

# Transportation Plan

Revised March 2021

This plan is informed by the work of the Comprehensive Integration Plan (CIP) committee, including work related to the comprehensive study, and other assessments of travel times, travel distances, locations of targeted populations, costs, and other factors. As a component of the CIP, the transportation plan informs the development of, and supports, the other components, particularly the Future CMP and non-magnet integration and academic plans.

The plan includes information on (a) magnet and incentive transportation, (b) transportation to support District Advanced Learning Experiences programs, and (c) transportation to support Two-way Dual Language. This plan also includes information on the modes of transportation provided, limiting transportation costs while maximizing transportation impacts on integration, and the use of transportation as a criterion for selecting future magnet candidates and non-magnet schools with high potential for becoming Integrated in the future. Finally, the Plan clarifies the role of transportation costs in determining expansion for Advanced Learning Experience program.

## **A. Modes of Transportation**

Whenever the District offers free transportation, the District may use the following modes to transport students:

- TUSD Yellow Buses based on driver and route availability and including express shuttles where available (see discussion below).
- Public Transportation where there is a public bus route that can transport the student to his or her school as efficiently, or more efficiently, than a yellow bus.
- Contracted Services where a yellow bus or public transportation is not a viable option for the student.

## **B. Magnet Transportation**

The District's school transportation program is designed and managed as part of its ongoing, overall commitment to integration and diversity. The District provides free transportation to magnet students living beyond school attendance boundaries. Approximately 70% of all magnet students are eligible for free magnet transportation. In the 2017-18 school year, there were a total of 7,047 magnet students and at least 4,888 magnet students (69.4%) were eligible for free magnet transportation. Students are eligible for free magnet transportation if they live within the TUSD general boundary, but outside of the walk-zone of the magnet school.

### **C. Incentive Transportation**

The District currently provides free incentive transportation to open enrollment students living within the boundary of a racially concentrated school, who attend a different school and whose enrollment improves the integration of the receiving school. Incentive transportation depends on several factors, including the demographics of the home school, the demographics of the school to which you are applying, and the student's ethnicity. The incentive transportation program uses strategically placed, pre-determined stops to pick up students. Parents must transport their child to these stops. Thus, free transportation is available to Sabino High School for any student who lives within the boundary of a racially concentrated school and whose enrollment at Sabino will improve the integration of that school.

Approximately 900 students are eligible for incentive transportation. These students live within the boundary of a racially concentrated school, but attend a school where their presence helps to improve the integration of the receiving school. This means that 100% of these students are improving integration at the receiving school and may utilize incentive transportation. In the 2017-18 school year, there were 872 students eligible for incentive transportation.

#### **1. Incentive Transportation Calculator**

The District operates a “school choice calculator” to make it easy for parents to determine eligibility for incentive transportation (at <http://deseg.tusd1.org/Incentive-Transportation>).

#### **2. Proposed Change to the Interpretation of Incentive Transportation**

Based on the results of the Comprehensive study, discussed above, the District is exploring a change to the current, applied interpretation of the definition of incentive transportation. The current interpretation provides for incentive transportation to open enrollment students living within the boundary of a racially concentrated school, whose enrollment improves the integration of the receiving school. The District would like to increase eligibility for incentive transportation, as follows:

1. open enrollment students living within the boundary of a racially concentrated school, whose enrollment improves the integration of the receiving school.
2. open enrollment students whose enrollment improves the integration of the receiving school and who live within an identified “incentive zone” that has enough targeted

students, based on the receiving school in question, to help integrate the non-magnet receiving school.<sup>1</sup>

This revised form of incentive transportation may take the form of a regular route, or a express shuttle route. The District can limit costs by combining incentive and magnet routes that are picking up from the same hub point and delivering students to the same area.

#### **D. Transportation In Support of Advanced Learning Experiences**

The District currently provides free transportation to students in support of programs for advanced learning experiences in the following five ways:

##### **1. GATE Program Transportation.**

The District provides transportation that supports its delivery of an equitable full-time GATE experience to all qualified students. All GATE-qualified students live within 20 minutes of a school with a full-time GATE program, and the District offers transportation to a full-time GATE program to every qualified student not within the “walk-zone” for school with a full-time GATE program.

##### **2. IB Program Transportation.**

The District will provide free transportation to any student enrolled in the IB program at Cholla who lives outside the designated “walk zone” for Cholla, and free transportation to the IB boot camp.

##### **3. University High School.**

The District will offer free transportation to any District student enrolled at UHS who lives outside the designated “walk zone” for UHS. The District will also offer free transportation to UHS boot camps and to the BLAST, BOOST, and BOUNCE programs.

