



2023 School Transportation Business Management Forum Home-to-School Transportation

Opportunities to Impact Chronic Absenteeism and Special Education Outcomes

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**California Associations
of School Transportation
Officials**

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Frequently Used Terms

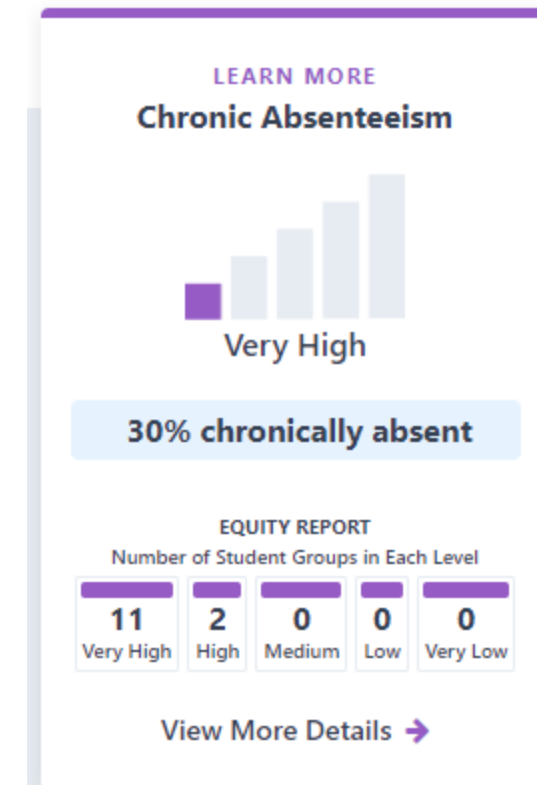
- Annual Principal Apportionment (Annual)
- California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS)
- California School Accounting Manual (CSAM)
- Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)
- County Office of Education (COE)
- Education Code Section (EC §)
- Extended Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP)
- First Principal Apportionment (P-1)
- Home-to-School Transportation (HTST)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Joint Powers Authority (JPA)
- Kindergarten (K)
- Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)
- Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
- Local Educational Agency (LEA)
- California Department of Education (CDE)
- Second Principal Apportionment (P-2)
- Students with Disabilities (SWD)
- Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS)
- Transitional Kindergarten (TK)
- United States (US)

2 Transportation Impacts Students

- **Transportation can have a significant impact on a student's academic performance**
 - **Research shows students with access to safe and reliable transportation to and from school have better academic outcomes**
 - **Schools and communities must work together to find solutions to transportation-related barriers to education**
 - **Improving attendance directly contributes to more equitable education and better student outcomes**
- **Students who regularly attend school have a foundation for positive life outcomes:**
 - **Better academic performance**
 - **More work options and earning potential**
 - **Greater opportunities for higher education**
 - **Higher civic engagement**
 - **More developed life skills that positively influence health and economic decisions**

- State measures of accountability linked to the LCFF include chronic absenteeism
- Chronic absenteeism is being absent from school more than 10% of school days
- Chronic absenteeism is a priority monitoring area for California
- [Chronic Absenteeism Indicator](#)
- [2021-22 Chronic Absenteeism—DataQuest](#)

Statewide Chronic Absenteeism



**Chronic Absenteeism
Indicator**



Chronic Absenteeism and Student Outcomes

- **Missing school negatively affects academic and socioemotional outcomes for all students**
 - **The impacts are largest for low-performing, low-income, and English learner students**
- **Students who are chronically absent in K have lower attendance rates and achievement in future grades**
- **Students who are chronically absent in the early years of schooling may not learn crucial school readiness skills (abilities such as fundamental reading skills, critical thinking, problem solving, and creative thinking)**
- **Students who require interventions are the most vulnerable to the impact of absenteeism**
- **Missing school reduces opportunities for participation and exposure to core instruction and interventions**
- **High absence rates place a burden on teachers and impacts the entire class**
- **Making up for lost instruction adds to the workload and valuable classroom time is lost**
- **Teachers and student support teams are more likely to attribute a learning difficulty to absenteeism**

Research-Based Evidence

- **School bus eligibility increased attendance rates for economically disadvantaged students by 0.63 percentage points (approximately a 1-day increase in a 180-day school year)**
- **School bus eligibility decreased the probability of being chronically absent (missing more than 10% of school days) for economically disadvantaged students by 3.8 percentage points (an approximate 20%-25% reduction)**

