

ACTION ALERT



TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

August 19, 2021

As school starts across the state, transportation is taking center stage. What do you do if there are problems with school transportation? Who do you talk to?

While many districts work with community and chartered nonpublic schools to work out transportation issues, challenges remain.

Recent changes to state law in HB 110, which go into effect September 30, require the Ohio Department of Education to oversee and intervene in cases where a school district demonstrates “prolonged and persistent” noncompliance. The Department is still working out how to implement this requirement, but one thing is very clear, if the Department of Education is unaware of issues, they are unlikely to mediate disputes and will not be able to determine prolonged or persistent noncompliance. To ensure there is a record of transportation issues, School Choice Ohio (SCO) recommends:

1. Document everything. Make sure you have copies of all communications, including notes or follow up emails from telephone conversations.
2. Try to work out disputes. Demonstrate you have tried to successfully address concerns.
3. Go on the record with the Department of Education and request assistance. Send an email, including copies of relevant correspondence and a description of the issue to the Department of Education. Address emails to one of the following individuals:

Dr. David Bowlin, Director of Field Services and Pupil
Transportation david.bowlin@education.ohio.gov

Jason Heilman, Pupil Transportation Program
Administrator jason.heilman@education.ohio.gov

Heather Free, Pupil Transportation Program
heather.free@education.ohio.gov

4. You may also contact the Department’s transportation office using these emails:
denise.hoffman@education.ohio.gov or schoolbus@education.ohio.gov

5. If you are a chartered nonpublic school, we recommend you copy: Sue Cosmo (Office Nonpublic Options) Sue.Cosmo@education.ohio.gov
6. If you are a community school, we recommend you copy: Karl Koenig (Office of Community Schools) Karl.Koenig@education.ohio.gov
7. Please also copy Ann Riddle, SCO Director of Provider Outreach ariddle@scoho.org and advocacy@scoho.org to help School Choice Ohio compile a record of transportation issues.

SCO recently broadcast a webinar reviewing school transportation requirements. This webinar includes an overview of several key legislative changes. Use the link below to access the webinar.

<https://zoom.us/rec/share/Ecyxha0TQOAjnG8cmJsis-wtzTgU0ubIiWc9DsTxnjFivojoj7gbmcu52Mg54kQ.s9lGXeZXNR3XHQTD>

Slides from this webinar are available here: <https://scoho.org/school-transportation-webinar>

If SCO can help, please do not hesitate to contact Ann Riddle, Director of Provider Outreach ariddle@scoho.org.