Based on the District’s investigation of why students and their families chose not to attend UHS in SY 18-19 and SY 19-20, and an analysis of the demographics of students who chose not to attend UHS, transportation from the southwest portion of the District to UHS is not a barrier to enrollment. In response to the District’s inquiries, most families preferred to attend high schools other than UHS for a variety of reasons, including a desire to attend the same school as siblings or friends, a desire to be at a charter school, or a desire to attend the same school their parents attended. One student said UHS was too far even if the District provided transportation. Thus, based on the District’s investigation, transportation from the southwest portion of the District to UHS is not a barrier to enrollment.

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<sup>1</sup> An incentive zone is a census tract that has at least 30 students who do not attend any District school that would improve the integration of the anticipated receiving school. The District has not yet utilized any incentive zones.

#### **4. Partial Day Transportation.**

From time to time in special circumstances, the District may transport students from the regular school at which they are enrolled to another school for a portion of the day, to provide access to an advanced learning opportunity that is not offered at the enrolled school. This transportation is only provided where it is practical given distances and bell schedules, and not unduly disruptive to the students' schedule for other classes. The decision to provide such transportation is made on a case-by-case basis, and is not susceptible of more formal definition. The paradigm example would be a small eighth grade class with only three or four students interested in taking algebra, with another school nearby that offers algebra at a time that fits with the students' schedule for other classes, and has room for the students.

#### **5. AP Student Support Programs.**

The District offers AP student support programs to high school students taking AP courses. If the neighborhood school for any student taking an AP course in grades 9-12 does not offer an AP student support program, the District will offer free transportation to a non-neighborhood school with an AP student support program from that student's neighborhood or neighborhood school, depending on the dates and times of the offered program.

#### **Transportation in Support of the Two-Way Dual Language Program**

The District offers free transportation to any student enrolled in a Two-Way Dual Language program who lives outside the "walk zone" for the school in which the student is enrolled.

#### **E. Information on Express Shuttles**

During the 2019-20 school year, the District operated three express shuttles: from the southside and westside to Sabino HS; from the southside to Santa Rita HS; and from the eastside to Roskrue K8 magnet. The District designed express shuttles to integrate schools or to improve academic achievement, and the District will monitor express shuttle ridership to assess their effectiveness in improving integration. Shuttles operate on routes that take no more than 30 minutes.

The shuttle to Sabino is part of the incentive transportation program. The shuttle to Roskrue is based on both its magnet status and its status as a TWDL school. The shuttle to Santa Rita is to provide wider access to its unique programs for career readiness (including programs in construction technologies and culinary arts which are designed to prepare students for careers immediately after high school) and dual credit courses, and is not part of the incentive transportation program.

The following chart sets out ridership data and transportation times for the three express shuttles operated by the District in the 2019-2020 school year:

| Express Route      | Start Time | End Time | Ridership                      |
|--------------------|------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| To Sabino AM       | 6:27am     | 7:40am   | 10 Hispanic, 1 Native American |
| From Sabino PM     | 3:30pm     | 4:29pm   | same                           |
|                    |            |          |                                |
| To Santa Rita AM   | 6:33am     | 7:05am   | 4 Hispanic                     |
| From Santa Rita PM | 3:30pm     | 3:58pm   | same                           |
|                    |            |          |                                |
| To Roskrige        |            |          |                                |
| From Vail          | 8:04am     | 8:24am   | 2 Af. Am., 5 Hispanic, 1 White |
| To Vail            | 4:03pm     | 4:27pm   | same                           |
|                    |            |          |                                |
| From Dodge         | 8:06am     | 8:30am   | 10 Hispanic, 3 White           |
| To Dodge           | 4:00pm     | 4:23pm   | same                           |
|                    |            |          |                                |
| From Both Fickett  | 7:58am     | 8:20am   | 2 Hispanic, 1 White            |
| To Booth Fickett   | 4:00pm     | 4:35pm   | same                           |

Assuming the above-referenced proposal to adopt a new interpretation of incentive transportation, the District will seek to utilize express shuttles to go west to east (from racially concentrated areas) and from east to west as an incentive for recruiting and enrolling targeted students in “incentive zones” to help integrate non-magnet schools.

To address funding concerns associated with adding an express shuttle route (and, often, also adding a driver), the District has developed a strategy to identify existing routes that operate from one transportation hub to another transportation hub. These routes take less than 30 minutes, as the buses go directly from one hub to the other), re-branding them as express shuttles, and marketing them to targeted populations in identified areas. This strategy will cut down on additional expenses if or when the District initiates additional express shuttle routes in the future.

