

S.B. 23-094

School Transportation Modernization

Task Force Report

Submitted to:

**The Education Committee of the House of Representatives,
Education Committee of the Senate,
State Board of Education, and the Governor**

By:

S. B. 23-094 Transportation Task Force

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Executive Summary

Colorado has recently experienced a severe shortage in the existing public school transportation workforce, which was further exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. As a result of a smaller workforce, districts across the state have been forced to reduce the number of buses in service, which subsequently decreases transportation eligibility for students across the state. This decrease impacts equitable access to a high quality education for all students¹.

In response to the shortage, the Colorado General Assembly passed [Senate Bill 23-094](#). The bill created a School Transportation Task Force composed of a wide range of education and transportation leaders and advocates. The group was convened to study a range of issues that currently exist in the public school transportation system and hamper the ability of the state and districts to overcome the current transportation crisis. Using the findings of the work, the Task Force was charged with developing recommendations regarding policies, laws, and rules that could help to improve public school transportation across the state. The recommendations were intended to help better meet the needs of the students of Colorado, while simultaneously alleviating burdens on school districts.

This report documents the work of the Task Force and its recommendations including the following:

Driver Recruitment and Retention

1. Support in enhancing training, recruitment, and retention of transportation staff.
2. Provide competitive wages and affordable benefits.
3. Develop sector partnerships and short-term credential pipelines.

Innovations and Partnerships

4. Create an ongoing Transportation Innovation Fund.
5. Foster collaboration between districts and public transit entities.
6. Investigate and develop transportation collaborations and partnerships.

Eligibility and Utilization

7. Increase accessibility and safety of walk-zones.
8. Support acquisition and utilization of routing and GPS software.
9. Increase communication with students and families regarding transportation.

Funding

10. Increase transportation funding to support equitable education.
11. Use a Single-Factor reimbursement process moving forward.
12. Update current transportation statute and related regulations.

¹ SB 23-094, 2023 Annium, 2023 Reg. Session (Colorado 2023)
https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2023a_094_signed.pdf

Introduction

In recent years, numerous educational programs, initiatives, and opportunities for the students of Colorado have expanded, including Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, magnet and charter school options, and dual enrollment programs². Each focuses on expanding the educational opportunities of children across the state to enable them to thrive, succeed, and meet their full potential in an academic environment that works for them. Due to the fact that at times these programs are only offered outside of a student’s neighborhood school, many families that are looking to benefit from these opportunities can only access them if they have district supported transportation available. **However, over the last decade, in Colorado, as well as nation-wide, there has been an unprecedented decline in the number of public school transportation drivers¹.** The driver shortages reduce the number of available buses in a district, ultimately reducing not only opportunities for students to access programs outside of their neighborhood school, but also increasing the length of routes and number of students riding a single bus within the district. These changes ultimately decrease the number of students eligible for any type of district transportation, decrease utilization of district transportation, and increase the burden on an often already overtaxed district¹.

For many districts the shortage is so significant that they are unable to even provide transportation for all students to and from their neighborhood school. Data collected by the Transportation Task Force from districts across the state demonstrates that numerous districts have significant bus driver shortages, reducing the number of buses running within a district. Thirty-five out of 111 responding districts, reported unfilled vacancies within their driver pools, with some reporting over 20 position vacancies across their district. The Denver Public School District reported being down approximately 35 bus drivers for the current school year, with more than 200 buses in service for the district³. **Students of color as well as students living in under-resourced communities are often disproportionately affected by reductions in transportation¹.** Student access to additional educational and enrichment programming, career pathways, career-connected opportunities, and extracurricular activities are often the first to go in districts in their efforts to help ensure all students can, at a minimum, access transportation to and from their neighborhood school each day¹. Although the barriers and challenges in each case are unique, the underlying cause in each case is a shortage of transportation staff to meet the demand.

These shortages continue to get worse across the state from year to year¹. Even though districts have taken many steps to mitigate the decline, meeting the transportation needs of students across Colorado continues to be a significant state-wide concern. As a result, in 2023, the Colorado General Assembly passed Senate Bill 23-094 “Concerning the creation of a task force to report on measures to improve school transportation, and, in connection therewith making an appropriation.” This bill sought to address the issue of school transportation head on, through the formation of a School Transportation Task Force

² Colorado Department of Education Website
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/>

³ Transportation Task Force District Data Request
See section *Data Collection: District Data Request*, page 14 of this report

that would investigate potential factors which have led to the public school transportation shortage and develop recommendations to help address the problems.

Challenge

The public school transportation driver shortage in Colorado began before COVID, however, the pandemic made an existing problem even worse¹. Data collected by the Task Force determined that drivers have been leaving positions in districts across the state for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, low pay, lack of benefits, insufficient hours, and issues with student discipline. Additionally, certification requirements and new federal regulations can prevent some interested applicants from being eligible to fill vacancies⁴. Finally, state reimbursement rates for district transportation have not kept pace with inflation increases over recent years, resulting in a shift in the financial burden to local communities. ***All of these factors stand in the way of Colorado's ability to provide the best education for students across the state.***

Many districts are currently doing everything they can to provide competitive compensation and extended hours for drivers, and addressing other issues that are impacting recruitment and retention. However, for many districts the burden of addressing all of these issues is too great to handle on their own and, as a result, vacancies continue to increase and transportation opportunities continue to decline. Less and less Colorado students are eligible for even basic transportation to and from school, significantly impacting educational equity across the state. In the school year(SY) 2008-09, almost 43 percent of public school students were transported to school. This dropped to approximately 36 percent in SY2021-22⁵. ***State-wide reform and support is needed to help ensure that districts are able to address this crisis head on without imposing undue burden so that the transportation needs of all students can be met, allowing them to meet their full academic potential.***

Bill Goals and Objectives

Due to the current challenges, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 23-094¹ which seeks to address the issues facing school transportation systems and use the Task Force's findings to develop and recommend policies, laws, and rules to improve public school transportation across the state in order to better meet student needs and alleviate burdens on school districts. The Department of Education was tasked with collecting, studying, and publicly reporting on school transportation data including at a minimum the following data:

- a. *“student eligibility, including factors used by school districts and charter schools to determine eligibility for transportation and whether the factors used create barriers for students to attend*

⁴ Transportation Task Force Driver Survey
See section *Data Collection: Driver Survey*, page 13 of this report

⁵ Transportation Funding
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/sftransp>

their school district-assigned neighborhood public school, public school of choice, or career pathways program;

- b. student utilization, including how many eligible students utilize school transportation, whether routes are at capacity, and methodologies used by school districts and charter schools to identify utilization patterns and adjust operations accordingly;*
- c. driver staffing levels, including staffing required to cover routes, driver pay rates, hours of operation, vacancies, and whether and how school districts and charter schools contract with public transportation providers or alternative transportation providers to satisfy school transportation needs;*
- d. fleet diversification, including the types of buses or vehicles used to satisfy school transportation needs and costs associated with each type of bus and vehicle used and including, for each type of bus and vehicle used, electrification options, fuel costs, maintenance costs, purchase prices, resale values, and salvage values; and*
- e. service gaps, including identifying discrepancies between eligible students and utilization, and causes of those discrepancies.”*

The Task Force was tasked with creating a report including findings and recommendations including:

- a. “identification of transportation challenges that create barriers to students attending a school district-assigned neighborhood public school, public school of choice, or career pathway programs;*
- b. recommendations for implementing a simplified reimbursement process for school districts based on the findings or recommendations from the transportation subcommittee of the financial policies and procedures advisory committee of the department of education;*
- c. identification of existing and potential funding for providing school transportation;*
- d. recommendations for creating and implementing sustainable funding mechanisms to meet school transportation needs;*
- e. recommendations for creating and implementing a transportation innovation fund to support local efforts to create new and innovative transportation solutions that may serve as a model to scale and sustain in other school districts and charter schools;*
- f. recommendations for facilitating partnerships among school districts, district and institute charter schools, public transportation providers, private transportation providers, and local nonprofit organizations to meet transportation needs and create cost efficiencies, while maintaining safety standards;*
- g. recommendations for creating pathways and talent pipelines for transportation provider and logistics career;*
- h. recommendations for competitive salaries and benefits packages necessary to recruit and retain school transportation drivers;*
- i. identification of outcomes from transportation assistance grants from the department of education, and recommendations for replication or expansion;*
- j. an analysis of the cost and benefits associated with requiring route school buses that can control traffic with alternating flashing red lights to have automated vehicle information systems, as*

defined at section 42-4-110.5 (6), to record motor vehicles that unlawfully pass a stopped route school bus; and

- k. recommendations for legislation or rules that may improve school transportation, including recommendations for legislation or rules that do not exacerbate the marginalization of communities through separation while protecting public funds.”*

Approach

The Task Force consisted of 28 members representing the following entities/groups: parents/legal guardians, school transportation directors, special education directors, students with disabilities advocacy organizations, charter schools, bus driver labor unions, career pathway program providers, education advocacy organizations, public transportation providers, rideshare transportation providers, after-school program providers, recipients of a transportation assistance grant from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), superintendents, and school district chief financial officers. Across all categories, there was a focus on ensuring that members included representation from rural areas across the state. A full list of work group members and their affiliations can be accessed through this [Transportation Task Force Members](#) link.

Beginning in September 2023, three-hour, virtual, Task Force meetings were held approximately once a month. To foster full engagement, agendas and pre-reading materials for each meeting identified action and/or decision items. All meetings of the Task Force were held in accordance with Colorado Open Meetings Law and allowed for non-member comments. After each meeting, notes and resource materials, including video recordings of the meeting, were made available through the [CDE School Transportation Task Force webpage](#). Meetings routinely included open discussion around decision points. Relevant information and data were gathered between meetings and presented to Task Force members during meetings to help inform decision points. Design Thinking (Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test) was utilized to drive all work. The Task Force developed a set of operating guidelines during their first meeting and used a model of [Fist to Five Voting](#) for the development of recommendations. Votes were cast during meetings through the chat function and saved for records.

