



**METRO**

news release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SORTA STATEMENT REGARDING SERVICE FOR CPS STUDENTS**

The Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) has engaged with Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) over the past month to evaluate the service that Metro provides to 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The service is reviewed annually in partnership with CPS staff per our regular contract process.

Based on the current hiring climate and a desire to ensure that students have access to reliable transportation for the 2021-2022 school year, it was mutually determined that the best course of action to ensure students are able to get to school on time would be to open up Metro's entire network with new enhanced route alignments and increased trip frequency to better meet students' needs.

There were multiple paths forward when we started this conversation. However, CPS desired to provide this additional level of service, and the benefits that accompany it led us in this direction. This solution avoids having to reduce or delay service that was promised to Hamilton County as part of Reinventing Metro. It provides more options for student riders and our broader community, while boosting service reliability.

Previously, more than 30 percent of CPS students riding Metro (about 4,000 students) already commuted to school on regular Metro service. Allowing all eligible CPS students to take regular Metro routes would also mirror the service currently provided to students in nearby cities, including Dayton, Columbus and Cleveland.

As part of this transition, Metro would add service improvements that would offer additional benefits to CPS students, including:

- **Increased Eligibility:** New service will be added to serve Riverview East High School, ensuring all students have access to Metro. Also new this year, students in a career or technical program will be eligible for a Metro transportation pass regardless of where they live.
- **Expanded Service Hours:** Student transportation passes will be valid on Metro for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders from 6 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. and 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders from 6 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. (previously 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for each grade). These hours will better support students with extracurricular activities, whether at school or in the community, including after-school jobs.
- **More Options:** 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students will benefit from increased access across Metro's system, including added frequency on Metro routes serving CPS high schools and two new crosstown routes serving peak commuter times. Students will have more options for getting to school on time, and increased service frequency on these routes will help prevent crowding.

- **Shorter Ride Times:** Service for the 2021-2022 school year will offer students a 10-minute travel time reduction on average. Additionally, the percentage of students who previously required two bus transfers to get to school will be reduced from 4.3 percent (about 400 students) to zero.
- **Weekend rides:** Now 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders will be able to use their CPS pass on Saturdays, further supporting extracurricular activities and student employment.
- **Safety and Security Enhancements:** Metro has dedicated additional security resources system-wide to ensure the safety of students and all Metro riders as part of its extended service hours and other system improvements

SORTA will host a public meeting on Thursday, August 5, to receive public comments on the changes and to answer any questions customers may have about the service improvements that will go into effect on Aug. 15. The presentation will also be live streamed on Metro's Facebook page.

To ensure CPS parents understand the changes to Metro service, Metro staff will also participate in upcoming school orientation sessions to answer questions.

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Metro is a non-profit, tax-funded public service of the [Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority](#), providing about 13.5 million rides per year. Learn more about Metro at [www.go-metro.com](http://www.go-metro.com).