**TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

It is the policy of the Board of Education to provide transportation for those students, of any age, whose distance from their school makes this service necessary within the limitations established by State law and the regulations of the State Board of Education.

School buses and student-transportation vehicles shall be purchased, housed, and maintained by the District for the transportation of resident students between their home areas and the schools of the District to which they are assigned. However, no vehicle shall be purchased or used to transport students for which there is no applicable, passenger-protection, Federal motor-vehicle safety standards.

All school buses and student-transportation vehicles, whether purchased, leased, or contracted for shall comply with specifications defined in State law. Each operator of a school vehicle used by the District shall be licensed for the purpose for which the vehicle is being used and shall operate the vehicles in accordance with Federal and State laws.

Transportation of eligible special education children between their home areas and schools outside the District shall be arranged through the use of District-owned vehicles, through cooperation with other districts, through commercial carriers, and/or by other means in the most efficient and economical manner.

Bus routes shall be established so that an authorized bus stop is available within reasonable walking distance of the home of every resident student entitled to transportation services.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to install and operate video cameras on District buses to enhance student safety and well-being. She/He shall establish appropriate administrative guidelines for the proper use of the cameras.

The Superintendent shall establish administrative guidelines to ensure proper implementation of this policy.

**Transportation Guidelines**

The following guidelines are established to implement Board of Education policy on transportation.

**Administrative Responsibilities**

* The Superintendent/Director of Special Education is responsible for the planning, operating, and maintenance of all District vehicles. Included within this scope of responsibility are:
* establishment of bus routes;
* management of dispatching operations;
* supervising and analyzing vehicle maintenance programs;
* preparing and submitting all State/Federal reports;
* bus driver personnel selection, supervision, and training;
* transportation budgets;
* development of specifications for bids on contracted services;
* verification of qualifications of bus drivers.

Quality transportation services require cooperation and effective communication with the Director who shall be responsible for:

* supervision at bus loading and unloading zones;
* communication to parents and students concerning student behavior, safety, schedules, and the like;
* adjudication of all behavior problems;
* enforcement of traffic regulations on the school site;
* communication about overcrowding and unsafe conditions or practices to the Superintendent.

**Bus Conduct**

* Parents are to be informed that school bus transportation is a privilege and not a right and that the bus driver is the sole authority on the bus while students are being transported.
* Parents are also to be informed that they are responsible for:
	+ the safety of their child while going to or from the bus;
	+ damage by their child to school buses, personal property, or public property.
* Students are expected to conduct themselves in a proper manner. The District will not enter into disputes involving parents and/or students concerning matters that take place prior to the student boarding the school bus or after the student has disembarked from the bus on his/her way home.
* A change in a student's regular assigned bus stop may be granted for a special need, if a note from a parent is submitted to the supervisor stating the reason for the request and the duration of the change and the supervisor approves.
* A permanent transfer to another route or bus stop for morning pick-up and/or afternoon drop-off will only be made upon the approval of the Superintendent/Director of Special Education.
* For the safe operation of the school bus, noise on buses shall be kept at a minimum with students speaking in reasonable conversation voices. Students must be quiet at railroad crossings and other danger zones as designated by the bus driver.
* Students are not allowed to play their own radios or tape recorders.
* The following cargo is forbidden to be transported on a school bus: pets, alcoholic beverages, drugs, ammunition, explosives, firearms, knives, or any other dangerous materials or objects. If there is a question on the transportation of a particular item, the Superintendent/Director should be consulted.

**Student Surveillance**

* In accord with Board policy, the Superintendent/Director may install the appropriate equipment for video-taping the interior of the buses while transporting students. She/He should follow the District's purchasing practices in obtaining such equipment and abide by the following guidelines for the use of such equipment:
* Arrange for the installation of a box in a location on each bus that will allow for the camera to record all students.
* Develop a plan whereby the camera(s) is installed in the box on a rotating basis and so students are not aware of the installation.
* Record the date, time, and bus number of each video tape and maintain the tapes in a secure location for a period not to exceed the school year.
* Establish a procedure whereby no one observes a tape without the prior authorization of the appropriate supervisor who shall ensure that any observation is done only by those who are authorized to view student records and is conducted in accord with the District’s policy regarding Student Records.

Any disciplinary action resulting from the use of the video tapes shall be determined by the appropriate supervisor who shall ensure that due process is provided to the students involved, in accordance with Board policy and administrative guidelines relating to discipline. Any use of photographs obtained through the use of video tapes shall be in accordance with Federal and State law.

The Superintendent/Director shall be responsible for reviewing the tapes for the purpose of assuring that bus safety procedures are being followed properly and the buses are being operated in accord with District guidelines and State law.

**Special Services**

In compliance with Board policy, the transportation services may be provided for field trips, co-curricular trips, and extra-curricular trips, including athletics.

Transportation may be provided on weekends and holidays to District students who are participating in approved School District programs which are under the supervision of professional staff members.