

SENATE, No. 4801

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 8, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator M. TERESA RUIZ
District 29 (Essex and Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

Permits alternative student transportation providers to transport certain students in certain vehicles; regulates alternative student transportation providers; clarifies types of vehicles that may be used by school personnel to transport certain students.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning transportation of certain students, amending
2 various parts of the statutory law, and supplementing P.L.1981,
3 c.51 (C.18A:39-20.1).

4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7

8 1. (New section) As used in sections 1 through 10 of P.L. , c.
9 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

10 “Alternative school vehicle” means a private vehicle or school-
11 owned motor vehicle that is operated by a driver of an alternative
12 student transportation provider and has a gross vehicle weight
13 rating of 3,000 pounds or more, originally designed by the
14 manufacturer with a maximum seating capacity of nine passengers
15 or less, excluding the driver.

16 “Alternative student transportation provider” means an entity
17 that enters into a contract with an educational agency pursuant to
18 section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
19 as this bill) to transport school children to and from school and
20 related school activities in an alternative school vehicle pursuant to
21 the requirements of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
22 before the Legislature as this bill). An alternative student
23 transportation provider shall not include a transportation network
24 company as that term is defined in section 2 of P.L.2017, c.26
25 (C.39:5H-2).

26 “Driver of an alternative student transportation provider” or
27 “driver” means either an individual employed by an alternative
28 student transportation provider or an individual providing student
29 transportation services pursuant to a contract with an alternative
30 student transportation provider.

31 “Educational agency” means a board of education, educational
32 services commission, county special services school district,
33 jointure commission, or any other established State or local agency
34 providing pupil transportation services.

35

36 2. (New section)a. Notwithstanding any other law, rule, or
37 regulation to the contrary, an educational agency may enter into a
38 contract with an alternative student transportation provider listed on
39 the registry established pursuant to section 4 of P.L. , c.
40 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) to provide
41 transportation services to and from school and related school
42 activities in an alternative school vehicle for:

43 (1) homeless children pursuant to the provisions of section 3 of
44 P.L.1989, c.290, (C.18A:7B-12.1);

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 (2) children who have been placed in the custody of the Division
2 of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children
3 and Families;

4 (3) students with disabilities who are being served in out-of-
5 district placements; and

6 (4) a student with disabilities being served in a school or
7 placement within the district.

8 b. An educational agency that enters into a contract pursuant to
9 this section to provide pupil transportation services to a student
10 with special needs with an individualized education program or 504
11 plan shall ensure that the alternative student transportation provider
12 has the capability to accommodate the individualized education
13 program or 504 plan, as applicable, for each student receiving
14 transportation services.

15 c. An educational agency that enters into a contract pursuant to
16 this section shall provide written notification to the parent or
17 guardian of any student who may be transported by an alternative
18 student transportation provider prior to the transportation services
19 commencing. This notification shall also provide the parent or
20 guardian with the contact information for the alternative student
21 transportation provider and a mechanism to report concerns.

22 d. A contract authorized pursuant to this section shall comply
23 with all applicable bidding requirements for pupil transportation
24 contracts pursuant to the applicable provisions of chapter 39 of Title
25 18A of the New Jersey Statutes and any applicable regulations
26 promulgated by the State Board of Education.

27
28 3. (New section)a. The Department of Education shall
29 establish a registration process for alternative student transportation
30 providers that wish to contract with an educational agency pursuant
31 to section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
32 Legislature as this bill). Each school year, an alternative student
33 transportation provider shall:

34 (1) obtain a business registration certificate issued by the
35 Division of Revenue in the Department of the Treasury or any other
36 form of verification or proof of registration as may be approved by
37 the division to establish that the alternative student transportation
38 provider is registered with the Department of the Treasury;

39 (2) certify that each of its drivers meet the qualifications
40 established pursuant to sections 6 and 7 of P.L. , c. (C. and
41 C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), and all
42 alternative school vehicles meet the inspection and insurance
43 requirements established pursuant to sections 9 and 10 of P.L. , c.
44 (C. and C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill);

45 (3) attend any mandatory training offered by the Department of
46 Education for new school bus contractors and receive a certificate
47 of completion issued by the department; and

48 (4) receive a vendor code from the Department of Education.

