

CHAPTER 285

STATE AID FOR TRANSPORTATION

Referred to in [§256F.4](#), [261E.9](#), [274.3](#)

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285.1 When entitled to state aid.

1. a. The board of directors in every school district shall provide transportation, either directly or by reimbursement for transportation, for all resident pupils attending public school, kindergarten through twelfth grade, except that:

(1) Elementary pupils shall be entitled to transportation only if they live more than two miles from the school designated for attendance.

(2) High school pupils shall be entitled to transportation only if they live more than three miles from the school designated for attendance.

(3) Children attending prekindergarten programs offered or sponsored by the district or nonpublic school and approved by the department of education or department of health and human services or children participating in preschool in an approved local program under [chapter 256C](#) may be provided transportation services. However, transportation services provided to nonpublic school children are not eligible for reimbursement under [this chapter](#).

(4) Districts are not required to maintain seating space on school buses for students who are otherwise to be provided transportation under [this subsection](#) if the students do not or will not regularly utilize the district’s transportation service for extended periods during the school year. The student, or the student’s parent or legal guardian if the student is less than eighteen years of age, shall be notified by the district before transportation services may be suspended, and the suspension may continue until the student, or the student’s parent or legal guardian, notifies the district that regular student ridership will continue.

b. For the purposes of [this subsection](#), “high school” means a school which commences with either grade nine or grade ten, as determined by the board of directors of the school district or by the governing authority of the nonpublic school in the case of nonpublic schools.

c. Boards in their discretion may provide transportation for some or all resident pupils attending public school or pupils who attend nonpublic schools who are not entitled to transportation. Boards in their discretion may collect from the parent or guardian of the pupil not more than the pro rata cost for such optional transportation, determined as provided in [subsection 12](#).

2. Any pupil may be required to meet a school bus on the approved route a distance of not to exceed three-fourths of a mile without reimbursement.

3. In a district where transportation by school bus is impracticable, where necessary to implement a whole grade sharing agreement under [section 282.10](#), or where school bus service is not available, the board may require parents or guardians to furnish transportation for their children to the schools designated for attendance. Except as provided in [section 285.3](#), the parent or guardian shall be reimbursed for such transportation service for public and nonpublic school pupils by the board of the resident district in an amount equal to eighty dollars plus seventy-five percent of the difference between eighty dollars and the previous school year’s statewide average per pupil transportation cost, as determined by the department of education. However, a parent or guardian shall not receive reimbursement for furnishing transportation for more than three family members who attend elementary school and one family member who attends high school.

4. In all districts where unsatisfactory roads or other conditions make it advisable, the board at its discretion may require the parents or guardians of public and nonpublic school pupils to furnish transportation for their children up to two miles to connect with vehicles of transportation. The parents or guardians shall be reimbursed for such transportation by the boards of the resident districts at the rate of twenty-eight cents per mile per day, one way, per family for the distance from the pupil's residence to the bus route.

5. Where transportation by school bus is impracticable or not available or other existing conditions warrant it, arrangements may be made for use of common carriers according to uniform standards established by the director of the department of education and at a cost based upon the actual cost of service and approved by the board.

6. When the school designated for attendance of pupils is engaged in the transportation of pupils, the sending or designating school shall use these facilities and pay the pro rata cost of transportation except that a district sending pupils to another school may make other arrangements when it can be shown that such arrangements will be more efficient and economical than to use facilities of the receiving school, providing such arrangements are approved by the board of the area education agency.

7. If a local board closes either elementary or high school facilities and is approved by the board of the area education agency to operate its own transportation equipment, the full cost of transportation shall be paid by the board for all pupils living beyond the statutory walking distance from the school designated for attendance.

8. Transportation service may be suspended upon any day or days, due to inclemency of the weather, conditions of roads, or the existence of other conditions, by the board of the school district operating the buses, when in their judgment it is deemed advisable and when the school or schools are closed to all children.

