

**January 10,2024 Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting Written Comments
Received between Monday, January 8th and Thursday, January 11th
Submitted via Written Comments Form**

1 I know my time is short-

Not allowing any general education kids onto buses this year means that we've lost a valuable support structure for families of a student with a disability. Since we're only transporting students with disabilities and students in temporary living situations, we've also turned every school bus and CPS paratransit vehicle into a big sign that reveals personal private information about the lives of the students inside.

I'm here because our family is a success story of ODLSS, a fantastic first grade teacher and early support resources at InterAmerican that got us pointed in the right direction to help us diagnose his disability. We were lucky to have the right combination of doctors, diagnosis, social workers, medication and exercise fairly quickly. By 4th grade, we were on a pathway to success. That's the CPS WIN!

Many other aspects of life brought upset and breakdowns for our son, but school, the bus, the bus stop, and his friends ~~there were no problems~~ ~~the regular bus~~ ~~the regular~~ but disabilities is the "regular" environment must occur unless a child cannot travel safely in the regular bus,...

This fall when bussing went away, and was replaced with a frenzy of car pools and transportation options thrown together, 5500 students, 85% of whom are low-income, were left to our own devices to find transportation options for our children. The best CPS would do for us was to say "Send him on the CTA."

WE WERE LUCKY to qualify for transportation under his 504, but here's my dilemma. For my son, paratransit is not as good as the bus. Last year, his transportation costs were around \$5000 and he was being transported with his schoolmates. This year he's in a paratransit vehicle alone and the costs start at \$80,000/year before mileage and fuel surcharges. That's three times more than our cheapest paratransit provider. Even though there are 4 extra seats that I've begged Chi Chi and Charles Mayfield to fill with kids from the bus stop who live blocks away, they have refused.

Filling these seats would not add any time to the route and be in his best interest. All they've said is basically we can't get all 5500 on a route so we can't put 4 on a route.

Now, I know adequate transportation has been a hard fought battle in recent years, but I'm here before you tonight looking for a partner who sees the value of students with disabilities being transported with everyone else. It's not a win unless all our students are on the bus and when that can't happen, provide them with financial relief (AKA stipends) for them to get to school

Here is a breakdown of my son's route from 3 different paratransit companies as well as one standard large bus company. Uber and Hopskipdrive.com are not CPS Vendors but offer a similar product to the public.

Period of performance: August 1st, 2022 - September 30, 2024

Para transit: (Vehicles with 8 or fewer seats Typically only one student is routed)

Kaizen \$450+\$4per mile (4 AM 4PM)=\$482/day (from CPS Paratransit Agreement

Kaizen Health inc)

AllenGreen Group \$250+ \$4 per 6 (pdr)-5.9 (i)2.6 (v)39 (-)6dr \$43b(r)-64pdr (c)2r6 (P)2547a)2.5(e)-16

The Ramones changed music forever with an average song time of 2:30. As did the Gettysburg addresses 272 words (about 2 minutes) The two minute limit does lend order especially in meetings with larger attendance and more speakers.

Thank you (If I read this message it would come in around 2:45.)