Family Engagement and Support

- **Transportation is the most frequently reported barrier to attendance by families**
- **Immediate access to transportation, unreliable or inconsistent availability of transportation, work schedules, and unsafe conditions were cited as barriers**
- **Socioeconomic hardship can lead to limited transportation resources**
- **One child in six lives in poverty in the US, according to Children International**

Home-to-School Transportation



7 Historical Funding Sources

- The HTST Reimbursement formula included the LCFF add-on funding based on two former funding sources
- Funding equal to HTST . . . funding received by school districts in 2012-13
 - Required 2012-13 expenditure levels continue to be maintained for HTST
- These previous funding program amounts were incorporated into the LCFF entitlements for school districts and COEs effective 2013-14



- Small School District/COE Bus Replacement Program
- [Pupil Transportation: HTST and Special Education](#)
 - HTST and transportation provided for students with severe disabilities and/or orthopedic impairments was available to eligible LEAs to reimburse for the approved cost of transporting pupils to and from school

8 HTST Reimbursement Program

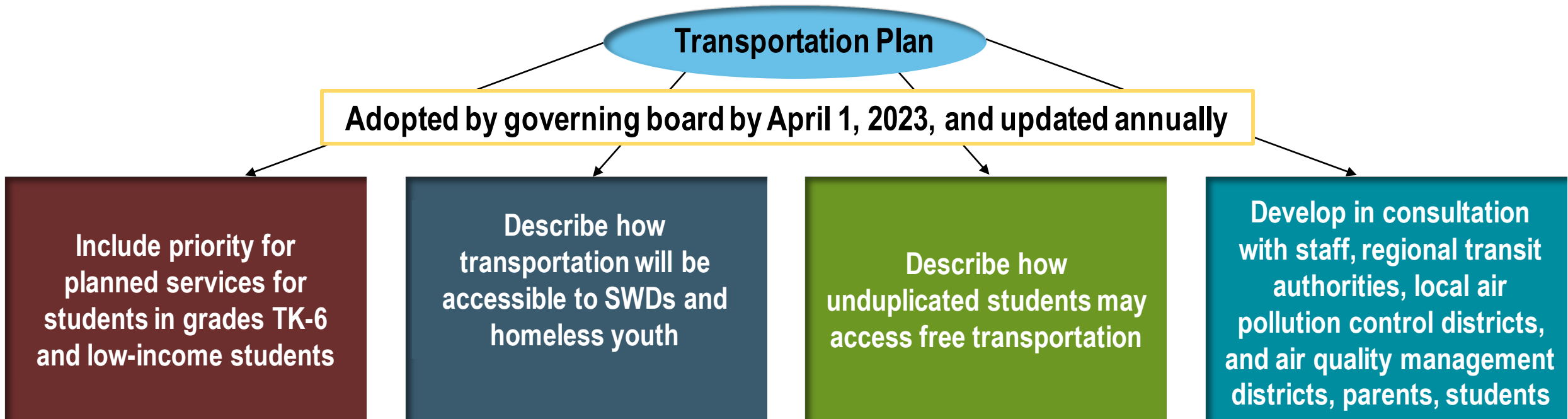
HTST Reimbursement

- [EC § 39800.1](#)
- Statutory language related to the required transportation plan for HTST Reimbursement
- Unrestricted Resource 0000; Object Revenue Code 8590
- [Audit Guide—July 2023](#)
- [EC § 41850.1](#)
- Statutory language related to funding allocations, audits, and data collection
- [FAQs for the HTST Reimbursement](#)
- [CDE Instructor Bulletin—HTST](#)



9 Home-to-School Transportation

- Starting in 2022-23, school districts and COEs received the greater of:
Transportation add-on (plus annual COLA beginning in 2023-24) OR **60% of reported transportation costs**
- Subject to audit
- May charge fees for transportation but must waive fees for unduplicated students
- Difference between transportation as a service due to IEPs and HTST for special education students



Home-to-School Transportation Funding

Funding Formula Calculation

Entitlements are calculated as reimbursement for 60% of transportation costs, less the LCFF add-on

- If the LCFF add-on exceeds the reimbursement, LEAs will still receive the full LCFF add-on
- Transportation LCFF add-on will receive a COLA prior to the deduction beginning 2023-24

Capital outlay and nonagency expenditures are excluded from reimbursement

Apportionment of Funds

Funds were apportioned as part of the 2022-23 P-2 2023-24 and future year funds will follow the Principal Apportionment schedule:

- The Advance and P-1 certifications will include an estimate of HTST reimbursement based on prior-year data
- Final funding for the fiscal year will be calculated at the P-2 certification

- Funding is allocated to school districts and COEs
- Unduplicated students must be exempted from transportation fees
- Requirements will be audited

