FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: CS/HB 1213	**COMPANION BILL:** SB 1424 (Collins)
TITLE: K-12 School Route Optimization Pilot Program	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Alvarez, D.	**RELATED BILLS:** None

Committee References

Education Administration	➤	PreK-12 Budget	➤	Education & Employment
17 Y, 0 N, As CS		15 Y, 0 N		18 Y, 0 N

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill establishes a route optimization pilot program in Duval, Highlands, Hillsborough, Okeechobee, and Pasco county school districts to evaluate the efficiency and financial impact of different student transportation routing scenarios. The bill requires school districts to use their existing transportation management systems in conjunction with a student transportation intelligence platform with artificial intelligence, if available, to optimize routing while maintaining student safety.

The pilot program, as required by the bill, will assess expanding transportation to students in grades 7-12 subject to hazardous walking conditions and to all K-12 students living more than 1 mile, rather than the current 2-mile requirement, from school. Additionally, the bill requires participating school districts to evaluate hazardous walking conditions for expanding student transportation, including traffic proximity, speed limits, darkness, and lack of sidewalks, as well as dynamically adjusting routes to avoid proximity to sexual predators or offenders.

The bill requires each participating school district to report implementation costs and potential cost savings, if any, to the Department of Education in order to provide the Legislature with a report on the findings by September 1, 2026.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The five school districts required to participate in the pilot program may experience an indeterminate negative fiscal impact, due to the costs associated with purchasing a student transportation intelligence platform with artificial intelligence.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill creates a route optimization pilot program in Duval, Highlands, Hillsborough, Okeechobee, and Pasco county school districts to model and evaluate the efficiencies and financial impacts of different student transportation routing scenarios.

The bill requires the pilot school districts to use their existing transportation management system in conjunction with a student transportation intelligence platform with artificial intelligence, if available, to evaluate diverse routing scenarios and optimize student transportation efficiency while maintaining student safety. The routing scenario evaluations must include:

- Expanding school transportation to students in grades 7-12, if such students are subject to hazardous walking conditions as defined in Florida statute while en route to or from school.
- Expanding school transportation to students in kindergarten through grade 12 whose homes are more than 1 mile, rather than the current 2-mile requirement, from the nearest appropriate school.
- Reducing hazardous walking conditions that require students to walk:
  - Along a roadway within 4 feet of lanes of traffic;
  - Along a roadway that is 30 miles per hour or greater;

    - In the dark; or
    - Along a path where there is not a sidewalk adjacent to the road.
- Dynamically changing routes if a student's route must walk within 3 miles of the residence of a sexual predator or a sexual offender, as defined in Florida statutes.

The bill requires each school district to report the costs to implement each of the requirements and the cost savings, if any, associated with the use of artificial intelligence, including reduction in fuel use, accidents, injuries, the number of buses required to provide transportation, the number or length of routes, and any changes to existing routes based on the use of artificial intelligence or routing scenarios.

The bill requires the Department of Education to assist school districts with the implementation of the pilot program and submit a summary of the evaluations submitted by each school district to the Legislature by September 1, 2026.

The pilot program will be repealed July 1, 2027. (Section 1).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2025. (Section 2).

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The bill has an indeterminate negative fiscal impact to the five school districts required to participate in the route optimization pilot program due to the costs associated with the purchasing of a student transportation intelligence platform with artificial intelligence.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Student Transportation

Responsibilities of the District School Superintendent
The district school superintendent (superintendent) is required to ascertain which students should be transported to school or to school activities, determine the most effective arrangement of transportation routes to accommodate these students; recommend such routing to the district school board; recommend plans and procedures for providing facilities for the economical and safe transportation of students.[1]

Responsibilities of District School Boards
After considering recommendations of the superintendent, the district school board (board) must make provisions for the transportation of students to the public schools or school activities they are required or expected to attend; authorize transportation routes arranged efficiently and economically; provide the necessary transportation facilities, and adopt the necessary rules to ensure safety, economy, and efficiency in the operation of all buses and other vehicles used to transport students.[2]

Boards, after considering recommendations of the superintendent, among other responsibilities:

- Must provide transportation for each student in prekindergarten disability programs and in K-12 public schools when transportation is necessary to provide adequate educational facilities and opportunities which otherwise would not be available.[3]
- Must provide transportation for students whose homes are more than a reasonable walking distance from the nearest appropriate school.[4] Generally, districts do not receive state funding to transport students in

[1] S. 1006.21(1), F.S.
[2] S. 1006.21(2), F.S.
[3] S. 1006.21(3)(a), F.S.
[4] S. 1006.21(3)(b), F.S.

grades K-12 living 2 miles or less from the schools they attend.[5] However, state funds are allocated to transport any public elementary school student whose grade level does not exceed grade 6 and is subject to a hazardous walking condition.[6]
- May provide transportation for public school students in grades 7-12 who are subjected to a hazardous walking condition.[7]

Hazardous Walking Condition

Hazardous walking conditions are classified based on statutory criteria for walkways that are parallel or perpendicular to a road, as well as for crossings over the road at uncontrolled sites that students must use to walk to and from school.[8]

The following statutory criteria define hazardous walking conditions for walkways parallel to the road, walkways perpendicular to the road, and crossings over the road at uncontrolled sites.

Walkways Parallel to the Road

A hazardous walking condition exists for walkways parallel to the road when there is less than a 4-foot wide surface adjacent to the road for students to walk, not including drainage ditches, sluiceways, swales, or channels. Additionally, if the road is uncurbed and has a posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour or greater, the walking surface must be set back at least 3 feet from the edge of the road or it will be identified as a hazardous walking condition.[9]

An otherwise hazardous walking condition on a parallel walkway may not be designated as hazardous if:[10]
- the volume of traffic[11] on the road is less than 180 vehicles per hour, per direction, during the time when students walk to and from school; or
- the road is located in a residential area with a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour or less.

Walkways Perpendicular to the Road

A hazardous walking condition exists for walkways perpendicular to the road if:
- traffic volume on the road exceeds the rate of 360 vehicles per hour, per direction, during the time when students walk to and from school and the crossing site is uncontrolled, meaning it is an intersection or other designated crossing site where no crossing guard, traffic enforcement officer, stop sign, or other traffic control signal is present when students walk to and from school;[12] or
- total traffic volume on the road exceeds 4,000 vehicles per hour through an intersection or other crossing site controlled by a stop sign or other traffic control signal and no crossing guards or other traffic enforcement officers are present during the time when students walk to and from school.[13]

Crossing Over the Road

A hazardous walking condition exists at any uncontrolled crossing site if the road has:[14]
- a posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour or greater; or

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[5] S. 1011.68(1)(a), F.S. *See also*, r. 6A-F.A.C. A reasonable walking distance for any student who is not otherwise eligible for transportation pursuant to s. 1011.68, F.S. is any distance not more than two (2) miles between the home and school or one and one-half (1 1/2) miles between the home and the assigned bus stop.
[6] S. 1006.23(1)-(2), F.S.; s. 1011.68(1)(e), F.S.
[7] S. 1006.21(3)(b), F.S.
[8] S. 1006.23(2), F.S.
[9] S. 1006.23(2)(a)1. F.S.
[10] S. 1006.23(2)(a)2. F.S.
[11] S. 1006.23(2), F.S. (Flush left provision at the end of the subsection.) Traffic volume is determined by the most current traffic engineering study conducted by a state or local governmental agency.
[12] S. 1006.23(2)(b)1. F.S.
[13] S. 1006.23(2)(b)2. F.S.
[14] S. 1006.23(2)(c), F.S.

- six lanes or more, not including turn lanes, regardless of the speed limit.

