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OFFICE OF THE
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Michael Kohlhagen
Superintendent of Schools

March 1, 2010

TO: Representative Russ Morin
Education Committee

FROM: Michael Kohlhagen, Superintendent of Schools
Wethersfield Public Schools 

RE: Raised Bill 280, Sec. 2

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about possible relief with respect to mandated transportation of students to public schools.

As stated in Bill 280 Sec. 2. (Effective July 1, 2010) It is recommended that in a case where a local or regional Board of Education is required to provide school transportation to a student, pursuant to chapter 172 of the General Statutes, the parent or guardian of a student may submit a written waiver of such school transportation for the school year to the local or regional Board of Education for such student.

Currently School Districts provide and budget for all students eligible for transportation. In Wethersfield, based on Board Policy 3541 on transportation and eligibility, the following policy is followed:
Students in grades 1 – 6 are transported if their home is at least 1 mile from their elementary school, Grades 7-8 students are transported if their home is at least 1.5 miles from our middle school, and students in grades 9-12 are transported if their home is at least 2 miles from Wethersfield High School.

This waiver proposed in Bill 280 Sec. 2 would allow for a school District or regional Board of Education to continue to implement local Board policy and, acknowledge those students who do not ride the school bus at any time to or from school during the school year, and thus route and provide transportation only to students who participate in this mandated transportation and thus, incur costs only for those students who participate in this mandated transportation program.

In Wethersfield, we understand that we currently have, based on Board policy, and 2009 data, 1,997 students eligible for transportation. We currently operate on a three tier transportation system and route and plan to transport all eligible students using a total of 16 school buses daily, excluding or midday Kindergarten run.

Currently, our 2009-10 data confirms a 56% ridership, meaning 56% of our eligible students participate in our school bus transportation program. Yet, everyone of the eligible students have a paid seat on a school bus every day from August to June. Therefore, it is proposed that, should such waiver be approved and received from a student's parent or guardian, acknowledging confirmation that they would not participate in this mandated transportation provision, participating riders could be routed with fewer school buses, at a cost savings of 217.00 per day per school bus, and approximately \$40,000 per bus per year.

Wethersfield currently serves approximately 3800 students in five elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. Wethersfield spent \$630,112 in 2008-9 on regular size school buses, transporting students to and from school. Given our data confirming ridership, it is estimated that there would be a savings between 56% ridership to 70% ridership, or between \$220,000 and \$323,300 annually.

In summary, this waiver would allow school Districts to maintain current level of transportation service to our students and families, and reduce the general budget obligation in this program substantially, reducing the tax burden and in fact potentially save staff positions, jobs and instructional programs during these difficult economic times.

Thank you for your consideration.

MK:eh

cc: Wethersfield Board of Education
Carol Cancelliere, Transportation



General Assembly

February Session, 2010

Raised Bill No. 280

LCO No. 1390

01390_____ED_

Referred to Committee on Education

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 10-66c of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
3 *1, 2010*):

4 (a) A regional educational service center shall be a body corporate
5 and politic. The board of a regional educational service center shall be
6 a public educational authority acting on behalf of the state of
7 Connecticut and shall have the power to sue and be sued, to receive
8 and disburse private funds and such prepaid and reimbursed federal,
9 state and local funds as each member board of education may
10 authorize on its own behalf, to employ personnel, to enter into
11 contracts, to purchase, receive, hold and convey real and personal
12 property and otherwise to provide, in accordance with this section, the
13 programs, services and activities agreed upon by the member boards
14 of education. A regional educational service center shall not provide
15 transportation services to students in cases when member boards of
16 education request competitive bids and receive responses from other

17 responsible qualified bidders. The board of a regional educational
 18 service center shall have authority, within the limits prescribed by this
 19 part and as specified by the written agreement of the member boards,
 20 to establish policies for the regional educational service center, to
 21 determine the programs and services to be provided, to employ staff
 22 including a director of the center, to prepare and expend the budget
 23 and, within the limits authorized under this section, to provide for the
 24 financing of the programs and projects of the regional educational
 25 service center.

