

Tennessee School Bus Specifications Policy 2.400

The Background:

Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-6-2115 specifies “Notwithstanding any rule of the state board of education to the contrary, all school buses purchased by an LEA or private contractor to transport school students shall meet national minimum school bus standards and all applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.”

This first read items proposes updates to the specifications for vehicles with a body build date later than July 1, 2019, and incorporates applicable sections of the National School Transportation & Procedures manual adopted by the 16th National Congress on School Transportation. Additional safety improvements are included which were agreed on by a stakeholder group comprised of representatives from the Department of Education, the Department of Safety, and school bus original equipment manufacturers.

The intent of the proposed recommendations is to better align with current industry standards thereby increasing the safety for Tennessee school bus drivers and the students they transport.

The Fiscal Analysis Impact:

T.C.A. § 49-1-212 requires that the Department prepare a fiscal analysis of any policy, rule, or regulation proposed to the State Board of Education. This item has no financial impact on an LEA.

Policy Justification:

T.C.A. § 4-5-230 requires that justification for adopting an item as a policy instead of a rule be submitted to the chair of the Government Operations Committee. This item is proposed to be adopted as a policy because it defines or explains the meaning of a statute or rule and/or concerns only the internal management of state government that does not affect private rights or privileges.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends acceptance of this item on first reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.