§ 1502. Passengers on school buses. 1. Boards of education of school districts located entirely or partially in any county with less than two hundred thousand population or any town which has a population of less than one hundred fifty persons per square mile are hereby authorized to permit the following persons to ride as passengers on school buses with pupils: residents who are enrolled in education or training programs, including, but not limited to, alternative education programs, vocational, apprenticeship and job training programs, and on-the-job training; children under the age of five traveling between home and day care or preschool programs; and employees of school districts or other educational or training institutions.

2. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, the board of education of any school district located entirely or partially in any county with less than two hundred thousand population or any town which has a population of less than one hundred fifty persons per square mile is hereby authorized and empowered, in order to protect the interests of pupils, to adopt rules and regulations under which any person would be permitted to ride as a passenger on any school bus that provides pupil transportation for such district during the hours such bus is transporting pupils to and from classes providing:

a. such person makes application to the school district, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the district, and such application is approved by the board of education;

b. there is regularly sufficient space on such school bus to permit all pupils to be seated while such bus is in operation;

c. any amount charged such person does not exceed the cost to the district for transporting a pupil the same distance.

3. Any rules and regulations adopted pursuant to the provisions of this section may, among other things, establish the maximum number of persons other than pupils that may ride any bus.

4. Any person authorized in subdivision one of this section to ride as

a passenger on school buses with pupils, may also ride on buses not owned by the school district but used for transportation of pupils pursuant to contract, provided the school district and the owner of the bus agree upon any amount to be charged such person. Such agreement may include an amount to be paid to the bus owner or school district.

5. In the event any person is authorized to ride on school buses pursuant to the provisions of this section, the school district shall maintain records indicating the number of such trips and any revenues collected therefrom. Any funds collected for such non-pupil transportation as authorized by this section shall be credited to an account so designated.