



Student Transit Pass Program: 2022-2023 School Year

Evaluation

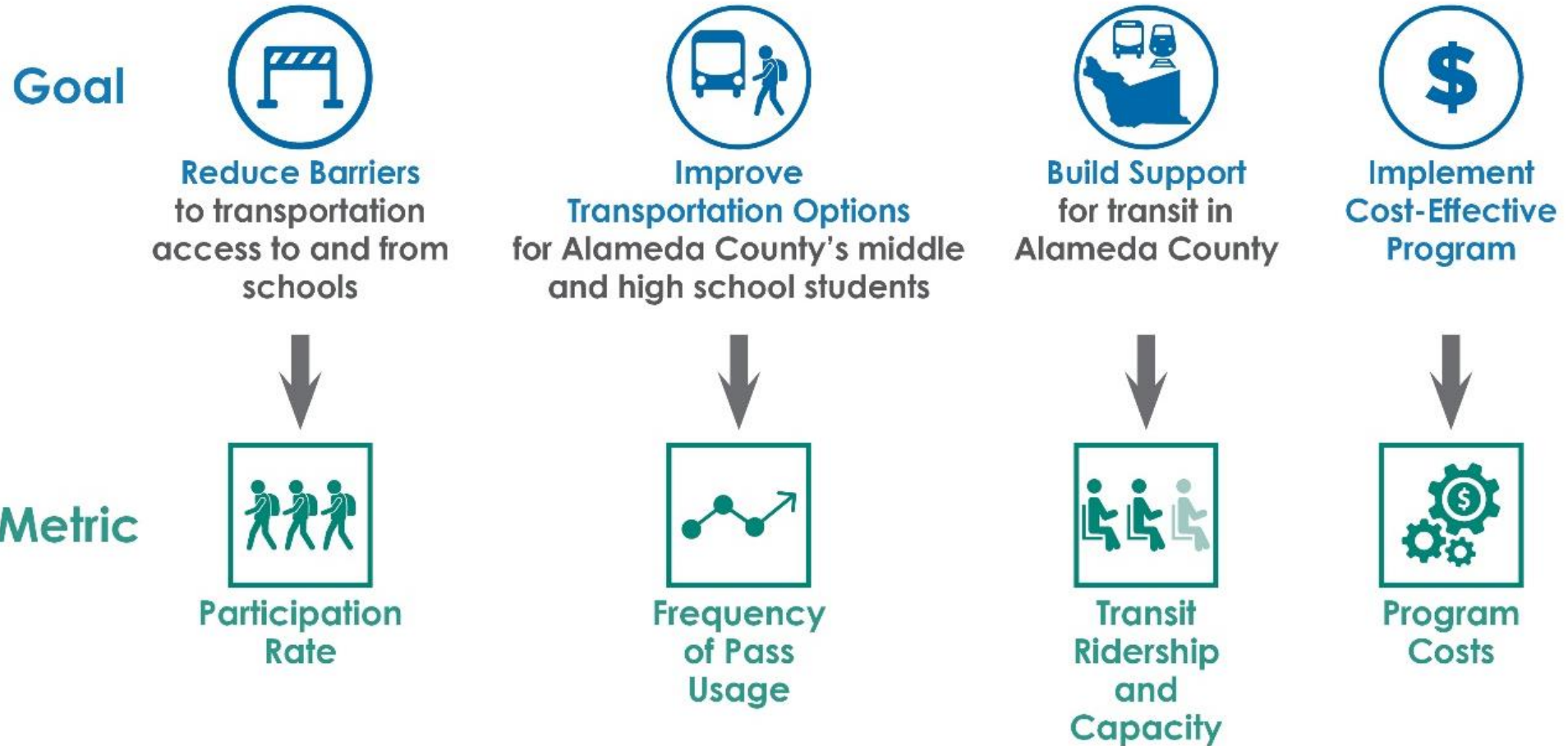
June 2024

Contents

- Introduction
- Participation Rate
- Pass Usage
- Transit Ridership and Capacity
- Program Costs
- Road Ahead

Introduction

Goals and Metrics



Program Design



FREE / UNIVERSAL 57 schools

Offered in school districts where 75% or more of students are eligible for California's Free and Reduced-Priced Meals (FRPM). All students enrolled in participating schools are eligible for the STPP.*



MEANS-BASED 70 schools

Students who qualify for California's Free and Reduced-Priced Meals (FRPM) are eligible for the STPP.

