



BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL



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TOPIC

ACHS School Bus Transportation

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

This report covers the topic of school bus transportation for ACHS, and the inefficiencies within this system. Many factors are responsible for a lack of bus capacity being met, which results in wasted time, resources, and money. To combat this ineffectiveness, I propose an integration initiative between ACHS and DASH to provide initial joint transportation, and eventually transportation primarily by DASH bus, without sacrificing the needs of ACHS bus drivers or students.

RESULT

The result of this report will be an increase in ACPS after-school transportation efficiency by merging DASH transit efforts with those of ACHS.

Goal:

100%

of bus capacity filled daily!



SIGNIFICANCE

The results of increased school transportation efficiency matters because it will provide a more cost-effective, resource-preserving mode of transport that will positively affect ACHS students, drivers, and administrators.

Around 1,100 ACHS students already use DASH services daily.

An official partnership with DASH, which many students are already comfortable with, will allow students access to more timely routes, no driver shortages, and more reliable transportation.

CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

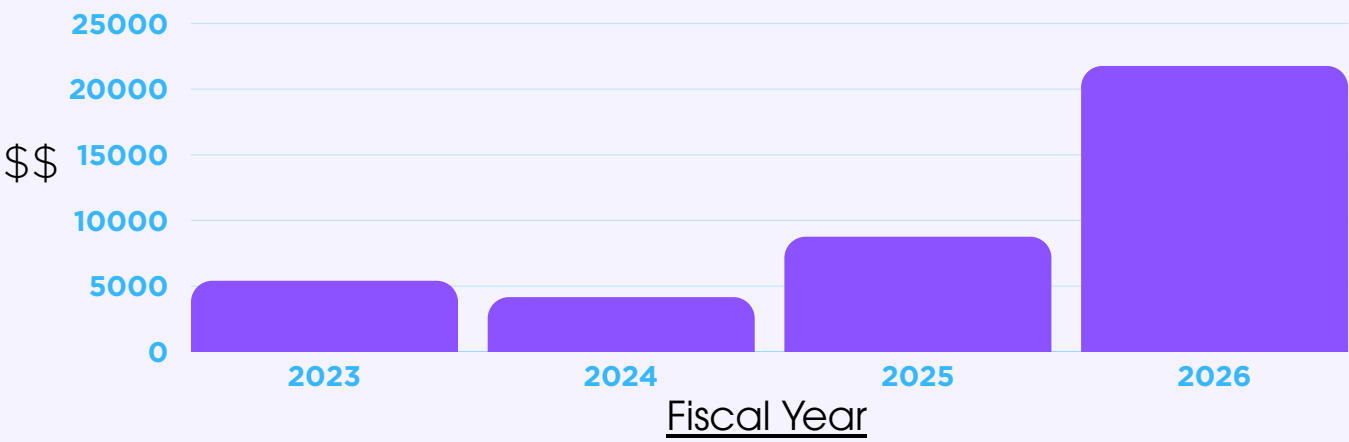
School facilities & operations



HOW ARE WE DOING?

ACHS faces the issue of increasing need for funding in their transportation department, even though less than 60% of their bus capacities are used, according to a 2025 ACPS Transportation Study. The ACPS 2026 Fiscal Year Budget highlights how much money is spent on their underutilized services:

ACPS Transportation Operations Spending by Fiscal Year



That's a **148%** increase in spending from 2025 - 2026! This money is coming mainly from taxpayer dollars, and ACHS cannot keep up with the amount of funding their underused student transportation requires.

IMPLEMENTATION

ACHS does not currently have a policy implemented about DASH usage, but it is a method of transportation promoted and trusted by the school. As of March 2025, almost 86% of ACHS students who use school buses for transportation are within walking distance of a frequented DASH stop, with most being able to take students to the school within 30 minutes, which is similar to the commute by school bus. Information about DASH services can also be found on the Transportation page of the ACHS website, showing their support of students utilizing this safe and free mode of transport.

PARTNERSHIPS

- **ACPS School Board**

The policy-maker to agree upon and implement the DASH Plan.

- **DASH**

Provide their bus services for ACPS use.

- **APD**

Provide additional protection and stability during the transition phase.



PERFORMANCE EFFORT

In August of 2025, the School Board attempted to implement a plan to merge ACHS transportation services with DASH. This plan was created to optimize money and resources for ACHS, and the potential for these advantages remains.

Students already use and trust the DASH system, and it's free for student riders, so the merging wouldn't be too disruptive. No policies are in place to foster this collaboration, but it could easily be done with support.

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

The DASH Plan was ultimately rejected due to concerns about safety standards, school bus driver hours and benefits, and the overall rushed timeline. The biggest negative effect of the switch from school buses to DASH buses is that school bus drivers would lose hours they need for benefits, which could cost them significant losses.

Another problem was accounting for student safety, since ACPS would be sharing responsibility with DASH and its security measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Use the 2025 DASH Plan as a foundation for how operations would work, but include solutions for the concerns of...

Student safety



Utilize current DASH safety measures, such as security cameras, but partner with the Alexandria City Police Department as enforcement for proper conduct.

Bus drivers



In the 2025 DASH Plan, a new fleet of DASH buses was planned to be added. ACHS bus drivers can simply take over driving these buses, as their CDL will carry over. This way, they won't lose benefits from less driving time.

Rushed timeline



Operational logistics will carry over from the 2025 DASH Plan, so there will be no rush to come up with the plan, providing more time for garnering support from students, staff, and parents.

ONLINE

- **Memorandum to the City Council and School Board Subcommittee**

Outlines the 2025 DASH Plan as it was suggested to the School Board.

- **Dashbus.com**

This is the DASH official website, which can provide information about their policies, routes, schedules, and future plans.

IN PERSON

- **Dean Candace Hyman**

Dean Hyman works with campus functioning and transportation, and is a wonderful source for insight on related topics.

- **Josh Baker**

The General Manager and CEO of DASH, he can speak for the company's merit and future hopes.

CITATIONS

-FY 2026 Budget - Alexandria City Public Schools. (2026). K12.Va.us.

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/departments/financial-services/budget/fy-2026-budget>

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-Fox, D. (2025, September 30). Fox Homes Team. FoxesSellFaster.com.

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-Belmore, R. (2025, September 10). School board to discuss DASH bus proposal for ACHS students Thursday | ALXnow. ALXnow | Alexandria, Va. Breaking News, Local Events and Community Happenings. <https://www.alxnow.com/2025/09/10/school-board-to-discuss-dash-bus-proposal-for-achs-students-thursday/>