1 b. An alternative student transportation provider that complies
2 with subsection a. of this section shall contact an executive county
3 superintendent, who shall assist the provider in the annual
4 registration process and prepare the provider for contract bidding.
5 The alternative student transportation provider shall promptly notify
6 the executive county superintendent of any material changes related
7 to its compliance with the provisions of subsection a. of this
8 section.

9 c. An alternative student transportation provider that complies
10 with the requirements of this section shall be certified by the
11 Department of Education for placement on the registry established
12 pursuant to section 4 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
13 Legislature as this bill).

14
15 4. (New section) a. The Department of Education shall
16 establish and maintain a central, searchable registry of alternative
17 student transportation providers that are annually certified pursuant
18 to section 3 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
19 Legislature as this bill).

20 b. The registry shall include, but not be limited to:

21 (1) the name and contact information of the alternative student
22 transportation provider;

23 (2) the vendor code of the alternative student transportation
24 provider;

25 (3) the registration status, the date of the alternative student
26 transportation provider's most recent school transportation advisory
27 review, and the registration expiration date of the provider pursuant
28 to section 5 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
29 Legislature as this bill);

30 (4) a listing of any county in which the alternative student
31 transportation provider provides transportation services; and

32 (5) any additional information the department deems necessary.

33 c. The department shall make the registry publicly available on
34 its Internet website.

35
36 5. (New section) a. The Department of Education shall
37 establish a school transportation advisory review for an alternative
38 student transportation provider that contracts with an educational
39 agency pursuant to section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
40 before the Legislature as this bill). Each registered alternative
41 student transportation provider shall be subject to a school
42 transportation advisory review every three years. In conducting the
43 review, the department shall evaluate:

44 (1) qualification files, training records, and the checks required
45 pursuant to subsection b. of section 8 of P.L. , c. (C.)
46 (pending before the Legislature as this bill) for every driver of an
47 alternative student transportation provider;

- 1 (2) vehicle inspection status and maintenance records of each
2 alternative school vehicle used by the alternative student
3 transportation provider;
- 4 (3) any emergency procedures and contingency plans
5 implemented by the alternative student transportation provider;
- 6 (4) any relevant student-specific documentation;
- 7 (5) insurance certificates and business registration certificates;
8 and
- 9 (6) any additional information the department deems necessary.
- 10 b. The department shall determine whether the information
11 provided places the alternative student transportation provider into
12 the registration status of active, pending, suspended, or expired.
13 The department may establish guidance to assist alternative student
14 transportation providers with these classifications.
- 15 c. The department shall promptly notify the alternative student
16 transportation provider and each educational agency that contracts
17 with that provider pursuant to section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.)
18 (pending before the Legislature as this bill) of the provider's
19 registration status. If an alternative student transportation provider
20 receives a classification of suspended or expired, the department
21 shall remove the provider from the registry established pursuant to
22 section 4 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
23 as this bill).
- 24 d. In the years intervening between the three-year review,
25 whenever the department receives a complaint regarding a safety
26 concern, or determines that conditions exist that may pose a threat
27 to the safety or wellbeing of students, the department may
28 immediately conduct a school transportation advisory review for an
29 alternative student transportation provider.
- 30 e. Nothing in this section shall preclude the department from
31 conducting a random audit of an alternative student transportation
32 provider.
33
- 34 6. (New section) a. A driver of an alternative student
35 transportation provider shall only be deemed qualified to transport
36 school children pursuant to section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.)
37 (pending before the Legislature as this bill) if the driver:
- 38 (1) is at least 21 years of age;
- 39 (2) possesses a valid New Jersey driver's license for a minimum
40 of three years;
- 41 (3) completes and passes a physical examination;
- 42 (4) completes a criminal history record check pursuant to the
43 provisions of P.L.1986, c.116 (C.18A:6-7.1 et seq.), the review
44 required pursuant to P.L.2018, c.5 (C.18A:6-7.6 et seq.), and a sex
45 offender registry check;
- 46 (5) completes a child abuse record information check;

