



# NEWS

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

For Immediate Release

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## District Transportation Strategies Take Hold in Advance of the Start of School, September 3<sup>rd</sup>

PITTSBURGH August 30, 2021 – District transportation strategies to address an unsurmountable student seat gap caused by a national driver shortage are rapidly taking hold. This evening, families of nearly 650 students were notified that their students fall in the seat gap. This is down from the close to 11,000 student seat gap the District faced at the start of summer break. The District anticipates this number will drop daily as new drivers are cleared and trained to service students. Families in the seat gap are eligible to receive a daily reimbursement for transporting their students to and from school until the District can secure a driver for the route. Families, who are unable to drive, may also receive Port Authority ConnectTixs.

“I want to thank our PPS families for their flexibility as our transportation team works expeditiously with carriers to secure transportation for students who need it,” said Superintendent Anthony Hamlet. “We have come a long way from the 11,000 student seat gap we were facing: even still, we know we must do everything we can to provide every student access to instruction on the first day.”

The District has taken multiple steps to address the impact of the national driver shortage, including:

- Increasing walk zones to align with state and Board policy;
- Expanding the use of Port Authority transportation;
- Changing school start and end times;
- Adding additional bus carriers;
- Offering sign-on bonuses to attract new drivers; and
- Asking eligible families to release their child’s seat on a yellow bus if they can transport their child to and from school.

*Below is the message shared this evening with families.*



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*Hello PPS Families-*

*As of today, August 30, 2021, your child falls into our "seat gap," which means we have a route and bus for your child but need a driver. We are working diligently to get drivers cleared and trained to service our students that fall in this gap. As of right now, you are eligible to receive a daily reimbursement for transporting your child to and from school until the District can secure a driver. If you are unable to drive your student, Port Authority Connectixs are also available. Please visit [www.pghschools.org/releaseyourseat](http://www.pghschools.org/releaseyourseat), submit a Let's Talk ticket, or call the Transportation Department at 412-529-8125. If you cannot transport your child with your own vehicle or through Port Authority, please get in touch with the transportation department to identify additional solutions. This information was also shared with your school Principal. An additional update will be sent on the evening of Wednesday, September 1.*

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