9. Distance to school or to a bus route shall in all cases be measured on the public highway only and over the most passable and safest route as determined by the area education agency board, starting in the roadway opposite the private entrance to the residence of the pupil and ending in the roadway opposite the entrance to the school grounds or designated point on bus route.

10. The board in any district providing transportation for nonresident pupils shall collect the pro rata cost of transportation from the district of pupil's residence for all properly designated pupils so transported.

11. Boards in districts operating buses may transport nonresident pupils who attend public school, kindergarten through junior college, who are not entitled to free transportation provided they collect the pro rata cost of transportation from the parents.

12. The pro rata cost of transportation shall be based upon the actual cost for all the children transported in all school buses. It shall include one-seventh of the original net cost of the bus and other items as determined and approved by the director of the department of education but no part of the capital outlay cost for school buses and transportation equipment for which the school district is reimbursed from state funds or that portion of the cost of the operation of a school bus used in transporting pupils to and from extracurricular activities shall be included in determining the pro rata cost. In a district where, because of unusual conditions, the cost of transportation is in excess of the actual operating cost of the bus route used to furnish transportation to nonresident pupils, the board of the local district may charge a cost equal to the cost of other schools supplying such service to that area, upon receiving approval of the director of the department of education.

13. When a local board fails to pay transportation costs due to another school for transportation service rendered, the board of the creditor corporation shall file a sworn statement with the area education agency board specifying the amount due. The agency board shall check such claim and if the claim is valid shall certify to the county auditor. The auditor shall transmit to the county treasurer an order directing the county treasurer to transfer the amount of such claim from the funds of the debtor corporation to the creditor corporation and the treasurer shall pay the same accordingly.

14. Resident pupils attending a nonpublic school located either within or without the school district of the pupil's residence shall be entitled to transportation on the same basis as provided for resident public school pupils under [this section](#). The public school district

providing transportation to a nonpublic school pupil shall determine the days on which bus service is provided, which shall be based upon the days for which bus service is provided to public school pupils, and the public school district shall determine bus schedules and routes. In the case of nonpublic school pupils the term “*school designated for attendance*” means the nonpublic school which is designated for attendance by the parents of the nonpublic school pupil.

15. If the nonpublic school designated for attendance is located within the public school district in which the pupil is a resident, the pupil shall be transported to the nonpublic school designated for attendance as provided in [this section](#).

16. *a.* If the nonpublic school designated for attendance of a pupil is located outside the boundary line of the school district of the pupil’s residence, the pupil may be transported by the district of residence to a public school or other location within the district of the pupil’s residence. A public school district in which a nonpublic school is located may establish school bus collection locations within its district from which nonresident nonpublic school pupils may be transported to and from a nonpublic school located in the district. If a pupil receives such transportation, the district of the pupil’s residence shall be relieved of any requirement to provide transportation.

b. As an alternative to paragraph “*a*” of [this subsection](#), subject to [section 285.9, subsection 3](#), where practicable, and at the option of the public school district in which a nonpublic school pupil resides, the school district may transport a nonpublic school pupil to a nonpublic school located outside the boundary lines of the public school district if the nonpublic school is located in a school district contiguous to the school district which is transporting the nonpublic school pupils, or may contract with the contiguous public school district in which a nonpublic school is located for the contiguous school district to transport the nonpublic school pupils to the nonpublic school of attendance within the boundary lines of the contiguous school district.

c. If the nonpublic school designated for attendance of a pupil is located outside the boundary line of the school district of the pupil’s residence and the district of residence meets the requirements of [subsections 14, 15](#), and [this subsection](#) by using [subsection 17](#), paragraph “*c*”, and the district in which the nonpublic school is located is contiguous to the district of the pupil’s residence and is willing to provide transportation under [subsection 17](#), paragraph “*a*” or “*b*”, the district in which the nonpublic school is located may provide transportation services, subject to [section 285.9, subsection 3](#), and may make the claim for reimbursement under [section 285.2](#). The district in which the nonpublic school is located shall notify the district of the pupil’s residence that it is making the claim for reimbursement, and the district of the pupil’s residence shall be relieved of the requirement for providing transportation and shall not make a claim for reimbursement for those nonpublic school pupils for which a claim is filed by the district in which the nonpublic school is located.

