

CHAPTER 27

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Authority

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SUBCHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

6A:27-1.1 Authority

(a) As used in this chapter, the term "district board(s) of education" shall refer to both district boards of education and coordinated transportation services agencies.

(b) District boards of education shall provide transportation pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 et seq. and shall adopt policies and procedures governing the transportation of students to and from school and school related activities.

(c) Suspension of the operation of transportation services due to inclement weather or other conditions shall be the responsibility of the district board of education providing the transportation services.

6A:27-1.2 Students that shall be transported

(a) Transportation shall be provided to public school students who reside remote from their assigned school of attendance, nonpublic school students who reside remote from their school of attendance and meet the eligibility criteria of N.J.A.C. 6A:27-2.2, and special education students who reside remote from their assigned school or who require transportation services in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

1. The words "remote from the school of attendance" shall mean beyond two and one-half miles for high school students (grades nine through 12) and beyond two miles for elementary school students (grades preschool through eight).

2. For the purpose of determining eligibility for student transportation, measurement shall be made by the shortest route along public roadways or public walkways from the entrance of the student's residence nearest such public roadway or public walkway to the nearest public entrance of the school which the student attends.

6A:27-1.3 Students that may be transported

(a) District boards of education may provide for the transportation of students who reside less than remote from their school in accordance with their local policies and at their own expense.

1. District boards of education may elect to charge parents or legal guardians for all or part of the cost of this service in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1.3.

(b) Municipal governments may elect to pay the cost of transportation for students who live less than remote from their school through an interlocal agreement with the district board of education in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1.2. Municipalities may elect to charge parents or legal guardians for all or part of the cost of this service.

(c) Students may not be excluded from receiving services described under this section who are unable to pay because of financial hardship. The criteria used to determine financial hardship shall be the same as the Statewide eligibility standards established for free and reduced price meals under the State school lunch program.

6A:27-1.4 Passengers

A district board of education shall ensure that only enrolled eligible public school students, eligible private school students, adults serving as chaperons or authorized school personnel are transported.

6A:27-1.5 Insurance

(a) Anyone providing for the transportation of students to and from school or school related activities shall furnish liability insurance for bodily injury and property damage in a minimum amount of \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for all vehicles which are used for this purpose.

(b) Insurance shall be obtained through a company authorized to issue insurance in New Jersey and shall cover the district board(s) of education and any transportation agency providing for joint transportation services for the resident district as an additional named insured.

1. Parents or legal guardians transporting only their own child or children shall be exempt from the requirement to provide the certificate of insurance that names the district board of education as an additional named insured.

(c) Self-insured transportation contractors and district boards of education as provided in N.J.S.A. 48:4-12 and 13 shall file a certificate of self-insurance with the county superintendent of schools.

(d) Policies or certificates of insurance shall accompany all contracts or contract renewals when they are submitted to the county superintendent of schools for approval.

(e) Policies or certificates of insurance shall be submitted to the district board of education and the county superintendent of schools whenever policies are amended, revised or renewed.

SUBCHAPTER 2. NONPUBLIC SCHOOL
TRANSPORTATION**6A:27-2.1 General provisions**

(a) Transportation or aid in lieu of transportation shall be provided in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 et seq.

(b) District boards of education shall advertise and receive bids for nonpublic school transportation before a determination is made to provide transportation or aid in lieu of transportation.

1. Resident district boards of education which paid aid in lieu of transportation in the prior year or have determined that they cannot provide transportation for the ensuing school year, shall attempt to utilize one of the coordinated transportation services agencies before paying aid in lieu of transportation.

2. The resident district board of education is not required to bid for nonpublic school services when transportation is provided through a renewal of an existing contract, or an agreement with another district board of education.

3. The resident district board of education is not required to bid for nonpublic school services when another district board of education has bid on the resident board's behalf.

(c) The resident district board of education is not required to pay aid in lieu of transportation when the parent or legal guardian of the nonpublic school student returns the signed payment voucher after the end of the fiscal year.

(d) The resident district board of education shall not expend more than the maximum per student expenditure for nonpublic school transportation in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1.

(e) Transportation for nonpublic school students shall be provided Monday through Friday between September 1 and June 30 when the non-profit nonpublic school is in session.

(f) A late application is any request received by the resident district board of education after March 15. Eligible students shall receive transportation or aid in lieu of transportation based upon the date of receipt of the applications for nonpublic school transportation by the resident district board of education.

(g) The payment of aid in lieu of transportation may be adjusted when the request for transportation is received after the start of the nonpublic school's year, or when the student withdraws from the nonpublic school before the close of the school year.

6A:27-2.2 Eligibility requirements

(a) Elementary school students shall reside more than two miles from their nonpublic school and secondary school students shall reside more than two and one-half miles from their nonpublic school to be eligible for transportation services.

(b) Only resident district boards of education which provide transportation to remote public school students attending public school programs other than vocational, special

education or other specialized programs are required to provide transportation services to eligible nonpublic school students.

(c) The nonpublic school shall be located within the State not more than 20 miles from the student's home, and shall not be operated for profit in whole or in part.

1. If a district is located in a county of the third class with a population of not less than 80,000 and not more than 120,000, transportation services shall be provided to a nonpublic school located outside the State not more than 20 miles from the student's home. A third class county is defined as a county that does not border the Atlantic Ocean and has a population between 50,000 and 200,000.

2. Students living more than 20 miles from their nonpublic school are eligible for transportation services when other students living in their municipality, whose residence is less than 20 miles from the school, are transported to the same school. District boards of education may require students living more than 20 miles from the school to utilize existing school bus routes and stops established for students living within 20 miles of the school.

