

Parsippany-Troy Hills Township School District
Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Transportation
2019-20

What is the current policy on student transportation?

The district is in compliance with NJ Administrative Code 18A: 39-1 in that district transportation is provided to elementary students who live a walking distance of 2.0 miles or greater from home to school, middle school students who live a walking distance of 2.0 miles or greater from home to school, and high school students who live a walking distance of 2.5 miles or greater from home to school.

Is it a district's responsibility to provide transportation for students who live within the established walking distance from school when hazardous road conditions exist?

Boards of education are not required by law to provide busing for students who live within the established walking distance from school even for safety reasons. However, boards are permitted, at their own discretion and expense, to provide transportation for students who reside within the established walking distance from school and may charge the student's parents or legal guardians for this service. Municipalities may also contract with boards of education for this service and charge the parents. This transportation service is called *Subscription Busing*.

How much does Subscription Busing cost?

The projected cost per student would be \$1000 annually.

How is the Subscription Busing cost determined?

A single bus route costs between \$40,000 and \$60,000. A full-sized school bus holds 52 students. The rate of \$1000 per student would not include driver salary and would need to be further determined. A less-than-capacity bus would yield a higher annual per-student cost. School districts that offer subscription busing at a lower rate have embedded that cost into their base budget. Parsippany-Troy Hills School District has not budgeted for any portion of subscription busing.

What is the practice in other districts of similar size?

Somerset County District of 7300 students

The district has provided courtesy busing for a least a decade and built the cost into the base budget. The estimated cost for this courtesy bussing is approximately \$4.7 million annually. As a result of state aid reduction and major budget restraints, the district eliminated courtesy busing for high school students who live less than two miles from the high school in certain areas. This saved approximately \$275,000.

Somerset County K-12 District of 8600 students

The district does not offer subscription busing. Courtesy busing is provided with bulk of courtesy falling under "Hazardous" which is then paid for by the Township/Borough.

Morris County K-12 District of 3600 students

The district provides minimal courtesy busing to one section of the township where they feel it is appropriate. In most cases, the district does not provide courtesy busing.

Morris County K-12 District of 5200 students

The district does not offer subscription busing and has never explored it.

What does ‘hazardous route’ mean and how does the district manage this?

A hazardous route, as defined by NJAC 18A:39-1.5, shall be any roadway where a combination of factors determine that it is not an appropriate route for school children walking to school. Within the purview of the Parsippany-Troy Hills Township Board of Education, a hazardous route has been defined as any road section having a score of 40 or more under the criteria defined herein.

A Transportation Committee convened in 2007, and re-affirmed in 2019, determined that the definition of ‘hazardous’ would be defined as it relates to pedestrians only. The following criteria are considered in assessing a street or road as hazardous:

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| § Traffic volume | § Bridges or overpasses |
| § Vehicle velocity | § Train tracks or trestles |
| § The presence or lack of walkways | § Highway or arterial road crossings |
| § Limited sight distances | § Quality of street lighting |
| § Drop offs | § Width of street |

What would be the estimated cost for the district to implement courtesy busing?

If the district was to provide busing for students who live .5 to 1.99 miles from home to school, an estimated 1710 students would qualify for transportation. This number of students would be equivalent to approximately 38 additional to/from bus routes (condensed to 19 tiered routes) and would cost the district an estimated \$1,231,200.

If the district was to provide busing for students who live 1 to 1.99 miles from home to school, an estimated 848 students would qualify for transportation. This number of students would be equivalent to approximately 18 additional to/from bus routes (condensed to 8 tiered routes and 2 stand alone routes) and would cost the district an estimated \$626,760.

Who is responsible for safe travel along public roadways or walkways?

Safety along public roadways and walkways is a municipal responsibility. It is for this reason that municipalities install sidewalks, traffic signals and signs, and paint crosswalks. Pursuant to section 40A:9-154.1 of New Jersey statute, school crossing guards are appointed by the municipality and are under the supervision of the chief of police or other chief law enforcement officer. The Parsippany Police Department has always been extremely responsive to safety concerns related to student pedestrian traffic.

Has a recent traffic study been conducted?

A traffic study would be the responsibility of the township. Part of the town's Master Plan includes recommendations to improve sidewalk connectivity in Parsippany, particularly at key nodes of activity such as schools, bus stops, and retail areas. At the request of the Superintendent, the Parsippany Police Department conducted a traffic count for the following locations:

- ❑ Baldwin Road approaching Vail Road from Route 46: Highest morning/afternoon count (772) corresponded with a rating of "5" on the Hazardous Grid.
- ❑ Vail Road approaching Baldwin Road from North Beverwyck Road: Highest morning/afternoon count (819) corresponded with a rating of "5" on the Hazardous Grid.
- ❑ Vail Road approaching Baldwin Road from Central Middle School: Highest morning/afternoon count (1072) corresponded with a rating of "10" on the Hazardous Grid.
- ❑ Vail Road near Central Middle School (eastbound and westbound lanes): Highest morning/afternoon count (1231) corresponded with a rating of "10" on the Hazardous Grid

Traffic count conducted during the first week of October 2019, Monday through Friday, between 7:00 and 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.