

December 15, 2021

**RESOLUTION REGARDING SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION IN RESPONSE
TO THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS DRIVER SHORTAGE**

WHEREAS, according to a joint survey conducted by the National Association of Pupil Transportation (NAPT), the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), and the National School Transportation Association (NTA) there is currently a nationwide shortage of school bus drivers; and

WHEREAS, due to the national school bus driver shortage, as of September, the District's bus transportation vendors began the 2021-22 school year with only 500 of the 1,200 school bus drivers required to meet student transportation needs; and

WHEREAS, the District annually provides school bus transportation for approximately 10,000 Diverse Learners and 10,000 General Education students, and

WHEREAS, the District is required by state and federal laws to provide school bus transportation for Diverse Learners whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) require transportation, Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) and low income students enrolled in magnet schools; and

WHEREAS, the Admissions Policy for Magnet, Selective Enrollment and Other Options for Knowledge Schools and Programs (Magnet Policy) (Board Report 17-0426-PO2) outlines how the District will provide school bus transportation for various Options for Knowledge schools and programs; and

WHEREAS, the District has diligently pursued new vendors and signed on six new vendors and 120 new routes since September and implemented a number of other strategies to increase the district's transportation capacity; and

WHEREAS, 720 students with disabilities have agreed to accept transportation reimbursement and incentives for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year;

WHEREAS, the District has made incentive payments of \$1,000 to 5,157 families and \$1,500 mileage reimbursement payments to 3,478 families for the months of October, November, and December 2021 who have used alternatives to Board-provided transportation; and

WHEREAS, despite all of these efforts, the District has been unable to secure enough school bus drivers to meet all of the District's transportation needs and must prioritize transportation for students legally entitled to transportation; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with a Letter of Finding dated November 12, 2021, issued by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for the systemic state complaint 2022-CO-0022 relating to transportation for students with IEPs for the 2021-22 school year, the District has submitted a plan of action to ISBE to provide transportation to students with IEPs that includes the following elements:

- Securing new transportation vendors. The District has contracted with six new transportation companies, including North Star Taxi Cab, Ride-A-Long Transportation, Allen Green, Yellow Bus, Flash Cab, and Kalaju Transportation. The District has secured 120 routes from these new transportation companies.
- Providing vendor incentives to recruit new drivers. The District has provided vendor incentives by offering to pay \$1,000 for each new driver recruited by a private vendor and \$1,000 bonuses per quarter for existing drivers.
- Hosting job fairs for bus driver recruitment. The District has hosted job fairs for vendors to recruit new bus aides, and has invited vendors to join the District at the job fairs to assist in recruitment. The District has also partnered with Chicago City Colleges to host bus driver job fairs. The District has assisted in marketing and communicating the sign-on bonuses at these job fairs.
- Utilizing mitigation strategies for existing routes. Since the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, the District has been using the mitigation strategy of students arriving at school 30 minutes early or departing from school 30 minutes after the end of the school day, and providing additional financial supports to schools who serve those students as part of the district pandemic relief funding to schools.
- Purging Ridership Roles. The Transportation Department is continuously reviewing ridership data to ensure that routes are not artificially inflated with students who currently waived transportation or are no longer in the District.
- Collaborating with other Districts. The Transportation Department has been collaborating with other large school districts to discuss bus driver recruitment initiatives and to brainstorm ways to maximize routing efficiency.
- Providing Transportation Incentives. The District has offered families willing to transport their students a \$1,000 one-time payment and \$500 each month. Families do not have to waive transportation in order to receive the incentive. A family may choose to receive the incentive until the District can secure a route for the student.

WHEREAS, the Board and the Chief Executive Officer are committed to meeting the transportation needs of its most vulnerable students and complying with all of the District's legal obligations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Transportation Department will produce a plan(s) for actionable alternative solutions to meet the transportation needs of students with IEPs. These alternative plans, including potentially rerouting some or all students who currently have transportation, will prioritize transportation for students in the following order:

- a. Diverse Learners with an IEP requiring transportation and Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS)
 - b. General Education Students enrolled in schools of choice who qualify for transportation on the basis of income
 - c. All other General Education Students enrolled in Magnet, Selective Enrollment or other Options for Knowledge schools and programs
2. At the January 26, 2022 Board meeting, the Transportation Department will provide a progress report to the Board, including a report on the alternative solutions identified and the District's action plan to provide transportation to all students with IEPs and STLS students requiring transportation by the start of the second semester.
3. The Transportation Department will conduct a review of all Board Rules and Policies that impact transportation and recommend to the Board necessary amendments to its rules and policies to reflect the priorities in paragraph 1 of this Resolution prior to notification of school acceptances through the GoCPS process in Spring 2022.