(d) All nonpublic school students eligible for transportation or aid in lieu of transportation shall be enrolled in grades kindergarten through grade 12. Nonpublic school students shall meet the entrance age requirement for the public school students of their resident district board of education in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-5 and 18A:44-2 to be eligible for transportation services.

(e) Expenditures for nonpublic school transportation are limited to the annual maximum statutorily established amount per student in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1. If the cost of transportation to the nonpublic school exceeds this amount, the resident district board of education shall not provide transportation, but shall instead pay the parents or legal guardians of the student aid in lieu of transportation.

6A:27-2.3 Responsibilities of the district board of education

(a) The district board of education shall supply the Application for Nonpublic School Transportation forms, as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, and the procedures for nonpublic school transportation to nonpublic schools located within the school district.

(b) The resident district board of education shall document receipt of applications for nonpublic school transportation and determine students' eligibility for transportation.

(c) The parents or legal guardians of the nonpublic school student and the nonpublic school administrator shall be notified by the district board of education as to the

determination of each application for nonpublic school transportation by August 1 of each year.

(d) District boards of education shall prepare the Nonpublic School Transportation Summary form, as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, and shall submit such forms to the nonpublic school administrators in January and May for certification of each semester, respectively.

(e) The district boards of education shall evaluate the January and May certification reports and, if approved, shall continue to provide transportation services. The Request for Payment of Transportation Aid voucher, as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, shall be sent to all parents or legal guardians of eligible students who are to receive first and second semester aid in lieu of transportation payments. The district board of education shall then pay aid in lieu of transportation to the parents or legal guardians of these students after receiving the signed Request For Payment of Transportation Aid vouchers from the parents or legal guardians.

6A:27-2.4 Responsibilities of the nonpublic school administrator

(a) The administrator of the nonpublic school shall obtain the Application for Nonpublic School Transportation forms from the district board of education in which the nonpublic school is located.

(b) Applications shall be distributed to the parents or legal guardians of students upon registration in the nonpublic school.

(c) The administrator of the nonpublic school shall annually collect the Application for Nonpublic School Transportation from the students' parents or legal guardians and shall submit these forms to the resident district boards of education in which the students reside, within 30 days of the students' registration in the nonpublic school, or by March 15 of the preceding school year in which transportation services are to be provided.

(d) The nonpublic school administrator shall submit the school calendar to the resident district board(s) of education responsible for providing transportation services by May 15, preceding the school year in which transportation is being requested.

(e) The nonpublic school administrator shall certify on forms, prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, that the named students were enrolled for the first and second semesters of the academic year. The nonpublic school administrator shall return these forms to the district board(s) of education as prescribed by the board.

(f) The nonpublic school administrator shall immediately notify the student's resident district board of education when a student eligible for transportation or aid in lieu of transportation has a change in address or withdraws from the nonpublic school.

6A:27-2.5 Responsibilities of the parents or legal guardians of nonpublic school students

(a) It is the responsibility of the parents or legal guardians of a nonpublic school student to annually obtain the Application for Nonpublic School Transportation from the administrator of the nonpublic school in which the student is enrolled.

(b) The parents or legal guardians shall complete the Application for Nonpublic School Transportation annually for each student, and submit the application to the administrator of the nonpublic school by March 10 preceding the school year for which transportation is being requested or at the time of registration in the nonpublic school if registration is after March 10.

1. Any application received after March 10 is considered to be a late application. Eligible students shall receive transportation or aid in lieu of transportation based upon the date the application is received by the resident district board of education.

(c) Parents or legal guardians receiving aid in lieu of transportation shall complete and submit a signed Request for Payment of Transportation Aid voucher to the resident district board of education upon request.

SUBCHAPTER 3. CHARTER SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

6A:27-3.1 General provisions

(a) Transportation or aid in lieu of transportation shall be provided to charter school students pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 et seq. A charter school shall be considered a public school offering a specialized program.

(b) The transportation of students to and from a charter school shall be the responsibility of the board of education of the school district in which each student resides. Students who reside less than remote from their charter school are eligible for transportation in accordance with the policies of the district board of education in which they reside.

(c) Eligible students shall receive transportation or aid in lieu of transportation based upon the date of receipt of the applications for charter school transportation by the district boards of education in which the students reside.

(d) Charter school students who reside in the district or region of residence in which the charter school is located shall be provided with transportation in the same manner as transportation is provided to other public school students residing within the district in which the charter school students reside.

6A:27-7.6 Transportation to and from related school activities

Private vehicles with a capacity of eight or fewer passengers may be used for the transportation of students to and from related school activities, in accordance with policies and regulations adopted by the responsible transporting authority. The policy shall clearly stipulate procedures under which such transportation shall take place safely, including provision for appropriate and adequate insurance coverage and approval of activities and drivers.

6A:27-7.7 Parent transporting his or her own child or children

A parent under contract with a district board of education to transport only his or her own child or children shall not be required to possess a commercial driver's license, to use a vehicle registered as a school bus, or to comply with the health examination prescribed for employees of the district board of education.

6A:27-7.8 Use of school buses other than to and from school and school related activities

(a) The following words and terms, when used in this subchapter, shall have the meanings listed, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

"Contiguous district" means a district adjoining and adjacent to another district and sharing in some part a common boundary within the State of New Jersey. For a regional school district, a contiguous school district shall be an adjoining and adjacent district which shares in some part a common boundary with the total regional district.

"Group" means 10 or more persons.

"Senior citizens" means those people of the State of New Jersey who are 60 years of age or older and their spouses. Spouses of senior citizens may be less than 60 years of age.

(b) The district board of education may permit the use of school buses, owned or leased by the school district, for the purpose of transporting senior citizens' groups to and from events within the district or in any contiguous district, for transporting handicapped citizens in any district, and for transporting children and adults participating in a recreation or other program operated by the municipality or municipalities in which the district is located or the municipality in which any constituent district of a regional school district is located. Such events shall include, but not be limited to, civic, social, cultural, educational, recreational, nutritional and health programs and activities.

