# Special Education Transportation Cost Savings Initiative

MASBO Annual Conference
May 15, 2019

# Panel Presenters

Colleen Cavanaugh      Mass Association of Pupil Transportation

Stephanie Fisk      Gateway Regional School District

Brian Hyde      Uxbridge Public Schools

Kristin Shaver      Salem Public Schools

# Special Education Transportation Task Force

In 2003 representatives from MASS, MOEC, maaps, MAPT and ASE organized to discuss rising costs in out-of-district special education transportation

A Statewide Task Force was created in 2004

Preliminary study showed significant cost savings by consolidating routes

For the past several years the Massachusetts Legislature and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education have funded initiatives to reduce cost of out-of-district transportation

# Resources Available

A website was developed in FY2012 to show the October 1 DESE Data
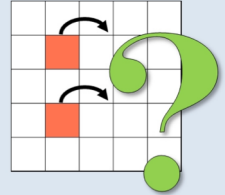
## www.SpedTransSavings.org

This data can assist in identifying contiguous districts to explore potential ride sharing

The Massachusetts Association of Pupil Transportation was awarded a contract from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Activities include conducting Special Education Transportation Reviews with a 50% contribution from DESE

# District Reviews: Scope of Work

- Review all contracts and processes used for obtaining transportation services

- Conduct analysis of in-house operations

- Role of district personnel in arranging services

- Explore option of district operated program

- Conduct analysis of transportation budget and actual route costs

- Review IEP process as it pertains to transportation

- Provide comparative state data from Schedule 7 for FY13-FY18

What-If
Analysis ▼

# What Have We Learned From Some of the Reviews That We Have Completed?

- **Maximizing** vehicle load is key to savings

- Makes sense to see if neighboring/contiguous communities also have children attending same out of district school

- Sometimes this is not possible

- Some students need to ride alone

- Age differences

- Geography between schools and/or home

- Existing contracts with vendor(s)

# What Have We Learned From Some of the Reviews That We Have Completed?(Continued)

- IReview in-district transportation to ensure students are riding the regular education bus if possible

- Discussion at the IEP meeting impacts transportation costs

- Carefully consider when a monitor is needed on the vehicle

- Seek quotes or bids <u>annually</u> to allow for changes in ride share opportunities

# Challenges

• Parents may not want child riding with students from other districts

• Length of ride

• Frequent changes to routes

• Special conditions for monitors and/or wheelchairs

# Considerations

- Out-of-District transportation can be the least efficient and the most expensive

- Bid out all outside Special Education runs as opposed to quoting each trip

- Vendor competition, research available vendors in your area

- Bid annually or negotiate prices annually

# Considerations

Some vendors will share information with you for the best price while others are more guarded with their route information

Know your neighboring districts

The telephone can be your most valuable tool to secure a good price

A few minutes invested can save considerable money

# Gateway Regional School District

District overview - comprised of 6 towns - 187 square miles

Special education transportation review conducted in FY '17 -

Those included in review:

Colleen Cavanaugh, M.A.P.T.
Gateway Assistant Superintendent
Gateway Special Education Director
Gateway Transportation Coordinator

# Major Changes for Savings

Received 2 quotes = More competitive pricing

Coordinated preschool transportation with special education director and preschool coordinator for placement of students from same town in same preschool schedule

Purchased used 7D van for transportation of special education students involved in the work study transition program

In-house programs vs. tuitioning out

Placement of monitors on regional bus runs vs. a separate special education bus

# Special Education Transportation Cost Comparisons

FY '17 - $639,569

FY '18 - $436,128

FY '19 - $348,449 (Projected)

FY '20 - $326,915 (Projected)

Cost reductions from FY '17 - FY '20 projected to be $312,654

# UXBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**MAPT COL-MAR (54) + Uxbridge (1) = $219,627 or 41.43% Savings**

1,700 students
18.6% SPED (316 IEPs)
29% (91) receive Specialized Transportation
Five in-district vehicles
Two in-district SPED buses
FOUR+ (former) Vendors

- **MAPT met** with Business Office, Special Education Office (including Team Chairs), Drivers and All Vendors
- **Reviewed, Analyzed and Provided Thoughtful Feedback** of All In & Out of District Special Education Transportation

- **MAPT Provided three full pages of recommendations** including:
  - Formalized bid process and expanded vendor list;
  - Expanded our in-district routes;
  - Neighboring schools' collaboration;
  - Tightened up Team Chairs and IEP process with *Individual Transportation Checklist*;
  - Reviewed monitor need;
  - Driver/Monitor training program;
  - Vendor guidelines;
  - Parent relationships; and
  - Ride sharing language
- **Introduced Uxbridge to MAPT, spedtranssavings.com**
- **Updated job descriptions** for drivers and monitors
- **Move Forward!  Get It Done!**

# Salem Public School District

Special education transportation review conducted in March 2017

Participants in the review process:

      Superintendent
      Business Manager
      Assistant Superintendent-Pupil Personnel Services
      Special Education Department Head
      Specialized Transportation Coordinator
      Homeless Liaison
      Out of District Coordinator
      Vendors

# Salem Public School District

Recommendations:

- Conduct a formal bid with annual pricing

- Educate team chairs on the IEP relative to transportation so they have a clear understanding when a student needs to be on a separate vehicle

- Review current IEP's to ensure special transportation services are warranted

- Develop protocols for dealing with transportation issues

- Encourage ride sharing with a cost benefit to the district

Colleen Cavanaugh - colleen_cavanaugh@outlook.com