

IRVINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2025-26

Board of Education Adoption: March 10, 2026

**Irvine Unified School District
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OVERVIEW

The Irvine Unified School District Board of Education (Board of Education) is committed to providing safe and efficient transportation to students as necessary to ensure student access to the educational program, promote regular attendance, and reduce tardiness. Due to significant underfunding of transportation by the State, the extent to which the Irvine Unified School District (District) provides transportation services shall depend on student and community needs and a continuing assessment of financial resources.

The purpose of the Transportation Plan is to clearly articulate transportation services offered by the District and to comply with the requirements of Assembly Bill 2933.

BACKGROUND

Prior to 1981, the State reimbursed school districts for home-to-school transportation on a sliding scale for costs up to ninety percent (90%) and covered one-hundred percent (100%) of costs for transporting students with severe disabilities.

Unlike home-to-school transportation, which is not required by law, the transportation of students with special needs is mandated when required within the students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Mostly in response to the passage of Proposition 13, in the 1981-82 school year, transportation funding was frozen at prior year levels and only increased based on annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increases, regardless of cost.

As the actual cost to provide home-to-school transportation increased over the next several years, many school districts began to scale back home-to-school transportation due to the drain on the General Fund and the corresponding negative impact to educational programs.

On May 16, 1989, the Board of Education adopted Board Policy 3540 and Administrative Regulation (AR) 3540.1. Board Policy 3540 allowed the District to charge for transportation in recognition the State was no longer providing sufficient funding. AR 3540.1 established transportation zone limits on providing transportation and set non-transportation zones which include 1.5 miles for elementary schools, 2.5 miles for middle schools, and 3.0 miles for high schools; therefore, transportation within these zones is not provided. AR 3540.1 also includes a provision for providing service beyond the transportation zone, for a given school, where there is sufficient paying ridership to operate a bus on a cost-neutral basis, or where significant safety concerns are present.



Due to advocacy efforts by several state-wide organizations representing school district Governing Boards and Administrators, the 2022-23 Final State Budget provided \$637 million in ongoing additional transportation funding. This provides the District with additional funding of approximately \$3.5 million per year. While this is certainly appreciated, with this allocation, transportation continues to be underfunded by approximately \$7.2 million annually.

As a condition of receiving this allocation, school districts were required to:

- develop a plan in consultation with various educational and community stakeholder groups for providing home-to-school transportation;
- report data related to the impact of the plan;
- present the plan in a public meeting for public comment; and
- obtain formal adoption of the initial plan by the Governing Board by April 1, 2023.

School districts are required to update the plan annually by April 1.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

I. CURRENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES:

The District contracts out all transportation services to multiple vendors.

For 2025-26, the District is transporting approximately 944 General Education students and 596 Special Education students, totaling approximately 1,540 students. The District provides transportation services for over 2,500 activity trips such as field trips and athletic events.



