

reasonably may require additional expenses to guarantee adequate transportation during the regular school year.

(2) In addition to providing advice to the Motor Vehicle Administration under § 25-110 of the Transportation Article regarding the adoption by the Administration of rules and regulations relating to the safe operation of school vehicles, including vehicles and equipment appropriate for transporting handicapped children, the Department shall adopt guidelines which set minimum standards to meet in each of the following categories:

(i) The qualifications for hiring and training of drivers and aides, including private contract personnel, involved in handling and transporting handicapped children to Level V nonpublic special education facilities; and

(ii) The appropriate length of time and distance for transporting handicapped children to Level V nonpublic special education facilities.

(d) (1) By July 1 of each year any county that has 25 or more handicapped children attending Level V nonpublic education facilities shall submit to the State Department a detailed report, including any rules and regulations it has adopted since the submission of its last report, which outline the county's compliance with the State Department adopted guidelines for the transportation of handicapped children to Level V nonpublic special education facilities.

(2) The State Department shall annually:

(i) Review each applicable county's plan or procedures for transporting handicapped children to Level V nonpublic special education facilities for compliance with the State Department's guidelines; and

(ii) Advise a county as to whether its plan or procedures are in compliance.

(e) In both the adoption of guidelines under subsection (c)(2) of this section and the annual review under subsection (d) of this section of each applicable county's plan or procedures for transporting children to Level V nonpublic special education facilities, the State Department shall:

(1) Take into consideration the particular circumstances and needs of each applicable county, including the differences among urban and rural counties; and

(2) Recognize the need for flexibility on an individual client basis.