

2022 -- H 7293

=====
LC003219
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

—————
A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Introduced By: Representatives McNamara, McLaughlin, Noret, and Craven

Date Introduced: February 02, 2022

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 31-22 of the General Laws entitled "Miscellaneous Rules" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **31-22-11.10. School bus driver incentive response fund.**

4 (a) There is hereby established a separate fund within the treasury to be known as the school
5 bus driver incentive response fund (hereinafter the "school bus incentive fund"). This school bus
6 incentive fund shall be administered by the general treasurer in accordance with the same laws and
7 fiscal procedures as the general funds of the state, and in consultation with the commissioner of the
8 department of elementary and secondary education (the "education commissioner"). This school
9 bus incentive fund shall consist of such sums as the state may from time to time appropriate, as well as
10 at least five million dollars (\$5,000,000) received from federal COVID-19 response funds
11 (hereinafter "COVID-19 response funds") received by the state to assist the state in its public health,
12 community and economic recovery efforts related to the state of emergency concerning the novel
13 coronavirus disease outbreak declared by the governor on March 9, 2020. This school bus incentive
14 fund shall also consist of interest earnings, money received from the federal government, gifts,
15 bequests, donations, or otherwise from any public or private source. The initial funding for the
16 school bus incentive fund shall be a grant of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) from COVID-19
17 response funds.

18 (b) The school bus incentive fund shall be used for the purpose of allowing school districts
19 to provide financial assistance to student transportation providers to offer incentives for

1 employment and retention of persons who operate school buses within the state, including bus
2 drivers as well as bus monitors. As used herein, the term "school bus" includes traditional school
3 buses, vans, and other motor vehicles used by the district, either directly or through an outside
4 provider, to transport students to and from school, as well as to transport students for field trips,
5 athletic events, and other transportation provided by a school or school district to students for
6 school-related and extracurricular activities as well as student activities engaged in as part of the
7 basic education program ("BEP") and activities which fall outside of the BEP.

8 (c) The school bus incentive fund shall be credited with:

9 (1) Revenue authorized by the general assembly and specifically designated to be credited
10 to the school bus incentive fund from federal funds allocated to the state pursuant to federal
11 legislation enacted after December 4, 2020 and in response to the COVID-19 outbreak or related
12 economic recovery, excluding federal grants that are not subject to appropriation and funds related
13 to increased federal medical assistance percentage rates under section 1905(b) of the Social
14 Security Act; provided, that federal funds made available in the form of newly created
15 reimbursement programs may be authorized by the general assembly and designated to be credited
16 to the school bus incentive fund; and

17 (2) Interest earned on such revenue. Amounts credited to the school bus incentive fund
18 shall be subject to appropriation and money remaining in the school bus incentive fund at the end
19 of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund and shall be available for expenditure in the
20 subsequent fiscal year.

21 (d) The general treasurer, in consultation with the education commissioner, shall
22 promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of this section, emphasizing the
23 establishment of metrics for awarding these funds as well as a process allowing a school district to
24 access school bus incentive funds to pay extra compensation or incentives to hire and retain school
25 bus drivers and monitors. Funds shall be issued by the general treasurer directly to school districts
26 as directed by the education commissioner.

27 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

=====
LC003219
=====

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- MISCELLANEOUS RULES

1 This act would establish a revolving school bus driver incentive fund for the purpose of
2 providing incentives to school districts to hire and retain school bus drivers and monitors. Initial
3 monies for the fund would come from a grant of COVID-19 response funds in the amount of five
4 million dollars (\$5,000,000).

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

=====
LC003219
=====