



Council for Lifelong Learning  
**Student Transportation**

**Fact  
Sheet**

September 2001

<p>1. For which students do school districts provide transportation?</p>	<p>Each school district is required to provide transportation for students who meet one of the following criteria established by s. 236.083, F.S.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the student lives two miles or more from school;</li><li>• the student has a disability or is enrolled in a teenage parent program, regardless of distance from school;</li><li>• the student is pregnant or is a student parent or is the child of a student parent, regardless of distance from school;</li><li>• the student is enrolled in a state pre-kindergarten program, regardless of distance from school;</li><li>• the student is transported from one school to another to participate in an instructional program or service for vocational students, dual enrollment students, or students with disabilities; or</li><li>• the student's grade level does not exceed grade six and the student is subjected to hazardous walking conditions according to s. 234.021, F.S.</li></ul> <p>Florida's school districts operate 14,165 school buses on a typical school day, transporting over 972,766 students to and from school and between schools.</p>
<p>2. What funding do school districts receive for transportation?</p>	<p>For the 2001-2002 school year, school districts will receive \$411.3 million in transportation funding from the state (Specific Appropriation 121). Each school district receives a portion of these funds from the Department of Education for the transportation of students in the district who are eligible for transportation. Each school district's allocation is calculated based on the membership of students to be transported according to s. 236.083, F.S., multiplied by the base transportation allocation per student.</p>
<p>3. Can school districts transport students other than those required by law?</p>	<p>School districts may transport students other than those required by law if they so choose. However, school districts will only receive state funding for those students that they are required to transport.</p>
<p>4. Are school buses required to have safety belts?</p>	<p>School buses, purchased after December 31, 2000, used to transport students in grades pre-K through 12 must be equipped with safety belts or with any other restraint system approved by the Federal Government. These safety belts must also meet the standards required under s. 316.614, F.S.</p>

	<p>School buses, purchased prior to December 31, 2000, are not required to have safety belts. Elementary schools are to receive first priority in the allocation of school buses equipped with safety belts. Safety belt requirements only apply to public school buses.</p>
<p>5. What is a hazardous walking condition?</p>	<p>Section 234.021, F.S., identifies a hazardous walking condition as walkways parallel to any road that students must walk along in order to go to and from school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if an area adjacent to the road that is at least four feet wide with a surface for walking that does not require walking on the road does not exist;</li> <li>• if the road is uncurbed with a posted speed limit of 55 miles per hour and does not have an area that is at least three feet from the edge of the road, is at least four feet wide, and has a walking surface that does not require walking on the road.</li> </ul> <p>The following exceptions apply in both of the aforementioned cases for hazardous walking conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the road is located in a residential area that has little or no transient traffic;</li> <li>• the road has a volume of traffic that is less than 180 vehicles per hour, per direction, during the time students walk to and from school; or</li> <li>• the road is located in a residential area and has a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour or less.</li> </ul> <p>Section 234.021, F.S., also identifies a hazardous walking condition as walkways perpendicular to any road that students must cross in order to walk to and from school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the traffic volume exceeds the rate of 360 vehicles per hour, per direction (including all lanes), during the time students walk to and from school and if the crossing site is uncontrolled which means where there is no crossing guard, traffic enforcement officer, or stop sign or other traffic control signal present;</li> <li>• if the traffic volume on such road exceeds 4,000 vehicles per hour through an intersection or other crossing site controlled by a stop sign or other traffic control signal, unless crossing guards or other traffic enforcement officers are also present during the times students walk to and from school.</li> </ul>

<p>6. Who determines whether a perceived hazardous walking condition is an actual hazardous walking condition?</p>	<p>Section 234.021, F.S., requires a perceived hazardous walking condition to be inspected by a representative of the school district, a representative of the county sheriff, a representative of the local safety council (if a safety council exists), and a representative of a local governmental entity where the perceived hazardous walking condition exists. The statute further states that if it is determined that a walking condition is hazardous to students, the findings must be reported to the Department of Education.</p>
<p>7. Are school districts authorized to transport anyone other than students?</p>	<p>School districts are authorized to use school buses for public purposes. Each school district may enter into agreements with the governing body of a county, municipality, state agency, nonprofit corporation, or nonprofit civic association to provide transportation for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the transportation disadvantaged, as defined in s. 427.011, F. S.;</li> <li>• the elderly;</li> <li>• WAGES program participants, as defined in s. 414.0252, F.S.; and</li> <li>• school-age children attending activities sponsored by the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Club, the Y.M.C.A., and other similar nonprofit associations.</li> </ul> <p>Any agreement for the transportation of such individuals must provide for reimbursement to the school district.</p>
<p>8. What is a school safety transportation plan?</p>	<p>Section 234.0215, F.S., requires each school district and the state or local governmental entity having jurisdiction to develop a school safety transportation plan and to include charter schools in its plan. The plan must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the development of a priority list of hazardous walking conditions projects that have been identified but not corrected;</li> <li>• the submission of recommendations and fiscal estimates for (1) any changes to current law for expanding the definition of a student to include students in grades K-12, (2) any changes to current law for identifying hazardous walking conditions for walkways parallel to the road and perpendicular to the road, and (3) any other potential changes to transportation safety;</li> <li>• the number of schools that separate the school bus loading and departure locations from the loading and departure locations for parents, guardians, or others who provide transportation to children; and</li> <li>• the number of schools that provide transportation to</li> </ul>

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	students for whom transportation is not currently required under current law.
9. What are the applicable statutes and rules?	Section 234.01, F.S. -- Transportation Section 234.021, F.S. -- Hazardous Walking Conditions Section 234.0215, F.S. -- School Safety Transportation Plan Section 236.083, F.S. -- Funds for Student Transportation Section 316.614, F.S. -- Safety Belt Usage Section 414.0252, F.S. -- Wages Program Section 427.011, F.S. -- Transportation for Disadvantaged
10. Where can I get additional information?	Florida Department of Education School Transportation Management (850) 488-4405 <a href="http://www.firn.edu/doe/">www.firn.edu/doe/</a>  The Florida House of Representatives Committee on Education Innovation (850) 488-7451