The Task Force meetings were organized by topic and focus on the work. Topic areas included: Innovation Grant Program, Transportation Collaboration Across the State, Driver Salaries, Benefits, and Talent Pipelines, Transportation Eligibility, Utilization, and Service Gaps, Current Transportation Funding, and Reimbursement Process. Data collection was a large requirement in the bill. As a result the first set of meetings (September and December 2023) focused on getting feedback and input from Task Force members regarding surveys and data requests that were distributed to a variety of stakeholders during the work. The second set of meetings (January through April 2024) focused on reviewing topics and having the Task Force members vote on minimum recommendation expectations. Minimum requirements were defined as critical components and/or “must haves” for the final recommendations. Agreeing on minimum requirements enabled the Task Force to narrow down possibilities ahead of developing the final recommendations for each topic area. ***Minimum requirements established between***

January and April are diagrammed below (Figure 1). The next set of meetings (May through September 2024) focused on extensive discussion and decision making to establish final recommendations in all topic areas. Minimum requirements were utilized as a starting point for discussion and development of recommendations. Meetings in September and October 2024 were focused on finalizing recommendations and the report itself.

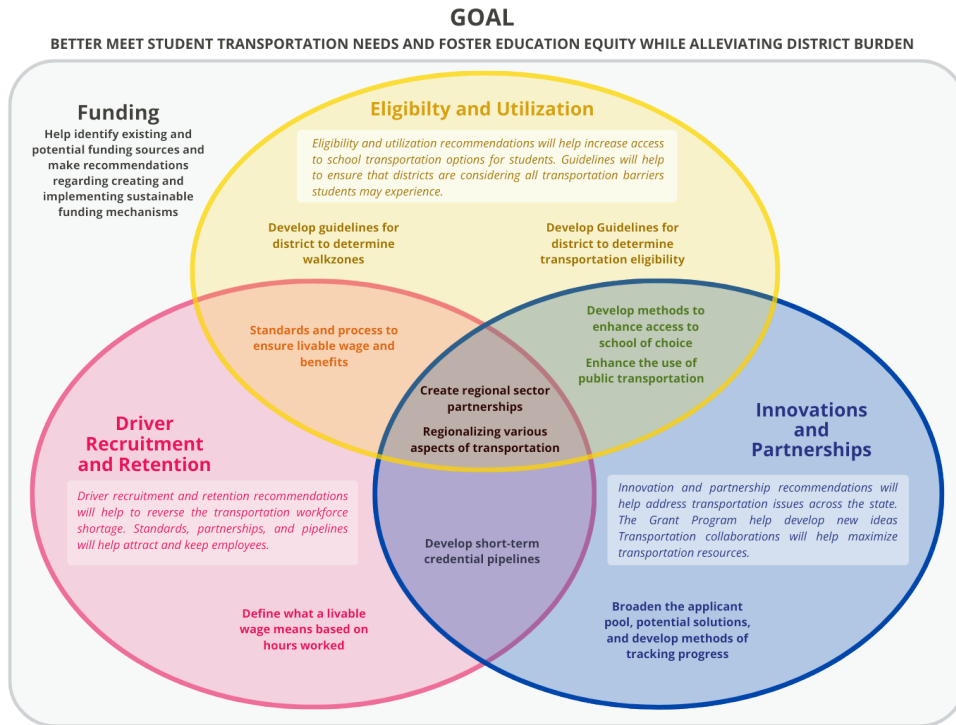


Figure 1

Data Collection

Data collection and analysis took place throughout the work. Information was collected from a variety of stakeholders on a wide range of topics through the use of surveys available to the public, and also district specific links. Task Force members were involved in the process of survey and data request development. In addition to data collected through these methods, information regarding current state and national level programs, resources, and legislation was compiled and shared with the Task Force to help inform the process. Finally, research and analysis into possible statewide implementation of an automated vehicle information system on route school buses was conducted.

Transportation Desk Review

In order to assist the Transportation Task Force in creating recommendations in the required areas, information was collected from a wide variety of sources on a range of topics. Below is a list of the primary resources gathered for and reviewed by the Task Force during the last year of work.

1. **2023 Colorado Revised Statutes- Title 22 Education** (Colorado General Assembly) This document reviews all of the current codified general and permanent statutes of the Colorado General Assembly. Title 22 of the Code addresses Education, Article 32 of the Title addresses Transportation of Pupils and Article 51 of the Title addresses Public School Transportation Fund. Senate Bill 23-094, tasked the Transportation Task Force with proposing legislation or rules that may improve school transportation. The Transportation Task Force utilized this document to develop an understanding of the current statutes that govern school transportation across the state.
2. **Colorado Transporting Students with Special Needs** (Colorado Department of Education) This document reviews current federal laws regarding transportation of students with special needs including groups such as students with disabilities, students in foster care, and students who are homeless. Senate Bill 23-094, tasked the Transportation Task Force with proposing legislation or rules that may improve school transportation. The Transportation Task Force utilized this document to develop an understanding of the current federal laws that govern school transportation for students with special needs.
3. **CDE-40 Data Submission Worksheet and Form** (Colorado Department of Education) This document is the template data collection sheet utilized by districts across the state to submit information to CDE to enable calculation of their transportation reimbursement. Senate Bill 23-094, tasked the Transportation Task Force with developing recommendations for implementing a simplified reimbursement process for school districts. The Transportation Task Force utilized this document to develop an understanding of the current requirements of school districts to qualify for transportation reimbursement.
4. **Transportation Payment Calculation** (Colorado Department of Education) This document reviews the current process utilized by CDE to provide transportation reimbursement to school districts across the state. Senate Bill 23-094, tasked the Transportation Task Force with developing recommendations for implementing a simplified reimbursement process for school districts. The Transportation Task Force utilized this document to develop an understanding of the current process utilized to calculate reimbursement amounts.
5. **House Bill 22-1395 Transportation Innovation Grant Program** (Colorado General Assembly) This document is a previous House Bill, introduced in April 2022 which failed in the House Committee on Appropriations. The bill sought to create a competitive transportation innovation grant

program to address the public school transportation shortage. Senate Bill 23-094, tasked the Transportation Task Force with proposing another version of the Innovation Grant Program. The Transportation Task Force utilized the original version of this bill as a starting point for recommendations on a new version of the grant program.

6. **Get On the Bus** (Allies for Children) This document is a case study published in August 2022 by Allies for Children, a nonprofit organization in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. The case study investigates a wide range of ride sharing initiatives that have been implemented throughout the country. The study focused on identifying best practices through national benchmarking and presents a foundation for the development of shared-service models. Senate Bill 23-094 tasked the Transportation Task Force with developing recommendations for facilitating partnerships across the state to meet transportation needs and create cost efficiencies. The Transportation Task force utilized this case study to investigate a variety of partnership options that are currently taking place across the country.
7. **2023 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report** (Colorado Workforce Development Council) This document is a report that has been published annually since 2014 by state agency partners as required by Section 24-46.3-103, C.R.S. as amended by Senate Bill 14-205. It provides insights on the demand for and supply of talent in Colorado and identifies strategies to balance the supply and demand equation as examined through a data lens. Senate Bill 23-094 tasked the Transportation Task Force with creating pathways and talent pipelines for transportation providers and logistics careers. The Transportation Task Force utilized this report to better understand the current supply and demand landscape in Colorado and guide their recommendations to help recruit and retain school transportation drivers across the state.
8. **House Bill 21-1264 Funds Workforce Development Increase Worker Skills** (Colorado General Assembly) This document is a previous House Bill that utilized a portion of the pandemic stimulus funds to invest in staffing for regional sector partnerships to help strengthen them through the increase in capacity by convening industry-led efforts across multiple sectors. Senate Bill 23-094 tasked the Transportation Task Force with facilitating partnerships across the state and creating pathways and talent pipelines to increase recruitment and retainment of transportation drivers. The Transportation Task Force utilized this House Bill to better understand what current initiatives and programs exist within Colorado that are positively impacting its workforce.
9. **House Bill 22-1215 Study of Expanding Extended High School Programs** (Colorado General Assembly) This document is a previous House Bill that advanced skills-based hiring and work-based learning initiatives across the state. Senate Bill 23-094 tasked the Transportation Task Force with developing talent pipelines and pathways that would help recruit and retain transportation drivers. The Transportation Task Force utilized this House Bill to better understand what current initiatives and programs exist within Colorado that are positively impacting its workforce.

10. **Executive Order D2022-015 Concerning Skills-based Hiring for the State Workforce** (Jared Polis, Governor) This document is an Executive Order signed by Governor Polis in 2022. Its purpose was to promote skill-based hiring for state jobs across the state. Senate Bill 23-094 tasked the Transportation Task Force with developing talent pipelines and pathways that would help recruit and retain transportation drivers. The Transportation Task Force utilized this House Bill to better understand what current initiatives and programs exist within Colorado that are positively impacting its workforce.

11. **Executive Order D2023 016 Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning for the State Workforce and Promoting Work-Based Learning as a Solution for Colorado Employers Superseding and Replacing Executive Order D 2022 027** (Jared Polis, Governor) This document is an Executive Order signed by Governor Polis in 2023 which expands on the scope of a previous Executive Order regarding skill-based hiring. This Executive Order includes and promotes other work-based learning programs in state government including internships, pre-apprenticeships, and fellowships, that support learning through and at work. Senate Bill 23-094 tasked the Transportation Task Force with developing talent pipelines and pathways that would help recruit and retain transportation drivers. The Transportation Task Force utilized this House Bill to better understand what current initiatives and programs exist within Colorado that are positively impacting its workforce.

