

Title Special Update - Transportation Supplement - October 2025 Revised
TRANSPORTATION
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Revised Policy - Special Update

8600 - **TRANSPORTATION**

The Board of Education will provide transportation for those students whose distance from their school makes this service necessary within the limitations established by State law. Such laws and rules shall govern any question not covered by this policy.

School buses (x) and vehicles other than school buses [END OF OPTION] shall be purchased, housed, and maintained by the Board for the transportation of resident students between their home areas and the schools of the District to which they are assigned or to their nonpublic or community schools. The Superintendent may substitute smaller buses or alternative vehicles for reasons of economy or efficiency of operation.

Children living beyond the following walking limits shall be entitled to bus transportation:

- A. Kindergarten: one (1) mile ~~at Noon~~ = _____ mile(s)
- B. ~~Kindergarten in Morning, or afternoon~~ = _____ mile(s)
- C. Grades one (1) through six (6): one (1) mile = _____ mile(s)
- D. Grades seven (7) through twelve (12): one (1) mile ~~eight (8)~~ = _____ mile(s)
- E. ~~Grades nine (9) through twelve (12)~~ = _____ mile(s)

Exceptions to the foregoing limits may be made in the case of a student who is temporarily or permanently disabled and in the case of adverse safety conditions. Transportation for students who are not entitled to transportation under State law will not be reduced after the start of the school year.

Transportation of eligible vocational or special education children between their home areas and schools outside the District shall be arranged through the use of Board-owned vehicles, through cooperation with other districts, through commercial carriers, and/or by other means in the most efficient and economical

manner. The governing authority of a community school shall provide or arrange for transportation free of charge for any eligible special education student enrolled in the community school for whom the student's individualized education program specifies transportation **as a related service**.

Transportation to and from school shall be provided for each student residing in the District and attending a State-chartered nonpublic school on the same basis as established for resident students as set forth above, subject to the following limitation. Transportation will only be provided if it requires thirty (30) minutes or less of direct travel by a school bus during normal travel times as measured from the school building to which the student would be assigned in the District. Transportation shall be provided each day ~~in which~~ the nonpublic school is open with students in attendance (excluding Saturdays and Sundays except by agreement between the entities entered into by July 1st in any year). Chartered nonpublic school students who are transported by the Board may be assigned to ride on buses upon which resident students are also assigned. Notwithstanding the above, the District will provide transportation as a related service to students with disabilities who live in the District and attend a nonpublic school if the School District is provided with supporting documentation from the child's individualized education program ("IEP") or an individual service plan ("ISP") developed by the county board of developmental disabilities pursuant to R.C. 5126.41 for county residents who receive supported living services.

Furthermore, transportation to and from school shall be provided for each native student (i.e., student entitled to attend school in the District under R.C. 3313.64 or R.C. 3313.65) attending a chartered community school for each day in which the school is open and students are in attendance (excluding Saturdays and Sundays except by agreement between the entities entered into by July 1st each year). However, if that community school is located outside the District, the Board will only provide transportation if it requires thirty (30) minutes or less of direct travel by a school bus during normal travel times as measured from the school building to which the student would be assigned in the District. Native students attending an approved community school located within the District will be provided transportation on the same basis as established for resident students set forth above. Students transported to an approved community school may be assigned to ride on buses upon which resident students **attending other schools are also assigned**. ~~are also assigned.~~

Transportation of eligible nonpublic or community school children between their home areas and schools shall be arranged through the use of ~~District-owned~~ **Board-owned or contracted** vehicles, through cooperation with other districts, through commercial carriers, and/or by other means in the most efficient and economical manner. The Board will not provide or arrange for transportation of students enrolled in **community or nonpublic chartered schools in any grades**, kindergarten through eighth grade, using mass transit system vehicles unless the Board and the community/nonpublic school have entered into an agreement authorizing this mode of transportation which is approved by both entities in advance. Students enrolled in ninth grade or above may be transported on vehicles operated by a mass transit system, provided that the route does not require more than one (1) transfer.

