§ 3650. Comprehensive school bus driver safety training program. 1. The commissioner, in consultation with the state comprehensive school bus driver safety training council and subject to appropriation by the legislature, shall:

a. Develop a uniform and comprehensive school bus driver safety training program for school bus drivers transporting students to and from school by school bus including instruction to such school bus drivers concerning the latest safety techniques using the latest instructional materials.

b. Include within the safety training program the development of curriculum and training materials including a school bus driver safety training manual.

c. Develop and conduct professional development school bus driver safety training seminars statewide.

d. Establish and maintain a data base containing data relative to school bus accidents and fatalities reported within the state.

e. Engage the services of consultants on a contract basis for rendering professional and tactical assistance.

f. Award and distribute grants, following appropriation by the legislature which appropriation may include funds of the school bus motorist education fund established pursuant to section eighty-nine-j of the state finance law, for the study of issues involving the illegal passing of stopped school buses, the development of proposals to reduce the number of motorists passing school buses in violation of section eleven hundred seventy-four of the vehicle and traffic law, and to promote school bus safety.

2. The commissioner, in consultation with the justice center for the protection of people with special needs, shall promulgate rules and regulations requiring every school bus driver operating a school bus which has or will have one or more students with a disability as

passengers to receive training and instruction relating to the understanding of, and attention to, the special needs of such students. Such training and instruction may be included with the training and instruction required pursuant to paragraph a of subdivision one of this section and shall be provided at least once per year or more frequently as determined by the commissioner in consultation with the state comprehensive school bus driver safety training council. For the purposes of this subdivision, the term "student with a disability" shall have the same meaning as such term is defined in subdivision one of section forty-four hundred one of this chapter. Any person employed as a school bus driver on January first, two thousand nine who is subject to the provisions of this subdivision shall comply with the requirements of this subdivision by July first, two thousand nine. Any school bus driver hired after January first, two thousand nine who is subject to the requirements of this subdivision shall complete such training and instruction prior to assuming his or her duties.