*Livermore Valley Joint USD is designated as Free/Universal even though they do not meet the above qualifications because they are the lowest income district in East County.

Participating Schools and Program Models

Year-Four Program Model	School District	# of Participating Schools
Free/Universal	Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE)	6
	Emery Unified School District (Emery USD)	2
	Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD)	9
	Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)	40
Means-based/Free	Alameda Unified School District (AUSD)	7
	Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD)	5
	Castro Valley Unified School District (CVUSD)	4
	Dublin Unified School District (DUSD)*	6
	Fremont Unified School District (FUSD)	13
	Hayward Unified School District (HUSD)	9
	New Haven Unified School District (NHUSD)	5
	Newark Unified School District (NUSD)	4
	Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD)	6
	San Leandro Unified School District (SLUSD)	4
	San Lorenzo Unified School District (SLZUSD)	7
Total number of schools		127

* District is new to the program this year.

Full list of all participating schools and program models listed in Appendix.



Evaluation Approach

- The STPP team evaluates data collected by the program team from schools and partner transit agencies.
- The program year runs from August – July, following the school calendar.
- Participation rates are calculated at the end of each school year to include mid-year sign-ups.
- Rates of bus pass usage are averaged across the “core months” of the school year, to ensure that roll-out is complete and that school calendars are relatively aligned when making comparisons across school districts.
 - For the 2022-2023 school year, the core months were October – May, consistent with 2021-2022 and pre-pandemic evaluations.
 - During the pandemic school years (2019-2020 and 2020-2021), the core months were November – February due to the variances across districts in remote and in-person learning.

School Year Context: 2022-2023

- **School Districts**

- All participating schools had returned to in-person learning by Aug 2022.

- **Transit Systems**

- No major service changes prior to or during the school year.
- Ridership was generally continuing to recover, but no operator had reached pre-pandemic levels of ridership by the end of the school year.

- **Administration & Policy**

- California began offering Universal Meals in Aug 2022, eliminating the “FRPM” program. Previous income guidelines are still used to determine STPP eligibility in Means-Based/Free school districts.
- As of Jul 2022, AB 181 now requires school districts to develop “transportation service plans” for their students.
- Continued to see wide variation in capacity and engagement from site admins.

