

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF OPERATIONS

November 13, 2025

TO: The Honorable Ken Kuraya
Chairperson, Finance and Infrastructure Committee

FROM: Jesse Souki 
Deputy Superintendent of Operations

SUBJECT: Department of Education update on student transportation

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the mass route suspensions last year, the Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) has been proactively working with bus contractors, schools, and county partners to mitigate the effects of the ongoing driver workforce shortage. By exploring and utilizing alternative transportation methods, the Department has been able to maintain student access to schools despite the ongoing driver shortage.

2. DESCRIPTION

Status update on student transportation services as of Quarter 1, School Year (SY) 2025-2026.

3. UPDATE

The attached presentation is an update on student transportation services statewide as of Quarter 1, SY 2025-2026. This includes information on current school bus services, focusing on areas that are experiencing a severe lack of school bus drivers—Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii Island—and how the contractors are continuing to provide coverage.

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This presentation also includes updates and metrics on alternative transportation initiatives, such as the EXPRESS County Bus Pass Program and the GoKid Carpool Pilot.

JS:mo
Attachment

c: Assistant Superintendent, Office of Campus Operations and Support
Student Transportation Services Branch



HAWAII STATE **Department of Education**

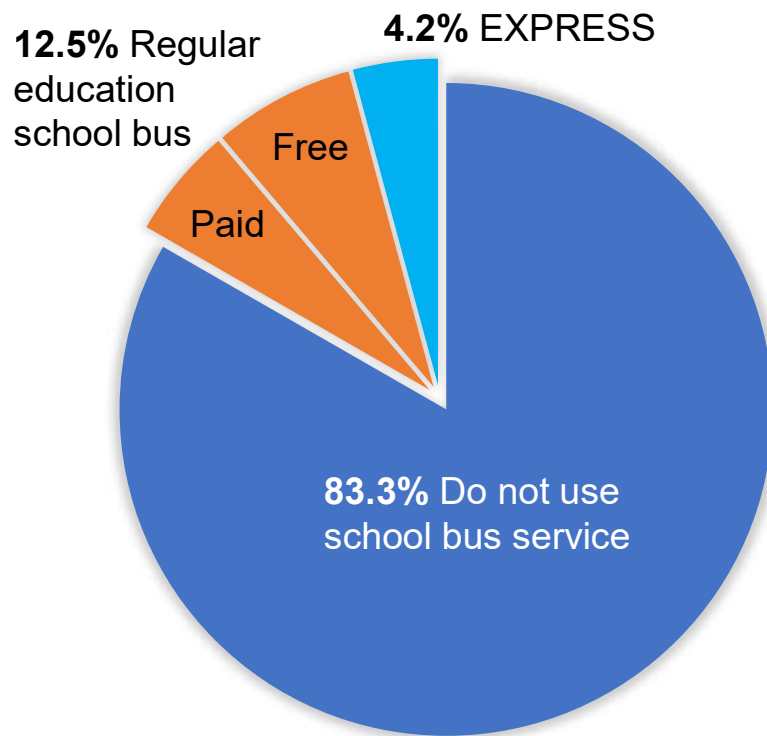
Agenda Item: Department of Education update on student transportation

Hawai'i State Board of Education
Finance and Infrastructure Committee
November 13, 2025

Jesse Souki, *Deputy Superintendent of Operations*
Sean S. Tajima, *Assistant Superintendent, Office of Campus Operations and Support*
Megan Omura, *Administrator, Student Transportation Services Branch*



