

Driving Attendance and Funding: The Power of Alternative Transportation



Agenda

- How attendance impacts funding in both attendance-based (ADA) and enrollment-based (ADM) states
- Why transportation is a key driver of chronic absenteeism—especially among at-risk students
- How districts are leveraging alternative transportation to improve equity, compliance, and funding outcomes

Attendance is a Critical District Lever

Attendance Drives Learning and Funding

1

In ADA-based states, funding depends on how often students show up.

2

In ADM-based states, chronic absenteeism still threatens long-term funding.

3

28% of students were chronically absent in 2022–23.

4

Every missed day impacts learning, support services, and your bottom line.

ADA-Based

Daily attendance = daily funding

Absenteeism = direct funding loss

Early-year absences hurt most

ADM-Based

Enrollment = funding—but only if retained

Chronic absenteeism = eventual attrition

Early-year absenteeism leads to instability

Attendance Determines District Funding



Attendance-based states

(ADA) often audit or reconcile counts within the first few months.

- A student missing even 2 days in September can lower per-pupil funding all year.



Enrollment-based states

(ADM) average daily attendance during specific windows or year-round.

- Chronic absenteeism in this window often leads to unenrollment.



Missed days now = fewer staff, services, and supports later

Stats That Tell the Story

In November 2023, the average daily attendance rate was 90%.

15%

Percent of public schools reported being “extremely concerned” about student absences.

26% In high-poverty neighborhoods

26% With a student body made up of 76 percent or more students of color

21% High/secondary schools

“The new, timely data on attendance help us understand **the extent of absenteeism** at public schools, as well as the extent to which absences by students, teachers, and staff are a **concern to public school leaders**.”

NCES Commissioner Peggy G. Carr.

Who's Missing + What's in the Way

Vulnerable students often struggle with getting to school.



**8.84 million
students**

7.62 million students with special needs

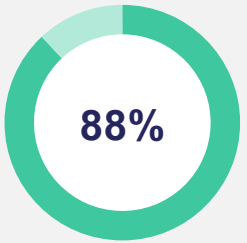
1.22 million students experiencing homelessness

- Nearly half (48%) were chronically absent in 2022-23
- Affecting ~672,000 students nationwide

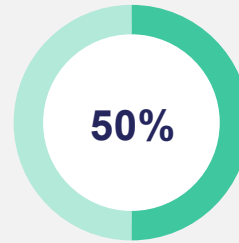
If attendance matters for funding, and vulnerable students are missing most often, how should districts *really* addressing this gap?

Transportation: A Common, Overlooked Barrier

When traditional transportation can't reach them, students stop showing up.



88% of districts report equity gaps in transportation access across student groups.



Nearly 50% of districts report rising McKinney-Vento student populations.



Half of districts struggle with servicing general education and special education students on the same routes.



These challenges are growing while 41% of districts report driver shortages, and 35% face rising operational costs.

Traditional Models Are Failing: Here's Why

While centric to student transportation, the school bus alone can't meet the needs of every student.



Traditional routes are designed for consistency, not flexibility.



Students who move frequently or live outside of district lines can't rely on the school bus.



Most fleets can't adapt quickly enough to ensure vulnerable students receive reliable transportation.



Parents want added visibility and districts need more reliability.

How Districts Are Modernizing Transportation

Alternative transportation models are **central to the student**—not district boundaries.



Semi-personalized
bus service



Contracted,
small-capacity
vehicle providers



Rideshare/Taxis
with monitoring



Carpooling
(district
coordinated)



Parent
gift cards/
reimbursements

Benefits of Modernizing Transportation

Districts are turning to alternative solutions for benefits including:

1

Door-to-door access for vulnerable student populations

2

Flexible scheduling, multiple drop-off points, and last-minute changes

3

Ability to efficiently serve general education and special education students

4

Tech-enabled systems like GPS tracking and parent notifications to build trust and peace of mind



Alternative Transportation: Proven to Boost Attendance

Alternative transportation is already delivering real results—and district leaders are embedding it into their long-term attendance strategies.



37% of districts have already adopted alternative transportation to close access gaps and reduce absenteeism.



Provides accessible transportation to vulnerable students, helping to reduce absenteeism by 2 to 4%.



Protects districts' per-pupil funding by stabilizing early-year attendance, especially in ADA-based states.