Participation Rate

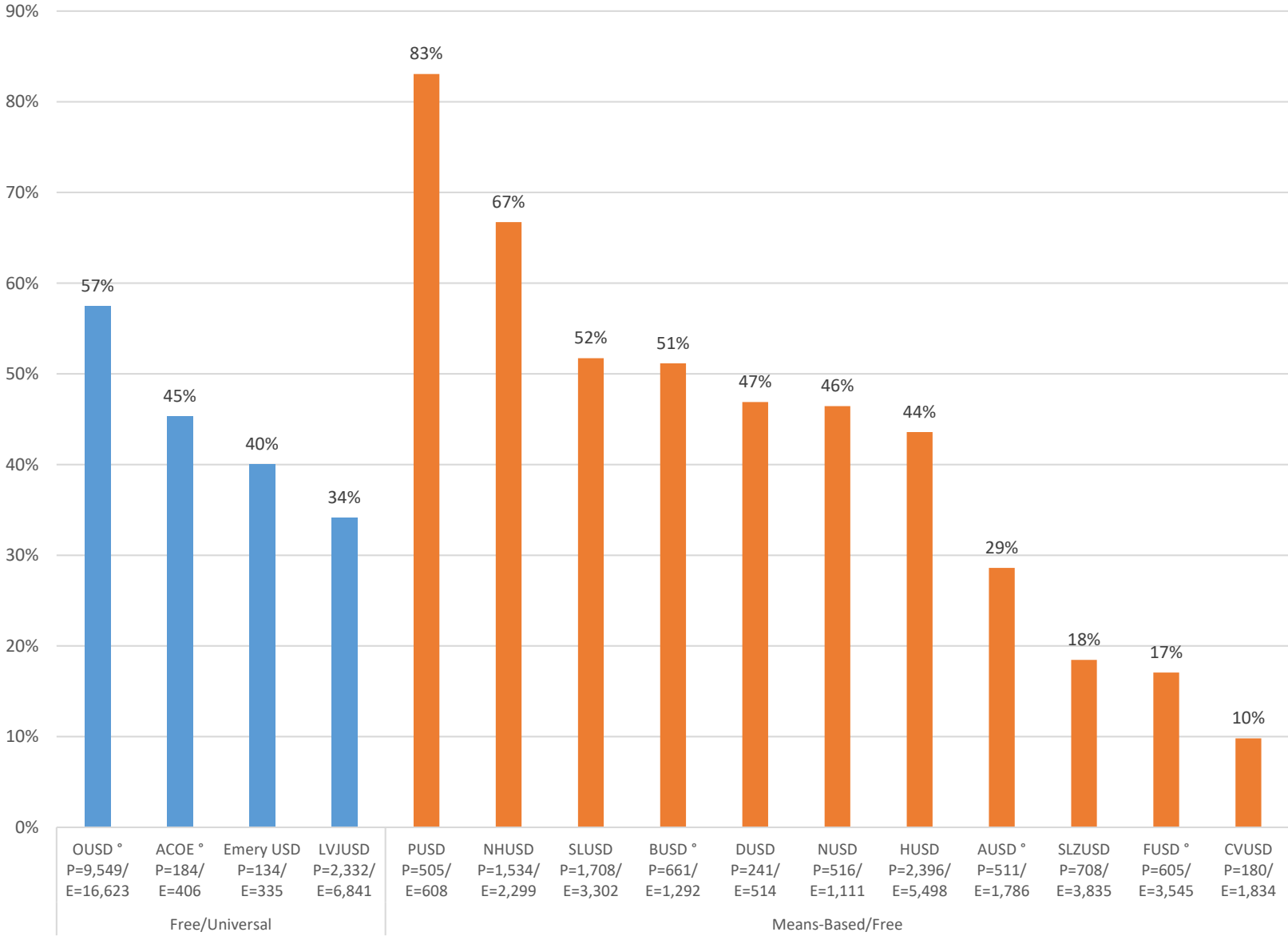
Overall Participation Rate

- The overall participation rate for the county was 44%.
 - Any student who signs up to receive a transit pass is considered a “participant” regardless of how often they use the pass.
 - Participation rate is the share of eligible students in each district who sign-up for a pass.
- Compared to the 2021-2022 SY, the overall participation rate increased by 2%.
- At the school district level, the highest participation rates were in Pleasanton USD (83%), New Haven USD (67%), and Oakland USD (57%).
- San Lorenzo USD, Fremont USD, and Castro Valley USD had the lowest participation rates, ranging from 10% to 18%.
- Changes in district-level participation rates relative to the 2021-2022 SY varied across the county.

Comparison Across Program Model

- There is no clear pattern in the distribution of participation rates when comparing free/universal districts to means-based/free districts. There are high-participation districts and low-participation districts in each of the program types.
- Free/universal districts had participation rates that ranged from 34% (Livermore Valley Joint USD) to 57% (Oakland USD).
- Means-based/free districts had a participation rates that ranged from 10% (Castro Valley USD) to 83% (Pleasanton USD).
- Similarly, the program model does not appear to be a factor in whether or how much participation rates increase or decrease from year to year.

2022-23 Year-End Participation Rate, by Program Model and School District



Degree sign (°) indicates school districts that expanded to additional schools this year.