1 (6) undergoes a check for alcohol and drug-related motor
2 vehicle violations similar to the check required pursuant to section 6
3 of P.L.1989, c.104 (C.18A:39-19.1);

4 (7) completes the training requirements applicable to school bus
5 drivers pursuant to P.L.2018, c.160 (C.18A:39-19.1a) and P.L.2015,
6 c.123 (C.18A:39-19.2 et seq.) regarding appropriate procedures for
7 interacting with students with special needs; and

8 (8) completes any other training requirements of the Department
9 of Education for transporting students in smaller vehicles.

10 b. Notwithstanding any other law, rule, or regulation to the
11 contrary, a driver of an alternative student transportation provider
12 shall not be required to:

13 (1) possess a commercial driver license, as that term is defined
14 in section 3 of P.L.1990, c.103 (C.39:3-10.11); or

15 (2) be a designated school employee, State employee, or parent
16 of a student being transported pursuant to the requirements of
17 section 1 of P.L.1981, c.51 (C.18A:39-20.1).

18
19 7. (New section) A driver of an alternative student
20 transportation provider shall be permanently disqualified from
21 providing pupil transportation services if:

22 a. the driver's license is currently revoked or suspended by the
23 New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission;

24 b. the driver's criminal history record reveals a record of
25 conviction for which public school employment candidates are
26 disqualified pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1986, c.116 (C.18A:6-7.1);
27 or

28 c. the driver has been convicted for a violation of:

29 (1) R.S.39:4-50;

30 (2) section 2 of P.L.1981, c.512 (C.39:4-50.4a);

31 (3) section 2 of P.L.1966, c.142 (C.39:4-50.2); or

32 (4) a violation of subsection b. or subsection c. of section 1 of
33 P.L.2017, c.347 (C.2C:40-26.1).

34
35 8. (New section) a. A driver of an alternative student
36 transportation provider qualified to provide transportation services
37 pursuant to section 6 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
38 Legislature as this bill) shall attest daily to the alternative student
39 transportation provider that the driver has not received any citations
40 that would disqualify the driver pursuant to section 7 of P.L. , c.
41 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) and shall also
42 be subject to:

43 (1) weekly background checks performed by the alternative
44 student transportation provider. The type of background check
45 shall be selected by the Commissioner of Education, but shall
46 include, at a minimum, evidence of a check for the driver's record
47 of alcohol- and drug-related motor vehicle violations;

48 (2) annual child abuse record information checks; and

1 (3) unannounced medical testing for the presence of alcohol,
2 narcotics, or habit-producing drugs within the scope of the "New
3 Jersey Controlled Dangerous Substances Act," P.L.1970, c.226
4 (C.24:21-1 et seq.).

5 b. The alternative student transportation provider shall:

6 (1) have access to the State's online child abuse record
7 information service to obtain the required child abuse record
8 information check on behalf of drivers pursuant to paragraph (2) of
9 subsection a. of this section and paragraph (5) of subsection a. of
10 section 6 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
11 as this bill);

12 (2) provide the relevant State agencies with the appropriate
13 consent from the drivers to conduct the checks required pursuant to
14 subsection a. of this section;

15 (3) pay any costs associated with the checks required pursuant
16 to subsection a. of this section;

17 (4) certify to the Department of Education, in a form and
18 manner to be determined by the department, that the checks
19 required pursuant to subsection a. of this section have been
20 performed; and

21 (5) maintain a separate record for each driver, which record
22 shall contain information regarding the driver's qualifications
23 pursuant to section 6 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
24 Legislature as this bill) and the results of the checks required
25 pursuant to subsection a. of this section. The record required to be
26 maintained pursuant to this paragraph shall also be made available
27 upon request to any educational agency contracting for services
28 pursuant to section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
29 Legislature as this bill) or the department.