26 Sec. 2. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2010) In a case where a local or
 27 regional board of education is required to provide school
 28 transportation to a student, pursuant to the provisions of chapter 172
 29 of the general statutes, the parent or guardian of a student may submit
 30 a written waiver of such school transportation for the school year to
 31 the local or regional board of education for such student.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2010	10-66c(a)
Sec. 2	July 1, 2010	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To allow regional educational service centers to provide school transportation services to students only when there are no other responsible qualified bidders and to allow a parent or guardian of a student to submit a written waiver of school transportation services to the local or regional board of education.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

FILE COPY



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CHRISTOPHER DREZEK
Director of Human Resources & Operations

DATE: July 16, 2009

TO: Michael Kohlhagen
Superintendent of Schools

FROM: Christopher Drezek 
Director of Human Resources and Operations

RE: Transportation Analysis

Attached is an analysis of our current transportation program. I have included our student data from the 2008-2009 school year, however all financial information was taken from our current transportation contract for the 2009-2010 school year.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me.

2008-2009 Transportation Activity

# of Eligible Students	1,997
# of Actual Riders (AM)	1,121
# of Actual Riders (PM)	1,113
% of Riders vs. Eligibility (AM)	56%
% of Riders vs. Eligibility (PM)	56%
09-10 cost of Full sized Bus (day)	\$ 217.58
# of Regular sized Buses 2009-2010	16
Total Cost Per Day	\$ 3,481.28
Total Cost of Regular Sized Bus (Year)	\$ 630,111.68
K Only Buses	13
Cost Per K Only Bus (Midday Run)	\$ 44.48
Total Cost Per Day (K Only- 13 Midday Runs)	\$ 578.24
Total Cost Per Year (K Only Midday Run)	\$ 104,661.44
Total Cost of Regular Sized Bus Per Year	\$ 734,773.12
Cost Per Pupil Per Year	\$ 367.94
<i>Potential Savings (70% R vs. E)</i>	<i>\$ 220,431.94</i>
<i>Potential Savings (56% R vs. E)</i>	<i>\$ 323,300.17</i>

Distances

K	Midday Door to Door
Grades 1-6	1 mile
Grades 7-8	1.5 miles
Grades 9-12	2 miles

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
34							
35	Webb Bus #1	37	38	56	66.07%	67.85%	
36	Webb Bus #2	25	33	42	59.52%	78.57%	
37	Webb Bus #3	14	17	27	51.85%	62.96%	
38	Webb Bus #4	15	15	25	60.00%	60.00%	
39	Webb Bus #5	36	34	53	67.92%	64.15%	
40	Webb Bus #6	17	18	38	44.73%	47.36%	
41	Webb Totals	144	155	241	59.75%	64.31%	124
42							
43	SDMS Bus #1	26	26	41	63.41%	63.41%	
44	SDMS Bus #2	16	17	35	45.71%	48.57%	
45	SDMS Bus #3	28	26	36	72.22%	72.22%	
46	SDMS Bus #4	21	20	38	55.26%	52.63%	
47	SDMS Bus #5	28	35	44	63.63%	79.54%	
48	SDMS Bus #6	28	33	41	68.29%	80.48%	
49	SDMS Bus #7	22	22	41	53.65%	53.65%	
50	SDMS Bus #8	21	15	37	56.75%	40.54%	
51	SDMS Bus #9	14	13	26	53.84%	50.00%	
52	SDMS Bus #10	5	8	13	38.46%	46.15%	
53	SDMS Totals	207	213	352	58.80%	60.51%	228
54							
55	WHS Bus #1	14	20	64	21.87%	31.25%	
56	WHS Bus #2	24	28	70	34.28%	40.00%	
57	WHS Bus #3	9	10	50	18.00%	20.00%	
58	WHS Bus #4	15	12	50	30.00%	24.00%	
59	WHS Bus #5	22	24	55	40.00%	43.63%	
60	WHS Bus #6	22	25	46	47.82%	54.34%	
61	WHS Bus #7	22	21	60	36.66%	35.00%	
62	WHS Bus #8	11	14	58	18.96%	24.13%	
63	WHS Bus #9	18	15	42	42.85%	35.71%	
64	WHS Totals	157	169	495	31.71%	34.14%	741
65							
66							
67	WPS Totals	1039	1038	1,867	55.22%	54.53%	1,753

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
68							
69							
70	Corpus Christi Bus #1	10	10	20	50.00%	50.00%	
71	Corpus Christi Bus #2	22	20	31	70.96%	64.51%	
72	Corpus Christi Bus #3	11	5	16	68.75%	31.25%	
73	Corpus Christi Bus #4	6	6	8	75.00%	75.00%	
74	Corpus Christi Bus #5	9	12	14	64.28%	85.71%	
75	Corpus Christi Bus #6	14	10	26	53.84%	38.46%	
76	Corpus Christi Bus #7	10	12	15	66.66%	80.00%	
77	Total Corpus Christi	82	75	130	63.07%	57.69%	4
78							
79	Total Count						
80	Including Corpus	1,121	1,113	1,997	56.13	55.73	1,730
81							
82	COSTS						
83	Regular Ed Transp						
84	Cost Per Bus	\$39,379					
85	# of Buses	<u>17</u>					
86	Total Cost	669,443					
87	Total # Eligible Students	1,997					
88	Cost Per Student	\$335					