(c) The district board of education shall adopt a policy addressing the transportation of these groups. The policy shall require groups seeking the use of school buses to pay all or part of any costs incurred by the district board of education in permitting such use. The costs shall include,

but not be limited to, the costs of fuel, driver salaries, insurance, and depreciation.

(d) The use of school buses by these groups requires the approval of the district board of education and shall not interfere with the transportation of school students.

(e) Buses shall be operated only by a person having a valid commercial driver's license with appropriate endorsement(s) required by the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

(f) School bus warning lamps shall not be used when transporting these groups.

(g) School buses, when used to transport these groups, shall load and unload off the public roadway so as not to interfere with traffic.

(h) District boards of education using buses for the transportation of these groups shall maintain proof of insurance coverage for such transportation. Insurance coverage shall include liability for bodily injury and property damage in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for all vehicles used for this purpose.

6A:27-7.9 Vehicle records

School bus owners shall retain all records of inspection and maintenance reports for the life of the vehicle. Such records shall be available for review by the Division of Motor Vehicles in the Department of Transportation.

SUBCHAPTER 8. STATE AID**6A:27-8.1 General provisions**

(a) District boards of education shall be entitled to State transportation aid for eligible resident public, nonpublic and charter school students in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-25.

(b) State aid shall be calculated according to the transportation funding formula and administered in the manner determined by the Commissioner of Education.

(c) A choice school district shall be entitled to State aid for each eligible choice school student transported.

(d) District boards of education shall submit all data necessary for the calculation of State transportation aid.

6A:27-8.2 School transportation efficiency and corrective action plans

District boards of education shall submit all data for the calculation of their vehicle utilization rating and shall submit

corrective action plans and reports, as necessary, in the manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

SUBCHAPTER 9. CONTRACTING FOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

6A:27-9.1 General provisions

(a) District boards of education shall administer student transportation contracts in accordance with the requirements of this subchapter.

(b) Any contract drawn which fails to meet the requirements of this subchapter shall be set aside by the district board of education.

(c) All contracts require the approval of the County Superintendent of Schools.

1. Notwithstanding the county superintendent's contract approval, State aid shall be subject to modifications by the Commissioner of Education for good cause shown.

6A:27-9.2 Responsibilities of district boards of education

(a) Prior to the opening of school and in sufficient time to publicly advertise for bids, district boards of education shall assess their student transportation needs. If the assessment indicates that student transportation services in the aggregate shall exceed the statutory bid limit, except for contracts qualifying for renewal, all transportation services shall be bid in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-3.

(b) District boards of education shall have the option of annually bidding all transportation contracts or awarding annual extensions of existing contracts. No contract for the transportation of students to and from school shall be made when the amount to be paid during the school year for such transportation exceeds the bid threshold limit, unless the district board of education making such contract shall have first publicly advertised for bids. Such advertisement shall be published once in a newspaper circulating in the district at least 10 days prior to the date fixed for receiving proposals for such transportation. All bids shall be advertised with the time and place fixed to each advertisement for submission of proposals to the board of education. No proposal shall be opened prior to the hour designated in the advertisement and none shall be received thereafter. The district board of education or designated official shall unseal bids in the presence of those in attendance and publicly announce the contents.

(c) District boards of education shall designate a committee, official or employee to prepare the specifications for each route or contract for which proposals are sought. A copy of the specifications shall be submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools prior to advertisement for bids. The specifications and advertisement for bids shall be approved and authorized by formal action of the district board of education.

(d) The officer of the district board of education responsible for distributing specifications to prospective bidders shall maintain a bidders' list and keep a list of all persons who take copies of the specifications.

(e) If any person operating a school bus under contract with a district board of education shall fail to comply with any of the rules governing student transportation, the district board of education shall immediately notify such person in writing of his or her failure to comply.

1. If the violation is repeated, the district board of education may require the violator to show cause at a hearing why his or her failure to comply should not be deemed a breach of contract.

2. If, after due notice and hearing, the district board of education determines that a breach of contract exists, it may call upon the bondsperson or surety company, as the case may be, to perform the contract or to reimburse the district board of education for any financial loss resulting from the breach of the contract, and may annul the contract.

3. Any person operating a bus under contract may appeal from the action of the district board of education in the manner provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:6-24, 25, 27, 28 and 29.

6A:27-9.3 Bid specifications

(a) Specifications drawn for purposes of competitive bidding shall be drafted in a manner designed to encourage free, open and competitive bidding. Specifications shall not knowingly discriminate, exclude prospective bidders by reason of the impossibility of performance or bidding by any one bidder. All bidding practices shall be designed to prevent fraud, favoritism and extravagance, to safeguard the taxpayers and protect the lowest responsible bidder. The bid specifications must be definite, precise, impose common standards and shall protect against discrimination in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:5-31 et seq. When bid specifications are formed to deter rather than to invite genuine competition, an award to the favored bidder shall be set aside.

(b) Any revisions to the bid specifications shall be furnished to all prospective bidders and shall not restrict competitive bidding. Modifications to the specifications shall not invalidate the award of a contract to the successful bidder when it appears that all such bulletins were received in advance of the submission of bids by all prospective and actual bidders. If, in good faith, a district board of education finds it has made a mistake in its specifications that cannot be corrected, bids shall not be accepted based upon those specifications.

(c) Variations from the bid specifications required by this subchapter shall be reasonable and are subject to review by the Commissioner of Education.

(d) Bid specifications shall contain language that requires contractors to comply with all current applicable State and Federal laws pertaining to student transportation and shall be prepared to include, but not be limited to, the requirements of this subchapter.