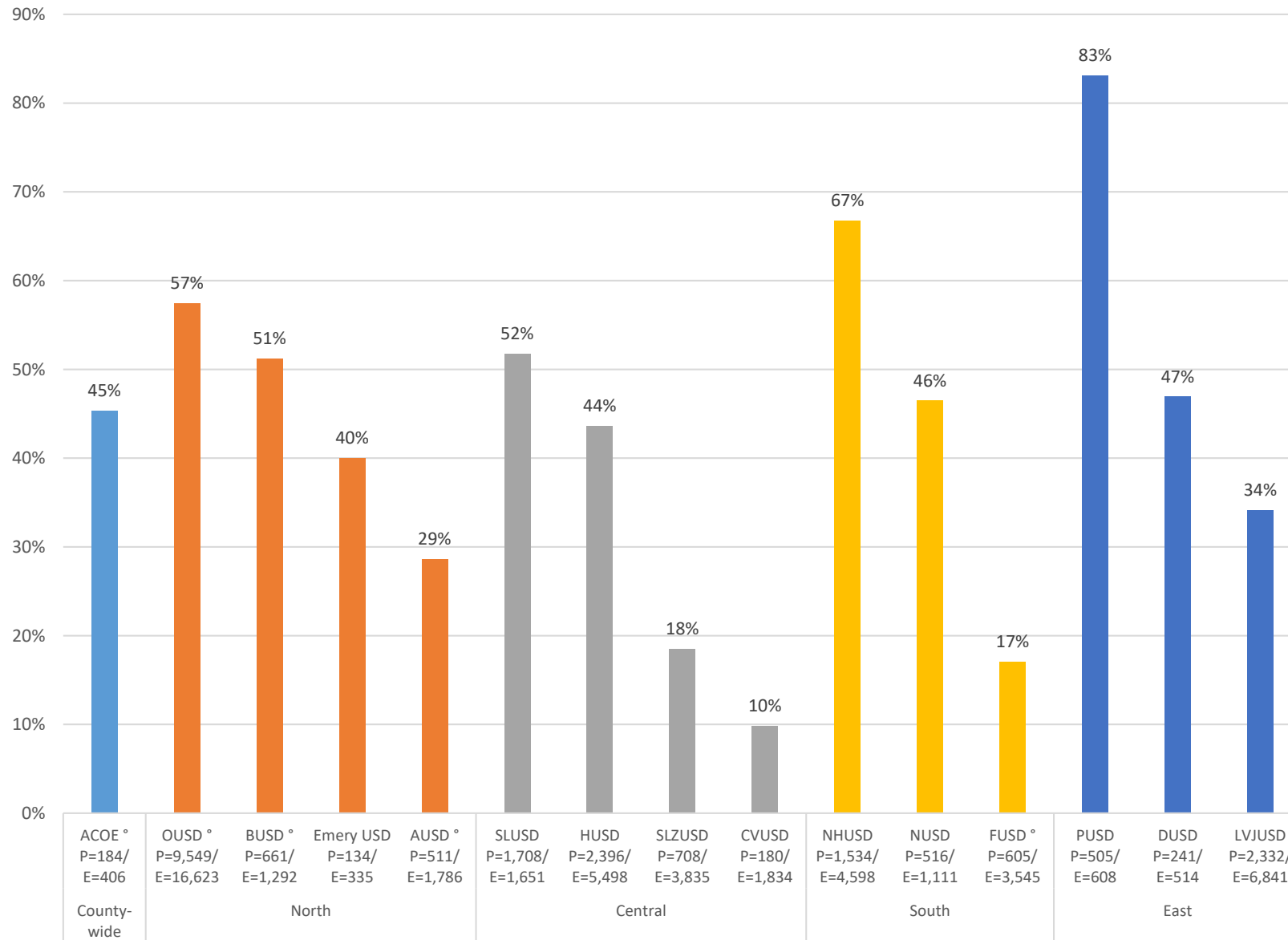
For each district, P-value indicates the number of participants and E-value indicates the number of eligible students.



Comparison Across Planning Areas

- Participation rates vary greatly within each planning area.
- The variation in participation rates within planning areas is consistent with the trends observed in past school years.

2022-23 Year-End Participation Rate, by Planning Area and School District



Degree sign (°) indicates school districts that expanded to additional schools this year.