Data Collection

- Per [EC § 41850.1\(c\)](#), CDE collects data via existing standardized data reporting systems
 - Transportation data, excluding expenditure data, will be collected through the CBEDS data collection in the fall
 - Expenditure data will be collected from the information submitted through coded entries in the SACS data collection during the LEAs standard financial submission process
- The transportation data to be collected:
 - Ridership demographics
 - Ridership information
 - Average daily ridership
 - Annual ridership
 - Socioeconomically disadvantaged ridership
 - Number of days transported
 - Number of home-to-school miles driven
 - Number of home-to-school routes
 - Number of lap/shoulder belt equipped buses
 - Types of fuel sources

Transportation Opportunities

HTST

There is no mandate to get students from home to school and back

However, if HTST is provided, the expectation from the state is that low-income students and students in grades TK-6 are prioritized

Capital outlay and nonagency expenditures are excluded from reimbursement

ELOP

There may be a requirement to provide transportation as part of ELOP

If ELOP is not available at all school sites for the required students, then transportation must be provided so the students may access ELOP

ELOP funds may be used to pay for ELOP-related transportation

Special Education

Special education-related transportation costs are eligible for HTST reimbursement

If the transportation costs are reported to the CDE through SACS Function 3600, then the expenditure is reimbursable

What's Eligible for Reimbursement?

- **HTST costs for an LEA's general education and SWDs**
 - **Personnel costs**
 - Supervisors, drivers, clerks
 - Training for bus aides and drivers
 - **Fuel, oil, tires, and parts for buses**
 - **Payment to JPA or other entity for HTST services**



- **Instructional field trips (Function 1000)**
- **Transporting students between school sites (Function 1000)**
- **Co-curriculars (Function 4000)**
- **Capital Outlay (Object 6xxx)**
- **Cost of transporting other LEA's students (Goal 7110)**

Refer to CSAM Procedure 640

HTST and Special Education

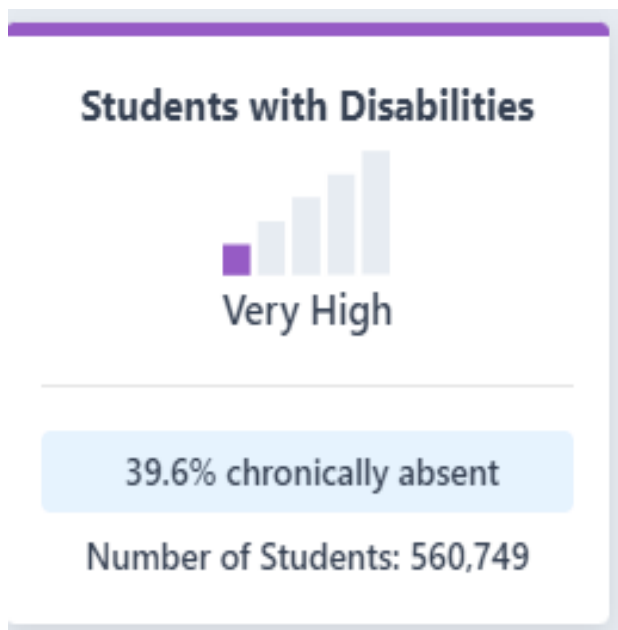
- **Although IDEA mandates transportation for some SWDs, not all transportation is due to the unique needs of students**
 - **District offer of placement at locations far from home**
 - **Program offerings only at certain sites**
 - **Extenuating circumstances beyond the impact of the student disability**
- **SWDs are general education students first, who need to get from home to school**
- **Research specific to SWDs finds:**
 - **SWDs provided transportation had fewer absences compared to students without disabilities**
 - **Taking the bus is related to better attendance behaviors for many SWDs**

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) governs the provision of transportation for students with disabilities

- **Districts must ensure that transportation services in students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are provided at public expense and at no cost to families.**
- **Transportation services include travel to and from school; travel in and around school buildings; and the use of specialized equipment such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps.**

Improving Attendance and Outcomes

- Students with transportation come to school more often and arrive on time
- Students in grades TK-3 are the most likely to miss school due to parental transportation conflicts



Expanding Access and Inclusive Practice

- Including SWDs in afterschool programming, including ELOP, can enhance learning recovery, improve social-emotional learning, and build independence skills
- Program planning and coordination of location of service based on student needs can support improved outcomes in social, emotional, behavioral, and academic areas

