

# **New Law Provides Free Bus Transportation for All East St. Louis School District Students**

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The Illinois State Board of Education has issued its first approved transportation waiver since the adoption of HB5195 in late 2018. This bill allows qualifying schools to provide free bus transportation to students who reside in an area with high incidence of criminal gang activity.

The East St. Louis School District is the first school district in Illinois to apply and receive a waiver for all their students. Previously, free school transportation was only

provided to students who live more than 1.5 miles from school or for those who live less than 1.5 miles but who walked through hazardous areas as identified by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Data from the Illinois State Police, as well as the City of East St. Louis, City of Washington Park, City of Centreville and the Village of Alorton, were used as evidence for determining eligibility in the application to the Illinois State Board of Education. School District administration was grateful to local municipalities and police departments for their assistance with the data reports.

East St. Louis School District Superintendent Arthur Culver noted that the district and concerned partners have been working for several years to get free transportation for students who reside in areas with high incidences of criminal gang activity. The bill was championed by Rep. LaToya Greenwood, Rep. Jay Hoffman and Sen. James Clayborne, Jr. to ensure approval in the House and Senate.

Superintendent Culver continued, “Our parents are the ones who raised this issue and worked tirelessly to advocate for free bus transportation for all students. Their advocacy has led to this win for our students. We also want to thank our Board of Education and the Financial Oversight Panel for their support and steadfast concern for the safety of our students.”

It is estimated that an additional 1,800 students will qualify for transportation beginning with the 2020-2021 school year. The school district’s transportation provider (Illinois Central) is in the process of adding new fleet and recruiting additional drivers to meet the increased service demand.

*East St. Louis School District 189 is focused on providing rigorous, high quality education and exceptional educational experiences to the nearly 6,000 students within the community. Our vision is for students to be supported physically, socially, and emotionally in a safe and nurturing environment to achieve academic success that prepares them for college, the workforce, and citizenship in the 21st century. For more information, visit [www.estl189.com](http://www.estl189.com). Follow more great stories @estl189 on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*