DURHAM
Public Schools

Transportation Updates



Durham Public Schools Board of Education Meeting
January 9, 2025

Engagement Summary

Durham Public Schools

What are your questions regarding the implementation of Express Stops and Family Responsibility Zones to solve DPS’s transportation challenges? Please share your thoughts.

ThoughtExchange

Executive Summary

The responses highlight significant concerns regarding the implementation of Express Stops and Family Responsibility Zones. Key issues include increased traffic congestion, safety risks for children walking through unsafe areas, and the disproportionate impact on low-income families and those with inflexible work schedules. Many parents are worried about the lack of supervision at express stops, the logistical challenges of coordinating multiple children at different schools, and the potential for increased student absences. There is also a strong sentiment that the plan is inequitable and fails to consider the needs of working parents, single-parent households, and families without reliable transportation.

Jan 9, 2025 4:43 PM

PARTICIPATION
Breakdown of Participation

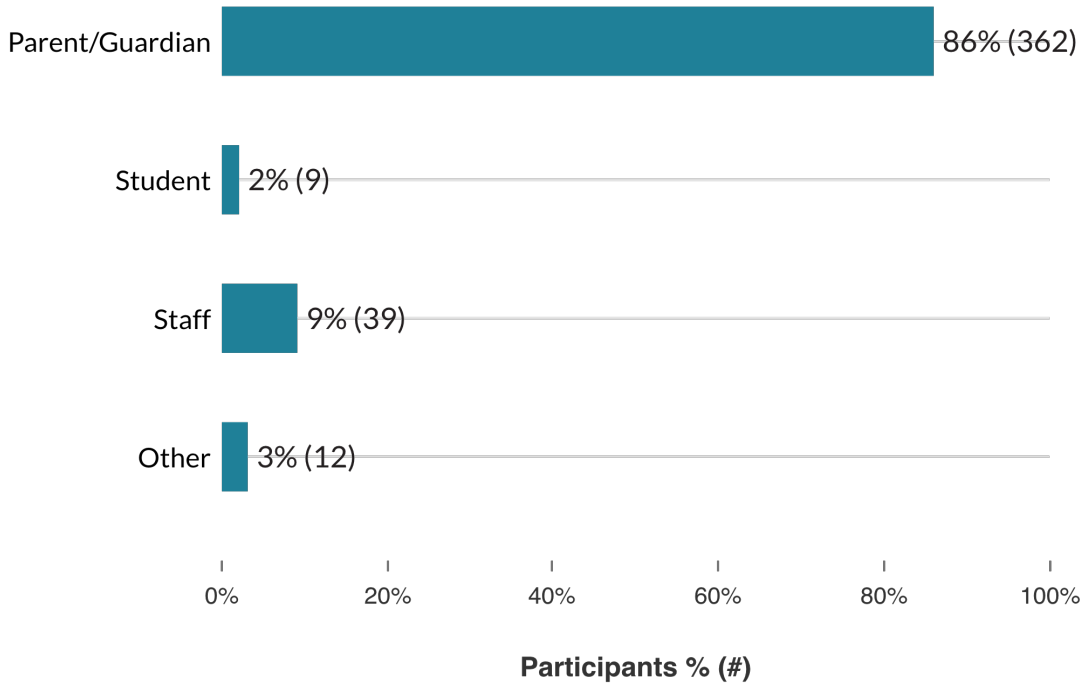
512
Participants

313
Thoughts

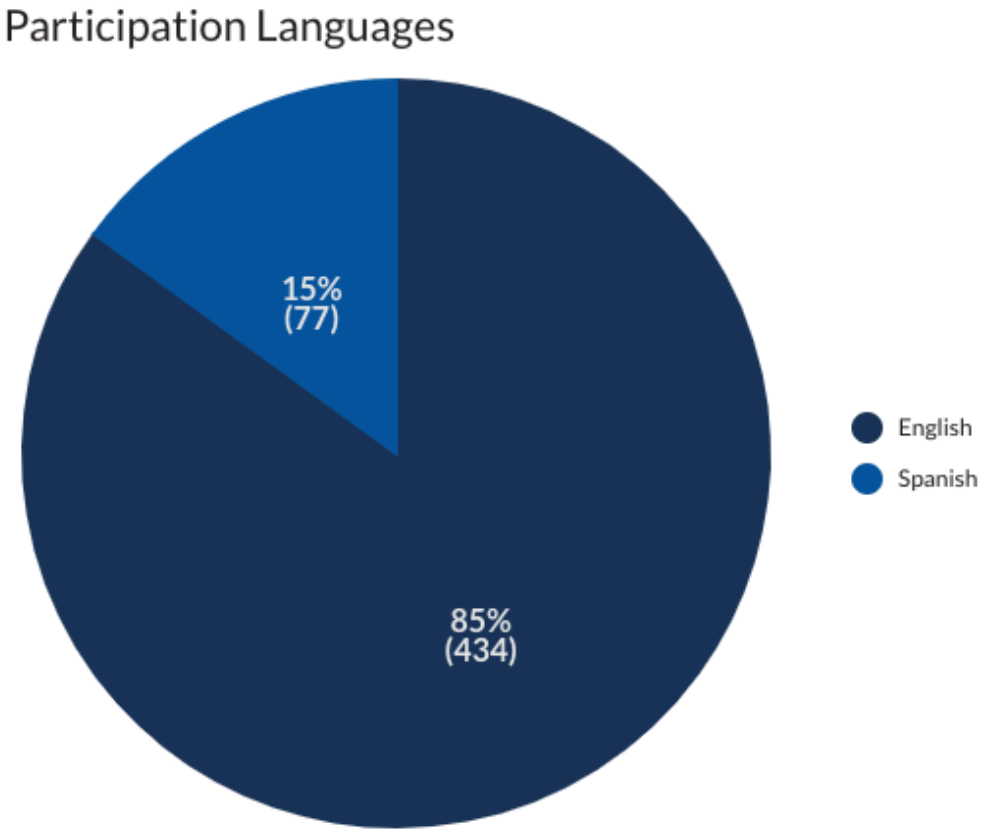
6,619
Ratings

PARTICIPATION
Breakdown of Participation

Which role do you most closely identify with?



PARTICIPATION
Breakdown of Participation



WORDCLOUD
Top Rated



TOP THOUGHTS
Key Thoughts

Who thought this express stop was a solution without insight into how it will create larger issues for families impacted? Parents jobs do not allow them to take their children to an unsupervised express stop and pick up everyday, families rely on neighborhood stops

