

Transportation Proposal for SHPS

Yellow Bus and Specialized Transportation

February 27, 2025

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- Benefits and Challenges
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04 VOCATIONAL TRANSPORTATION

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South Hadley Transportation Responsibilities

- Provide yellow bus transportation to and from school based on School Committee policy
- Currently operate 10 buses and 1 vocational bus for CTECH students

Specialized Transportation

- Required for students with specialized needs as outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEPs)
- Specialized transportation serves students attending in-district schools and out-of-district schools

Rising Transportation Costs

- Transportation costs have been increasing by 5-10% annually
- There is a growing need for specialized transportation
- Projected cost of transportation for FY26 is approximately 3 million

Need for Cost-Reduction Solutions

- This presentation is our response to exploring ways to reduce the overall transportation expense
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Current Yellow Bus Transportation

- Existing Policy
 - Students living 1 mile or more from school are eligible for yellow bus transportation and those that live closer than 1 mile from school can pay for yellow bus transportation
- Challenges with Current Policy
 - High number of buses required
 - Higher Operational costs

Proposed Change to Yellow Bus Policy

- New Proposal
 - Change policy from 1 mile to 2 miles
 - Remove the pay option for transportation for students living closer than 2 miles.
 - HS will still have a fee for transportation
- Benefits
 - Projected cost savings of \$250,000
 - Reduction of buses from 10 to 7
- Cons
 - Reduced student access to transportation
 - Families may need to travel up to 0.5 miles to reach a neighborhood bus stop

Proposal for In-House Vans

- New Proposal
 - Purchase and operate 15 in-house vans to handle special education transportation
- Benefits
 - Savings on the school budget estimated at \$600,000
 - More control over the transportation process
- Challenges
 - Additional costs for purchasing vans
 - Additional benefits costs on the town's budget
 - Quick turn around to be prepared for the 25-26 school year
 - Developing and implementing a new department

Vocational Transportation Proposal

- Current Status
 - Vocational transportation handled by a vendor
- Proposed Change
 - Split transportation between:
 - Yellow Bus: Adding a bus back on to our Yellow Bus Transportation.
 - This would produce a savings of \$10,000-\$15,000 by switching vendors
 - In-House Transportation: The other vocational school will be transported using the new in-house transportation system
- Benefits
 - Reduced costs
 - Greater control and efficiency in managing transportation

Conclusions and Next Steps

- Summary of Proposals
 - Yellow Bus Transportation Policy Change: Estimated Savings \$250,000
 - Specialized Transportation Proposal: Estimated Savings \$600,000
 - Vocational Transportation: Shift to a combination of a different vendor and utilizing the new in-house transportation.
- Next Steps
 - Review by the School Committee to decide if we should move forward
 - Update School Committee Policies
 - Present at Capital Planning and, if approved, at Town Meeting
 - Alert families of the change in services
 - Begin planning for implementation for FY26

THANK YOU

COMPANY NAME