Figure 1: Total General Education and Special Education Ridership

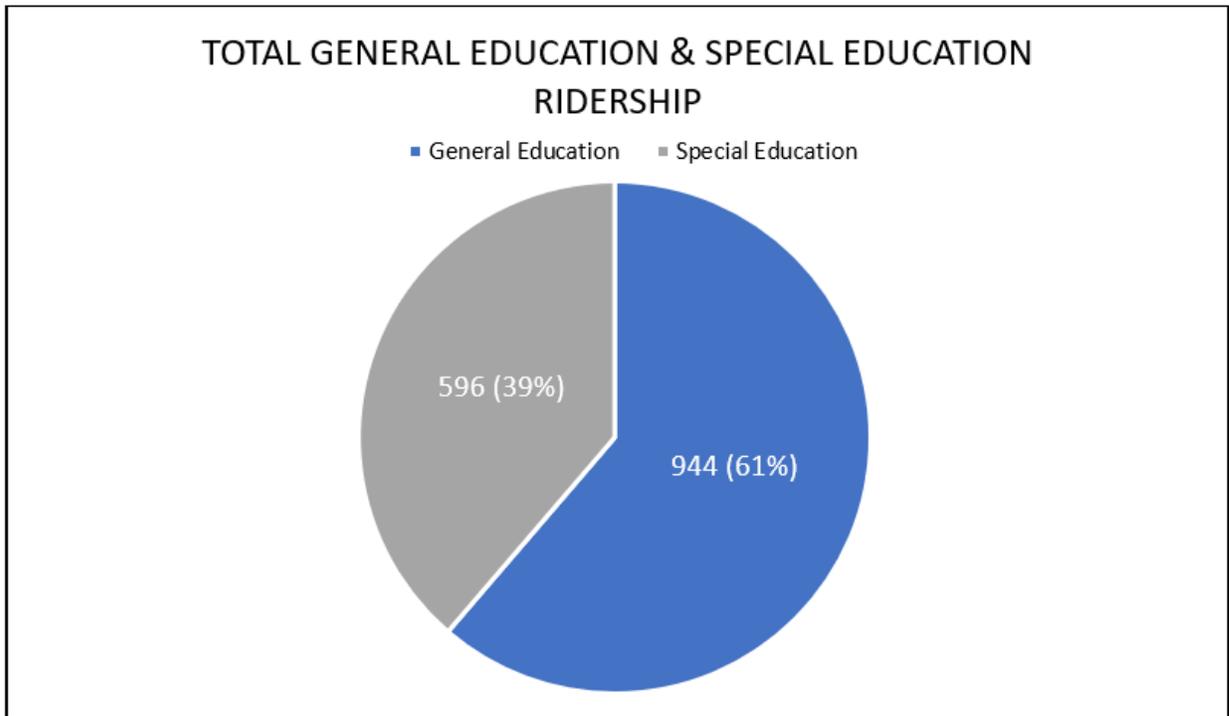


Figure 2: General Education and Special Education Ridership PK-6 and 7-12

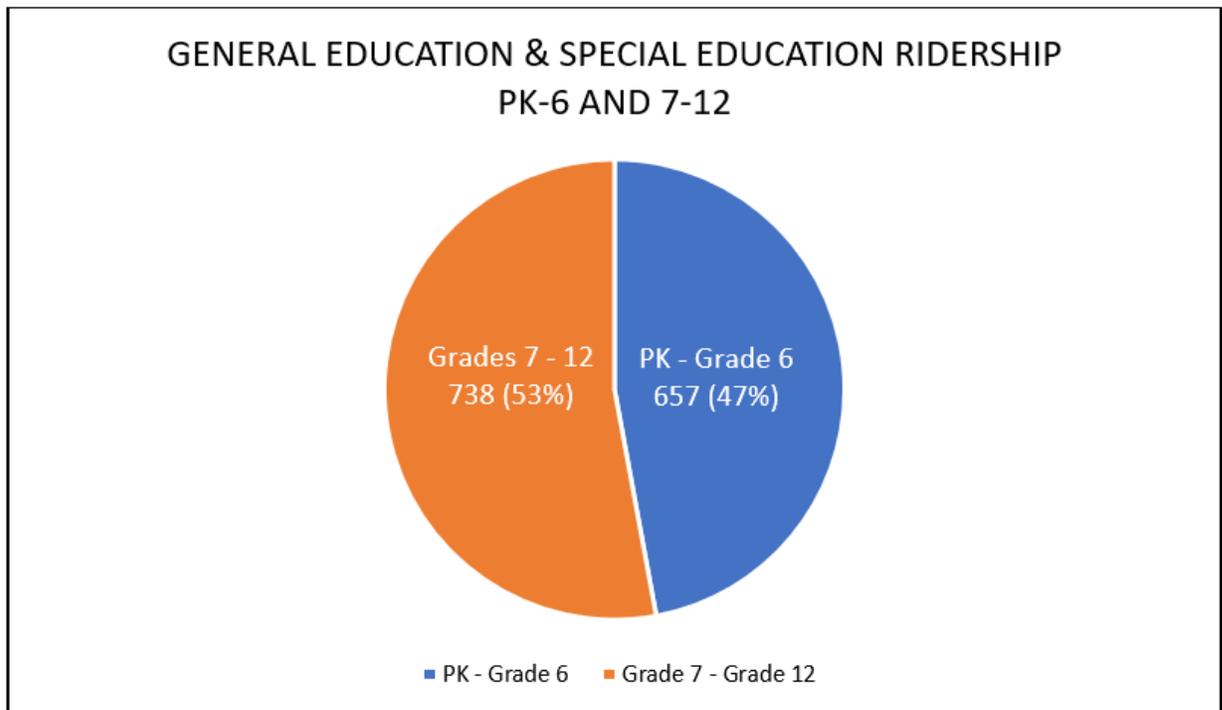
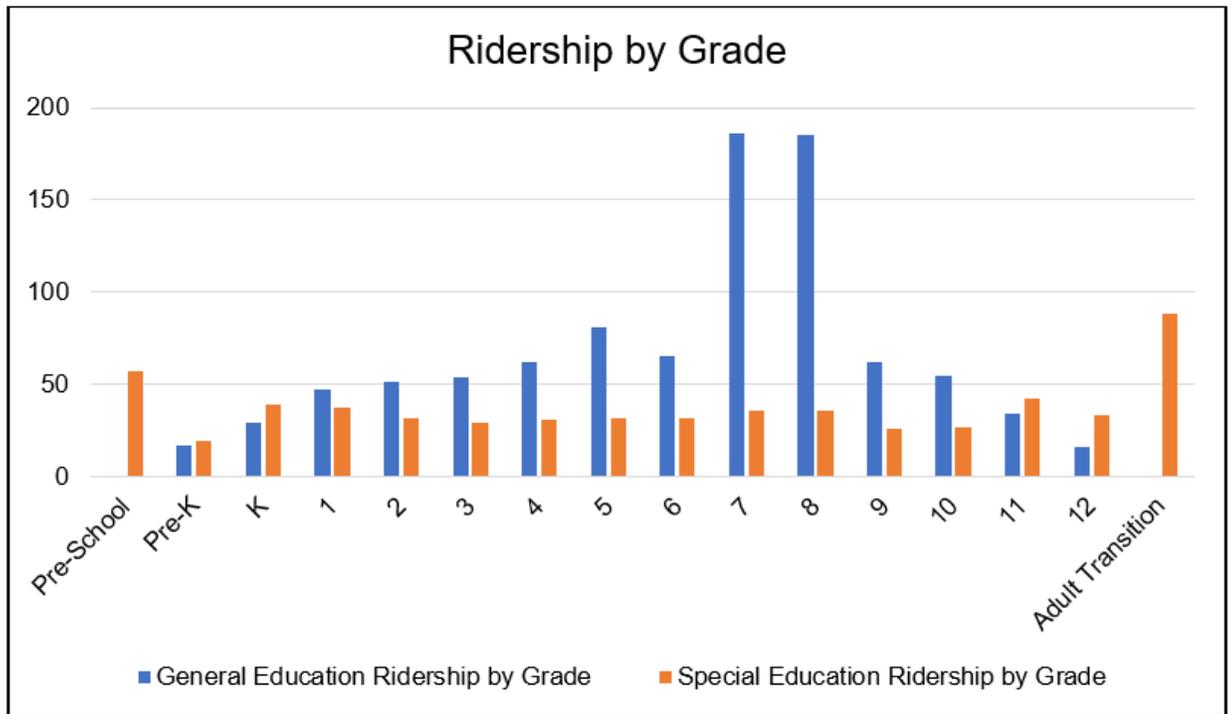


