



Board Policy No. 546

Standards for Operation of Supplementary Service

ADOPTED: 8/96

RECENT AMENDMENT: 1/22/20

SEE ALSO: N/A

SUBJECT CATEGORY: SECTION 500, PLANNING AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

SUBSECTION: SERVICE PLANNING

CONTROL DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND ENGINEERING

I. PURPOSE

As a public transit agency, the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) provides basic fixed-route bus service to most public and private junior high/middle schools and high schools within its service area using its regular route network. In addition, supplementary trips are provided to meet the demand for increased system capacity at bell times. Resources – operating funds, vehicles, and bus operators – limit how much supplementary service can be offered.

AC Transit intends to continue providing supplementary service to the extent it has the resources to do so within the confines of existing laws and regulations.

II. PERSONS AFFECTED

This policy is applicable to any department prescribed herein as well as employees in any department that may have a role in any part of planning or operating supplementary service as defined within this policy. This policy is also applicable to local school districts, jurisdictions, and the general public within the District's service area.

III. DEFINITIONS

"Supplementary Service" means additional service provided by the District for the purpose of ensuring the District's regular service is not impacted by large loads associated with student passengers traveling to or from school sites around school bell times.

"Bell Times" mean the times when the school day is scheduled to begin and end each day.

"Minimum Days/Early Dismissals" means days – either regular or intermittent – when the school day ends earlier than its regularly scheduled time.

"In-service and Non-school Days" means any day during the academic school year in which students do not attend school for any part of the day.

IV. POLICY

A. State and Federal Regulations:

AC Transit must comply with state and federal regulations when operating supplementary service. AC Transit is prohibited from operating exclusive "school bus" service and as a result may

only supplement its existing route structure in order to provide needed capacity. Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 605 and Section 545 of the California Vehicle Code provide the authority under which AC Transit operates supplementary service.

In part, these regulations and statutes require AC Transit to publish all supplementary schedules in order that the service is available to all potential passengers. Once distributed, AC Transit cannot deviate from the published schedule without providing advance public information. AC Transit may operate supplementary service only over established routes or combined segments of established routes and serve only existing bus stops. AC Transit is expressly forbidden from customizing “school bus” service to provide home to school transportation.

B. Inter-agency Partnerships:

To continue to provide cost-effective supplementary transportation, AC Transit will enter into partnerships with all public school districts and private schools benefitting from such service. The purpose of these partnerships is to meet the common goal of offering reliable and efficient transit service to meet the needs of AC Transit's customers while recognizing the resource limitations facing the District.

These partnerships will include two key elements: 1) a single point-of-contact with each school district who can coordinate bell times and disseminate information and 2) a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing the relationship between AC Transit and each school district.

AC Transit staff will provide school districts and each individual school with specific information regarding AC Transit's capabilities and requirements. AC Transit staff will include a range of time within which bell times should be set if AC Transit is expected to deliver passengers on-time. Bus trips linked with two or more schools will be discussed so that the schools concerned can coordinate their bell times to reduce the number of buses required.

C. Operational Standards:

1. **Deadline for School Schedules:** Schedule information for the following academic year shall be submitted no later than the second Monday in May for implementation in August. If no information is received by the deadline, schedules will be assumed to be the same as the current school year. No adjustments to those schedules can be made until December should any changes be necessary.
2. **School Bell Schedule Coordination:** AC Transit will host an annual meeting at its General Office in February or March and invite all school districts and private schools served by supplementary school service within its service area. This meeting will allow AC Transit and school staff to coordinate bell schedules and ensure compliance with the school bell schedule deadline described above.
3. **Regular Early Dismissals:** AC Transit will provide service to the extent possible, based upon driver and equipment availability, for weekly recurring early releases. In order to maximize

- efficiency of operators and vehicles and minimize the cost impact, AC Transit will schedule these short days on Wednesdays. Any requests for a different early release day will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. Irregular Minimum Days/Early Dismissals: AC Transit will not provide service for minimum days/early dismissals other than those occurring weekly. Minimum days due to testing or other activities will be covered at the regular full-day service schedule.
 5. In-service and Non-school Days: Whenever possible, in-service or non-school days shall be coordinated within the affected school district. In the case of two schools being served by the same bus or buses, these days shall be coordinated whenever possible in order to maximize savings.
 6. Summer School Sites: Only basic service will be available during the Summer break.
 7. Passenger Behavior & Vandalism: AC Transit takes the safety of its employees and customers seriously. AC Transit holds students to the same standards of conduct as the general public and disruptive behavior and/or acts of vandalism may result in exclusion from bus service.

D. Conflicts with Existing Policies:

In order to facilitate timely response to the changing needs of schools, the service operated under this policy is exempt from Board Policy 110.