

SB 878 (Skinner)

Road to Success

PURPOSE

To provide universal Home-To-School Transportation (HTST) for all students to their neighborhood school and back home, and to reform the state's transportation funding mechanism with an equitable formula that adequately funds home-to-school transportation.

BACKGROUND

HTST provided by Local Education Agencies (LEAs), including school bus transportation, has tremendous benefits for California students. HTST increases student attendance and reduces truancy; students are 70 times safer when transported by school bus as opposed to a passenger vehicle; and HTST using school buses has environmental benefits by reducing the number of vehicles on the road and carbon dioxide emissions.

Despite these benefits, California has failed to adequately invest in school bus transportation. In fact, the state froze funding for its HTST Program in 2012-13. In the last decade, costs have increased substantially, including fuel, labor, equipment, and vehicle maintenance while funding for school transportation has not even been adjusted for inflation. As a result of decades of insufficient HTST funding and the decade-long freeze, many LEAs have abandoned HTST, reduced HTST offerings or even begun charging fees from families for students to ride a school bus.

THIS BILL

SB 878 ensures that every public-school student is offered transportation to the student's neighborhood school beginning

with the 2023-24 school year with an exception for students who live very near the school. A neighborhood school is defined as the school that a student is designated to attend based on their grade level and residence within the school's geographic boundary assigned by the LEA.

The bill creates a new funding formula based on the LEA's route miles. The LEA's cumulative route miles per instructional year are multiplied by the state's reimbursement rate, \$____. An add-on amount is also provided to account for field trips and extra-curricular related activities depending on the grades served by the LEA. Funding begins in 2022-23 to allow LEAs to plan for universal home-to-school transportation for all students by 2023-24.

Unlike current transportation funding, the state's reimbursement rate will be subject to an annual statutory cost-of-living adjustment.

SB 878 also prohibits LEAs from charging students any fee for HTST.

SPONSOR

- California School Employees Association, AFL-CIO (Sponsor)

KEY CONTACTS

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