



STUDENT MOBILITY SCHOLARSHIPS PILOT PROGRAM

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LACK OF TRANSPORTATION AND SCHOOL CHOICE

Although Michigan allows inter-district choice, the increased travel time and lack of transportation is a barrier for low-income families, especially those in high-need urban areas. Most districts that accept non-resident students do not offer transportation assistance beyond possibly picking students up at an established bus stop.

- The Detroit school district's poor track record of student achievement has prompted most students to find somewhere else to get an education.
- **Three out of 10 Detroit parents said transportation barriers limit their ability to choose a safer or higher-performing school**, according to a 2014 Center on Reinventing Public Education [survey](#).
- Only [one-third of Michigan public charter schools](#) provide transportation to the school door.
- Recently, a few growing companies have given parents the digital tools to hire [qualified drivers](#) to take their children to school and extracurricular activities. Although this has been marketed at affluent companies, the concept could be expanded to help more economically challenged students as well.

SOLUTION: HELPING FAMILIES ACCESS THE BEST SCHOOLS

Level the playing field by offering transportation scholarships to the neediest families so they can send their children to schools - traditional, charter or private - that best fits their needs outside their assigned zone. Eligible parents would receive a limited-use digital debit account for restricted use to access transportation to and from school

Student Eligibility

- Free and reduced lunch income status
- Student lives less than 1.5 miles from school (distance at which districts are not required to transport resident students)
- Resident of a defined urban, rural or suburban region

Qualified Providers

- School districts and charter schools could receive pooled scholarship funding to expand routes or operate smaller vehicles
- Public transit operators
- State-approved ridesharing services, possible partnership with "rideshare for kids" company

Funding Oversight

- Parents, school staff and the Michigan Department of Treasury could monitor ride usage and account balance.
- Ridesharing apps could be programmed to receive scholarship funds directly and limit usage to predetermined routes to and from school.

Program Revenue

- Scholarships serving nearly 700 students in the first year could be paid for with an annual **legislative appropriation of \$1 million**
- Supplemental funding through dollar-for dollar tax credit on donations to state-authorized nonprofit, up to the capped amount

IMPACT

Student Mobility Scholarships would increase equitable access to schools, put parents in charge of their children's education and enable public and private operators to compete fairly, encouraging greater efficiency and innovation.

OUR CONTACT INFORMATION

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