Inspecting, Determining, and Reporting Hazardous Walking Conditions

Identification of hazardous walking conditions begins when the district school superintendent requests a review of a condition perceived to be hazardous for students who live within the 2-mile limit of a school and who walk to school.[15]

Once a request for review is received, the perceived hazardous walking condition must be jointly inspected by a representative of the:[16]

- school district;
- state or local governmental entity with jurisdiction over the location; and
- municipal police department, the sheriff's office, or the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Under current law, the governmental representatives must determine whether the condition constitutes a hazardous walking condition. If the governmental representatives concur that a condition constitutes a hazardous walking condition, the governmental entity with jurisdiction must report that determination in writing to the superintendent, who then initiates a formal request for correction.[17]

If the governmental representatives are unable to reach a consensus, the reasons for lack of consensus are reported to the superintendent, who must provide a report and recommendation to the board.[18] The board may initiate a proceeding under Chapter 86 of the Florida Statues, to determine whether the condition constitutes a hazardous walking condition after providing at least 30 days' notice to the state or local governmental entity having jurisdiction over the road.[19]

Correcting Hazardous Walking Conditions

A district school board and other governmental entities work cooperatively to identify conditions that are hazardous along student walking routes to school, and the board provides transportation to students who would be subjected to such conditions.[20] Additionally, state or local governmental entities with jurisdiction over a road along which a hazardous walking condition is determined to exist must correct the condition within a reasonable period of time.[21]

Upon a determination that a hazardous walking condition exists, the superintendent must request a position statement with respect to correcting a hazardous condition from the state or local governmental entity with jurisdiction over the road.[22] Within 90 days after receiving such a request, the state or local governmental entity must inform the superintendent whether the entity will include correction of the hazardous walking condition in its next annual 5-year transportation work program.[23]

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[15] S. 1006.23(3)(a), F.S.

[16] S. 1006.23(3)(a), F.S. A representative of the municipal police department is required for a municipal road, a representative of the sheriff's office is required for a county road, and a representative of the Department of Transportation is required for a state road. If the jurisdiction is a metropolitan planning organization, a representative of that organization must also be included.

[17] *Id*.

[18] S. 1006.23(3)(b), F.S.

[19] *Id*. The proceedings continue unless, within 30 days after such notice is provided, the state or local governmental entity concurs in writing that the condition is a hazardous walking condition and provides a position statement.

[20] S. 1006.23(4)(a), F.S.

[21] *Id*.

[22] S. 1006.23(4)(b), F.S.

[23] *Id*. If the hazardous walking condition will be corrected, the state or local governmental entity informs the superintendent when correction of the condition will be completed. If the hazardous walking condition will not be included in the state or local governmental entity's next annual 5-year transportation work program, the factors justifying such conclusion must be stated in writing to the superintendent and the Department of Education.

State funds are allocated for the transportation of students subjected to a hazardous walking condition.[24] However, such funding ceases upon correction of the hazardous walking condition or upon the projected completion date, whichever occurs first.[25]

Sexual Predators and Sexual Offenders

Sexual Predators

A person is a sexual predator in Florida if he or she:

- Was convicted of a qualifying offense committed on or after October 1, 1993; and
- Has not received a pardon or otherwise had the conviction set aside for the qualifying offense.

Qualifying convictions for sexual predator designation include:

- Capital, life, or first degree felony kidnapping or false imprisonment, when the victim is a minor and there is a sexual component to the crime;[26]
- Capital, life, or first degree felony sexual battery;[27]
- Capital, life, or first degree felony lewd or lascivious battery or molestation;[28]
- Capital, life, or first degree felony selling or buying minors to engage in sexually explicit conduct;[29]
- An offense that would require registration as a sexual offender, other than transmission of child pornography by electronic device or transmission of material harmful to minors, by a person with a prior conviction for a sexual offense;[30] or
- A conviction for a similar offense committed in another jurisdiction.[31]

The court must make written findings designating a person who meets the criteria as a sexual predator.[32]

Sexual Offenders

Under Florida law, a person is a sexual offender if he or she is convicted of a qualifying offense and:

- Was released on or after October 1, 1997, from the criminal sanction resulting from a qualifying conviction.[33] A sanction imposed in this state or in any other jurisdiction includes, but is not limited to:
  - Probation,
  - Community control,
  - Parole,
  - Conditional release,
  - Control release, or
  - Incarceration in a state prison, federal prison, private correctional facility, or local detention facility.
- Establishes or maintains a residence in Florida and has not been designated a sexual predator by a court of this state but has been designated a sexual predator, sexually violent predator, or another sexual offender designation in another state or jurisdiction, if such designation subjects or would subject him or her to registration or public notification in that state or jurisdiction.[34]
- Establishes or maintains a residence in this state and is in the custody or control of, or under the supervision of, any other state or jurisdiction as a result of a qualifying conviction.[35]
- Has been adjudicated delinquent on or after July 1, 2007, for a qualifying offense, if the juvenile was at least 14 years old at the time he or she committed the offense.[36]

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[24] S. 1006.23(4)(c), F.S.
[25] *Id*.
[26] Ss. 787.01 and 787.02, F.S.; *Raines v. State*, 805 So.2d 999 (Fla. 4th DCA 2001).
[27] S. 794.011, F.S.
[28] S. 800.04, F.S.
[29] S. 847.0145, F.S.
[30] S. 775.21(4)(a)1.b., F.S.
[31] S. 775.21(4), F.S.
[32] Ss. 775.21(4)(c) and 775.21(5), F.S.
[33] S. 943.0435(1)(h)1.a.(II), F.S.
[34] S. 943.0435(1)(h)1.b., F.S.
[35] S. 943.0435(1)(h)1.c., F.S.
[36] S. 943.0435(1)(h)1, F.S.

- Is in the custody or control of, or under the supervision of, the Department of Corrections (DOC) or is in the custody of a private correctional facility.[37]

Qualifying convictions for sexual offender designation include:

- Sexual misconduct with an individual with a developmental disability;[38]
- Sexual misconduct with a mental health patient by an employee;[39]
- Kidnapping or false imprisonment, where the victim is a minor and there is a sexual component to the crime;[40]
- Luring or enticing a child, with a prior sexual conviction;[41]
- Human trafficking;[42]
- Sexual battery;[43]
- Unlawful sexual activity with minors;[44]
- Lewd or lascivious battery, molestation, conduct, or exhibition;[45]
- Video voyeurism with a prior video voyeurism conviction;[46]
- Lewd or lascivious offense on an elderly person;[47]
- Sexual performance by a child;[48]
- Providing obscene materials to a minor;[49]
- Computer pornography involving minors;[50]
- Soliciting a minor over the Internet;[51]
- Traveling to meet minors;[52]
- Lewd or lascivious exhibition over the Internet;[53]
- Transmission of child pornography by electronic device or equipment;[54]
- Transmission of material harmful to minors;[55]
- Selling or buying minors to engage in sexually explicit conduct;[56]
- Racketeering involving at least one sexual offense;[57]
- Sexual misconduct with a forensic client;[58] and
- Sexual misconduct by an employee on a juvenile offender.[59]

Qualifying delinquency adjudications for sexual offender designation include:

- Sexual battery;[60]

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[37] S. 944.607(1)(f), F.S.
[38] S. 393.135(2), F.S.
[39] S. 394.4593(2), F.S.
[40] Ss. 787.01, F.S. and 787.02, F.S.
[41] S. 787.025(2), F.S.
[42] S. 787.06(3)(b), (d), (f), or (g), F.S.
[43] S. 794.011, F.S. excluding s. 794.011(10), F.S.
[44] S. 794.05, F.S.
[45] S. 800.04, F.S.
[46] S. 810.145(8), F.S.
[47] S. 825.1025, F.S.
[48] S. 827.071, F.S.
[49] S. 847.0133, F.S.
[50] S. 847.0135(2), F.S.
[51] S. 847.0135(3), F.S.
[52] S. 847.0135(4), F.S.
[53] S. 847.0135(5), F.S.
[54] S. 847.0137, F.S.
[55] S. 847.0138, F.S.
[56] S. 847.0145, F.S.
[57] S. 895.03, F.S.
[58] S. 916.1075(2), F.S.
[59] S. 985.701(1), F.S.
[60] S. 794.011, F.S.

