



**PUTNAM COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
SHAPING THE FUTURE

**200 Reid Street
Palatka, Florida 32177
386.329.0538**

August 19, 2021

Dear PCSD Families,

Thank you for working diligently to get your children to school each day. The first week of school presents challenges with student arrival and dismissal. We recognize that the new school configurations, along with recent changes in bus transportation, have compounded these challenges. We continue to work with our local law enforcement to design efficient and safe procedures for our students and families.

Based on current allocations, we are able to employ 88 bus drivers. Although we have recruited and offered many incentives over the past few years, we still face a shortage of 33 bus drivers. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our local workforce, and we share this dilemma with all school districts throughout this state and nation. We will continue our efforts to recruit, hire and train new drivers for our district.

Attached are the Florida Statutes related to the bus transportation of students. If a student lives within two miles of a school, specific criteria must be met to provide bus transportation. In the past, when we were not facing a shortage of bus drivers, we were able to accommodate students living within two miles of a school. Unfortunately, that is not possible at this time, unless the hazardous walking conditions criteria are met.

Therefore, if you live within two miles of school, and you are seeking bus transportation for your Pre-K-6th grade child, please call 386-329-0538 or email us at info@my.putnamschools.org. We will review each case based on state guidelines and determine if your child is eligible for bus transportation. Please know that the rule for hazardous walking conditions does not apply to students in grades 7-12.

If you or anyone you know may be interested in joining our transportation team, please visit www.putnamschools.org, or call the Department of Human Resources at 386-329-0547. As always, we appreciate your support as we begin a great 2021-22 school year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Rick Surrency
Superintendent

Florida Statute 1011.68 Funds for Student Transportation

Link:

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1011/Sections/1011.68.html

The annual allocation to each district for transportation to public school programs, including charter schools as provided in s. 1002.33(17)(b), of students in membership in kindergarten through grade 12 and in migrant and exceptional student programs below kindergarten shall be determined as follows:

(1) Subject to the rules of the State Board of Education, each district shall determine the membership of students who are transported:

(a) By reason of living 2 miles or more from school.

(b) By reason of being students with disabilities or enrolled in a teenage parent program, regardless of distance to school.

(c) By reason of being in a state prekindergarten program, regardless of distance from school.

(d) By reason of being career, dual enrollment, or students with disabilities transported from one school center to another to participate in an instructional program or service; or students with disabilities, transported from one designation to another in the state, provided one designation is a school center and provided the student's individual educational plan (IEP) identifies the need for the instructional program or service and transportation to be provided by the school district. A "school center" is defined as a public school center, Florida College System institution, state university, or other facility rented, leased, or owned and operated by the school district or another public agency. A "dual enrollment student" is defined as a public school student in membership in both a public secondary school program and a Florida College System institution or a state university program under a written agreement to partially fulfill ss. 1003.435 and 1007.23 and earning full-time equivalent membership under s. 1011.62(1)(i).

(e) With respect to elementary school students whose grade level does not exceed grade 6, by reason of being subjected to hazardous walking conditions en route to or from school as provided in s. 1006.23. Such rules shall, when appropriate, provide for the determination of membership under this paragraph for less than 1 year to accommodate the needs of students who require transportation only until such hazardous conditions are corrected.

(f) By reason of being a pregnant student or student parent, and the child of a student parent as provided in s. 1003.54, regardless of distance from school.

(2) The allocation for each district shall be calculated annually in accordance with the following formula:

$T = B + EX$. The elements of this formula are defined as follows: T is the total dollar allocation for transportation. B is the base transportation dollar allocation prorated by an adjusted student membership count. The adjusted membership count shall be derived from a multiplicative index function in which the base student membership is adjusted by multiplying it by index numbers that individually account for the impact of the price level index, average bus occupancy, and the extent of rural population in the district. EX is the base transportation dollar allocation for disabled students prorated by an adjusted disabled student membership count. The base transportation dollar allocation for disabled students is the total state base disabled student membership count weighted for increased costs associated with transporting disabled students and multiplying it by an average per student cost for transportation as determined by the Legislature. The adjusted disabled student

membership count shall be derived from a multiplicative index function in which the weighted base disabled student membership is adjusted by multiplying it by index numbers that individually account for the impact of the price level index, average bus occupancy, and the extent of rural population in the district. Each adjustment factor shall be designed to affect the base allocation by no more or less than 10 percent.

(3) The total allocation to each district for transportation of students shall be the sum of the amounts determined in subsection (2). If the funds appropriated for the purpose of implementing this section are not sufficient to pay the base transportation allocation and the base transportation allocation for disabled students, the Department of Education shall prorate the available funds on a percentage basis. If the funds appropriated for the purpose of implementing this section exceed the sum of the base transportation allocation and the base transportation allocation for disabled students, the base transportation allocation for disabled students shall be limited to the amount calculated in subsection (2), and the remaining balance shall be added to the base transportation allocation.

(4) No district shall use funds to purchase transportation equipment and supplies at prices which exceed those determined by the department to be the lowest which can be obtained, as prescribed in s. 1006.27(1).

(5) Funds allocated or apportioned for the payment of student transportation services may be used to pay for transportation of students to and from school on local general purpose transportation systems. Student transportation funds may also be used to pay for transportation of students to and from school in private passenger cars and boats when the transportation is for isolated students, or students with disabilities as defined by rule. Subject to the rules of the State Board of Education, each school district shall determine and report the number of assigned students using general purpose transportation private passenger cars and boats. The allocation per student must be equal to the allocation per student riding a school bus.

(6) Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, in no case shall any student or students be counted for transportation funding more than once per day. This provision includes counting students for funding pursuant to trips in school buses, passenger cars, or boats or general purpose transportation.

