



Poudre School District Early Childhood Education Program

Request for
Transportation Waiver
Grant Years 2020-2025
School Year: 2023-2024

Grant Number: 08CH011826
Legal Name of Grantee: Poudre School District
Name of Authorized Official: Rebecca Benedict
Title: Director of Early Childhood

1. Number of Children Served: Head Start: 275 Children
Early Head Start: 108
2. Number of Children Provided Transportation Services:
Head Start: 275 Children (typical year) Early Head Start: Zero Children
A. Using Grantee Owned or Leased Vehicles: Yes
B. Through Grantee Contracted Services: No
3. Proposed Number of Children who will be covered by Waiver:
Head Start: 150-200 children (can vary daily based on family needs)
Early Head Start: Zero Children
4. Requesting Waiver of:
Bus Monitor requirement for busses servicing less than 5 children (45CFR Chapter VIII, 1303.72)
5. Waiver applies to: Grantee_ Delegate

Narrative: Poudre School District (PSD) respectfully submits the Transportation Waiver request for the Bus Monitor requirement. (Standard 1303.70, section C, specifically 1303.72(a)(4))

Local Background Information: Poudre School district has been the grantee for Early Childhood Education for 55 years. The program serves approximately 1100 children annually. Children are funded by Early/Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program, Tuition-based preschool, special



Poudre School District Early Childhood Education Program

education funds, Stabilization and Circle Grant dollars, and local district dollars. Benefits include high-quality integrated classrooms for children and in-kind support including building use, facilities maintenance, nutrition, health, and transportation support, and other district staff support. This support allows the district to use most of the Federal Head Start and Early Head Start funds to directly support children and families.

Transportation needs are high for 3-5-year-old children within ECE. These preschool children are currently served in 37 integrated classrooms. Preschool students whose addresses are outside of their neighborhood school's walk areas of more than one mile from the school are transported by PSD school buses. Bus services exist at all 21 elementary schools with preschool classrooms within the 1,856 square miles encompassing the school district catchment.

Currently, 143 preschool students are transported on 74 of 125 total district transportation runs. The breakdown of students is 79 HS, 24 ECSE, and 40 CPP. Nineteen runs, on 11 different routes have five more early childhood students. These routes would require additional staffing based on the approval of this waiver. This waiver allows us to save on staffing costs for the remaining 55 runs.

During a typical year, we serve 150-180 HS students, and another 50-60 Special education students, but this year, our program is still struggling with post-pandemic conditions including a lack of drivers and a qualified workforce to fill these transportation jobs. The children are placed on existing bus runs, resulting in operating efficiencies and alignment with the district's promotion of Pre-K through 5th-grade integration and provision of inclusive services.



Poudre School District Early Childhood Education Program

The Early Childhood Program serves children through several layered funding sources. Only children with Head Start, and/or McKinney Vento status, and/or Integrated Services-funded with transportation services written into their Individualized Education Plan are transported. Students attending their neighborhood schools have priority for transportation on a space-available basis. Families who opt to go to schools, not within their neighborhoods are not eligible for transportation. Costs for transportation are applied to the appropriate funding source based on the children served. District Transportation charges ECE for mileage only, and at a lower than the standard rate per mile; it also donates some miles, providing Non-Federal Share for the program. The district pays the salaries for drivers, bus aids, routers, and dispatchers.

The costs of personnel are significant and are the primary obstacle to compliance. Currently, under the waiver, we only fund staff members for 11 routes. These 11 routes average 5.68 hours per day, \$21.70 an hour for bus monitors only (drivers not included in this figure because they are calculated for non-federal share), for 133 days. This current cost is \$180,323.52. Poudre School District has agreed to pay for these bus monitors and the cost for preschool children is used as a non-federal share. Our Transportation Department has found that they can manage up to 4 ECE children per run without significantly impacting run time and without needing a bus attendant's assistance. Runs with over 4 children create difficulties in managing time and bus runs, so assistance is needed to secure the students in a timely manner.



Without the waiver, the costs for these employees would far surpass the Head Start allocations. With 63 routes carrying preschoolers for 133 days per year, at an average of 5.32 hours per day, and with an estimated hourly rate for bus monitors of \$21.70/hour, the estimated annual cost for a monitor on each run is approximately \$967,305.01. The Early Childhood budget does not have the funds needed for this purpose and these regulations surpass what is required for our elementary students. This is why our district is requesting the waiver.

The EC Program and the Transportation department jointly propose that the district require bus attendants on only the runs serving 5 or more young children. The waiver request is to continue running the remaining runs between 1 and 4 preschool students without a bus attendant, as the driver can support up to 4 students. The EC Program is committed to transporting children safely. We know from experience that providing support on the runs that most need assistance is adequate and financially manageable.

Policy Council: Policy Council supports and appreciates program efforts to increase the level of safety while transporting our children and approves the Transportation Waiver request. Policy Council approval was granted on : (pending March Meeting)

Policy Council Chair Signature: _____

Early Childhood Director Signature: _____