

**CHAPTER 15.1-30
TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS**

15.1-30-01. Transportation or meals and lodging - Options of school board.

1. The board of a school district may:
 - a. Provide for the transportation of a student to and from school; or
 - b. If acceptable to the student's parent, reimburse the parent for expenses incurred in providing meals and lodging to the student outside the student's home.
2. A parent receiving payments under section 15.1-30-02 is not eligible to receive payments under this section.
3. If the board elects to provide for the transportation of students by public transit, the board shall establish eligibility criteria based on a minimum distance between a student's residence and the school. Except as otherwise provided by law, the board shall apply the criteria equally to all students in the district.
4. If the board closes one of several schools in the district, nothing in this section precludes the board from agreeing to provide transportation to those students who were placed in another school in the district because of the closure.
5. Benefits under this section are available even if a student is transported to another school district in or outside this state, provided the student's attendance meets all other conditions established by law.

15.1-30-02. Transportation payments - Board option.

1. The board of a school district in the state may pay to the parent of each student who resides more than two miles [3.22 kilometers] from the public school which the student attends a reasonable sum per day for each day the student attends the school, provided:
 - a. The student is transported to school by an adult member of the student's family;
 - b. The student's transportation is provided in a vehicle furnished by the student's parent;
 - c. The student's transportation is paid for by the student's parent; or
 - d. The cost of providing meals and lodging for the student at a location other than the student's residence is assumed by the student's parent.
2. The board shall calculate the payment provided for in this section according to the distance between the front door of the student's residence and the front door of the school attended by the student, using the most direct public route.

15.1-30-03. Transportation payments - Written request - Waiver.

A parent entitled to any payment authorized by a school board under this chapter shall submit to the school district a written request for payment before June thirtieth of each school year or the payment is deemed waived. Any payment not made within one year of the date on which it is requested is deemed to have been refused and the claim is deemed to have expired.

15.1-30-04. Provision of meals and lodging for high school students - Payment permitted.

Instead of providing transportation so that an eligible high school student residing in the district can attend school in another district, a school board may pay a reasonable allowance to the student's parent for costs incurred in the provision of meals and lodging for the student at a location other than the student's residence.

15.1-30-05. Schoolbus transportation services - Optional fee.

The board of a school district that has not been reorganized may charge a fee for the provision of schoolbus transportation service to students.

15.1-30-06. Transportation - Bids, contracts, bonds.

1. Before the beginning of each school year, the board of a school district that provides transportation shall contract for the provision of transportation services during the school year. Except as provided in section 15.1-30-11, the board shall provide notice of its intent to contract by publishing the time and place for submission of sealed bids in the official newspaper of the school district at least ten days prior to the required date of submission. The notice must:
 - a. Include the route to be covered by each contract;
 - b. Provide that the board reserves the right to reject any and all bids;
 - c. Provide that each successful bidder must submit in a separate envelope a bond in an amount set by the board, provided that the amount of the bond must be at least five hundred dollars;
 - d. Provide that the bond must be conditioned for the faithful performance of the duties set forth in the contract; and
 - e. Provide that any bids submitted name the individual who will operate the vehicle and describe the vehicle.
2. If the transportation vehicle is privately owned, the duration of the contract may not exceed seven years.
3. This section does not apply to a school district that owns its own buses and employs its own busdrivers.

15.1-30-07. Transportation contract - Standard form.

The superintendent of public instruction shall prepare a standard transportation contract form and shall provide copies, upon request, to school districts.

15.1-30-08. Transportation contract - Provisions.

A transportation contract must:

1. Provide that no vehicle other than that described in the contract may be used to transport students, unless a change is authorized in writing by the board of the school district.
2. Provide that only the individual named in the contract may operate a vehicle used to transport students, unless a change is authorized in writing by the board.
3. Include the transportation routes that were established by the board and which are to be covered by the transportation provider.
4. Set compensation for the provision of transportation.
5. Describe the process by which an equitable adjustment of compensation will be determined and paid if a change in the established transportation routes becomes necessary.