17. The public school district may meet the requirements of [subsections 14 through 16](#) by any of the following:

a. Transportation in a school bus operated by a public school district.

b. Contracting with private parties as provided in [section 285.5](#). However, contracts shall not provide payment in excess of the average per pupil transportation costs of the school district for that year.

c. Utilizing the transportation reimbursement provision of [subsection 3](#).

d. Contracting with a contiguous public school district to transport resident nonpublic school pupils the entire distance from the nonpublic pupil’s residence to the nonpublic school located in the contiguous public school district or from the boundary line of the public school district to the nonpublic school.

18. The director of the department of education may review all transportation arrangements to see that they meet all legal and established uniform standard requirements.

19. Transportation authorized by [this chapter](#) is exempt from all laws of this state regulating common carriers.

20. Transportation for which the pro rata cost or other charge is collected shall not be provided outside the state of Iowa except in accordance with rules adopted by the department

of education in accordance with [chapter 17A](#). The rules shall take into account any applicable federal requirements.

21. Boards in districts operating buses may in their discretion transport senior citizens, children, persons with disabilities, and other persons and groups, who are not otherwise entitled to free transportation, and shall collect the pro rata cost of transportation. Transportation under [this subsection](#) shall not be provided when the school bus is being used to transport pupils to or from school unless the board determines that such transportation is desirable and will not interfere with or delay the transportation of pupils.

22. Notwithstanding [subsection 1](#), paragraph “a”, subparagraph (1), a parent or guardian of an elementary pupil entitled to transportation pursuant to [subsection 1](#), may request that a child care facility be designated for purposes of [subsection 9](#) rather than the residence of the pupil. The request shall be submitted for a period of time of at least one semester and may not be submitted more than twice during a school year.

[S13, §2794-b, -c, -d, -e; SS15, §2794-a, -g; C24, 27, 31, §4179 – 4181, 4184, 4186; C35, §4179 – 4181, 4184, 4186, 4233-e5; C39, §4179 – 4181, 4184, 4186, 4233.5; C46, §276.26, 276.28, 276.29, 276.32, 276.34, 279.20, 285.1, 285.5; C50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.1]

85 Acts, ch 212, §21; 86 Acts, ch 1246, §135; 87 Acts, ch 6, §1; 87 Acts, ch 115, §42; 87 Acts, ch 233, §488; 88 Acts, ch 1263, §11; 93 Acts, ch 127, §4; 94 Acts, ch 1060, §1, 2; 95 Acts, ch 209, §15; 96 Acts, ch 1129, §113; 99 Acts, ch 192, §33; 2007 Acts, ch 148, §9; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §109; 2021 Acts, ch 80, §153, 154; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §1052

Referred to in §257.16C, 257.31, 282.1, 282.18, 285.2, 285.3, 285.11, 321.18, 331.502

Parent or guardian required to transport pupil participating in open enrollment without reimbursement to receiving district’s regular school bus route; §282.18

285.2 Payment of claims for nonpublic school pupil transportation.

1. a. Boards of directors of school districts shall be required to provide transportation services to nonpublic school pupils as provided in [section 285.1](#) when the general assembly appropriates funds to the department of education for the payment of claims for transportation costs submitted by the school district.

b. There is appropriated from the general fund of the state to the department of education funds sufficient to pay the approved claims of public school districts for transportation services to nonpublic school pupils as provided in [this section](#). The portion of the amount appropriated for approved claims under [section 285.1](#), [subsection 3](#), shall be determined under [section 285.3](#).

