



**T R A N S P O R T A T I O N
P L A N**

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Overview

Since the return to in-person instruction in the 2021-2022 school year, families in Tehachapi have received home-to-school transportation services provide by the Tehachapi Unified School District Transportation Department at no cost. Home-to-school transportation for students that live within the district's over 500 square mile boundary for all primary and secondary schools requires careful planning and coordination to ensure safe and efficient travel for student riders. In the 2022-2023 school year, the District had an enrollment of about 4,200 students and issued over 1,400 free bus passes.

Safe transportation and access to school are top priorities for the Tehachapi Unified School District. Inclement weather conditions such as fog, wind, snow, or ice present road hazards that only highlight the community's need for safe and accessible transportation to and from school, provided by highly qualified drivers.

California Assembly Bill 181 requires California school districts to develop transportation service plans that prioritize planned services for transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1-6 inclusive and pupils who are low income as well as partner with municipally owned transit systems to provide services to middle and high school students. As part of the 2022-2023 California State Budget, additional funds were allocated on an ongoing basis to reimburse school district 60% of qualifying transportation expenditures for districts that implement a transportation plan by April 1, 2023 and every April 1st thereafter. The district is required to provide home- to-school transportation that prioritizes TK-6 grade students as well as provides access to students identified as socio-economically disadvantaged or with special needs.

The Tehachapi Unified School District's Transportation Plan incorporates existing Board Policies (BP) and Administrative Regulations (AR) that govern pupil transportation support services, as well as augmented descriptions for the current school year. Specifically, the plan outlines:

- Transportation services offered by Tehachapi Unified School District to its pupils.
- How Tehachapi Unified School District prioritizes transportation services for pupils in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1-6, inclusive, and low-income students.
- Access to transportation services for Tehachapi Unified School District's pupils with disabilities and homeless children and youth.
- How Tehachapi Unified School District's unduplicated pupils can access home-to-school transportation at no-cost.

- The consultation with Tehachapi Unified School District’s classified staff, teachers, school administrators, regional local transit authorities, local air pollution control districts and air quality management districts, parents, pupils, and other stakeholders in developing the plan.

Transportation in California Ed Code

California Education Code

39800.

(a) The governing board of any school district may provide for the transportation of pupils to and from school whenever in the judgment of the board the transportation is advisable and good reasons exist therefor.

The governing board may purchase or rent and provide for the upkeep, care, and operation of vehicles, or may contract and pay for the transportation of pupils to and from school by common carrier or municipally owned transit system or may contract with and pay responsible private parties for the transportation.

(b) As used in this article, “municipally owned transit system” means a transit system owned by a city, or by a district.

39800.1.

(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 plan shall be adopted by the local educational agency’s governing board on or before April 1, 2023, and updated 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 pursuant 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) The plan may provide for the local educational agency to partner with a municipally owned transit system to provide service pursuant to this section to middle school 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 purposes of this section, "local educational agency" means a school district or a county office of education.

Board Authorization for Student Transportation

Board Policy

3540.

The Governing Board desires to provide for the safe and efficient transportation of students to and from school as necessary to ensure student access to the educational program, promote regular attendance and reduce tardiness. The extent to which the district provides for transportation services shall depend upon student and community needs and a continuing assessment of financial resources.

The Superintendent or designee shall recommend to the Board the most economical and appropriate means of providing transportation services.

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

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

Transportation Services Offered

Administrative Regulation

3541. The Superintendent or designee shall design transportation routes and stops within district boundaries that promote student safety, maximum efficiency in the use of buses, and decreased traffic in and around the schools.

Students shall be eligible for transportation service to and from school if the distance between their school-established bus stop and the school is beyond the minimum listed below:

1. For elementary school students:

Grades K-3: three-fourths mile

Grades 4-8: one mile

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2. For students attending a three-year junior high school:

Grades 7-9: one mile

3. For students attending a four-year high school:

Grades 9-12: two miles

The Superintendent or designee may authorize transportation below these limits when safety problems or hazards exist.

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

With the Board of Trustees' authorization, transportation services may be provided or arranged by the district for:

1. Students traveling to and from school during the regular school day.
2. Field trips and excursions.
3. School activities, expositions or fairs, or other activities determined to be for the benefit of students.
4. District employees, parents/guardians, and adult volunteers traveling to and from educational activities authorized by the district.
5. Preschool or nursery school students.
6. Students traveling to full-time occupational classes provided by a regional occupational center or program.
7. Students traveling to and from their places of employment during the summer in connection with a summer employment program for youth.
8. Matriculated or enrolled adults traveling to and from school, or adults for educational purposes other than to and from school.
9. Private school students, upon the same terms, in the same manner, and on the same routes provided for district students.
10. Non-school purposes as allowed by law, such as:
 - a. Community recreation
 - b. Public transportation
 - c. Transportation of government employees to and from their places of employment.

Students who attend school outside of their school attendance area or district boundaries may be eligible for transportation services in accordance with district policy.

