



Mountain View  
Whisman  
School District

# Transportation Update

Fleet Optimization and Transporting to Choice  
Programs

11/02/23



# Goals and Objectives:

## Today's Objectives:

- ❑ Current practices/constraints
- ❑ Purpose of Transportation update (Challenges #1 & #2)
- ❑ Scenarios related to providing transportation to SED students at choice programs
- ❑ Request for Board direction



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# Transportation in MVWSD

# Purpose of Transportation Update

## Goal:

Provide an update and information on multiple transportation challenges and possible next steps

**Challenge #1:** Provide transportation to SED students attending choice programs

**Challenge #2:** Provide reliable, cost-effective transportation to students (1) to/from school, (2) to/from field trips, and (3) to/from athletic and after school activities, minimizing our use of outside vendors when possible

# Connections to SP2027 and Equitable Access

- Goal Area #5: Equitable distribution of resources that support student success
  - Ensure facilities and resources equitably serve all students
- Goal Area #3: Inclusive and Supportive Culture
  - Expand stakeholders' access to the systems and strategies used to support student learning



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# Current Practices and Challenges

# Current Practices: To/From School

Currently, MVWSD provides transportation services to/from school for the following groups:

- Students who are McKinney-Vento
- Students residing at Moffett Military Base
- Identified students with special needs
- Per Board policy, students outside 1mi (elem.) of neighborhood school

MVWSD will continue to provide these transportation services to/from school for these students.

# Previous Practices

- Previously provided transportation to ST from CA/MI neighborhood zone (as recently as 2018)
  - Part of the regular route (increased ride time slightly for passengers of route)
  - Only 1 student participated in this offering



# Current Fleet

## Yellow Buses:

- 11 Yellow Buses (7 active):
  - 6 large buses w/ capacity of 48 adults, 74 children
  - 6 small buses w/ wheelchair lifts (capacity variable depending on student need, max 20 students)
    - 2 of 5 large buses currently active
      - three would need to be re-inspected/certified if put into use
    - 5 of 6 small buses currently active
      - one is awaiting engine parts

## Personnel:

- 6 drivers active, 0 on reserve

# Current Base Operating Costs

Current bus operating costs for basic to/from school services (for 112 riders) and *minimal* field trips/after school:

Average Annual Salary	\$116,226.35	x6 (# personnel)	\$697,328.09
Average Annual Bus Maintenance/Oil and Supplies	\$32,647.33/bus	x6 (# operating)	\$195,883.97
Admin Costs-training, dispatcher etc.	\$159,799.92		\$159,799.92
		Total	\$1,053,042.00

# What are other districts doing?

- Santa Clara Unified School District
  - Transportation not provided to schools of choice
- Sunnyvale
  - Transportation not provided to schools of choice
- Palo Alto Unified School District
  - Transportation not provided to schools of choice
- Cupertino School District
  - Transportation not provided to alternative programs



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# Addressing Current Challenges

# Current Max Capacity

Our current ridership (excluding additional SED choice program riders) has our personnel team operating and maximum capacity. At an additional cost, the district is already supplementing these constraints by using outside vendor services for some field trips and SPED transportation.

Any additional riders would require additional personnel and/or equipment.

# Current Restrictions

## Personnel Vacuum:

- Current staffing limited with a constrained labor market

## Aging Equipment:

- All vehicles are gas-powered
- Cost to operate large vehicles is increasing with the price of gas and maintenance yearly

## Lack of Versatility:

- “Yellow” school bus drivers require special training and credentialing
- Needs for transportation vary (some needs require large capacity vehicles, while some needs are better fulfilled with smaller vehicles)

# Expanding Ridership to Choice Program Students

## SY22-23 SED and Zone of Residence Student Data

Gabriela Mistral SED - Neighborhood School	
BB	16
CA *can exclude based on proximity	69
IM	2
LN	44
ML	19
TH	13
VA	22
Total w/o*	116

Stevenson SED - Neighborhood School	
BB	3
CA	4
IM	2
LN	10
ML	7
TH *can exclude based on proximity	7
VA	10
Total w/o *	36

**Total [Max] Participants: 152 riders**

# Transporting to Choice Program Scenarios: # of students

<b>20% or less of SED students transported</b>	<b>20-50% of SED students transported</b>	<b>50%+ of SED students transported</b>
1-31 students	32-76 students	77-152 students



# Transportation to Choice Programs

## Shuttle Option

Students arrive independently **to home campus** and are **shuttled to Choice Program** using district transport services