Upon receipt from the community/nonpublic school of the official start and end times of school for the upcoming year, the District will develop and provide a transportation plan that includes transportation routes and schedules for eligible students. ~~The plan will be provided~~ within sixty (60) days after receiving the start and end times, or when possible, by the first day of August in the event the Board is not notified of start and end times ~~by the deadline of~~ April 1st. For eligible students who enroll after July 1st but before the start of the school year, a transportation plan will be developed within fourteen (14) business days after receiving a request for transportation. The transportation plan provided to community/nonpublic schools pursuant to this policy and State law is tentative and subject to change.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to ~~The Superintendent may~~ determine that it is impractical to transport a student to a community or nonpublic school after considering the factors enumerated under State law. The determination for payment-in-lieu of transportation will be made at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the District's first day of student instruction, or no later than fourteen (14) calendar days if a student is enrolled less than thirty (30) days prior to the first day of instruction or after the start of the school year, and such determination must be formalized through a resolution passed by the Board at its next scheduled meeting. If transportation is determined to be impractical, the Board will issue a letter to the student's parent/guardian, the community or nonpublic school, and the Department of Education & Workforce ("DEW") detailing the reason(s) why the determination was made. Parent(s)/guardians shall be provided payment-in-lieu of transportation at ~~an~~ the amount established by State law and approved by the Board unless otherwise directed by action of the DEW. Parents/guardians may authorize the community or nonpublic school where their student is enrolled to act on their behalf at any time after requesting transportation.

The Board will not be required to provide transportation for any native student enrolled in a community school if the Board has entered into an agreement with the governing authority of the community school that designates the community school as responsible for providing or arranging the transportation of the District's native students to and from the community school and is certified by the DEW as having met certain requirements established by State law. The governing authority of a community school must provide or arrange for transportation in a manner that is comparable to the transportation that the District provides or arranges for its native students of the same grade level and distance from school who are enrolled in the District. Also, the governing authority must provide or arrange for the transportation under such agreement free of charge for each of its enrolled students who are eligible to be transported in accordance with R.C. 3327.01 or who would otherwise be transported by the District under the District's transportation policy. If the Board enters into an agreement with the governing authority regarding the transportation of the District's native students, the DEW shall make payments to the community school in accordance with the terms of the agreement for each student actually transported.

Likewise, the Board is not required to provide transportation for any native student enrolled in an approved community school if the governing authority of the community school submits a written notification to the Board, by a date prescribed by the DEW, stating that the governing authority will accept responsibility for providing or arranging for the transportation of the District's native students to and from the community school. The governing authority's unilateral acceptance of the responsibility to provide transportation must cover the entire school year and shall remain in effect for subsequent school years unless the governing authority submits written notification to the Board relinquishing the transportation responsibility. However, the governing authority may not ~~cannot~~ relinquish the transportation responsibility before the end of the school year and shall submit such notice by a date prescribed by the DEW in order to allow the District a reasonable period of time to prepare for the transportation of its native students enrolled in the community school. If the governing authority unilaterally accepts the transportation responsibility, the DEW shall make payments to the community school for each student actually transported, calculated in accordance with existing State law governing the calculation of transportation payments to the District from the State and any rules implemented by the DEW and that otherwise would be paid to the District.

x] The Board is not required to provide transportation to students enrolled in a chartered nonpublic or community school that has offered to provide transportation in lieu of the District providing it.

☒] The Board is not responsible for providing transportation to students who receive transportation from an educational service center participating in the Pupil Transportation Pilot Program.

Bus routes shall be established so that an authorized bus stop is available within reasonable walking distance of the home of every transported resident student, but not more than one-half (1/2) mile for students in grades PK through eight (8). The Board shall approve bus stops and a time schedule annually, no more than thirty (30) days prior to and no more than thirty (30) days after the start of the school year. The Superintendent is authorized to make any necessary changes to the approved stops and routes. Each student will be assigned to use a specific school bus stop, except in unusual circumstances and approved by the Superintendent. The District is not required to allow alternate stops based on shared parenting, day care, or child care convenience. ~~The bus routes and time schedule annually no more than ten (10) days after the start of the school year. The Superintendent is authorized to make any necessary changes in the approved route.~~

Students receiving transportation will be delivered to school no sooner than thirty (30) minutes before the start of school and will be picked up no later than thirty (30) minutes after dismissal.

