



August 24,2020

The Duluth Public Schools Preschool program has had the opportunity to allow 4 year old children in our program to ride the school bus to and from school alongside elementary students for the last several years. Our preschool program blends Head Start funding with state funded School Readiness, and includes students from the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program. As per state guidelines, students in Voluntary Pre-K must be provided with transportation. Our district has generously provided this same access to Head Start and School Readiness families. This has reduced a significant barrier for our Head Start families in particular, who all meet the federal poverty guidelines in order to qualify for the program, and for whom transportation can present great challenges.

This request is asking you to continue providing transportation for students enrolled in our programs that follow the elementary school day schedule. We also ask that you waive regulations for restraints and monitors (Head Start Performance Standards 1303.71 (d); 1303.72 (a)(1) and 1303.72(a)(4). We have seen that 4 year old children have been successful riding the bus without restraints and monitors for the last 3 years. We do have safety measures in place, such as seating the children in the first seats in the bus, having adults wait with and pick up children from the bus stop, and teaching children bus safety procedures. Riding the bus is not required. It is optional for families.

We have seen attendance rates improve with transportation. We know we are setting the habits families are likely to continue when children enter elementary school. We believe this is an important reason to approve this request. Thank you for your commitment to equity that implores us to Start Early.

Please sign below, indicating your support to waive the requirements for restraints and bus monitors that Head Start typically requires.

---

School Board Chairperson

Date