

2026-27 School Year Fleet Readiness

Ensuring a Safe, Reliable, and Operational Fleet for the First Day of School

Jason L. Tonkins
Senior Director of Transportation
Board of Education Work Session
Aug. 4, 2026

Transportation Updates 2026-27

Board members will receive an update on

- ❖ Strategic Goals, Aim & Objective
- ❖ Transportation staff updates
- ❖ Bus Driver recruitment efforts/staffing levels
- ❖ Finance/Incentive Program
- ❖ Bus routes for 2026-27
- ❖ No Transport Zones Expansion for 2026-27
- ❖ Field Operations preparedness
- ❖ Fleet Maintenance update
- ❖ EC Transportation moving forward 2026-27

Transportation 2026 -2027 Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals, Aim & Objectives

Building a Safer, Smarter, and More Accountable Transportation System

Strategic Goal

Leverage innovative technology, data-driven decision-making, and operational excellence to provide every student with a safe, reliable, and accountable transportation experience.

Our Aim

Create a transportation system that enhances student safety, improves communication with families, empowers staff with modern technology, and delivers exceptional customer service every day.

Key Objectives

- Enhance student safety through GPS tracking, barcode verification, and proactive monitoring.
- Strengthen family communication with accurate, real-time information.
- Increase accountability through dashboards and performance standards.
- Optimize operations using routing technology and automation.
- Empower employees with modern tools and training.
- Build public trust through transparent, dependable service.

2026-2027 Transportation Staff Updates

- Jason L. Tonkins**, Senior Director
- Christy Estes**, Director of Field Operations
- Jimena Mitchell**, Director of Field Operations
- Bobby Jones**, Director, Fleet Maintenance
- Dee Luttrell, Director, EC Transportation and Customer Service
- Joy Mylin**, Director, Routing and Central Logistics
- Jamie Doran** Senior Administrator, Business Manager
- Teresa Williams, Senior Administrator
- Tina Hinton, Senior Administrator
- Brandon Johnson**, Senior Administrator
- Vacant**, Senior Administrator
- Chris Posey, Senior Administrator

New to role	
Existing in role	

Driver Recruitment Updates: Recruit, Train, Retain, Serve

July 11 Transportation Job Fair: At a Glance

○ 229	○ 76	○ 35	○ 111
Pre-Registered	Attended	On-Site	Total

- 2025 Driver Hires : 548
- 2026 Driver Hires : 533
- July 2026 Passed CDL Course: **12 Graduated CDL Program**
- Aug.17-18 2026 Train Class Registered: **56 Potential Candidates**

Career Development & Department Exposure Program (Retain)

Purpose

- Provide employees with opportunities to explore different areas of the Transportation Department
- Expand knowledge and develop new skills
- Prepare employees for future career opportunities
- Build a stronger, more versatile workforce

How the Program Works

Express Interest

Employees share their interest in learning about another area of Transportation

Leadership Review

Participation is based on performance, attendance, and departmental needs

Department Exposure

Observe and learn from teams across Transportation, including:

- Routing
- Field Operations
- Dispatch
- Driver Training
- Safety
- Fleet Maintenance
- Transportation Administration

Building Tomorrow's Transportation Leaders

Professional Development

Gain a broader understanding of departmental operations, responsibilities, and career pathways

Future Opportunities

Employees who demonstrate initiative and readiness are better prepared to compete for future openings

Our Commitment

We are investing in our employees by creating opportunities to expand their skills, explore career pathways, and prepare the next generation of Transportation leaders

Bus Driver In-Service

Transportation In-Service Schedule

NORTHERN & EASTERN

 August 12
 Wakefield High School
 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM

WESTERN & SOUTHERN

 Felton Grove High School
 Date: TBD
 Time: TBD

Preparing our teams for a successful 2026–2027 school year.

Finance/Incentive Program



Bus Routes for 2026-2027



WCPSS
TRANSPORTATION

★ **READY FOR
THE FIRST DAY!** 🍏

2026-27 BUS ROUTE INFORMATION
AS OF 07.28.2026

Back to School!





565
PLANNED
BUS ROUTES



88,882
REGISTERED
STUDENT RIDERS



6.33
AVERAGE
RUNS PER BUS



157.31
AVERAGE RIDERS
ASSIGNED PER BUS



100% STUDENT COVERAGE
Every bus rider is assigned to a route with a driver.



