

# County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

County Government Center, East Wing  
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San Jose, California 95110  
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October 7, 2021

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors  
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

From: Rocio Luna, Deputy County Executive DS  
RL

Subject: Off-Agenda Report: Chronic School Absenteeism in Santa Clara County: Student Transportation

At the August 17, 2021 Board meeting (Item No. 24), Supervisor Lee requested an off-agenda report related to the feasibility of providing public transportation for elementary, middle, and high school students, as one way to decrease barriers to school attendance. A request was made to identify the number of students needing and receiving transportation services, the type of transportation being provided (contracted, school-operated, public), the number of students not qualifying for transportation and the rationale; student enrollment at the elementary, middle, and high school levels; and the number of housing insecure students. This report responds to the request.

## I. Transportation for Students in Elementary, Middle, and High School

The state of California does not require school districts to provide transportation to students who live far from school. School districts determine whether and how to provide transportation to their students. However, there are exceptions. School districts are required to provide students with transportation if they fall into the following categories: students with disabilities, attending federally sanctioned schools, and experiencing homelessness. Funding to pay the cost of transportation is now significantly reduced for all districts. In 2013/2014 the State of California restructured how transportation is funded.<sup>1</sup> Transportation costs were shifted to be funded within the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and detailed expenditure and ridership data from districts were discontinued. The overall result is that most school districts now have reduced capacity to provide their students with school transportation options.

Because school districts are no longer required to provide detailed data on the numbers of students provided transportation based on qualification or need, these data are not readily available. To collect this type of data from 32 school districts, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (COE) would be required to survey each school district at a time when many are challenged to normalize in-person instruction while balancing COVID safety.

<sup>1</sup> Report from the California Legislative Analyst's Office (2014). <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2014/education/school-transportation/school-transportation-022514.pdf>.

## II. Total Number of Students Enrolled at the Elementary, Middle, and High School Levels in Santa Clara County, 2020/2021 School Year:

	Grades Served	# Schools	Total Enrollment	Enrollment K-5	Enrollment 6-8	Enrollment 9-12
			Includes charters schools for all districts except SCCOE & non-public, non-sectarian schools (all districts)			
School Year		2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21
<b>Totals</b>	<b>K-12</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>242,008</b>	<b>104,570</b>	<b>55,206</b>	<b>82,232</b>

Data Source: [DataQuest- Enrollment Data, 2020/2021](#)

- The California Department of Education has not published its 2021/2022 enrollment data.
- School district specific enrollment is included in the appendix to this report.

## III. The Number of Housing Insecure Students:

The table below provides counts of Santa Clara County students experiencing homelessness for the two most recent school years. The experience of homelessness is defined as students qualifying for McKinney-Vento housing services and supports. (The McKinney-Vento Act is federal legislation that ensures the children's and youth's right to enroll, attend, participate fully, and succeed in school.)<sup>2</sup> An overall 13 percent decrease in the number of students experiencing homelessness was observed, from 2,896 students in School Year 2019-20 to 2,518 students in School Year 2020-2021.

	SLS	# of Homeless Youth 2019-20	# of Homeless Youth 2020-21
School District Totals (excludes charters)	16	2,896	2,518

Source: Santa Clara County Office of Education

However, out of 32 school districts, 16 experienced an increase in the number of students experiencing homelessness. Half of the school districts experienced an increase of 1-5 more students with homelessness: Cambrian, Campbell Union, Campbell Union High, Cupertino, Los Gatos Union Elementary, Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High, Mt. Pleasant Elementary, and Mt. View-Los Altos Union. Districts that experienced higher increases in homelessness (range = 6-161) included: Franklin McKinley, Fremont Union High, Gilroy Unified, Los Altos Elementary, Luther Burbank, Morgan Hill Unified, Mt. View Whisman, and COE.

