

# Transportation Updates

## April 23, 2024

# Board of Education End Statements

## Academic Excellence

- All students have equitable access to a Douglas County public school that promotes growth in their cognitive, physical, social and emotional needs and builds on their strengths.
- Every student has equitable opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills that will ensure performance at his/her highest individual potential.

## Outstanding Educators and Staff

- Quality educators and staff have been recruited, developed, supported, retained and celebrated.

# Superintendent Policy EEAA

## Transportation of Eligible Students

School bus service generally will be provided for elementary school students who live more than one mile from school and for secondary school students who live more than two miles from school, unless extenuating circumstances exist limiting the availability of buses or seats available to transport students.

# State of Transportation

- Across the Nation
- Impact to Douglas County School District
- Response and Successes
- Challenges
- Next Steps

## Across the Nation

- Even before the pandemic, the number of bus drivers working had not returned to levels that existed during the Great Recession. Staffing declined 21.8% by 2019.
- The pandemic caused further declines in staffing of 15.1% from 2019 to 2023, for a total of 37% since 2019.
- For comparison, Douglas County School District declined 43% since 2019.

# Impact to Douglas County School District Staffing

	Budgeted Positions	Filled Positions	Vacancies
<b>Bus Driver (CDL)</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Driver (Non-CDL)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Transportation Education Assistant</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>31</b>

Only 61% of positions are filled (slightly better than last year).

Leaves of Absence (LOA), Workers Comp (WC), Scheduled Sick Days, and Unscheduled Call-ins further reduce staffing.

# Impact to Douglas County School District Routes

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2034
<b>General Education*</b>	100	82	69	59 (does not include rolling cancellations)
<b>Special Education<sup>†</sup></b>	73	57	51	49
<b>Total</b>	173	139	120	108

*\*The number of General Education routes has been reduced 41% through consolidations and rolling cancellations in the past four years in order to continue running routes approximately one mile from elementary schools and two miles from middle and high schools.*

*<sup>†</sup>Does not include Third Party*

Routes are at maximum capacity, have longer distances to bus stops, and are longer rides.

Options for cancellations were surveyed this summer and rolling cancellations (routes cancelled every five weeks) was ranked as the least impactful because it gives parents advanced notice. Five routes are not cancelled since cancelling these would have significant negative impacts to learning.

# Impact to Douglas County School District Special Education Routes by Third Parties

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>Number of Students Transported</b>	124	236	285	365

The number of students with special needs transported by third party companies has almost tripled in the last four years.

One reason for this increase is the lack of District drivers and TEAs to provide these routes. While all third party companies meet all District and CDE requirements, the strong preference is to transport as many students as possible in-house.

The cost for third party transportation averages \$2,145 per student per month.



# Response and Successes

- Through the successful passage of 5A, we increased pay for all staff including drivers and TEAs
- Hired a consultant to assist with operations and options for routing and best practices, improve communications and customer service, and team building
- Hired a recruiter who specializes in the transportation sector
  - 283 applications received, 179 applicants interviewed, 53 started training, 30 graduated and are now driving (last year was 17), and 14 drivers and 5 TEAs are in the queue for training
- Hired a Behavior Specialist to mentor drivers and partner with schools on student behavior
- Hired a fifth third party carrier to provide additional routes for students with special needs
- Continued to focus on climate and culture

