

# Students Slide to School On Air-Powered Sled



Do you walk to school? Ride a bus? Get driven by car? Or do you make the trip to school on an air-powered sled?

Some students who live in Wisconsin travel to school on an air-powered sled. They travel across 2.5 miles of Lake Superior to attend school. The only way they can get to school during part of the winter is by *windsled*.

Students only ride the windsled to school a few weeks each year. When the weather is warm, they take a ferry to school. When it is very cold and the ice is very thick, they ride in a van driven across a plowed path on the frozen lake. But for a few weeks at the beginning and end of each winter season, the ice is too thick for the ferry and too thin for vans. So out comes the windsled.

## **NEWS WORD BOX**

air-powered    plowed  
engine    Lake Superior  
houseboat    resident

The windsled looks like a houseboat with two giant fans on the back and a wheel in the front. The “fans,” which are the windsled’s engine, push it across the ice. A driver steers the sled just like a school bus driver would steer a bus. The windsled that students ride to school has room for 20 people. It takes about ten minutes to travel to school. Some kids say it is a very noisy trip!

## **MORE FACTS ABOUT WINDSLEDS**

- The kids live on Madeline Island, Wisconsin. They go to school in Bayfield.
- The windsled weighs about 9,000 pounds, has padded benches, and is heated.
- The first windsled was built by a resident of Madeline Island in the 1950s.

## **THINK ABOUT THE NEWS**

What other unique forms of transportation do people use? Are those vehicles used because of geography or for other reasons?