

Private Transportation Options for Special Education Students

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Overview

- The cost of private transportation increased >40% from 2018 to 2019
 - Approximately \$300k (annual)
 - Expecting additional increases in the future
 - Currently 23 students, 4 of them in wheelchairs
- Need to evaluate private transportation options for students with special needs or homeless students
 - **Homeless students:** The district needs to provide transportation per The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
 - **Students with special needs:** Behavior disorders, special medical needs, low incidence specialized instructional needs (e.g. hearing-impaired students)
- The purpose of this assignment is to:

Research available options with comparative cost analysis

Work to Date

- 8 question survey of OAPSA (Ohio Association of Pupil Service Administrators) and Hamilton County Education Service Center Business Managers Collaboration Group
 - District providing private transportation
 - Number of students with private transportation
 - Current provider
 - Past providers and rating
 - Consideration of purchasing vans
 - Annual expenditure and how being charged
 - Other ideas
 - Interest in shared services
- Internet search re: shared ride and other options

Preliminary Findings

District responses to Business Managers Survey

School District	Number of students
Sycamore	18-19: 26, 19-20: 23
District #1	No student data shared
District #2	18-19: 12, 19-20: 11
District #3	18-19: 6, 19-20: 68
District #4	18-19: 45, 19-20: 42
District #5	18-19: 3, 19-20: 6
District #6	18-19: 25, 19-20: 30
District #7	19-20: 84
District #8	19-20: 8
District #9	No student data shared
District #10	No student data shared
District #11	No student data shared
District #12	19-20:18

Preliminary Findings: Rating of Providers

School District	Rating of Transportation Providers
Sycamore	1 for Vendor #1 2 for Vendor #2
District #1	Vendor #1=1, Vendor #2=2, Vendor #3=2, Vendor #4=1
District #2	Vendor #5=1, Vendor #1=2
District #3	Vendor #1=2
District #4	Vendor #1=1/2 Vendor #6=2
District #5	Vendor #1=1; Vendor #7=2
District #6	Vendor #4 -3- They will do whatever is asked with a quick response Vendor #1=1
District #7	Vendor #1=1/2 Vendor #6=2/3
District #8	Vendor #1=1 or 2
District #9	Vendor #1=1 or 2
District #10	Vendor #4 or Vendor #1: both 2 (with intermittent issues)
District #11	Vendor #1=1 or 2
District #12	Vendor #1= 1.5 Vendor #6=

- 1- Not acceptable
- 2- Meets needs & expectations
- 3- Exceeds expectations

Preliminary Findings: Purchasing Vans

Majority is interested in purchasing van

School District	Question 4: Purchasing vans
Sycamore	Yes, we have considered and are considering this
District #1	We have already purchased a few and plan to move in-house. Inadequate service and increased cost.
District #2	yes, it has saved us cost and headaches by moving much of the service in house
District #3	No, District #3 had vans 8-10 years ago, we will not entertain this option. If the need is there we will purchase HC buses.
District #4	Yes. We currently have two min-vans for special service but only operate one van. We do not have enough drivers to cover our routes and multiple mini-van services. If we could field enough drivers, we would, the ROI vs. outsourcing in most cases is around two years. The CDL shortage is really causing us issues with this.
District #5	We have two vans and use them for midday field trips and sporting events. We would consider doing all transportation in house but having enough drivers makes it challenging to rely on this.
District #6	We are considering doing this through a vendor. Our current facility will not allow for any growth but our future one will have this in mind. Will be used in house and a possible shared service
District #7	Have considered, but not moved forward
District #8	Yes, operate 3 vans, struggle with drivers. Contract with vendor for driver
District #9	Yes, we have 2 vans, HC bus, flexibility / cost
District #10	We have considered but have not had a consistent enough population with transportation needs to make it viable.
District #11	We have a few vans used for local trips, very limited. Drivers is a problem for us as well
District #12	Yes, we have 18 vans now providing service