Figure 3: General Education and Special Education Ridership by Grade



Transportation Fees

The cost of a route for the 2025-26 School Year varies depending on the type of vehicle providing the service.

- 24 Passenger Bus \$699.38/day \$125,888.40/year
- Wheelchair Bus \$673.26/day \$121,186.80/year
- Transit Bus \$809.45/day \$145,701.00/year

Home-to-School Transportation Routes

Administrative Regulation 3540.1 establishes a non-transportation zone for each school as follows:

- Elementary - 1.5 mile radius;
- Middle - 2.5 mile radius; and
- High - 3 mile radius.

Service beyond the non-transportation zone, for a given school, may be provided where there is sufficient paying ridership to operate a bus on a cost-neutral basis.



In addition, when there are significant safety concerns present, parent pay/District-subsidized service beyond the non-transportation zone may be provided.

The District provides eleven (11) home-to-school subsidized transportation routes:

Nine (9) home-to-school transportation routes subsidized by the District:

- Six (6) routes for Turtle Rock Elementary School and Rancho San Joaquin Middle School;
- One (1) route for Vista Verde K-8 School; and
- Two (2) routes for Oak Creek Elementary School.

Two (2) home-to-school transportation routes subsidized by the City of Irvine:

- Two (2) routes for University High School.

The routes for Turtle Rock Elementary School and Rancho San Joaquin Middle School were grandfathered in when the District eliminated district-wide home-to-school transportation. The Vista Verde K-8 School and Oak Creek Elementary School routes were subsequently added due to significant pedestrian safety concerns allowable under AR 3540.1. These routes are subsidized by the District, with the District contributing approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the cost and parents contributing the remaining twenty-five percent (25%).

The routes for University High School (UHS) are cost-neutral to the District. Regardless of significant efforts made by both the UHS community and the District, the requisite number of full-paying riders to secure a cost-neutral route for the 2023-24 school year was not met. Subsequently, the UHS community requested the City of Irvine (City) to consider providing financial support to subsidize the cost of a bus route. Following consideration of this request and due to continued interest from the community, the Irvine City Council has voted annually to approve allocations to provide financial support for a pilot program for school bus service to a number of UHS neighborhoods including the Quail Hill area for the past three (3) years.