12. **House Bill 23-1246 Support In-demand Career Workforce** (Colorado General Assembly) This document is a previous House Bill that expanded on the Care Forward Colorado program which covers all tuition, fees, and course materials for short-term health care programs. The expansion increased the number of fields included in the program. Senate Bill 23-094 tasked the Transportation Task Force with developing talent pipelines and pathways that would help recruit and retain transportation drivers. The Transportation Task Force utilized this House Bill to better understand what current initiatives and programs exist within Colorado that are positively impacting its workforce.

Parent/Guardian Survey

The Parent/Guardian Transportation survey collected information and perspectives directly from families regarding school transportation. Information collected included both aspects of eligibility and utilization. Access to the survey was available through a publicly available link. The survey was available through the CDE website and it was also emailed to all districts throughout the state for distribution direct to families. The survey was available in English and Spanish. ***This survey provided important transportation information regarding perspectives from stakeholders that utilize school transportation that would be directly impacted from changes in statewide policy and practice. The survey specifically helped to highlight barriers and opportunities to student transportation eligibility and utilization as well as what changes would likely have the largest impact with regards to maximizing transportation use across the state.*** Thirteen hundred and sixty-two (1362) individuals completed the survey. All district settings and

parents of students at all grade levels were represented by survey respondents. Thirty-three percent of survey respondents indicated that their child was eligible for free/reduced lunch programs. Three percent of survey respondents identified as American Indian, three percent identified as Asian, three percent identified as Black, fifteen percent identified as Hispanic, less than one percent identified as Native American, and sixty-three percent identified as White. Twelve percent of survey respondents indicated that they did not identify with any of the previously mentioned racial or ethnic groups. A complete list of survey questions can be accessed through this [Parent/Guardian Transportation Survey](#) link.

A major takeaway from the survey was that a focus on maximizing route efficiency and enhancing communication strategies will likely help to increase the number of students that are eligible for transportation within a district as well as the number of students that utilize available transportation options. Some key findings from the Parent/Guardian Transportation Survey were the following:

- Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated that their families had been contacted by their school district to inform them of transportation options that were available (Appendix A).
- Eighty-five percent of respondents indicated that their families were eligible for district transportation, seventy-five percent indicated that their child attended their neighborhood school, and sixty-four percent indicated that they would stay in their neighborhood school regardless of transportation options (Appendix B).
- Families of students utilizing district transportation typically were satisfied with the length of time the student spent on the bus (sixty-five percent), the number of students riding the bus (fifty-one percent), the number of stops made by the bus (fifty-two percent), and safety (seventy-seven percent) and reliability (eighty-seven percent) of the bus (Appendix C).
- Forty-three percent of families who choose to drive their children to school indicated that they would drive their child regardless of transportation options. Those individuals indicated they drove due to a variety of reasons including personal preference (seventy-one percent), timing of bus pick up and/or drop off (seventy-five percent), as well as the amount of time their child spent on the bus (sixty percent) (Appendix D).
- District transportation was typically not available due to a student's proximity to the school (twenty-six percent), a student attending school outside of the district boundaries (thirty-one percent), or the district not providing any transportation within the district (four percent) (Appendix E).
- Forty-seven percent of families indicated that they did not have access to after-school transportation, while thirty-four percent indicated they were not sure if it was available. Fifty percent of families that indicated they had access to after-school transportation indicated that they utilized it, while sixty-eight percent of families who do not currently have access indicated they would use it if it was available (Appendix F).

Driver Survey

The Driver Transportation survey collected information and perspectives directly from drivers who transport students to and from school, including district drivers, third-party contractors, and public transit drivers. Information collected included aspects of salary, benefits, current routes, work hours, and job satisfaction. Additionally, drivers were surveyed regarding average utilization of their scheduled routes. Access to the survey was available through a publicly available link. The survey was available through the CDE website and it was also emailed to all districts throughout the state for distribution direct to drivers. The survey was available in English and Spanish. ***This survey provided important transportation information regarding perspectives from stakeholders that provide school transportation and would be directly involved in supporting changes based on updated statewide policy and practice. The survey specifically helped to highlight the current experience of drivers across the state and what changes could have the largest impact on driver recruitment and retention.*** Four hundred and fifty-two (452) individuals completed the survey. All district settings and transportation types were represented by survey respondents. A complete list of survey questions can be accessed through this [Driver Transportation Survey](#) link.

A major takeaway from the survey was that a focus on more competitive wages and benefits and an investment in skills training and credential pipelines will help to recruit and retain more transportation staff. Some key findings from the Driver Transportation Survey were the following:

- Sixty-three percent of district routes, regardless of time of day, route type, or district setting are a minimum of 1.5 hours in duration and thirty-eight percent are over 2 hours long. Bus routes were defined as the time required to complete a full round trip from leaving the bus depot until returning to the bus depot. Sixty-nine percent of district routes are over half full and thirty-seven percent are basically full. Buses tended to be more full in rural areas (Appendix G).
- Twenty-nine percent of drivers across the state have a second job. Fifty-three percent of the time, second jobs are the result of low pay (Appendix H).
- Seventy-nine percent of drivers are paid hourly (Appendix I).
- Fifty-two percent of drivers indicated that they work less than 30 hours per week during the academic year. Forty-six percent of drivers in more rural districts work less than 20 hours a week (Appendix J).
- Eighty-eight percent of drivers indicated that incentive pay is available in their position and eighty-three percent indicated that benefits are available. Both incentive pay and benefits were most common in metro and urban/suburban areas. Sixteen percent of drivers indicated they had received a promotion since starting in their position, while forty-three percent indicated that promotion opportunities were available in their role (Appendix K).
- While seventy-five percent of drivers indicated they plan to stay in their current position, several factors were found to have influenced workers choosing their current position and would make them more likely to stay. Good hours, flexibility, good benefits, and good work culture/atmosphere were most commonly identified as reasons workers had chosen their

current job. Better pay, better benefits, better support structure, and better hours were most commonly identified as reasons workers would consider staying in their current job (Appendix L).

District Data Request

The District Transportation Data request collected information directly from districts. Information collected included aspects of current district transportation policy, transportation eligibility, routes available, and third-party transportation contractors. In addition, the data request collected data on details of the existing district fleet including number and types of vehicles, average age and mileage of the fleet, as well as calculated costs for replacement and upkeep. Data was also compiled by the district regarding the number of drivers employed, roles of current staff, typical work schedules, training programs, pay scales, and benefit packages provided. Each district was provided with a unique link to access a spreadsheet for compiling data. District staff were able to log in and out of the link over time to make data entry easier. Additionally, multiple district staff could utilize the same link to enable multiple staff members to work together to complete the data request.

This data request provided important transportation information regarding current transportation within districts across Colorado. The survey specifically helped to highlight how transportation is currently handled throughout the state and areas that would most likely benefit from changes to statewide policy and practice to help increase eligibility and utilization for students while simultaneously minimizing burden on the district. One hundred and eleven (111) districts provided information through the data request. All district settings were represented in the data. A complete list of data set questions can be accessed through this [District Transportation Data Request](#) link.

A major takeaway from the survey was that huge variability exists from district to district with regards to transportation needs and challenges. As a result, with the exception of the common need for more funding to support transportation, a one size fits all approach will not work, instead, innovations and collaborations will be a key to success. Some key findings from the District Data Request were the following:

- Sixty percent of reporting districts indicated that transportation is available outside of a defined walk zone. Forty-nine percent of reported walk-zones were one mile or less. Walk zones tend to be larger in more urban areas and do tend to increase with age of the student (Appendix M).
- Thirteen percent of reporting districts indicated that public transportation was available to all students within the district (Appendix N).
- The number of buses utilized and routes run by reporting districts varies widely across the state. Number of reported buses ranged from zero to more than two hundred. Number of routes ranged from as few as two to more than one thousand. Eleven districts indicated that their buses occasionally ran over capacity (Appendix O).
- A wide range of staffing levels and staffing vacancies were observed across the state. Staffing levels in reporting districts ranged from a low of two to a high of four hundred and sixty-three. Vacancies ranged from a low of one to a high of fifty-one (Appendix P)

- Twenty-five percent of reporting districts indicated that they use software to route buses and twelve percent indicated that they use software to track daily ridership (Appendix Q).
- Numerous districts only offer one pay level for bus drivers. Large variability in driver pay levels exist across the state, starting just above minimum wage and increasing to over fifty dollars per hour. Average maximum salary level varied by district setting. Urban/suburban salaries tended to be highest with an average maximum of \$25.65, while outlying city salaries tended to be the lowest with an average maximum of \$20.45 (Appendix R).
- Insurance and benefits were available in many reporting districts across the state. The most commonly available benefits were medical (sixty-one percent of reporting districts), dental (fifty-three percent of reporting districts), and holidays (forty-eight percent of reporting districts). Districts in the Denver Metro area and Urban/Suburban areas are far more likely to offer drivers benefits such as medical, dental, and life insurance relative to other district settings (Appendix S).
- Numerous districts shared through the data collection process that insufficient driver staffing was the main factor hampering their ability to increase transportation eligibility. Additionally, multiple districts reported that through the utilization of routing software they were able to much more easily and efficiently meet the demand for transportation in their district.

An additional supplemental data request that focused on a few specific questions regarding district utilization was sent out following the initial request. ***The supplemental request focused on gathering information regarding estimates on percent utilization of transportation by grade level as well as whether districts had an opt-in process available for families.*** One hundred and seven (107) districts provided information through the supplemental data request. All district settings were represented in the data. A complete list of the supplemental data set questions can be accessed through this [Supplemental District Transportation Data Request](#) link.

A major takeaway from the survey was enhancing communication strategies with families will likely be an important component of increasing utilization of school transportation services across the state.

Some key findings from the Supplemental District Data Request were the following:

- Transportation utilization varies widely across the state. Forty-percent of rural districts indicated that seventy-five percent or more of their student population utilized district transportation. All other district settings had far fewer districts indicating that seventy-five percent or more of their student population utilized district transportation (Metro- seventeen percent, Urban/suburban- eighteen percent, Outlying cities- ten percent, Outlying towns- seventeen percent) (Appendix T).
- Fifty-two percent of reporting districts indicated that they use an opt-In process for district transportation. However, through the data collection process, many districts shared that the opt-in process did not always help increase efficiency in routing due in large part to inaccurate information collected (Appendix U).

