

Resolution Concerning Bus Transportation For Providence High School Students

WHEREAS, in August of this year, the School Department and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) entered into a memorandum of understand (MOU) concerning the purchase of bus passes to transport “eligible” high school students (those who live 2 miles or more away from school), and

WHEREAS, as part of the MOU, the School Department made a substantial financial commitment to RIPTA, agreeing to purchase at least 2,500 monthly passes at a non-discounted rate, and

WHEREAS, according to RIPTA’s website, the current monthly bus pass rate is \$70 with the possibility of a price increase on January 1, meaning that the School Department’s commitment under the MOU is at least \$175,000 per month, or more than \$1.5 million over the school year, and

WHEREAS, Paragraph 3 of the MOU reads as follows:

3. Provision of Service. During the School Hours, RIPTA shall supplement its Bus Services in order to accommodate ridership by Eligible Students. However, RIPTA shall not be required to designate or create any route, or designate any vehicle(s), to serve Eligible Students, and

WHEREAS, Paragraph 11 of the MOU in relevant part reads as follows:

11. Travel Times. In an effort to maximize RIPTA's capacity to accommodate the Eligible Students, school hours at each school shall be set in consultation with RIPTA. Start times at different schools will ideally be widely staggered, to maximize the efficiency of RIPTA resources in carrying students. The District recognizes that if school hours are set which are not optimal for RIPTA operational efficiency, overcrowding and transportation-related tardiness may be more likely. However RIPTA recognizes that many other factors impact school hours and will make all reasonably possible efforts to accommodate the hours decided by the District, and

WHEREAS, as school started this week, RIPTA reduced bus service to Classical High School, eliminating two Route #1 runs that went directly to the school, while also altering the #40 route to reduce the access of some eligible students to the school, and

WHEREAS, after the elimination of these existing routes, the remaining network of scheduled bus transportation to the school is inadequate for scores of students, resulting in overcrowded buses and extended travel time of up to 30 minutes in several cases, and

WHEREAS, the students at Classical and other high schools already are having difficulty adjusting to an earlier start time (8:00 instead of previous years’ 8:30) which is incompatible with the sleep schedules of high school students, and the extra half hour of transportation time compromises their ability to be ready for school each day for the entire day;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Providence City Council finds that RIPTA is not meeting its obligation under Paragraph 3 of the MOU to supplement its bus services to accommodate eligible Providence Public Schools students, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Providence City Council finds that RIPTA is not meeting its obligation under Paragraph 11 of the MOU to make all reasonably possible efforts to accommodate the hours decided by the District, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Providence City Council hereby requests the School Department to take appropriate action to ensure that (a) RIPTA complies with its obligations under the MOU and (b) that RIPTA provide adequate bus service to all eligible Providence high school students without causing further damage to the education of those students.