

ILEA Sept 24, 2025 - Online Public Comment

Lindsey Cornett	<p>Please do NOT divert transportation resources away from our traditional public schools toward charter schools. Charter schools were founded with the understanding that certain public resources would not be available to them, and if they can't figure out how to offer those services themselves, that was a failure of planning and organization on their part. Instead, the city should put the full weight of its resources behind fully outfitting Rebuilding Stronger as conceived, including safe & efficient bus transportation and improved infrastructure for walkers/bikers across the district. --Fountain Square resident and parent of 3 IPS students since 2019 (William McKinley School 39 and Harshman Middle School)</p>
Jonelle Chalmers	<p>We are at a tipping point in Indianapolis. Are we going to continue to have thriving public schools that are open to all? Or are we going to continue to divide and divide, so that we end up with a few desirable schools where only wealthy people with flexible jobs can send their children to school?</p> <p>Sharing transportation without limitation could lead to a situation like in Ohio where public schools are unable to provide yellow bus transportation for public school students because of a mandate to provide transportation for private schools. https://www.ideastream.org/education/2025-09-08/thousands-of-ohio-students-left-without-a-school-bus-ride-as-private-school-transport-expands</p> <p>I am primarily concerned about safety and optimization of resources with these decisions. To ensure resources are allocated fairly and transparently, these decisions should be made by an elected board. An elected unified board will ensure local control and accountability.</p> <p>With RBS, if we chose a school outside of our zone, we, as parents, are responsible for transportation. There is no reason that this rule should not apply to people who chose charter schools. Our traditional public schools are diverse and every student has many choices within their zones to find a school that is best for them and receive transportation to that school. We should not demand that taxpayers pay for transportation to an unlimited number of options. This will only make fewer resources available to students and increase the length of their bus rides. This is a lose/lose proposition.</p>

	<p>Some sort of distance limit will be required to ensure that students aren't on the bus for extended periods of time. Longer routes will only make it harder to find qualified bus drivers and increase stress on everyone involved in the process. IPS is the only party involved in this process who has navigated large, complex environments. Charter school leaders have smaller schools that cover smaller geographic areas. Just as with RBS, there need to be limitations to the area students can be provided with bus transportation on the taxpayers' dime. We should not be bussing students across the city when there are so many other options closer to their home.</p> <p>I'm concerned about mixed aged busses and younger students being bussed with middle and high schoolers without an adequate number of supervisory adults. This creates a lot of safety issues. Transportation hubs also create safety concerns with large numbers of students waiting for a bus somewhere that isn't their neighborhood.</p> <p>Our school board was elected to manage our schools. They need to have full access to resources and broad decision making authority to do their job. Democratically elected school boards are the key to ensuring safe, accessible, equitable public schools.</p>
Corben Havener	<p>Accountability is held through elections. It is disturbing to hear of this closed door meeting proposing an all mayor appointed school board. Decision around transportations should be made by people who are electorally accountable as these are our public schools, and these are our assets.</p>
Kristen Phair	<p>On behalf of the IPS Parent Council, an organization representing over 400 community members—including parents, caregivers, and public-school advocates across the district—we strongly oppose any plan to divest IPS of managing its transportation services.</p> <p>Further divesting IPS of its management of transportation services would be disruptive for our children. This year, IPS safely transports over 20,000 students, including those with special needs and unhoused students. In addition, the district carefully designs walk-paths to ensure the safest possible routes for students who walk to school.</p> <p>Currently, IPS provides free transportation to any school that is an Innovation Partner housed in an IPS building, and heavily subsidized transportation to</p>

Innovation Schools in their own buildings, requiring them to cover only about two-thirds of the actual cost. The district has the infrastructure, scale, and expertise to manage these services efficiently, creating economies of scale and enabling district-wide planning that is simply not feasible in a fragmented, competitive market.

The IPS elected board already manages this complex logistical challenge. Through the Rebuilding Stronger plan, they have created four enrollment zones and overhauled the transportation system to reduce wasted routes, save money, and increase efficiency. These proactive steps demonstrate the board's strategic vision and governance capabilities.

While IPS partners with IndyGo for high school students, the district's yellow bus fleet remains a foundational service for younger students. To ensure equitable access to education, all public funds—including those for transportation—should flow through the elected board, providing a single, comprehensive system that serves all students, regardless of school type.