Breakdown of Alternative Transportation Solutions

Method	Semi-Personalized Bus Routes	Contracted Small-Capacity Vehicle Providers	Rideshare/ Taxis with Monitoring	Carpooling (District-Coordinated)	Parent Gift Cards / Reimbursements
Attendance Impact	Consistent, predictable access	Reliable, compliant daily rides	Increases flexibility for hard-to-serve areas	Informal but regular access	Family dependent
ADA-Based Funding Benefit	Supports stronger daily averages	Maximizes attendance during funding windows	Fills short-term attendance gaps	Improves access to rural areas	Attendance varies
ADM-Based Funding Benefit	Improves early enrollment tracking	Retains at-risk students across mobility changes	Provides limited stability	Builds trust with families	Encourages family engagement
Scalability	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Low
Coordination Required	High	Low	Medium	High	Medium
Best Fit For...	Dense, high-need areas	Vulnerable student populations	Overflow, short-term coverage	Rural or underserved areas	Families with Transport access

Modernizing Transportation in Crisis

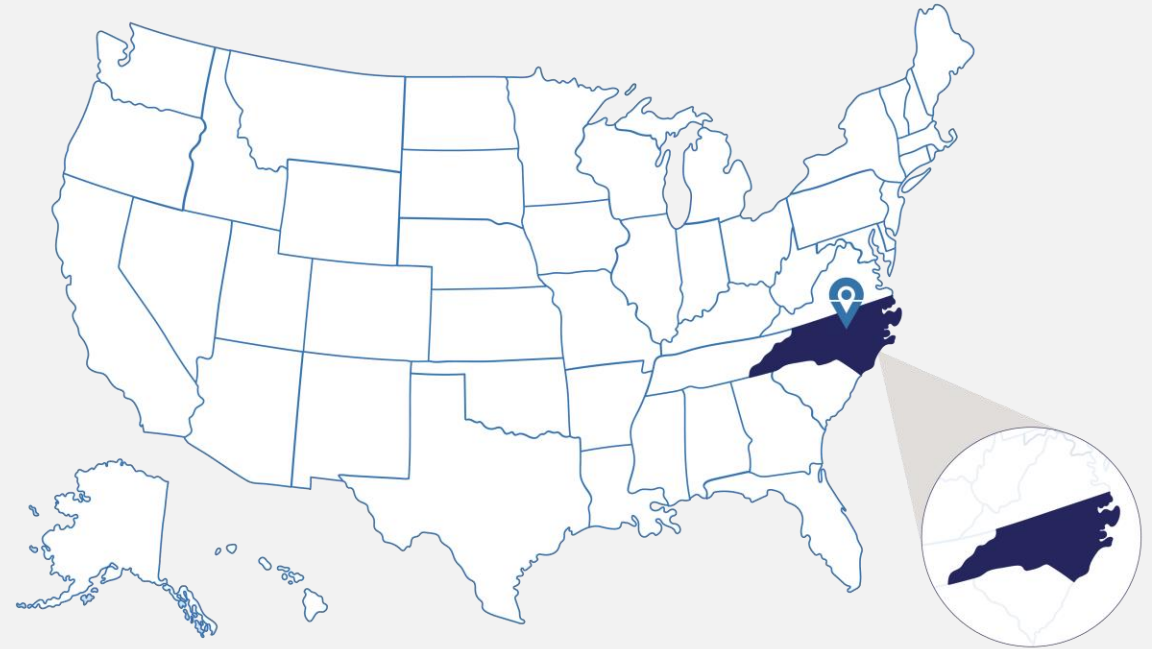
Problem

After Hurricane Helene displaced 1,200+ students, Buncombe County Schools couldn't reach them with existing routes—putting attendance and compliance at risk.



Solutions + Impact

- Deployed new system in 10 days with tech-enabled, flexible routing
- Reconnected displaced students to their schools of origin across 660 square miles
- Enabled real-time ride tracking for families during frequent housing moves



