

The Benefits of SB 1630's Pupil Transportation Policy Reforms



Some of Arizona's highest-quality schools are unable to offer pupil transportation thanks to well-meaning but antiquated state law. Many of Arizona's public schools cannot meet the geographic diversity of their students' transportation needs through traditional 60-foot yellow school buses. These buses are expensive to acquire, operate, and maintain, and require a driver with a commercial driver's license. Smaller, lower-cost vehicles would help students living in rural, geographically diverse areas of the state, but also assist urban families who have the opportunity to attend a school that is miles across town. **SB 1630 makes the following improvements:**

1. Enabling the Use of 11-to-15 Passenger Vehicles in Pupil Transportation

- ❖ Allows the use of 11-to-15 passenger vehicles that have been successfully and safely operated by transit agencies decades.
- ❖ Permits these vehicles as a tailored, environmentally friendly pupil transportation solution for rural, suburban, and urban areas.
- ❖ Includes generated route mileage in the Transportation Support Level.

2. Modernizing School Transportation Governance

- ❖ Renames School Bus Advisory Council to the Student Transportation Advisory Council.
- ❖ Increases council membership from 9 to 14 to include representatives of public charter schools, with electric vehicle expertise, and the broader public.
- ❖ Encourages consideration of vehicles beyond the traditional yellow bus.

3. Assuring Safety in Pupil Transportation

- ❖ Requires the Department of Public Safety to issue new regulations on 11-to-15 passenger vehicles used in pupil transportation.
- ❖ Requires operators of these vehicles to meet the same standards as yellow bus drivers, minus the commercial driver's license required for operating heavy-duty trucks and buses.
- ❖ Any vehicle type must be assessed by the Department before it can transport students.

Reason Policy Contacts —

- Aaron Garth Smith, Director of Education Policy (aaron.smith@reason.org)
- Marc Scribner, Senior Transportation Policy Analyst (marc.scribner@reason.org)

Reason Foundation is a national 501(c)(3) public policy research and education organization with expertise across a range of policy areas, including public sector pensions, transportation, infrastructure, education, and criminal justice. For more information about Reason Foundation's approach to education and transportation policy, visit reason.org