

TRANSPORTATION PROPOSAL FOR 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

Re: Suggested modification of enrollment procedures to improve transportation services

To: USD #469 Board of Education and Superintendent Dan Wessel

From: Jim Slapper, Transportation Services Director

Date: March 8, 2021

This proposal will specify past transportation service concerns and suggest modifications to help resolve those issues and better provide transportation for eligible students.

Goals

1. Increase safety for all students transported.
2. Better communication between parents and school staff pertaining to transportation.

Historical Overview:

Enrollment procedures result in a significant distortion of the number of students entitled to/needing/prepared to utilize transportation services. In the past, the number of students requesting services at time of enrollment has been skewed much higher than students utilize our transportation service.

Under such circumstances, transportation services have experienced serious problems planning for the number of students to be transported, appropriate bus stop locations and allocation of transportation staff and material resources and planning. Currently all enrolled students are entitled to free transportation services except for those specifically excluded by policy. Those not eligible include students within a walk zone and students residing out-of-district.

2019-2020 School Year Experience:

During the school enrollment process form on Skyward, parents can mark a box if they believe their student needs transportation services. Parents enrolling their students for transportation services can do so at any time before and after the first day of school. There is no cutoff date.

During the 2019-2020 school year enrollment process, 1774 students were checked yes as needing and/or wanting transportation services. Included in that number were students not eligible for transportation, such as out of district students and students who live in a walk zone.

On the first week of school that year, only 802 of the 1774 students requesting transportation services, scanned their cards and boarded a bus. That means 972 students were included in our planning for rides and stops. When setting up routes and bus stops, we plan for 1,774 students, but hoped not all that number showed up at the bus stops. (If all 1,774 needed a ride we would not have had enough resources to transport all those students to and from school.)

Transportation Department Procedures

Seven days before school starts, we have all our bus routes set in Skyward. Pick up times and stops are posted on Skyward for those who have already registered. At that seven-day window our bus drivers are given the list of students who have been assigned to their bus.

Our drivers list may have as many as 100 students assigned, which is double the capacity of the bus. Our drivers are instructed to call each family, introduce themselves and give the parents the pickup and drop off times and the stop location.

On our first day of school for 2019-2020, as in other years, we did not know how many of the 1,774 registered students would show up at the bus stops. We ran each bus route for at least a week to determine student counts. Doing so is especially important to know before we adjust bus routes, bus stops, bus/student assignments, and pick up and drop off times as needed.

Communication with parents is difficult and some parents do not receive notice of the changes in time to avoid scheduling and safety concerns. When bus times and routes get changed parents have problems being home at an appropriate time to get their students on or off the buses and/or students may get on the wrong bus.

Solutions

After thoughtful reflection I have concluded that charging a nominal registration fee for bus service at the time of enrollment should result in helping receive accurate counts for students that utilize or be eligible for transportation services. If so, we would probably get a more realistic (smaller) number of eligible students needing services in time to plan accordingly. This would be a bus registration fee, not a bus use fee.

1. All students who are eligible for transportation, other than district employees' children, will pay a registration fee.
 - If a household is registered seven days prior to the first day of school the cost is \$25.00, and the household is entitled to transportation beginning the 1st day of school. District employee students are exempt from these fees but still need to meet the registration deadline.
 - Thereafter the registration fee will be \$35.00, and the household will be entitled to transportation beginning seven days after registration.
 - Free and reduced students who are eligible for transportation ride free, but are still subject to the 7 day registration period before riding.
2. Registration will be removed from Skyward and maintained by transportation department.
 - a. Timeline for Parent Communication:
 - i. End of School Year 2021- Notify parents of the change in transportation procedure.
 - ii. July 22 – Open enrollment, send transportation document change with procedures to parents. include cutoff date for first day of school ride.

- iii. August 6, 2021 – Final date for transportation signup for students to get day one ride.
 - iv. August 19 – First Day of School.
 - v. August 26 – Second Registration Opens
- 3. Walk zones stay the same. There will be no bus privileges for any student in walk zones.
 - 4. The no highway crossing policy would be the same.

I believe these guidelines and nominal registration fees will more than provide for better administration of the transportation department. Communication with parents will also improve. Scheduling and safety issues associated with student transportation will improve. Lansing USD 469 will continue to have one of the most generous and parent and student friendly transportation departments in Kansas.

Jim Slapper
Transportation Director USD469

Appendix:

Other School Districts:

After some research and after speaking with heads of other school district transportation departments, my staff and I compiled a list of what some other districts are doing.

USD 464 Tonganoxie charges \$340 per year per student for transporting students under 2.5 miles. It is on a first come first serve basis if space is available. They have a deadline date for enrollment and free and reduced ride free. No transportation is provided for anyone in their walk zones.

USD 232 Desoto charges \$300 per student per year with a maximum of \$600 for a family under 2.5 miles. They have a discounted fee if paid before Aug 12th. Free and reduced ride for free.

Shawnee Mission School District charges \$370 per year if paid by July 24th for any student who lives under 2.5 miles.

USD 453 Leavenworth (uses Easton Bus Service): charges \$315 for the first student and then \$270 for siblings. They have no discount for free/reduced.

Basehor Linwood charges \$100 per student with a \$200 family cap for students under 2.5 miles. Free and reduced are not charged.