

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 533a

51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013

Tracking Number: .192959.1

Short Title: School Transportation Training Fund

Sponsor(s): Representative Roberto “Bobby” J. Gonzales and Others

Analyst: David Craig

Date: March 8, 2013

AS AMENDED

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee amendments fixes a typographical error and clarifies that money in the fund may be appropriated by the Legislature.

Original Bill Summary:

HB 533 creates a fund in the state treasury, effective July 2013 to:

- provide public school transportation workshops; and
- training services to school districts and charter schools including:
 - supplies and
 - professional development for Public Education Department (PED) staff.

Fiscal Impact:

HB 533 does not contain an appropriation.

Fiscal Issues:

Under HB 533:

- school districts and charter schools would make payments to the fund for workshops and services;
- other income is from investments and other money accruals to the fund;
- money in the fund does not revert to any other fund;
- PED would administer the fund;
- money in the fund would be appropriated to PED to provide workshop and training services.

Technical Issues:

On page 1, line 22, the sponsor may wish to consider replacing “is” with “in.”

Substantive Issues:

According to the PED analysis, the School Transportation Bureau (STB), administers three major programs:

- the School Bus Driver Instructor Program;
- the Commercial Drivers License Examiner Program; and
- the School Bus Inspection Program.

These programs are required in order to train and test new school bus drivers throughout the state as well as bus inspectors. They are key component in ensuring a safe and qualified driver workforce among districts and charter schools statewide.

Also according to the PED analysis:

- all three of these programs require training to school districts and school bus contractors who want to become certified in each of the respective programs;
- each of these trainings are week-long trainings that occur throughout the year in different regions of the state;
- currently PED charges \$200 per person to attend each of these trainings;
- these funds are used to cover the cost of trainings including equipment, supplies, and travel for STB employees; and
- funds may also be used to pay for professional development of PED employees to ensure the department continues to provide high quality training to drivers and inspectors.

According to PED, “the department does not have an appropriate fund to deposit fees received and as such contracts with a Regional Education Cooperative (REC) to collect funds, schedule the trainings, and pay conference costs. While the REC accounts for funds received, these funds are not under the direct control of the department and our external auditors have noted that they would like for the department to receive and deposit fees directly.”

Background:

During the 2012 interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) convened a school transportation subcommittee to examine school bus transportation data, funding, and safety issues, and to provide recommendations to the full committee prior to the 2013 legislative session. One item of discussion was potential training for school district and school bus contractors regarding safety and operations issues.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HAFC

Related Bills:

HB 290 *K-3 Plus Program Buses*
HB 328a *School Bus Fuel Gross Receipts*
HB 419a *School Transportation Reporting Dates*
*HB 447a *Transportation Emergency Fund*
HB 532 *School District Liens on Certain School Buses*

HB 53a3 *School Transportation Training Fund*
HB 603 *School District Bus Rental Fee Times*
*SB 60 *Severance Tax Bond Projects*
*SB 160a *Biodiesel Definitions*
SB 576 *School Bus GPS Devices*