Automated Vehicle Information System

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA) notes that all fifty states have laws that make it illegal to pass a school bus when it is stopped for students to get on or off the bus. All yellow

school buses are equipped with a stop arm with red flashing lights to denote to other drivers when it is illegal to pass. However, even though these laws are in place throughout the country each year numerous drivers in every state pass school buses as they are loading and/or unloading students. When drivers disobey these laws there is a significant risk to the students.

As a result of this existing danger for students, many states have begun to pass new laws in an attempt to curb this risky behavior through the identification and punishment of drivers that pass buses illegally. The [National Conference of State Legislators](#) stated that as of March 2024, over twenty-five states now have laws that allow or mandate schools to install school bus stop-arm cameras. Stop-arm cameras can be mounted on the outside of buses and can record video of vehicles that illegally pass buses enabling offenders to be identified and prosecuted.

At present, Colorado does not have any laws in place to enable or require school buses to be equipped with stop-arm cameras. In 2023, House Bill 23-1177 was introduced to the Committee on Education. This bill sought to make it mandatory for all school buses across the state to have stop-arm cameras installed by July 1, 2028. The bill also proposed a matching grant program be created to assist eligible districts in the purchase of cameras. The bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Committee on Education in March of 2023.

While the addition of stop-arm cameras would appear to help solve the problem of illegal passing, when laws were first being passed it was unclear whether the implementation of such systems would actually have a meaningful impact on student safety. The [United States Department of Transportation](#) addressed this very issue in 2021. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics conducted a study of three districts that had installed stop-arm cameras to determine if they resulted in a positive change within the districts. The study found that the number of illegal passes significantly decreased in two of the three districts studied, however all three had a much higher incident of violators being reported to authorities. The study also found that while public support of stop-arm cameras varied widely, bus drivers typically supported their use. The study identified several considerations when implementing such laws to help ensure success. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics did not find definitive evidence of the effectiveness of stop-arm cameras, but indicated that programs may be effective and suggested a multi-year evaluation should be considered.

Although the installation and use of stop-arm cameras has an obvious benefit for the students of Colorado, laws that mandate them could create a significant financial burden for many districts across the state. At present stop-arm camera systems typically cost between \$3,000-\$7,000 per bus. Cost estimates were provided by [IC Bus](#). While this price tag may seem like a small cost to help keep students safe, the statewide financial impact could be significant. Seventy-five of the existing one hundred and seventy-eight districts in Colorado, provided information to the Task Force regarding their school bus fleets. A total of one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four (1884) buses were reported from just under half of the districts in the state. If only the reported buses were equipped with cameras a low end cost estimate would be roughly \$5.6 million, while a high end cost estimate would be over \$13 million. The actual number of buses in operation across the state is certainly higher than the numbers reported

to the Task Force, making these current cost estimates low. If districts were expected to cover the costs for installing these cameras on their own, it could prove to be cost prohibitive. The number of buses each district reported owning and operating varied greatly from a minimum of one bus to a maximum of three hundred and fifteen buses. While it was uncommon for districts to own hundreds of buses, a district that owns three hundred buses would need to spend \$900,000 to equip all of their buses at a cost of \$3,000 per bus, and \$2.1 million to equip all of their buses at a cost of \$7,000 per bus. With educational funding tight across the state, this type of financial investment could be difficult for districts and could negatively impact a district's ability to spend dollars in the classroom.

Recommendations

This full set of recommendations is designed to work in concert to support a holistic approach to addressing the current school transportation shortage in Colorado. Each individual recommendation will bring something unique to the overall approach of *“improving public school transportation across the state in order to better meet student needs and alleviate burdens on school districts.”* However, arguably the most critical piece of this overall approach is the successful recruitment and retention of drivers and transportation staff. Without the personnel in place to drive, service, and maintain the vehicles, as well as schedule, monitor, and adjust routes, all other recommendations cannot be truly impactful. The full set of recommendations will collectively provide the best chance for meaningful improvements across the state but the cornerstone of these recommendations is without a doubt the transportation workers.

Driver Recruitment and Retention

Recommendation 1: The state should fully support and invest in enhancing training, recruitment, and retention of ALL school transportation staff to help ensure success of the public school transportation reform proposed here.

- A. ***The state should support district efforts designed to increase staff pay and benefits.*** Without a full complement of various staff positions to carry out this work, none of the following recommendations are likely to succeed. Low pay and a lack of affordable benefits have been identified by the Task Force as major driving factors in the public school transportation staff shortage. Without the financial backing of the state, many districts will struggle to secure the financial resources needed to make these increases a reality.
- B. ***The state should support district efforts designed to eliminate barriers to the training of transportation staff.*** The 2023 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report highlighted the fact that many certificate and short-term credential programs are out of reach for a large portion of the population due to the cost of training and the time commitment that would take them away from their current job. By supporting training opportunities through current and future legislation, more Colorado workers will be able to fill the most in-demand public school transportation positions.
- C. ***The state should support district efforts designed to recruit and retain staff in all facets of public school transportation.*** Addressing the current school transportation crisis is dependent

on supporting all transportation related staff, not just drivers. Mechanics, administrators, dispatchers, and route specialists are also critical to ensure buses run when and where they are needed. Without a full complement of transportation staff, districts will not be able to meet the transportation needs of their students. While drivers are indeed a critical component, all members of the school transportation team need and deserve support from the state. As a result, legislative measures cannot only focus on public school drivers but all workers that support school transportation.

- D. ***The state legislature should work with the Department of Education (CDE) and the Department of Revenue - Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to review and update the current statutes.*** One critical component to effectively addressing the public school transportation shortage is to ensure that current statutes and regulations related to school transportation are up to date and are not at odds with the recommendations put forth by this Task Force. A thorough review and potential update by the legislature will help ensure potential barriers to success are eliminated.

Recommendation 2: Districts should work towards providing competitive wages and affordable benefits to their transportation staff whenever possible.

- A. ***Districts should work towards providing regionally competitive wages within the industry to their transportation staff.*** While district financial constraints will always need to be taken into consideration, districts should regularly assess the regional cost of living as well as regional industry and public sector transportation wages to help ensure competitive wages are being offered within their districts. Data collected from drivers across the state illustrated that more competitive wages and salaries would likely make a significant impact towards increased recruitment and retention of public school transportation staff.
- B. ***Districts should work towards offering full-time hours to their transportation staff whenever possible.*** While some district transportation staff are looking for part-time work to supplement their existing income, data collected by the Task Force determined that many school transportation staff have left positions because they are unable to make a livable wage as a result of part-time hours. Districts may be able to utilize existing transportation staff to fill additional part-time positions within the district, creating full-time work for their staff. This approach could help to retain existing transportation staff and may help to recruit new members of the workforce.
- C. ***Districts should work towards finding equitable methods for assigning extra trips when available.*** Many districts across the state frequently have extra trips available as a result of absences, extra-curricular activities, and other school related functions. The methods utilized to offer and assign drivers to these trips varies across districts. These extra trips can provide supplemental income that is valuable to drivers, especially those at the lower end of the pay scale. If districts can find equitable methods for distributing these trips it could help to recruit and retain drivers.
- D. ***Districts should work towards making benefits available to all transportation staff.*** While it will likely not be practical for all districts to cover the cost of benefits for all transportation staff, districts should be encouraged to make benefits available, at least in some capacity, to all transportation staff. Similar to wages, benefits were identified as a likely trouble spot when it

comes to recruitment and retention in the public school transportation workforce. The data collected by the Task Force indicated that the availability of benefits was a common reason workers had changed positions and/or would be a factor in keeping an existing staff member.

Recommendation 3: Numerous current state initiatives that are working to develop sector partnerships and create short-term credential pipelines should incorporate the transportation sector.

- A. ***The state should include the transportation sector in existing bills, executive orders and other initiatives.*** The work of House Bill 22-1215, Executive Order D2023 016, and House Bill 23-1246 have all helped to support and build the workforce of in-demand fields through enrollment in postsecondary courses, apprenticeships, work-based learning, and financial support for participation in certificate and licensing programs. While these bills and executive orders have greatly benefitted the workforce of Colorado, the transportation workforce is currently not included. The 2023 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report identified Commercial Drivers' Licenses (CDL) as a highly in-demand certification with a much higher number of job openings relative to certified job applicants. As a result, the benefits of expanding these initiatives to include programs that encompass CDL training would have an obvious and potentially profound impact on the public school transportation workforce shortage.
- B. ***The state should support the continuation of providing a strong state voice around federal regulations for public school transportation.*** The CDE has long been involved with the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), including the National Congress on School Transportation (NCST), which addresses school bus specifications and best practices and procedures for school bus and student transportation. By both supporting positive initiatives that help drive public school transportation forward and fighting against barriers that work against public school transportation, the CDE has helped to shape the current landscape of transportation. The state should continue to support this approach to ensure that Colorado's voice is heard at the federal level and the needs of Colorado are addressed.

Innovations and Partnerships

Recommendation 4: The state should consider an ongoing Transportation Innovation Fund, similar to the one-time grant funding considered by House Bill 22-1395.

- A. ***Efforts should be made to broaden the applicant pool.*** The adopted program should include a strong communication plan to help spread awareness of the program to all eligible applicants across the state. Increasing awareness will help to increase the chances of truly innovative and impactful proposals being submitted.
- B. ***The selection process should be based on the identification of a significant community need.*** Applicants should be required to identify and explain their communities' needs and demonstrate how their proposed project will help to directly address that need. Priority should be given to applicants that will address the needs of large populations of At-Risk students, however, centering the selection process around identified needs will provide a means of assessing whether the innovation was a success upon completion of the work.

