

# STUDENT TRANSPORTATION PLAN



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## DESCRIPTION OF RIALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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The Rialto Unified School District (RUSD) is located in the City of Rialto within San Bernardino County. Sections of the District are also established in bordering cities of Fontana, Colton, and San Bernardino. RUSD has an affluent, diverse population of approximately 24,000 students. RUSD is the largest employer in the city, with more than 2,700 employees. Preschool through adult-aged students and community are served through nineteen (19) elementary schools, five (5) middle schools, three (3) comprehensive high schools, one (1) continuation high school, one (1) independent study program/virtual academy, preschool programs, and an adult school. Transportation Services provides transportation to approximately 3,055 students yearly.

## CHANGES IN THE LAW

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Per Education Code 39800.1, the District must develop a plan to prioritize and offer transportation to students with disabilities, McKinney-Vento (students experiencing homelessness), and unduplicated pupils in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and any of grades 1 to 6, inclusive and low income students, which must be approved by the Board of Education by April 1, 2023, and every year thereafter.

## GOAL

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Create a plan to prioritize transportation to students with disabilities, McKinney-Vento (students experiencing homelessness), and unduplicated in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and any grades first through six, inclusive and who are low income.

Unduplicated pupils are students who classified in two or more categories:

- English learner
- Foster Youth
- Eligible for free or reduced-price meals

## CONSULTATION

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The District consulted with parents, students, families, classified staff, teachers, school administrators, regional local transit authorities, local air pollution control districts and air quality management districts, and other educational partners.

**Outreach:** The District created the Quality Transportation Services Committee (QTSC) to develop the student transportation plan. QTSC completed four (4) meetings, with the first meeting in December 2022. Members of QTSC are parents, students, staff, community members, Omnitrans, and Leaders for Education Services (Elementary, Secondary, Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA), Special Services, Technology Services, and Multilingual Programs) and Business Services (Risk Management, Fiscal Services, and Facilities Planning). In January 2023, Transportation Services introduced a survey during the Parent Summit (a District-wide event for families) and via email/text message on January 31, 2023, and February 6, 2023. The three notifications received feedback from families (including parents, caregivers, and guardians), students, community members, employees, and local business owners. The survey resulted in 856 responses.

Note: An email was sent to the South Coast Air Quality Management District to consult. No response as of the conclusion of our community outreach.

## **Current Transportation Routes and Services for Students**

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**Board Policy 3540:** Transportation; The Board of Education desires to provide for the safe and efficient transportation of students to and from school as necessary to ensure student access to the educational program, promote regular attendance and reduce tardiness. The extent to which the district provides for transportation services shall depend upon a continuing assessment of financial resources.

**Administrative Regulation 3541:** Transportation Routes and Services; describes students who reside beyond the minimum transportation distances (walking boundaries) are eligible for transportation service to the school of their attendance area. The District may authorize transportation to students who live within the maximum walking distance from the attending school when safety problems or hazards exist. Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are eligible when the IEP team determines transportation services are needed as a related service. Students with a McKinney-Vento or Foster Youth classification are eligible for transportation.

### **Modes of Transportation**

Potential modes of transportation for transporting students to and from a school include, but are not limited to existing school bus routes; public bus transportation; carpooling and contracted passenger van services.

### **Transportation Services**

The transportation fleet consists of:

- 38 large buses (56 - 62 passengers)
- 25 mid-size buses (39 passengers or less) with wheelchair access
- 14 small buses (25 passengers or less)
- 5 passenger vans (7 passengers or less)

District-owned school buses average 388,000 miles per school year. The District operates 35 routes (22 for walking distance and 13 for Special Service routes). In addition, the District contracts out transportation services, and these contractors operate ten (10) wheelchair buses, 30 small buses, and 11 passenger vans to various schools within the District, Riverside County Superintendent of Schools (RCSS), San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS), and non-public schools. The District provides transportation services for approximately 2,000 educational and athletics field trips annually.

Transportation Services transports and arranges transportation for 2,628 General Education students, 396 students who receive transportation as a related service, 34 students to SBCSS programs, five (5) students to California School for the Deaf Riverside (CSDR), one (1) student to the RCSS program, and 12 students to non-public schools for the 2022-2023 school year.