Pupils with Disabilities

The district shall provide home-to-school transportation and additional transportation services as needed for students with disabilities as specified in their individualized education program or Section 504 plan.

Homeless Children and Youth

The Superintendent or designee shall provide transportation to homeless students in accordance with law, Board policy, and administrative regulation. When the student resides outside of district boundaries, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the superintendent of the district of residence to apportion the responsibility and costs of transportation.

Foster Youth

The Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with the local child welfare agency to determine the provision, arrangement, and funding of transportation to enable foster youth to attend their school of origin when it is in the student's best interest to do so.

Transportation for Pupils with Disabilities

Board Policy

3541.2.

The Board of Trustees desires to meet the transportation needs of students with disabilities to enable them to benefit from special education and related services. The district shall provide appropriate transportation services for a student with disabilities when the district is the student's district of residence and the transportation services are required by his/her individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan.

The specific needs of the student shall be the primary consideration when an IEP team is determining 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 intervention plan.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide IEP teams with information about district transportation services in order to assist them in making decisions as to the mode, schedule, and location of transportation services that may be available to each student with disabilities. The IEP team may communicate with district transportation staff and/or invite transportation staff to attend IEP team meetings where the student's transportation needs will be discussed.

Transportation services specified in a student's IEP or Section 504 plan shall be provided at no cost to the student or his/her parent/guardian.

If a student whose IEP or accommodation plan specifies transportation needs is excluded from school bus transportation for any reason, such as suspension, expulsion, or other reason, the district shall provide alternative transportation at no cost to the student or parent/guardian.

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 the provision of transportation services if specified in the student's IEP.

The Superintendent or designee shall arrange transportation schedules so that students with disabilities do not spend an excessive amount of 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 on an individual basis.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that any mobile seating devices used on district buses are compatible with bus securement systems required by 49 CFR 571.222.

As necessary, a student with disabilities may be accompanied on school transportation by a service animal, as defined in 28 CFR 35.104, including a specially trained guide dog, signal dog, or service dog.

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.

Transportation for Homeless Children and Youth

Board Policy

6173.

The Governing Board believes that the identification of homeless students is critical to improving the educational outcomes of such students and ensuring that homeless students have access to the same free and appropriate public education provided to other students within the district. The district shall provide homeless students with access to education and other services necessary for such students to meet the same challenging academic standards as other students.

Administrative Regulation

6173.

The district shall provide transportation for a homeless student to and from the student's school of origin when the student is residing within the district and the parent/guardian, or the district liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, requests that such transportation be provided. If the student moves outside of district boundaries, but continues to attend the student's school of origin within this 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 the transportation.

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.

Transportation for Foster Youth

Board Policy

6173.1.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that foster youth may face significant barriers to achieving academic success due to their family circumstances, disruption to their educational program, and their emotional, social, and other health needs. To enable such students to achieve state and district academic standards, the Superintendent or designee shall provide them with full access to the district's educational program and implement strategies identified as necessary for the improvement of the academic achievement of foster youth in the district's local control and accountability plan (LCAP).

Administrative Regulation

6173.1

The Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with the local child welfare agency to determine how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded in a cost-effective manner

to enable foster youth to remain in their school of origin, for the duration of their time in foster care, when it is in their best interest to do so. Such transportation costs may be paid by either the child welfare agency or the district, or shared by both.

Transportation Fees

Board Policy

3250

The Governing Board desires to provide no-cost transportation services for students of the district as long as adequate funding is available for providing this service. Additionally, the Board recognizes that the community places a high priority on having this no cost service available.

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, including the district's bus pass system.

Students in Transitional Kindergarten through Sixth Grade

Students in transitional kindergarten through sixth grade, inclusive and low-income students, will receive priority no-cost transportation services if they reside within

the transportation zone.

Low Income

The Board shall establish financial assistance requirements which shall be reviewed and adjusted periodically to meet the district's needs, should funding prevent the district from providing no-cost transportation for its students.

Unduplicated Pupils

No charge shall be made for any transportation of students whose individualized education program requires transportation or whose parents/guardians are determined indigent pursuant to administrative regulations.

Unduplicated pupils, residing within transportation eligible zones described in the scope of services, may apply for free school bus passes at the Transportation Office.

Unduplicated Pupils - Homeless Students and Youth in Transition

Within the scope of services offered, and in accordance with 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.

2022-2023 Home-to-School Transportation Services Offered

The chart below illustrates the current elementary, middle, and high school general education routes offered.

	Elementary	JMS/THS
Route #1	CV	THS
Route #2	CV	JMS
Route #3	CV	THS
Route #4	CV	JMS
Route #5	GH	THS
Route #6	TPK	JMS
Route #7	TPK	THS & JMS
Route #8	-	THS & JMS
Route #9	CV	JMS

The chart below illustrates the number of vehicles.

Buses	2022-2023 Active/Spare	2023-2024 Active/Spare
General Education Buses	9/4	13/1
Special Education Buses	5/0	5/1
Vans	2	2

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The chart below illustrates the number of staffing on TUSD routes.