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Non-Instructional Operations**Transportation**

1. The Board of Education will provide transportation, under provisions of state law and regulation, under contract, for all pupils who qualify for such service, except in those instances wherein the services may be provided more economically by other means.

The Superintendent of Schools shall administer the operation so as to:

- a. Provide for maximum safety of students.
- b. Supplement and reinforce desirable student behavior patterns.
- c. Assist handicapped students appropriately.
- d. Enrich the instructional program through carefully planned field trips as recommended by the staff.

2. Transportation by private carrier may be provided whenever such practice is more economical than using school district-owned facilities. Parents may be reimbursed for transportation of eligible students whenever such practice is more economical or convenient.

3. Transportation for a regular school day as scheduled by the Wethersfield Board of Education will be provided to students enrolled in the Wethersfield Public Schools and Corpus Christi School who live:

- a. 1.0 mile or more for Grades K-6 from the elementary school they attend, except that all kindergarten students will be eligible for transportation at midday, regardless of distance from their residence.
- b. 1.5 miles or more from the middle school.
- c. 2.0 miles from the high school.

4. The Superintendent of Schools may make exceptions to this policy in specific situations involving the safety and/or health of students based on established written guidelines.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-97 Transportation to vocational schools.

10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education re school attendance.

10-220 Duties of boards of education.

10-220c Transportation of children over private roads.

10-233a and 10-233c Suspension of pupils.

Policy adopted: May 25, 1999

3541

Non-Instructional Operations

Transportation

1. Definitions

a. **"School transportation"** means the procedure, program, or fully effective and implemented plan by which a pupil is conveyed to and/or from school from his/ her residence or the bus stop at public expense, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract. Such transportation shall be over public roads approved by the Town or private roads approved pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-220c.

b. **"Walking distance"** for elementary school pupils means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the pupil's residence and his/her school measured from the center of the curb line or edge of the paved road in front of the pupil's residence to the bus pick-up or drop-off area at the elementary school.

"Walking distance" for middle school or high school pupils means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the pupil's residence and his/her school measured from the center of the curb line or edge of the paved road in front of the pupil's residence to the nearest safe entrance to the school grounds.

The various points of "nearest safe entrance" have been established at each school by the Board of Education. Linear measurements to each of these points have been calculated by the Town Engineering Department dated June 5, 1986, and are on file at the Board of Education. These linear measurements will be utilized in determining school transportation entitlement.

(1) Silas Deane Middle School -nearest safe entrances

At a point on Church Place where the east sidewalk meets the bituminous walk at the property line between #19 Church Place and the school property.

At a point located at the northerly school property line and the drive into the Town Hall parking lot. This point is located on the west side of this driveway where the concrete sidewalk runs in a southwest direction.

At a point located at the east side of school where the sidewalk on the Silas Deane Highway is intersected with the bituminous walk which runs along the south side of the school.

(2) Wethersfield High School - nearest safe entrances

At a point on Wolcott Hill Road on the west sidewalk where the bituminous walk intersects just north of the main entrance drive.

At a point on Wolcott Hill Road on the west sidewalk where the bituminous walk intersects just south of the main entrance drive.

A point on Jay Street and Eagle Drive where the concrete sidewalk meets the bituminous walk on the west side.

(3) **Corpus Christi School - nearest safe entrances**

At a point located at the east side of the school at the main entrance. More particularly. It is a drill hole on the concrete sidewalks where the sidewalk at the main entrance intersects the upper parking lot.

