

Transport and Feed Students



We can help students and their families have full access to basic education by updating the Student Transportation Allocation Reporting System (STARS) formula to cover all costs related to student transportation.

Expanding the prospect for more students to have access to school meals at no cost to their families so they are equipped to learn is a practical way to demonstrate our commitment to equitable education for all students.

Why is it important?

Covering student transportation costs and expanding access to school meals is essential to ensuring equitable access to education. These initiatives eliminate barriers, promote equity, and support healthy development while fostering an effective learning environment. This commitment not only benefits individual students but also strengthens the community and invests in future generations.

01 Equal Access to Education

To level the playing field and give all students a chance to succeed, public schools should provide access to transportation and school meals. These supports increase the chances for every student to have equal access to education regardless of their zip code or family income.

02 Updated STARS Formula

Updating the STARS formula will benefit districts of every size and location. A revised formula is the key to ensuring districts can transport students safely and reliably. ¹

03 Expanding School Meals

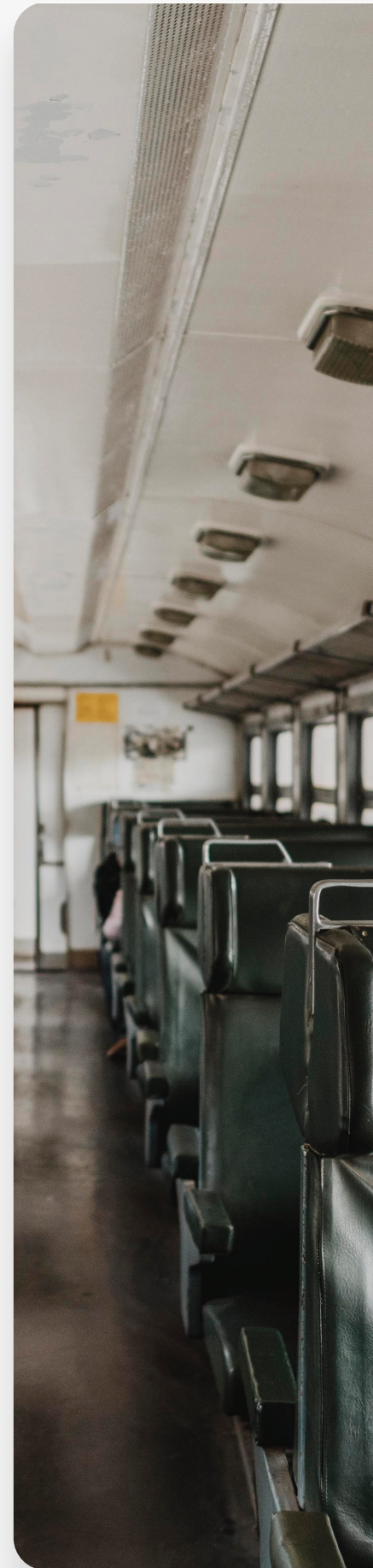
Increasing access to school meals, breakfast and lunch, provides students with the nutrition necessary for successful learning. Hunger should not be a barrier to education, and school meals play a vital role in addressing this issue. ²

04 Improving Learning Environments

Students who are well-fed have more energy and focus available for learning, which leads to more engagement and improved performance. If provided without stigma, nourished bodies can lead to nourished relationships. Eating together can, by itself, build community at a time when students are feeling disconnected.

05 Reducing Barriers

Lack of transportation and access to meals creates barriers to learning. Eliminating these barriers creates more opportunities for students to excel academically and socially.





06 Ensuring Equity

Ensuring all students have access to transportation and meals is about fairness and opportunity. Every student deserves the opportunity to attend school with as few barriers as possible. ³

07 Healthy Development

School meals give students the nutrition they need for healthy development. Well-nourished students are generally better prepared for learning, both physically and mentally. ⁴

08 Reducing Absenteeism

Students are more likely to attend school regularly when they have reliable transportation and access to meals. ⁵

09 Supporting Families

Covering transportation costs can lead to increased attendance by helping students without reliable transportation to get to school. This support will have a big impact for struggling families and promote consistent attendance. ⁶

10 Community Well-being

Supporting transportation and meals for students benefits the students and their communities, fosters community spirit, and elevates investment in future generations.

What can school board members do to advocate for transporting and feeding students?

- ✔ Meet with your superintendent to familiarize yourself with the needs of the schools in your district.
- ✔ Connect the need to provide transportation and meals to students to its positive impact on teaching and learning.
- ✔ Schedule meetings with legislators whose district includes your schools.
 - Share connections you found in your school district between transporting and feeding students and learning. Consider having positive examples to contrast with your negative anecdotes.
- ✔ Engage students in the advocacy process. Students can also meet with legislators and provide testimony during the legislative session.

For additional recommendations on effectively and persuasively communicating the importance of transporting and feeding students to legislators:

✉ Please contact us at strategicadvocacy@wssda.org

Supporting Research

¹ Student Transportation Allocation Reporting System (stars). Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (n.d.). <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/student-transportation/student-transportation-allocation-reporting-system-stars>

² Pearce, A., & Neal, A. (2023, September 26). Challenges and opportunities of providing free school meals for all. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/challenges-and-opportunities-of-providing-free-school-meals-for-all/>

³ OECD (2012), Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264130852-en>

⁴ UNESCO. (2023, February 8). Ready to learn and thrive: What you need to know about the global report on School Health and Nutrition. UNESCO.org. www.unesco.org/en/articles/ready-learn-and-thrive-what-you-need-know-about-global-report-school-health-and-nutrition?TSPD_101_R0=080713870fab200016fc-fbdfe92105629fd3c08f4f85a2568bc50a-6faa6396a4628ac3bb37f3391088b45fe-271430009b5009ea61ba4f731769e8f5c244d5a24a-e0c90c46-0861efd4f0f64e3cc9ec019635c4286da5c-250fca3a7da7521ca5d

⁵ Sanderson, D. (2022, July 19). How Does School Bus Transportation Affect Student Attendance and Achievement? Washington DC; Research on Education Access and Choice.

⁶ Girouard, D., & FitzSimons, C. (2019, October). Reducing Barriers to Consuming School Meals. Washington DC; Food Research; Action Center.