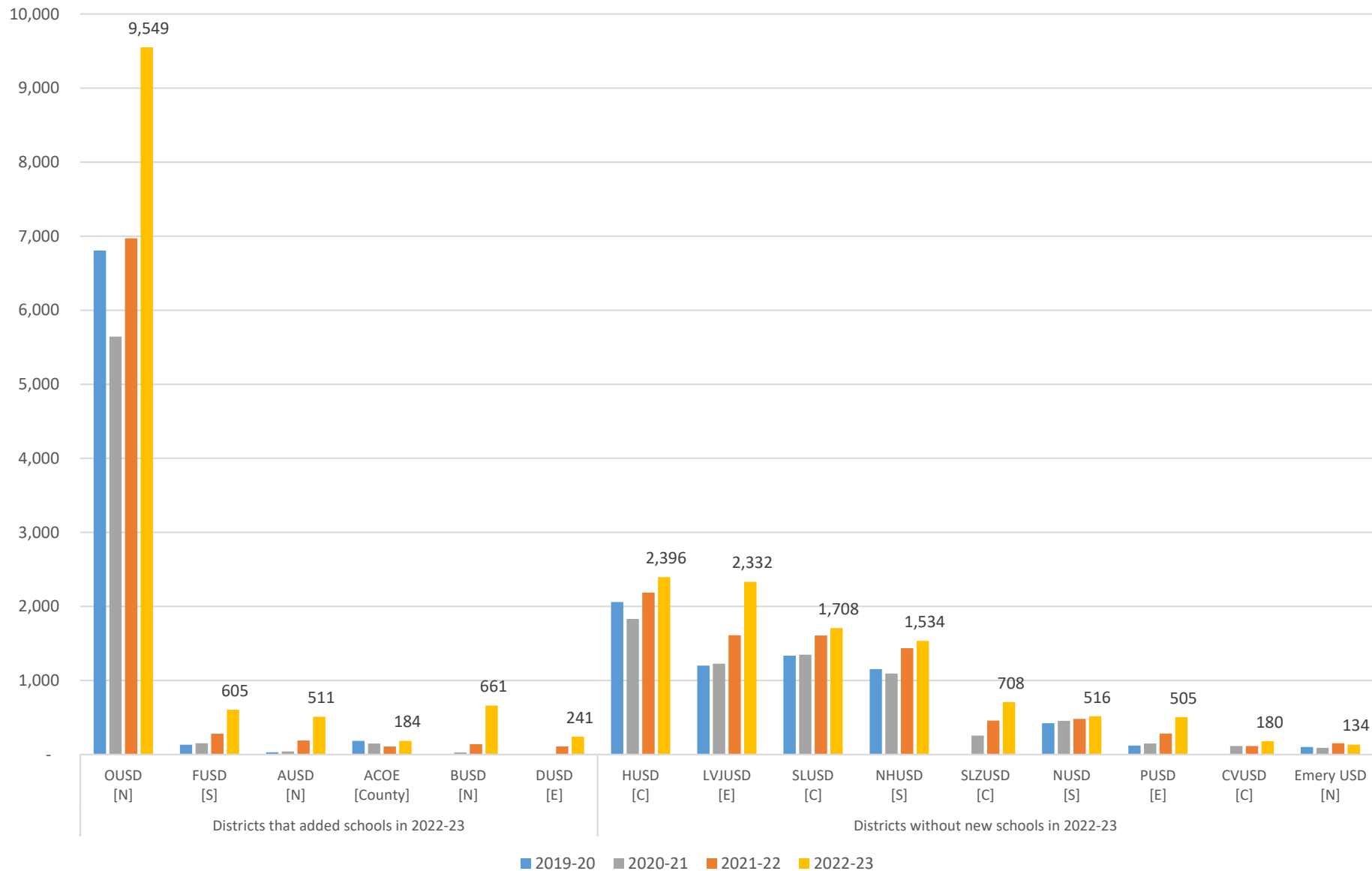
For each district, P-value indicates the number of participants and E-value indicates the number of eligible students.



Comparison Across Program Years

- Some districts have had declining participation rates in recent years
 - Newer schools in Oakland USD and Fremont USD are showing lower first-year participation rates than the schools in those same districts who joined the program in the earlier years.
 - When new schools have less interest/uptake than the continuing schools, the overall districtwide average goes down.
 - This effect could be due to the fact that expansion efforts focused first on schools with high need and strong transit options; newer schools may take longer to mature.
- Despite participation rates leveling off as some of the larger districts continue to expand, the number of participants has increased in nearly all districts
 - The number of participants decreased in 2020-21, largely because that school year began under remote learning conditions, and the program team was unable to conduct the usual outreach and marketing activities.
 - Participation rate came back very strong in 2021-22—generally above pre-COVID levels—and has surged ahead in several districts in 2022-23, including some districts where no new schools were added.

