

Most Accurate Way to Measure Driving Distance

Hello all,

I'm working from home today, and my toddlers are actually napping for once, so I get to do a little work.... Anyway, here is my question...

A private school is having a dispute with the local public school board over whether the school board has to pay travel costs for students attending the charter school. PA law says public school must reimburse for its student's travel costs if the private school is 10 miles or less from the school district boundary.

Charter school appears to be about 9.9 miles away. School district says it is over 10 miles. What is the most accurate and verifiable way to determine this distance?

....and as I write this, one of the kiddos begins screaming...

Thanks!

What does Google Maps say?

Perhaps the statute defines how to measure "10 miles or less".

John Varde, Illinois

turn on tracking feature of GPS (it takes a lat long coordinates reading every few seconds), start GPS at the private school and drive the exact same route (assuming there is one) from private school to the nearest "boundary" of the school district. Plug the lat long waypoints into apps that convert those into distances and times.

Michael L. Boli, California

Back in the day I would trot out Rand McNally books or a folded map - but I think most judges would accept Google or Mapquest. Look for rulings on treatises.

See also <http://maps.randmcnally.com/mileage-calculator.do>

Richard P. Schmitt, Maryland

There are different ways to measure distance, but first, does the rule mean distance as the crow flies or distance traveled over roads?

If it is the former, then something simple as using the distance measurement function in Google Maps might work.

If it is distance traveled over roads, you could try the "directions from here to there" function in Google Maps, which will likely give you a few alternative routes. I don't know how accurate this function is but it does give you distances. Car odometers and GPS monitors such as the kind used by runners and bicyclists are unlikely to be sufficiently accurate for this purpose. Possibly the most practical way to get an accurate and credible measurement would be to hire a course measurer who is accredited by USA Track and Field <<http://www.usatf.org/Products-/-Services/Course-Certifications/USATF-Certified-Courses/Certify-Your-Course.aspx>>.

These are the people who measure road courses for events such as 5K and 10K running events. The most reliable way would be to hire a licensed surveyor, but this would likely be prohibitively expensive.

Burt Krages, Oregon

Answer is measurement can be a creature of the statute. Look at exact language and any relevant administrative law. Unless the statute says driving distance, I would use direct measurement. Latitude and longitude of nearest boundary line spot, connected to edge of private school property latitude and longitude, would be the method of measuring. Using a precision map is probably the way to start, as you don't know the algorithms behind a web search.

Darrell G. Stewart, Texas

Driving distance:

24 PS 13-1366

Where, by the terms of this act, 1 or any other act, any distance is specified between the residence of any pupil and any public school to be attended by him, or any transportation is provided for within or beyond any particular distance, in computing such distance no allowance shall be made for the distance that the dwelling house of the pupil is situated off the public highway. All such distances shall be computed by the public highway from the nearest point where a private way or private road connects the dwelling house of the pupil with the highway to the nearest point where said highway touches the school grounds of the school to which the pupil has been assigned.

Marshall D. Chriswell, Pennsylvania

I like the idea of getting a certified US Track and Field Measurer.

Marshall D. Chriswell

I can't answer the legal aspect but years ago we were hired, as investigators, to drive distances from point A to point B. Prior to the driving we had the speedometer of our vehicle tested and calibrated and then wrote a report and eventually a sworn affidavit stating that the distance from A to B while driving was "X.Y" miles.

Ari Morse, Florida

NOTE: I'm not a lawyer.
