

TUSD Transportation Policy and Transportation as a Related Service

TUSD Transportation Policy

The governing board of any school district may provide for the transportation of pupils to and from school whenever in the judgment of the board the transportation is advisable and good reasons exist therefore. CA Ed Code Section 39800

This includes for pupils "who live beyond a reasonable distance to their school and would not, without transportation, have access to appropriate special education instruction and related services at no cost." (CA Special Education Transportation Guidelines)

The 2025 –2026 TUSD Transportation Plan defines a reasonable distance to be:

- 2 Miles for Tk-8 students from student's home address to school
- 2.5 miles for 9-12 students from student's home address to school
- Distance measured as the crow flies

The eligibility determination is based on distance from home to school, not on whether a student attends their school of residence.

Transportation as a Related Service

- The IEP team determines if student needs transportation to receive FAPE. The central question for the IEP team is: Do the student's impairments limit their ability to traverse to and from school to a degree greater than any other same age peer (San Bruno Park Unified School Dist. V. Student (OAH 2016))

Some Factors to consider:

- Student's Medical/health needs
- Student's cognitive ability, adaptive behavior, and/or communication skills
- Students behavior
- Are there accessibility issues on the route to school with curbs, sidewalks, etc.

Transportation as a related service eligibility should be discussed during Eligibility review assessment process (initial and triennials)

- Observations of students arriving to and from school may be helpful

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Transportation

"The IDEA does not require LEAs to transport children with disabilities in separate vehicles, isolated from their peers. In fact, many children with disabilities can receive the same transportation provided to non-disabled children..." OSERS 2009

Transportation Options include (in no order):

- Walking
- Regular School Bus Transportation (with or without supports)
- Bus with special education students
- Public Transportation
- Specialized shuttle service or taxi
- Medical transportation
- Reimbursement for parent-provided transportation

CDE Special Education Transportation Guidelines

Safety of student, driver, and riders is essential component of LRE Transportation Decision

Transportation Loading

TUSD buses do not load students until after the dismissal bell for the following reasons:

- Early dismissal from class reduces students' instructional minutes
- State law prohibits buses from idling for extended periods in loading areas
- Bus drivers' responsibility for students begins once the bell rings and loading starts—they are not assigned to provide supervision beforehand
- Loading early would require students to sit on the bus in less-than-ideal climate conditions, as departures are scheduled approximately 10 minutes after the bell
- While buses do arrive prior to the bell, this is solely to secure their place in the loading zones and be ready for students once dismissal begins. Because routes are designed to leave 10 minutes after the bell, there is no operational need for early loading
- All drivers were reminded during in-service meetings not to load prior to dismissal unless they receive direction from the transportation department
- If early loading is being considered as part of a student's IEP, or other transportation accommodations, you must consult with the transportation department and your program specialist before adding this to the IEP

The Transportation Box on the IEP Services Page Should Contribute to a Clear Written Offer of FAPE.

There must be justification that describes why a student is eligible for transportation services (i.e. are they eligible due to District Transportation Policy or Due to needs associated with their disability as a related service). Additionally, any special accommodations or support that is needed for transportation should be described clearly (purpose and logistics). Remember, you must consult with the transportation department and your program specialist before adding special accommodations to the transportation box.

Sample Transportation Service Box Descriptions*

* These are provided for reference only. The IEP team makes the final determination for transportation eligibility.

Special Ed Transportation

Yes No

Student is not eligible for transportation as a related service. At this time, student attends school within 2.5 miles of their residence.

Special Ed Transportation

Yes No

Student is eligible for transportation per TUSD Transportation Guidelines. Curb to curb is not required. Student can access a regular bus stop. At this time, student attends a middle school that is 2.0 miles or more from their residence. However, during the 26-27 school year, student will not be eligible for transportation due to attending a high school within 2.5 miles from their residence.

Special Ed Transportation

Yes No

Student is eligible for transportation as a related service due to needs associated with student's disability. Specifically, student has delays in (mobility, social reasoning, cognitive and adaptive skills, etc.) that substantially limit their ability to get to and from school like their same age peers. Curb to curb is required. Student will have access to a bus monitor (small group rider) to provide behavioral support on the bus and to assist student with loading and unloading due to student's mobility needs.