- Lewd or lascivious battery by encouraging, forcing, or enticing any person under 16 years old to engage in sadomasochistic abuse, sexual bestiality, prostitution, or any other act involving sexual activity,[61] if either the:
    - Victim is under 12 years old; or
    - Court finds sexual activity by the use of force or coercion;
- Lewd or lascivious molestation against a victim less than 12 years old,[62] if the court finds molestation involving unclothed genitals;
- Lewd or lascivious molestation against a victim at least 12 years old but less than 16 years old,[63] if the court finds both:
    - Use of force or coercion; and
    - Unclothed genitals.

Registration Requirements for Sexual Predators and Sexual Offenders

Current law requires all sexual predators and sexual offenders to comply with a number of statutory registration requirements.

A sexual predator must register:

- With the DOC if the sexual predator is in the DOC's custody or control, under the DOC's supervision, or in the custody of a private correctional facility;[64]
    - If the sexual predator is under the DOC's supervision but not in custody, he or she must register within three days of the court designating him or her as a sexual predator;[65]
- With the custodian of the local jail, within three days of the court designating him or her as a sexual predator, if the sexual predator is in the custody of a local jail;[66]
- In person at the sheriff's office in the county where:
    - The sexual predator establishes or maintains a residence within 48 hours of establishing or maintaining a residence in Florida;[67] or
    - The sexual predator was designated a sexual predator within 48 hours after such finding is made.[68]

A sexual offender[69] must register:

- With the DOC if the sexual offender is under the supervision of the DOC but not incarcerated within three business days after being sentenced for a qualifying offense.[70]
- In person at his or her local sheriff's office within 48 hours of:
    - Establishing a permanent, temporary, or transient residence in Florida; or
    - Being released from the custody, control, or supervision of the DOC or from the custody of a private correctional facility.[71]

Residency Restrictions for Certain Sex Offenses

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[61] S. 800.04(4)(a)2., F.S.
[62] S. 800.04(5)(c)1., F.S.
[63] S. 800.04(5)(d), F.S.
[64] S. 775.21(6)(b), F.S.
[65] *Id*.
[66] S. 775.21(6)(c), F.S.
[67] S. 775.21(6)(e)1.a., F.S.
[68] S. 775.21(6)(e)1.b., F.S.
[69] A juvenile sexual offender who is under the care or custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice is subject to separate registration requirements under s. 985.4815, F.S.
[70] S. 944.607(4), F.S.
[71] S. 943.0435(2)(a)1., F.S.

A person who has been convicted of a violation of sexual battery;[72] a lewd or lascivious offense committed upon or in the presence of a person less than 16 years of age;[73] child pornography or sexual performance by a child;[74] possession, transmission, or viewing of child pornography using electronic devices;[75] or the selling or buying of minors for pornographic entertainment,[76] regardless of whether adjudication has been withheld, in which the victim of the offense was less than 16 years of age, may not reside within 1,000 feet of any school, child care facility, park, or playground. However, a person does not violate this subsection and may not be forced to relocate if he or she is living in a residence that meets the requirements of this subsection and a school, child care facility, park, or playground is subsequently established within 1,000 feet of his or her residence.[77]

OTHER RESOURCES:

Hazardous Walking Conditions in Florida: A 2022 Analysis by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Education Administration Subcommittee	17 Y, 0 N, As CS	3/27/2025	Sleap	Dixon
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	• Removed the requirement for parental notification and written consent before a school district can provide transportation, including transportation in a privately owned vehicle. • Removed the statewide requirement for artificial intelligence (AI)-based route optimization and penalties for noncompliance, replacing it with a pilot program in select school districts to model and evaluate the efficiencies and financial impacts of different routing scenarios using a student transportation AI platform. • Created a pilot program to evaluate the costs of revisions to hazardous walking conditions and any efficiencies realized through the use of AI. • Required a summary report of the evaluations of the route optimization pilot program to be submitted to the legislature by September 1, 2026.			
PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	4/8/2025	Potvin	Bailey
Education & Employment Committee	18 Y, 0 N	4/17/2025	Hassell	Dixon

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THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.

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[72] S. 794.011, F.S.
[73] S. 800.04, F.S.
[74] S. 827.071, F.S.
[75] S. 847.0135(5), F.S.
[76] S. 847.0145, F.S.
[77] S. 775.215, F.S.