#### **F. Limiting Transportation Costs While Maximizing Integration Impacts**

The purpose of the CIP is sustainability, with geographically and demographically focused transportation plans that limit costs while at the same time maximizing transportation’s impact on integration or student achievement. The comprehensive study revealed valuable information about the location and distance of various targeted populations to schools where their enrollment may help integration. Using this information, the District seeks to maximize transportation routes to improve integration while limiting cost in two ways, both discussed in other sections of the plan:

*Maximize the use of incentive transportation.*

By changing the interpretation of eligibility to permit east to west routes that may improve integration to non-magnet schools

*Limit costs by utilizing existing routes rather than adding routes.*

This flexible approach means that there may be situations where a bus serving a magnet school also serves a non-magnet school – bringing targeted students to more than one school to improve integration at more than one site. So, magnet and open enrollment students enrolled in different but nearby schools, coming from the same general area, may ride the same bus for all or part of their trip. A challenge with this strategy is that it may make it harder to integrate a magnet school if the District is also offering free transportation to a nearby non-magnet school – it may diminish the attractiveness of the magnet as the free transportation “carrot” is key to recruiting.

#### **G. Transportation as a criterion for selecting future magnet candidates**

The District considered transportation as a criterion for assessing the strength or weakness of potential candidates for future designations as magnet or Integrated schools. The committee incorporated transportation considerations when selecting the nine magnet candidates from the initial list of 17 schools. Using Versitrans software, the Transportation department assessed existing transportation routes for the 17 schools to identify routes that could improve integration, to evaluate travel times, and to form an overall transportation picture for each initial magnet candidate – including potential transportation costs. In assessing routes, they used the census maps to determine whether current routes existed between the school and the targeted census tracts. The committee used this evaluation in eliminating schools as magnet candidates. If current transportation routes existed between the school and targeted demographic census tracts, the committee used this as a positive factor and the magnet candidate remained on the list. If transportation routes did not exist, and routes created would need to extend beyond 20-30 minute travel times, the Committee evaluated this as a negative factor. The committee eliminated five schools where transportation would be too costly.

Based on the transportation assessment, and other factors, the committee further limited the initial list of 17 schools to nine schools. The final list of preferred choices includes five elementary schools, one middle schools, one K-8 school, and one high school. Of these nine schools, three are currently integrated, two are racially concentrated, and four are not integrated or racially concentrated. Most of the preferred choices have viable existing transportation routes from targeted census tracts; others need and could develop specific plans.

#### **H. Transportation as a criterion for selecting future candidates for Integrated schools**

Based on the comprehensive study, the District identified 12 non-magnet schools with high potential for integration, including 3 of the non-integrated magnet candidates. Several schools appeared to be high potential schools but were re-categorized as mid- or low-potential based on further assessment of the viability of various transportation strategies. Other schools did not appear to be high-potential schools based on distance to census areas with significant numbers of targeted students, but the maps revealed significant numbers of targeted students *within* their boundaries who were not being captured. In these cases, flexible routing and targeted marketing may prove effective to capture students to improve integration at a limited number of non- magnet schools.

In 2020, the District conducted another transportation assessment for high-potential non-magnet schools and included in the assessment Cholla HS and University HS. The assessment included a review of each school's existing services, needs and service gaps, strategies, and budget implications (if any). Based on the assessment, and in developing each school's integration improvement action plan, the District designed and will implement over the next three years, plus, the following additional transportation strategies utilizing the methods described above: incentive transportation going from east to west and from west to east, and express shuttles that utilize existing routes to minimize or eliminate additional cost as described in section G, above.

| <b>School (Priority Year)</b> | <b>Method</b>   | <b>Pickup/Dropoff Area</b>  |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Banks ES (Year 1)             | Incentive Route | Incentive zones to the south/southwest of Banks   |
| Maxwell K8 (Year 1)           | Incentive Route | Incentive zone to the southeast of Maxwell  |
| Robins K8 (Year 1)            | Incentive Route | Incentive zone to the southeast of Maxwell  |
| Cholla HS (Year 1)            | Incentive Route | Rincon/UHS, through an incentive stop or stops in the incentive zone near Vail MS, Roberts-Naylor K8, and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base/Borman K8. |
| Cholla HS (Year 1)            | Express Shuttle | Doolen MS, through an incentive stop at the border of the incentive zone to the north of Grant Road and the I-10 freeway.                         |
| Doolen MS (Year 2)            | Express Shuttle | Pistor MS, within the boundary of a racially concentrated middle school   |
| University HS (Year 3)        | Express shuttle | UHS may add an express shuttle from the south or westside of TUSD, if such offering can be shown to improve acceptance rates.                     |

