

Providing Better Transportation for the Students and Parents of San Francisco

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Executive Summary

This report was prepared for Board of Supervisor Katy Tang of San Francisco. In 2010, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) was faced with decreased funding and the adoption of a new student assignment system. These two changes forced SFUSD to revamp their general education busing. Realizing that buses no longer play the same role as they once, SFUSD decided to decrease the number of general education buses for students. From 2011 to today, SFUSD cut buses down from 44 to 25-where it currently stands. The lack of transportation has caused increase pressure and difficulty for parents across the city to find alternative modes of transportation for their children and has played a role in the resegregation of San Francisco schools.

There are many reasons why transportation should not be ignored by city governments and school districts. Transportation, particularly school buses, play a vital for students to access better education, is the safest mode of transportation for students, is more environmentally friendly by decreases the number of cars on the road.

The changing role of transportation and decrease in funding for the department is not a problem limited to San Francisco, this is a problem that most states and cities throughout the country are facing. For this policy analysis, I researched other cities throughout the country that have taken different approaches to providing students with transportation in their district. I researched two cities and one state for this report (Portland, OR; Pennsylvania; Denver, CO) in order to find the best possible solution for San Francisco.

Due to the complexity of the problem, my final recommendation for Supervisor Tang is multiple approaches. In order to find the best solution the city should collect more data to find out exactly where students are traveling from, how, and their final destination. Parents needs to be involved in the transportation discussion in order for the school district and city government to know what is needed among families. Finally, it would be

worth the city and school district to relook at the school assignment system. The elimination of the neighborhood in order to diversify the school district racially and economically has proven to be the biggest obstacle in creating a transportation solution. If the new school assignment system is not meeting the objective of diversifying the student, it would be worth the district and city to reconsider how the program. More data, research, and stakeholder will help the city move forward on this problem.