- C. ***The selection process should be based on the long term vision and expected impact of the project.*** In the current version of the bill, applicants are required to discuss how the project is sustainable, replicable, and scalable. The intent of the program is to foster innovation but if applicants are required to have a plan for sustainability in place it could significantly hamper innovation. A focus on the long term vision and expected impact will help to demonstrate how the proposal is using 'outside the box thinking' and simultaneously won't stifle or constrain innovation.
- D. ***The selection process should not include any expectation of supplemental funding.*** In the current version of the bill, applicants are not required to secure supplemental funds, however, applicants would be asked if matching funds will be available. Any expectation or even request for information regarding supplemental funding could dissuade potential applicants from submitting proposals and ultimately hamper beneficial innovation in the future.
- E. ***Efforts should be made to make the process as simple, quick, and straightforward as possible.*** Many small, rural districts and communities are often hesitant to apply for funding due to the time consuming nature of the application and reporting process. If the process as a whole is simple, quick, and straightforward more districts and communities may consider applying. Small, rural districts represent unique challenges as well as opportunities that could help spur truly groundbreaking proposals which lead to long lasting innovation in the state.
- F. ***Metrics should be required in both the application and reporting components to help track impact.*** The purpose of this program is to foster innovative solutions to transportation challenges which could be adopted by others in the future to drive statewide change. As such, it will be important to have a means of accurately determining whether a given proposal has the intended impact. Using metrics in the application process will provide a starting point and help determine potential benchmarks of the work, while metrics in the reporting process will provide a clear picture of the results of the work.
- G. ***Feedback from stakeholders served by the funding as well as the funding recipients themselves should be required.*** For this program to be a success, impactful innovations will need to be identified and shared out with others to utilize and expand upon. Collecting feedback from stakeholders and fund recipients will help others to use identified successes and challenges to further the work. Robust feedback from all parties will help to maximize the impact of innovative solutions across the state.
- H. ***The list of possible solutions, strategies, and services should be expanded.*** In addition to the solutions, strategies, and services already listed as suggestions in the current version of the bill, the following suggestions should be added:
- a. Addressing chronic absenteeism
 - b. Addressing before/after school transportation
 - c. Addressing training of new and/or existing drivers
 - d. Addressing target populations including those who are highly mobile, those At-Risk, and those living in low socioeconomic areas

Recommendation 5: Collaborations between school districts and public transportation entities should be fostered and supported throughout the state.

- A. ***The state should work to expand the number and reach of school districts and public transit collaborations.*** Many school districts in Colorado already collaborate with public transit entities in their region, however, many districts do not take advantage of these types of collaborations. The use of public transportation by students, where available, can help to alleviate burden on school districts. If students can utilize public transportation through the availability of no cost or low cost opportunities, districts could potentially increase the number of students in the district that are eligible for transportation. The state should host strategy sessions for districts that are interested in beginning these types of partnerships and the state should incentivize districts with existing partnerships to share their experience to support the development of new collaborations.
- B. ***The state should continue to reimburse districts for the cost for students utilizing public transportation.*** At present, districts that collaborate with public transit entities and cover all or part of the students fees, can claim those expenses with the state for partial reimbursement. The use of public transportation is an extremely cost effective way for districts to increase transportation eligibility to their students and as such the state should continue to financially support those collaborations.
- C. ***Whenever possible, the state should encourage public transportation entities to include schools within their routes.*** The state should strongly encourage public transportation entities to include schools when developing new routes or adjusting existing routes. If schools are included within public transportation routes, collaborations become much easier to develop benefiting all parties involved.

Recommendation 6: The state should encourage and support regional transportation collaborations and partnerships that would investigate and develop optimal methods to help address student need and district burden.

- A. ***Multi-stakeholder groups should be formed to discuss and investigate potential areas of collaboration and partnership.*** Multi-stakeholder groups should work to discuss and investigate transportation challenges that are impacting students and districts in a negative way and develop potential solutions that leverage collaborations and/or partnerships. Potential areas of focus could include, but would not need to be limited to:
 - a. Advanced transportation technologies
 - b. Administrative responsibilities
 - c. Cooperative training
 - d. Regional transportation for special education
 - e. Regional transportation for Career Pathways
 - f. Regional transportation for before/after school programs
 - g. Regional transportation for athletics
 - h. Cost sharing for insurance, maintenance, and/or purchasing.
- B. ***Multi-stakeholder groups should include a wide range of representatives including but not limited to public and private sector industry experts, representatives from school districts,***

charter schools, and BOCES, transportation employees, families, community partners, after-school providers, and alternative transportation providers. Including a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences within the multi-stakeholder groups will help ensure that collaborations and partnerships can be maximized and provide the most impactful change for the state. Each stakeholder will bring something different to the table and will help these groups to think outside the box and have the best chance to find innovative and sustainable solutions.

- C. **Feasibility studies should be conducted once focus areas are identified to help develop a plan for implementation.** Many transportation challenges exist across the state and could be addressed by a variety of solutions. However, not all solutions will be viable. As a result, all potential areas of collaboration and partnership should be fully vetted to help develop a plan to implement and track the work.

Eligibility and Utilization

Recommendation 7: Districts should make walk-zones as safe and accessible as possible for their students.

- A. **Districts should be encouraged to utilize state and federal resources when developing, assessing, and adjusting walk-zones.** Whenever possible, districts throughout the state should work towards utilizing the “Planning Safer School Bus Stops and Routes” Toolkit from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) when addressing walk-zones. Additionally, districts should be encouraged to participate in the “Safe Routes to School” Grant program administered by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). While many large urban communities and school districts have taken advantage of ‘Safe Routes to School’, the CDOT has reported that very few rural districts have participated. Both of these resources represent best practices, based on researched information that would benefit all if adopted and utilized by districts.
- B. **The CDE should promote the above mentioned state and federal resources to districts and families across the state.** The CDE should develop communication strategies for both districts and families, to promote available resources that help make walk-zones more safe and accessible. Many communities are not aware of available resources and the CDE is uniquely positioned to help promote them, especially in small, rural, and under-resourced districts.
- C. **The CDE should provide technical assistance to districts who are looking to utilize and apply for available resources.** Many districts, especially those that are smaller and/or traditionally under-resourced may be unable to take full advantage of the available resources due to staffing limitations. These districts however, could significantly benefit from the use of these resources. If CDE could provide technical assistance, during the application process, reporting process, or both, more districts could benefit from existing programs and support.
- D. **Districts should incorporate clear and comprehensive language into their communications that explain what safety standards are being utilized when developing, assessing, and adjusting walk-zones within the district.** Communication with families is a critical component of making walk-zones safe and accessible. Districts should work towards developing specific language

regarding walk-zone regulation and standards being utilized to ensure families living within walk-zones can get to school safely.

Recommendation 8: The state should support all districts across the state in the acquisition and utilization of routing and GPS software.

- A. ***The state should explore various cost effective options for districts to purchase and utilize routing and GPS software.*** Data collected by the Task Force demonstrated that numerous districts in Colorado who are currently utilizing routing and GPS software have been able to solve past issues and develop more efficient transportation methods. Additionally, these districts have been able to maximize eligibility and in some cases utilization of district transportation in their communities. More efficient bus routes across the state could free up both buses and drivers, enabling more students to become eligible for school transportation. This type of software can be expensive and for some small, rural, or under-resourced districts may currently be beyond reach financially. If the state is able to identify cost efficiencies to purchasing this type of software, potentially through state funded grant programs, expansion of the reimbursement process, or bulk purchase of software by the state, more districts could utilize these technologies.

Recommendation 9: Districts should increase communication regarding available transportation with students and families within their district.

- A. ***District should provide more specific information regarding transportation options to the families in their district.*** Data collected by the Task Force demonstrated that a large portion of families across the state were not aware of various transportation options available to students in their district. Raising awareness is critical for maximizing utilization of district transportation across the state.
- B. ***District should utilize a variety of resources and methods of communication to relay information to families.*** No one communication strategy is ideal for all families. When sharing information regarding transportation options with families, districts should utilize a broad range of methods potentially including but not necessarily limited to voicemail, text messages, emails, paper flyers, and mobile apps. Ensuring that information is successfully conveyed to all families within a district will help to ensure utilization of transportation is maximized.

Funding

Recommendation 10: The state annually considers transportation funding as part of the categorical programs budget request. As the state reviews education funding, an increase in funding for transportation should be considered as it is a critical component to ensuring equitable educational opportunities to students across the state.

- A. ***The state should consider how transportation reimbursement percentages have decreased over time and make changes to increase percentages to at least the level that they were during SY2014-15.*** Over the last decade, reimbursements percentages have steadily declined to current levels. This decrease in state funding has led to an increased reliance on local funding to

cover the funding gap that currently exists for public school transportation. This increase in local funding places a significant burden on many communities and often a disproportionate burden on under-resourced communities and communities with higher percentages of students of color. Increasing funding will help to bridge the existing gap and reduce the local burden on districts.

Recommendation 11: Moving forward the state should utilize the Scenario Six (*Single-Factor*) reimbursement process developed by the subcommittee of the Financial Policies and Procedures Advisory Committee.

- A. ***The state should utilize the new process and include an additional \$10 Million allocation.*** Scenario Six (*Single-Factor*) provides several significant advantages over the current reimbursement process. The base funding amount helps ensure equitable distribution of funds for small districts, the use of Finance December Data Pipeline expenditure data eliminates the administrative burden for school districts as well as the need for yearly audits, and the addition of a hold harmless provision helps maintain funding levels for districts across the state. The additional \$10 Million allocation will also help to address the current lag between the increase in transportation cost and increase in transportation reimbursement percentages over the past 15 years.
- B. ***The state should utilize the new process and calculate hold harmless amounts based on a three year rolling average of transportation costs.*** The hold harmless provision will help to ensure that the new reimbursement process does not negatively impact certain school districts or provide excess funding to other districts. Utilizing a three year rolling average will help to ensure that if a school district reduces their transportation expenditures over time, hold harmless amounts will be adjusted accordingly.
- C. ***The state should utilize the new process and reevaluate the need for a hold harmless component every five years.*** While a hold harmless provision is undoubtedly needed at this time to ensure no districts are negatively impacted by the new reimbursement process, additional changes to public school transportation over the coming years may reduce its necessity. As a result, the state should reevaluate the need for a hold harmless provision in the reimbursement process every five years. If in the future the need for such a provision disappears it could be removed from the model.