## Description of Contracted Transportation Services

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In order to provide quality transportation to our students and to support the educational programs, Transportation Services utilizes services provided by Private Transportation Contractors. Contracted services are utilized to assist the District in meeting the needs of students.

### General Education

**Administrative Regulation 3541:** Transportation Routes and Services; provides students residing beyond the prescribed distance from their school of residence eligible for transportation:

- Grades K: one (1) mile
- Grades 1-5: one and one-half (1.5) miles
- Grades 6-8: two (2) miles
- Grades 9-12: three and one-half (3.5) miles

When safety problems or hazards exist, the District may authorize transportation within the maximum walking distance.

Students residing within the walking boundaries of and attending Carter High School receive transportation due to the safety of the walking path.

### Students with Disabilities

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Students with disabilities are offered transportation under the provisions of the Individuals Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA) as a related service. Team members determine the students' needs to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) through the IEP process. Special Services has procedures and guidelines in place as a reference. It is the responsibility of the IEP team to determine if transportation is required to assist the student in benefitting from special education services. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides students with a disability not outlined in the IDEA accommodations and modifications to ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment. By providing transportation services to students with disabilities, it creates opportunities for the students to participate in activities as their peers without a disability.

## **Student Transportation Plan for Priority Groups**

Per Education Code 39800.1, the District must develop a plan to prioritize and offer transportation to students with disabilities, McKinney-Vento (students experiencing homelessness), and unduplicated pupils in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and any of grades 1 to 6, inclusive and low income students, which must be approved by the Board of Education by April 1, 2023, and every year thereafter. The following are the priority groups:

### **Students with Disabilities**

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Transportation is a related service in the IEP and 504 plan. Personal factors in determining the mode of transportation are health, physical abilities, social/emotional judgment, behavioral, safety, cognitive development, and lack of ability to communicate. The District will provide transportation for students with disabilities at no cost to the student or family. The IEP team or 504 plan team must determine that transportation is required to assist the student in benefiting from their unique educational needs.

#### **Section 1. Students with Disabilities**

1. Transportation will be provided to those students with orthopedic or other physical disabilities that significantly impair mobility.
2. Transportation will be provided to those students whose safety and well-being are at risk due to severe sensory impairment, such as blind, partially sighted, deaf, or hard of hearing.
3. Transportation will be provided when it is determined that there is a substantial risk to the student's safety and well-being due to significant social, emotional, or cognitive developmental delays. For this population of students, the need for transportation shall be based upon the decision of the IEP team.
4. The IEP or 504 plan team will determine the appropriate transportation service and/or accommodation.
  - a. Curb to Curb - pick-up and drop-off are provided at the safest location near the student's residence.
  - b. Corner to Corner - pick-up and drop-off are provided at the closest cross streets (corner) to the student's home. Corner to Corner may occur when the vehicle is unable to travel safely on the roadway, in a private community or to provide the student more independence.
  - c. School to School - pick-up and drop-off is provided at the student's school of residence or other location determined by the IEP or 504 plan team.
5. A student who would otherwise not be eligible for transportation will receive transportation when Special Services assigns the student to a site other than the school of residence to provide program availability.
6. Students with qualified services for Extended School Year (ESY) will receive the appropriate transportation.



## **Procedures to expedite Transportation Services for Students with Disabilities**

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1. After the IEP or 504 plan is completed and signed, a representative from the respective service area will send a Bus Service Request (BSR) to Transportation.
2. Transportation Services may take up to ten (10) business days to assign the student to a route. Bus stops for other passengers may need adjustment, and families must receive a notification for time changes for their students.
3. Transportation Services representatives will complete and send the BSR with the route information, including pick up/drop off time, location of the bus stop, route number, and effective date, to the respective services area. The respective service area will notify the family.

## **McKinney-Vento (Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11301 et seq.))**

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The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11301 et seq.) supports the education of students who are experiencing homelessness with the same educational opportunities as other students. Transportation is a related service for students to continue at the school they attended prior to becoming homeless.

Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) Foster Youth/McKinney-Vento Liaison is responsible for tracking McKinney-Vento students living and attending schools within the boundaries of the District. Each school site has one designated Foster Youth/McKinney-Vento Representative who provides and assists families with the required forms. Following the procedures to request transportation, the District will provide the best available mode of transportation to the McKinney-Vento student at no cost to the student or family.

### **Section 1. McKinney-Vento (students experiencing homelessness) – Public and school bus transportation**

Families requesting transportation are offered a public bus pass at no cost. Families that decline public bus transportation may request a different mode of transportation. The school site Foster Youth/McKinney-Vento representative or CWA Foster Youth/McKinney-Vento Liaison will complete the required form with an explanation for the request of another mode of transportation. CWA will process all transportation requests for McKinney-Vento students.

### **Section 2. McKinney-Vento (students experiencing homelessness) - Transportation as a related service**

McKinney-Vento students who already have transportation as a related service through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) pursuant to the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Foster Youth (Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015). The District will assess whether the student is entitled to transportation services under another law upon enrollment or classification change. If the student is eligible for transportation under another law, the District will provide transportation.

## **Foster Youth (Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015)**

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Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) Foster Youth/McKinney-Vento Liaison is responsible for tracking Foster Youth living and attending schools within the boundaries of the District. Each school site has one designated Foster Youth/McKinney-Vento Representative who provides and assists families with the required forms. Following the procedures to request transportation, the District will provide the best available mode of transportation to the Foster Youth at no cost to the student or family.

### **Section 1. Foster Youth – Public and school bus transportation**

Families requesting transportation are offered a public bus pass at no cost. Families that decline public bus transportation may request a different mode of transportation. The school site Foster Youth/McKinney-Vento representative or CWA Foster Youth/McKinney-Vento Liaison will complete the required form with an explanation for the request of another mode of transportation. CWA will process all transportation requests for Foster Youth.

### **Section 2. Foster Youth - Continuance after exiting foster placement**

Transportation to and from school of origin for the student will be provided for the duration of placement in foster care as long as it continues to be in their best interest. A student who exits foster care before the end of a school year, will continue with transportation services to and from the school of origin for the remainder of the academic school year. In addition, if a student exits placement while enrolled in high school, transportation services will continue to be offered to and from the school of origin through graduation.

### **Section 3. Foster Youth - Transportation as a related service**

Foster Youth who already have transportation as a related service provided through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) under the IDEA, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (students experiencing homelessness), or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) will be reviewed. The District will assess whether the student is entitled to transportation services under another law upon enrollment or classification change. If the student is eligible for transportation under another law, the District will provide transportation



## **Unduplicated Students**

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Students classified as unduplicated will receive transportation through Administrative Regulation 3541: Transportation Routes and Services; students who reside beyond the minimum transportation distances are eligible for transportation service to the school of their attendance area. In addition, students who live within the maximum walking distance from the school of attendance are eligible to receive a public transportation bus pass at no cost.

## **Low Income Students**

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Students classified as low-income will receive transportation through Administrative Regulation 3541: Transportation Routes and Services; students who reside beyond the minimum transportation distances are eligible for transportation service to the school of their attendance area. In addition, students who live within the maximum walking distance from the school of attendance are eligible to receive a public transportation bus pass at no cost.

## **Ridership Program**

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Students residing within the prescribed distance from their school of residence may obtain transportation services through the Ridership Program. Students require submission of a transportation application to receive school bus services. The intent of the Ridership Program is to assign students to General Education Routes.

### **Ridership Program:**

- At the beginning of each school year, Transportation Services will determine the maximum capacity for each bus route.
- Transportation Services will establish bus stops at designated locations following California Highway Patrol and Vehicle Code regulations.
- Family member(s) with education rights for the student will submit an application to request transportation. Applications must be submitted annually.
- Assign students to routes to maximum capacity.
- Students not placed on a route will be placed on a waiting list and notified. When seats on the route become available, the students will receive a notification of route assignment.

The District reserves the right to revise this Student Transportation Plan as needed.