At a point on the sidewalk on the west side of the school at the northeast intersection of Hulburt Road and Cottwell Drive.

c. **"One mile walking distance"** means a reasonable measurement of a route to be traversed extending from the point of measurement at least 5,280 feet, but not more than 5,380 feet. The Board of Education recognizes the Town Engineering Department for purposes of validating the measured distance between a student's residence and the school.

d. **"Hazard"** means a thing or condition, as prescribed in these administrative procedures, affecting the safety of students walking to and from school. The Board of Education recognizes the Town Director of Public Safety for purposes of making judgments regarding safety.

e. **"Raised walk area or sidewalk"** means a portion of the landscaped right of way at least three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes which may be paved or unpaved, and may be distinguished by some elevation above the street pavement level, and may be marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area, or fencing, apart from and independent of any white line safety markings along the street pavement.

f. **"Student"** means any individual of school age residing in Wethersfield and enrolled in a public or non-profit private school located within the school district.

g. **"Grade K"** means kindergarten student.

2. Guidelines for Extending Transportation to Students for Reasons of Safety and/or Health

The following guidelines are established to assist the administration in making judgments relative to extending transportation privileges to students who must travel to and from school and whose safety and/or health may be affected by requiring such student to walk:

a. Health Considerations

(1) The Wethersfield Public Schools may provide **transportation** to students who have a disability or illness which could be aggravated by requiring the student to walk the required distance set forth in the Policy.

(2) Each request shall be filed with the Head Nurse. The request shall be accompanied by any medical record, certificate, evaluation, recommendation, etc., deemed sufficient to review the medical status of the student.

(3) The Head Nurse shall notify the interested parties of his/her findings within five days of receipt of all documentation related to the case and previously requested.

(4) The Head Nurse shall forward his/her recommendation to the Director of Business Services that **transportation** be provided for the interested student and for a specific period.

(5) Appeal

If a parent is dissatisfied with the ruling of the school official, the parent may make a request in writing for a hearing to appeal the decision.

Appeals from decisions of the Head Nurse shall be heard by the Superintendent of Schools.

b. Safety Hazards

(l) The Wethersfield Public Schools may provide transportation to students where a hazardous condition exists according to the following standards:

(a) A street or road having an adjacent or parallel sidewalk or raised walk area shall be deemed hazardous when anyone of the following conditions exist:

- For students under age ten or enrolled in grades K through 3, absence of pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect, and at street crossings where there are no stop signs or crossing guards and the traffic count during the time that children are walking to or from school exceeds 60 vehicles per hour as established in Town warrants for school crossing guards

- Any street, road or highway with speed limits in excess of forty miles per hour which do not have pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where students must cross in going to or from school

- the usual or frequent presence of any nuisance which is potentially dangerous to children including but not limited to open manholes, construction, snow plowed or piled on the walk areas making walkways unusable, loading zones where delivery trucks are permitted to park on walkways, commercial entrances and exits where cars are crossing walking areas at speeds in excess of five miles per hour.

(b) Any highway or main artery which has no adjacent or parallel sidewalks or raised walk area and is used as accepted or suggested route for non-residential vehicular traffic shall be deemed hazardous for students under ten years of age. Streets in residential sections in which the use primarily serves the needs of the people living in those areas shall not be considered hazardous unless otherwise determined by the Director of Public Safety of the Town of Wethersfield.

(c) A lake, pond, stream, culvert or waterway may be deemed a hazard in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier fixed between the student and the water.

(d) Any area adjacent to a roadway, walkway or bridge having a drop of three or more feet per four feet of travel length on either side of the established lanes without a fence, or other suitable barrier shall be deemed a hazard.

(e) Any street, road, walkway or path designated as a walking route for school students which passes through an area which has a history of aggressive acts or molestation resulting in actual or threatened physical harm or moral degradation during the hours when students ordinarily walk to or from school shall be deemed hazardous. However, the school administration may designate alternate walking

routes that students should travel.

(2) The school administration, in consultation with the Director of Public Safety of the Town of Wethersfield, may grant an exception to any provision of this guideline where in the judgment of the school administration a unique condition or combination of conditions renders such condition(s) a hazard.

(3) The Director of Business Services shall be responsible for administering the transportation program for students.

(4) Appeal

If a parent is dissatisfied with the decision of the Director of Business Services, the parent may make a written appeal of the decision.

Appeals from decisions of the Director of Business Services shall be considered by the Superintendent of Schools.

3. Transportation for Elementary Day Care Students

The Board will make no judgment whether day care facilities are paid or unpaid arrangements with a neighbor, relative, licensed or unlicensed day care center or home. The alternate child care location must be permanent.

Transportation will be granted on a **space-available-basis only** if the day care location is more than the walking distance to the school and the student's residence is less than the walking distance to the school, provided that the parent or guardian of such student submits a written request to the office of the Director of Business Services **prior to July 1** for the ensuing school year.