Recommendation 12: The state should update current statute and related regulations to reflect the new transportation funding and reimbursement process.

- A. ***Current transportation statute and regulations will require edits to conform with the recommendations in this report.*** The recommendations proposed in this report will require a new set of rules from the State Board of Education and new instructions from CDE. In order for the State Board and CDE to develop these new guidelines, state laws will need to be amended to align with the recommendations.

Access to School Choice

Senate Bill 23-094 tasked the Transportation Task Force with developing recommendations that address *“legislation or rules that may improve school transportation, including recommendations that do not exacerbate the marginalization of communities through separation while protecting public funds.”* After collecting and reviewing data from families across the state, the members voted at the April 2024 meeting to develop a set of recommendations that included guidelines they hoped would help districts consider and address identified transportation barriers. Numerous barriers were identified through the work, including barriers to students looking to access school choice. Since 1994, students across the state have had the right to enroll in school in any district, regardless of the student’s residency.⁶ While this law provides all students in Colorado the ability to attend the school of their choice, in many cases transportation to and from the chosen school to the students residency does not exist. Colorado statute authorizes school districts to determine whether students will be provided with any type of district supported transportation to any school. Additionally, the statute stipulates that if a student attends a school outside of their district of residence, both districts must agree to transportation arrangements for the student.⁷ As a result of this existing barrier for students, the Task Force came to consensus around the fact that access to school choice is a critical issue within the state and should be addressed. Discussion regarding a potential recommendation aimed at tackling access to school choice took place during multiple Task Force meetings. The diverse backgrounds and perspectives of the Task Force members highlighted a variety of issues and considerations on the topic. Conversation amongst the members brought to light just how complicated this issue is and how many factors could come into play with any recommendation.

Each member brought unique perspectives, considerations, and ideas as representatives of the Task Force. All members expressed a genuine desire to expand transportation across the state and apply out of the box thinking to help ensure the students of Colorado can access a high-quality education. Several suggestions and potential solutions were discussed; however in the end, two opposing factors prevented the development of a formal recommendation. Senate Bill 23-094 sought recommendations that help *“to better meet student needs and alleviate burdens on school districts”*. While this may at first seem like a straightforward charge, no solution could be found that simultaneously met students needs while alleviating district burdens. Recommendations that would help to broaden school choice access for students through the expansion of district transportation by design would result in the need for districts to expand bus routes, district transportation staff, and ultimately budgets. As districts across the state struggle to staff existing routes and fund existing programs and resources, this added requirement would certainly not alleviate district burden. On the flip side, recommendations that helped to protect districts from additional burden by design would limit the ability to broaden school choice access. Limitations on

⁶ C.R.S. 22-36-101 The Public Schools of Choice Law
https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/choice/download/openenrollment_2009.pdf

⁷ C.R.S. 22-32-113 School District Student Transportation
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/cdenutritran/download/pdf/trans/schooldistricttransportationauthority.pdf>

transportation both intra- and interdistrict, would certainly not better meet the needs of students. Acknowledgement that many districts across the state often struggle to provide transportation even to all students within the district and transportation for students to schools of choice out of district highlighted the complexity of this problem and ultimately prevented consensus on the topic.

During the August 2024 meeting numerous questions were posed by members regarding several key items around the topic including but not limited to:

- Who would be responsible for paying for and providing transportation to a choice school?
- Should there be limitations on how far a choice school could be from a student's home if transportation was to be provided?
- How should transportation within and potentially across districts be regulated?
- How should potential impacts to budgets and students within districts be handled?
- How could changes be made to help ensure equity and sustainability for all stakeholders?
- How could students be guaranteed access to school choice if they didn't have access to transportation?

No resolution was made during the August meeting. As a result the topic was tabled until the September 30, 2024 meeting, with the hopes of revisiting and finalizing a recommendation around access to school choice.

At the September meeting, three proposed recommendations submitted by Task Force members ahead of the meeting were presented to the group for discussion and a vote. All three recommendations were reviewed and discussed by the group. The three proposals as voted on were as follows:

Proposal One: The Task Force acknowledges the complexities of school transportation and believes that comprehensively, the recommendations we are making are intended to improve the school transportation landscape for all students attending public schools. Recognizing that school choice is allowed in Colorado, any recommendations pursued by the legislature should be with the intent of ensuring that all students are able to access a high-quality school.

1. The state should ensure that improving access to transportation for some students does not in effect reduce transportation options for any other students.
2. The state should support school districts in this work to help minimize local impact (financial, administrative, operational) and maximize access for students.

Proposal Two: The state should strive to improve transportation for all students, including students attending a public school that is not their residentially assigned school.

1. The state should ensure that improving access to transportation for some students does not in effect reduce transportation options for any other students.
2. The state should support school districts in this work to help minimize local impact (financial, administrative, operational) and maximize access for students.

Proposal Three: Given the significant proportion of Colorado public school students that use open

enrollment and lack access to school transportation, the state could further study how to improve transportation for those students.

1. Further study should include identifying promising practices happening within Colorado and across the country to support transportation for students to attend a public school of their choice.
2. Additional topics the study could address may include:
 - a. Identifying the highest areas of need in the state
 - b. Best approaches for funding and operationalizing transportation to schools of choice (e.g. partnerships, contracted services, carpool support, etc.)
 - c. Ideal distance parameters for students exercising open enrollment and requesting transportation
 - d. Guidelines for open enrollment transportation both within and across district boundaries to maximize student access while minimizing negative consequences on district finances or operations
 - e. Best practices for ensuring equity and sustainability for all students.

After discussion and edits by the group, each proposal was voted on utilizing the Task Force’s standard fist to five decision making process. All three proposals were vetoed. As a result, the Transportation Task Force was unable to come to consensus around a formal recommendation regarding Access to School Choice ahead of submission of their final report to the Colorado Joint Budget Committee. The voting outcomes for each proposal are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Voting Results of the Fist to Five Process for the Three Proposed Recommendations

Fist to Five Vote Options	Proposal One	Proposal Two	Proposal Three
Fist (Veto)	<i>1 vote</i>	<i>6 votes</i>	<i>3 votes</i>
One	<i>7 votes</i>	<i>1 vote</i>	<i>6 votes</i>
Two	<i>2 votes</i>	<i>3 votes</i>	<i>1 vote</i>
Three	<i>1 vote</i>	<i>1 vote</i>	<i>0 votes</i>
Four	<i>5 votes</i>	<i>3 votes</i>	<i>5 votes</i>
Five	<i>2 votes</i>	<i>3 votes</i>	<i>3 votes</i>

Overall Conclusion

Colorado has recently developed numerous programs and initiatives aimed to help support students across the state reach their full academic potential. However, for many students, access to these supports is severely hampered by a lack of transportation. Safe, reliable, and efficient public school transportation is a critical component of a high quality education and without transportation many students across the state are often left with no options. In many cases a lack of transportation can even prevent students from simply getting to school. The current public school transportation workforce shortage creates an inequitable environment across the state that can often be detrimental to Colorado's most vulnerable populations. Senate Bill 23-094 was designed to help find long-term, impactful, and sustainable solutions to this current crisis. Through extensive research, data collection, analysis, discussion, deliberation, and consensus decision making, the School Transportation Task Force has developed a set of comprehensive and sustainable recommendations that could change the face of public school transportation in Colorado. All twelve recommendations are inherently linked to the larger goal of *"improving public school transportation across the state in order to better meet student needs and alleviate burdens on school districts."* While each recommendation will have a unique impact on the system, in combination the recommendations can create the long-lasting system-wide impact that will be needed to achieve change.



Appendix A

Communication from the district regarding transportation options.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated they had received information from their district regarding available transportation options.

COMMUNICATION	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	51	124	18	49	79	321 (24%)
Not Sure	23	63	8	41	44	179 (14%)
Yes	91	169	33	239	283	815 (62%)
Grand Total	165	356	59	329	406	1315



Appendix B

Types of school transportation students are eligible for by district setting.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated their student was eligible for a given transportation type. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

DISTRICT SETTING	DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION	PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION	REIMBURSEMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION	NO TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	28	17	6	0	42	93
Urban-Suburban	156	1	2	0	12	171
Outlying City	31	1	1	0	1	34
Outlying Town	222	4	0	1	15	242
Remote	260	1	3	1	23	288
Grand Total	697	24	12	2	93	818

School that students attend by district setting.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated their student attends a given school type.

SCHOOL ATTENDING	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
My student attends a different school	100	69	10	45	80	304 (23%)
My student attends their neighborhood school based on their home address	67	283	48	281	326	1005 (75%)
Not Sure	2	4	2	16	5	29 (2%)
Grand Total	169	356	60	342	411	1338

Intent to attend different school if transportation was available by district setting.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated whether their student would attend a different school if transportation was available to them.

INTENT TO ATTEND	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	31	179	31	174	213	628 (64%)
Not Sure	19	64	5	54	69	211 (21%)
Yes	16	40	11	40	39	146 (15%)
Grand Total	66	283	47	268	321	985



Appendix C

Time spent in transit to and from school.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated their opinion on the time spent in transit to and from school.

OPINION ABOUT TIME	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
About the right length	20	148	10	111	160	449 (65%)
Not sure	2	16	1	13	12	44 (6%)
Too long	8	63	11	74	46	202 (29%)
Grand Total	30	227	22	198	218	695

Number of students on bus to and from school.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated their opinion on the number of students on the bus to and from school.

