School bus safety week. Repeals the provision that allows school boards to designate one day of "school bus safety week" as "school bus driver day."

School bus safety training. Deletes the requirement that the training be "results-oriented." Deletes the requirement of pupil testing after the training.

School transportation policy. Deletes the requirement that each school district's written pupil transportation safety policy must include itemization of planned expenditures for safety activities. Deletes the requirement that amendments to the policy must be approved by the school bus safety advisory committee, and substitutes a requirement that amendments must conform to law.

Head start vehicle. Amends the law that allows Head Start buses to be equipped as a school bus or Head Start bus to provide that it applies to vehicles that transport students (currently "passengers") under the federal Head Start act.

Operation of school buses under 16 passengers. Allows a person with a class D (basic) license who has a school bus endorsement to operate a school bus designed to transport 15 or fewer passengers including the driver. Requires the department of public safety, before issuing a school bus endorsement on a class D license, to conduct a background check and perform drug and alcohol testing.

Repeals the present law that allows operation of a school bus designed to transport 15 or fewer passengers including the driver by a person with a class C (commercial) driver's license.

Processing fee. Allows the department of public safety to charge a $4 processing fee for school bus endorsements, to cover the costs of processing the applicant's physical examination certificate. Prohibits any other fee for the endorsement.

School bus endorsements. Amends laws governing school bus endorsements.

Subd. 1. Endorsement. Allows a person who meets the qualifications for a school bus endorsement to drive a school bus for up to 180 days without the endorsement, if the person has
all the documentation needed for the endorsement and sent it to the department.

**Subd. 1a. Responsibility.** Specifies that:

- it is the department's responsibility to issue a school bus endorsement to a qualified applicant
- it is the responsibility of the endorsement holder to ensure that it is in effect before the person drives a school bus.

Requires the person's employer to check the endorsement status when the driver is hired and at least twice a year thereafter.

**Subd. 2. Rules.** Deletes the requirement that the department's school bus rules must exempt an applicant for a school bus endorsement from the medical examination if the person has been medically examined within the past two years. The requirement that the rules provide an exemption from the physical qualification if the person has been certified as fit to drive a commercial motor vehicle is not affected.

**Subd. 3. Records check.** Allows the department to release the results of a school bus endorsement applicant's criminal and driver's license check to the applicant's designee as well to the applicant.

**Subd. 4. Training.** Requires a school district that has an alternative system of testing school bus drivers to make that system available to department representatives for inspection.

**Subd. 5. Evaluation.** Deletes the requirement that pupil transportation directors, nonpublic school chief administrators, and school bus contractors certify annually to the department of public safety that each driver meets competency requirements, and substitutes a requirement that the certification be to the school board or nonpublic school governing body. Deletes the requirement that the certification include the number of in-service training hours of each driver.

Deletes the requirement that school districts, nonpublic schools, and school bus contractors check the license of each school bus driver annually with the national drivers register or the department of public safety.

**Effective date.** Makes the bill effective immediately.