SCHOOL TRANSITION UPDATES



HILLTOP NEEDMORE ES
Opening as
Tr4 Only



BRENTWOOD ES
Staying at
Spring Forest
Swing Space



FUQUAY VARINA ES
Moving back to
Renovated
Campus



SWIFT CREEK ES
Moving back to
Renovated
Campus

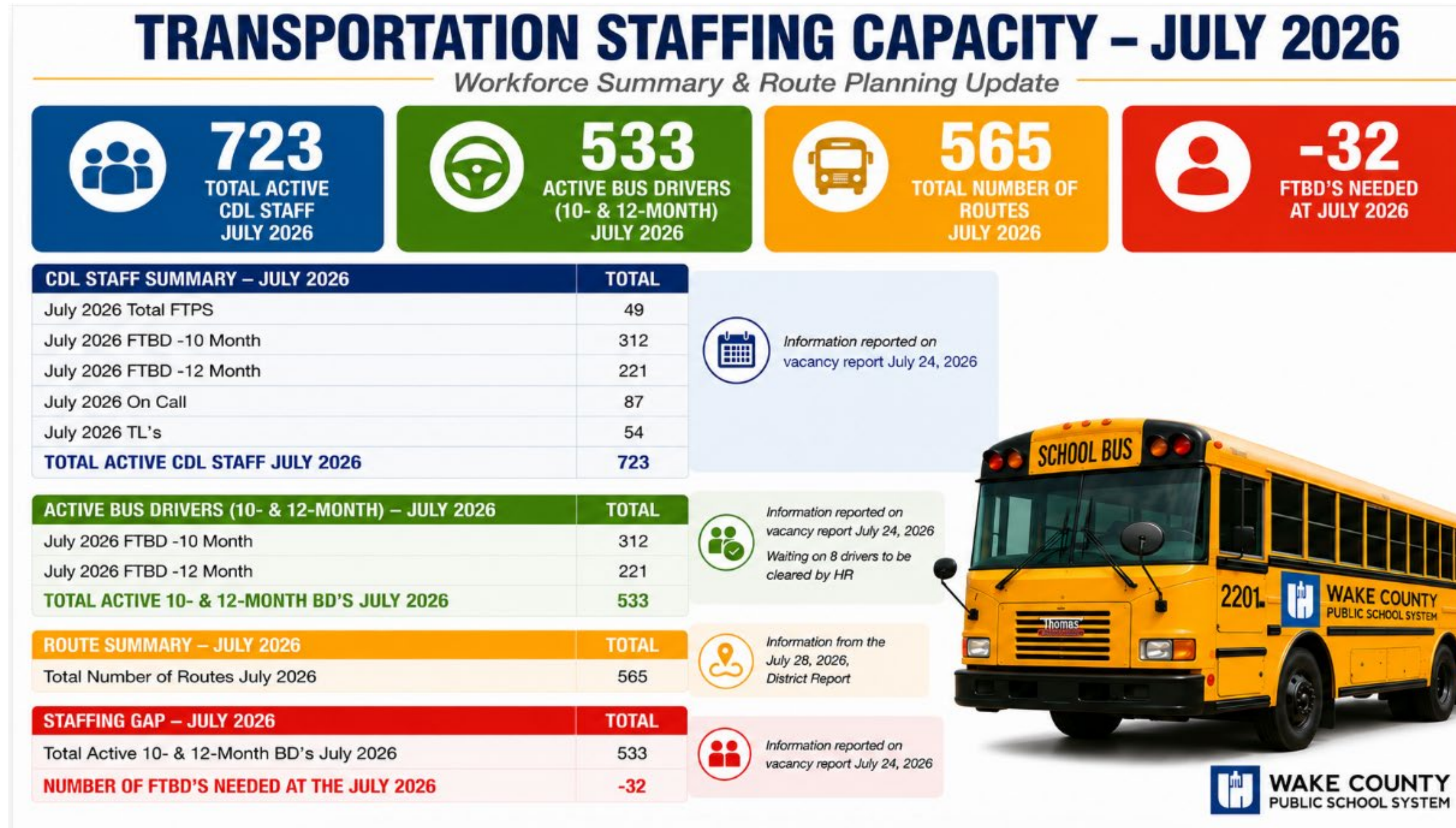


SAFE RIDES. STRONGER SCHOOLS. **BRIGHTER FUTURES.**

#WCPSSMovesKids ★ 



Transportation Workforce



No Transport Zones for 2026-2027 Expansion

What is a Non-Transportation Zone (NTZ)?

An NTZ is a Board-approved Non-Transport area surrounding a school where students living within the established distance are not eligible for bus transportation. NTZs improve transportation efficiency, maximize fleet utilization, and reduce ride times.