2. The costs of providing transportation to nonpublic school pupils as provided in [section 285.1](#) shall not be included in the computation of district cost under [chapter 257](#), but shall be shown in the budget as an expense from miscellaneous income. Any transportation reimbursements received by a local school district for transporting nonpublic school pupils shall not affect district cost limitations of [chapter 257](#). The reimbursements provided in [this section](#) are miscellaneous income as defined in [section 257.2](#).

3. a. Claims for reimbursement shall be made to the department of education by the public school district providing transportation or transportation reimbursement during a school year on a form prescribed by the department, and the claim shall state the services provided and the actual costs incurred. A claim shall not exceed the average transportation costs of the district per pupil transported except as otherwise provided. If transportation is provided under [section 285.1](#), [subsection 3](#), the amount of a claim shall be determined under [section 285.3](#) regardless of the average transportation costs of the district per pupil transported.

b. Claims shall be accompanied by an affidavit of an officer of the public school district affirming the accuracy of the claim.

c. By February 1 and on or about June 15 of each year, the department shall certify to the department of administrative services the amounts of approved claims to be paid, and the department of administrative services shall draw warrants payable to school districts which have established claims.

4. a. Claims shall be allowed where practical, and at the option of the public school district of the pupil’s residence, subject to approval by the area education agency of the pupil’s residence, under [section 285.9](#), [subsection 3](#), the public school district of the pupil’s

residence may transport a pupil to a school located in a contiguous public school district outside the boundary lines of the public school district of the pupil's residence.

b. The public school district of the pupil's residence may contract with the contiguous public school district or with a private contractor under [section 285.5](#) to transport the pupils to the school of attendance within the boundary lines of the contiguous public school district. The public school district in which the pupil resides may contract with the contiguous public school district or with a private contractor under [section 285.5](#) to transport the pupil from the pupil's residence or from designated school bus collection locations to the school located within the boundary lines of the contiguous public school district, subject to the approval of the area education agency of the pupil's residence. The public school district of the pupil's residence may utilize the reimbursement provisions of [section 285.1, subsection 3](#).

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §285.2]

[84 Acts, ch 1302, §19](#); [86 Acts, ch 1246, §136, 137](#); [89 Acts, ch 135, §92](#); [94 Acts, ch 1181, §14, 18](#); [95 Acts, ch 214, §10, 11](#); [2003 Acts, ch 145, §286](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1061, §180](#)

Referred to in [§285.1](#)

See Iowa Acts for provisions relating to appropriations for approved claims in a given year

285.3 Parental reimbursement for nonpublic school pupil transportation.

1. A parent or legal guardian of a student attending an accredited nonpublic school, who furnishes transportation for the student pursuant to [section 285.1, subsection 17, paragraph "c"](#), and who meets the requirements of [subsection 2 of this section](#), is entitled to reimbursement equal to an amount calculated under the provisions of [section 285.1, subsection 3](#). In addition, a parent or guardian who transports one or more family members more than four miles to their nonpublic school of attendance shall be entitled to one supplemental mileage payment per family, per claim period, equal to thirteen percent of the parental reimbursement for the claim period rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

2. To qualify for parental reimbursement under [subsection 1](#), a parent or guardian of a student attending an accredited nonpublic school who furnishes transportation for the student in accordance with [this section](#), shall submit a notice of nonpublic school attendance to the resident public school district, notifying the district that the student is enrolled in and will attend an accredited nonpublic school during the period for which parental reimbursement is being requested. The notice shall be filed with the resident public school district not later than December 1 for the first semester claim and May 1 for the second semester claim each year. The notice shall include the parent's name and address, the name, age, and grade level of the student, and the name of the nonpublic school and its location. The resident public school district shall submit claims for reimbursement to the department of education on behalf of the parent or guardian if the parent or guardian meets the requirements of [this section](#).