30
31 9. (New section) a. An alternative school vehicle shall meet the
32 vehicle standards, registration, and inspection requirements for
33 vehicles used to transport students to and from school or school-
34 related activities established by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle
35 Commission. At a minimum, an alternative school vehicle shall:

36 (1) be systematically inspected twice each year; and

37 (2) display a current vehicle inspection sticker authorizing the
38 vehicle for school use.

39 b. (1) Notwithstanding any other law, rule, or regulation to the
40 contrary, each alternative school vehicle shall be equipped with:

41 (a) an interior video camera to monitor the driver while the
42 students are being transported;

43 (b) a global position system that provides information about the
44 location and speed of each alternative school vehicle in real time;
45 and

46 (c) two-way communications equipment, which may include,
47 but not be limited to, a cellular or other wireless telephone.

1 (2) The items required pursuant to paragraph (1) of this
2 subsection shall only be activated after an educational agency
3 receives written consent for the use of these items from the parent
4 or guardian of any student who will be transported pursuant to
5 section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
6 as this bill).

7 (3) Any video footage collected from a video camera and any
8 global positioning system data collected from the global positioning
9 system pursuant to this section shall not be considered a
10 government record pursuant to P.L.1963, c.73 (C.47:1A-1 et seq.),
11 P.L.2001, c.404 (C.47:1A-5 et al.) or the common law concerning
12 access to government records.

13 (4) Notwithstanding the provisions of any law, rule, or
14 regulation to the contrary, any video footage collected from a video
15 camera and any global positioning system data collected from the
16 global positioning system installed pursuant to this section shall be
17 retained for not less than 180 days from the date it was recorded.

18
19 10. (New section) a. An alternative student transportation
20 provider shall furnish to each educational agency for which the
21 provider is contracted for services pursuant to section 2 of P.L. ,
22 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) evidence
23 of automobile liability insurance for bodily injury and property
24 damage in a minimum amount of \$1,500,000 combined single limit
25 per occurrence for all alternative school vehicles used to transport
26 students pursuant to section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
27 before the Legislature as this bill) and shall comply with any other
28 insurance requirements established by any applicable State law,
29 rule, or regulation. The insurance certificate shall name the
30 educational agency with which it contracts pursuant to section 2 of
31 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)
32 as an additional insured.

33 b. Evidence of compliance with the automobile liability
34 insurance requirements established by subsection a. of this section
35 shall be submitted by the educational agency to the executive
36 county superintendent in a form and manner determined by the
37 Commissioner of Education.

38
39 11. Section 3 of P.L.1974, c.162 (C.39:3-19.3) is amended to
40 read as follows:

41 The provisions of **【this act】** section 2 of P.L.1974, c.162
42 (C.39:3-19.2) shall not apply to buses used in common carrier line
43 service and school transportation service whose owner meets the
44 qualifications prescribed in **【R.S. 39:3-19】** R.S.39:3-19, alternative
45 school vehicles authorized to transport students pursuant to P.L. ,
46 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), or 【to】
47 any vehicle with a seating capacity of 16 or less 【which】 that is

1 solely used to transport children to or from summer day camps or
2 summer residence camps from May 15 to September 15 of any year.
3 (cf: P.L.1980, c.115, s.1)
4

5 12. Section 1 of P.L.1981, c.51 (C.18A:39-20.1) is amended to
6 read as follows:

7 1. a. Notwithstanding any statute or regulation to the contrary,
8 any board of education, governing body of a nonpublic school, or
9 State agency may authorize qualified school personnel, State
10 employees, or parents to transport school children to and from
11 related school activities in a private vehicle with a capacity of eight
12 or less. The board of education, governing body of a nonpublic
13 school, or State agency may also designate school personnel to
14 transport school children to and from school or school related
15 activities in a private vehicle or school-owned vehicle with a
16 capacity of eight or less. The designated personnel will only be
17 deemed qualified to transport school children to and from school if
18 the designated school personnel meet the following criteria:

19 (1) be at least 21 years of age;

20 (2) possess a New Jersey driver's license for a minimum of three
21 years;

22 (3) have a completed physical on file with the school district or
23 local education agency;

24 (4) have completed a criminal history background check by the
25 New Jersey Department of Education and a Child Abuse Record
26 Information check;

27 (5) submit a driving record for the past five years demonstrating
28 evidence of no alcohol- or drug-related motor vehicle violations;
29 and

30 (6) have completed the training program established in
31 accordance with P.L.2015, c.123 (C.18A:39-19.2 et seq.) on
32 appropriate procedures for interacting with students with special
33 needs.

34 The designated personnel that meet these criteria **[must]** shall
35 utilize a vehicle that does not exceed a maximum seating capacity
36 of eight passengers, excluding the driver, to transport school
37 children to and from school.

38 Any person authorized by a board, body, or agency to provide
39 such transportation services shall not be required to be licensed or
40 regulated as a school bus driver. Such transportation shall be
41 exempt from all registration, equipment, inspection, and
42 maintenance requirements imposed on the transportation of pupils
43 by school bus. Evidence of appropriate automobile insurance
44 requirements for the vehicle **[must]** shall be submitted by the board
45 of education, governing body of a nonpublic school, or State agency
46 to the Executive County Superintendent by a date set by the
47 Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education.

1 Each year prior to transporting school children, the board of
2 education, governing body of a nonpublic school, or State agency
3 designating school personnel as qualified to transport school
4 children to and from school pursuant to this **law must** section
5 shall submit the list of designated drivers to the Executive County
6 Superintendent by a date set by the Commissioner of the New
7 Jersey Department of Education. Only school personnel submitted
8 by that date **will** shall be eligible to transport school children to
9 and from school for a given school year.

10 The board of education, governing body of a nonpublic school,
11 or State agency designating school personnel as qualified to
12 transport school children to and from school pursuant to this **law**
13 **must** section shall also submit periodic copies of the designated
14 personnel's driving record showing no alcohol- or drug-related
15 motor vehicle violations or any other motor vehicle violations that
16 would disqualify the driver's eligibility of transporting school
17 children pursuant to Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes and Title
18 39 of the Revised Statutes to the Executive County Superintendent
19 by a date set, and at a frequency set, by the Commissioner of the
20 New Jersey Department of Education. Failure to provide the
21 requisite driving record within the prescribed time frame **will**
22 shall result in the removal of that individual from the list of
23 designated drivers.

24 b. Notwithstanding any statute or regulation to the contrary,
25 any board of education, governing body of a nonpublic school, or
26 State agency may authorize a person certified as a mobility
27 assistance vehicle technician to transport a student with medical
28 needs to and from school or related school activities in a mobility
29 assistance vehicle. Any certified mobility assistance vehicle
30 technician authorized by a board, body, or agency to provide such
31 transportation services shall not be required to be licensed or
32 regulated as a school bus driver. Such transportation shall be
33 exempt from all registration, equipment, inspection, and
34 maintenance requirements imposed on the transportation of students
35 by a school bus.

36 Each year prior to transporting students, a certified mobility
37 assistance vehicle technician who transports a student with medical
38 needs in accordance with this section shall furnish to the executive
39 county superintendent a criminal history background check and
40 evidence of a check for the technician's record of alcohol- and drug-
41 related motor vehicle violations.

42 For the purposes of this subsection, "student with medical needs"
43 means a school-aged child who suffers from a life-threatening
44 medical condition and, as a result of such condition, requires more
45 individualized and continuous care.