Other References:

- California Department of Education (2021). [Stronger Together: School Services - Health Services & School Nursing \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Education on McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431-11435). [Homeless Education - Specialized Programs \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)

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cc: Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer  
James R. Williams, County Counsel  
Tiffany Lennear, Acting Clerk of the Board  
Chief Board Aides  
Erica Kelly, Principal Budget & Policy Analyst  
Agenda Review Coordinators

**Appendix**  
**Santa Clara County School District Enrollment by Grade Level, and Students with Housing Needs**

District	Grades Served	# Schools <sup>1</sup>	SLS <sup>2</sup>	Total Enrollment <sup>1</sup>	Enrollment K-5 <sup>1</sup>	Enrollment 6-8 <sup>1</sup>	Enrollment 9-12 <sup>1</sup>	Homeless 2019-20 <sup>3</sup>	Homeless 2020-21 <sup>3</sup>
			Schools partnering w/ School Linked Services =Y	Includes charters schools for all districts except SCCOE & non-public, nonsectarian schools (all districts)				McKinney-Vento	McKinney-Vento
School Year		2020-21		2020-21	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>K-12</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>242,008</b>	<b>104,570</b>	<b>55,206</b>	<b>82,232</b>	<b>2,896</b>	<b>2,518</b>
Alum Rock Union Elementary	K-8	28	Y	9,850	6,067	3,783	0	112	47
Berryessa Union Elementary	K-8	15		6,534	4,301	2,233	0	17	15
Cambrian	K-8	7		3,172	2,070	1,102	0	4	9
Campbell Union	K-8	14	Y	6,622	4,536	2,086	0	33	36
Campbell Union High	9-12	8	Y	8,606	0	0	8,606	26	30
Cupertino Union	K-8	26		15,663	10,193	5,470	0	8	9
East Side Union High	9-12	27	Y	25,946	211	78	25,657	822	386
Evergreen Elementary	K-8	17		9,789	6,189	3,600	0	37	14
Franklin-McKinley Elementary	K-8	22	Y	8,980	5,904	3,076	0	84	130
Fremont Union High	9-12	7	Y	10,836	0	0	10,836	6	13
Gilroy Unified	K-12	16	Y	11,360	4,753	2,633	3,974	159	199
Lakeside Joint	K-6	2		66	65	1	0	0	0
Loma Prieta Joint Union Elementary	K-8	3		441	247	194	0	0	0
Los Altos Elementary	K-8	11		3,576	2,190	1,386	0	0	7
Los Gatos Union Elementary	K-8	5		2,710	1,564	1,146	0	0	1
Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High	9-12	3		3,470	0	0	3,470	1	2
Luther Burbank	K-8	1	Y	475	288	187	0	7	13

District	Grades Served	# Schools <sup>1</sup>	SLS <sup>2</sup>	Total Enrollment <sup>1</sup>	Enrollment K-5 <sup>1</sup>	Enrollment 6-8 <sup>1</sup>	Enrollment 9-12 <sup>1</sup>	Homeless 2019-20 <sup>3</sup>	Homeless 2020-21 <sup>3</sup>
Milpitas Unified	K-12	15	Y	10,413	4,911	2,215	3,287	277	268
Moreland	K-8	9		4,364	2,903	1,461	0	6	4
Morgan Hill Unified	K-12	15	Y	8,894	4,023	2,111	2,760	533	694
Mount Pleasant Elementary	K-8	6	Y	1,929	1,249	680	0	17	20
Mountain View Whisman	K-8	12	Y	4,753	3,291	1,462	0	135	166
Mountain View-Los Altos Union High	9-12	4	Y	4,563	0	0	4,563	36	37
Oak Grove Elementary	K-8	19	Y	9,362	6,287	3,075	0	50	29
Orchard Elementary	K-8	1	Y	815	543	272	0	9	5
Palo Alto Unified	K-12	20		10,754	4,269	2,416	4,069	35	24
San Jose Unified	K-12	46	Y	28,710	12,084	6,730	9,896	208	86
Santa Clara County Office of Education	K-12	26		1,213	384	180	649	141	186
Santa Clara Unified	K-12	29		14,808	7,229	3,114	4,465	112	68
Saratoga Union Elementary	K-8	4		1,657	926	731	0	0	0
Sunnyvale	K-8	11		5,950	4,206	1,744	0	15	15
Union Elementary	K-8	10		5,727	3,687	2,040	0	6	5
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Data Sources:

1= California Department of Education's Dataquest for the most current school year available (2020-21).

2= Department of Behavioral Health Services Department.

3= Santa Clara County Office of Education.