
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SCHOOL BUS SERVICES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the department of
2 education provides bus services in neighborhoods across the
3 State to ensure broad access to educational opportunities for
4 Hawaii's students, serving approximately twelve thousand student
5 riders on Oahu and thirteen thousand student riders on the
6 neighbor islands. However, due to the continuing shortage of
7 qualified school bus drivers in the State, student bus
8 transportation services have been completely or partially
9 suspended at ten Oahu's high schools and four schools on Kauai
10 in the 2023-2024 school year. Of the sixty-one bus routes on
11 Oahu and seventeen bus routes on Kauai that were cancelled, only
12 one route on Oahu and nine routes on Kauai have been restored.
13 Additionally, high school bus routes on Maui and Hawaii island
14 have been modified due to the bus driver shortages.

15 The legislature further finds that while the department of
16 education is in the process of restoring these services, it is
17 essential to develop comprehensive standards for the department



1 to determine when and how school bus services may be reduced or
2 modified to ensure that these decisions are made with the utmost
3 consideration for reasonable accommodation, equity, and
4 prioritization of students who live beyond a certain distance
5 from school.

6 The purpose of this Act is to establish comprehensive
7 standards for the department of education related to school bus
8 services to ensure equitable access, timely communication, and
9 accountability.

10 SECTION 2. Section 302A-406, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
11 amended by amending its title and subsection (a) to read as
12 follows:

13 "**§302A-406 Transportation of school children[-];**
14 **comprehensive standards.** (a) The department may provide
15 suitable transportation to and from school and for educational
16 field trips for all children in grades kindergarten to twelve
17 and in special education classes. The department shall adopt
18 policies, procedures, and programs as it deems necessary to
19 provide suitable transportation[-] and meet the following
20 comprehensive standards:



- 1 (1) The department shall conduct an equity assessment
2 before making any decisions related to school bus
3 service reductions or modifications; provided that in
4 cases of unscheduled service modifications due to
5 unforeseen circumstances, including driver absences or
6 emergencies, the department shall notify affected
7 families promptly, explaining the reason for the
8 change in service and outlining any available
9 alternative transportation options;
- 10 (2) The department shall implement a communication and
11 outreach plan for scheduled bus service changes to
12 notify affected communities and stakeholders of any
13 planned changes to school bus services using diverse
14 communication channels and partnerships to inform,
15 gather feedback, and ensure transparency with affected
16 communities and stakeholders; and
- 17 (3) In cases where school bus service must be reduced, the
18 department shall ensure that affected communities and
19 stakeholders are aware of the process to appeal
20 decisions regarding school bus service modifications,



1 as determined by the department pursuant to rules
2 adopted pursuant to chapter 91."

3 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
4 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

School Bus Services; Department of Education; Comprehensive Standards

Description:

Establishes comprehensive standards for the department of education related to school bus services to ensure equitable access, timely communication, and accountability. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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