Currently, transportation is overseen directly by district staff, meaning parents can raise concerns with officials accountable to the public. Privatizing buses would place parents in a less transparent system where service decisions are motivated by profit, not student safety or community trust. Outsourcing could lead to cost-cutting measures that jeopardize safety, lock the district into inflexible contracts, and make it difficult to return transportation in-house even if service quality declines.

The most sensible approach is to include charter schools under the IPS transportation umbrella. This will be cheaper for charters, eliminate piecemeal services, and ensure all students benefit from a publicly accountable system. While charters should contribute financially, they would participate within the IPS framework—preserving efficiency, equity, and oversight for all students.

In short: IPS transportation works, it's accountable, and it's essential. Privatization would threaten safety, transparency, equity, and ultimately affordability. Keeping services under IPS management ensures that all students—district-run and charter alike—receive the reliable, safe transportation they deserve.

	<p>Thank you, Kristen Phair on behalf of the IPS Parent Council</p>
<p>Kate Brumbaugh</p>	<p>Our family has three kids attending three different schools in our zone and we are dependent on IPS transportation. Our daughter attends Northwest Middle School, which is 8 miles from our home, so we are incredibly grateful for the reliable bus that takes her to and from school. We are also thankful that IPS provides after-school activity buses, allowing students to participate in sports and clubs, who otherwise wouldn't have access to these enriching experiences and life-giving relationships.</p> <p>We appreciate the accurate and user-friendly First View app for the bus. It is extremely helpful to track the bus and know how much time we have until it arrives as well as being notified when our kids are dropped off on the return trip.</p> <p>Our kids have always felt safe on the bus and their only complaint is that the trips are long as the bus weaves through neighborhoods. For our middle and high school students, we believe that bus stops could be consolidated so students would walk more, but have a more efficient and shorter route. Similarly, we are in favor of the proposed Community Transportation Hubs that would allow for students to have a safe and central location to wait for the bus and for a shorter ride to school.</p> <p>We believe that all public funds, especially those for transportation, need to be funneled through our elected and publicly accountable school board, to assure a unified, comprehensive system that equally serves all students. We believe our IPS school board has already done extensive research and work towards an effective transportation plan as a part of Rebuilding Stronger and we would encourage the ILEA to rely on these prior efforts.</p>
<p>Amanda Nyamutora</p>	<p>Too often, the students who are most marginalized lose critical supports, including access to transportation. Several years ago, our district starting using IndyGo as a way to save money regarding transportation. Since that was implemented, I have spent multiple full days during the summer ensuring that students could navigate and access IndyGo safely. I have also spent several hours making phone calls on behalf of families regarding transportation because I am committed to ensuring that all public school students have</p>

	<p>reliable access to transportation to school. Making transportation available and accessible to all public school students is essential for our district, and I do not believe our students should continue to suffer the consequences due to underfunding of busses. I have witnessed students miss multiple days of school due to transportation challenges within the district which takes away from students' academic success in the classroom. This is unacceptable. As concerned citizens, we must ensure that all students have adequate access to transportation, which is vital for their academic success.</p>
<p>Andrew Hart</p>	<p>Proposal for Partnership Between The Oaks Academy and Indianapolis Public Schools</p> <p>Shared Vision</p> <p>The Oaks Academy and Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) share a commitment to enriching the lives of Indianapolis students by providing equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. Field trips are an essential part of this vision, offering students hands-on experiences that connect academic learning with the cultural, historic, and civic life of our city. By working together, The Oaks and IPS can strengthen opportunities for all students while modeling collaborative partnership across schools.</p> <p>Proposed Partnership</p> <p>The Oaks Academy seeks to establish a formal partnership with IPS beginning in January 2026 to provide safe, reliable transportation for field trips. Under this agreement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Service Structure: IPS will provide bus transportation for The Oaks Academy's field trips. ● Fee Model: Services will be offered on a fee basis, with costs negotiated between The Oaks Academy and IPS in advance. ● Scheduling: The Oaks will provide IPS with its annual field trip calendar by fall 2025 to allow for efficient planning and coordination. <p>Operational Considerations</p> <p>We recognize that operational challenges such as scheduling, fleet capacity, and compliance requirements, must be addressed for this partnership to succeed. The Oaks Academy is committed to working collaboratively with IPS to plan proactively, adapt when needs arise, and</p>

