



Pupil Transportation Services Plan

For the
Vista Unified School District

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■ MANDATE

California Education Code Section 39800.1 states:

- (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 local educational agency's governing board shall adopt the plan on or before April 1, 2023, and update it 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 according 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) According to this section, the plan may allow the local educational agency to partner with a municipally owned transit system to serve middle 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 this section, "local educational agency" means a school district or a county office of education.

■ OVERVIEW

The (Local Education Agency) Transportation Plan incorporates existing Board Policies (BP) and Administrative Regulations (AR) governing pupil transportation support services, as well as augmented descriptions of available services for the current school year. The plan describes:

- Transportation services offered to pupils
- The priority of planned transportation services for pupils in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 - 6 inclusive, and pupils who are low income.
- Transportation services are accessible to pupils with disabilities, homeless children, and youth.
- How unduplicated pupils could access available home-to-school transportation at no cost to the pupils.
- The required 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.

○ Pupil Transportation Operations Board Authorization

Vista Unified School District serves a diverse community of 18,100 students in Transitional Kindergarten through grade twelve. The district encompasses 39 square miles and serves Vista and parts of Oceanside, Carlsbad, and San Marcos.

Vista Unified School District recognizes transportation as an integral support of our comprehensive education process.

Transportation services shall be provided for district students according to policies adopted by the Governing Board district Administrative Procedures and in accordance with Titles V, VIII, and XIII of the California Administrative Code, the Vehicle Code, and the Education Code.

The Board of Trustees desires to provide safe and efficient transportation for students to and from school as necessary to ensure student access to the educational program, promote regular attendance, and reduce tardiness. In determining the extent to which the District will provide transportation services, the Board shall weigh student and community needs against the cost of providing such services (BP 3540).

The Superintendent or designee shall recommend to the Board economical, environmentally sustainable, and appropriate means of providing transportation services (BP 3540).

The Board may purchase, rent, or lease vehicles; contract with a common carrier or municipally owned transit system; contract with responsible private parties, including the parent/guardian of the student being transported; and/or contract with the County Superintendent of Schools (Education Code [35330](#), [39800](#), [39801](#)) (BP 3540).

The Board may charge a transportation fee to parents or guardians of transported students in accordance with Education Code [39807.5](#) and BP/AR 3250—Transportation Fees (BP 3540).

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure the qualifications of bus drivers and related district staff, provide for the maintenance and operation of district-owned school buses and other equipment, and ensure adequate facilities for equipment storage and maintenance (BP 3540).

No student shall be required to be transported for any reason without written permission of the student's parent/guardian, except in emergencies involving illness or injury to the student according to Education Code [35350](#) or the evacuation of students as necessary for their safety (BP3540).

The Superintendent or designee shall develop procedures to promote safety for students traveling on school buses (BP 3540).

Vista Unified School District serves diverse ethnicities. Our community is reflected in our TK-12 population and includes Hispanic/Latino (65.8%), White (22.9%), Two or More Races (6.6%), Asian (1.4%), Black/African American (1.4%), Filipino (1.0%), Pacific Islander (0.7%), and Native American or Alaska Native (0.2%). Additionally, 15.3 % of the district's students are classified as English language learners, 20.1% are enrolled in special education programs, and 65.6% are eligible to participate in the free, reduced-priced federal meal program.

o Pupil Data and Route Management Procedures

Transportation is dedicated to providing safe and efficient transportation while serving our diverse community.

The Transportation Department annually retrieves applications for student transportation services. In July, all parents of students who are eligible for services receive an email. The email contains a link for our transportation application. It sends a spreadsheet of all student applicants to transportation. Transportation processes the application, and all information is verified in Aries and then added to our database. The bus pass is printed and given to the school bus drivers to hand to the students. Parents of new students or parents who need to make changes throughout the school year are sent to the Transportation office. An application is printed for the parent to register their student. All applications or changes are verified through Aries before printing changes or bus passes. All students who qualify for transportation as a related service through an IEP are verified through Student Services. Once processed, the application is sent to Transportation with directions to begin transportation. The application includes all pertinent information needed to transport the student safely.

