



January 22, 2015

To: Honorable Representative Neil Abramson
Honorable Senator Edwin R. Murray

RE: ACT No. 654 (HB 600 – Regular Session, 2014)

On behalf of the Louisiana Association of School Transportation Officials (L.A.S.T.O.), I am writing to cite changes the association feels are needed to ACT No. 654 during the Regular Session of the 2015 Legislature. These suggestions come from long hours of discussion and research involving School Transportation subject matter experts.

ENROLLED

Regular Session, 2014

ACT No. 654

BY REPRESENTATIVE ABRAMSON AND SENATOR MURRAY

1 AN ACT
2 To enact R.S. 17:158(J) and 3996(B)(34), relative to the loading and unloading of school
3 buses; to provide limitations on the location of such loading and unloading; and to
4 provide for related matters.
5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:
6 Section 1. R.S. 17:158(J) and 3996(B)(34) are hereby enacted to read as follows:
7 § 158. School buses for transportation of students; employment of bus operators;
8 alternative means of transportation; improvement of school bus turnarounds;
9 loading and unloading students
10 * * *
11 J. The governing authority of each public school shall adopt policies and
12 procedures or shall make provision in its **school** bus transportation service agreement to do
13 all of the following:
14 (1) Prohibit a **school** bus driver from loading or unloading students at school while
15 the **school** bus is in an active traffic lane of any type of street as defined in R.S. 32:1 and require
16 that students be loaded or unloaded ~~on a shoulder, in a school parking lot, or at other~~
17 ~~in an~~ appropriate off-~~street road~~ location at the school as determined by the school governing
18 authority. The requirements of this Paragraph shall not apply ~~(a)~~ if the ~~travel lane or~~ the shoulder of a

19 municipal ~~street road~~ is the only available alternative ~~and the municipality has not made~~
 20 ~~the shoulder available by designating that area for loading and unloading students~~
 21 during designated school zone hours ~~and (b) if vehicular traffic is prevented from~~
~~moving on the street during school bus loading and unloading activities by~~
~~deployment of school bus stop signs and flashing red stop lights.~~

22 ~~(2) Prohibit a bus driver from loading or unloading students at or near their~~
 23 ~~homes while the bus is in a traffic lane of any type of street as defined in R.S. 32:1~~
 24 ~~and require that students be loaded or unloaded on a shoulder. However, if there is~~
 1 ~~no shoulder, a~~ A school bus driver may load and unload ~~a student at the designated school~~
~~bus stop~~ while the bus is in a lane of
 2 traffic but only if the bus is in the lane farthest to the right side of the road. ~~so that the~~
 3 ~~student does not need to cross any lane of traffic to get onto or off of the bus.~~

4 (3) Prohibit a school bus driver from loading or unloading students either at school
 5 or at ~~the designated school bus stop or near their homes~~ in a manner or in a
 6 location that results in students crossing more than two
 lanes of traffic on a state highway or any other type of street.

7 * * *

8 § 3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

9 * * *

10 B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and
 11 except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a
 12 charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this
 13 Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be
 14 exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are
 15 applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for
 16 the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades.

17 * * *

18 (34) School bus loading and unloading provisions, R.S. 17:158(J).

19 * * *

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____

In addition to the changes suggested herein the rationale to support same, a report from a notable routing software provider is included to illustrate the significant increase in equipment/drivers and subsequently cost, that would be needed to fully comply with ACT No. 654.

Thank you for your time consideration on this most important request. LASTO is more than willing to discuss this issue further at anytime.

Regards,

Gary J. Reese
President-Elect