	<p>ensure smooth, efficient operations for both parties. By establishing clear communication protocols and confirming expectations in advance, we can create a streamlined process that benefits students while respecting IPS's operational priorities.</p> <p>Mutual Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For Students: Reliable transportation ensures equitable access to field trips that deepen academic learning and foster social-emotional growth. ● For IPS: This partnership creates a new fee-based service opportunity that maximizes existing resources while strengthening IPS's role as a collaborative educational leader. ● For Indianapolis: Students from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds will have greater access to the city's civic, cultural, and historic assets. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Oaks Academy values its relationship with Indianapolis Public Schools and sees this partnership as a sustainable, mutually beneficial solution. By providing transportation services on a fee basis, IPS can help ensure that The Oaks' students continue to benefit from transformative learning experiences while advancing our shared commitment to student success across Indianapolis.</p>
Sujata Gbate	<p>Hello, I have a strong interest in maintaining an independent voice for IPS through the upcoming changes. My two kids attend an IPS school that is very close to my house, use transportation and many other needed services. My quality of life and financial situation would change dramatically if we did not have the use of bus transportation or if it was located far from our home. I believe that we have the right as taxpaying homeowners, and local business owners to have a voice in how our tax dollars are spent. I urge ILEA for more transparency, and to be able to maintain open meetings for all conversations about school changes.</p>
JaVaughn Hardaway	<p>I support IPS and the elected school board retaining control over the transportation system with cross-school, grade band buses. It is important to our family that IPS retains the resources needed to meet the needs of students as IPS continues to evolve and improve. IPS, rather than individual schools</p>

	<p>alone, have demonstrated the willingness and capacity to gather community input and feedback over a multiyear process for improvement.</p>
<p>Alejandro Samaniego</p>	<p>Dear Members of the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance,</p> <p>I am writing to share why transportation is so important to my family and to many others in our district. My children take IPS buses every day to get to school. Without this service, our family would not be able to attend the school that best meets their needs. Transportation is not a luxury, it is a lifeline that ensures students have equitable access to education.</p> <p>That is why I am deeply concerned about any proposals that would strip transportation from some families in order to serve others. We should not be forced into false choices that divide parents and pit neighborhoods against one another. The real battle we should be fighting is with the statehouse, which continues to starve public schools of the resources needed to thrive.</p> <p>The IPS board has already demonstrated strong leadership in managing transportation through the Rebuilding Stronger plan. They created enrollment zones and overhauled routes to improve efficiency while balancing the needs of families. This is the kind of system-wide vision that ensures every student has a fair chance, and it shows that our democratically elected school board is best positioned to oversee transportation services.</p> <p>Shifting control of buses to an appointed body would only reduce transparency, accountability, and local voice. Families deserve to know that decisions about their children's safety, access, and opportunity are made by leaders they elect, not by outsiders.</p> <p>As you evaluate transportation options, please prioritize:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Safety, with buses that are well-staffed, well-maintained, and accountable. 2) Efficiency, with routes that keep ride times manageable. 3) Equity, by ensuring that every IPS student, regardless of which school they attend in the district, has access to reliable transportation. <p>Finally, I urge you to share the results of the transportation survey with the</p>

