



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

15 October 2020

To: School Committee

Subj: Recommendation Regarding Transportation of Non-Public Students in Full Remote Learning Modality

Background

As outlined in General Laws chapter 76, § 1, Shrewsbury residents who are students in kindergarten through grade 12 and attend private or parochial schools located in Shrewsbury have the same “rights and privileges” for transportation as students attending the local school district.

This year we have the following number of buses providing services:

St. John’s High School	4	Rideshare with St. Mary’s
St. Mary’s School	4	Rideshare with St. John’s
Al Hamra Academy	2	
Montessori School	2	
Lilliput School	0	

Recent Clarification from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MA DESE]

Recently, MA DESE provided the following clarification regarding the provision of bus service to private and parochial schools:

Transportation of Non-Public School Students: *As schools begin the year with a variety of learning models, questions have arisen about districts’ responsibility to provide transportation to students in private and parochial schools. As outlined in General Laws chapter 76, § 1, students in kindergarten through grade 12 who attend private or parochial schools have the same “rights and privileges” for transportation as students attending the local school district. These rights are not changed for the 2020-2021 school year. While we encourage districts to work out transportation issues with private schools, they are not obligated to provide transportation for private school students on days that the district is not providing in-person school. For instance, if a district is in a fully remote or hybrid learning model, the district is not obligated to provide transportation for private or parochial students on days that remote learning is taking place.*

Recommendation

The aforementioned private schools in Shrewsbury have been notified of this statutory clarification and were solicited to provide any input or questions about our intended recommendation to you to not provide such transportation services, if our district goes into a full remote modality due to Covid-19 spread. All schools responded acknowledging receipt of the communication and most indicated they too would consider shifting to a full-remote mode as well if our district did so.

Questions were offered regarding the lead time of notice for the suspension of transportation services so they could appropriately communicate to their parent community and also regarding the situation if only one Shrewsbury public school shifted to remote.

It is our recommendation that in the event the entire district [all schools] shift to a full remote learning modality that the provision of school transportation services to all private and parochial schools be suspended for the closure period.

Recommended Vote:

I move that in the event that the District closes all of its schools due to Covid-19 conditions that the provision of school transportation services to private and parochial schools located in Shrewsbury be suspended for the same closure time period due to public health concern and that such services resume upon the reopening of the District schools.