9 New NTZs Added

- Adams ES
- Cary ES
- Felton Grove HS
- Moore Square MS
- Reedy Creek ES
- Reedy Creek MS
- South Lakes ES
- Stough ES
- Sycamore Creek ES

11 Existing NTZs Expanded

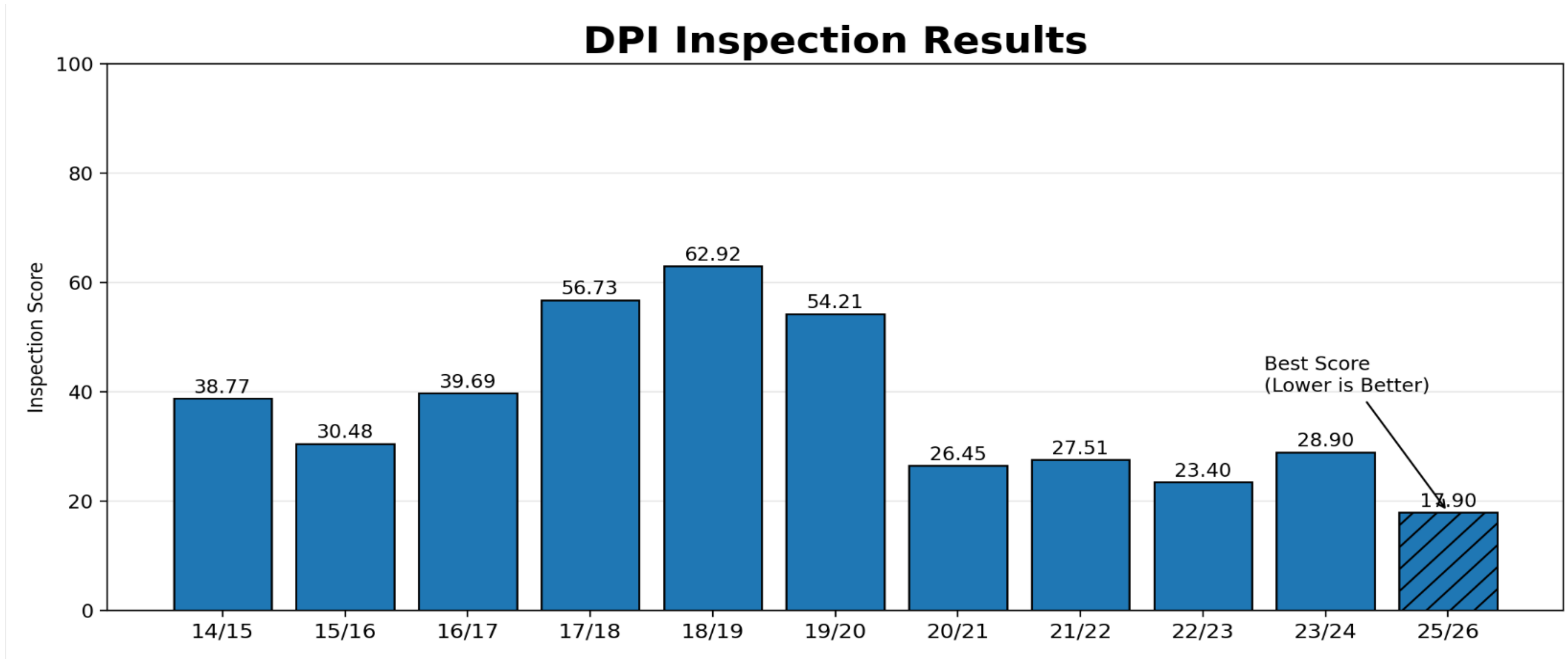
- Apex Friendship MS
- Apex Friendship HS
- Briarcliff ES
- Cary HS
- Conn ES
- East Cary MS
- Fuquay-Varina HS
- Morrisville ES
- Scotts Ridge ES
- Walnut Creek ES
- Willow Spring HS

Impact: 20 Schools | 9 New NTZs | 11 Expanded NTZs | Improved Fleet Efficiency & Student Service

Fleet Maintenance Status

-  **Mechanic Vacancy Rate**
31.9%
Current staffing vacancy across the maintenance team
-  **Preventive Maintenance (PM) Program**
100% Up to Date
All scheduled preventive maintenance has been completed
-  **Fleet Readiness**
95% Operable
95% of the transportation fleet is available and ready for daily service
-  **Propane Fleet**
25 Propane Buses
Currently assigned and operating on daily routes (Increased our green thumb print by 15 )

DPI Inspection Results



EC TRANSPORTATION

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

2026 – 2027

Repairing Vendor Relationships



Strengthening Vendor Partnerships

During the first six months, we focused on rebuilding trust and improving collaboration with our alternative transportation vendors.

