

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1714

S.P. 667

In Senate, April 17, 2025

An Act to Create a New Pathway to Licensure to Drive School Buses

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant".

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BENNETT of Oxford.

Cosponsored by Senator: LIBBY of Cumberland, Representatives: DODGE of Belfast,
FOSTER of Dexter, JACKSON of Oxford, LANCE of Paris.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §1254, sub-§3-A** is enacted to read:

3 **3-A. School buses.** The Secretary of State may issue a license specifically endorsed
4 for the operation of a school bus as defined in section 2301, subsection 5 with the same
5 requirements as a motor vehicle license and that conforms with the requirements of the
6 federal Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 without requiring the license holder
7 to obtain a commercial license under section 1253. A motor vehicle license does not
8 authorize operation of a school bus unless the license is endorsed for that vehicle. This
9 subsection does not prohibit a commercial license holder with a school bus endorsement
10 and who is otherwise qualified to operate a school bus from operating a school bus in the
11 State.

12 **Sec. 2. 29-A MRSA §1304, sub-§4-B** is enacted to read:

13 **4-B. School bus learner's permit.** The following provisions apply to school bus
14 learner's permits.

15 A. The school bus learner's permit holder must be at all times accompanied in a school
16 bus by the holder of a valid school bus license under section 1254, subsection 3-A or a
17 commercial driver's license with a school bus endorsement under subsection 4-A,
18 paragraph E, subparagraph (2). The school bus license holder or commercial driver's
19 license holder shall at all times be directly behind or in the first row behind the driver
20 or, in the case of a passenger vehicle, be physically present in the front seat of the
21 vehicle next to the school bus learner's permit holder.

22 B. The school bus learner's permit holder must hold a valid Maine driver's license.

23 C. In order to receive a license specifically endorsed for the operation of a school bus,
24 in accordance with the requirements of the federal Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety
25 Act of 1986, a school bus learner's permit holder must have taken and passed the school
26 bus endorsement knowledge test. A school bus learner's permit holder testing for a
27 license specifically endorsed for the operation of a school bus is prohibited from
28 operating a school bus with passengers other than test examiners and the school bus
29 license holder or commercial driver's license holder with a school bus endorsement
30 accompanying the school bus learner's permit holder pursuant to paragraph A. A school
31 bus learner's permit holder must be at least 21 years of age to apply for a permit under
32 this subsection. The school bus learner's permit holder must be accompanied by a
33 school bus license holder or commercial driver's license holder with a school bus
34 endorsement who has at least 3 years of driving experience and is at least 22 years of
35 age.

36 D. The school bus learner's permit is valid for no more than one year from the date of
37 issuance.

38 E. The issuance of a school bus learner's permit is a precondition to the initial issuance
39 of a license specifically endorsed for the operation of a school bus.

40 F. The school bus learner's permit holder must complete a school bus driver's license
41 skills course and is not eligible to take the school bus driver's license skills test in the
42 first 14 days after the initial issuance of the school bus learner's permit.

G. An instructor of a school bus driver's license skills course must be a school bus license holder or commercial driver's license holder with a school bus endorsement who has at least 3 years of school bus driving experience and is at least 22 years of age. An instructor of a school bus driver's license skills course must have completed a school bus driver's license skills instructor course approved by the department, which may be offered in conjunction with a commercial driver's license instructor course.

For purposes of this subsection, "school bus" has the same meaning as in section 2301, subsection 5.

SUMMARY

This bill creates a license specifically endorsed for the operation of a school bus, which must conform with the requirements of the federal Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986. An applicant for a license specifically endorsed for the operation of a school bus must follow requirements set out in the bill to obtain that license. The bill does not prohibit a holder of a commercial license with a school bus endorsement who is otherwise qualified to operate a school bus from operating a school bus in the State.

A school bus learner's permit holder must complete a school bus driver's license skills course taught by an instructor who has at least 3 years of school bus driving experience and has completed a school bus driver's license skills instructor course, which may be offered in conjunction with a commercial driver's license instructor course.