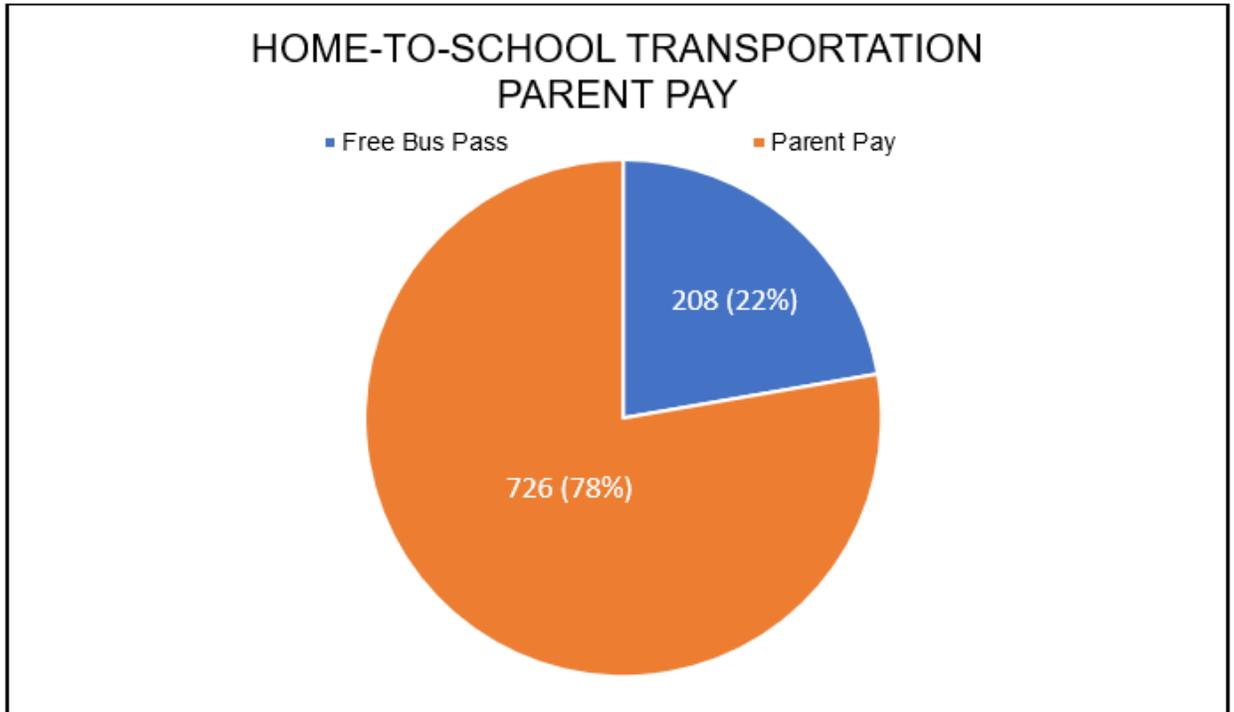
School Year	Number of Buses Provided	Approximate Allocation Amount
2023-24	1	\$55,000
2024-25	2	\$220,000
2025-26	2	\$220,000



For the routes subsidized by the City, the City contributes approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the cost and parents contribute the remaining twenty-five percent (25%).

The following chart depicts Home-to-School Transportation services, excluding Special Education.

Figure 4: Home-to-School Transportation Parent Pay



Special Education Transportation Routes

Transportation for Special Education students is provided for students receiving services at a school other than their school of residence or due to the severity of their disability, as specified in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Orange County Transit Authority

The Orange County Transit Authority (OCTA) Youth Ride Free Program provides passes for all Orange County youth ages 6 to 18 to ride all OC Bus fixed-route buses for free for travel to school, work, or fun.

Irvine CONNECT

The City of Irvine provides free shuttle services through Irvine CONNECT and has stops near five (5) District schools: Lakeside Middle School, Sierra Vista



Middle School, Irvine High School, Northwood High School, and Woodbridge High School. The shuttle frequency is every twenty (20) minutes and runs daily.

Figure 5: Provides details of services provided on District transportation routes

	General Education	Special Education	Total
Bus Routes	11	82	93
Individualized Service	2	37	39
Students Transported	944	596	1,540
Pre-School Aged Students Transported	0	57	57
PK-6 Students Transported	406	251	657
7-12 Students Transported	538	200	738
Free Bus Passes Issued	204	0	204
CHS Equity Multiplier Free Bus Pases Issued	4	0	4
Parent Pay Bus Passes Sold	726	0	726

II. PRIORITY FOR PK-6 AND LOW-INCOME STUDENTS:

Administrative Regulation 3540.1 establishes a non-transportation zone for elementary schools as a 1.5 mile radius.

Service beyond the non-transportation zone, for a given school, may be provided where there is sufficient paying ridership to operate a bus on a cost-neutral basis. In addition, when there are significant safety concerns present, parent pay/ District-subsidized service beyond the non-transportation zone may be provided.

The City of Irvine is a master planned community. Approximately ninety-seven percent (97%) of elementary students live within the 1.5 mile radius non-transportation zone.

No busing shall be provided for afternoon Kindergarten schedules. Only central bus stops shall be established in each residential community served.

For established routes, and when seats are available, the District will prioritize the transporting of General Education students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 6. Students identified as Unduplicated Pupils (students who are low socio-economic, English learners, or foster youth) by the Student Services Department will receive transportation services at no charge, as needed, when seats are available on existing routes.



III. ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND HOMELESS YOUTH:

Students with disabilities will continue to be provided transportation services, when specified in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as required by law.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law created to support the enrollment and education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. McKinney-Vento is intended to provide homeless students the same educational opportunities as housed students by removing as many barriers to learning for homeless students as possible.

Students designated as McKinney-Vento (homeless) are identified, monitored, and serviced by the Student Services Department. Once identified, Student Services works with the family to ensure homeless students are transported to and from school. If transportation services are needed, this can be accomplished through the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Youth Ride Free Program which provides a free bus pass for youth ages 6 to 18 to ride the public bus system, the Irvine Connect shuttle, mileage reimbursement, or by working with the Transportation Department to provide District transportation on existing bus routes or through individualized transportation.