OPINION ABOUT STUDENT NUMBER	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
About the right amount	13	114	11	94	122	354 (51%)
Not enough	2	3	1	5	9	20 (3%)
Not sure	9	62	3	58	41	173 (25%)
Too many	6	48	7	41	46	148 (21%)
Grand Total	30	227	22	198	218	695



Appendix C cont.

Number of stops in transit to and from school.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated their opinion on the number of stops in transit to and from school.

OPINION ABOUT NUMBER OF STOPS	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
About the right amount	17	113	10	95	128	363 (52%)
Not enough	3	17	0	2	4	26 (4%)
Not sure	7	65	9	62	59	202 (29%)
Too many	3	32	3	39	27	104 (15%)
Grand Total	30	227	22	198	218	695

Safety in transit to and from school.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated their opinion on the safety in transit to and from school.

OPINION ABOUT SAFETY	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
I DO NOT generally feel good about bus safety	2	36	1	23	34	96 (14%)
I generally feel good about bus safety	26	167	19	158	168	538 (77%)
Not sure	2	24	2	17	16	61 (9%)
Grand Total	30	227	22	198	218	695

Reliability of transit to and from school.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated their opinion on the reliability in transit to and from school.

OPINION OF RELIABILITY	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
I DO NOT generally feel the bus is reliable	5	14	0	24	12	55 (8%)
I generally feel the bus is reliable	23	199	20	162	198	602 (87%)
Not sure	2	14	2	12	8	38 (5%)
Grand Total	30	227	22	198	218	695



Appendix D

Transportation type used.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated their family used a specific type of transportation to school. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

TYPE OF TRANSPORTATION	DISTRICT	PUBLIC	ALTERNATIVE	REIMBURSEMENT	FAMILY CHOOSES TO DRIVE	NOT ELIGIBLE	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	31	15	2	0	96	65	209
Urban-Suburban	237	3	7	1	166	23	437
Outlying City	24	1	0	0	38	5	68
Outlying Town	203	6	1	1	171	32	414
Remote	226	0	6	0	225	41	498
Grand Total	721	25	16	2	696	166	1626

Any existing factors that would encourage families to use district transportation by district setting.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated there were factors that would change their mind about driving their student to school.

WOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	14	65	16	89	121	305 (67%)
Yes	23	39	10	42	37	151 (33%)
Grand Total	37	104	26	131	158	456



Appendix D cont.

Reasons that families chose to transport their student to school by district setting.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated a given reason led them to drive their student to school. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

REASON FAMILY DRIVES	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
Too Much Time on Bus	15	32	8	43	34	132
Safety Concerns of Other Passenger	14	15	7	10	13	59
Safety Concerns of Driver	2	7	2	7	4	22
Safety Concerns of Vehicle	1	2	3	0	0	6
Stop Location	8	33	6	15	22	84
Safety Walking to Bus Stop	8	27	4	14	12	65
Timing of Pick-Up or Drop-Off	14	47	9	51	43	164
Unreliable Schedule	8	20	2	10	12	52
Personal Preferred	8	32	10	41	66	157
Too Crowded on Bus	1	13	4	6	8	32
Special Needs	1	1	0	0	3	5
Insufficient Reimbursement	0	0	0	2	0	2
Other	9	18	5	40	58	130
Grand Total	89	247	60	239	275	910



Appendix E

Reason district supported transportation is not available.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated that district supported transportation was not available for a given reason.

REASON	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
I don't know why my student is not eligible for transportation to school	4	3	0	4	9	20 (12%)
My student attends a school other than the neighborhood school designated by their home address	22	11	2	6	10	51 (31%)
My student lives within a designated walk zone	11	5	2	11	13	42 (26%)
None of the above	5	3	0	8	6	22 (14%)
There is no transportation offered to the school my student is attending	23	0	1	3	0	27 (17%)
Grand Total	65	22	5	32	38	162



Appendix F

Availability of after-school program district transportation by district setting.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated after-school program transportation was available in their district.

AVAILABLE AFTER-SCHOOL TRANSPORT	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	20	110	12	105	82	329 (48%)
Not Sure	8	93	7	62	69	239 (34%)
Yes	2	24	3	31	67	127 (18%)
Grand Total	30	227	22	198	218	695

Current use of district-provided transportation to after-school programs.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated whether they currently utilize available district-provided transportation to after-school programs.

USE	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	0	20	1	9	34	64 (50%)
Yes	2	4	2	22	33	63 (50%)
Grand Total	2	24	3	31	67	127

Planned use of district-provided transportation to after-school programs.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated whether they would utilize district-provided transportation to after-school programs if it was available.

USE	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	3	9	2	19	12	45 (14%)
Not Sure	4	18	3	18	17	60 (18%)
Yes	13	83	7	68	53	224 (68%)
Grand Total	20	110	12	105	82	329



Appendix G

Length of district bus route.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated they drove a bus route during the school day that took the corresponding amount of time to complete.

LENGTH OF BUS ROUTE	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
15-29 minutes	1	1	0	0	5	7 (1%)
30-44 minutes	9	2	4	7	12	34 (4%)
45-59 minutes	13	14	8	8	27	70 (9%)
60-90 minutes	45	65	11	28	34	183 (22%)
91-120 minutes	91	64	9	30	17	211 (26%)
More than 2 hours	123	151	11	20	4	309 (38%)
Grand Total	282	297	43	93	99	814

Occupancy of district bus route.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated a given occupancy of a bus route they drive during the school day.

OCCUPANCY OF BUS ROUTE	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
Basically empty	21	22	2	2	4	51 (7%)
Less than half full	93	77	7	17	18	212 (30%)
More than half full	81	51	11	35	43	221 (32%)
Basically full	51	67	25	39	34	216 (31%)
Grand Total	246	217	45	93	99	700



Appendix H

School district transportation drivers with second jobs.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated they had at least one additional job beyond their district driving position.

DISTRICT SETTING	NO <i>Current transportation job within the district is my only job</i>	YES <i>I have an additional job outside the district</i>	YES <i>within the district</i>	TOTAL
Denver Metro	92	14	3	109
Urban-Suburban	103	3	6	112
Outlying City	12	4	8	24
Outlying Town	22	12	13	47
Remote	14	4	32	50
NA	7	1	1	9
Grand Total	250 (71%)	38 (11%)	63 (18%)	351

Reasons school district transportation drivers have a second job.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated a particular option was the reason for their second job. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

DISTRICT SETTING	<i>My current transportation job doesn't pay enough to cover basic expenses</i>	<i>My second job is my "dream job" but it does not pay well</i>	<i>My second job provides me with some extra spending money that I want</i>	<i>My transportation job and second job together provide the schedule I need for my home situation</i>	Other	TOTAL
Denver Metro	6	1	0	3	6	16
Urban-Suburban	2	0	0	1	6	9
Outlying City	11	0	0	1	0	12
Outlying Town	14	0	3	4	4	25
Remote	16	1	0	4	14	35
NA	0	0	0	0	2	2
Grand Total	49	2	3	13	32	99



Appendix I

Structure of compensation for district drivers.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated they were paid based on a given structure of compensation.

STRUCTURE OF COMPENSATION	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
By Route	7	3	2	2	8	22 (6%)
By Trip (Activity)	0	2	1	3	1	7 (2%)
Hourly	97	100	19	34	26	276 (80%)
Other	4	3	1		3	11 (3%)
Yearly Salary	3	6	1	8	13	31 (9%)
Grand Total	111	114	24	47	51	347



Appendix J

Scheduled hours for district drivers.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated they were scheduled for a given range of hours during a typical week.

SCHEDULED HOURS	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
40 hours or more	13	33	5	11	14	76 (22%)
30-39 hours	39	29	3	15	3	89 (26%)
20-29 hours	52	33	13	12	10	120 (35%)
10-19 hours	1	16	2	3	6	28 (7%)
9 hours or less	7	3	1	6	17	34 (10%)
Grand Total	112	114	24	47	50	347



Appendix K

Incentive pay for district drivers.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated incentive pay was available in their position.

INCENTIVE PAY AVAILABLE	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	TOTAL
No	7	9	6	13	8	43 (12%)
Yes	104	104	18	34	43	303 (88%)
Grand Total	111	113	24	47	51	346

Benefits for district drivers.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that benefits were available in their position.

BENEFITS AVAILABLE	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	TOTAL
No	2	7	3	10	16	38 (11%)
Not Sure	2	8	1	4	6	21 (6%)
Yes	107	99	18	33	29	286 (83%)
Grand Total	111	114	22	47	51	345



Appendix K cont.

Promotion opportunities for district drivers.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated they had opportunities for a promotion in their position.

OPPORTUNITY	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	43	39	18	26	38	164 (57%)
Yes	53	48	4	11	6	122 (43%)
Grand Total	96	87	22	37	44	286

Promotions received by district drivers.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated they had received a promotion since beginning their position.

PROMOTION RECEIVED	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	99	87	22	37	44	289 (84%)
Yes	11	27	2	9	7	56 (16%)
Grand Total	110	114	24	46	51	345



Appendix L

Plans to stay in current position.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated they plan to stay in their current position.

PLAN TO STAY	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
No	4	2	2	3	5	16 (5%)
Not Sure	17	24	6	12	11	70 (20%)
Yes	90	89	16	32	35	262 (75%)
Grand Total	111	115	24	47	51	348



Appendix L cont.

