



Expect
More.

Update: Transportation Changes for 2026-27

Presented to the School Board
April 21, 2026

Creating a **smarter, more efficient** transportation system to serve students for years to come.

Our Commitments:

- Student safety remains the top priority
- Maintain reliability and predictability for families
- Improve operational efficiency
- Reduce underutilized routes and empty seats
- Use models already proven successful in our district
- Minimize disruption to families





History of Transportation Costs

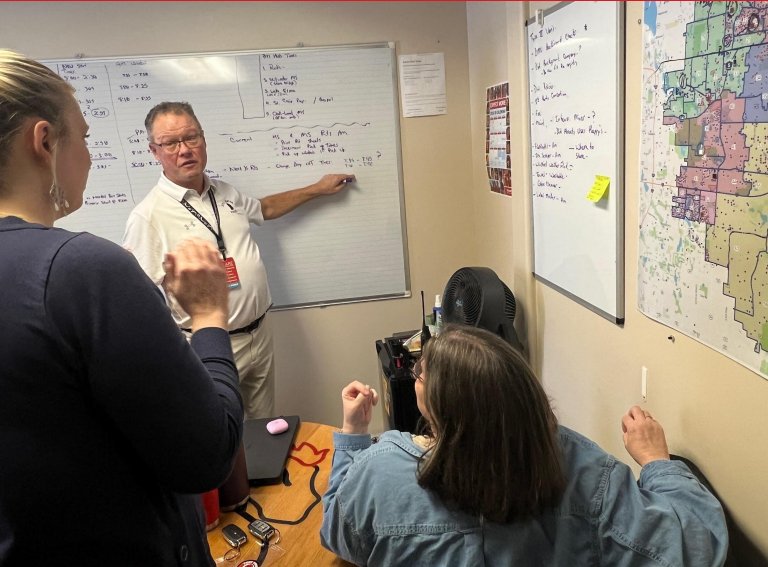
Total Transportation Expenditures

Actual 2020-21	Actual 2021-22	Actual 2022-23	Actual 2023-24	Actual 2024-25	Projected 2025-26*
\$8,335,669	\$7,095,924	\$11,956,361	\$12,696,526	\$14,022,609	\$13,454,419

**Good
News!**

Transportation Changes Are Paying Off

We're tracking to finish the year on budget
for the first time in 3 years



What's Changed Since February

- Internal staff built draft bus routes using existing rider data
- Created more efficient routes
- Simplified two tier busing model
- Created a transfer model for middle, high school, charter/private schools
 - District preK-5 students do not transfer



Commitment to later start times for our secondary students:

- All bus routes will start at same time, or later, than existing routes
- Revised model maintains (and in some cases shortens) existing bus route length

We heard
your
feedback!





Elementary Hours Remain The Same

2026-27

Elementary Hours:

7:45 a.m. -

2:15 p.m.

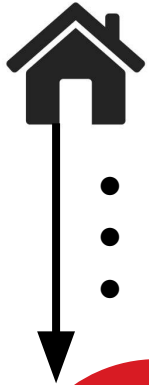
Keeping existing school hours at the elementary level:

- Maximizes cost savings
- Creates shorter afternoon wait times for Tier 2 students at their transfer locations
- Maintains busing model for special education students



Transfer Model: Morning

TIER 1



Nighborhood Bus Picks Up:

- Elementary School
- New Heights
- St. Croix Catholic

Elementary Schools



New Heights



St. Croix Catholic

TIER 2

Nighborhood Bus Picks Up:

- Middle School
- High School
- St. Croix Prep



Oak-Land Middle



Stillwater Middle



St. Croix Prep



Impact On Our Schools

Morning school drop off windows:

Elementary:

7:20 to 7:35 a.m.

Oak-Land:

8:20-8:30 a.m.

Stillwater Middle:

8:20-8:30 a.m.

High School:

8:05-8:15 a.m.

High school transfer site:

- K-12 charter/private students transferring
- More buses coming through
- Will require additional supervision between 8:05 and 8:20 a.m.



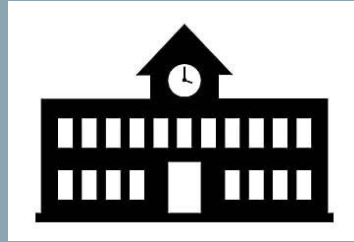
Transfer Model: Afternoon

TIER 1

**Elementary
Schools**



TIER 2: Transfers



High School
New Heights
St. Croix Prep
St. Croix Catholic



Transfer
Location =
**SMS and
OMS**



NORTH



SOUTH



Afternoon bus departure times:

Elementary:

2:25 p.m.

Oak-Land:

Wave 1 = 3:20-3:30 p.m.

Wave 2 = 3:30-3:35 p.m.

Stillwater Middle:

Wave 1 = 3:20-3:30 p.m.

Wave 2 = 3:30-3:35 p.m.

High School:

3:15-3:20 p.m.



Impact On Our Schools

Middle school transfer sites:

- High school students and K-12 charter/private students transferring
- More buses coming through in two separate waves
- Will require additional supervision until 3:35 p.m.



What Families Can Expect

- Redrawn bus routes
- Centralized bus stops
- Single pick-up and drop-off location
 - Joint custody exception
- Walk/no bus zones
 - **Secondary:** More than 2 miles (at state maximum)
 - **Elementary:** More than ½ mile (less than state maximum = 1 mile)
- Fuller buses (no buses scheduled over capacity)





Increased Efficiency

What Students Can Bring On The Bus

- Backpacks, small instruments
- Must fit comfortably on their lap

What Cannot Come On The Bus

- Larger instruments
 - Athletic equipment
 - Large school projects
- Larger items must be transported by families

Additional Riders (Friends)

- **Elementary:** Friends permitted, as space allows
- **Middle, High School & Charter/Private Schools:** Friends not permitted

Why These Changes:

More efficient use of buses | More reliable routes | Fewer routes needed overall



Impact On Charter/Private Schools

- Charter/private students ride with district students
- Charter/private students will transfer buses in AM and PM
- No busing for out-of-district students to charters and private schools

New school hours:

- **St. Croix Catholic**
8:20 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.
- **St. Croix Prep**
8:35 a.m. - 3:05 p.m.
- **New Heights**
8:10 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.



Internal Van Fleet

- **Priority:** Take over the highest cost routes from our vendor and run them in house
- Help mitigate mid-day coverage costs

Latest Update:

- 5 vans purchased
 - 2 being used by Special Education for shuttles at Bridge Transition and SAHS
- 1 driver hired and began driving routes on April 13
- Additional driver positions posted



Projected Cost Savings

**Total estimated savings
for 2026-27**

\$663,875





Communications Plan & Timeline

This Week:

- Communicating transportation changes for next year to families

Summer:

- Assign riders to routes
- Work with vendor to finalize routes

End of July:

- Bus information released to families

Be Sure To Opt-In For Busing

Families who haven't
opted in are not being
routed for fall

*Form is available in PowerSchool or
contact schoolbus@stillwaterschools.org*



Questions