

Action Item - 22

Board of Education Meeting Date: 6/26/2025

Title: Parent Reimbursement for Transportation Expenses (\$5,000,000)

Action Under Consideration:

The Administration recommends that the Board of Education authorize The School District of Philadelphia, through the Superintendent or his designee, to reimburse parents of eligible students for transportation expenses, subject to funding, as follows:

Purpose: Reimbursement of monthly expenses for families to and from school transportation

Start Date: 9/1/2025

End Date: 6/30/2030

Compensation not to exceed: \$5,000,000

Location(s):

All schools

Description:

The School District of Philadelphia's Department of Transportation Services is seeking continuation of the Board Authorization originally approved for 2020–2025, allowing up to \$5 million in reimbursement for the 2026–2030 school years. This program offers parents the option to transport their child(ren) to and from school and receive reimbursement for eligible expenses.

The requested authorization of one million for the first year will support reimbursements for eligible families during the 2025–2026 school year.

During the current school year, approximately 450 families and 500 students are participating in the program.

Why is this contract needed?

The Parent Reimbursement Program supports families in cases where District-operated bus transportation may determine that school bus service for a student is neither practical nor economical because the student's home is not on an existing bus route. When this occurs, parents are given the option to provide transportation for their children and obtain reimbursement for those expenses from the School District.

How is this work connected to the District's plan to achieve Goals & Guardrails?

This work directly supports the Board of Education's Guardrail 1. Welcoming and Supportive Schools.

Does this Action Item support a specific strategy/intervention identified in the Strategic Plan?

This Action Item supports a specific strategy identified in the District's Strategic Plan, Accelerate Philly. The Parent Reimbursement Program for Transportation Expenses aligns with the strategic priority to "Deliver Efficient, High-Quality Operations," specifically the intervention to expand transportation options and improve service availability and reliability. By reimbursing families for transporting their children when District-operated transportation is not feasible, the program addresses ongoing operational challenges stemming from students living outside of existing bus routes. It provides families with a reliable alternative, reduces demand on limited bus capacity, and strengthens the District's ability to maintain consistent transportation services. Furthermore, this initiative advances the broader goals of equity and accessibility by ensuring transportation remains a bridge to educational opportunity for all students.

If this is the continuation of a contract, how has success been measured in the past and what specific information do we have to show that it was successful?

The success of the Parent Reimbursement Program has been measured by participation levels, cost efficiency, and parent feedback. Currently, approximately 450 families are eligible to receive transportation reimbursement for the 2024–2025 school year. The Department of Transportation Services anticipates that participation will continue at a similar level moving forward. The program has also proven to be cost-effective, providing a lower-cost transportation alternative at an average annual cost of \$2,450 per student compared to \$3,300 for yellow bus service, while offering families greater flexibility. Parent feedback collected through platforms such as Let's Talk has been generally positive, indicating that the program meets family needs and contributes to improved transportation reliability.

Related resolution(s)/approval(s):

February 27, 2020 No. 34

Funding Source(s):

FY26 Operating
FY27 Operating
FY28 Operating
FY29 Operating
FY30 Operating

Office Originating Request:

Operations - Transportation Services