Student ridership breakdown School Year 2025-2026



12.5% Regular education school bus

- Paid Riders – 8,387
- Free Riders – 10,637

19,024

4.2% EXPRESS county bus pass

6,307

Total

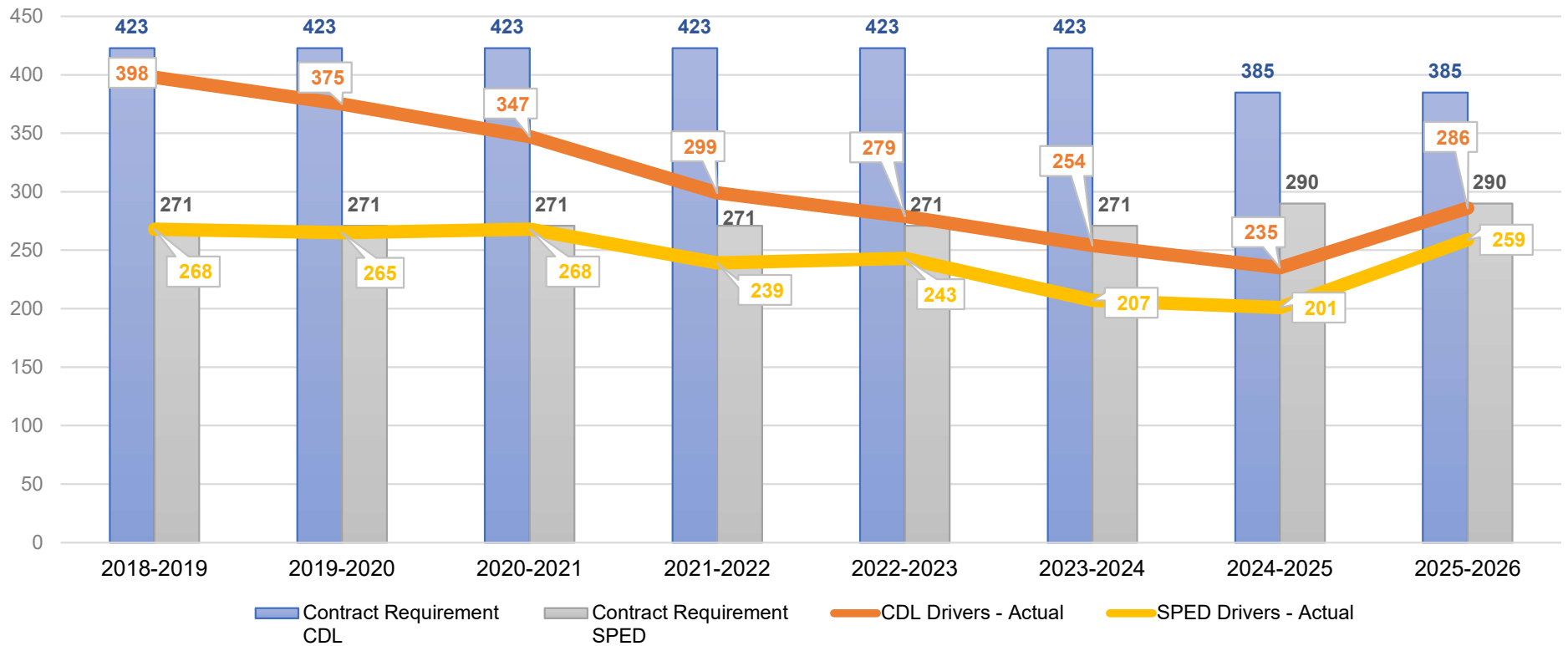
25,331

83.3% Do not use school bus service

126,615
students



Historical Driver Trend





OFFICE OF
Campus Operations and Support

O'AHU	MAUI	HAWAI'I ISLAND
• School bus routes in service at the end of school year 2024-2025 were reopened at the beginning of school year 2025-2026. • 98% of EXPRESS program participation is from O'ahu. • Route consolidations to address areas with low ridership and limited drivers. • 'Aiea-Moanalua-Radford Complex Area: Four motorcoaches from Polynesian Adventures are being utilized for school services. Reopened route for Radford servicing Ford Island due to limited city bus. • Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua Complex Area: Mililani Complex schools participating in carpool pilot.	• Two of four routes remain suspended from last school year. • Tiered route schedules added more service for Samuel E. Kalama Intermediate and King Kekaulike High. • Redistricting for Central Maui schools reduced school bus demand. • Increased demand for Kaiapuni (Hawaiian language immersion program) services have forced schools to reevaluate driver distribution. • Kekaulike Complex schools are participating in carpool pilot.	• One of four routes remain suspended from last school year. • Route consolidations have been implemented to address areas with low ridership and limited drivers. • Tiered route schedules added in more service for Pāhoā Elementary, Pāhoā High, and Kea'au High.



Driver recruitment efforts

- Starting pay \$25-27/hour for SPED van drivers; \$35/hour for CDL drivers (no experience).
- Paid training, guaranteed minimum of 22-25 hours, and sign-on bonuses between \$1,000 and \$3,000.
- Frequent job postings on company websites, Indeed, and ZipRecruiter to make applying easy and convenient.
- Paid partnerships with KHON2 and Pacific Media Group for ad space on TV and radio.
- Partnerships with the Hawai'i State Department of Education at school job fairs and career expos.

The image shows two recruitment flyers. The top flyer is from GTI Ground Transport, Incorporated, titled "WE'RE HIRING ALL LOCATIONS OAHU-MAUI-HILO". It lists three job categories: School Bus Drivers, School Van Drivers, and School Van Aides, each with specific requirements and starting pay. It also lists benefits like paid training, vacation, and insurance, and offers hiring incentives. The bottom flyer is from Roberts Hawaii, titled "SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS (CDL AND TYPE 3) AND SCHOOL BUS AIDES". It lists benefits such as paid training, vacation, medical, and insurance, and provides a QR code and contact information for applying.

GTI GROUND TRANSPORT INCORPORATED

WE'RE HIRING
ALL LOCATIONS
OAHU-MAUI-HILO

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

- At Least 21 Years Old
- At least 1 yr. of General Driving Experience
- Must Have CDL B or A License w/ P & S Endorsement (Willing to train/upgrade to CDL)
- Must meet all DOE and DOT Requirements
- Able to pass a PUC/DOT physical & drug screening(s)
- Part-Time Permanent Position
- Starting Pay \$35.00/hr school routes

SCHOOL VAN DRIVERS

- At Least 21 Years Old
- At least 1 yr. of General Driving Experience
- Type 3 License- NO CDL REQUIRED
- Must meet all DOE and DOT Requirements
- Able to pass a PUC/DOT physical & drug screening(s)
- Part-Time Permanent Position
- Starting Pay \$25.00/hr school routes