[87 Acts, ch 6, §2](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1140, §26](#)

Referred to in [§285.1, 285.2](#)

285.4 Pupils sent to another district.

1. When a board closes its elementary school facilities for lack of pupils or by action of the board, it shall, if there is a school bus service available in the area, designate for attendance the school operating the buses, provided the board of such school is willing to receive them and the facilities and curricular offerings are adequate. The board of the district where the pupils reside may with the approval of the area education agency board, subject to legal limitations and established uniform standards, designate another rural school and provide their own transportation if the transportation costs will be less than to use the established bus service.

2. All designations must be submitted to the area education agency board on or before July 15, for review and approval. The agency board shall after due investigation alter or change designations to make them conform to legal requirements and established uniform standards for making designations and for locating and establishing bus routes. After designations are made, they will remain the same from year to year except that on or before July 15, of each year, the rural board or parents may petition the agency board for a change of designation to another school. Appeals from the decision of the agency board on designations may be made

by either the parents or board to the director of the department of education as provided in [section 285.12](#) and [section 285.13](#).

[C35, §4274-e1, -e3, -e4, -e6; C39, §4274.03, 4274.05, 4274.06, 4274.08; C46, §282.10, 282.12, 282.13, 282.15, 285.4; C50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.4]

[85 Acts, ch 212, §21](#); [2021 Acts, ch 76, §150](#)

285.5 Contracts for transportation.

1. a. Contracts for school bus service with private parties shall be in writing and be for the transportation of children who attend public school and children who attend nonpublic school. Such contracts shall define the route, the length of time, service contracted for, the compensation, and the vehicle to be used. The contract shall prescribe the duties of the contractor and driver of the vehicles and shall provide that every person in charge of a vehicle conveying children to and from school shall be at all times subject to any rules said board shall adopt for the protection of the children, or to govern the conduct of the persons in charge of said conveyance. Contracts may be made for a period not to exceed three years.

b. The contract shall provide that the contractor will sell the equipment to the board should the contractor desire to terminate the contract, provided the board should desire to purchase said equipment, the price of the equipment to be determined by an appraisal board composed of one person appointed by the school board, one appointed by the owner of the equipment, and a third selected by these two.

2. The contractor shall operate the vehicle or provide a driver who must be approved by the board. The contractor and driver shall be subject to all laws and prescribed standards for school bus drivers. Failure to comply shall constitute grounds for dismissal of the driver or cancellation of the contract if the board so desires.

3. All vehicles of transportation provided by contractor shall be inspected, approved and certified before being put into operation.

4. All contracts may be terminated by either party on a ninety-day notice.

5. The director of the department of education shall prepare a uniform contract containing provisions not in conflict with [this chapter](#) which shall be used by all schools in contracting for transportation service.

6. All contractors shall carry liability insurance in amounts and kind as provided in the official contract.

7. All contracts for transportation service and for drivers of school-owned and operated buses shall be made with someone outside the board except where no other transportation service is available, a board member may transport the member's own children.

8. Private buses other than common carriers not used exclusively in transportation of pupils while under contract to a school district shall meet all requirements for school-owned buses, as to construction and operation.

9. All bus drivers for school-owned equipment shall be under contract with the board. The director of the department of education shall prepare a uniform contract containing provision not in conflict with [this chapter](#) which shall be used by all school boards in contracting with drivers of school-owned vehicles.

[SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4182, 4183; C46, §276.30, 276.31; C50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.5]

[85 Acts, ch 212, §21](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1061, §180](#); [2011 Acts, ch 25, §24](#)

Referred to in [§285.1, 285.2, 452A.17](#)

285.6 Personnel — expenses.

The director of the department of education shall employ the necessary qualified personnel to implement [this chapter](#). The appropriation provided by [this chapter](#) may be expended in part for the direction and supervision provided by the chapter which shall include salaries and all necessary traveling expense incurred by personnel in the performance of their official duties.