Drivers are required to carry a current route sheet with them at all times. School bus route information will be maintained for all regular and special education home-to-school bus runs. Each route shall show the route of travel, the pick-up and drop-off locations, and the expected departure time from each location. A master listing of all active and inactive bus stops at the school bus stop shall also be maintained by the Transportation Department. School bus stop and route information is published on the district website and is included in the email parents receive in July to register their students to ride the bus.

The criteria for bus route design are to provide a safe route to and from school, minimize miles driven, allow adequate time for schedules to be met, and effectively utilize staff and equipment resources. Bus stops will only be assigned within the established transportation eligibility areas. No fee is charged for transportation services.

The Superintendent or designee shall communicate in writing to parents/guardians regarding bus routes, schedules, and stops and/or shall arrange for local media to publish such information.

The Superintendent or designee shall design transportation routes and stops to promote student safety and maximum efficiency in bus use (AR 3541).

1. The Superintendent or designee may authorize student transportation services when special problems or hazards exist (AR 3541).

2. The Superintendent or designee shall design school routes and stops to enhance student pedestrians' safety (AR 3541).

3. Bus routes shall be along federal, state, city, or county-maintained roads with grades of not more than twelve percent (12%) and where safe turnarounds are located (AR 3541).

The Transportation Department will adjust and modify routes and schedules as appropriate to maintain an optimum level of transportation services. A complete file of all current bus schedules shall be maintained in the Transportation Department and on the district website. The Transportation Department shall furnish each school with the current bus schedules for that school. The respective schools shall maintain their files with the most current bus schedules the Transportation Department provides. Schools shall ensure that their bus duty personnel are kept abreast of all changes.

o Scope of Pupil Transportation Services Offered

Students who attend a school outside their attendance area are not eligible for transportation services.

Transportation shall not be provided for students attending district schools on an Interdistrict Transfer Agreement (BP 5117).

The district owns and operates a limited number of vehicles. These vehicles are provided for the district's required operations and shall not be used for personal reasons.

Transportation services may be provided for students who live within their home school boundary and outside the non-transportation radius area. The non-transportation area will be measured in a radius, a straight-line distance from each school site. The Superintendent or designee shall design transportation routes and stops to promote student safety and maximum efficiency in the use of buses.

AR 3541. Transportation Services

With the Board's authorization, transportation services may be provided or arranged by the District for:

1. Students traveling to and from school during the regular school day (Education [Code 39800](#))
2. Field trips and excursions (Education [Code 35330](#)). We are compliant with the SB88.
3. School activities, expositions or fairs, or other activities determined to benefit students (Education [Code 39860](#))
4. District employees and parents/guardians traveling to and from educational activities authorized by the District (Education [Code 39837.5](#))
5. Preschool or nursery school students (Education [Code 39800](#))
6. Students traveling to full-time occupational classes provided by a Regional Occupational Program or Center (Education [Code 39807.5, 41850](#))
7. Students traveling to and from their places of employment during the summer in connection with a summer employment program for youth (Education [Code 39837](#))
8. Matriculated or enrolled adults traveling to and from school or adults for educational purposes other than to and from school (Education [Code 39801.5](#))
9. Private school students, in the same manner, and on the same routes provided for District students (Education [Code 39808](#))
10. Nonschool purposes as allowed by law, such as:
 - a. Community recreation (Education [Code 39835](#))
 - b. Public transportation (Education [Code 39841](#))
 - c. Transportation of government employees to and from their places of employment (Education [Code 39840](#))

The District shall provide home-to-school transportation and additional transportation services as needed for students with disabilities as specified in their individualized education programs. (Education [Code 41850](#); 20 [USC 1400-1482](#); 34 [CFR 104.4](#))

The Superintendent or designee shall provide transportation to homeless children in accordance with law, Board policy, and administrative regulation. (AR 3541)

The following non-transportation radius distances are established. ***Grade TK-5 students are prioritized with a larger transportable zone than students in subsequent grades. Grade 6-8 students are prioritized with a larger transportable zone than subsequent grades.***

Grade	Distance
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- | | |
|--------|-----------------|
| ▪ TK-5 | 1.5 mile radius |
| ▪ 6-8 | 2.0 mile radius |

