

Massachusetts Association of Pupil Transportation

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION REVIEW

PURPOSE

Special Education Transportation Reviews usually address the following matters:

- To review current transportation practices for the purpose of determining their alignment with the statutory requirements of the Commonwealth;
- To review current transportation practices in order to ascertain whether staffing levels are appropriate for the required workflow;
- To assess the effectiveness of the district's processes associated with procurement, scheduling, planning and development, reporting, payroll and management;
- To review the current procedure pertaining to the management of special education student transportation;
- To review the written agreement between the school system and transportation contractors;
- To acknowledge strengths, identify weaknesses, and recommend improvements to the transportation system of the school district.

SELF ASSESSMENT

- The Review begins with the completion of a Self-Assessment document, which is submitted to Colleen Cavanaugh several days before the scheduled site visit of the MAPT Review team.
- The purpose of the self-assessment is to obtain focused input from the superintendent, the school business administrator the special education director and/or the transportation director pertaining to special education pupil transportation.
- The input obtained from this assessment serves to focus the efforts of the Review Team and is the topic of the team's first interview of the site visit—the interview with the superintendent or designee and the school business administrator.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Review Team will:

- Review all district transportation contracts, bid specifications and internal processes used for obtaining transportation services for all aspects of special transportation;
- If applicable, conduct an in-depth analysis of in-house operations to include, personnel salaries, vehicle costs, maintenance and budget development;
- Explore the role of district personnel in arranging transportation services and how it is conducted;
- Review all policies, protocols and procedures. What training programs are in place for drivers;
- Develop a budget for an in-district transportation program;
- Conduct analysis of transportation invoices and actual route costs for both in-district and out-of-district transportation;
- Review IEP process as it pertains to transportation;
- Provide comparative State data from Schedule 7 for FY13-FY18; and
- Review the process and cost of Homeless and Foster Care transportation.

SITE VISIT

- Once the self-assessment document has been completed a scheduled site visit occurs.
- The Review Team is composed of two to three members, and during the site visit a series of interviews are conducted with employees and administrators that interact with the district's transportation system.
- The list of positions that will be involved in these interviews varies depending upon the needs of the school district, however, the team commonly visits the district and interviews the Superintendent, School Business Administrator, Special Education Director, Special Education Administrative Assistant, Bus Contractor(s), District Transportation Coordinator (if the district has one), Team Chairs, Principals and anyone else that is involved in the school transportation program.

- ❑ The information obtained from these interviews and from observations of your transportation operations is used to specifically identify the particulars of your transportation procedures.
- ❑ We also review the following documents during our site visit and while we prepare our report of findings: school budget, external transportation contracts, capital plan, strategic plan, financial reports, all school committee transportation policies.
- ❑ A step-by-step review of how the district has addressed issues which add to the cost of special education transportation such as vendor contracts, in-district students accessibility to regular education transportation, cost sharing out of district routes, IEP process, overall safety of the transportation system, etc. This review is conducted to determine if there are more efficient and less costly ways of accommodating these issues.

REPORT OF FINDINGS

- ❑ Within approximately five weeks of the site visit, a draft report is prepared for your perusal. This comprehensive report is prepared for the district which delineates information relative to improved efficiencies in cost and process, and cost saving alternatives to transportation.
- ❑ This report delineates the existing conditions of the district's transportation operations, points out inefficiencies within the operational procedures, comments on the impact of these inefficiencies, and finally, recommends improvements.
- ❑ Some recommendations can be adopted immediately, while others may perhaps take extended time to implement. Many districts use the report as a blueprint in establishing priorities for the overall improvement of transportation operations in the district.