

# Parent Perspective on APS “Special” Transportation

June 27, 2018

APS Advisory Committee on  
Transportation Choice

## IDEA and ADA

- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**
  - Guarantees students with disabilities a “free and appropriate education” in the “least restrictive environment” through an “individualized education program” (IEP)
  - “‘Related services’ means **transportation** and such developmental, corrective, and other **supportive services** as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.” 34 C.F.R. § 300.24
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**
  - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability
  - Designed to counter “**discriminatory effects of architectural, transportation, and communication barriers, overprotective rules and policies, failure to make modifications to existing facilities and practices, ... segregation, and relegation to lesser services, programs, activities, ... or other opportunities.**” 42 U.S.C. § 12101(a)(5)
  - “Public entity **may not deny ... the opportunity to participate in services, programs, or activities that are not separate or different**, despite the existence of permissibly separate or different programs or activities.” 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(2)

## Students with Disabilities (SWD) Who Might Need Transportation-Related Services

- Students who are unable to navigate the distance between home and school either by walking or taking the regular school bus (including walking to and waiting at the bus stop) without some level of support, assistance, or special equipment
- Students with such needs may include those with:
  - Visual impairments/Blindness
  - Deafness/Hard of hearing
  - Other communication-related disabilities (e.g., a nonspeaking student who requires communication supports)
  - Physical disabilities/Gross motor impairments
  - Neurological or developmental disabilities (e.g., autism, Down syndrome)
  - Epilepsy/Seizure disorder
  - Traumatic brain injury
  - Significant intellectual disabilities/Anyone who might have difficulty navigating an unexpected change in routine
- Special transportation also includes transportation for SWD who attend private schools at APS expense

## APS Facts and Figures (2017-2018)

- **407 students use APS “special transportation”** (approx.)
  - 1.5% of APS student body (407/27,000)
  - 6.8% of APS student ridership (407/6,000)
  - 10% of all APS SWD (407/4,000)
- APS allocates the following resources for these 407 students:
  - 31% of student transportation vehicles (56/178)
  - 24% of all APS bus runs (91/379) (approx.)
  - \$4,325,000 in staffing (approx.)
- APS spends an average of **\$10,627 per student** just to staff the transportation of 407 students for a year (\$4,325,000/407)
- **32% of the APS Transportation Department staffing budget is devoted to transporting 1.5% of the APS student population (6.8% of ridership)** (\$4,325,000/\$13,330,912)
- Can we find a way to serve these students more efficiently?

## Family Experiences

- Only transportation service option offered is the fully segregated and stigmatizing “short bus”
  - Families have experienced IEP teams pushing this option on them, even where the family says they prefer to walk
- Many parents would strongly prefer to have their children ride the regular bus with the necessary supports
- As with curb cuts, people without disabilities often benefit a great deal by changes that are made to make our society more accessible and welcoming for people with disabilities

## Terminology Note

- The term “special needs” is generally despised by people with disabilities
- “Special education bus”?

## Engaging APS Families with Disabilities

- Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC) (“ACE – ack”)
  - <https://www.apsva.us/special-education-advisory-committee/>
  - [aseac.mail@gmail.com](mailto:aseac.mail@gmail.com)
- Arlington Special Education Parent-Teacher Association (SEPTA)
  - <http://www.arlingtonsepta.org>
  - [president@arlingtonsepta.org](mailto:president@arlingtonsepta.org)
- Arlington Inclusion Task Force
  - <http://www.arlingtonsepta.org/inclusion-task-force/>
  - [arlingtoninclusion@gmail.com](mailto:arlingtoninclusion@gmail.com)