1. The bid specifications shall include a separate route description for each individual route.

i. A route is a selected or an established course of travel by a vehicle with definite stops for the purpose of loading and unloading students. A route for the transportation of regular public and nonpublic school students shall be described from the first bus stop to the destination listing each street traveled and the schedule for arriving and departing.

ii. A route for the transportation of special education students shall be described listing each bus stop, the schedule for arriving and departing and the vehicle capacity. The Statement "the direction of the vehicle from the last stop shall be along the safest most direct route to the destination" shall also be included in the route description. In addition, language shall be included which requires the successful bidder to submit to the district board of education, within 10 days of the start of the contract, a description of the actual streets traveled.

iii. Transportation routes shall be arranged so that the buses shall transverse the highways that serve the largest number of students within a reasonable time limit and at a minimum cost.

2. The bid specifications shall state that the district board of education shall reserve the right, with the approval of the County Superintendent of Schools, to change the route. If any change of route results, adjustment in the contract price shall be made in accordance with the bid.

3. The specifications shall include language that describes the following district board of education requirements:

i. Procedures for a change in route schedule and emergency school closings;

ii. The cancellation of a contract;

iii. The limits of vehicle liability insurance to be provided by the contractor;

iv. The types of bid guarantee and performance surety bond to be provided by the contractor;

v. The term of the contract including payment terms; and

vi. The need for specialized equipment or restrictions due to student classification, if applicable.

4. Language shall also be included in the bid specifications which prohibits the subcontracting of contracts

without the prior written approval of the district board of education; and, with the exception of contracts awarded on a per student basis, the commingling of students unless authorized to do so by the district board of education through the joint transportation agreement process.

(e) The district board of education shall include language which directs bidders to submit the following documents and forms, prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, to be made part of the bid specifications and of the contract:

1. A bid sheet for bids to be made on a per diem or per annum basis and on a per route basis for regular public, nonpublic and in-district special education students; and on a per route, per vehicle, per student, or per mile basis for special education students transported outside the district;

i. The bid sheet shall include a separate cost for adjusting the contract. Cost adjustments on a per mile basis are required for regular public and nonpublic school routes and in-district special education routes, and on a per mile, per student, or per vehicle basis for out-of-district special education routes.

ii. The bid sheet shall include a separate per diem cost for each aide to be assigned to the route.

iii. The bid sheet may include a separate provision to request bulk and combination bids.

iv. Bids that do not include an adjustment provision shall not be considered by the district board of education.

2. A bidder's questionnaire;

3. A stockholder's disclosure statement;

4. An affirmative action questionnaire;

5. A non-collusion affidavit; and

6. A copy of the school calendar.

6A:27-9.4 Responsibilities of the bidder

(a) Bidders or their agents shall not draft specifications or route descriptions to be advertised for bid.

(b) The bidder shall complete and submit the bid on the bid sheet contained in the specifications. Bids that do not include a separate cost for adjusting the contract shall not be considered by the district board of education.

(c) Bids are to be placed in a sealed envelope and submitted in the manner specified by the district board of education.

(d) Bidders shall submit a guarantee payable to the district board of education to ensure that, if a contract is awarded, the successful bidder shall enter into that contract and furnish a performance surety bond.

1. The guarantee to be submitted shall be a certified check, cashier's check or bid bond as required by the district board of education. No other form of guarantee is authorized.

2. The bid bond, cashier's or certified check shall be forfeited upon refusal of the successful bidder to execute a contract; otherwise, the guarantee shall be returned when the contract is executed and a performance bond filed.

(e) A surety bond for the performance of the contract shall be provided to the district board of education equal at least to the amount of one year of the contract. In the case of contracts for more than one year, the bond may be for an amount in excess of the proportionate annual contract amount as determined by the district board of education.

1. A surety bond shall be provided for the faithful performance of all provisions of the specifications and for all matters contained in the notice to bidders relating to the performance of the contract.

2. The performance surety bond shall be either a corporate surety bond or personal surety bond as required by the district board of education.

6A:27-9.5 Bidder's guarantee

(a) The district board of education may, at its discretion, require the guarantee to be submitted in the form of a certified check, cashier's check or bid bond. No other form of guarantee is authorized.

(b) The amount of the bidder's guarantee shall be a minimum of five percent of the bid, not to exceed \$50,000.

(c) Except for the three lowest bidders, the guarantee shall be returned to the bidders within ten working days after the opening of the bids.

6A:27-9.6 Performance surety bond

(a) A surety bond for the performance of the contract shall be required by the district board of education equal at least to the amount of one year of the contract. In the case of contracts for more than one year, the bond may be for an amount in excess of the proportionate annual contract amount as determined by the district board of education. The district board of education may, at its discretion, require a performance surety bond furnished by a corporate surety company recognized by the State Department of Banking and Insurance as being authorized to do business in the State of New Jersey or may permit a personal surety bond. District boards of education may determine whether a surety bond shall be required for quoted contracts.

1. Personal bonds shall be submitted on the Personal Surety Bond form, as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. The bond shall be signed by at least two responsible sureties, who are residents of New Jersey, neither of whom shall be a member of the district board of education.

i. The district board of education shall have the right to reject an individual surety offer, and may request a certification that each individual's net worth is sufficient to cover the bond.

(b) Contracts and contract renewals shall be accompanied by a performance surety bond for the total annual amount of the contracts. Bonding for multi-year contracts shall be submitted each year in the annual amount of the contract or may be for an amount in excess of the proportionate annual contract amount as the district board of education shall determine. Contracts awarded on a per diem basis shall be bonded in the per annum amount based on the actual number of days transportation is required by the school calendar or, at the discretion of the district board of education, may be in the per annum amount based on 180 days.

