



Board Meeting Date: 9/9/2024

Title: To-and-From School Transportation Fees follow-up

Type: Information

Presenter(s): Dr. Stacie Stanley, Superintendent; and Mert Woodard, Director, Finance & Operations

Description: As part of the fiscal year 2025 budget development process, the District administration was advised to consider the impact of assessing fees for to-and-from school transportation that is currently free of charge. Administration surveyed families and provided an initial summary of the data at the August 20, 2024, board work session. Administration is providing a summary of the full survey results.

State law mandates that school districts offer free transportation to students living over 2 miles from school. Currently, the District exceeds this requirement by providing free transport to elementary students living 0.7 miles or more away and secondary students living over 1 mile away.

The following is the expected number of students receiving free transportation under District policy who would not qualify if the District adhered strictly to state statute **and** do not qualify for educational benefits:

| <u>School</u> | <u>No. of Students</u> | | <u>Prior-Year Ridership</u> | <u>Adjusted Ridership</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | <u>0.7-2.0 or 1.0-2.0 Miles</u> | <u>Routed Within</u> | | |
| Edina High School | 392 | | 0.38 | 149 |
| South View Middle School | 253 | | 0.73 | 185 |
| Valley View Middle School | 264 | | 0.72 | 190 |
| Concord Elementary School | 327 | | 0.67 | 219 |
| Cornelia Elementary | 205 | | 0.78 | 160 |
| Countryside Elementary School | 284 | | 0.96 | 273 |
| Highlands Elementary School | 136 | | 0.75 | 102 |
| Creek Valley Elementary School | 246 | | 0.78 | 192 |
| Normandale Elementary School | 335 | | 0.64 | 214 |
| Total | 2,442 | | | 1,684 |

Current Pay-For-Ride Fees per Policy 713 (Appendix I):

| <u>Grade Level</u> | <u>Distance From School</u> | <u>Yearly Fee Per Student</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Elementary (K-5) | <0.7 miles | \$350.00 |
| Secondary (6-12) | <1.0 miles | \$350.00 |

*cap of \$525 per year per family

A survey was sent to the families of students that would not qualify for no charge transportation were the District to adjust its policy to align with state statute.

- It is important to note that per state statute, if a district elects to charge for to-and-from school transportation, it must also ensure that no student is denied access to transportation due to an inability to pay. Those families have also been removed from the survey list.

Survey Introduction:

Introduction

As part of the 2024-2025 budgeting process, one of the cost saving options identified by stakeholders relates to the Edina Public Schools transportation program. One proposal that would not start until the 2025-2026 school year would be to adjust the cost of transportation service.

Although the state of Minnesota only mandates complimentary transportation for resident students residing more than 2.0 miles away from their school, the majority of Edina Public Schools' resident students currently receive free transportation to and from school.

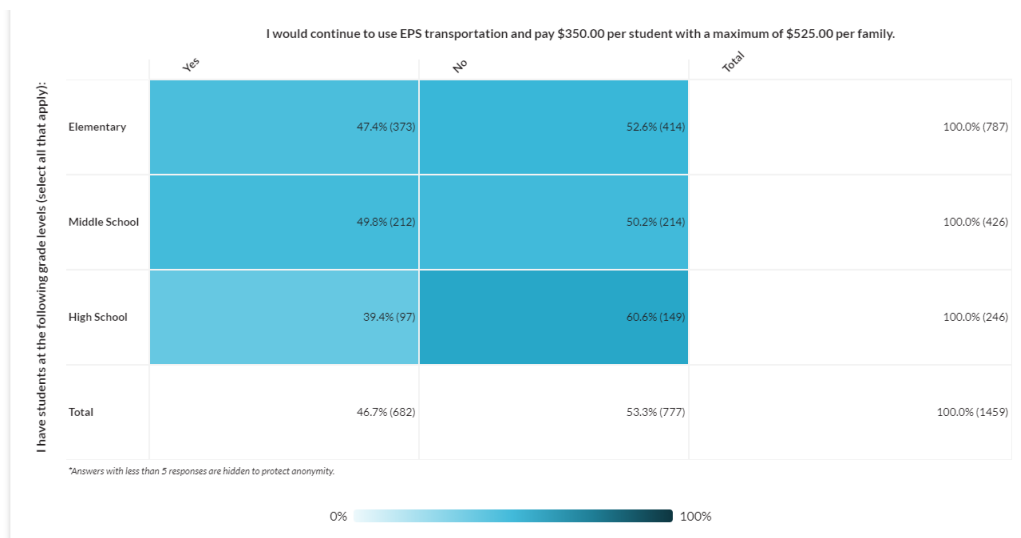
We are conducting a survey to identify how many resident families who reside outside the state mandated service area would continue to use EPS transportation if they were charged a fee. The current fee permitted in Edina Public Schools' District Policy 713 (Appendix I) is \$350.00 per student with a cap of \$525.00 per family.

This study solely includes:

- Elementary resident students that live more than 0.7 miles, but less than 2.0 miles from their school, and
- Secondary resident students that live more than 1.0 mile, but less than 2.0 miles away from school.

Thank you in advance for completing this survey by, Friday, August 23rd.

The heat map below represents the data from 1,079 respondents:



Recommendation: There is no recommended action.

Desired Outcomes from the Board: Review the final results from the transportation survey.

Attachments:

Policy 713 (specifically see Appendix I)