Job Designation	2022-2023	Needed in 2023-2024
Bus Drivers	15	18
Van Drivers	2	2
Transportation Aides	12	12
Mechanic/Drivers	1	1
Custodian/Drivers	1	1
Trainer/Drivers	1	1
Instructor/Drivers	1	1

The chart below illustrates the current services provided on school bus routes by Tehachapi Unified School District.

	General Education	Special Education	Total
Routes	9	7	16
Students Transported Daily	1,302	105	1,407
TK-6 Students - Transported Daily	398	55	453
Free Bus Passes Issued	1,407	0	1,407

In an effort to support all students that may require transportation, both consistently and intermittently, the Tehachapi Unified School District is considering expansion of the number of school bus routes currently offered in order to accommodate additional riders and to meet the community demand for increased ridership due to increased transportation costs and varied community needs. In the 2022-2023 school year, TUSD implemented late bus routes for secondary level students who attend after-school tutoring and clubs and will be expanding these offerings to elementary schools in the 2023-2024 school year, in order to increase the instructional school day as part of the state’s Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) initiatives. TUSD also provides transportation beyond home-to-school for students that participate in field trips and extra-curricular activities such as sporting, music, or instructional events on a regular basis. TUSD would be able to comfortably transport 1700 students, with full capacity being 2000 students, if additional routes are added in the 2023-2024 school year. In order to add routes, the district will need to recruit additional bus drivers. Expanding transportation services is heavily dependent on the District's ability to hire sufficient drivers and maintain an adequate fleet of school buses and vans to meet the demand for ridership.

Transportation Funding and Finance

The following figure illustrates the projected reimbursement for the current school year based on the transportation expenses in the school year 2021-2022.

Revenue Calculation	
Total 2021-22 Transportation Expenses (Function 3600)	2,621,054
Less Capital Outlay (object 6XXX, Function 3600)	353,931
Less Nonagency Expenditures (Goal 7110,7150, Function 3600)	-
Estimated 60% Reimbursement	1,360,273
Less 2021-22 Transportation add-on (from LCFF Calculator)	586,541
Total Additional Revenue (Object 8590, Resource 0000)	773,732

Expenditures and Other Financing Uses	
2000-2999 - Classified Salaries	\$1,268,082
3000-3999 - Employee Benefits	725,287
4000-4999 - Books and Supplies	530,500
5000-5999 - Services and other Operating Expenditures	257,073
6000-6999 - Capital Outlay	733,056
7000-7999 - Other Outgo	346,783
Total Expenditures	3,860,781

Board Adoption 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 and brought before the Tehachapi Unified School District School Board for adoption at the Regular Board Meeting held on March 14, 2023. The plan will continue to be updated to incorporate stakeholder input and updates to resource allocation to meet the demand for home-to-school transportation.

Stakeholder Input

Tehachapi Unified School District is continuously seeking input regarding district transportation. To date, stakeholders have provided feedback in support of the district's plan to expand transportation services to as many students as possible and dedicate resources toward increased staffing of the department. Stakeholder input for the 2023-2024 school year also supports the elimination of first come, first serve registration for bus passes and instead supports transition to a model that would accommodate families unable to visit the TUSD Transportation Department during business hours (online registration). Stakeholders also provided input supporting the district's plans to create incentives and training programs to generate additional qualified bus drivers to support TUSD school bus routes that, would allow for greater ridership capacity.

Local Air Pollution & Air Quality Control District

The Tehachapi Unified School District applied for the Lower Emission School Bus Program with the assistance of the East Kern Air Pollution Control District. The program provides funding (currently \$110,000 reimbursement per school bus) to replace older, higher emission diesel school buses with cleaner, lower emission school buses through the purchase of modern and more efficient school buses. Since the 2021-2022 school year the Tehachapi Unified School District has utilized the program to replace five (5) school buses.

With the support of the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District, the Tehachapi Unified School District will continue to replace its fleet of school buses with cleaner Tier IV diesel school buses. Due to the mountainous terrain of the Tehachapi Unified School District boundaries, zero-emission electric school buses available in the market are not currently a viable option.

Regional Local Transit Authority

The community of Tehachapi does not currently offer regional transit beyond what is offered by the Kern County transit authority, Kern Transit. Tehachapi Unified School District met with Kern Transit representatives to discuss a potential partnership to offer transportation services through promotion of Kern Transit's Dial-A-Ride offering to supplement local transportation offerings. Dial-A-Ride provides curb-to-curb transportation services to various points of interest within the City of Tehachapi boundaries and Golden Hills.

Conclusion

Before the passing of Assembly Bill 181, The Tehachapi Unified School District Transportation Department implemented practices which prioritized transportation for pupils with disabilities, homeless and foster youth, students in Kindergarten through 6th grade and low income students. TUSD will continue this practice by automatically issuing bus passes to current bus pass holders who fall under the specified categories. With the addition of funds, staff and vehicles, TUSD hopes to continue to build resources to meet student and community needs.

Public comment and feedback regarding the TUSD Transportation Plan is welcome, and may be sent to hentezari@tehachapiusd.com