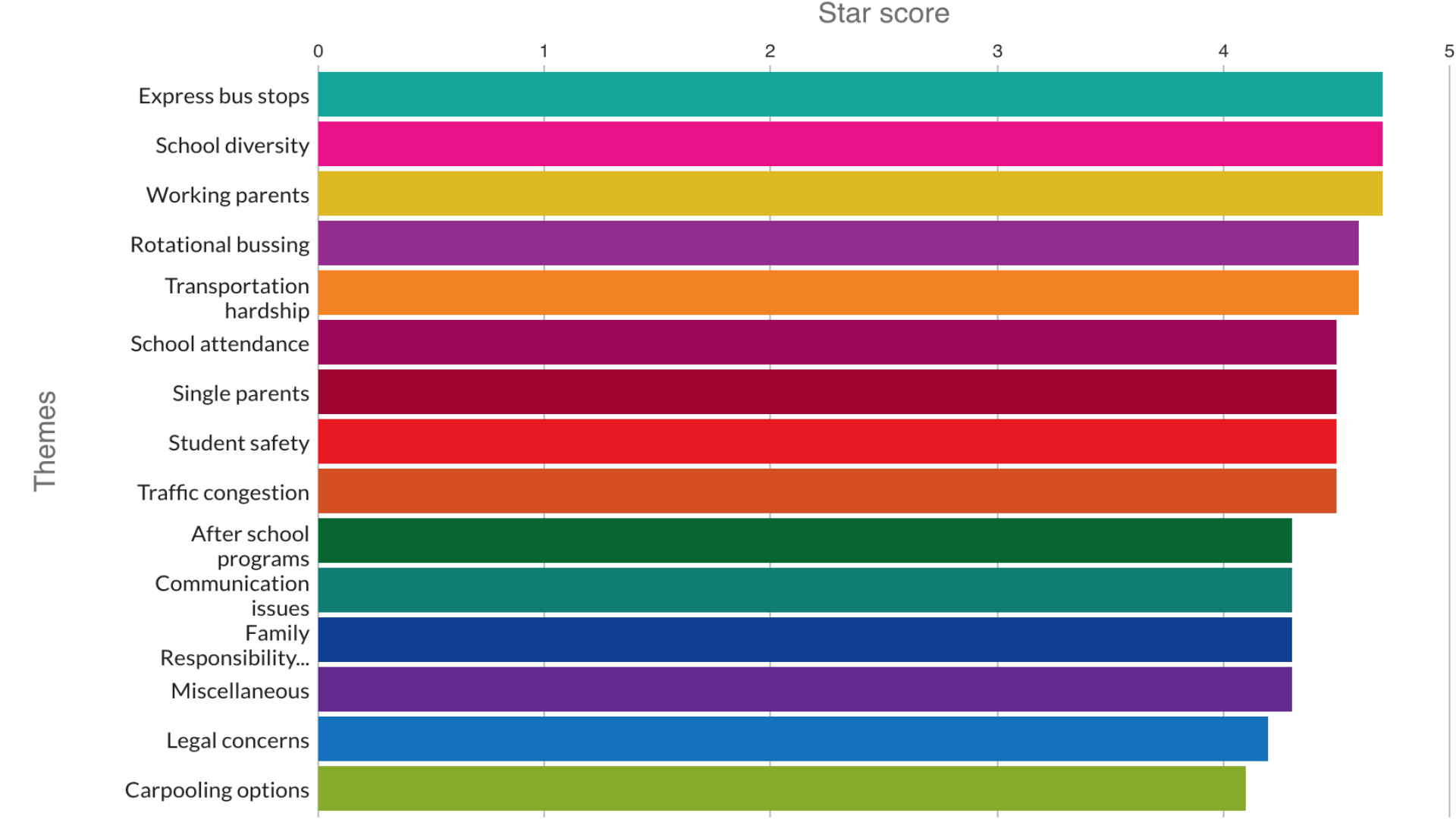
4.8 ★★★★★ (36)
Ranked #1 of 272

Express stops are a horrible idea and massively inconvenience my family. Also, it's ridiculous to implement this in the middle of the year. DPS has failed to solve the transportation problem and has basically passed the buck. Do better by our kids.

4.8 ★★★★★ (35)
Ranked #2 of 272

DPS core belief of EQUITY except for students living close to certain schools or attending magnet schools? If equity is a core belief, then it should permeate the goals of the transportation issue. Find solutions that sustain equitable access.

4.7 ★★★★★ (36)
Ranked #3 of 272


Star score
0
1
2
3
4
5
Themes
Express bus stops
School diversity
Working parents
Rotational bussing
Transportation hardship
School attendance
Single parents
Student safety
Traffic congestion
After school programs
Communication issues
Family Responsibility...
Miscellaneous
Legal concerns
Carpooling options

THOUGHTS
Express Stops

Who thought this express stop was a solution without insight into how it will create larger issues for families impacted? Parents jobs do not allow them to take their children to an unsupervised express stop and pick up everyday, families rely on neighborhood stops

4.8 ★★★★★ (36)

How will you make sure that express stops don't lead to a decrease in equity at magnet schools? When students can't take a reliable bus (or need a ride to a stop), they will be more likely to leave their magnet school.

4.7 ★★★★★ (36)

If I was able to get my kids to a stop outside of our neighborhood at the times needed for this, I would not need a bus at all!! Unless these express stops are walkable, I.e. WITHIN our neighborhood, we have to choose between our jobs and our kids' chosen school. Nice.

4.7 ★★★★★ (35)

Express Stops Debate: Equity Concerns

Side A

Express Stops Supporters

Some respondents believe that implementing Express Stops is a necessary step to ensure bus service for those who need it most. They argue that partial bus service is better than no bus service and may help decrease traffic in school drop-off/pick-up lines. They also suggest that express stops could be more efficient if located at central, walkable spots within neighborhoods.

Common ground

Need for Equitable Solutions

Both sides agree on the importance of finding equitable solutions that ensure all students have access to reliable transportation. There is a shared concern about the impact on families without transportation and the need for clear communication and planning to address these challenges. Both supporters and opponents recognize the need for a well-thought-out plan that considers the diverse needs of the community.

Side B

Express Stops Opponents

Many respondents are strongly opposed to the implementation of Express Stops, citing concerns about equity, safety, and the logistical burden on working families. They argue that the plan disproportionately affects families without reliable transportation and those with inflexible work schedules. They also highlight the potential for increased traffic congestion and the risk of students having to walk long distances in unsafe conditions.

