

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

DATE: April 20, 2023
TOPIC: 9.3 – Transportation Guiding Change Document
PRESENTER: Dan Pyan, Executive Director of Finance and Operations
REFERENCE TO POLICY/STATUTE: 707 Transportation of Students

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- a. South Washington County Schools provides transportation to students in grades K-12. Those students in elementary schools who live more than one mile from their boundary school receive transportation. Middle school students who live more than 1.5 miles from their boundary school receive transportation and high school students who live more than 2 miles from their boundary schools receive transportation.
- b. The result of the transportation policy is that over 110 regular education buses are utilized.
- c. Additionally, the District also provides transportation of special education students utilizing over 60 routes.
- d. A route usually consists of three runs as the district employs three tiers of busing based on school start times.
- e. Staffing shortages have caused routes to be cancelled resulting in over 250 students left without transportation.
- f. A transportation task force has been created to address long-term solutions to the shortage of bus drivers.
- g. The task force has drafted the attached guiding change document.
- h. The School Board reviewed the document at the April 6, 2023 workshop meeting.

B. RECOMMENDATION

- a. Approval of the guiding change document





Transportation/Routing Guiding Change Document April 2023

This document serves to bring clarity to the roles of school board governance and administrator management. It clearly defines: the current reality of where we are at, the results of where we want to be and the unacceptable means – our values and principles that will not be infringed upon during the planning process.

The Current Reality	Unacceptable Means	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota state statute 123B requires school districts to transport students who live 2 miles or more from their school. • We provide transportation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elementary students who live outside of 1 mile ○ Middle school students who live outside of 1.5 miles ○ High school students who live outside of 2 miles. • Our district-owned fleet consists of 111 full size general education and 20 special education buses. • Each general-education bus has a capacity of 77 students, with elementary 3 students per seat. Middle and high school general-education bus capacity is 52 students, with two students per seat. • We are actively recruiting drivers every day. At a minimum, the hiring process takes two months from interview to driving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be unacceptable to create a plan that regularly denies transportation to students who live outside of the 2 mile state statute requirement. • It would be unacceptable not to exhaust every effort to provide transportation for students who qualify for special education transportation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a radius model for fall 2024 to determine transportation distances. This requires a change to existing district policy. • Implement a plan that would reduce the need for 15-20 bus routes. • Increase the accuracy of ridership. • Clearly define what a hazard is. • Review hazards, and determine if there is rationale for keeping or removing a currently-existing hazard. • Create a transportation system that is sustainable for the next five years.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We consistently have had mechanics driving buses. They serve as the cushion when absences or illnesses arise. Office staff members also drive buses when needed.• We've spent \$60,000 in overtime to compensate mechanics when they are asked to drive buses.• We currently have 98 morning and 97 afternoon general-education routes (we started the year with 100 morning and 100 afternoon routes).• We currently have 6 morning and 6 afternoon in-district special ed routes AND 68 contracted special ed routes for students that require special transportation.• Most routes are tiered, consisting of 3 school runs each day, based on school start times.• We currently have 101 (full-time) daily drivers and 7 consistent daily substitute drivers.• We currently have 12 morning and 12 afternoon "open" general-education routes that have no permanent driver assigned (subs, mechanics, office staff and contractor are covering).• We currently have 1 morning and 1 afternoon route		
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<p>canceled due to a lack of a driver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have 131 students without transportation as a result of the canceled routes.• Areas deemed “Hazardous” create a need for more routes.• Activity busing is limited due to school start and end times.• We asked drivers to move from special-education routes to general-education routes, as the contracting company was able to accommodate additional special-education routes. This resulted in 67 special education students having to be re-routed from district-owned vehicles to contracted vehicles.• Per state statute, all students eligible for transportation are routed. This year, the district utilized an opt-out option for students in high school, with some success in reducing ridership.• Drivers bid on routes on or around August 20. Routes differ in length and are selected by seniority.• Currently, drivers must select at least a morning		
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<p>and an afternoon route. Contractual language hinders us in making driver switches on routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We currently transport 1,425 students to non-public and charter schools.• Our current transportation facility has little space for additional bus parking/expansion.• Many school bus corral parking lots are congested or full.• We have an aging driver workforce, thus the potential for a larger number of retirements.		
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