Note: routes will be marketed and promoted through outreach and recruitment during year 1, to attract students and families to enroll in the school for the following year. For example, the Banks ES incentive route will be promoted through marketing materials designed in the fall of Year 1 (SY2020-21), at events, school tours, online outreach, and other activities occurring in Year 1 (SY2020-21). The actual route will not begin to seat students or to serve incentive stops in incentive zones until Year 2 (SY2021-22).

# **I. The Role of Transportation in Decisions Regarding Growth or Expansion of Advanced Learning Experiences.**

## **1. GATE Services.**

**a. Growth generally.** The District currently provides GATE services to all students who qualify. The District has already reduced the cut score for qualifying, as suggested in recent recommendations of the Special Master and orders of the Court, and has accommodated the increase in students as a result. Thus, there is no potential for major expansion of the number of students qualifying for GATE services, and no current plans to change the qualifying score again in such a way that would produce a measurable impact on transportation costs.



**b. Self-contained GATE Programs.** The expansion of self-contained GATE does not generally require transportation studies, as expansion to a new school or even adding a classroom at an existing school does not increase transportation costs, as fewer students need transportation to access a self-contained GATE program. Since no school has an individual “transportation budget,” a change in transportation costs does not affect the school’s individual budget. Transportation cost is not a factor in the District’s decision to expand self-contained GATE programs.

The District currently has only one school which offers a Two-Way Dual Language self-contained GATE program (Hollinger), and does not currently have any plan to expand the number of schools offering this program, preferring instead to expand its regular Two-Way Dual Language Program. In 2019-20 there were 22 EL students who qualified for GATE services and whose primary language was Spanish. Of these, 12 lived more than 30 minutes away from Hollinger. Though the District remains committed to providing free transportation for students enrolled in the TWDL GATE program, the District recognizes that for some students, transportation times to this program from various points in the District may exceed 30 minutes, due to the geographic size of the District and prevailing traffic at school transport times. As noted above, all of these students live within 20 minutes of a full-time GATE program.

**c. Cluster GATE Programs.** Similarly, expansion of a cluster GATE program to a new school, or increasing the number of cluster GATE classrooms at an existing school, does not increase transportation costs, as fewer students need transportation to access a full time GATE program. Transportation cost is not a factor in the District’s decision to expand cluster GATE programs.

**d. Pull Out and Resource GATE Programs.** These programs do not involve transporting students, and there is no need for expansion: All students qualifying for GATE services are currently provided these services in the school they attend.

## **2. Advanced Academic Courses.**

**a. Middle School Courses.** Transportation cost is not generally a factor in deciding to expand advanced academic courses at middle schools, as decisions regarding expansion are usually based on factors related to the current school and do not involve additional student transportation. Transportation cost may be considered in the partial day transportation described in A.4 above, in that the cost of transporting students from one school to another for access to advanced academic courses may be weighed along with the cost, convenience and teacher availability for a class at the enrolled school with lower-than-standard enrollment. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, and no advance transportation studies are needed.



**b. High School Courses.**

**i. AP and Dual Credit Courses.** Transportation cost is not a factor in deciding to expand advanced academic courses at high schools, as decisions regarding expansion are usually based on factors related to the current school and do not involve additional student transportation.

**ii. IB Program.** As noted above, the District is committed as a matter of policy to provide free transportation to any student enrolled in the IB program at Cholla who lives beyond the designated “walk zone” for that school. Transportation cost is not considered in decisions to promote or expand the program. As a practical matter, efforts to expand the program are unlikely to have a measurable impact on transportation, as the location of the school in the southwest quadrant of the District is more than 30 minutes, travel time, under any transportation mode, from many areas of the District, including in particular the northeast quadrant of the District. Thus, the District does not believe there is a practical potential for a shuttle from the northeast area of the District to Cholla.

**iii. University High School.** As noted above, the District is committed as a matter of policy to provide free transportation to any student enrolled at University High School who lives beyond the “walk zone” for that school. Transportation cost is not considered in decisions to promote or expand the program. As a practical matter, unless the requirements for admission to University High School are changed in a manner not currently contemplated, efforts to expand the program, or recruit higher minority participation are unlikely to have a measurable impact on transportation costs.