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.6]

[85 Acts, ch 212, §22](#); [86 Acts, ch 1245, §1488](#)

285.7 Reserved.

285.8 Powers and duties of department.

The powers and duties of the department shall be to:

1. Exercise general supervision over the school transportation system in the state.
2. Review and establish the location of bus routes which are located in more than one area education agency when the area education agency boards of the affected area education agencies after formal action do not approve.
3. Establish uniform standards for locating and operating bus routes and for the protection of the health and safety of pupils transported.
4. Inspect or cause to be inspected all vehicles used as school buses to transport school children to determine if such vehicles meet all legal and established standards of construction and can be operated with safety, comfort, and economy. When it is determined that further use of such vehicles is dangerous to the pupils transported and to the safety and welfare of the traveling public, the department of education shall order such vehicle to be withdrawn from further use on a specified date. School buses which do not conform to the requirements of the department of education may be issued a temporary certificate of operation provided that such school buses can be operated with safety, and provided further that no such certificate shall be issued for a period in excess of one year. All equipment can be required to be altered, or safety equipment added in order to make vehicles reasonably safe for operation. New buses after initial inspection and approval shall be issued a seal of inspection. After each annual inspection a seal of inspection and approval shall be issued. Said seals shall be mounted on the lower right hand corner of the windshield.
5. Aid in the enforcement of the motor vehicle laws relating to the transportation of school children.
6. Prescribe uniform standards and regulations:
 - a. For the efficient operation and maintenance of school transportation equipment and for the protection of the health and safety of children transported.
 - b. For locating and establishing bus routes.
 - c. For procedures and requirements in making designations.
 - d. For standard of safety in construction of school transportation equipment.
 - e. For procedures for purchase of buses.
 - f. For qualification of school bus drivers.
 - g. As deemed necessary for the efficient administration of [this chapter](#).
7. Review all transportation arrangements when deemed necessary and shall disapprove any arrangements that are not in conformity with the law and established standards and require the same to be altered or changed so that they do conform.
8. Conduct schools of instruction for transportation personnel as needed or requested.
9. Establish a fee for conducting school bus inspections in accordance with [subsection 4](#) and issuing school bus driver authorizations in accordance with [section 321.376](#), which shall not exceed the budgeted cost for conducting inspections and administering authorizations.

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.8]

[85 Acts, ch 212, §24](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1140, §27](#)

285.9 Powers and duties of area boards.

The powers and duties of the respective area education agency boards shall be to:

1. Enforce all laws and all rules and regulations of the department of education relating to transportation.
2. Review and approve all transportation arrangements between districts in the agency and in all districts in the agency not operating high schools. If such transportation arrangements, designations, and contracts are not in conformity to law or established uniform standards for the locating and operating of bus routes, the agency board shall, after receiving all facts, make such alterations or changes as necessary to make the arrangements, designations, and contracts conform to the legal and established requirements and shall notify local board of such action.

3. Approve all bus routes outside the boundary of the district of the school operating buses.

4. When a local board fails to make designations and other necessary arrangements for transportation as required by law, the agency board shall, after due notice to the local board, make necessary arrangements in conformity with law and established requirements. Notice shall be given to the local board of the arrangements as made. The arrangements shall be binding on the local board which shall pay the costs for service as arranged.

[C35, §4274-e1, -e2; C39, §4274.03, 4274.04; C46, §282.10, 282.11, 285.9; C50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.9]

Referred to in [§285.1](#), [285.2](#)

285.10 Powers and duties of local boards.

The powers and duties of the local school boards shall be to:

1. Provide transportation for each resident pupil who attends public school, and each resident pupil who attends a nonpublic school, and who is entitled to transportation under the laws of this state.

2. Establish, maintain, and operate bus routes for the transportation of pupils so as to provide for the economical and efficient operation thereof without duplication of facilities, and to properly safeguard the health and safety of the pupils transported.

3. Purchase or lease buses and other transportation facilities, and maintain same, and to enter into contracts for transportation subject to any provisions of law affecting same.

4. Employ such drivers and other employees as may be necessary and prescribe their qualifications and adopt rules for their conduct.

