

# Pupil Transportation Services Plan 2025

Transporting Greatness



## Introduction

*As a Condition of receiving apportionments under Section 41850.1, the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District has developed a plan describing the transportation plan services offered to its pupils, and how it will prioritize planned transportation services for pupils who are low income. [EC 39800.1.(a)]*

Transportation is provided to eligible students based on Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 3541. Transportation stops and routes are designed to promote the safety of students and maximize the efficiency in the use of busses. The Superintendent or designee may authorize transportation within the walking distance when safety problems or hazards exist. The District provides written communication to parents and guardians regarding bus routes, schedules, and stops each year.

The district provides transportation to students traveling to and from school during the regular school day; field trips and excursions; school activities; expositions or fairs, or other activities determined to be for the benefit of students; district employees or parents/guardians traveling to and from educational activities authorized by the District.

The District created a bilingual support position for parents and guardians of bus riders; a new Dispatcher position was created and filled. The need for this support has grown exponentially with the growth of the student population. When the transportation office receives a call from a non-English speaker, communication is challenging for both parties. The bilingual service will expedite requests and daily reports of student rider needs.

# 1. Providing Services to Pupils with Disabilities and Homeless Children and Youth

## a. Students with Disabilities

- Based on a student's Individualized Education Plan, the District provides the least restrictive transportation based on the direction of the IEP Team.
- Currently the District owns fourteen (14) school buses with wheelchair capability. All wheelchair buses are model year 2000 or newer.
- Currently the District operates nine (9) school bus routes using wheelchair buses.
- The two (2) additional wheelchair buses arrived in November of 2024.
- The Transportation Department will monitor the trends of students with disabilities and plan additional wheelchair buses ahead of the time needed to transport the additional students. The District Business Office will forecast additional students with disabilities from the feeder school data.
- Providing targeted assistance for students with special needs necessitated returning to using bus attendants on many busses. The District had used bus drivers as attendants as necessary to maximize flexibility in the Transportation Department. In light of the current job market, the District has changed "bus attendant" strategies. It has been difficult to fill bus driver positions, so the District opened jobs for bus attendants to broaden the available candidate pool. Additional bus attendants were hired this school year, bringing the total to six (6) bus attendants. The District will monitor student needs and hire additional bus attendants as needed.

## b. Homeless Children and Youth

- The District contracts with a community liaison to monitor and manage the homeless student population in accordance with the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- The community liaison contacts student services when homeless students require transportation to one of the District's Schools. Student Services shall work with Social Services to identify the location of homeless students and arrange transportation as necessary.

- Homeless youth housed within their home school boundaries are placed in transportation based on their walk distance to school, available school bus stops, and any disabilities.
- Homeless students who attend a school within the district, but outside of their home school boundaries, will be provided bus passes for public transportation at no cost. If there is a case where public transportation does not serve the needs of the student, the District will provide free District transportation. This may be a current designated bus stop for students living in the vicinity and attending another school within the District.
- Homeless youth outside the District boundaries who are attending one of the District's schools will be transported at no cost to the student. District transportation coordinates with the School District where the student currently resides, as both Districts are responsible for the transportation of the student. The placement of homeless youth is evaluated each semester to determine the best placement for the student, with the priority being educating the student within their home school boundaries.

## 2. Providing No-Cost Transportation to Unduplicated Pupils

- The District provides free home-to-school transportation for all pupils meeting the criteria of Administrative Regulation 3541.
- The District has actively pursued increasing the number of neighborhoods served by school bus transportation for several years, following the state budget crisis of 2009-2010.
- During the 2024-2025 school year the District added two (2) PVHS routes, one (1) ERHS route, and one (1) DHS route. This positively impacted the students attending those schools.
- We propose the following improvement to transportation for school year 2025-2026. This includes adding one (1) ERHS route, two (2) PVHS routes, and two (2) delegated behind-the-wheel driver trainer positions. This will be dependent on the availability of hiring additional transportation staff and the budget to support them.

### 3. Consultants to the Plan

- The following District staff members, District groups, outside groups, and other stakeholders reviewed the initial Transportation Services Plan:
  - Classified staff
  - Teachers
  - School Administrators
  - Regional Transit Authorities (SMRT)
  - Local Air Pollution Control District
    - S.B. County APCD
  - Parents
  - Pupils
  - Community Liaison
- A list of consultants that met the above criteria was selected. Each member received an invitation to an open meeting to discuss the proposed Transportation Services Plan. All members received a DRAFT copy of the plan, as well as the Education Code Section 39800.1, ahead of the meeting so they would have time to review and analyze it.
- The consultant group met at the Support Services Center on February 6, 2023. No further consultation is required per the Home-to-School Transportation Plan Update Fiscal Report by the School Services of California.

### 4. Plan Approval

- The plan will be reviewed annually.
- Following the review, the plan will be submitted to the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District Board of Education for approval on or before April 1 each year.