Special Education Department

- **Include Special Education Department in HTST Planning**
- **Include valuable information and input from transportation in IEP or behavior meetings**
- **Define difference between mandated IDEA transportation and HTST Plan participation**
- **Align HTST Plan with location of special education programs and services**
- **Have a documentation process to ensure staff does not add HTST to an IEP unless it is required due to student unique needs**

Leveraging HTST Reimbursement

- **Identify ways expanding HTST can align with LCAP and other focus areas**
- **Offer SWDs access to HTST and increase attendance and outcomes**
- **Utilize HTST reimbursement to incorporate capacity building and training for drivers and bus assistants**
- **Ensure safety planning incorporates the needs of SWDs**

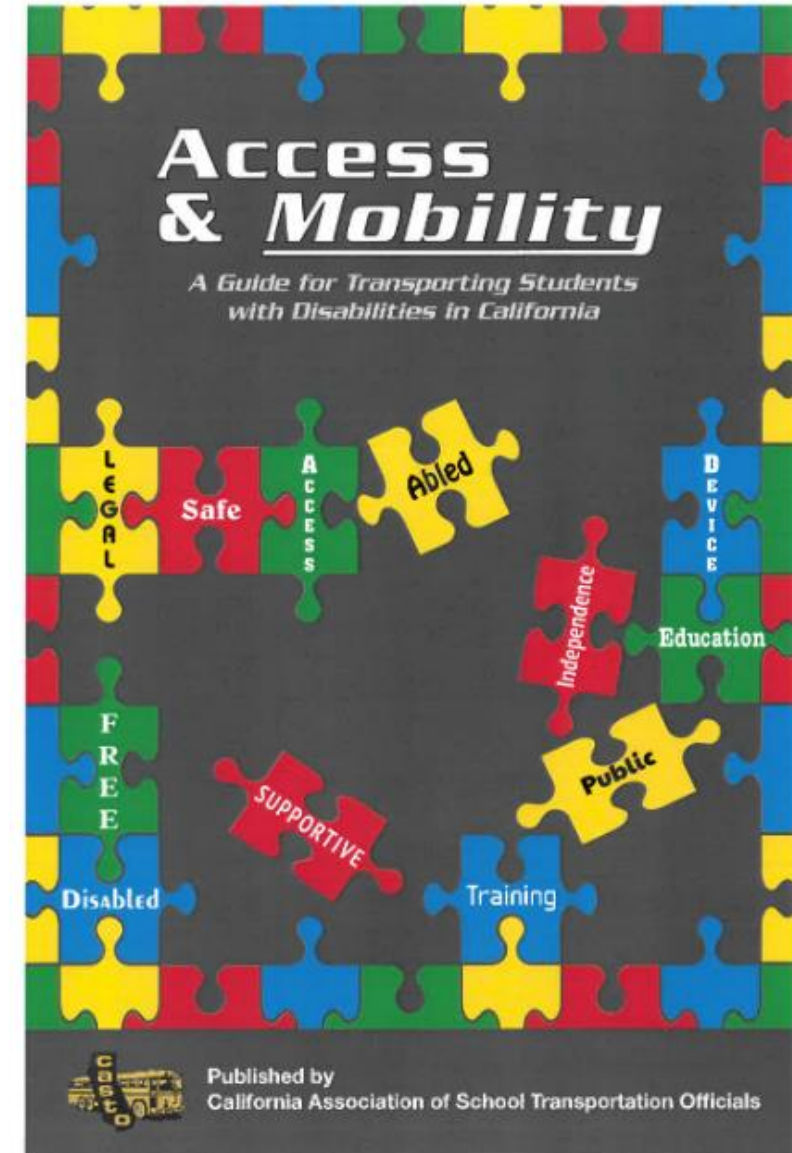
17 Training for HTST Safety for Students

- Training resources for drivers and support personnel who ride buses or help SWDs load and unload from buses is available
 - Understand the disabilities of those who need HTST
 - Understand potential responses of students overwhelmed by sensory stimulation
 - Understand behavioral triggers and ways to reduce those triggers
 - Understand considerations for verbal exchanges and interactions with students and family/caregivers
 - Understand multiple de-escalation techniques
 - Understand ways to identify needs that may be physically invisible
 - Understand ways HTST operations may need to change or adjust



CASTO Guide for Transporting SWDs

- Each day in California, school transportation departments are responsible for transporting more than one million students; at least 200,000 are SWDs
- This publication is intended to provide a foundation for understanding, training, and collaboration
- It is suggested local policy and procedure be reviewed carefully for compliance with federal and state requirements
- Access and Mobility, A guide for Transporting Students with Disabilities in California is published by the California Association of School Transportation Officials (CASTO)





Thank you!

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