1. The district board of education may at its discretion require a performance surety bond for quoted contracts.

(c) If it is necessary to substitute an existing corporate or personal surety bond, the contractor shall furnish a new surety bond as required by the original bid.

6A:27-9.7 Bulk and combination bids

(a) District boards of education may receive bulk and combination bids.

1. A bulk bid is a bid that is awarded for a lesser price than the sum of the individual bids, when all routes advertised in the bulk bid are awarded to one bidder.

2. A combination bid is a bid designed by the district board of education which groups specified routes together to be serviced by the contractor utilizing the same vehicle for all routes in the group.

(b) Bulk and combination bids shall include individual route or contract costs.

1. Bulk bids shall contain a percentage deduction that shall be applied to each route or contract bid price when all routes or contracts contained in the bulk bid are awarded to a single bidder.

(c) Bulk bidding shall not be used to eliminate competitive bidding.

6A:27-9.8 Receiving and opening bids

(a) Unless the proposals are to be received in a meeting of the district board of education, a committee, officer, or employee of the district board of education shall be designated to receive the proposals at a time and place designated by the district board of education and stated in the advertisement for bids. At the time and place so designated and advertised, the district board of education or any committee, officer, or employee designated by the district board of education to do so, shall receive the proposals and proceed to unseal them and publicly announce their contents. No proposals shall be opened before the time designated in the advertisement and none shall be received thereafter.

(b) The district board of education shall reserve the right to reject any or all bids.

(c) A district board of education cannot impose new conditions, and bidders cannot be allowed to change bids or make oral bids after they are opened. Specifications shall not be modified after bids have been received and the contract awarded to one of the bidders upon revised specifications.

(d) Bulletins issued to explain minor details of specifications and to make minor changes shall not invalidate the award of a contract to the successful bidder when it appears that all such bulletins were received in advance of the submission of bids by all prospective and actual bidders. The officer of the board responsible for distributing specifications to prospective bidders shall keep a list of their names and addresses so that bulletins can be issued to them, if necessary. If, in good faith, a district board of education finds it has made a mistake in its specifications that cannot be corrected, bids shall be rejected and re-advertised.

6A:27-9.9 Contracts

(a) The term of the contract shall not exceed four years.

1. Beginning in the second year, a multi-year contract may be increased annually by a maximum of seven and one-half percent of the original yearly contract amount in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-2.

(b) All contracts or contract renewals for student transportation shall be made in triplicate, on forms prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, and shall be submitted for approval to the County Superintendent of Schools within 30 days after the award of the contract by the district board of education or by September 1 of the school year in which transportation is to be provided.

(c) New contracts submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools shall be accompanied by the bid specifications, all documents required by the specifications to be submitted by the bidder, a copy of the newspaper bid advertisement, and a certified copy of the minutes of the district board of education authorizing the contract.

(d) Contract renewals submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools shall be accompanied by a certified copy of the minutes of the district board of education authorizing the contract and copies of the contractor's certificate of insurance, affirmative action documentation and performance surety bond.

(e) Negotiated contracts between a district board of education and a parent or guardian transporting only his or her own child or children shall be accompanied by a certified copy of the minutes of the district board of education authorizing the contract, a certificate of insurance, and a copy of the parent's or legal guardian's valid driver's license and vehicle registration.

(f) A summary of all bids received shall be submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools with the submission of new contracts. If a contract is not awarded to the lowest bidder, a statement by the school board attorney justifying the contract award must accompany the summary.

(g) All transportation contracts require the approval of the County Superintendent of Schools regardless of whether State aid is involved.

(h) Notwithstanding the county superintendent's approval, State aid shall be subject to modifications by the Commissioner of Education for good cause shown.

6A:27-9.10 Awarding contracts

(a) Contracts shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder by formal action of the district board of education in a public meeting.

1. The board minutes authorizing the award of contracts shall include the contractor's name, route numbers and individual route costs of all bidders who submitted bids.

2. A contract that is not awarded to the lowest bidder shall be accompanied by a statement by the school board's attorney justifying the contract award.

(b) The district board of education is not authorized to delegate its power to enter into a transportation contract.

(c) Any award of a contract made by a district board of education after advertisement shall be according to the terms advertised to prospective bidders. Each bidder shall be compelled to conform to every substantial condition imposed upon other bidders.

(d) After a contract has been awarded, a bidder cannot be relieved from conforming to the conditions imposed upon him or her in the specifications and cannot substitute something that does not conform to the specifications.

(e) A district board of education shall not reject the bid of the lowest bidder upon the ground that he or she is not responsible without giving him or her a hearing upon the facts. To determine that a bidder is not responsible, the district board of education must find as a fact, after notice and a public hearing, that the bidder is so lacking in experience, financial ability, equipment and facilities to justify that he or she would be unable to carry out the contract, if awarded.

(f) The lack of ability upon the part of a contractor to work in harmony or the district board of education's inability to enforce the terms of a previous contract cannot be controlling factors in determining the bidder's responsibility. Disputes involving controverted questions of fact with reference to the performance of a previous contract do not constitute grounds for declaring a bidder irresponsible, if such disputed matters can be taken care of under a contract

properly safeguarding the public interest with a contractor who is financially responsible.

6A:27-9.11 High, collusive or no bids

If on two occasions no bids were received, or on two occasions bids were rejected by the district board of education because they were too high, contracts shall be awarded pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5(c) and (d).

6A:27-9.12 Quoted contracts

(a) Quotations may be sought after the opening of school for unanticipated transportation services. The process of soliciting quotations shall not be used by the district board of education to intentionally split transportation routes into smaller parts so as to avoid reaching the amount determined by the Governor as the formal competitive bidding requirement.

