
SENATE BILL 5187

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Wellman, Dhingra, Conway, Shewmake, Bateman, Salomon, Riccelli, Hasegawa, and Saldaña

Prefiled 01/08/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing adequate and predictable student
2 transportation; amending RCW 28A.160.170; and adding new sections to
3 chapter 28A.160 RCW.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.160
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature recognizes that many school districts do not
8 receive adequate funding for student transportation under the current
9 student transportation allocation reporting system formula. The
10 legislature further finds that the formula does not provide
11 sufficient funding to address the needs of special student
12 populations, including students receiving special education services,
13 students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, and
14 students attending skill centers. Furthermore, the formula does not
15 address the unique transportation challenges faced by rural and high
16 population density urban districts. Therefore, the legislature
17 intends to direct the office of the superintendent of public
18 instruction to gather and disaggregate student transportation data
19 and develop a comprehensive funding model that is inclusive of the
20 diverse needs of students and school districts.

1 (2) The legislature also recognizes the increased costs of
2 transporting students experiencing homelessness due to the heavy
3 reliance on individualized transport systems to get these students to
4 and from school. To address this, the legislature intends to
5 establish a flat rate funding model that allocates per-pupil funding
6 for qualifying students.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.160
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) By June 1, 2028, the office of the superintendent of public
10 instruction must provide an analysis of school district
11 transportation costs and allocations following the 2026-27 school
12 year to the education and fiscal committees of the legislature. This
13 analysis must include the mileage, ridership, and costs for each
14 district, disaggregated by the following student demographic
15 categories: (a) Students requiring special transportation services to
16 access special education services that are documented in a properly
17 formed and approved individualized education program; (b) students
18 requiring special transportation due to requirements of the McKinney
19 Vento homeless assistance act or other federal program; (c) students
20 requiring special transportation due to a foster care placement out
21 of their regular school district boundary; (d) students attending
22 skill centers; and (e) all other students transported to and from
23 school.

24 (2)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction
25 must use the analysis conducted in subsection (1) of this section to
26 develop a transparent, predictable, and comprehensive student
27 transportation funding model that addresses the diverse needs of
28 students and the unique characteristics of school districts.

29 (b) The new funding model must be inclusive of student
30 transportation services for the following demographic groups: (i)
31 Students requiring special transportation services to access special
32 education services that are documented in a properly formed and
33 approved individualized education program; (ii) students requiring
34 special transportation due to requirements of the McKinney Vento
35 homeless assistance act or other federal program; (iii) students
36 requiring special transportation due to a foster care placement out
37 of their regular school district boundary; and (iv) students
38 attending skill centers.

1 (c) The new funding model must include mechanisms to address the
2 unique transportation challenges faced by high population density
3 urban school districts and rural, geographically large districts that
4 have a relatively low number of schools in proportion to the
5 geographic size of the school district.

6 (d) This section is not intended to limit the factors, variables,
7 demographic groups, or district characteristics that may be addressed
8 by the office of the superintendent of public instruction when
9 developing a new student transportation funding model.

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

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

15 (1)(a) The number of eligible students transported to and from
16 school as provided for in RCW 28A.160.150, along with identification
17 of stop locations and school locations(~~(, and)~~);

18 (b) (~~the~~) The number of miles driven for pupil transportation
19 services as authorized in RCW 28A.160.150 the previous school year;
20 and

21 (c) The number of students requiring special transportation due
22 to requirements of the McKinney Vento homeless assistance act.

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

33 Each district shall submit the information required in this
34 section on a timely basis as a condition of the continuing receipt of
35 school transportation moneys.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.160
37 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) In addition to the pupil transportation allocations provided
2 under this chapter, the superintendent of public instruction shall
3 provide additional funds to support the alternative transportation
4 costs associated with ensuring students experiencing homelessness are
5 transported to and from school.

6 (2) Funds allocated to school districts under this section must
7 be equal to \$400 for each student that requires special
8 transportation due to the requirements of the McKinney Vento homeless
9 assistance act, as reported under RCW 28A.160.170, and may only be
10 used to address transportation costs associated with such students.

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