

RCW 28A.160.260 Zero emission school buses—Cost of ownership formula—Qualified reimbursement—Exceptions. (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the department of ecology, must develop preliminary guidance for school districts regarding the formula factors used to calculate the total cost of ownership for zero emission school buses and diesel school buses. After considering feedback to the preliminary guidance, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the department of ecology, must adopt rules to establish the formulas. Such formulas must, at a minimum, address the initial cost of the bus at the time of purchase, the cost of maintenance, the cost of fueling and charging, and the cost of replacing zero emission school bus batteries, if applicable.

(2) (a) Once the total cost of ownership of zero emission school buses is at or below the total cost of ownership of diesel school buses, as determined by the formulas in subsection (1) of this section, school districts may only receive reimbursement under RCW 28A.160.195 and 28A.160.200 for the purchase of zero emission school buses.

(b) The requirements of this subsection do not prohibit the use of externally vented fuel-operated passenger heaters from November 15th through March 15th annually until other viable alternatives become available.

(3) (a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must make exceptions to the requirement under subsection (2) of this section in the following circumstances:

(i) The reimbursement is for a diesel school bus that was purchased prior to the total cost of ownership determination;

(ii) The school district has bus route mileage needs that cannot be met by the average daily mileage achieved under actual use conditions in Washington for zero emission school buses;

(iii) The school district has other unique needs that may not be met by the technological capabilities of zero emission school buses; or

(iv) The school district does not have, or have access to, the appropriate charging infrastructure to support the use of zero emission school buses. If a school district qualifies under this exception it must submit documentation indicating it has applied for grant funding to install charging infrastructure under available federal grant programs or the zero emission school bus grant program established under RCW 70A.15.4200, or documentation from a public utility district or utility company indicating the school district does not have enough electric capacity to support the appropriate charging infrastructure.

(b) Exceptions granted by the superintendent of public instruction under (a) (ii) through (iv) of this subsection may not exceed five years. A school district may apply to renew an exception if the need for such an exception still exists after the initial exception has expired.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "zero emission school bus" means a school bus that produces zero exhaust emission of any air pollutant and any greenhouse gas other than water vapor. [2024 c 345 s 3.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 345: See note following RCW 70A.15.4200.