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# Administrative Letter A048

## Suggestions and Recommendations for School Transportation and Student Travel

*Administrative Letter #48 Suggestions and Recommendations for School Transportation and Student Travel; Reviewed/Updated 3-31-22.*

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### **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL**

### **TRANSPORTATION AND STUDENT TRAVEL**

The following recommendations and suggestions are offered to assist public schools in Utah to avoid harm to student and to avoid unnecessary risk in process of transporting students.

#### General Recommendations:

1. Whenever possible students should be transported on school buses operated by properly licensed school employees. The use of private noncommercial vehicles to transport students is discouraged.
2. School bus drivers must conform to the statutory or rule requirements and limitations on driving time and on duty time. No individual who is transporting students shall work more than 15 hours in a 24 hour period. For example no classroom instructor may teach a full compliment of classes then transport students to activities or events and coach the students, if the combined amount of time spent between teaching, coaching and transporting students exceeds 15 hours.
3. No group officially associated with and recognized by a school district may at any time utilize any vehicle for the transportation of students whose design capacity exceeds eight passengers and the driver, except for a properly licensed and equipped school bus or commercial bus. The design capacity of a vehicle is established by the manufacturer and is not affected by removing a seat or otherwise modifying the seating arrangement in the van. School districts, school representatives and others recognized and associated with the school district shall not rent, lease or otherwise contract for vans or other vehicles that exceed the design capacity of eight passengers and the driver when the vehicle is utilized for the transportation of students. This rule does not apply to commercial buses.

4. Under no circumstances shall students be officially authorized, required or in any way encouraged to drive other students to school classes or activities. No student shall be authorized to act as an agent driver for a school district. When students are required to leave their home school campus in order to attend classes or other school related activities, schools are encouraged to provide transportation to and from the classes or activities. In those situations where students are required to provide their own transportation to classes this requirement should be included in the course description. Parents and guardians must be informed of this requirement. In these cases students should be informed that it is their responsibility to arrange for their own transportation. Under no circumstances should teacher or counselors attempt to mandate car pools or other groupings that may imply that the student driver is an agent for the district.
5. No one under the age of 21 should be authorized to transport students.
6. No vehicle other than a school bus or a commercial vehicle that is used for the transportation of students shall begin a trip between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. Any trip, which begins before 11:00 p.m. shall be able to be completed before 1:30 a.m. If it cannot be completed by 1:30 a.m. a rest stop until at least 4:30 a.m. should be included in the travel plans. The 1:30 a.m. completion rule does not apply to commercial bus travel.
7. The passengers and the driver of every vehicle, except a school bus, shall use seat belts at all times while in the vehicle. The driver of a school bus shall use a seat belt at all times while operating the vehicle. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that this rule is followed.
8. Any official and authorized transportation of students more than 400 miles in distance from the home school or another central location must be done on a school bus with an authorized and properly licensed driver or on a commercial carrier. School districts are encouraged to utilize commercial transportation options when students are being transported out of state.
9. Drivers of school buses or other vehicles used to transport students shall comply with all general traffic and safety regulations and any and all regulations applicable to their licenses. Any school employee in violation of this rule is subject to the imposition of disciplinary action up to termination of employment.
10. Drivers of school buses or other vehicles used to transport students shall comply with all United States Department of Transportation rules regarding the number of hours that a driver may operate a vehicle, how often breaks must be taken and all other applicable rules governing drive time and related matters. Drivers are encouraged at a minimum to stop at least every two hours for a rest break for themselves and their passengers.
11. If a school district utilizes suburbans, or other large vehicles designed to carry up to seven passengers and the driver, for the transportation of students the drivers of these suburbans must successfully complete a district approved suburban or large vehicle driving program which must include actual experience operating the type of vehicle that the driver will be operating. Suburban drivers or drivers of other large vehicles should take sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the locations of all switches, fog lights, windshield wipers, cruise control, etc. before beginning any trip. All drivers shall be properly licensed and must be at least 21 years of age.
12. The driver of any vehicle used to transport students must ensure that all items in the vehicle are properly secured so that they do not come loose in the case of a sudden stop or accident.
13. Travel in adverse or stormy weather should be discouraged, especially if the trip is to be made in a vehicle other than a school bus or commercial vehicle.