Unduplicated Pupils

The Superintendent or designee shall provide transportation to homeless children in accordance with the law, Board policy, and administrative regulation:

- English Learner
- Free / Reduced
- Foster Youth / McKenny Vento

○ Transportation Eligibility Exceptions

Students in the following categories shall be eligible for transportation services without regard to boundary limits:

- Students attending schools or classes for students with disabilities. Provision shall be made for handicapped students who have special transportation needs. If possible, such students shall be transported with the same equipment as regular students.
- Students assigned to special training schools or classes, social adjustment classes, or other schools or classes for exceptional children who are physically or mentally disabled shall, if possible, be transported in the same equipment as regular students.

Transporting students from one school to another to balance class loads, relieve overcrowded conditions, or provide educational opportunities not available at the regular school of attendance is authorized at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

○ Non-Mandated Transportation Services

When transportation is not specifically required by the IEP or Section 504 plan of a student with disabilities, the student shall be subject to the rules and policies regarding regular transportation offerings within the district,

AR 3260

When approved by the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent or designee may impose a fee for the following (5 CCR 350)

AR 3260 (7)

Home-to-school transportation between regular, full-time day schools and regional occupational centers, programs, and classes, as long as the fee does not exceed the statewide average unsubsidized cost per student and exemptions are made for indigent and disabled students (Education Code 39807.5)

Low-Income Eligibility

The Board shall establish financial assistance requirements, which shall be reviewed and adjusted periodically to meet the district's needs.

All Vista Unified School District students participate in the Community Eligibility Program. Through this program, students can have a reimbursable breakfast and a reimbursable lunch at no cost. No meal applications will be collected because all VUSD school sites are CEP sites.

No charge shall be made for any transportation of students whose individualized education program requires transportation or whose parents/guardians are determined indigent according to administrative regulations. (BP 3541.5(a))

o Mandated Transportation Services

Transportation for Students with Disabilities

The student's specific needs shall be the primary consideration when an IEP team determines the student's transportation needs. Considerations may include but are not limited to the student's health needs, travel distances, physical accessibility and safety of streets and sidewalks, accessibility of public transportation systems, midday or other transportation needs, extended-year services, and, as necessary, implementation of a behavioral plan.

The Board of Trustees shall ensure appropriate transportation services for students with disabilities as specified in their individualized education program (IEP) or accommodation plan. The District shall make home-to-school transportation available for students at no cost to parents/guardians as specified in the student's IEP (BP 3541.2).

The Superintendent or designee shall establish criteria and procedures for determining the most appropriate mode of transportation for an individual student based on identified needs as specified in the IEP or accommodation plan (BP 3541.2).

The Superintendent or designee shall arrange transportation schedules so that students with disabilities do not spend excessive time on buses compared to other students. Arrivals and departures shall not reduce the length of the school day for these students except as may be prescribed individually (BP 3541.2).

The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures to ensure compatibility between mobile seating devices and bus securement systems (BP 3541.2).

Transportation for students with disabilities shall be provided by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan (AR 3541.2).

If a disabled student is excluded from school bus transportation, the District shall provide alternative transportation at no cost to the student or parent/guardian, provided that transportation is specified in the student's IEP (Education Code [48915.5](#)) (AR 3541.2).

When contracting with a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency to provide special education services, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the contract includes general administrative and financial agreements related to transportation services, if specified in the student's IEP (Education Code [56366](#)) (AR 3541.2) (ED 39878).

Guide, signal, and service dogs trained to assist disabled persons may be transported in a school bus when accompanied by disabled students, teachers, or persons training the dogs (Education Code [39839](#)) (AR 3541.2).

Unduplicated Pupils - Homeless Students and Youth in Transition

Within the scope of services offered, and by law, Board policy, and administrative regulation, homeless students and youth in transition, where transportation is a barrier to accessing their educational services, shall be provided transportation on school buses, municipal buses, or through alternative transportation service providers, at no cost to the student.

AR 6173

Transportation

The district shall provide transportation for a homeless student to and from the student's school of origin when the student resides within the district and the parent/guardian, or the district liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, requests that transportation be provided. If the student moves outside of district boundaries but continues to attend the student's school of origin within the district, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the Superintendent of the district in which the student is now residing to agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of transportation (42 USC 11432).