THOUGHTS
Families

This plan places immense hardship on families with children at different schools and of different ages. It is also discriminatory.

4.7  (36)

This policy is discriminatory. It disproportionately affects families with 2 working parents, single parent families & those who cannot afford a car. For a magnet school, this policy will select out only wealthy families who can manage transportation for their students. There will be no diversity.

4.7  (28)

You are not giving families enough time to make new plans! Jan 10 (because school board meets at night) to Jan 21 has only 7 (M-F) workdays in between. That is not enough time to change work schedules!

4.6  (35)

THOUGHTS
Working Parents

Express stops do not help. If families could drive their child to an express stop they could drive them to school. This will eliminate DSA as a school option for families with 2 working parents, single parents, and those who cannot afford a vehicle.

4.7 ★★★★½ (32)

I'm a student at DSA, and this is a terrible idea. The point of the bus system is so parents don't have to worry about how their child is going to get to/from school. Parents have no time to be waiting for the bus to come to the express stop. They have LIVES where they WORK, and cannot do that.

4.6 ★★★★½ (33)

Moving bus routes to Express Stops will create constant problems for working parents. With the current system, we only have to worry about 1 day. The Express Stop makes the bus system completely useless for working parents

4.6 ★★★★½ (24)

THOUGHTS
Bus Stop

Our child rides the bus out of necessity. If there is no one to take him to express stop, how does he get there? Because transportation to the school is arguably the most important park of ensuring a child is able to attend

4.7 ★★★★½ (34)

What are the plans for students who will have to leave the magnet school mid-year because of this? Seriously, I need your answer. Where is my child supposed to go now?

4.6 ★★★★½ (34)

No vehicle available to transport student My child has no way to get to an express stop. We rely on the bus completely. I do not want to pull my child from DSA. We would be devastated

4.1 ★★★★☆ (12)

THOUGHTS
Children

Hoping to God that the importance of transportation is taken into account It is very important that there is transportation since not all of us have cars to transport our children.

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4.4 ★★★★½ (16)

It is very difficult as parents to have to go and drop off the children at school, especially when you have younger children at home that you have to take with you. For the education of children it is important that they do not miss going to school but as parents it is difficult for us to make these changes due to work.

translated by Google

4.3 ★★★★☆ (16)

I think that many families will be affected by this situation, since not all of us have the same comfort in transporting our children. It is important that people who do not have the means to transport their children provide us with transportation.

translated by Google

4.3 ★★★★☆ (13)

Family Responsibility Zones

"Family Responsibility Zones will negatively impact vulnerable families. The families that live closest to our school are some of Durham's poorest. Many refugee and asylum-seeking families don't have cars or time to walk." (Rating: 4.2)

"For family responsibility zones, you picked schools with safe and walkable streets and sidewalks. Why not for express stops?" (Rating: 4.1)

"Por qué están implementando la Responsabilidad Familiar?. Porque el transporte es un beneficio significativo para que mi hijo asista a clase todos los días." (Rating: 4.0)

> “Why are they implementing Family Responsibility? Because transportation is a significant benefit for my child to attend class every day.”

"Can children that live within the Family Responsibility Zone but go to after school programs that are outside the Zone use DPS buses? Many parents within the Zone rely on afterschool programs that are outside the Zone to make sure their children are safe and cared for after school." (Rating: 3.9)

"Do you have a map that shows geographically where the family responsibility zone is for each school? Parents would like to plan for transportation options for next year for kids that don’t currently ride the bus this year, specifically after school." (Rating: 3.7)

Equity Concerns

Disproportionately affects families without reliable transportation, single-parent households, and those with inflexible work schedules.

The plan will exacerbate existing inequalities, making it harder for underprivileged families to access education.

The plan seems discriminatory and could lead to legal challenges.

The plan does not serve all families equally and could negatively impact attendance and diversity.

Logistical Challenges

The practicality of getting children to these stops, especially for working parents and those without vehicles.

The safety of children walking long distances or waiting unsupervised at these stops.

The plan would increase traffic congestion around schools and disrupt established schedules.

The logistical aspects of the plan have not been thoroughly considered, leading to potential chaos and inconvenience for families.

