

---

**Note:** For additional legal requirements applicable to purchases with federal funds, see CBB.

---

**Authorization to Purchase or Lease Vehicles**

A district may purchase school motor vehicles through the comptroller or through competitive bidding under Education Code Chapter 44, Subchapter B. *Education Code 34.001(a)* [See CH]

Each contract proposed to be made by a district for the purchase or lease of one or more school buses, including a lease with an option to purchase, must be submitted to competitive bidding when the contract is valued at \$20,000 or more. *Education Code 44.031(l)*

When a contract for the purchase of school buses is valued at \$20,000 or more, the contract must be made either through competitive bidding or by purchasing the buses through the comptroller. *Atty. Gen. Op. LO-98-063 (1998)*

Payment

A district financially unable to pay for a vehicle the district purchases may, as prescribed by Education Code 34.005, issue interest-bearing time warrants in amounts sufficient to make the purchase. *Education Code 34.005(a)*

A board may issue bonds to purchase new school buses. *Education Code 45.001(a)(1)(D)* [See CCA]

New Van Purchases or Leases

A school system may not purchase or lease a new 15-passenger van if it will be used significantly by, or on behalf of, the school system to transport preprimary, primary, or secondary school students to or from school or an event related to school, unless the 15-passenger van complies with the motor vehicle standards prescribed for school buses and multi-function school activity buses under United States Code Title 49. This provision does not apply in some limited circumstances, including the purchase or lease of a 15-passenger van under a contract executed before August 10, 2005, the date of enactment of this provision. *49 U.S.C. 30112*

**Contracts for School Bus Use, Acquisition, or Lease**

A board may contract with any person for use, acquisition, or lease with option to purchase a school bus if the board determines the contract to be economically advantageous to the district. Such a contract may have any lawful term of not less than two or more than ten years. The competitive bidding requirements of Education Code Chapter 44, Subchapter B apply to a contract under this provision. A school bus that is leased or leased with an option to purchase must meet or exceed safety standards set out in Education Code 34.002. *Education Code 34.009* [See CH]

<b>Registration</b>	District-owned vehicles used exclusively in the service of a district are exempt from the state registration fee. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) must approve an application for registration before exempt license plates are issued. <i>Transp. Code 502.451, .453</i>
<b>Identification</b>	The DMV may not issue exempt license plates unless the applicant for registration certifies in writing that the name of a district is printed on each side of the vehicle, in letters that are at least two inches high or in an emblem that is at least 100 square inches in size. The letters or emblem must be of a color sufficiently different from the body of the vehicle to be clearly legible from a distance of 100 feet. <i>Transp. Code 502.452(a)</i>
<b>Maintenance</b>	District vehicles are subject to inspection pursuant to Transportation Code Chapter 548.
<b>School Bus Advertising</b>	The exterior of a school bus may not bear advertising or another paid announcement directed at the public if the advertising or announcement distracts from the effectiveness of required safety-warning equipment. A school bus that violates this provision or rules adopted under this provision shall be placed out of service until it complies. <i>Transp. Code 547.701(d)</i>
Advertising Rules	A district may allow advertisements on school buses in accordance with rules. The rules adopted by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) at 37 Administrative Code 14.61–14.65 apply to all school buses used to transport preprimary, primary, and secondary public school students. <i>37 TAC 14.61</i>
“Advertisement”	For purposes of this policy, “advertisement” means any communication brought to the attention of the public by paid announcement or in return for public recognition in connection with an event or offer or sale of a product or service, except for a single-line listing of a district name and/or school or manufacturer logo approved by DPS. <i>37 TAC 14.1(1)</i>
Material and Location	Advertisements must be of a material and in a location specified in the rules. <i>37 TAC 14.62–.64</i>
Annual Notice	By September 1 of each year, districts involved in an advertising program shall provide the School Bus Transportation Program at DPS written notification of the number of buses operated by or for the district that display exterior advertising or another paid announcement. <i>37 TAC 14.65(a)(1), (b)</i>
<i>Delivery of Notice</i>	Notices to DPS shall be delivered by facsimile at (512) 424-2238, electronic mail at <a href="mailto:sbt@txdps.state.tx.us">sbt@txdps.state.tx.us</a> , or mailed to School Bus Transportation, Texas Department of Public Safety, P.O. Box 4087, Austin, TX 78773-0525. <i>37 TAC 14.65(d)</i>

**Nonschool Use**

A board may contract with nonschool organizations for use of school buses. The board may provide services relating to the maintenance and operation of the buses in accordance with the contract. *Education Code 34.010*

**Sale of Buses**

At the request of a district, the comptroller shall dispose of a school bus. A district is not required to dispose of a bus through the comptroller. *Education Code 34.006*