(b) Quoted contracts may be issued for unanticipated transportation services provided the following requirements are met.

1. At least three quotations shall be sought and documented.
2. Quotations shall be solicited on a per diem basis.
3. Quoted contracts under the bid threshold may be in effect for the balance of the school year.
4. Quoted contracts over the bid threshold shall be issued for a period not to exceed 90 calendar days. The competitive bid process shall then be completed, and awarded contracts implemented for the balance of the school year.
5. Quoted contracts shall not be renewed. These contracts shall be included in the aggregate cost of transportation services for the ensuing school year.

(c) Quoted contracts submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools shall be accompanied by a certified copy of the district board of education minutes authorizing the contract, copies of the contractor's certificate of insurance, performance surety bond, if applicable, and evidence of three quotes.

6A:27-9.13 Renewing contracts

(a) Annual extensions of an existing contract, approved by the County Superintendent of Schools, are permitted provided:

1. The contract was entered into through competitive bidding;
2. The terms of the contract remain the same;

3. There is no increase in the annual amount of the contract to the district board of education, or the increase in the original contractual base amount as a result of such extension does not result in an effective increase of more than 30 percent regardless of the fact that the route description has changed or an aide has been added or removed, except in cases where a student rider is newly assigned to a route during the school year and extra mileage is necessary. Any such arrangement shall be approved by the County Superintendent of Schools and shall be bid for the next school year.

i. The original contractual base amount is the sum of the actual cost to the district board of education for those items included in the bid at the end of the term of the original contract; and

4. The school destination remains the same as the original contract.

i. Destination is defined as the physical location of the school(s).

(b) When it is necessary to change the bus type, an immediate rebid of a contract renewal is not required. Any such change shall be approved by the district board of education and shall be bid for the next school year.

6A:27-9.14 Addendum to a contract

(a) An addendum shall be required in order to adjust the cost of an existing contract or contract renewal.

1. An addendum to a contract or contract renewal for regular students and handicapped students transported to schools within the district shall be calculated based on the increase/decrease mileage adjustment stated in the original bid.

2. An addendum to a contract or contract renewal for the transportation of handicapped students transported outside the district shall be based on the per student, per mileage or per vehicle adjustment stated in the original bid.

3. An addendum to a contract or contract renewal for the purpose of adding an aide may be a negotiated cost, if the cost of an aide is not part of the bid, provided the cost does not exceed the bid threshold.

(b) An addendum to a contract or contract renewal shall be submitted on the Contract Addendum form, prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, to the County Superintendent of Schools for approval within 30 days of the district board of education's approval.

(c) Increased bonding is required when an addendum is added to an existing contract increasing its cost.

1. When an addendum is added to the contract, increasing the cost, additional bonding coverage is not required if the remaining cost of the original contract plus the additional cost of the adjustment does not exceed the amount of the original bond.

(d) A certified copy of the minutes of the district board of education authorizing the adjustment and additional performance surety bond, if required, shall accompany the Contract Addendum form when it is submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools.

6A:27-9.15 Transferring contracts and contract renewals

(a) Whenever a contractor has entered into or intends to enter into an agreement to sell or assign to a purchaser all of the contractor's rights and liabilities with respect to all of the transportation contracts held by the contractor, such assignment requires the approval of the district board(s) of education and their County Superintendent of Schools.

1. The Student Transportation Contract Transfer Agreement form, prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, shall be completed for each individual contract or multi-contract.

2. The assignment of selected contracts to another person or company is not to be considered a transfer, but shall be considered subcontracting. In this case, the rules governing the subcontracting of contracts pursuant to this subchapter shall apply.

(b) The transfer of contracts shall impose no additional cost to the district board of education.

(c) All terms of the original contract shall remain in effect.

(d) The assignment between the district board of education and the purchaser shall not become effective until the purchaser provides all documents required of the original bidder.

(e) The Student Transportation Contract Transfer Agreement form shall be accompanied by a copy of the certified board minutes approving the transfer of the contract and all documents required of the original bidder when it is submitted to the county superintendent for approval.

6A:27-9.16 Joint transportation agreements

(a) Two or more district boards of education may provide jointly for the transportation of students to and from any school(s), within or outside the district or counties.

(b) Whenever in the judgment of the County Superintendent of Schools transportation of students could be more economically accomplished by joint transportation, he or she may order such joint transportation, assign the administration to one district board of education as host and prorate the cost to the joining district board(s) of education.

(c) The district board of education providing the transportation, either by district-owned vehicle or contracted vehicle, shall be referred to as the host.

(d) The host district board of education shall be responsible for initiating the joint agreement and ensure that when transportation is provided by contracted services, contracts meet the requirements for approval by the County Superintendent of Schools.

(e) The joining district board of education shall submit four copies of the Joint Transportation Agreement form, prescribed by the Commissioner of Education, to the County Superintendent of Schools for approval. Joint agreements between district boards of education located in more than one county shall be submitted for approval to both County Superintendents of Schools by the joining district board of education.

1. Joint agreements issued between district boards of education in the same county shall be sent within 60 days of the agreement to the county superintendent for approval.

2. Joint agreements issued between district boards of education in different counties shall be sent within 90 days of the agreement to the county superintendents for approval.

(f) Certified copies of the board minutes for each district board of education involved in the joint agreement shall accompany the agreement submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools.

SUBCHAPTER 10. COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

6A:27-10.1 General requirements

(a) For the purposes of this subchapter, a resident district board of education, Educational Services Commission, Jointure Commission, County Special Services School District or any other entity governed by a local board of education providing coordinated transportation services and identified by the Commissioner of Education for this purpose shall be known as a coordinated transportation services agency (CTSA).

