

**FEDERAL SCHOOL BUS RULE GUIDANCE FOR
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDOT)
SECTION 5310 AND SECTION 5311 SUBRECIPIENTS**

The state and its subrecipient agencies are prohibited from providing exclusive school bus service unless the service qualifies and is approved by the FTA Administrator under an allowable exemption. Federally funded equipment or facilities cannot be used to provide exclusive school bus service. School tripper service that operates and looks like all other regular service is allowed.

An FTA subrecipient agency may operate exclusive school bus service with locally funded buses, when stored in locally funded facilities, under the following conditions:

1. The subrecipient agency operates a school system in the area and operates a separate and exclusive school bus service for that school system.
2. Existing private school bus operators are unable to provide adequate, safe transportation.
3. The subrecipient agency, a public entity, operated the service prior to August 12, 1973, or received a grant for facilities before November 26, 1974.

TRIPPER SERVICE

FTA defines tripper service as regularly scheduled mass transportation service which is open to the public, and which is designed or modified to accommodate the needs of school students and personnel, using various fare collections or subsidy systems. Buses used in tripper service must be clearly marked as open to the public and may not carry designations such as “school bus” or “school special”. These buses may stop only at a grantee or operator's regular service stop. All routes traveled by tripper buses must be within a grantee's or operator's regular route service as indicated in their published route schedules. **Therefore, tripper service analysis is only required for agencies providing fixed route service.** Demand response agencies may provide student transportation if it matches all other operational characteristics.

Tripper service must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Regularly scheduled public transportation service
2. Buses are clearly marked as open to the public
3. Service was modified to meet needs of students/school personnel
4. Service uses various fare collection systems or subsidies
5. Buses have no special designations (e.g., “school bus”)
6. Buses use regular bus stops
7. Service is noted on published schedules

School tripper service that does not meet the above requirements must be modified to comply with FTA requirements or discontinue the service.