



BEYOND THE YELLOW SCHOOL BUS

House Bill 3086 and 3084

Let's create innovative ways for kids to get to the best school for them.

Summary

This bill will ensure all Oklahoma students can reliably and safely get to school by providing grants for local governments and community leaders to create innovative school transportation solutions. It will also remove all current boundaries for yellow school buses, allowing them to reach children even if they live outside a school's district lines.

Why We Need It

Oklahoma's public school transportation system is antiquated and doesn't adequately serve every student. Right now, taxpayer money is dedicated to transportation options that aren't efficient for students and children are being left without transportation to the school that best fits their unique situation. The current law hinders districts from being innovative with these funds and prevents other outside-the-box thinking on school transportation solutions. If a bus route does not reach your house, or is not the best option for you to get your child to school, you're not benefitting from public school transportation that is guaranteed to your child.

The Solution

This legislation would provide families and communities with optional grant funding for transportation, giving them the opportunity to craft transportation solutions that work for them. The funding can be applied toward bus fares or driving costs for individual families, as well as to innovative solutions like transportation resource sharing, rideshare programs or neighborhood carpools. It will also broaden the range for yellow school buses, allowing them to reach more families.

The grant funding is an option for students and families, not a mandate or requirement. Local communities know the transportation options that would best meet the needs of their schools and students. This bill drives transportation decisions down to local communities, and even further to individual parents, and provides flexibility to ensure every student that needs a ride to and from their preferred school is able to get one.

Why This Matters

Safe and reliable transportation to school is key for every student to receive a high quality education. Inadequate transportation is a barrier to enrolling children in the best school for them, and can impact daily attendance. Our students must have a safe way to get to the best school for them, no matter where they live. By giving parents and communities the resources to create innovative transportation solutions, we open up their options to send their children to the school that best fits their child's needs.

Bill Details

- Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, a school district may use a portion of the transportation funds allocated to it to provide transportation grants to parents or legal guardians of students who attend the school district
- Each district will craft their own distribution plan for the grants and submit it to the State Department of Education for approval
- Once approved, districts can distribute transportation grants to support families in transporting students to and from school
- There is no mandate in this bill - if a district's transportation plan is working for them and their kids, they do not have to change it