☒] Students may be permitted to eat and/or drink on the bus as needed for documented medical reasons (x), and on non-routine trips during which the students on the bus are supervised by a chaperone(s) ~~END OF OPTION.~~

The Board authorizes the installation and use of video recording devices in school buses (x) and ~~alternative vehicles other than school buses~~ ~~END OF OPTION~~ to assist the drivers in providing for the safety and well-being of the students while on the vehicle.

The Board authorizes the use of ~~an alternative vehicle~~ ~~a school vehicle other than a school bus~~ (e.g., a van) designed to carry nine (9) passengers or less, plus a driver, instead of a school bus to transport ~~eligible students to and from students to~~ a chartered nonpublic or community school if all of the following apply:

- A. the number of students in the vehicle does not exceed nine (9); ~~[DRAFTING NOTE: House Bill 54 and House Bill 96 were enacted in 2025 and redefined the capacity of alternative vehicles in Ohio as up to twelve (12) passengers. Current Ohio law notwithstanding, U.S. Code and Federal regulations prohibit the sale and use of vehicles for school transportation that are designed for more than ten (10) occupants, unless that vehicle meets the construction standards for a school bus. Neola does not recommend increasing the passenger limit from nine (9) to twelve (12). If a district chooses to increase the limit, be sure to consult with district legal counsel, as it will be a district specific revision to this policy and will be in conflict with U.S. Code and Federal regulations.]~~
- B. the District regularly transports students to that chartered nonpublic or community school;
- C. the driver has a valid driver's license, is accustomed to driving the vehicle, and meets all statutory and administrative requirements to drive that vehicle including, but not limited to, pre-service and in-service training, pre-employment drug testing, criminal background checks, and participation in random drug testing;

- D. the driver may not stop on the roadway to load or unload passengers;
- E. the driver and all passengers are expected to comply with State laws regarding child and occupant restraint devices and safety while in the motor vehicle.

The District shall implement policies and/or programs for bus drivers that include professional development, annual performance reviews, and access to wellness support programming as provided by DEW and ODPS.

~~[DRAFTING NOTE: School bus drivers meet the qualifications to drive alternative vehicles, vehicles other than school buses. Districts may require that the driver complete other training modules, such as school van driver training. An individual does not need a CDL or any driving license endorsements to drive alternative vehicles.]to drive vehicles other than school buses.]~~

Drivers of alternative vehicles must conduct daily pre-trip inspections and alternative vehicles must ~~School vehicles other than school buses will~~ be inspected not less than two (2) times each year by a qualified mechanic who will determine whether the vehicle is safe to transport students.

Transporting Homeless Students

Students meeting the Federal definition of homeless will be transported **via an approved method, as appropriate,** from their temporary place of residence to their school ~~of assignment,~~ at the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied minor, to the same extent as all other students of the District and consistent with this Policy. If ~~a~~ **the** homeless student's temporary residence is located outside the boundaries of the District, the Liaison for Homeless Children will coordinate with the Director of Transportation to contact the district in which the student temporarily resides to arrange for joint transportation of the student and to seek inter-district agreement on a method for apportioning the cost of such joint transportation. In no event will a homeless student be denied enrollment based on issues related to student transportation.

Travel Times for the Transportation of Children with Disabilities

The Transportation Department, in consultation with the Department of Student Services/Special Education, shall generally be responsible for determining reasonable travel times for the transportation of children with disabilities. Travel time shall begin upon initial pickup of the child and end with the final arrival at the school or home destination. The Board directs that the determination of reasonable travel time shall be made on a case-by-case basis. In determining the reasonable travel time applicable to a child, the Transportation Department shall consider the following factors: age of child, condition of disability, geographic size of the District, location of special education class or service, traffic patterns, and roadway conditions. The Transportation Department's initial determination is subject to review by a child's IEP team, which ultimately is responsible (as part of the development/amendment of a child's IEP) for considering the individualized transportation needs of each child with a disability so that the District fulfills its obligation to provide the child with a free appropriate public education. Generally, travel time for children with disabilities will be comparable with in-District transportation for children without disabilities. Different standards may apply if a child attends a community school.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for developing and implementing appropriate administrative guidelines for this policy.

A.C. 3301-51-10, 3301-83-01 et seq., 3301-83-08

R.C. 3313.66, 3314.09, 3314.091, 3319.41, 3327.01 et seq.

R.C. 3327.016, 3327.02

R.C. 4511.01(F), 4511.75 et seq.

42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.

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