46 (cf: P.L.2024, c.81, s.1)

1 13. Section 2 of P.L.2021, c.471 (C.18A:39-35) is amended to
2 read as follows:

3 2. a. The duties of the Office of School Bus Safety shall
4 include, but need not be limited to, the following:

5 (1) reviewing a school bus driver's information collected by the
6 Commissioner of Education pursuant to section 6 of P.L.1989,
7 c.104 (C.18A:39-19.1);

8 (2) obtaining statements of assurance from school districts or
9 contractors that all training certifications for school bus drivers
10 from employers pursuant to subsection b. of section 2 of P.L.2015,
11 c.123 (C.18A:39-19.3) are complete;

12 (3) assisting in the development of a student information card
13 pursuant to section 3 of P.L.2015, c.123 (18A:39-19.4);

14 (4) reviewing statements provided by a board of education or
15 contractor that verify a school bus driver, whose bus driver's license
16 is suspended or revoked, no longer operates a school bus for the
17 board or contractor pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2018, c.152
18 (C.18A:39-19.6);

19 (5) coordinating with the New Jersey Motor Vehicle
20 Commission and the Department of Law and Public Safety on the
21 sharing of information regarding matters related to school bus
22 safety. The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission and the
23 Department of Law and Public Safety shall, pursuant to a valid
24 Memorandum of Understanding and to the extent permitted by law,
25 share information with the office to assist in effectuating the
26 provisions of [this act] P.L.2021, c.471 (C.18A:39-34 et seq.);

27 (6) **maintain** maintaining a list of all persons barred from
28 bidding on any pupil transportation contract pursuant to section 3 of
29 P.L.2021, c.307 (C.18A:39-11.5);

30 (7) **render** rendering a decision as to whether a person shall be
31 debarred from bidding on a pupil transportation contract pursuant to
32 the provisions of P.L.2021, c.307 (C.18A:39-11.5);

33 (8) collecting and reviewing the name, address, and contact
34 information of school bus contractors **and**, alternative student
35 transportation providers and drivers of alternative student
36 transportation providers pursuant to P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
37 before the Legislature as this bill), the owners of school bus
38 contracting companies, and the owners of alternative student
39 transportation providers pursuant to P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
40 before the Legislature as this bill);

41 (9) determining if a board of education or contractor has failed
42 to comply with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:39-20;

43 (10) reviewing and recommending changes to the commissioner
44 of the rules and regulations governing school bus safety; **and**

45 (11) assisting with the maintenance of the registry of alternative
46 student transportation providers pursuant to section 4 of P.L. , c.
47 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill);

(13) any other duties the commissioner deems appropriate to ensure the safety of school buses for students in the State.

c. As used in this section, "person" means an individual and any business, including any corporation, partnership, association, or proprietorship in which such individual is a principal, or with respect to which the individual owns, directly or indirectly, or controls any of the stock or other equity interest of such business. (cf: P.L.2021, c.471, s.2)

14. This act shall take effect in the first full school year following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

Under the bill, an educational agency may enter into a contract with an alternative student transportation provider listed on the registry established under the bill to provide transportation services to and from school and related school activities in an alternative school vehicle for: homeless children; children who have been placed in the custody of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families; students with disabilities who are being served in out-of-district placements; and a student with disabilities being served in a school or placement within the district. The bill requires the educational agency to provide written notice, as specified in the bill, to the parent or guardian of any student who may be transported pursuant to this bill.

The bill defines “educational agency” to mean a board of education, educational services commission, county special services school district, jointure commission, or any other established State or local agency providing pupil transportation services.

1 The bill establishes a registration and review process for
2 alternative student transportation providers, qualifications and
3 requirements for drivers of alternative student transportation
4 providers, and imposes inspection and insurance requirements on
5 alternative school vehicles.

6

7 ***Registration and Review Process***

8 Currently, an entity seeking to become a certified school bus
9 contractor is required to complete a process established by the
10 Department of Education. This bill models this process for
11 alternative student transportation providers by requiring among
12 other items, the provider to obtain a business registration certificate,
13 certify that the provider's drivers and alternative school vehicles
14 meet the requirements of the bill, and attend certain mandatory
15 trainings offered by the department. Under the bill, the alternative
16 student transportation provider is required to contact an executive
17 county superintendent to assist with the annual registration process
18 established under the bill.