The district shall not be obligated to provide transportation to students who continue attending their school of origin after they cease to be homeless unless the formerly homeless student has an IEP that includes transportation as a necessary related service for the student (Education Code 48852.7).

o **2025/2026 School Bus and Alternative Transportation Services Offered**

Figure 1 below provides details of (Local Education Agency) services provided on school bus routes.

	General Education	Special Education	Total
Routes	14	43	57
Students Transported	1357	494	1851
TK-6 Students Transported	85	214	299
Unduplicated Students Transported	1081	321	1402
Percentage of Transportation Eligible Unduplicated Students Transported	79.7%	65.0%	75.5%
Bus Passes Sold	0	0	0
Free Bus Passes Issued	4273	0	4273
Miles Traveled	215909	266846	482755

Figure 1: School Bus Transportation (2025/2026)

Figure 2 below provides the number of (Local Education Agency) students using alternative transportation services at no cost to students.

	McKinney-Vento	Special Education	Total
Municipal Transportation Service	Student Services	0	0
Rideshare Services	Transportation	0	0

Figure 2: Alternative Transportation (2025-2026)

o 2024-2025 Projected School Bus and Alternative Transportation Services Offered

Figure 3 below projects details of (Local Education Agency) services to be provided on school bus routes during the 2023-2024 school year.

Routes	4	32	36
Students Transported	597	476	1073
TK-6 Students Transported	255	279	534
Unduplicated Students Transported	453	269	722
Percentage of Transportation Eligible Unduplicated Students Transported	76%	73%	
Bus Passes Sold	N/A	N/A	0
Free Bus Passes Issued	221	0	221
Miles Traveled 23/24	26,280	247,122	273,392

Figure 3: School Bus Transportation (2024-2025)

Figure 4 below projects the number of (Local Education Agency) students who will use alternative transportation services at no cost during the 2023-2024 school year.

	McKinney-Vento	Special Education	Total
Municipal Transportation Service	Student Services	0	0
Rideshare Services	Student Services	9	384,075

Figure 4: Alternative Transportation (2023-2024)

o Transportation Funding and Finance

Figure 5 below contains the projected reimbursement for the current school year based on transportation expenses in the 2025/2026 school year.

Revenue Calculation	
Total 2025/2026 Transportation Expenses (Function 3600)	10,520,189.00
Less Capital Outlay (object 6XXX, Function 3600)	(1,432,114.00)
Less Non-Agency Expenditures (Goal 7110,7150, Function 3600)	0
Total Qualifying Expenditures	9,088,075.00
Estimated 60% Reimbursement	4,724,266
Less 2024-2025 Transportation add-on (from LCFF Calculator)	(1,683,654.00)
Total Revenue (Object 8590, Resource 0000723)	3,769,191.00
Expenditures and Other Financing Uses	
2000-2999 - Classified Salaries	5,124,351.00
3000-3999 - Employee Benefits	2,749,517.00
4000-4999 - Books and Supplies	1,214,207.00
5000-5999 - Services and other Operating Expenditures	
vvv6000-6999-Capital Outlay	1,432,114.00
Total Expenditures (Minus Outlay)	10,520,189.00

Figure 5: Transportation Funding Reimbursement Calculation for Current School Year

Board Approval Date: (must be on or before April 1, 2023)

The Transportation Plan and revenue calculations were developed in accordance with Education Code Sections 39800.1 and 41850.1.

■ APPENDIX – REQUIRED STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

In compliance with the mandate, Figure 4 lists the stakeholders invited to collaborate on developing the (Local Educational Agency) transportation plan.

Stakeholder Entities	Date
Classified staff	1/10/2023, 2/22/2023
Teachers	
School Administrators	2/22/202, 2/23/2023 3
Pupils	
Parents	2/28/2023
Regional Local Transit Authority	Message 2/21/2023 Email 2/22/2023
Local Air Pollution District	2/21/2023
Local Air Quality District	Disclaimer on their website.
Other Stakeholders	3/9/2023

Figure 4 Required Stakeholder Consultations