Communication and Planning

The details of the plan were not clearly communicated to the affected families, leaving them unprepared.

The decision seemed rushed and lacked proper consultation with parents.

More transparency and better communication about the locations and times of the Express Stops.

The perception is that the rollout of the plan has been poorly managed, leading to confusion and frustration among parents.

Safety Concerns

The safety of children walking to and from Express Stops, especially in areas without sidewalks or during early morning and late evening hours.

The potential for increased traffic accidents and the risk of children being left unsupervised.

The perception is that the plan does not adequately address the safety of students.

More consideration of safety measures before implementing the changes.

Alternative Solutions

Increasing the pay for bus drivers to attract and retain more staff.

Combining stops within neighborhoods to reduce the number of routes while still making them accessible.

Explore other options like rotational bussing or improving neighborhood schools to reduce the need for magnet school transportation.

The perception is that there are better solutions available that could address the issues without causing significant disruption to families.

WRAP UP
Next Steps

Thanks for participating

We'll be carefully considering what we learned and sharing our actions back with you.



Family Responsibility Zones (FRZ)

- Transportation and designated FRZ schools have been and will continue collaborating.
  - Walking Safety Education
  - Agreement for Independent Walkers and Bikers
- Pre-K walkers must be accompanied by a responsible person both to and from school.
- Parents of K through 5 students will need to complete a form advising if the child is a walker or car rider.
- Parents will designate on the form if the child will be allowed to walk or bike from school or must name the designated chaperone.
- State statute and board policy allow for a no transportation zone of 1.5 miles from the school. Currently, the range of FRZ addresses from schools is .0004 miles to 1.4 miles. The average distance for all FRZ addresses is .7 miles from an assigned school.
- The provision of transportation will be assessed as traffic pattern and construction projects may occur. Transportation and schools will communicate with impacted addresses as these projects may occur or come to the attention of the district.
- Community resources will be provided to schools to share with families.



Family Responsibility Zones

Requesting Service for a Bus-Ineligible Address

1. Children are expected to use the shortest route to school, following established streets, sidewalks, or satisfactory off-road paths accessible to regular auto or pedestrian traffic. Certain conditions, such as people loitering, general concerns about neighborhood crime, traveling in the dark, or abandoned buildings, are not considered hazards and generally will not qualify for exceptions.
2. Exception for extreme hardship:
    - Contact your Principal as they may have resources or information that can assist the potential hardship.
    - If still unable to resolve the hardship, fill out a Transportation Exception Form (being drafted) on the Transportation webpage.
    - The designee will advise if the hardship exception is granted or denied.
    - If denied, per Policy 6322, the parent may seek review of the decision in accordance with policy 1740/4010, Student and Parent Grievance Procedure.



Staffing

- We are realigning outreach efforts and simplifying processes to assist interested drivers in obtaining their licenses.

- Retention, recruitment, training efforts continue with Transportation, Human Resources, and Public Affairs.

- Administration is exploring ways to improve working conditions for our current drivers and safety assistants.

  Principal Futrell has agreed to offer a room for drivers that want a place to take a break between routes.



Express Stops

- We do not recommend implementing Express Stops this school year.
- Express Stops should be implemented for the 2025-2026 school year.
- The exact stops, locations, procedures and timeline for 2025-26 will be refined during the Spring of 2025.
- Families have been notified that Express Stops may be an aspect of the magnet school program next year in the magnet application.



Rotational Coverage

- Transportation staff are confident that DPS can end Rotational Coverage on January 17, 2025.
- Work continues to pursue the goal of a fully staffed bus driver team.
- Retention and recruitment efforts will continue.



Planning for Remainder of 2024-25 and 2025-26

1. Retention, Recruitment, and Training ~~and Retention~~
2. Ongoing Route Optimization
3. Evaluating Bell Schedules for Transportation Staffing and Efficiency
4. Implications and Implementation of Secondary Growing Together Initiative.


DURHAM
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CAREER
FAIR
WE'RE HIRING FOR
OUR HIGHEST-NEED ROLES:
BUS DRIVERS
INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS
COMMUNITY EDUCATION STAFF
MAINTENANCE TECHNICIANS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 21ST
5:00 - 6:30 PM
MINNIE FORTE-BROWN
STAFF DEVELOPMENT CENTER
2107 HILLANDALE RD, DURHAM, NC 27705



QUESTIONS?