19 The bill requires the department to establish a central, searchable
20 registry of alternative student transportation providers, which
21 registry is to be made publicly available on the department's
22 Internet website. The registry is to contain certain information, as
23 outlined in the bill.

24 The bill also requires the department to complete a school
25 transportation advisory review for alternative student transportation
26 providers every three years. The department is required to group
27 the alternative student transportation providers by active, pending,
28 suspended, or expired registration status. The department is
29 required to promptly notify the alternative student transportation
30 provider and any contracted educational agency of the provider's
31 registration status. The bill provides that if an alternative school
32 transportation provider's registration status is suspended or expired,
33 the alternative student transportation provider will be removed from
34 the registry. The bill permits the department to conduct interim
35 reviews if conditions exist that may pose a threat to the safety or
36 wellbeing of students. The bill further permits the department to
37 conduct random audits of alternative student transportation
38 providers.

39

40 ***Driver Qualifications and Routine Checks***

41 To transport students, the bill requires that a driver of an
42 alternative student transportation provider: (1) is at least 21 years of
43 age; (2) possesses a New Jersey driver's license for a minimum of
44 three years; (3) completes a physical examination; (4) completes a
45 criminal history record check, sex offender registry check, and child
46 abuse record information check; (5) undergoes checks for alcohol
47 and drug-related motor vehicle violations; and (6) completes certain
48 department trainings. The bill specifies certain convictions that will

1 disqualify a driver of an alternative student transportation provider
2 from providing transportation services. The bill does not require a
3 driver to possess a commercial driver license or to be a designated
4 school employee, State employee, or parent of a student being
5 transported in certain smaller vehicles as required under other
6 provisions of current law.

7 Under the bill, qualified drivers are required to attest daily to the
8 alternative student transportation provider that the driver has not
9 received any citations that would disqualify the driver pursuant to
10 the provisions of the bill. The drivers are also subject to certain
11 checks as specified in the bill, and unannounced medical testing for
12 alcohol, narcotics, and habit-producing drugs. The alternative
13 student transportation provider is to maintain a record of each
14 driver's qualifications and the results of the checks required under
15 the bill.

16 17 ***Alternative School Vehicles***

18 Under the bill, an alternative school vehicle is defined as a
19 private vehicle or school-owned vehicle that is operated by a driver
20 of an alternative student transportation provider and has a gross
21 vehicle weight rating of 3,000 pounds or more, originally designed
22 by the manufacturer with a maximum seating capacity of nine
23 passengers or less, excluding the driver.

24 In addition to the vehicle standards, registration, and inspection
25 requirements imposed on other school vehicles that transport
26 students with a capacity of nine or less, the alternative school
27 vehicles are to be inspected twice per year and display a current
28 vehicle inspection sticker authorizing the vehicle for school use.
29 However, the bill provides that alternative school vehicles do not
30 need to be equipped with a special license plate as required under
31 current law for other school vehicles.

32 Additionally, the bill requires each alternative school vehicle to
33 be equipped with an interior video camera, a global positioning
34 system, and two-way communications equipment. This equipment
35 can only be activated after an educational agency receives written
36 consent for the use of these items from the parent or guardian of
37 any student who will be transported by the alternative student
38 transportation provider.

39 Under the bill, an alternative student transportation provider is
40 required to maintain automobile liability insurance for bodily injury
41 and property damages in a minimum amount of \$1.5 million
42 combined single limit per occurrence for all alternative school
43 vehicles used to transport students under the bill.

44 45 ***School Personnel Transporting Certain Students***

46 Under current law, a board of education, governing body of a
47 nonpublic school, or State agency is permitted to designate school
48 personnel to transport school children to and from school in a

1 vehicle with a capacity of eight or less provided the school
2 personnel meet various requirements.

3 This bill clarifies that the school personnel may utilize a private
4 or school-owned vehicle with a capacity of eight or less to transport
5 school children to and from school or school related activities.