Florida Statute 1006.23 Hazardous Walking Conditions

Link:

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1006/Sections/1006.23.html

(1) DEFINITION.—As used in this section, the term “student” means any public elementary school student whose grade level does not exceed grade 6.

(2) HAZARDOUS WALKING CONDITIONS.—

(a) *Walkways parallel to the road.*—

1. It shall be considered a hazardous walking condition with respect to any road along which students must walk in order to walk to and from school if there is not an area at least 4 feet wide adjacent to the road, not including drainage ditches, sluiceways, swales, or channels, having a surface upon which students may walk without being required to walk on the road surface. In addition, whenever the road along which students must walk is uncurbed and has a posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour or greater, the area as described above for students to walk upon shall be set off the road by no less than 3 feet from the edge of the road.

2. Subparagraph 1. does not apply when the road along which students must walk:

a. Is a road on which the volume of traffic is less than 180 vehicles per hour, per direction, during the time students walk to and from school; or

b. Is located in a residential area and has a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour or less.

(b) *Walkways perpendicular to the road.*—It shall be considered a hazardous walking condition with respect to any road across which students must walk in order to walk to and from school if:

1. The traffic volume on the road exceeds the rate of 360 vehicles per hour, per direction (including all lanes), during the time students walk to and from school and if the crossing site is uncontrolled. For purposes of this subsection, an “uncontrolled crossing site” is an intersection or other designated crossing site where no crossing guard, traffic enforcement officer, or stop sign or other traffic control signal is present during the times students walk to and from school.

2. The total traffic volume on the road exceeds 4,000 vehicles per hour through an intersection or other crossing site controlled by a stop sign or other traffic control signal, unless crossing guards or other traffic enforcement officers are also present during the times students walk to and from school.

Traffic volume shall be determined by the most current traffic engineering study conducted by a state or local governmental agency.

(c) *Crossings over the road.*—It shall be considered a hazardous walking condition with respect to any road at any uncontrolled crossing site which students must walk in order to walk to and from school if:

1. The road has a posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour or greater; or

2. The road has six lanes or more, not including turn lanes, regardless of the speed limit.

(3) IDENTIFICATION OF HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS.—

(a) When a request for review is made by the district school superintendent with respect to a road over which a state or local governmental entity has jurisdiction concerning a condition perceived to be hazardous to students in that district who live within the 2-mile limit and who walk to school, such condition shall be inspected jointly by a representative of the school district, a representative of the state or local governmental entity with jurisdiction over the perceived hazardous location, and a representative of the municipal police department for a municipal road, a representative of the sheriff’s office for a county road, or a representative of the Department of Transportation for a state road. If the jurisdiction is within an area for which there is a metropolitan planning organization, a representative of that organization shall also be included. The governmental representatives shall determine whether the condition constitutes a hazardous walking condition as provided in subsection (2). If the governmental representatives concur that a condition constitutes a hazardous walking condition as provided in subsection (2), the governmental entity with jurisdiction shall report that determination in writing to the district school superintendent, who shall initiate a formal request for correction as provided in subsection (4).

(b) If the governmental representatives are unable to reach a consensus, the reasons for lack of consensus shall be reported to the district school superintendent, who shall provide a report and recommendation to the district school board. The district school board may initiate a proceeding under chapter 86 seeking a determination as to whether the condition constitutes a hazardous walking condition as provided in subsection (2) after providing at least 30 days’ notice in writing to the state or local governmental entity having jurisdiction over the road of its intent to do so unless, within 30 days after such notice is provided, the state or local governmental entity concurs in writing that the condition is a hazardous walking condition as provided in subsection (2) and provides the position statement pursuant to subsection (4). If a proceeding is initiated under this paragraph, the district school board has the burden of proving such condition by the greater weight of evidence. If the district school board prevails, the district school superintendent shall report

the outcome to the Department of Education and initiate a formal request for correction of the hazardous walking condition as provided in subsection (4).

(4) TRANSPORTATION; CORRECTION OF HAZARDS.—

(a) A district school board and other governmental entities shall work cooperatively to identify conditions that are hazardous along student walking routes to school, and a district school board shall provide transportation to students who would be subjected to such conditions. Additionally, state or local governmental entities with jurisdiction over a road along which a hazardous walking condition is determined to exist shall correct the condition within a reasonable period of time.

(b) Upon a determination pursuant to subsection (3) that a hazardous walking condition exists, the district school superintendent shall request a position statement with respect to correction of such condition from the state or local governmental entity with jurisdiction over the road. Within 90 days after receiving such request, the state or local governmental entity shall inform the district school superintendent whether the entity will include correction of the hazardous walking condition in its next annual 5-year transportation work program and, if so, when correction of the condition will be completed. If the hazardous walking condition will not be included in the state or local governmental entity's next annual 5-year transportation work program, the factors justifying such conclusion must be stated in writing to the district school superintendent and the Department of Education.

(c) State funds shall be allocated for the transportation of students subjected to a hazardous walking condition. However, such funding shall cease upon correction of the hazardous walking condition or upon the projected completion date, whichever occurs first.

(5) CIVIL ACTION.—In a civil action for damages brought against a governmental entity under s. 768.28, the designation of a hazardous walking condition under this section is not admissible in evidence.

(6) INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS.—This section does not prohibit a district school board and other governmental entities from entering into an interlocal agreement pursuant to s. 163.31777 that addresses the identification and correction of hazardous walking conditions, if such agreement:

(a) Implements the Safe Paths to Schools Program as provided in s. 335.066; or

(b) Establishes standards for the safety of students walking to school and procedures for identifying and correcting hazardous walking conditions that meet or exceed the standards and procedures provided in subsections (2), (3), and (4).