IV. FREE TRANSPORTATION FOR UNDUPLICATED PUPILS:

For established routes and when there are seats available, students identified as Unduplicated Pupils (students who are low socio-economic, English learners, or foster youth) by the Student Services Department, will receive transportation services at no charge.

V. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION:

To gather feedback from essential partners, the District conducted a district-wide survey in October 2025 and held a public hearing at the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting on March 10, 2026 to engage classified staff, teachers, school administrators, regional local transit authorities, local air pollution control districts and air quality management districts, parents, pupils, and other collaborators on the District's Transportation Plan.



VI. TRANSPORTATION FUNDING 2025-26:

Home-to-School pupil transportation has four (4) funding sources in 2025-26.

- 1) State Funding (LCFF): **\$534,426**
 - 2) State Augmentation: **\$1,404,490**
 - 3) Transportation Fees: **\$360,000**
 - 4) City of Irvine: **\$228,000**
- Total Home-to-School funding: **\$2,526,916**

In 2013-14 transportation funding became a permanent add-on to the District's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) target entitlements. In recognition of this program being underfunded, the State provided an augmentation to the funding beginning in 2022-23. This additional funding is based on 60% of the District's transportation costs less the LCFF entitlement. In addition, commencing in 2023-24 the Home-to-School transportation add-on in the LCFF calculation will include a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA).

Special Education transportation has four (4) funding sources in 2025-26.

- 1) State Funding (LCFF): **\$778,443**
 - 2) State Augmentation: **\$5,952,158**
 - 3) Local Revenues: **\$16,000**
 - 4) Unrestricted General Fund: **\$7,208,733**
- Total Special Education funding: **\$13,955,334**

Special Education transportation costs continue to rise without any corresponding funding increase.

For the 2025-26 school year, Creekside High School was identified as an **Equity Multiplier School** under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and was allocated \$119,260 for transportation services to enhance the educational experience and improve chronic absenteeism for Creekside High School students. Students qualifying for transportation services under other funding sources may not be supplanted by the Equity Multiplier Fund.



Figure 6: Home-to-School Transportation Funding 2025-26.

