

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

DATE: November 16, 2023
TOPIC: 6.2 – Pupil Transportation Update
PRESENTER: Dan Pyan – Executive Director of Finance and Operations
REFERENCE TO POLICY/STATUTE: 707 Transportation of Public-School Students

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- a. The School District's transportation department is responsible for transporting over 12,000 students per day.
- b. The district has about 88 general education and 78 special education routes that run on a daily basis.
- c. Minnesota State statute requires school districts to transport all students who live more than two miles from their school. The SoWashCo school district provides transportation for all elementary students who live more than one mile away from school, all middle school students who live more than 1.5 miles from school, and all high schooler students who live more than 2 miles from school.
- d. There are 92 daily drivers and 6 substitute drivers.
- e. Generally, 8-10 drivers are absent every day
- f. A shortage of available bus drivers may cause the cancellation of routes and leave families with the task of getting their children to school.
- g. A transportation steering committee has been convened to explore solutions to the staffing problem.
- h. The task of the committee is to produce a sustainable system which will prevent cancellation of routes.
- i. A guiding change document has been created for the process.
- j. We will update the School Board on its progress.

B. RECOMMENDATION

No action required, information only.





Transportation/Routing Guiding Change Document November 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 107 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 10-15 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 currently have 88 morning and 88 afternoon general-education routes.• We currently have 2 morning and 2 afternoon in-district special ed routes AND 78 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 92 (full-time) daily drivers and 6 consistent daily substitute drivers.• We currently have 10 morning and 10 afternoon “open” general-education routes that have no permanent driver assigned (subs and standbys are primarily covering).• Areas deemed “Hazardous” create a need for more routes.• Activity busing is limited due to school start and end times.• Per state statute, all students eligible for transportation are routed. This year, the district utilized an opt-in requirement for all students		
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<p>which was very helpful in reducing ridership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To further reduce routes, Valley Crossing Elem and St. Ambrose students are transported together and bus stops are farther apart where possible.• 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 and an afternoon route. Contractual language hinders us in making driver switches on routes.• We currently transport 1,500 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.• We are implementing new routing software and a student ridership tracking system to be fully operational by September 2024.		
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