5. Exercise any and all powers and duties relating to transportation of pupils enjoined upon them by law.

6. Shall purchase liability insurance and other insurance coverage which the board deems advisable to insure the school district, its officers, employees, and agents against liability incurred as a result of operating school buses, including but not limited to liability to pupils or other persons lawfully transported. [Section 670.7](#) shall apply to such insurance. However, the board of directors in its discretion shall determine the insurance coverages and limits, and the school district and directors shall not be liable as a result of any such discretionary decision.

7. When a school qualifies to purchase buses, they may be purchased as follows:

a. From funds available in the general fund or in the physical plant and equipment levy fund.

b. By purchasing buses and entering into contracts to pay for such buses over a five-year period as follows: one-fourth of the cost when the bus is delivered and the balance in equal annual installments, plus simple interest due. The interest rate shall be the lowest rate available and shall not exceed the rate in effect under [section 74A.2](#). The bus shall serve as security for balance due. Competitive bids on comparable equipment shall be requested on all school bus purchases and shall be based upon minimum construction standards established by the department of education. Bids shall be requested unless the bus is a used or demonstrator bus.

8. Boards in school districts which have sufficient resident pupils they are required to transport to warrant the purchase of transportation equipment may purchase buses needed to provide the transportation.

9. In the discretion of the board, furnish a school bus and services of a qualified driver to an organization of, or sponsoring activities for, senior citizens, children, persons with disabilities, or other persons and groups in this state. The board shall charge and collect an amount sufficient to reimburse all costs of furnishing the bus and driver except when the bus is used for transporting pupils to and from extracurricular activities sponsored by the school. A school bus shall be used as provided in [this subsection](#) only at times when it is not needed for transportation of pupils.

10. In the discretion of the board, furnish a school bus and services of a qualified driver for transportation of persons other than pupils to activities in which pupils from the school are participants or are attending the activity or for which the school is a sponsor. The board

shall charge and collect an amount sufficient to reimburse all costs of furnishing the bus and driver. A school bus shall be used as provided in [this subsection](#) only at times when it is not needed for transportation of pupils.

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.10]

[92 Acts, ch 1187, §5](#); [93 Acts, ch 127, §5](#); [94 Acts, ch 1029, §21](#); [96 Acts, ch 1129, §113](#); [2003 Acts, ch 180, §52](#); [2004 Acts, ch 1086, §58](#)

Referred to in [§279.48, 285.11, 321.18](#)

285.11 Bus routes — basis of operation.

The establishment and operation of bus routes and the contracting for transportation shall be based upon the following considerations:

1. Each bus route shall be planned and adjusted to utilize the normal seating capacity of each bus insofar as it is possible to do so.

2. Each bus route shall serve only those pupils living in those areas where transportation by bus is the most economical method for providing adequate transportation facilities.

3. A route shall not be extended for the purpose of accommodating pupils whose homes are nearer another bus route.

4. Special contracts for transportation of pupils entitled to transportation shall be entered into only when it is more economical to make such special provision than to provide same by regular bus route, or when by reason of physical or mental disability of the pupil such pupil cannot be transported with safety by bus.

5. The boards shall take advantage of all tax exemptions on fuel, equipment, and of such other economies as are available.

6. The use of school buses shall be restricted to transporting pupils to and from school and to and from extracurricular activities sponsored by the school when such extracurricular activity is under the direction of a qualified member of the faculty and a part of the regular school program and to transporting other persons to the extent permitted by [section 285.1, subsection 1](#), and [section 285.10, subsections 9 and 10](#). School employees of districts operating buses may be transported to and from school and approved activities which they are required to attend as a result of their responsibilities. Provided, however, nothing in [this subsection](#) shall prohibit the use of school buses in transporting a school teacher going to and from the teacher's school when such school is on an established school bus route and such teacher makes arrangements with the district operating such school bus.

