



Student Transportation

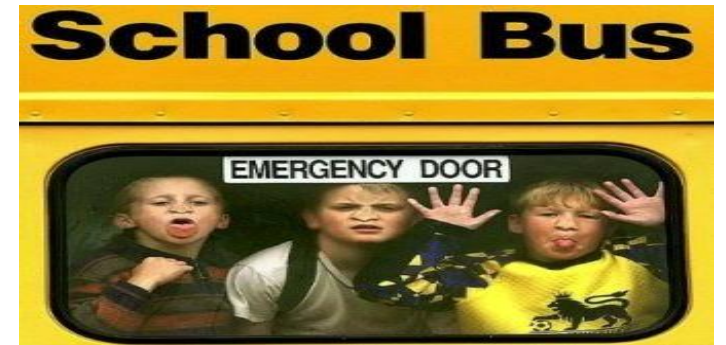
A Review of Current Transportation Policy
and the 2025-26 Budgetary Impact

February 4, 2026

Board of Education Meeting

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for Business and Management Services

Transportation Budget Status 2025–26



- Transportation remains one of the District’s most significant cost drivers, with a voter-approved 2025–26 appropriation exceeding \$11.6 million.
- Due to budgetary constraints and increased service utilization, the District initial projections resulted in a transportation budget shortfall of approximately \$721,476 (as of 2/2/26).
- Early in the school year, the District conducted a comprehensive bus route efficiency study to identify cost-saving opportunities while maintaining required service levels.
- As a result, the District eliminated several vans (small buses) and reduced several matron positions without reducing student services.
- This proactive mid-year action generated approximately \$350,000 in savings.
- The District must now identify an additional \$371,476 in savings or offsets to fully close the remaining transportation budget gap.

Transportation Policy Review

Fiscal Recovery Context

Transportation represents one of the District's largest and most controllable ongoing cost drivers, requiring careful analysis as we develop our path toward fiscal sustainability. Our current approach to private and parochial school transportation goes well beyond New York State's minimum requirements, creating significant financial pressure on our budget.

This policy review is a critical component of the District's comprehensive three-year fiscal recovery plan. By examining our transportation practices, we have the opportunity to align our services with state standards while protecting instructional programs and classroom resources. This presentation outlines the current situation, explores potential policy adjustments, and explains the community decision-making process ahead.



Status Quo: Current Transportation Policy

Private schools

Our District currently provides transportation to private and parochial school students up to 25 miles from their residence—significantly exceeding New York State's statutory minimum requirement of 15 miles. While this expanded service demonstrates our commitment to supporting all students in our community, it creates substantial budgetary pressure.

The numbers tell an important story: we transport 193 total students to private schools, with 121 of those students living beyond the 15-mile state minimum. These 121 students account for approximately \$897,000 in annual transportation costs—resources that could otherwise support classroom instruction, educational programs, and staffing.

By the Numbers

- **25 miles: Current district transportation radius**
- **15 miles: New York State minimum requirement**
- **193 students: Total private school transportation**
- **121 students: Transported beyond state minimum**
- **\$897,000: Estimated annual cost above minimum**

Note: Transportation costs are an expenditure driven category. Our Transportation Aid rate is 56.7%. Reducing Transportation costs by approximately \$900, would also result in a decrease in Trans Aid of approximately \$493K – for net rection of \$404,000.

Policy Change Option: Align with NYS Minimum

Reduce Service Radius

Adjust private and parochial transportation eligibility from 25 miles to the 15-mile state minimum, bringing our district in line with standard practice across New York.

Targeted Impact

Would affect only the 121 students currently transported beyond the statutory 15-mile minimum. Students within 15 miles would see no change in service.

Annual Savings

Generate approximately \$897,000 in recurring annual budgetary savings that can be redirected to support instructional programs and educational services.

Long-Term Stability

Support the District's three-year fiscal recovery plan by addressing one of our largest controllable cost areas without reducing classroom resources.

This policy adjustment represents a strategic approach to fiscal management—aligning our practices with state standards while preserving the educational programs and teaching positions that directly serve our students. The savings would provide meaningful relief to our operating budget, reducing the need for more difficult decisions that could impact instructional quality.

Voter Approval Requirement



Any reduction in transportation eligibility requires voter approval through a public referendum. This is not a decision the Board of Education can make unilaterally—it must be brought before our community for a vote.

The referendum process would include comprehensive community education efforts to ensure voters understand the current situation, the proposed change, the fiscal impact, and the implications for affected families. Transparency and clear communication will be essential throughout this process.

Before moving forward with a referendum, the Board of Education must provide clear direction on whether to proceed. Your input and questions during this review period are a critical part of that decision-making process.

#1:

Board Review & Direction

Board considers policy change and authorizes referendum

#3:

Public Referendum

Community votes on proposed policy change

#2:

Community Education

District provides transparent information to voters

#4:

Implementation

If approved, new policy takes effect per timeline

Why This Makes Fiscal Sense

This policy adjustment would address one of the District's largest controllable cost areas while aligning our services with statewide standards followed by school districts throughout New York. By bringing our transportation policy in line with the 15-mile state minimum, we can generate substantial recurring savings that protect what matters most: classroom instruction and educational programs.

The approximately \$897,000 in annual savings would significantly reduce the need for staffing reductions, program cuts, or increases in class sizes. This approach demonstrates fiscal responsibility while continuing to support students and families within the parameters established by New York State law.

Most importantly, this policy change supports the District's comprehensive three-year recovery plan, helping ensure long-term financial stability while balancing fiscal responsibility with our continued commitment to student support and educational excellence. The decision ultimately rests with our community through the referendum process.



Targeted Solution

Addresses controllable costs without impacting instruction



Statewide Alignment

Adopts standards used across New York districts



Program Protection

Preserves teaching positions and classroom resources



Long-Term Stability

Supports three-year recovery and sustainable future