Key Actions

- Established standing monthly partnership meetings with all vendors
- Improved communication through open, transparent dialogue
- Addressed concerns proactively before they affected service

Creating Accountability

Shared Responsibility for Student Service

Productive Conversations

- Addressed long-standing issues through honest, solution-focused discussions
- Focused on resolving challenges rather than assigning blame

Mutual Accountability

- Established shared responsibility for service outcomes
- Set clear performance expectations and follow-through for both WCPSS and vendors

Building Long-Term Partnerships

Measuring Performance and Driving Improvement

Vendor Evaluation Program

- Implemented a formal performance evaluation process
- Vendors are evaluated twice each year using consistent standards, including:
 - Safety
 - On-time performance
 - Communication
 - Compliance
 - Customer service

Our Result

We have shifted from managing contracts to building strategic partnerships focused on delivering safe, reliable transportation for students.

EC Vendor Accountability/Evaluation Tool

WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

EC TRANSPORTATION VENDOR
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Vendor Name: _____

Evaluation Period: _____

Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

Title: _____

Evaluation Type: ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annual ☐ Other _____

5 – EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

Consistently exceeds all requirements; performance is exceptional.

4 – MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Meets all requirements; performance is satisfactory with only minor issues.

3 – NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Meets some requirements; improvement needed to meet expectations; corrective action may be required.

2 – UNSATISFACTORY

Does not meet requirements; significant deficiencies; corrective action required.

1 – UNACCEPTABLE

Does not meet requirements; serious deficiencies; immediate corrective action required.

Score each evaluation item using the 1–5 rating scale above. Use the comments section to provide specific examples and documentation/evidence.

1. STUDENT SAFETY (Weight: 25%)

EVALUATION ITEM	PERFORMANCE STANDARD – WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR	RATING (1–5)	COMMENTS / EVIDENCE
Vehicle Safety & Maintenance	- Daily pre-trip inspections completed and documented. - Vehicles are clean, safe, and in good working order. - All required maintenance performed on schedule. - Vehicles pass all state inspections and have current decals.	_____	_____
Wheelchair Securements & Safety Equipment	- Wheelchair securements and safety equipment used properly. - All equipment is in good condition and inspected regularly. - Students are transported safely and securely at all times.	_____	_____
Driver Compliance with Safety Procedures	- Drivers follow all WCPSS safety procedures and policies. - Follow all traffic laws and speed limits. - No cell phone use or other distracted driving.	_____	_____
Accident Prevention & Safe Driving	- Zero (0) preventable accidents. - Drivers demonstrate defensive driving techniques. - Hazards are reported and addressed promptly.	_____	_____
Compliance with Transportation Regulations	- Complies with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. - Complies with WCPSS policies and procedures. - No regulatory violations.	_____	_____
CATEGORY SCORE (Total Points Earned): _____ / 25			

2. ON-TIME PERFORMANCE (Weight: 20%)

EVALUATION ITEM	PERFORMANCE STANDARD – WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR	RATING (1–5)	COMMENTS / EVIDENCE
Morning Arrival Timeliness	95% or greater of morning arrivals on time. - Students arrive ready to start the school day.	_____	_____
Afternoon Drop-off Timeliness	95% or greater of afternoon drop-offs on time. - Students arrive home or to after-school programs on time.	_____	_____
Attendance at Assigned Routes	- All routes are covered as assigned. - No missed trips.	_____	_____
Route Coverage & Service Continuity	- Adequate coverage provided for driver absences. - Minimal route disruptions.	_____	_____
Response to Transportation Changes	- Changes communicated promptly. - Adjustments implemented effectively.	_____	_____
CATEGORY SCORE (Total Points Earned): _____ / 20			

3. STUDENT MANAGEMENT & CUSTOMER SERVICE (Weight: 15%)

EVALUATION ITEM	PERFORMANCE STANDARD – WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR	RATING (1–5)	COMMENTS / EVIDENCE
Professional Interaction with Students	- Treats students with respect and dignity. - Creates a positive and safe environment. - Uses appropriate tone and language.	_____	_____
Professional Interaction with Parents/Guardians	- Communicates respectfully and effectively. - Answers questions and provides accurate information. - Addresses concerns in a timely manner.	_____	_____
Professional Interaction with School Staff	- Works cooperatively with school staff. - Responds promptly to school requests.	_____	_____
Resolution of Complaints and Concerns	- Acknowledges complaints within 24 hours. - Resolves complaints within 5 business days whenever possible. - Maintains records of complaints and resolutions.	_____	_____
Handling Student Behavior	- Follows WCPSS behavior management protocols. - Reports incidents as required. - Maintains student safety and order.	_____	_____
CATEGORY SCORE (Total Points Earned): _____ / 15			

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Review each performance standard carefully.

