

Ensuring Equitable Access: EATAC Recommendation Guide for Safe and Reliable Student Transportation

The Equitable Access to Transportation Advisory Council (EATAC) has released ten key recommendations for policymakers and transportation administrators to address the critical gaps in youth transportation access. These recommendations, based on extensive research and expert insights, provide a roadmap for creating a more equitable and accessible transportation system for all students.

1 Develop Dedicated Vulnerable Student Transportation Services:

Develop a transportation program specifically for children in foster care, ensuring they have timely, reliable, and consistent transportation to school and extracurricular activities, minimizing disruptions caused by placement changes. Update federal law to clarify which agency (child welfare/human services/education) has financial responsibility for ensuring stability in school transportation.



2 Create Community Transportation Hubs and Supervision Programs:

Set up transportation hubs in underserved neighborhoods with adult supervision (volunteer or paid) at bus stops and transit hubs to ensure safe, monitored spaces where students can gather and access transportation.

3 Launch Rural and Urban Transportation Programs:

Implement pilot programs for rural areas utilizing flexible vehicles, rideshare, or smaller buses while expanding subsidized public transit passes in urban areas to ensure all students, regardless of geography, have access to safe, reliable transportation.

4 Implement GPS Tracking and Communication Systems for Buses:

Introduce GPS tracking for school buses to allow parents and schools to monitor routes in real-time, ensuring timely communication of delays or route changes.

5 Expand Carpool and Rideshare Partnerships:

Organize school-based carpool programs and partner with rideshare companies like HopSkipDrive to fill transportation gaps for students in areas without reliable transportation options, especially those facing unique challenges such as foster care or homelessness.

6 Create Tiered, Income-Based Transportation Pricing Models:

Develop a sliding scale fee structure for supplemental transportation services, ensuring low-income families can access affordable options in areas where traditional school bus service is insufficient.



7 Implement Bullying Prevention and Safety Programs on Buses:

Provide training for bus drivers and staff on bullying prevention and safety, creating a secure environment for students and addressing behavioral issues that can occur during transport.

8 Promote Safer Routes and School Zones:

Advocate for traffic calming measures, such as speed humps and enhanced signage, around schools and work with local governments to improve infrastructure like sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks to make walking and biking safer and more viable for students.

9 Address Transportation Workforce Barriers:

Reduce barriers to becoming a school bus driver or youth transportation provider by streamlining licensing requirements and offering incentives like higher wages or training programs to combat driver shortages, ensuring reliable transportation staffing.

10 Advocate for Increased Transportation Funding and Research:

Advocate for increased funding for school transportation services, especially in underserved and rural areas, and conduct research on how transportation shortages contribute to absenteeism and the school-to-prison pipeline, particularly for at-risk youth. Additionally, conduct research and advocate for policy solutions that address how school bus driver shortages contribute to truancy and the school-to-prison pipeline. Explore solutions to build reliable transportation for all students to mitigate absenteeism, which disproportionately affects at-risk youth and leads to increased interactions with the juvenile justice system.