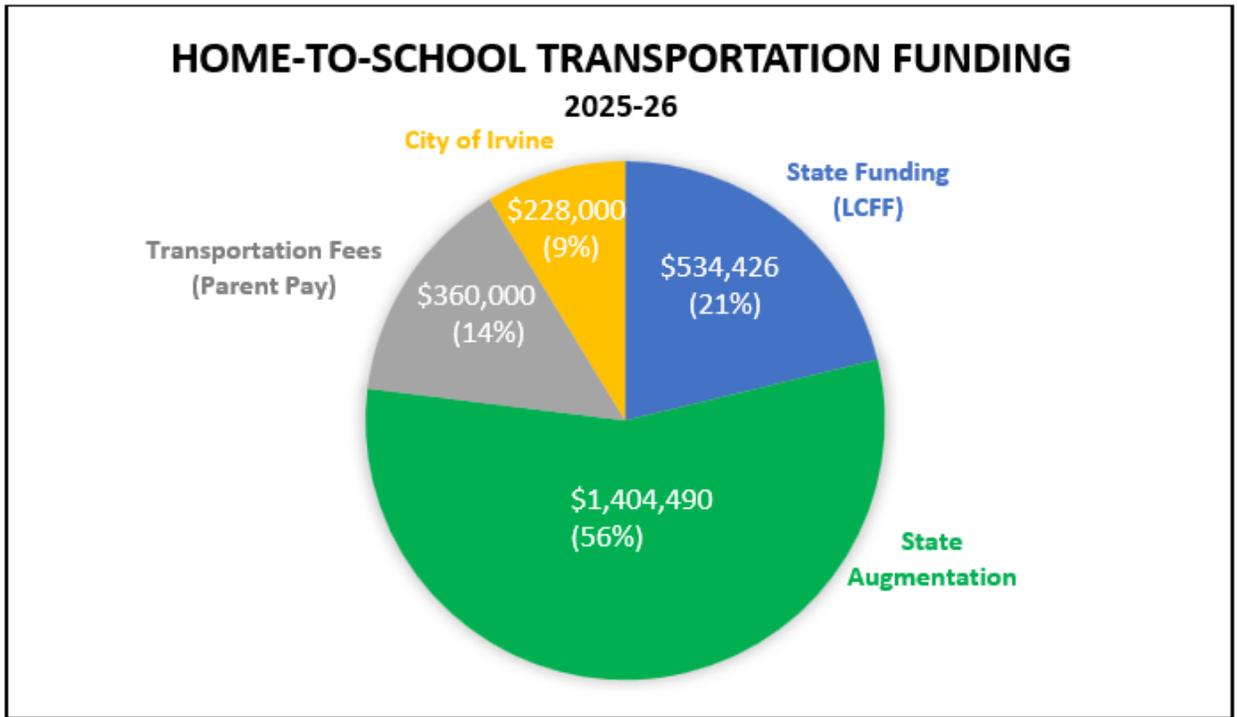
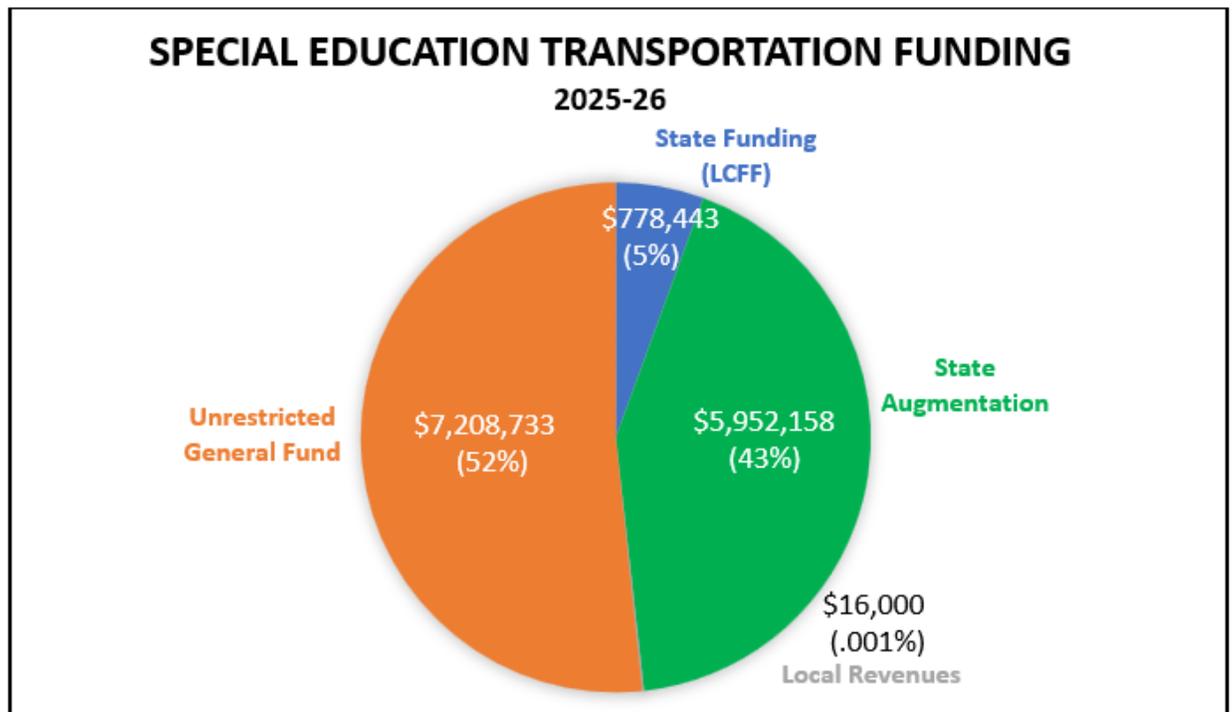


Figure 7: Special Education Transportation Funding 2025-26.



The Transportation Plan was developed in accordance with State of California Education Code Sections 39800.1 and 41850.1.



APPENDIX A

TRANSPORTATION FEES BOARD POLICY - 3540

Because the cost of providing student transportation exceeds funding provided by the state, the Board of Education finds it necessary to charge student transportation fees.

Proposed transportation fee schedules shall be submitted for approval by the Board of Education. Fees shall be determined based on operating costs and in accordance with the law.

The total amount received for transportation from the state and parent/guardian fees shall not exceed the actual operating cost of home-to-school transportation during the school year.

No charge shall be made for the transportation of special education students whose Individual Education Plan requires transportation due to a disabling condition or of students whose parents/guardians are determined indigent pursuant to administrative regulations.

Upon approval of a transportation fee schedule, the Board shall certify to the county superintendent that the district has levied fees in accordance with law.

Legal Reference:

Education Code

35330 Excursions or field trips

39800-39860 Transportation, especially:

39807.5 Payment of transportation cost; amount of payment

39809.5 Excess fees, adjustments

41850 Home-to-school and special education transportation

49557 Applications for free and reduced price meals

49558 Confidentiality of applications and records

56026 Individuals with exceptional needs

Arcadia Unified School District et al v. State Department of Education and Salazar, 5 Cal. Rptr.

2d 5457 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS Section 245.8(a)

Management Resources: CDE Management Advisory

0500.92 Implementation of Special Education Transportation Apportionment r#9202)

0619.92 Fees for Pupil Transportation #92-05)

Policy Adopted: September 25, 1992

Policy Revised: January 14, 2003



APPENDIX B

TRANSPORTATION FEES ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION - 3540

Eligibility for free transportation shall be based on the Irvine Unified School District income eligibility scale. At the beginning of the school year and whenever a new student is enrolled, parents/guardians may request information about free transportation eligibility standards, application procedures and appeal procedures.