2. Rate the vendor for each item using the 1–5 scale.

3. Provide specific comments and evidence to support each rating.

4. Calculate the category score by adding the points earned and entering the total.

5. Use the summary section to determine the overall performance score.

WEIGHTED SCORING

Each category score will be multiplied by the weight to calculate the weighted score contribution.

CATEGORY	WEIGHT
1. Student Safety	25%
2. On-Time Performance	20%
3. Student Management & Customer Service	15%
4. EC Transportation Compliance	15%
5. Communication & Responsiveness	10%
6. Staffing & Operational Reliability	10%
7. Contract Compliance	5%
TOTAL	100%

OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING

90% – 100% Excellent

80% – 89% Satisfactory

70% – 79% Needs Improvement

Below 70% Corrective Action Required

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION / EVIDENCE EXAMPLES

- Route and time reports
- Vehicle inspection reports
- Maintenance records
- Training records
- Incident reports
- Complaint logs
- Communication logs (emails, calls)
- Staffing records
- Invoice and billing records
- Insurance certificates
- Other records as requested

WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

www.wcpss.net

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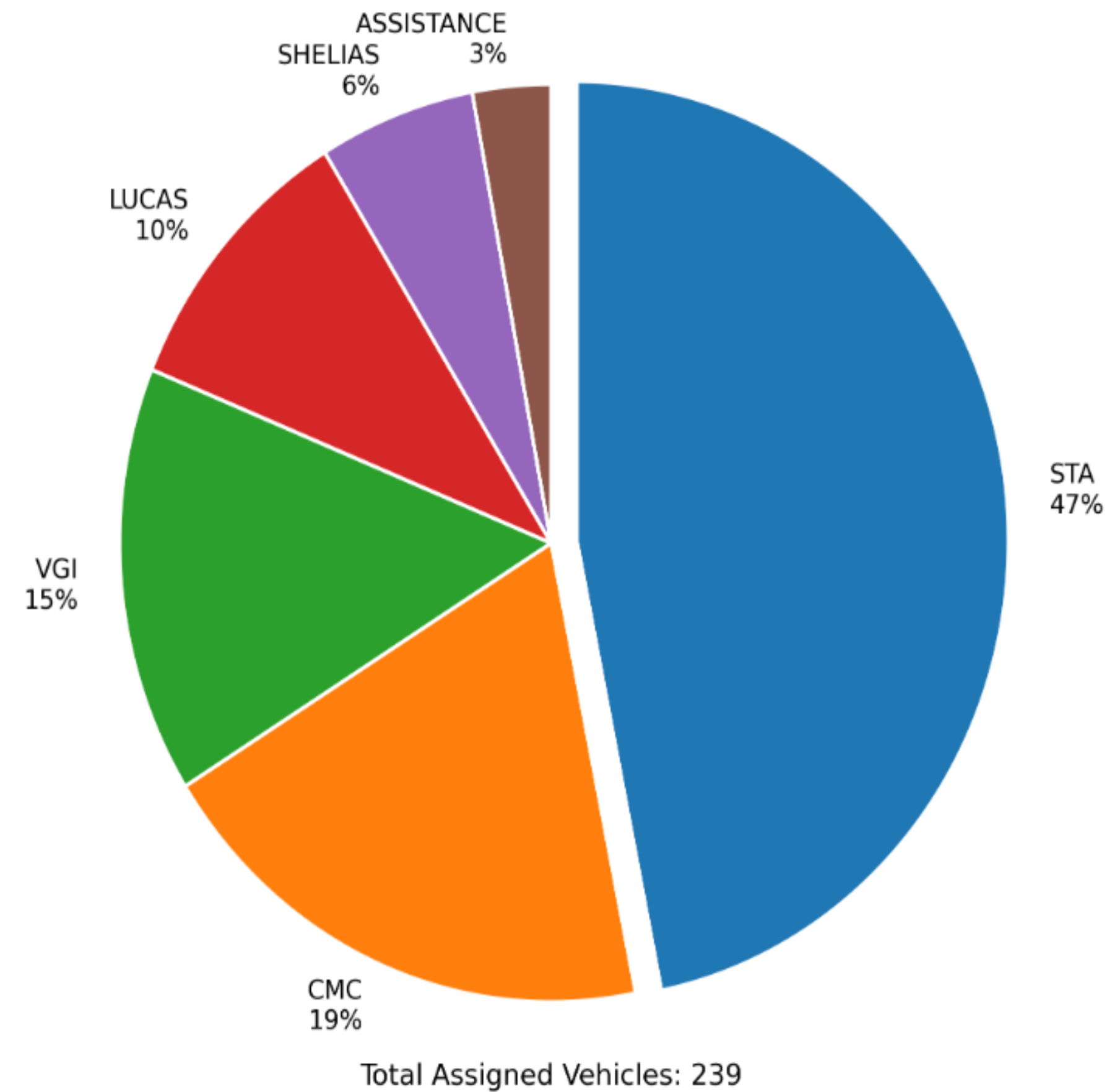
Vendor Performance Evaluation Process
Driving Accountability Through Measurable Performance Standards
Performance Evaluations Conducted Twice Per Year

