

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

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**Version:** As Introduced

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**Subject:** School Bus Standards

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### Overview

This bill aligns Minnesota's school bus standards with a more recent set of school bus standards adopted by the National Congress on School Transportation. Current standards are based on the 2000 Standards. This bill requires school buses to meet the standards set forth in the document identified as the 2005 edition of the "National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures." By adopting the more recent standards, some of the state statutory exceptions and additions to the old standards can be eliminated or updated.

This bill also clarifies a number of other policies and practices related to the operation of school buses.

#### Section

- 1 Early childhood family education participants.** Clarifies that school districts may transport ECFE and school readiness participants along all school bus routes when space is available.
- 2 Student training.** Clarifies that students taking driver's training instruction classes must receive appropriate information regarding school bus safety.
- 3 District reports.** Allows a school district that has actual, known costs for certain transportation services to use those actual costs instead of allocating costs for purposes of certain school district transportation reports.
- 4 School bus.** Conforms the definition of type A and type C school buses to the new national standards.

## Section

- 5 Cellular phone.** Defines cellular phone.
- 6 Personal cellular phone call prohibition.** Prohibits a school bus driver from using a cell phone for personal reasons when the school bus is in motion.
- 7 Driver seat belt.** Requires that all school buses and Head Start buses must have driver seat belts.
- 8 National Standards adopted.** Conforms the state's school bus equipment standards to the 2005 (instead of 2000) "National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures."
- 9 Applicability.** Makes the new standards apply to school buses manufactured after December 31, 2007.
- 10 Electrical system; battery.** Raises the minimum amperage of school bus generators and alternators to 130 amperes.
- 11 Identification.** Clarifies that after December 31, all type A, B, C, and D buses must display lettering that reads "Unlawful to pass when red lights are flashing."
- 12 Seat and crash barriers.** Requires all school bus seats to have a minimum cushion depth of 15 inches and a seat back height of at least 20 inches above the seating reference point.
- 13 Driver's license classifications, endorsements, exemptions.** Clarifies that a person may drive certain multifunctional school activity buses and certain type A school buses without a school bus endorsement.
- 14 Exception for certain school bus drivers.** Clarifies that a person may drive a multifunctional school activity bus without a school bus endorsement. Clarifies that when a type A school bus is being driven by a driver without a school bus endorsement that the driver may not use the eight-light system. Clarifies that the bus drivers must be trained in the proper use of child safety restraint systems if child safety restraints are used by the passengers on the school bus.
- 15 Training.** Allows a school bus driver to receive at least eight hours of school bus in-service training as an alternative to being assessed for bus driver competencies.
- 16 Rules revised.** Grants the commissioner of public safety the authority to amend and adopt the revisions to the listed rules under the good cause exemption to the state rulemaking process.
- 17 Repealer.** Repeals the following effective January 1, 2008:
- 169.4502, subdivision 15 - oil filters and oil filtration systems;
  - 169.4503, subdivision 17 - number of mirrors on school buses;
  - 169.4503, subdivision 18 - overall width limits on school buses; and
  - 169.4503, subdivision 26 - crossing control arm automatic relays.