

**House File 2109 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 2109

BY SIEGRIST

(COMPANION TO SF 2047 BY  
DAWSON)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to school buses and other vehicles used to  
2 transport pupils.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 321.1, subsection 69, paragraph d, Code  
2 2024, is amended to read as follows:

3 d. New or used motor vehicles designed to carry not more  
4 than ~~ten~~ twelve persons as passengers, including the driver,  
5 ~~or used passenger vans designed to carry not more than twelve~~  
6 ~~persons as passengers, including the driver,~~ either school  
7 owned or privately owned, which are used to transport pupils  
8 to activity events in which the pupils are participants or  
9 used to transport pupils to their homes in case of illness or  
10 other emergency situations. The vehicles operated under the  
11 provisions of this paragraph shall be operated by employees of  
12 the school district who are specifically approved by the local  
13 superintendent of schools for the assignment.

14 Sec. 2. Section 321.373, subsection 2, Code 2024, is amended  
15 to read as follows:

16 2. Rules prescribed for school buses shall provide  
17 standards for structural strength, materials, and insulation  
18 of the school bus body; color; seat and aisle arrangement;  
19 dimension and construction of service door; control of the  
20 front door or doors; emergency door and its location and  
21 construction; windows; roof ventilators; heaters; location,  
22 filling, and draining of the fuel tank; bumpers and how they  
23 shall be attached to the bus; lettering and identification  
24 of the bus; stop signal arm; and warning lights and flashing  
25 lights; and shall authorize the use of vehicles modified or  
26 manufactured to accommodate wheelchair access with or without  
27 the use of a ramp.

28 Sec. 3. Section 321.373, subsection 3, paragraphs a and c,  
29 Code 2024, are amended to read as follows:

30 a. The rules prescribed for school buses shall include  
31 special rules for passenger automobiles, and other vehicles  
32 designed to carry ~~ten~~ twelve or fewer persons, including the  
33 driver, when used as school buses.

34 c. The rules shall allow new or used passenger vans designed  
35 to carry twelve or fewer passengers, including the driver, and

1 weighing ten thousand pounds or less, to be used as school  
2 buses if the van does not carry more passengers than there are  
3 safety belts or safety harnesses in the van as installed by  
4 the manufacturer. The operator of the van shall comply with  
5 the qualification, licensing, and instruction requirements set  
6 forth in sections 321.375 and 321.376.

7 EXPLANATION

8 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
9 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

10 Under current law, every vehicle operated for the  
11 transportation of children to or from school is considered  
12 a school bus, with limited exceptions including new or used  
13 motor vehicles designed to carry not more than 10 persons  
14 as passengers, including the driver, or used passenger vans  
15 designed to carry not more than 12 persons as passengers,  
16 including the driver, which are used to transport pupils to  
17 activity events or in emergency situations if the vehicle is  
18 operated by an approved employee of the school district.

19 This bill instead excludes from the definition of "school  
20 bus" all new or used motor vehicles designed to carry not more  
21 than 12 persons as passengers, including the driver, which  
22 are used to transport pupils to activity events in which the  
23 pupils are participants, or used to transport pupils to their  
24 homes in case of illness or other emergency situations. The  
25 bill makes corresponding changes to related provisions in Code  
26 section 321.373. In accordance with current law, the vehicles  
27 must be operated by employees of the school district who are  
28 specifically approved by the local superintendent of schools  
29 for the assignment.

30 Current department of education (DE) administrative rules  
31 prohibit the use of ramps on a vehicle operated as a school  
32 bus, except when used on the MV-1 purpose-built wheelchair  
33 accessible vehicle (281 IAC 44.4(2)(g)).

34 The bill requires DE rules to authorize the use of vehicles  
35 modified or manufactured to accommodate wheelchair access with

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1 or without the use of a ramp.