except for funds  
9 provided for transportation and transportation services to and from  
10 school shall be in addition to the basic education allocation. The  
11 distribution formula developed in RCW 28A.160.150 through 28A.160.180  
12 shall be for allocation purposes only and shall not be construed as  
13 mandating specific levels of pupil transportation services by local  
14 districts nor the type of vehicle to be used for pupil  
15 transportation. School districts are encouraged to use the vehicle  
16 type deemed by a district to be the safest and most cost-effective  
17 manner of transporting its students, including using school buses and  
18 vans, and may use the student transportation allocation accordingly.  
19 Operating costs as determined under RCW 28A.160.150 through  
20 28A.160.180 shall be funded at (~~one hundred~~) 100 percent or as  
21 close thereto as reasonably possible for transportation of an

1 eligible student to and from school as defined in RCW 28A.160.160(3).  
2 In addition, funding shall be provided for transportation services  
3 for students living within the walk area as determined under RCW  
4 28A.160.160(5).

5 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.160.170 and 2021 c 234 s 3 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 Each district shall submit three times each year to the  
8 superintendent of public instruction during October, February, and  
9 May of each year a report containing the following:

10 (1)(a) The number of eligible students transported to and from  
11 school as provided for in RCW 28A.160.150, along with identification  
12 of stop locations and school locations, and (b) the number of miles  
13 driven per vehicle type for pupil transportation services as  
14 authorized in RCW 28A.160.150 the previous school year; and

15 (2) Other operational data and descriptions as required by the  
16 superintendent to determine allocation requirements for each  
17 district. The superintendent shall require that districts separate  
18 the costs of operating the program for the transportation of eligible  
19 students to and from school as defined by RCW 28A.160.160(3), non-to-  
20 and-from-school pupil transportation costs, and costs to provide  
21 expanded services under RCW 28A.160.185(1) in the annual financial  
22 statement. The cost, quantity, and type of all fuel purchased by  
23 school districts for use in to-and-from-school transportation shall  
24 be included in the annual financial statement.

25 Each district shall submit the information required in this  
26 section on a timely basis as a condition of the continuing receipt of  
27 school transportation moneys.

28 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.160.180 and 2009 c 548 s 307 are each amended to  
29 read as follows:

30 Each district's annual student transportation allocation shall be  
31 determined by the superintendent of public instruction in the  
32 following manner:

33 (1) The superintendent shall annually calculate the  
34 transportation allocation for those services provided for in RCW  
35 28A.160.150, inclusive of all vehicle types used. The allocation  
36 formula may be adjusted to include such additional differential  
37 factors as basic and special passenger counts as defined by the

1 superintendent of public instruction, average distance to school, and  
2 number of locations served.

3 (2) The allocation shall be based on a regression analysis of the  
4 number of basic and special students transported and as many other  
5 site characteristics that are identified as being statistically  
6 significant.

7 (3) The transportation allocation for transporting students in  
8 district-owned passenger cars, as defined in RCW 46.04.382, pursuant  
9 to RCW 28A.160.010 for services provided for in RCW 28A.160.150 if a  
10 school district deems it advisable to use such vehicles after the  
11 school district board of directors has considered the safety of the  
12 students being transported as well as the economy of utilizing a  
13 district-owned passenger car in lieu of a school bus (~~is the private~~  
14 ~~vehicle reimbursement rate in effect on September 1st of each school~~  
15 ~~year~~) must be included in the overall determination of the  
16 district's annual student transportation allocation. Students  
17 transported in district-owned passenger cars must be included in the  
18 corresponding basic or special passenger counts, average distance to  
19 school, and number of locations served.

20 (4) Prior to June 1st of each year the superintendent shall  
21 submit to the office of financial management, and the education and  
22 fiscal committees of the legislature, a report outlining the  
23 methodology and rationale used in determining the statistical  
24 coefficients for each site characteristic used to determine the  
25 allocation for the following year.

26 **Sec. 4.** RCW 28A.160.195 and 2005 c 492 s 1 are each amended to  
27 read as follows:

28 (1) The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation  
29 with the regional transportation coordinators of the educational  
30 service districts, shall establish a minimum number of (~~school bus~~)  
31 student transportation vehicle categories considering the capacity  
32 and type of vehicles required by school districts in Washington. The  
33 superintendent, in consultation with the regional transportation  
34 coordinators of the educational service districts, shall establish  
35 competitive specifications for each category of (~~school bus~~)  
36 vehicle. The categories shall be developed to produce minimum long-  
37 range operating costs, including costs of equipment and all costs in  
38 operating the vehicles. The competitive specifications shall meet  
39 federal motor vehicle safety standards, minimum state specifications

1 as established by rule by the superintendent, and supported options  
2 as determined by the superintendent in consultation with the regional  
3 transportation coordinators of the educational service districts. The  
4 superintendent may solicit and accept price quotes for a rear-engine  
5 category school bus that shall be reimbursed at the price of the  
6 corresponding front engine category.

7 (2) After establishing (~~school bus~~) vehicle categories and  
8 competitive specifications, the superintendent of public instruction  
9 shall solicit competitive price quotes for base (~~buses~~) vehicles  
10 from (~~school bus~~) dealers to be in effect for one year and shall  
11 establish a list of all accepted price quotes in each category  
12 obtained under this subsection. The superintendent shall also solicit  
13 price quotes for optional features and equipment.

14 (3) The superintendent shall base the level of reimbursement to  
15 school districts and educational service districts for (~~school~~  
16 ~~buses~~) vehicles on the lowest quote for the base (~~bus~~) vehicle in  
17 each category. School districts and educational service districts  
18 shall be reimbursed for (~~buses~~) vehicles purchased only through a  
19 lowest-price competitive bid process conducted under RCW 28A.335.190  
20 or through the state bid process established by this section.

21 (4) Notwithstanding RCW 28A.335.190, school districts and  
22 educational service districts may purchase at the quoted price  
23 directly from any dealer who is on the list established under  
24 subsection (2) of this section. School districts and educational  
25 service districts may make their own selections for (~~school buses~~)  
26 vehicles, but shall be reimbursed at the rates determined under  
27 subsection (3) of this section and RCW 28A.160.200. District-selected  
28 options shall not be reimbursed by the state.

29 (5) This section does not prohibit school districts or  
30 educational service districts from conducting their own competitive  
31 bid process.

32 (6) The superintendent of public instruction may adopt rules  
33 under chapter 34.05 RCW to implement this section.

34 (7) As used in this section, "student transportation vehicle" and  
35 "vehicle" mean a school bus or passenger van used in lieu of a school  
36 bus.

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