(b) Representatives of the participating resident boards of education and the CTSA shall meet at least annually to establish the provisions of the contractual agreement between the parties.

(c) Resident district boards of education shall utilize a CTSA to transport students going to a special education or vocational school located outside of the resident district, and nonpublic school students whose parents received aid in lieu

of transportation in the prior school year. District boards of education may also utilize the CTSA for any other transportation needs.

(d) Transportation for a special education or vocational school student newly assigned to a school located outside of the resident district, or a newly registered nonpublic school student for which no route currently exists, shall be given to a CTSA. If the CTSA is unable to coordinate transportation for this student with students from other districts, the resident district board of education may choose to provide the transportation or, in the case of nonpublic school students, pay aid in lieu of transportation.

(e) The County Superintendent of Schools shall assist district boards of education and the chief school administrators of the nonpublic schools in coordinating the calendars and schedules of the public and nonpublic schools to facilitate the coordination of services.

(f) Resident district boards of education shall adopt, by resolution, an agreement with the CTSA for transportation services. A copy of the board resolution to participate in the coordinated services, the contractual agreement (if separate from the board resolution), and a copy of the board minutes shall be sent to the County Superintendent of Schools. The agreement shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The time period to be covered by the agreement;
2. A description of the services to be provided;
3. A list of the responsibilities of each party to the agreement;
4. A formula for establishing the cost of service to each participating district, including a provision for adjusting the final cost based upon actual expenditures;
5. Administrative fees to be charged, if applicable;
6. A payment time schedule;
7. Provisions for revision of the services;
8. The signatures of both parties to the agreement; and
9. A provision for the county superintendent's acknowledgement of the agreement between the parties.

(g) District boards of education and the CTSA shall provide to the Department of Education all data necessary for the evaluation of the coordinated transportation services.

6A:27-10.2 Responsibilities of resident district boards of education

(a) Resident district boards of education shall evaluate their methods of transporting students attending a special education or vocational school located outside of the district and nonpublic school students whose parents or legal guardians receive aid in lieu of transportation to determine whether services could be more economically provided through a CTSA.

1. Bidding is not required for the purpose of comparing costs in order to make this determination.

(b) Resident district boards of education responsible for the transportation of students going to a special education or vocational school located outside the district shall utilize a CTSA, except when:

1. The resident district can provide transportation at a lesser cost;
2. The transportation to be provided by the CTSA does not fall within the policies of the resident district board of education regarding length of ride and/or assignment of students to routes based on student age or classification; or
3. The CTSA is unable to coordinate transportation with other districts.

(c) Once the resident district board of education has been notified of the estimated cost of transportation and has agreed to the service arranged by the CTSA, the services shall be provided until the student no longer requires transportation.

1. Any party to the transportation service may dissolve the arrangement for good cause shown. The party withdrawing from the agreement shall make documentation of the cause available to all affected parties, upon request.

(d) Resident district boards of education that paid aid in lieu of transportation to the parents or legal guardians of nonpublic school students in the prior year, or who have determined that transportation cannot be provided for the ensuing school year, shall attempt to utilize a CTSA for those students before the determination is made to pay aid in lieu of transportation.

1. If any unique limitations or restrictions on providing this transportation exist, the resident district board of education shall provide this information to the CTSA.

2. By August 1 preceding the school year in which transportation is to be provided, the district board of education shall notify the parents or legal guardians of the nonpublic school students and the nonpublic school administrators as to the manner in which transportation services are to be provided.

3. The County Superintendent of Schools shall be notified when it has been determined that the inability to provide transportation services is due to calendar and/or schedule conflicts.

4. A resident district board of education may choose not to use a CTSA if the agency cost of providing nonpublic school transportation, including administrative fees, causes the per student cost to exceed the maximum allowable expenditure permitted by law. In this case, the resident district board of education may pay aid in lieu of transportation.

(e) The resident district board of education shall document the reasons why it chose not to use a CTSA and maintain documentation of their per student cost calculation.

(f) If the resident district board of education determines it is in the best interest of the board to renew existing contracts, it may do so in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-3.

(g) Regional school districts shall continue to have the responsibility for providing nonpublic school transportation services for all constituent district students in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1. It shall be the regional school district's responsibility to determine when transportation should be provided through a CTSA.

6A:27-10.3 Responsibilities of coordinated transportation services agencies

(a) A CTSA shall be required to organize, schedule and provide transportation services in a manner which achieves maximum efficiency for participating districts. These services and method of payment shall be described in an agreement between the CTSA and the resident district board of education.

(b) A CTSA may contract for transportation services, use vehicles owned or leased by the agency, and/or utilize vehicles owned by district boards of education for the provision of coordinated services.

(c) The calculation of per student costs for transportation services provided by a CTSA shall include administrative expenses above the cost of providing the actual transportation service. If the agency costs are less than the established aid in lieu of transportation amount, including administrative fees, the agency shall provide transportation for the nonpublic school students.

(d) A CTSA may charge an administrative fee to participating districts to cover the ordinary cost of doing business. Determining routes and availability of service should be considered part of the ordinary cost of doing business and included in the administrative fees charged to district boards of education. The agency shall not charge a per student application fee.

(e) A CTSA may notify parents of the provision of nonpublic school transportation in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:27-2.3(c). This service shall be made part of the resolution and contractual agreement between the parties.

(f) If a CTSA cannot provide the requested services, the agency shall:

1. Document why it is unable to provide transportation; and
2. Maintain a listing of destinations for which it is unable to coordinate services in order to share this information with other school districts for possible coordination in the future.

mation with other school districts for possible coordination in the future.

(g) Prior to bidding for transportation services, the CTSA shall notify participating districts whether transportation will be coordinated with other districts on their routes.