Number of STPP Participants, by Program Year and School District – All Districts



Pass Usage

Total STPP Boardings

- Participants took more than 1.1 million bus trips between August 2022 and July 2023.
- This represents a 61% increase in bus trips compared to the 2021-22 SY.

Transit Agency	Bus Trips (Aug 2022 – Jul 2023)	Percent of Total Bus Trips
AC Transit	1,002,740	88%
Union City Transit	32,330	3%
LAVTA / Wheels	105,387	9%

Comparison Across Program Years

- Total transit ridership in 2022-2023 has not yet re-bounded to pre-pandemic volumes seen in 2018-2019
 - The program now has almost twice as many participants as before the pandemic, but on average, participants are riding transit less than half as often
 - Initial expansion criteria focused on schools with high need and strong transit service; expansion to remaining schools may be diluting results compared to earlier outcomes
 - Consider whether program should shift its marketing focus from sign-ups & participation to encouraging existing participants to ride transit more often

Comparison Across Transit Service Areas

- Two districts in the LAVTA/Wheels service area (in the East Planning Area) saw some of the highest pass usage rates in the county, likely due to LAVTA/Wheel's strong coordination with school bell times
 - Dublin USD: 7.5 monthly boardings per participant
 - Pleasanton USD: 6.1 monthly boardings per participant
- Three districts in the AC Transit service area (the North, Central, and South Planning Areas) also had above average pass usage this past school year:
 - Berkeley USD: 6.8 monthly boardings per participant
 - Oakland USD: 5.9 monthly boardings per participant
 - New Haven USD: 5.8 monthly boardings per participant *(includes boardings on Union City Transit)*
- All of the districts in the Central planning area (in the AC Transit service area) experienced below average pass usage rates, ranging from 0.7 (Castro Valley USD) to 3.2 (San Lorenzo USD) monthly boardings per participant.

Transit Ridership and Capacity

AC Transit

- **Service levels** had been fully restored before the school year began.
- **System ridership** continued to recover. Supplementary Service* ridership recovered at a 9.8% higher rate than the system-wide rate. Supplementary Service ridership was 74.7% of pre-pandemic levels compared to the 64.9% System-wide service recovery.
- **Bus driver shortages** continued in 2022-2023. School service routes are prioritized when routes are adjusted due to driver shortages; however, local routes that are serving schools as part of regular service are impacted by bus driver shortages.

As STPP expands, more and more schools are not on supplemental service routes, but rather on the local routes-that aren't coded as school trippers. Dispatch may not know that a bus is needed for a school pick-up. We must do the best we can to spread resources.

-- Andrew Broadbent, Transit Schedules Specialist

*AC Transit operates Supplementary School Service to schools in 17 cities throughout the East Bay to ensure that regular local line service is not impacted by large loads associated with student passengers during school bell times.

Union City Transit (UCT)

- **Service levels** were increased somewhat to ensure transfer coordination with BART and other regional transit providers.
- **System ridership** is about 86% of pre-pandemic levels.
- **Reliability** continued to be inconsistent during school pickup/dropoff due to high levels of vehicle congestion from many caretakers who opted to drive students to school.
- **Maintenance** challenges related to aging fleet also affected service quality.

Finding drivers is difficult enough, but finding mechanics is even harder. With constantly changing technology, hiring and retaining qualified mechanics is a big challenge.

- Steve Adams, Union City Transit

LAVTA/Wheels

- **Service levels** are mostly unchanged compared to prior school year.
- **Ridership** has grown and led to vehicle capacity challenges, with high load factors particularly at school bell times at Dublin High School.
 - A “sweeper” bus picks up unserved and/or students on school service routes.
- **Bus driver shortage and fleet size** constrain the ability to expand fixed route service and accommodate more riders.

We are lucky to have a young fleet of buses, so equipment reliability is good. Driver recruitment and retention are an ongoing industry issues that we work with our operations contractor to overcome – David Mark, LAVTA Director of Customer Experience

Lessons Learned

- Localized traffic congestion can create a downward spiral in student ridership.
- Each transit agency has different challenges (drivers, fleet size, equipment status) that affect the level of service provided; different solutions will be needed in each case.
- Operators need to make hard decisions about allocating their vehicles and drivers between school service and other fixed-route service.