Evaluation Area	Weight	What We Measure
 Student Safety	25%	Safe vehicles, driver compliance, accident prevention, regulatory compliance
 On-Time Performance	20%	Morning arrivals, afternoon drop-offs, route coverage, service reliability
 Student Management & Customer Service	15%	Professional interactions with students, families, and school staff
 EC Transportation Compliance	15%	IEP compliance, specialized equipment, student accommodations
 Communication & Responsiveness	10%	Timely communication with schools, families, and Transportation Services
 Staffing & Operational Reliability	10%	Driver staffing, attendance, training, operational consistency
 Contract Compliance	5%	Contract requirements, reporting, documentation, and invoicing

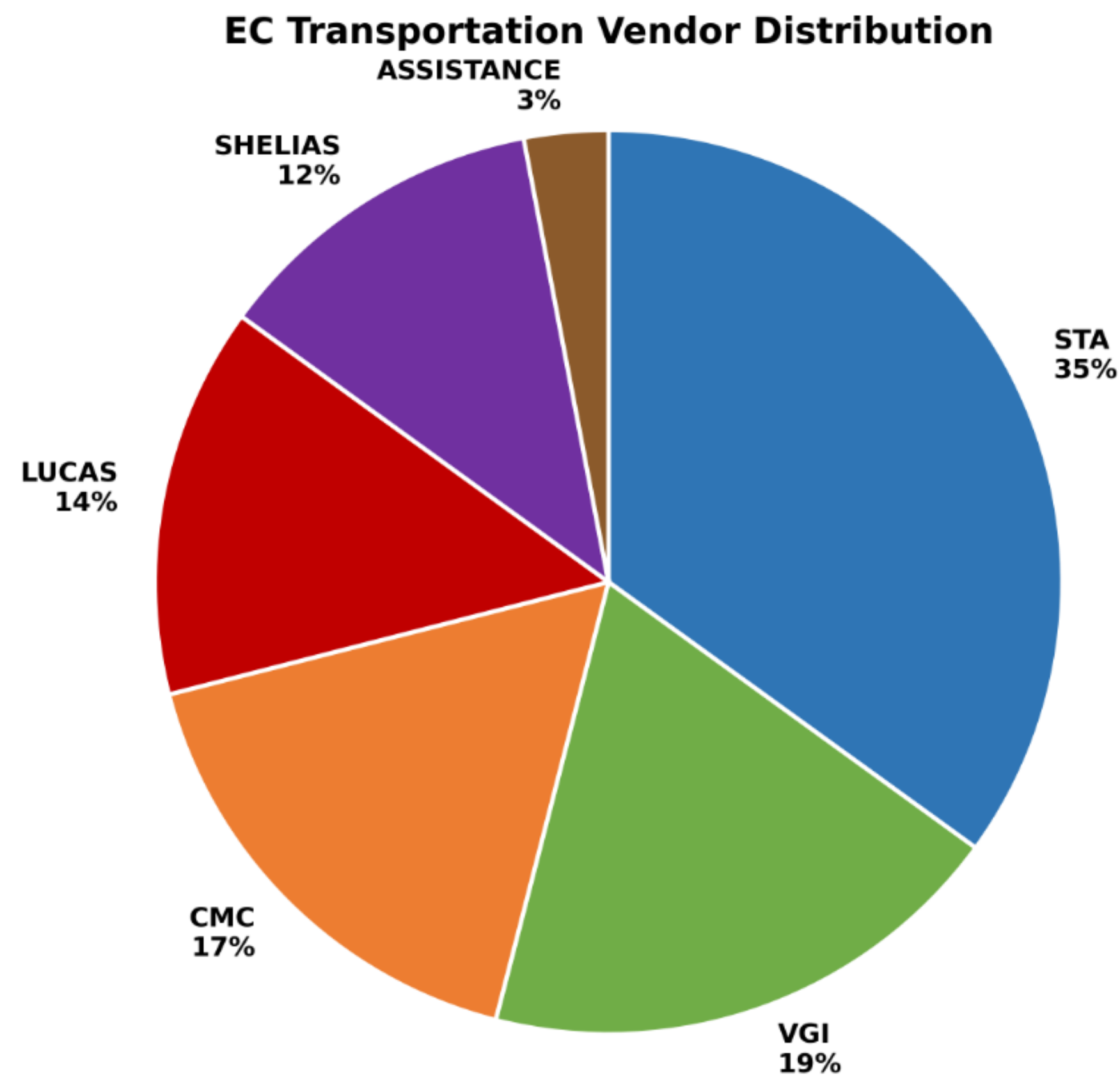
Overall Performance Rating
 **90–100%** – Excellent Performance
 **80–89%** – Satisfactory
 **70–79%** – Needs Improvement (*Corrective Action Plan Required*)
 **Below 70%** – Unsatisfactory (*Subject to Contract Review and Possible Corrective Measures*)