(h) Resident district boards of education shall be billed for services in accordance with the contractual agreement with the agency. The billing shall include the participating district's individual route costs based on adjusted monthly expenditures. The final cost billed to resident district boards of education shall be based on actual expenditures.

SUBCHAPTER 11. SAFETY

6A:27-11.1 Emergency procedures

(a) District boards of education shall establish policies and procedures to be followed by the school bus driver in the event of an emergency.

(b) District boards of education and school bus contractors shall establish policies and practices to ensure that school bus drivers employed by them comply with all applicable rules of this chapter.

6A:27-11.2 Evacuation drills and safety education

(a) School administrators shall organize and conduct emergency exit drills at least twice within the school year for all students who are transported to and from school.

1. All other students shall receive school bus evacuation instruction at least once within the school year.

(b) The school bus driver and bus aide shall participate in the emergency exit drills.

(c) Drills shall be conducted on school property and shall be supervised by the principal or person assigned to act in a supervisory capacity.

6A:27-11.3 Training

(a) Employers shall ensure that all school bus drivers and school bus aides are properly trained for the functions of their positions.

(b) Employers shall administer a safety education program for all permanent and substitute drivers and aides. At a minimum, this training shall include:

1. Student management and discipline;
2. School bus accident and emergency procedures;
3. Conducting school bus emergency exit drills;
4. Loading and unloading procedures; and

5. School bus stop loading zone safety.

(c) In addition to the training requirements in (b) above, employers shall administer a safety education program for school bus drivers which includes defensive driving techniques and railroad crossing procedures.

6A:27-11.4 Student safety education

District boards of education shall provide a safety education program to public school students, which includes pedestrian safety and rules for riding the school bus.

SUBCHAPTER 12. DRIVERS AND AIDES

6A:27-12.1 General requirements

(a) The school bus driver and aide shall be reliable persons of good moral character who possess the qualifications and communication skills necessary to perform the duties of the position.

(b) Anyone driving a school vehicle used to transport students to and from school and school related activities shall meet all requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:39-17, 18, 19 and 20 and all New Jersey Department of Transportation rules governing school bus drivers.

(c) Drivers shall hold a valid Commercial Driver's License with appropriate endorsement(s) for the class and type of vehicle operated, issued by the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

(d) School bus drivers shall wear a properly adjusted and fastened seat belt.

(e) Employers shall retain a current qualifications record for each school bus driver and aide. At a minimum, these records shall include:

1. The driver's and/or aide's name and social security number;
2. The driver's license number with the class of license, endorsement to operate a school bus, and the issuing State;
3. A current medical examiner's certificate, if required; and
4. The current criminal history background check certification letter.

(f) The driver shall complete daily a driver's school bus condition report as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

(g) The school bus driver and bus aide shall participate in emergency exit drills performed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:27-11.2.

(h) School bus aides shall meet criminal history background check requirements pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 et seq.

(i) School bus drivers and aides shall meet tuberculin testing requirements pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:29-2.3.

6A:27-12.2 Accident reporting

(a) Every school bus driver shall immediately inform the principal of the receiving school and the school business administrator of the district board of education providing for the transportation following an accident which involves an injury, death or property damage. The driver shall also complete and file the Preliminary School Bus Accident Report prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

(b) In addition to the Preliminary School Bus Accident Report, the driver of a school bus involved in an accident resulting in injury or death of any person, or damage to property of any one person in excess of \$500.00 shall within 10 days after such accident complete and file a Motor Vehicle Accident Report in accordance with N.J.S.A. 39:4-130.

SUBCHAPTER 13. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

6A:27-13.1 General authority

(a) The Commissioner of Education shall provide for a thorough evaluation of student transportation operations and fiscal procedures of district boards of education to determine compliance with the provisions of this chapter and N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 et seq.

(b) The Commissioner of Education may withhold or adjust transportation aid for district boards of education which are noncompliant with the provisions set forth in this chapter, such as, but not limited to, the improper award of contracts, use of unauthorized vehicles or inaccurate data submitted for State aid.

6A:27-13.2 General district procedures

District boards of education shall submit reports necessary for the calculation of State transportation aid and the analysis of the numerical values (cost factors) contained in the transportation aid formula in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7D-18 and 19.

6A:27-13.3 Regulatory review

(a) The County Superintendent of Schools shall conduct a review of transportation operations of district boards of education in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.4(a)7.

(b) The Office of Student Transportation field representative shall conduct quarterly reviews of the county superintendent's administration of student transportation. This review shall include a sampling of records that have been submitted to the County Superintendent of Schools by district boards of education to determine compliance with the provisions of this chapter.

(c) The Office of Student Transportation field representative shall conduct on site annual reviews of student transportation procedures, operations and fiscal records of district boards of education as directed by the Commissioner of Education, and shall notify the district board of education and county superintendent of the findings.

(d) The Office of Student Transportation shall verify data submitted by district boards of education for State transportation aid.

6A:27-13.4 Corrective plan

A district board of education found to be deficient as a result of the Office of Student Transportation review shall

submit a corrective action plan addressing the specific recommendations to the County Superintendent of Schools and the Office of Student Transportation.

6A:27-13.5 Compliance investigation

(a) The Office of Compliance shall conduct a complete inspection of student transportation procedures, operations, and costs for any district board of education identified as deficient in the administration of student transportation as a result of the Office of Student Transportation review or State Department of Education monitoring process under any one of the following circumstances.

1. The Office of Student Transportation review indicates that conditions exist that may prevent the successful implementation of a corrective action plan;
2. A district board of education fails to implement and adhere to the corrective action plan that has been approved by the County Superintendent of Schools; or
3. A district board of education fails to achieve certification based upon deficiencies noted in student transportation and does not demonstrate reasonable progress pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:30-2.5(b).