7. No bus shall leave the public highway to receive or discharge pupils unless their safety is enhanced thereby, or the private road is maintained in the same manner as a public roadway.

8. Bus routes shall be established only to give service to properly designated pupils.

[C39, [§4179.1](#); C46, [§276.27](#), 285.11; C50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.11]

[90 Acts, ch 1230, §4](#); [96 Acts, ch 1129, §113](#); [2006 Acts, ch 1152, §45](#)

285.12 Disputes — hearings and appeals.

In the event of a disagreement between a school patron and the board of the school district, the patron if dissatisfied with the decision of the district board, may appeal to the area education agency board, notifying the secretary of the district in writing within ten days of the decision of the board and by filing an affidavit of appeal with the agency board within the ten-day period. The affidavit of appeal shall include the reasons for the appeal and points at issue. The secretary of the local board on receiving notice of appeal shall certify all papers to the agency board which shall hear the appeal within ten days of the receipt of the papers and decide it within three days of the conclusion of the hearing and shall immediately notify all parties of its decision. Either party may appeal the decision of the agency board to the director of the department of education by notifying the opposite party and the agency administrator in writing within five days after receipt of notice of the decision of the agency board and by filing with the director of the department of education an affidavit of appeal, reasons for appeal, and the facts involved in the disagreement within five days after receipt of notice of the decision of the agency board. The agency administrator shall, within ten days of receipt of the notice, file with the director all records and papers pertaining to the case, including action of the agency board. The director shall hear the appeal within fifteen

days of the filing of the records in the director's office, notifying all parties and the agency administrator of the date and time of hearing. The director shall notify all parties of the decision and return all papers with a copy of the decision to the agency administrator. The decision of the director shall be subject to judicial review in accordance with [chapter 17A](#). Pending final order made by the director, upon any appeal prosecuted to such director, the order of the agency board from which the appeal is taken shall be operative and be in full force and effect.

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.12]

[85 Acts, ch 212, §21 – 23](#); [2001 Acts, ch 159, §15](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1140, §28](#); [2003 Acts, ch 108, §127, 132](#)

Referred to in [§285.4, 285.13](#)

285.13 Disagreements between boards.

In the event of a disagreement between the board of a school district and the board of an area education agency, the board of the school district may appeal to the director of the department of education and the procedure and times provided for in [section 285.12](#) shall prevail in any such case. The decision of the director shall be subject to judicial review in accordance with the terms of the Iowa administrative procedure Act, [chapter 17A](#).

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.13]

[85 Acts, ch 212, §21](#); [2003 Acts, ch 44, §114](#)

Referred to in [§285.4](#)

285.14 Nonstandard buses — penalties.

1. Any person who operates or permits to be operated as a school bus to transport pupils, any vehicle which does not comply with the requirements provided by law or by the rules and regulations of the department of education, or for which there is not a valid temporary certificate for operation, shall be guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

2. A vehicle used for an approved driver education course in which the driver education teacher transports driver education students from their residences for street or highway driving is not a school bus.

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.14]

[2021 Acts, ch 76, §150](#)

285.15 Forfeiture of reimbursement rights.

The failure of any local district to comply with the provisions of [this chapter](#) or any other laws relating to the transportation of pupils, or any rules made by the department of education under [this chapter](#) or the final decisions of the area education agency board, or the final decisions of the department of education shall during the period such failure to comply existed forfeit the rights to collect transportation costs from school or parents while operating in such illegal manner. Any superintendent, board, or board member who knowingly operates or permits to be operated any school bus transporting public school pupils in violation of any school transportation law shall be deemed guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §285.15]

285.16 “Nonpublic school” defined.

As used in [this chapter](#), “nonpublic school” means those nonpublic schools accredited by the department of education as provided in [section 256.11](#) and nonpublic institutions which comply with state board of education standards for providing special education programs.

[C79, 81, §285.16]

[87 Acts, ch 115, §43](#)

Referred to in [§257.11B](#)