All applications and records related to eligibility for free transportation shall be confidential and opened only for purposes directly connected with the free transportation program.

Students receiving free transportation shall not be identified by the use of special passes, tickets, lines, seats or any other means. They shall be treated in no way differently from other students, nor shall their names be published, posted or announced in any manner or used for any purpose other than the transportation program.

Recipients of Aid for Families with Dependent Children may use their monthly Medi-Cal or other subsidized insurance card to assist them in the application process.

Fee Schedule

Unless exempted, the parents/guardians of students transported to and from school shall be charged fees in accordance with Board-approved schedules.

Passes and tickets will be sold at the Transportation Office. No money will be collected on the bus.

Families with more than two bus-riding students shall be entitled to purchase the third child's pass at a reduced charge.

Extracurricular Activity Trips

Unless exempted, the parents/guardians of students participating in extracurricular activities shall be charged fees, in accordance with Board-approved schedules, to help offset the cost of related transportation. Board-approved schedules shall take into consideration the actual costs of providing transportation for the specific extracurricular activity. No student shall be denied participation in extracurricular activities based on an inability to pay for transportation expenses. No student shall be required to utilize district-provided transportation unless safety considerations dictate otherwise.

May 16, 1989

Revised: January 2003



APPENDIX C

HOME-TO-SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION LIMITS ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION - 3540.1

While home-to-school transportation is not a required District service, it may be provided for students of the Irvine Unified School District under conditions described below.

Non-transportation zones shall be established for each school as follows:

Elementary -- 1.5 mile radius

Middle -- 2.5 mile radius

High -- 3 mile radius

Service beyond the non-transportation zone, for a given school, may be provided where there is sufficient paying ridership to operate a bus on a cost-neutral basis, or where significant safety concerns are present.

No busing shall be provided for afternoon Kindergarten schedules.

Only central bus stops shall be established in each residential community served.

May 16, 1989

Revised January 2003



APPENDIX D



State of California

EDUCATION CODE

Section 39800.1

39800.1. (a) As a condition of receiving apportionments under Section 41850.1, a local educational agency shall develop a plan describing the transportation services it will offer to its pupils, and how it will prioritize planned transportation services for pupils in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and any of grades 1 to 6, inclusive, and pupils who are low income. The plan shall be adopted by the local educational agency's governing board on or before April 1, 2023, and updated by April 1 each year thereafter. The plan shall include the following components:

(1) A description of the local educational agency's transportation services that would be accessible to pupils with disabilities and homeless children and youth, as defined pursuant to the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11301 et seq.).

(2) A description of how unduplicated pupils, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 42238.02, would be able to access available home-to-school transportation at no cost to the pupils.

(b) (1) The plan shall be developed in consultation with classified staff, teachers, school administrators, regional local transit authorities, local air pollution control districts and air quality management districts, parents, pupils, and other stakeholders.

(2) The plan shall be presented and adopted by the governing board of the local educational agency in an open meeting with the opportunity for in-person and remote public comment.

(c) The plan may provide for the local educational agency to partner with a municipally owned transit system to provide service pursuant to this section to middle school and high school pupils.

(d) Nothing in a local educational agency's plan shall preclude a local educational agency from providing no-cost transit passes to pupils.

(e) For purposes of this section, "local educational agency" means a school district, excluding a school district with a districtwide charter petition approved pursuant to Section 47606, or a county office of education.

(Amended by Stats. 2023, Ch. 48, Sec. 19. (SB 114) Effective July 10, 2023.)



APPENDIX E



State of California

EDUCATION CODE

Section 41850.1

41850.1. (a) (1) Commencing with the 2022–23 fiscal year and for each fiscal year thereafter, the Superintendent shall apportion to each school district and county superintendent of schools that provides pupil transportation services, a transportation allowance equal to 60 percent of the home-to-school transportation expenditures reported by the school district or county superintendent of schools, as determined by its Function 3600 entry in the Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS) report, consistent with the definition in the California School Accounting Manual, for the prior year, excluding capital outlay and nonagency expenditures. This allowance shall be reduced by the amount of the transportation add-on computed for the prior fiscal year under paragraph (1) of subdivision (h) of Section 42238.02 and adjusted under paragraph (3) of subdivision (h) of Section 42238.02 for a school district or subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (e) of Section 2574 and adjusted under subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (e) of Section 2574 for a county superintendent of schools. If this reduction results in an amount less than zero, the transportation allowance under this section shall be zero.

(2) Home-to-school transportation expenditures reported for a school district with two component school districts under a common administration board pursuant to Section 35110 shall be divided among the component school districts in proportion to the transportation add-on amounts computed pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (h) of Section 42238.02.

(3) For reorganized school districts, the prior fiscal year home-to-school transportation expenditures for purposes of paragraph (1) shall be determined as follows:

(A) A new school district shall be credited with the amount of eligible home-to-school transportation expenditures reported by each former school district before the reorganization. A new school district shall not be credited with eligible home-to-school transportation expenditures reported by divided school districts before the reorganization.