15.1-30-09. Transportation contract - Waiver of provisions.

In the case of an emergency or other unforeseen event, the school board president may waive transportation contract provisions requiring that only vehicles described in the contract be used and that the vehicles be operated only by individuals named in the contract. The waiver is valid only until the next regular or special meeting of the board.

15.1-30-10. Transportation contract - Assignment.

A transportation contract is assignable only upon written authorization by the school board.

15.1-30-11. Transportation contract - Direct negotiation.

1. Notwithstanding sections 15.1-30-06 and 15.1-30-12, a contract for the transportation of students, originally bid by and let to a contractor, may be renewed:
 - a. Through direct negotiation between the board of a school district and the contractor; or
 - b. Upon sealed bids.

2. If a contract is to be renewed through direct negotiation, the school board shall publish notice in the official newspaper of the district, at least thirty days before the date of renewal, and shall make a good-faith effort to obtain at least two written quotations for the contract. The board shall maintain all quotations received on file for at least one year after their receipt. The quotations are public information.
3. If any written quotations are received, the board may directly negotiate a contract, provided:
 - a. The board shall conduct a public meeting regarding the contract;
 - b. The board provides at least seven days' notice of the public meeting regarding the contract by publication in the official newspaper of the district; and
 - c. The public is given an opportunity to appear and comment at the public meeting.
4. All terms of the contract must be negotiated and agreed to in the public meeting.
5. If a contract is to be made upon the receipt of sealed bids, the board shall follow the procedure set forth in section 15.1-30-06 for advertising and awarding the bids.

15.1-30-12. Contract for transportation - Conditions.

1. The board of a school district shall let the contract, except as otherwise provided in section 15.1-30-11, to the lowest responsible bidder who:
 - a. Furnishes a bond approved by the board, as provided for in section 15.1-30-06;
 - b. Agrees to use a vehicle which, in the opinion of the board, meets the standards imposed by the superintendent of public instruction under sections 39-21-27 and 39-21-27.1 and which is safe, comfortable, and suitable for the purpose; and
 - c. Identifies individuals who, in the opinion of the board, are competent and responsible to serve as drivers.
2. The board may not enter a contract for transportation with an individual member of the board.
3. An individual member of the board may serve as the driver of a vehicle identified for use in the transportation contract.

15.1-30-13. Transportation of students - Control and discipline.

The driver of a vehicle used to transport students under a contract as provided in this chapter is under the supervision and direction of the school board, the school district superintendent, the school principal, and the teachers of the school while the driver is on duty. The disciplinary authority of the school exists while a student is being transported, by or on behalf of the student's school, and the driver of the vehicle is charged with exercising control and discipline during the transportation.

15.1-30-14. Schoolbus route - Extension into bordering state.

The board of a school district may extend its bus route into a bordering state for the purpose of transporting students from the bordering state into this state, provided that the superintendent of public instruction has entered a reciprocal contract with the bordering state under section 15.1-29-02 or that the board has entered a contract with a school district in the bordering state under section 15.1-29-02.

15.1-30-15. Transportation services to nonpublic students - Joint provision of transportation services.

1. If the board of a school district provides transportation services to its students, the board may provide transportation services to students attending nonpublic schools, provided:
 - a. The nonpublic school students are transported only along the bus route established for the public school students;
 - b. The nonpublic school students are transported only on the days and at the times that the public school students are transported; and
 - c. The legal passenger capacity of each bus is not exceeded by the transportation of nonpublic school students.

2.
 - a. The board of a school district that provides transportation to its students may contract with other local, state, or federal government entities for the joint provision and integration of transportation services to the public.
 - b. A contract under this section must provide for the observation of all safety requirements otherwise imposed by law on schoolbuses, on school vehicles, and on schoolbus drivers when students are being transported.