2025–2026 Vendor Operations at a Glance

**Exceptional Children Transportation
Vendor Distribution**



2026–2027 Vendor Operations at a Glance



Vendor	Previous	Current	Change
STA	47%	35%	↓ -12 percentage points
VGI	15%	19%	↑ +4 percentage points
CMC	19%	17%	↓ -2 percentage points
LUCAS	10%	14%	↑ +4 percentage points
SHELIAS	6%	12%	↑ +6 percentage points
ASSISTANCE	3%	3%	No Change

EC Transportation Numbers

2026-2027 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW



STUDENTS MILEAGE: DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL

DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL		STUDENTS	% OF STUDENTS
Under 5 miles		1,817	58.40%
5–9.99 miles		913	29.30%
10–14.99 miles		263	8.40%
15–19.99 miles		62	2.00%
20–24.99 miles		19	0.60%
25–29.99 miles		2	0.10%
30 miles or more		1	<0.1%
Distance unavailable – Out of County		36	1.20%
TOTAL UNIQUE STUDENTS		3,113	100%

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 5,214** students served during the 2026–2027 school year.
- 406** students assigned to yellow bus transportation.
- 2,710** students transported by contracted vendors.
- Nearly **88%** of transported students live within 10 miles of their school.

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM BREAKDOWN (2026–2027)

- ✓ **5,214** total EC students served.
- ✓ **547** students enrolled in the Transportation Stipend Program and declined district-provided transportation.
- ✓ **1,551** EC students did not request transportation.
- Exceptional Children (EC) transportation is provided only upon a **transportation request** as documented through the student's IEP or approved transportation services.