SCHOOL VAN AIDES

- At Least 18 Years Old w/valid form of identification
- Must meet all DOE and DOT Requirements
- Able to pass a drug screening(s)
- Part-Time Permanent Position
- Starting Pay \$22.00/hr school routes

BENEFITS:

- PAID TRAINING
- PAID VACATION AND HOLIDAYS
- COMPANY PAID LIFE INSURANCE MEDICAL, DRUG, VISION & DENTAL INSURANCE
- 401K & PROFIT SHARING

INCENTIVES:

OFFERING HIRING INCENTIVES:

- \$ 3,000.00 - CDL School Bus Drivers
- 1,500.00 - School Van Drivers
- 1,000.00 - School Van Aides

APPLICATIONS **GTI WEBSITE**

EMAIL: JOBS@GROUNDTRANSPORTINC.COM
WWW.GROUNDTRANSPORTINC.COM

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS (CDL AND TYPE 3) AND SCHOOL BUS AIDES

Benefits

- Paid Training
- Paid Vacation and Holiday's
- Medical · Drug · Vision · Dental
- Life Insurance
- 401k Retirement
- Employee Stock Ownership
- Incentives and Sign On Bonuses and MUCH MORE!

To Apply

Log on to
www.RobertsHawaii.com/Careers
or call (808) 539-9414

Sample recruitment flyers from bus contractors



EXPRESS County Bus Program Quarter 1, School Year 2025-2026

Statewide Participation – 6,307 students

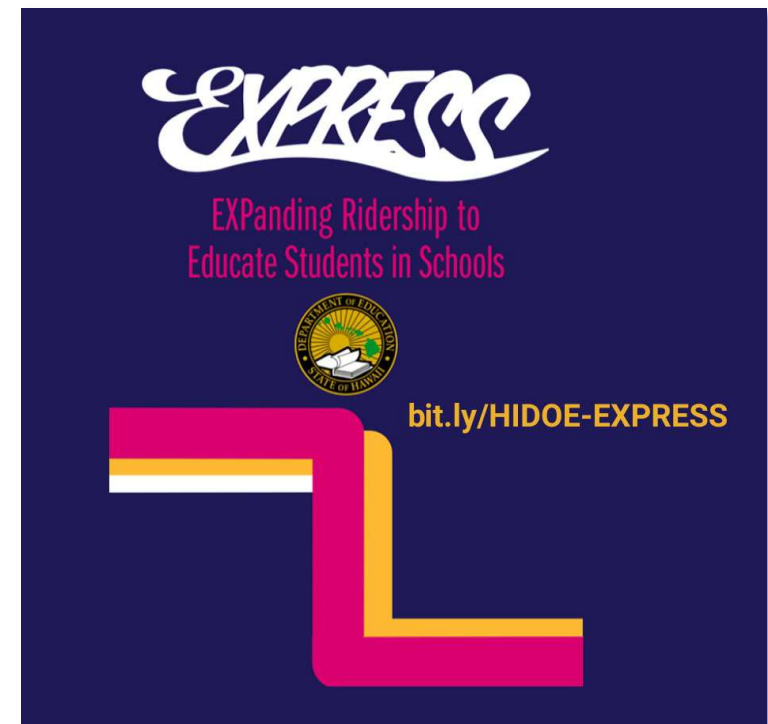
- Kaua'i – 99 students
- O'ahu – 6,208 students
- Maui County and Hawai'i County are fare-free

Middle/Intermediate School Participation – 694 students

- 11% of total EXPRESS applicants
- New option this school year
- Middle/intermediate schools still have school bus service
- Honolulu District schools have highest participation

High School Participation – 5,613 students

- 89% of total EXPRESS applicants
- 14 O'ahu high schools do not use school bus service
- Leeward O'ahu District schools have highest participation



EXPRESS logo



GoKid carpool pilot

Central O'ahu (Mililani Complex)	Upcountry Maui (Kekaulike Complex)
2.5% average participation	3.2% average participation
Top participating schools: Mililani Uka Elementary and Mililani Waena Elementary	Top participating schools: Pā'ia Elementary and Pukalani Elementary

- 260 families (3%) have registered for GoKid.
- Parent Teacher Student Association involvement has been helpful with spreading the word and building trust in the program.
- Live on-island support from GoKid has also been helpful.

gokid

Mililani and Kekaulike Complex Carpool Program

Empowering Parents to Carpool to School!

Our school is partnering with **GoKid** to offer school parents an easy way to find and organize carpools. With **GoKid**, parents can connect with nearby school families, set up carpools to school and after-school activities, and manage carpools in real-time. **GoKid** helps save parents time and gas, reduce traffic, and build a stronger school community.

Solving school transportation while building community

Preview a Walkthrough

How It Works

- **Getting Started** – Families who enroll will receive an invitation email over the summer to create a GoKid account linked to our school.
- **Find Families** – Use the school map to find nearby school families and start up a chat about carpooling.
- **Create Carpools** – Easily create and manage carpools with school families.
- **Track & Manage** – Follow your child's carpool in real-time for added peace of mind.

Sample GoKid flyer