(B) An acquiring school district shall be credited with the amount of eligible home-to-school transportation expenditures it reported before the reorganization, plus the amount of eligible home-to-school transportation expenditures reported by each former school district before the reorganization. A new school district shall not be credited with eligible home-to-school transportation expenditures reported by divided school districts before the reorganization.

(C) The remaining portion of a divided school district shall be credited with eligible home-to-school transportation expenditures it reported before the reorganization.



(D) If the reorganization includes a former school district that has been wholly included in more than one new or acquiring school districts, the amount of eligible home-to-school transportation expenditures shall be determined in a manner consistent with the adjustments made to the transportation add-on specified in paragraph (1) of subdivision (h) of Section 42238.02 pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 35735.

(b) A local educational agency shall be subject to audits required by Section 41020 with respect to this section, including adoption of the transportation plan pursuant to Section 39800.1. The Controller shall include instructions appropriate to the enforcement of this section in the audit guide required by subdivision (a) of Section 14502.1.

(c) The department shall annually collect and publish transportation data from each local educational agency providing pupil transportation services and that receives an apportionment pursuant to this section. The data shall encompass ridership, miles driven, expenditure details, the number of pupils transported, the demographic characteristics of pupils transported, including race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, and other data facilitating comparisons among local educational agencies. The department shall determine the specific data elements in consultation with the Legislature and with local experts, including the County Office Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team established pursuant to Section 42127.8.

(d) As used in this section, “local educational agency” means a school district, excluding a school district with a districtwide charter petition approved pursuant to Section 47606, or county office of education that is providing school transportation services.

(e) School districts and county offices of education that provide transportation services by means of a joint powers agreement, a cooperative pupil transportation program, or a consortium shall receive transportation allowances pursuant to this section.

(Amended by Stats. 2023, Ch. 48, Sec. 23. (SB 114) Effective July 10, 2023.)



APPENDIX F

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 2, 2022

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 24, 2022

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2021–22 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2933

Introduced by Assembly Member O'Donnell

February 18, 2022

An act to add Section 41850.5 to the Education Code, relating to school transportation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2933, as amended, O'Donnell. School transportation: apportionments.

Existing law authorizes school districts and county superintendents of schools to provide transportation services to pupils. Existing law, among other things, requires each school district or county office of education that provides transportation to receive the same home-to-school and special education transportation allowances that it received in the prior fiscal year and prohibits the transportation allowances from exceeding the prior year's approved transportation costs, increased by the amount provided in the annual Budget Act.

This bill would, notwithstanding any other law, require the Superintendent of Public Instruction, commencing with the 2022–23 fiscal year and for each fiscal year thereafter, to apportion to each school district, county office of education, entity providing services under a school transportation joint powers agreement, or regional occupational center or program that provides pupil transportation services either 100% of its school transportation apportionment for the 2020–21 fiscal year or 100% of its ~~approved~~ *reported* home-to-school transportation

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costs as determined by a specified report, whichever is greater. The bill, commencing with the 2023–24 fiscal year, would annually adjust those amounts for inflation, as specified. The bill would provide that implementation of these provisions is subject to an appropriation being made for purposes of those provisions in the annual Budget Act or another statute.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 41850.5 is added to the Education Code,
2 to read:

3 41850.5. (a) Notwithstanding any other law, commencing with
4 the 2022–23 fiscal year and for each fiscal year thereafter, the
5 Superintendent shall apportion to each school district, county office
6 of education, entity providing services under a school transportation
7 joint powers agreement, or regional occupational center or program
8 that provides pupil transportation services the greater of either of
9 the following:

10 (1) One hundred percent of its school transportation
11 apportionment for the 2020–21 fiscal year, as adjusted pursuant
12 to subdivision (b).

13 (2) One hundred percent of its—~~approved~~ *reported*
14 home-to-school transportation costs as determined by its Function
15 3600 entry in the prior year’s Standardized Account Code Structure
16 (SACS) report, as adjusted pursuant to subdivision (b).

17 (b) Commencing with the 2023–24 fiscal year, the school
18 transportation apportionment amounts described in paragraphs (1)
19 and (2) of subdivision (a) shall be adjusted annually by the
20 percentage change in the annual average value of the Implicit Price
21 Deflator for State and Local Government Purchases of Goods and
22 Services for the United States, as published by the United States
23 Department of Commerce, for the 12-month period ending in the
24 third quarter of the prior fiscal year. This percentage change shall
25 be determined using the latest data available as of May 10 of the
26 preceding fiscal year compared with the annual average value of
27 the same deflator for the 12-month period ending in the third
28 quarter of the second preceding fiscal year, using the latest data



1 available as of May 10 of the preceding fiscal year, as reported by
2 the Department of Finance.

3 (c) The implementation of this section is subject to an
4 appropriation being made for purposes of this section in the annual
5 Budget Act or another statute.

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