Transportation will not be granted if the day care location is less than the walking distance to the school and the student's residence is more than the walking distance to the school.

4. Exceptions to Student Transportation Policy

a. General Exceptions

General exception for any kindergartner whose residence is close to but less than 1.0 mile from school, and who lives in close proximity to an established bus route.

b. High School and Middle School

Students who live on those portions of Middletown Avenue and Elm Street (and adjoining streets) which are south of Maple Street are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

c. High School

(1) Students who live on those portions of Goff Road (and adjoining streets) which are within two miles of the High School are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

(2) Students who live on the north side of Highland Street east of 123 Highland Street

to the intersection with Griswold Road (and adjoining streets) are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

(3) Students who live on the north side of Wells Road between Cedar Street and Goff Road (except residences #733-749) are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

(4) Students who live on Nott Street between Ridge Road and the Berlin Turnpike (and adjoining streets on the north side of Nott Street) are bused because of lack of sidewalks.

(5) Students who live on Willow Street (and adjoining streets) are bused because of lack of sidewalks.

d. Middle School

Students who live on the west side of Maple Street (and adjacent streets) south of Prospect Street are bused because of the hazardous nature of the intersection at Maple and Prospect Streets.

e. Hanmer School

Students in grades K through 3 who reside on the east side of Silas Deane Highway north of Nott Street are bused because of a water hazard on Nott Street between Silas Deane Highway and Garden Street.

f. Higherest School

(1) Students who live on portions of Thornbush Road and Highland Street and adjoining streets west of said roads) which do not have sidewalks are bused.

(2) Students who live on those portions of the east side of Griswold Road (and adjoining streets) which are less than one mile from Higherest School are bused because of the hazardous intersection at Highland Street and Griswold Road.

(3) Students who live on those portions Fox Hill Road (and adjoining streets) without sidewalks are bused.

(4) Students who live on the north side of Highland Street, Stocking Mill Road, Old Mill Road, Grist Mill Road and Terrywood are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

(5) Students who live in the Straddle Hill subdivision are temporarily bused because of the construction activity and because of the lack of sidewalks on Willow Street.

(6) Students who live on Collier Road are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

g. Charles Wright School

(1) Students who live on the north side of Nott Street west of Folly Brook Boulevard (and adjoining streets) whose residences are within one mile of the Charles Wright School are bused because of high vehicular count at the intersection of Folly Brook

Boulevard and Nott Street.

(2) Students who live on the north side of Jordan Lane (and adjoining streets) whose residences are within one mile of the Charles Wright School are bused because of the high vehicular count on Jordan Lane.

(3) Students who live on the south side of Nott Street west of the intersection of Nott and Yale Street are bused due to the presence of a potential safety hazard.

(4) Students in grades K-3 who live on the south side of Jordan Lane between Folly Brook Boulevard and Wolcott Hill Road are bused due to the presence of a potential safety hazard.

h. Emerson-Williams School

(1) Students who live on Willow Street (and adjoining streets) are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

(2) Students who live on the west side of Ridge Road between Wells Road and Prospect Street are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

(3) Students who live on the north side of Wells Road between Cedar Street and Goff Road, and portions of Goff Road (and adjoining streets) whose residences are within one mile of the Emerson-Williams School are bused because of lack of sidewalks and high traffic volume.

i. Corpus Christi School

(1) Students enrolled in grades K through 6 who live east of the Silas Deane Highway are bused regardless of distance.

(2) Students in grades K through 3 whose residences are less than 1.0 mile from school and whose customary walking route would pass through the Wolcott Hill Road -Wells Road intersection are bused.

5. Miscellaneous Regulations

a. The school administration shall establish suitable pick-up and drop-off points for those students being transported.

b. Buses will not be permitted to enter roads that end in cul-de-sacs.

c. Transportation across school attendance area lines is not permitted.

d. The school administration will periodically review all exceptions.

6. Appeals to the Board of Education

Parents may appeal an administrative decision regarding school bus transportation. Upon written request, a hearing will be held pursuant to Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes and in accordance with Sections 4-177 through 4-180 inclusive.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-280a Transportation for pupils in non-profit private schools outside school district.

10-281 Transportation for pupils in non-profit private schools within school district.

14-275a Use of standard school bus required, when.

14-275b Transportation of handicapped students.

14-275c Regulations re school buses and motor vehicles used to transport special education students.

14-280 Letters and signals to be concealed when not used in transporting children. Signs on other vehicles.

Regulation approved: May 25, 1999

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