Parent Stipend Program 2025-2026

Parent Stipend Program Update & Process Improvements

974

Families Paid

\$1,776,875

Total Paid

2026–2027 Process Improvements

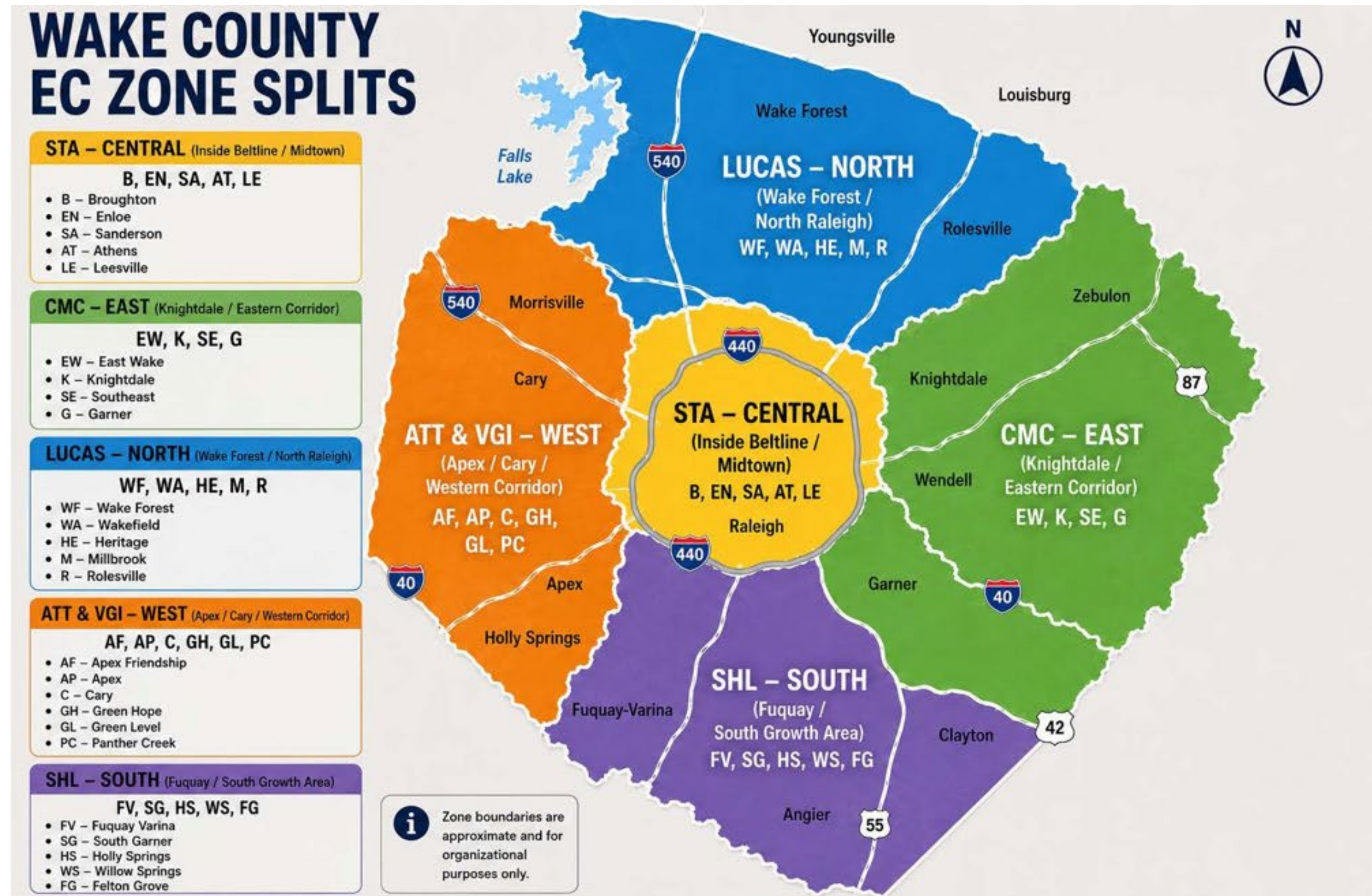
- Reduce monthly paperwork while using Infinite Campus attendance records.
- Implement DocuSign for parent stipend contracts.
- Develop a parent-facing stipend application/database.

Benefits

- Timely payments
- Reduced paperwork
- Fewer customer service calls

School Year	Families	Amount Paid
2024/25	1,041	\$2,606,575
2023/24	753	\$1,783,850
2022/23	408	\$586,175

2026-27 WCPSS REGIONAL ZONES



Students Remain Closer to Home

✓ Compresses Mileage Waste

” Maximizes Routing Options

New Transportation Vendors 2026- 2027

NEW TRANSPORTATION VENDORS

Expanding Our Network. Strengthening Our Service.

- All Pro All Services LLC
- AmeriTransit of NC LLC
- Best Transportation and Wheelchair Service Inc.
- EDCO
- Essential Transportation
- FLC

UP AND OPERATIONAL BETWEEN SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER

These new vendors will join our team in phases between **September and October** to increase capacity and enhance transportation for our students.

- MORE CAPACITY
- STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS
- BETTER SERVICE FOR STUDENTS



The End

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031

LOADING...

FOR GENERAL EDUCATION
(YELLOW BUS)



STRATEGIC.
FOCUSED.
FORWARD.



MORE OPTIONS.
MORE CAPACITY.
MORE IMPACT.



ONE VISION.
COUNTLESS
POSSIBILITIES.

The Future is Loading...
AND YOU'RE GOING TO WANT MORE!



MORE BUSES.
MORE ROUTES.
MORE RELIABILITY.



STRONGER SYSTEMS.
SMARTER SOLUTIONS.
BETTER EXPERIENCES.



STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS.
GREATER OPPORTUNITIES.
BRIGHTER FUTURES.

★ **STAY TUNED...**
THE BEST IS
YET TO COME!