### Considerations:

- Students arrive to neighborhood school
- Bell times may need to be adjusted at Choice Programs to accommodate by 15 min (based on recommendation)
- Vehicles assigned may vary depending on ridership

# Shuttle Option: Pros/Cons

## Shuttle Option

Students arrive independently **to home campus** and are **shuttled to Choice Program** using district transport services

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No new routes need to be created/maintained</li><li>● Less direct impact on current transportation routes</li><li>● Can use small or large vehicles depending on need, which makes this option more flexible to accommodating shifts in choice school transportation participation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Bell times may need to be adjusted for Choice Program schools</li><li>● May increase congestion at neighborhood schools during arrival times (depending on # students serviced)</li><li>● Total time in takes for student to arrive at school longer</li><li>● Would require more bus drivers</li></ul>

# Transportation to Choice Programs

## Neighborhood Stops Option

Students are picked up **from their neighborhood stop** and transported **directly to the choice program**.

### Considerations:

- Requires 3 additional bus routes (i.e. at least 3 additional drivers and/or buses) to accommodate this option
- Bell times will not need to be adjusted
- Vehicles assigned to do this task may vary depending on need and would not be able to be used for sports (limited use for field trips)

# Neighborhood Stops: Pros/Cons

## Neighborhood Stops Option

Students are picked up **from their neighborhood stop** and transported **directly to the choice program**.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Bell times would not need to be adjusted</li><li>● Would not increase congestion at neighborhood schools</li><li>● Students picked up close to their homes, which would reduce time it takes to get to school</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Would require at least 3 new routes, which would also require 3 re-commissioned buses and 3 additional “yellow” bus drivers (costly)</li><li>● Costs would have to be endured even if participation in transportation to choice programs was non-existent or very low</li></ul>

# Considerations

Explore ability to re-commission and hire staff for large capacity vehicles

*Minimum Needed to Transport to Choice Programs:*

- 1-3 re-commissioned buses
- 1-3 “Yellow” bus drivers
  - if we are unable to hire, current capacity would not allow increased ridership

# Considerations

- Explore the purchase of 3 small vehicles (EV or gas) to supplement current routes and use larger capacity vehicles for transportation to choice programs/use for field trips and sports
  - Research suggests this is not something we could do in enough time to address choice program transportation
  - Research suggests that any purchase made would need to undergo modifications to meet Ed.Code requirements for passenger vehicles that transport students, which would incur further costs
  - This could optimize our capabilities, enabling us to use larger vehicles for higher-capacity needs
  - This could also allow flexibility with scheduling based on geographic location and students served
- Explore feasibility for providing staff for this option

# Considerations

- Continue with current operations
- Explore hiring an additional driver in order to provide more flexibility for an already over-stretched department
  - This would increase district's ability to help more with field trips and after school programs

# Potential Total Costs

	Hire 1-3 drivers and recommission "yellow buses"	Purchase 3 small vehicles	Current Operations + Hire another driver
One-Time Costs	N/A	(unknown due to lack of availability) \$60,000 - \$150,000 per vehicle	N/A
Recurring Annual Costs	\$148,873.68 - \$446,621.04	\$116,226.00 - \$348,678.00	\$116,226.00
Total Possible Costs	\$148,873.68 - \$446,621.04	At least \$116,226.00 - \$348,678.00	\$116,226.00





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# Direction Needed

# Candor

- Upon further research and inspection, most transportation options explored so far are costly or improbable, due to personnel and vehicle vacuums. There is no ‘perfect’ solution.
- Acknowledging that resources within the district are finite, this level of expenditure may better serve more students (overall) if allocated to higher needs initiatives/schools
- Realistically, an investment in this effort may yet limit our ability to invest in others

# A Reminder from Previous Study

In addition to interviewing PreSchool families of rising K students, all SCEFs interviewed families at their sites about their perceptions (2021). This data revealed parents care most about:

- Proximity (ease of being close)
- Community (bonding and feeling in community with whom you have shared experiences)
- High-quality educational experiences

Previous study suggests parents would prefer to have high performing local school rather than an option to attend a different school of choice.

# Board Feedback

- Given previous feedback from the Board regarding the following concerns:
  - Size of ST (largest elem. school in district)
  - Lack of socioeconomic diversity at ST
  - Re-imagining Castro
  - Equity amongst schools

What does the Board wish the district to explore and/or prioritize?