

1 **Student Transportation Amendments**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Emily Buss

House Sponsor:

2 **LONG TITLE**

3 **General Description:**

4 This bill amends a student's eligibility for state-supported transportation.

5 **Highlighted Provisions:**

6 This bill:

- 7 ▶ defines terms;
- 8 ▶ amends a student's eligibility for state-supported transportation;
- 9 ▶ requires a school district that receives certain transportation funds to provide
- 10 transportation to certain students;
- 11 ▶ allows a parent to petition a school district;
- 12 ▶ allows the state board to designate certain transportation funds for a specific purpose; and
- 13 ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

14 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

15 None

16 **Other Special Clauses:**

17 This bill provides a special effective date.

18 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

19 AMENDS:

20 **53F-2-403**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 23

21 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

22 Section 1. Section **53F-2-403** is amended to read:

23 **53F-2-403 . Eligibility for state-supported transportation -- Approved bus routes.**

24 (1) As used in this section:

25 (a) "Crosswalk" means the same as that term is defined in Section 41-6a-102.

26 (b) "Hazardous route" means a path between a student's residence and the student's
 27 assigned school that a student must travel to get to school that contains one or more
 28 of the following conditions:

- 31 (i) a highway the student must pass alongside or cross where:
 32 (A) the speed limit is 50 miles per hour or greater; and
 33 (B) there is no separated sidewalk or multi-use path;
 34 (ii) a route where a student must walk on the shoulder of a road because:
 35 (A) of the absence of a sidewalk; or
 36 (B) the sidewalk is not separated from traffic by a curb or green space;
 37 (iii) a route where a student must cross:
 38 (A) a highway with four or more lanes;
 39 (B) a railway crossing without active warning signals; or
 40 (C) an intersection where pedestrian-involved crashes occur at a rate higher than
 41 the average for a similar intersection; or
 42 (iv) a route where a student must pass through an:
 43 (A) active industrial or construction zone;
 44 (B) area with significant commercial trucking traffic; or
 45 (C) area in which natural drainage issues or lack of lighting frequently obstruct the
 46 path.
- 47 (c) "Highway" means the same as that term is defined in Section 72-1-102.
 48 (d) "Middle school" means a public secondary school that provides instruction to a
 49 student between the elementary and high school levels.
 50 (e) "Sidewalk" means the same as that term is defined in Section 41-6a-102.
- 51 [(+) (2)(a) [A] Except as provided in Subsection (2)(b), a student eligible for
 52 state-supported transportation means:
- 53 [(a) (i) except as provided in [~~Subsection (1)(b)] Subsection (2)(a)(ii), a student~~
 54 enrolled in kindergarten through grade 6 who lives at least 1-1/2 miles from
 55 school;
- 56 [(b) (ii) a student enrolled in grade 6, if grade 6 is in a middle school, and grades 7
 57 through 12 who lives at least two miles from school; and
- 58 [(e) (iii) a student enrolled in a special program [~~offered by~~]a school district offers
 59 and [~~approved by~~]the state board approves for trainable, motor,
 60 multiple-disability, or other students with severe disabilities who are incapable of
 61 walking to school or where it is unsafe for students to walk because of their
 62 disabling condition, without reference to distance from school.
- 63 (b) A student is eligible for state-supported transportation regardless of the distance
 64 between the student's residence and the school if:

- 65 (i) the student is enrolled in:
 66 (A) kindergarten through grade 9, if grade 9 is in a middle school; and
 67 (B) a school located in the county of the first, second, or third class as described in
 68 Section 17-60-104; and
 69 (ii) the student's primary walking route to school is a hazardous route.
- 70 (3)(a) A school district that receives the transportation funds described in Subsection
 71 (5)(d) from the state board shall:
 72 (i) provide transportation to and from school to an eligible student under Subsection
 73 (2)(b); and
 74 (ii) respond to a petition described in Subsection (3)(b) within 30 days.
- 75 (b) A parent may petition the school district's school board to designate a specific route
 76 to a school as a hazardous route.
- 77 [~~(2)~~] (4) If a school district implements double sessions as an alternative to new building
 78 construction, with the approval of the state board, those affected elementary school
 79 students residing less than 1-1/2 miles from school may be transported one way to or
 80 from school because of safety factors relating to darkness or other hazardous conditions
 81 as [~~determined by~~]the local school board determines.
- 82 [~~(3)~~] (5)(a) The state board shall distribute transportation money to school districts based
 83 on:
 84 (i) an allowance per mile for approved bus routes;
 85 (ii) an allowance per hour for approved bus routes; and
 86 (iii) a minimum allocation for each school district eligible for transportation funding.
- 87 (b)[~~(i) Except as provided in Subsection (3)(b)(ii), the~~] The state board shall
 88 distribute appropriated transportation funds based on the prior year's eligible
 89 transportation costs as legally reported under Subsection 53F-2-402(3).
 90 [~~(ii) The state board shall distribute state appropriations for transportation for fiscal~~
 91 ~~years 2021 and 2022 using fiscal year 2019 eligible transportation costs described~~
 92 ~~in Subsection 53F-2-402(3).]~~
- 93 (c) The state board shall annually review the allowance per mile and the allowance per
 94 hour and adjust the allowances to reflect current economic conditions.
- 95 (d) The state board may designate specific transportation funds to a school district for:
 96 (i) the students eligible for transportation funding under Subsection (2)(b); and
 97 (ii) the purposes described in Subsection (3).
- 98 (e) If the state board distributes the transportation funds described in Subsection (5)(d)

99 to a school district, the state board shall distribute the funds to the school district the
100 state board determines to be in the most need of the funding to eliminate a hazardous
101 route.

102 [~~4~~] (6)(a) Approved bus routes for funding purposes shall be determined on fall data
103 collected by October 1.

104 (b) Approved route funding shall be determined on the basis of the most efficient and
105 economic routes.

106 [~~5~~] (7) A local school board may provide for the transportation of students regardless of
107 the distance from school, from general funds of the school district.

108 Section 2. **Effective Date.**
109 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.