Program Costs

Transit Pass Costs

- Alameda CTC uses a pay-per-ride payment structure with each participating transit agency for the ongoing program.
- Total boardings billed to Alameda CTC, cost per trip, and amounts invoiced are shown below.

Transit Agency	2022-2023 Boardings	Alameda CTC Cost per Trip	Bus Pass Cost
AC Transit	1,002,740	\$1.12	\$1,123,068.80
Union City Transit	32,330	\$1.60	\$40,412.50
LAVTA/Wheels *	103,776	\$1.25	\$166,041.60
Total Billed	1,138,846	Average = \$1.17	\$1,329,522.90

* Quarterly invoices from LAVTA for 2022-2023 school year had lower boardings than the total reported at the end of the year, due to a database reconciliation issue that was identified and resolved during school year.

Transit Pass Cost Per Participant (1)

School District	2022-23 Total Participants [1]	2022-23 Total Boardings	Ratio: Boardings / Participant	Annual Cost Per Participant
AC TRANSIT				
Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE)	184	4,004	22	\$60.10
Alameda Unified School District	511	22,810	45	
Berkeley Unified School District	661	38,739	59	
Castro Valley Unified School District	180	1,091	6	
Emery Unified School District	134	6,251	47	
Fremont Unified School District	605	22,119	37	
Hayward Unified School District	2,396	58,152	24	
Newark Unified School District	516	14,416	28	
Oakland Unified School District	9,549	577,424	60	
San Leandro Unified School District	1,708	53,636	31	
San Lorenzo Unified School District	708	21,913	31	
Unknown USD [2]	n/a	125,881	n/a	

[1] Any student who signs up to receive a transit pass is considered a “participant” regardless of how often they use the pass.

[2] During the 2022-2023 school year, some students who lost their pass were issued a replacement that was not correctly coded to their school district. Although the trips on these cards were logged in the Clipper system as program boardings, the trips cannot be associated to a particular school district.



Transit Pass Cost Per Participant (2)

School District	2022-23 Total Participants [1]	2022-23 Total Boardings	Ratio: Boardings / Participant	Annual Cost Per Participant
AC TRANSIT + UNION CITY TRANSIT				
New Haven Unified School District [2]	1,534	88,634	58	\$86.45
LAVTA / WHEELS				
Dublin Unified School District	241	14,538	60	\$53.94
Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District	2,332	63,494	27	
Pleasanton Unified School District	505	27,355	54	

[1] Any student who signs up to receive a transit pass is considered a “participant” regardless of how often they use the pass.

[2] The Cost per Participant for New Haven USD is the sum of the average cost across the entire AC Transit service area plus the extra cost associated with travel on Union City Transit.



Administrative Costs

Cost Type	Cost
Labor (incl. Alameda CTC, consultant team, and AC Transit)	\$430,200
Direct Costs (incl. online application platform, translations, shipping, and printing)	\$19,300

- Alameda CTC labor costs declined relative to last year due to multiple staff transitions.
- Total labor costs were higher than the threshold adopted by the Commission (5-8% of transit pass costs) due to boardings remaining below pre-pandemic levels and the continued hands-on approach to administering the program.

Road Ahead

Road Ahead

- During the 2023-2024 SY, the program will serve 149 schools across 18 districts (approximately 57,000 eligible students).
- At the start of the 2024-2025 SY, the STPP will have expanded to all eligible middle and high schools in Alameda County—over 160 schools and approximately 63,000 eligible students.

Appendix

2022-2023 Participating Schools by Program Model and District – Free / Universal

School District	Participating Schools
Alameda County of Education (ACOE)	Burke Academy
	Fruitvale Academy
	Lazear Charter Academy
	Oakland Unity Middle
	Opportunity Academy
	Quest Academy Community School
Emery Unified School District (EUSD)*	Anna Yates TK-8
	Emery High
	Bay Farm
	Encinal Junior/Senior High
	Island High (Continuation)
	Lincoln Middle
	Will C. Wood Middle

School District	Participating Schools
Livermore Valley Joint Unified (LVJUSD)	Andrew N. Christensen Middle
	Del Valle Continuation High
	East Avenue Middle
	Granada High
	Joe Mitchell K-8 School
	Junction K-8
	Livermore High
	Vineyard Alternative
William Mendenhall Middle	

* = District is new to the program this year.



