

CHAPTER 26**(SB 18)**

AN ACT relating to school bus equipment.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. KRS 156.153 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) (a) All school buses for which bids are made or bid contracts awarded shall meet the standards and specifications of the Kentucky Department of Education. The term "school bus," as used in this section, shall mean any motor vehicle which meets the standards and specifications for school buses as provided by law or by the standards or specifications of the Kentucky Department of Education authorized by law and used solely in transporting school children and school employees to and from school under the supervision and control and at the direction of school authorities, and shall further include school bus accessory equipment and supplies and replacement equipment considered to be reasonably adaptable for purchase from price contract agreements.
 - (b) *The standards and specifications for accessory equipment and supplies and replacement equipment under paragraph (a) of this subsection shall be based on federal safety standards and shall not discriminate among manufacturers unless the Kentucky Department of Education finds evidence that a specific manufacturer's product is defective or dangerous to use.*
 - (c) *The Kentucky Department of Education shall provide the list of standards and specifications for accessory equipment and supplies and replacement equipment to the Finance and Administration Cabinet for the purposes of maintaining the price contract list required under Section 2 of this Act.*
- (2) Except in cases of emergencies or for the transportation of students with disabilities, only school buses as defined in subsection (1) of this section shall be used for transporting students to and from school along regular bus routes. Districts may use district-owned vehicles that were designed and built by the manufacturer for passenger transportation when transporting nine (9) or fewer passengers, including the driver, for approved school activities. Vehicles used under this subsection shall be clearly marked as transporting students and shall be safety inspected no less than once every thirty (30) days.
- (3) As part of its regular procedure for establishing and updating school bus standards and specifications, the Kentucky Department of Education shall consider allowing school buses to operate using clean transportation fuels, as defined in KRS 186.750. If the department determines that school buses may operate using clean transportation fuels while maintaining the same or a higher degree of safety as fuels currently allowed, it shall update its standards and specifications to allow for such use.

➔SECTION 2. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 45A IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

The Finance and Administration Cabinet shall compile and maintain a list detailing the price contracts for the procurement of school bus accessory equipment and supplies and replacement equipment that meet the standards and specifications adopted by the Kentucky Department of Education under Section 1 of this Act. The cabinet shall provide districts with access to the list.

Signed by Governor March 29, 2024.