Improving Reliability for Specialized Students

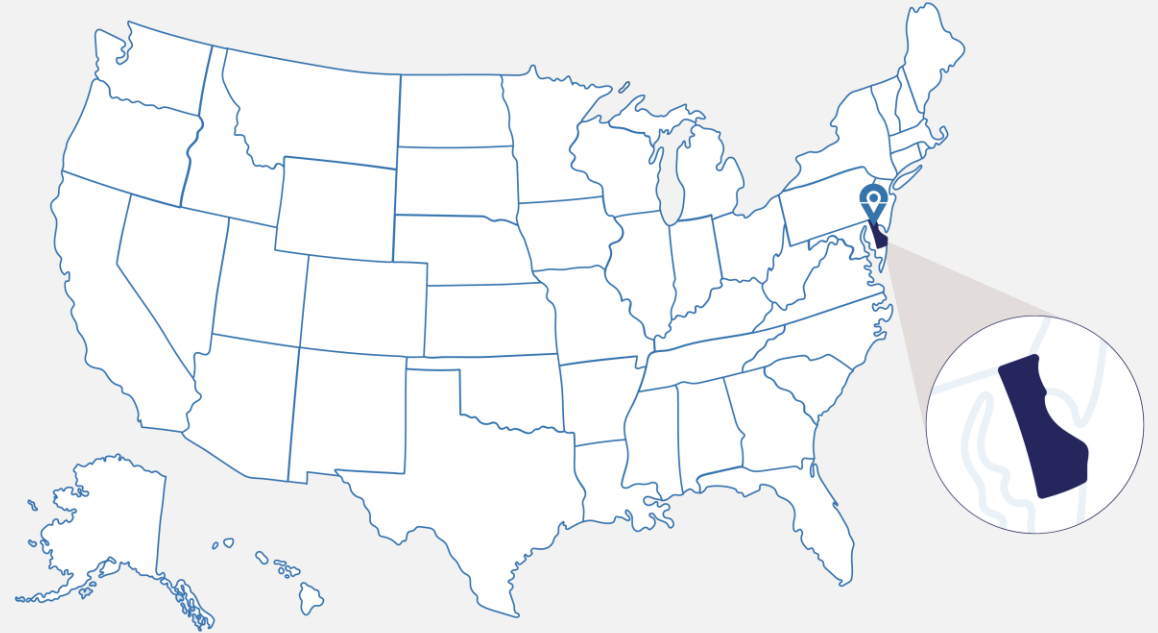
Problem

With limited contractor reliability, New Castle County Vo-Tech struggled to serve students with special needs—costing time, trust, and consistency.



Solutions + Impact

- Replaced unreliable rides with vetted, on-time drivers backed by a national network
- Improved daily consistency for SPED students using parent and communication apps
- Gained trust with families through visibility, safety tech, and responsive local support



Funding, Equity, & Compliance are Tied to Access



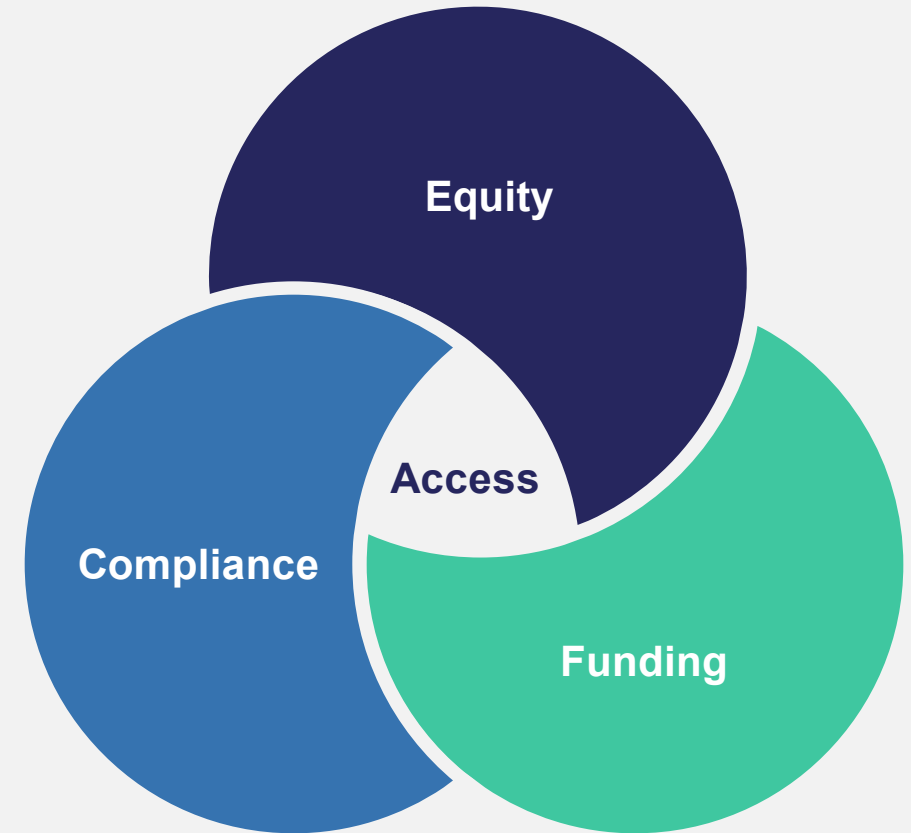
Access fuels funding – When students show up, ADA and ADM dollars follow.



Access creates equity – The right ride connects vulnerable students to opportunity.



Access ensures compliance – Alternative transportation supports your legal responsibility to McKinney-Vento, IDEA, and other state mandates.



Actionable Steps Your District Can Start Today:

1



**Maximize ESSER
Funding Before the
March 31 Deadline***

2



**Identify Gaps in Your
Routing Plan**

3



**Secure Early-Year
Rides for Vulnerable
Students**

4



**Build a Contingency
Plan for Driver
Shortages**

**subject to change*

About EverDriven



Serving
700 districts
across 36 states



Support
111,000+
at-risk students



Completed
2+ million
rides annually with a
99.99% safety record



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Appendix