# Response and Successes: Compensation

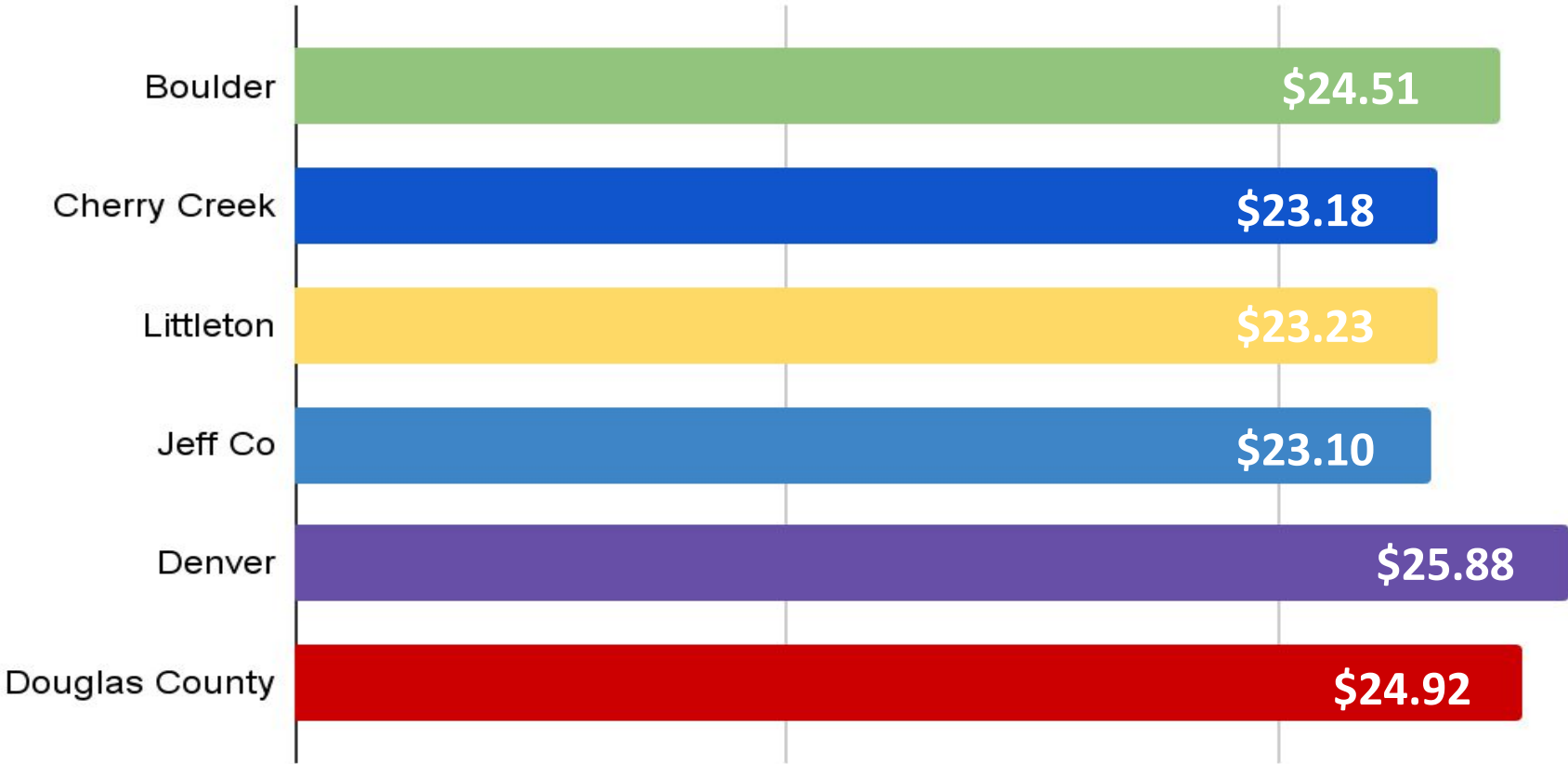
Position	SY 22-23 July 1	SY 22-23 Mid Yr	SY 23-24 July 1	SY 23-24 Post MLO	SY 24-25*
<b>Bus Driver (CDL)</b>	\$ 19.60	\$ 21.36	\$22.86	\$24.92	<i>TBD</i>
<b>Bus Driver (Non-CDL)</b>	\$17.55	\$19.13	\$20.47	\$22.31	<i>TBD</i>

*\* Subject to ATU negotiations*



# Metro Area Comparison

## Current Starting Bus Driver Pay



# Challenges

## Staff Departures

- 26 this school year
- 10 before next school year

## CDL Trainers

- 4 of 11 positions are vacant which will limit class sizes if any further departures occur

## Routes Being Added

- 5 or 6 depending on boundary changes implemented
- Special Education ridership increases each year, including Out of District

# Next Steps

- Continue to explore additional incentives to recruit, hire, train and retain drivers and TEAs
- Evaluate routes for SY 2024 - 2025 school year based on enrollment and available staffing
  - Restore priority routes when possible
- Develop and communicate SY 2024 - 2025 Transportation Plan in May



# Questions