2022-2023 Participating Schools by Program Model and District – Free / Universal

School District	Participating Schools
Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)	AIMS College Prep High
	AIMS College Prep Middle
	ARISE High
	ASCEND
	Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy
	Aspire Golden State College Preparatory Academy
	Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy
	Bay Area Technology
	Bret Harte Middle
	Castlemont High
	Coliseum College Prep Academy
	Dewey Academy High

School District	Participating Schools
OUSD continued	Edna Brewer Middle
	Elmhurst Community Prep
	Fremont High
	Frick Middle
	Gateway to College High at Laney College
	Greenleaf Elementary
	Independent Study, Sojourner Truth
	KIPP Bridge Academy
	LIFE Academy
	Lighthouse Community Charter High
	Lighthouse Community Charter Middle
	Lodestar: A Lighthouse Charter

2022-2023 Participating Schools by Program Model and District – Free / Universal

School District	Participating Schools
OUSD Continued	LPS Oakland R&D Campus
	Madison Park Academy 6-12
	McClymonds High
	Melrose Leadership Academy
	MetWest High
	Oakland Charter Academy
	Oakland High
	Oakland International High
	Oakland Military Institute
	Oakland Technical High
	Oakland Unity High
	Ralph J. Bunche Academy
	Roosevelt Middle

School District	Participating Schools
OUSD Continued	Rudsdale Continuation High
	Street Academy Alternative High
	United for Success Academy Middle
	Urban Promise Academy
	West Oakland Middle
	Westlake Middle

2022-2023 Participating Schools by Program Model and District – Means-based / Free

School District	Participating Schools
Alameda Unified School District (AUSD)	Alameda High
	Alameda Science and Technology Institute
	Bay Farm
	Encinal Junior/Senior High
	Island High
	Lincoln Middle
	Will C. Wood Middle
Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD)	Berkeley High
	Berkeley Technology Academy
	Longfellow Arts and Technology Middle
	Martin Luther King Middle
	Willard Middle

School District	Participating Schools
Castro Valley Unified School District (CVUSD)	Canyon Middle
	Castro Valley High
	Creekside Middle
	Redwood Continuation High
Dublin Unified School District (DUSD)	Cottonwood Creek
	Dublin High
	Eleanor Murray Fallon
	Valley High
	Wells Middle



2022-2023 Participating Schools by Program Model and District – Means-based / Free

School District	Participating Schools	School District	Participating Schools
Fremont Unified School District (FUSD)	American High	Hayward Unified School District (HUSD)	Anthony W. Ochoa Middle
	Centerville Junior High		Brenkwitz High
	Circle of Independent Learning		Bret Harte Middle
	G.M. Walters Middle		Cesar Chavez Middle
	Irvington High		Hayward High
	John F. Kennedy High		Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle
	John M. Horner Middle		Mt. Eden High
	Mission San Jose High		Tennyson High
	Robertson High		Winton Middle
	Thornton Junior High		Cesar Chavez Middle
	Vista Alternative		Conley-Caraballo High
	Washington High	Decoto School for Independent Study	
	William Hopkins Junior High		
	Young Adult Program		
		New Haven Unified School District (NHUSD)	



2022-2023 Participating Schools by Program Model and District – Means-based / Free

School District	Participating Schools
NHUSD continued	Itliong-Vera Cruz
	James Logan High
Newark Unified School District (NUSD)	Bridgepoint High
	Crossroads High
	Newark Junior High
	Newark Memorial High
Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD)	Amador Valley High
	Foothill High
	Harvest Park Middle
	Pleasanton Middle
	Thomas S. Hart Middle
	Village High

School District	Participating Schools
San Leandro Unified School District (SLUSD)	Bancroft Middle
	John Muir Middle
	Lincoln High
	San Leandro High
San Lorenzo Unified School District (SLZUSD)	Arroyo High
	Bohannon Middle
	East Bay Arts High
	Edendale Middle
	Royal Sunset
	San Lorenzo High
Washington Manor Middle	