	<p>public. Families deserve transparency about the models being considered, and we deserve the opportunity to weigh in on changes that will directly affect our lives.</p>
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	<p>Please keep transportation under the authority of our elected school board and continue to fight for the resources needed to serve all children in Indianapolis.</p>
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	<p>Sincerely, Alejandro Samaniego</p>
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Danielle Cruz	<p>My name is Danielle Cruz. I am a current IPS parent and an IPS alumni. Throughout my time as a student there were multiple iterations of what the public school system looked like. Over and over suggestions would be made for the betterment of the students. Some were beneficial. A lot were not. It seemed like it was constantly a way to control and discourage people from sending their children to public schools.</p> <p>Again- this feels like one of those times. Our transportation system is pivotal in a successful public education. And as a parent, I can tell you it's hard to navigate the transportation piece. The length of time your child is on a bus can be the reason you don't go to a school. I know for myself- I'm looking at Middle Schools for my 5th grader and I am wondering if a school is worth it for an extra hour each way.</p> <p>These concerns are with the bus system that just transports IPS students of one school. I know there have talks about combining schools in zones, making less bus stops and more. I can't imagine the safety issues that would come from doing these things.</p> <p>All because IpS is constantly forced to give up pieces of their pie. We are constantly forced to adjust and learn to do with less. It's our children who suffer the most. The government has shown over and over again, that we don't matter as much as other schools.</p> <p>My children and all the children at the system deserve a safe and secure environment, at all times during their school day.</p> <p>We can find a way to make this work without taking from IPS.</p>
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Michelle Pleasant	<p>As a parent and former teacher, I want to emphasize how essential safe, efficient, and reliable transportation is for our students and families. For many families the school bus is the only way children can consistently access their education. Any changes to the system must prioritize student safety and efficiency.</p> <p>As it related to transportation, the IPS school board has already shown that it is capable of handling complex logistical challenges. With the Rebuilding Stronger plan the district created the enrollment zones and redesigned the transportation system to be more efficient. Decisions about transportation funding and logistics should remain with our elected school board officials. Transportation dollars should prioritize students who live in the district, and should be managed by people who are directly accountable to voters.</p> <p>Local, democratic control matters. I want to know that those making decisions about how our tax dollars are spent can be held accountable at the ballot box. An appointed board cannot provide that same level of transparency and responsiveness to community needs. That is why I am deeply concerned about proposals like the one from Stand for Children. It risks undermining the role of our elected school board and creating greater inequality.</p> <p>I am also concerned that while sharing of resources continues to be discussed, there is no moratorium on the number of charter schools that can be opened. Talking about sharing resources while simultaneously approving new schools only adds to the spreading of already limited funds, leaving all students with less. I also believe that if public schools are expected to share resources, then every school receiving public dollars should be held to the same standards of accountability, transparency, and oversight. Families deserve to know how all funds are being used.</p> <p>I urge the ILEA to respect the authority of the elected IPS board to manage transportation and to ensure all resources remain under the control of those directly accountable to the public. Our students and families deserve nothing less than transparency and local control.</p>
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<p>Gary Evers</p>	<p>Good evening, esteemed members of the ILEA Board, education leaders, and community stakeholders.</p> <p>It is crucial to acknowledge that the success of our students is a collective responsibility rather than the obligation of any single district. A predominant challenge we face is ensuring equitable transportation for all students. I propose that the Indiana Legislative Education Association include recommendations that promote the participation of Indianapolis Public Schools in the transportation pilot program. This initiative exemplifies how various types of schools can collaborate to develop a more effective transportation system for every student.</p> <p>It is essential to acknowledge that transportation challenges stem from complex circumstances, necessitating a collaborative approach to their resolution. We are particularly enthusiastic about the transportation pilot, which has already engaged over 50 schools. By fostering a spirit of partnership rather than competition, we can ensure that every child in Indianapolis has reliable access to transportation.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention and commitment to this vital initiative.</p>
<p>Tannika Patton</p>	<p>Good evening, and thank you for this opportunity to advocate for transportation for all students.</p> <p>As a parent, an advocate, and a professional within our schools, I recognize the vital importance of transportation for families. Every student deserves the opportunity to choose the school that best fits their needs without being hindered by limited or nonexistent transportation options.</p> <p>We are all committed to ensuring that students have a safe and reliable means of transportation to and from school. The ILEA must make recommendations that foster collaboration among our schools to expand transportation services for countless students. I strongly urge the ILEA to include the pilot program in its recommendations and to ensure that IPS is a participating partner. This pilot is a powerful example of how all school types can come together to strengthen and create a more equitable educational system for every student.</p> <p>Reliable transportation directly addresses attendance challenges. When</p>

	<p>students have access to consistent bus services, they are less dependent on unreliable transportation, making daily attendance a more realistic goal. As you finalize your recommendations, it is crucial to consider how the pilot program effectively meets the needs of the communities you serve. By riding alongside peers from their neighborhoods, students benefit from IPS participation, which guarantees access to excellent schools and programs for all.</p> <p>We all want students to have a safe and reliable way to and from school. The ILEA should make recommendations that bring our schools together to make this service available for as many students as possible.</p> <p>Transportation is not merely a service; it is a foundational element of student success. It deserves to be a top priority in your recommendations.</p>
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