Preliminary Findings: Other Ideas

- Cost control
- Collaboration
 - Use of technology
- Owning van

School District	Question 7: Other ideas
Sycamore	Trying to evaluate potential to provide own service in house
District #1	Trying to control quality of service, increasing needs and increasing cost.
District #2	
District #3	We will be purchasing Air Conditioned HC bus for medically fragile student.
District #4	Looking to leverage technology more now to improve service, real-time GPS for on-time service tracking, feedback via apps for families and riders, better direct, safe communications with drivers, etc. Wish we had the employee power to provide this economically in-house.
District #5	
District #6	Working with a vendor on this. Something to think about while doing this is the tax exempt status of your facility. Will need to talk with your Bond Council on profits. We are looking a different financing methods for our new facility that could allow a vendor to provide service to other districts from our building.
District #7	Open to new ideas
District #8	Partnership among districts
District #9	Trying to control cost/service along with options for flexibility
District #10	Working to explore partnerships with other districts, if we save money using midday routes or bus route add on's if possible
District #11	Open to partnering with other Districts
District #12	Owning your own vans provide better scheduling; control and customer service

Preliminary Findings: Rideshare Services

- Uber and Lyft: Unaccompanied minors are not allowed
- There is growing interest on ride share services for minors
 - Background check and fingerprinting of drivers
- Prominent ride shares for minors
 - Hop Skip Drive, Kango, Zum, Autter
- Currently none operate in Cincinnati

Special Consideration for Homeless

- Recommendation from National Center for Homeless Education
 - Safety is #1 concern and factor. All drivers must be background checked
 - There is no one or two best practice or solution there
 - It's recommended to pick these kids first and drop them last. This seems to make sense for homeless but not sure for special needs
 - Some school districts enroll parent to drive kids and pay them on whatever mileage school will pay its own employees. The driver can be parent of other child also who ride to same or nearby school
 - Some have enrolled local social organization who provide either van or driver or both.
 - Some districts provide public transportation pass to students who can ride by themselves
 - Massachusetts has just started looking at Uber and similar ride share service, but they are far from any implementation or guideline

Baseline Facts and Variables

- Known, confirmed costs:
 - Purchase price of vans and wheelchair vehicles
 - Mileage, fuel, maintenance, insurance costs
 - Driver labor and hours
 - Aide labor and hours
- Key variables:
 - Population to serve - currently 23 students, 4 require wheelchair vehicle
 - Average pickups per day per van. Current assumption is 3 per van
 - Average number of Aides per vehicle. Current assumption is 50% (5)

Assumptions

- Vehicles: Purchase, no interest, 10-year life, no residual value
- Average 3 student pickups per vehicle, 5 aides
- 6 Vans, 4 wheelchair vans to support all students
- No annual cost increases built in for either model
- Surcharges for longer trips not included in either model

"Buy" vs. "Make" Outcomes

"Buy"

- Annual contracted cost **\$316,102**
- **\$13,744** per student annually
- Future contract prices increases not known
- Increase from '19 to '20 was over 40%

"Make"

- **\$301,068** annualized cost
- **\$13,090** per student annually
- 10 drivers
- 5 aides (50%)
- 10 vehicles
- Vehicle purchase value: **\$417,600**

Preliminary Recommendations - Part I

- Initiate district provided transportation for at least a pilot group of students with special needs who are currently transported by a private company
 - Potential pilot with students who do not need an aide during transportation
 - Explore drivers/aides provided by a vendor or by the district
 - -Possibly retired teachers/bus drivers might be interested in driving, especially since their retirement systems have frozen their COLA (Cost of Living Allowance.)
- Fresh look at the contract terms to alleviate quality problems
 - - Collaborate with other school districts

Preliminary Recommendations - Part II

- Explore feasibility and legality of parent/guardian provided transportation with agreed upon payment
- Pursue collaborative transportation services with nearby districts
 - -Possibly through Hamilton/Butler/Warren/Clermont County ESCs
 - -By destination providers (e.g. St. Rita's, Warren County Learning Center, Children's Home)
 - -Use of simulations to optimize the trips
 - (e.g. Simul8 or Arena Simulation software)
- Possible future sub-groups for consideration and implementation of above-mentioned recommendations

Thoughts and Questions



Appendix

- The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
 - <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento/>
 - <https://nche.ed.gov/determining-eligibility/>