Reason current job was chosen over another job.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated that a given reason contributed to choosing their current job over another job. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

REASON	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	NA	GRAND TOTAL
Good Pay	39	29	5	6	6	7	92
Good Benefits	72	32	11	10	9	6	140
Good Hours	61	58	12	11	13	4	159
Good Support Structures	21	17	2	3	9	3	55
Good Routes Available	22	24	3	2	5	2	58
No Concerns About Liability Issues	4	0	0	0	0	1	5
Low Stress	31	16	2	0	3	2	54
Feel Safer	7	2	1	1	4	1	16
Flexibility	49	51	10	18	15	1	144
Opportunities To Further Career	6	8	0	1	3	3	21
Good Working Conditions	26	35	5	6	11	4	87
On The Job Training	31	26	5	3	6	4	75
Possibility For Advancement	7	7	1	1	1	3	20
Opportunities To Earn Certificates	6	6	0	1	2	2	17
Good Work Culture /Atmosphere	35	43	7	12	11	3	111
Grand Total	417	354	64	75	98	46	1054



Appendix L cont.

Factors that would make it more likely to stay in current position.

Numbers represent the count of survey respondents that indicated a factor would make them more likely to stay in their current position. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

FACTORS	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	GRAND TOTAL
Better pay	13	17	8	11	9	58
Better benefits	5	7	5	7	4	28
Better hours	6	7	5	1	3	22
Better support structures	10	8	3	4	3	28
Better routes	2	3	2	0	0	7
Better culture/atmosphere	5	5	3	4	0	17
Lower stress	7	3	4	4	2	20
Addressing potential liability issues	3	4	1	3	2	13
More flexibility	1	5	1	1	0	8
More possibility for advancement	4	2	3	3	2	14
More job training	2	0	3	2	0	7
More opportunities to earn certifications	3	0	4	1	2	10
More opportunities to further my career	5	1	4	3	2	15
Better working conditions	6	7	2	4	1	20
Other	2	4	2	1	8	17
Addressing safety issues	3	4	2	3	3	15
Grand Total	77	77	52	52	41	299



Appendix M

Student transportation eligibility within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated their district provided transportation to the following group of students.

DISTRICT SETTING	ALL STUDENTS	OUTSIDE WALK ZONE, WITHIN TRANSPORTATION BOUNDARY*	ONE OR MORE OF FOLLOWING GROUPS: SPECIAL NEEDS, HOMELESS, FOSTER CARE	NO DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	1	12	0	0	13
Urban-Suburban	3	8	1	0	12
Outlying City	4	2	0	0	6
Outlying Town	9	20	0	0	29
Remote	21	19	0	3	43
CSI	0	1	0	0	1
Grand Total	38 (37%)	62 (60%)	1 (<1%)	3 (3%)	104

Size of walk zone within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated their walk zones were of a given size.

DISTRICT SETTING	<= .5 MI	0.6 TO 1 MI	1.1 TO 1.5 MI	1.6 TO 2 MI	> 2 MI	CITY LIMITS	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	0	8	10	11	10	0	39
Urban-Suburban	0	5	9	4	3	0	21
Outlying City	0	8	5	3	2	0	18
Outlying Town	10	25	14	2	0	9	60
Remote	9	24	3	0	0	9	45
CSI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	19 (10%)	70 (38%)	41 (22%)	20 (11%)	15 (9%)	18 (10%)	183



Appendix N

Public transit availability to students within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated a given arrangement with public transit providers was available for students within their district.

DISTRICT SETTING	ALL STUDENTS HAVE PUBLIC TRANSIT ACCESS	UNIQUE CRITERIA TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY* (E.G., STUDENT TRANSIT ROUTE IS < CERTAIN TIME OR DISTANCE)	NO FREE PUBLIC TRANSIT	OTHER	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	1	3	7	2	13
Urban-Suburban	1	2	7	0	10
Outlying City	1	1	1	1	4
Outlying Town	2	2	24	1	29
Remote	7	2	27	2	38
CSI	0	0	1	0	1
Grand Total	12 (13%)	10 (11%)	67 (71%)	6 (5%)	95



Appendix O

Number of buses owned or leased within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated they owned or leased a given number of buses.

DISTRICT SETTING	0	1 TO 5	6 TO 15	16 TO 25	26 TO 50	51 TO 100	100 TO 200	200+	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	2	0	2	0	1	0	2	3	10
Urban-Suburban	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	0	6
Outlying City	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Outlying Town	0	2	11	5	3	0	0	0	21
Remote	0	8	24	1	0	0	0	0	33
CSI	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	2 (3%)	10 (14%)	40 (54%)	7 (9%)	5 (7%)	4 (5%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	74

Number of routes run within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated they run a given number of routes.

DISTRICT SETTING	1 TO 5	6 TO 15	16 TO 50	51 TO 100	101 TO 250	1000 +	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	0	1	3	2	3	1	10
Urban-Suburban	1	0	3	3	1	0	8
Outlying City	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Outlying Town	9	7	3	1	0	0	20
Remote	25	4	0	0	0	0	29
CSI	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	36 (51%)	14 (20%)	10 (14%)	6 (8%)	4 (6%)	1 (1%)	71



Appendix P

Number of transportation staff employed during SY23.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated they had employed a specific number of drivers during SY23.

NUMBER EMPLOYED	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	CSI	GRAND TOTAL
1 To 10	1	1	0	10	20	1	33 (57%)
11 To 25	1	0	1	4	3	0	9 (16%)
26 To 100	1	2	2	2	1	0	8 (14%)
101 To 200	2	3	0	0	0	0	5 (9%)
200 To 463	2	1	0	0	0	0	3 (4%)
Grand Total	7	7	3	16	24	1	58

Number of driver position vacancies during SY23.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated they had a specific number of driver vacancies during SY23.

# VACANCIES SY2223	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	CSI	GRAND TOTAL
0	0	1	1	5	12	1	20 (36%)
1 To 5	3	1	1	9	11	0	25 (45%)
6 To 20	1	3	1	2	0	0	7 (13%)
21 To 50	2	1	0	0	0	0	3 (6%)
Grand Total	6	6	3	16	23	1	55



Appendix Q

Method used to route students within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated they utilized a specific method to route students.

METHOD	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	CSI	GRAND TOTAL
Manually	1	1	1	12	22	1	38 (34%)
Not Specified	2	4	1	15	24	0	46 (41%)
Software	10	7	4	5	2	0	28 (25%)
Grand Total	13	12	6	32	48	1	112

Method used to track ridership within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated they utilize a specific method for tracking ridership.

METHOD	DENVER METRO	URBAN-SUBURBAN	OUTLYING CITY	OUTLYING TOWN	REMOTE	CSI	GRAND TOTAL
Attendance sheets	1	1	1	3	6	0	12 (11%)
Manually	4	5	3	8	11	0	31 (28%)
None	0	0	0	3	4	0	7 (5%)
Not specified	2	4	2	15	26	0	49 (44%)
Software	6	2	0	3	1	1	13 (12%)
Grand Total	13	12	6	32	48	1	112



Appendix R

Average pay level within district.

Numbers represent the average high and low driver pay levels.

DISTRICT SETTING	AVERAGE OF BUS DRIVER PAY LEVEL MIN	AVERAGE OF BUS DRIVER PAY LEVEL MAX	# DISTRICTS WHO PROVIDED DATA
Denver Metro	\$21.67	\$23.41	8
Urban-Suburban	\$16.19	\$25.65	7
Outlying City	\$16.10	\$20.45	2
Outlying Town	\$19.78	\$23.65	12
Remote	\$16.83	\$22.54	15
CSI	\$20.00	\$20.00	1
Overall Average	\$19.81	\$23.42	



Appendix S

Benefits offered within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated they have specific types of benefits. Districts could choose more than one answer.

DISTRICT SETTING	HOLIDAYS	PTO	MEDICAL	DENTAL	LIFE	NONE OFFERED	NUMBER OF DISTRICTS PROVIDING DATA
Denver Metro	7	5	9	9	7	0	10
Urban-Suburban	2	3	8	8	7	0	8
Outlying City	2	2	2	2	0	1	4
Outlying Town	10	9	8	7	8	3	17
Remote	9	10	11	7	7	3	22
CSI	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Grand Total	30	29	38	33	29	8	62



Appendix T

Estimated utilization of students grades K-5 within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated a percentage .

DISTRICT SETTING	0 TO 25%	26 TO 50%	51 TO 75%	76 TO 100%	NO DISTRICT-FUNDED TRANSPORTATION	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	3	2	3	2	0	10
Urban-Suburban	1	5	2	3	0	11
Outlying City	1	3	2	1	0	7
Outlying Town	9	8	8	8	0	33
Remote	3	8	11	21	3	46
Grand Total	17 (16%)	26 (24%)	26 (24%)	35 (33%)	3 (3%)	107

Estimated utilization of students grades 6-8 within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated a percentage .

DISTRICT SETTING	0 TO 25%	26 TO 50%	51 TO 75%	76 TO 100%	NO DISTRICT-FUNDED TRANSPORTATION	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	2	2	4	2	0	10
Urban-Suburban	0	5	4	2	0	11
Outlying City	1	4	1	1	0	7
Outlying Town	10	10	7	6	0	33
Remote	4	8	12	19	3	46
Grand Total	17 (16%)	29 (27%)	28 (26%)	30 (28%)	3 (3%)	107



Appendix T cont.

Estimated utilization of students grades 9-12 within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated a percentage .

DISTRICT SETTING	0 TO 25%	26 TO 50%	51 TO 75%	76 TO 100%	NO DISTRICT-FUNDED TRANSPORTATION	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	2	7	0	1	0	10
Urban-Suburban	3	5	2	1	0	11
Outlying City	4	2	1	0	0	7
Outlying Town	15	13	2	3	0	33
Remote	13	9	6	15	3	46
Grand Total	37 (35%)	36 (34%)	11 (10%)	20 (19%)	3 (2%)	107



Appendix U

Availability of transportation opt-in process within district.

Numbers represent the count of districts that indicated they had an opt-in process.

DISTRICT SETTING	NO	YES	GRAND TOTAL
Denver Metro	3	7	10
Urban-Suburban	3	8	11
Outlying City	1	6	7
Outlying Town	18	15	33
Remote	25	18	43
Grand Total	50 (48%)	54 (52%)	104