

June 9, 2026

To: Superintendent Dr. Hines

From: Patricia Magnuson and David Hanson

Subject: Recommendation to Eliminate the Park Spanish Immersion Non-Transportation Zone

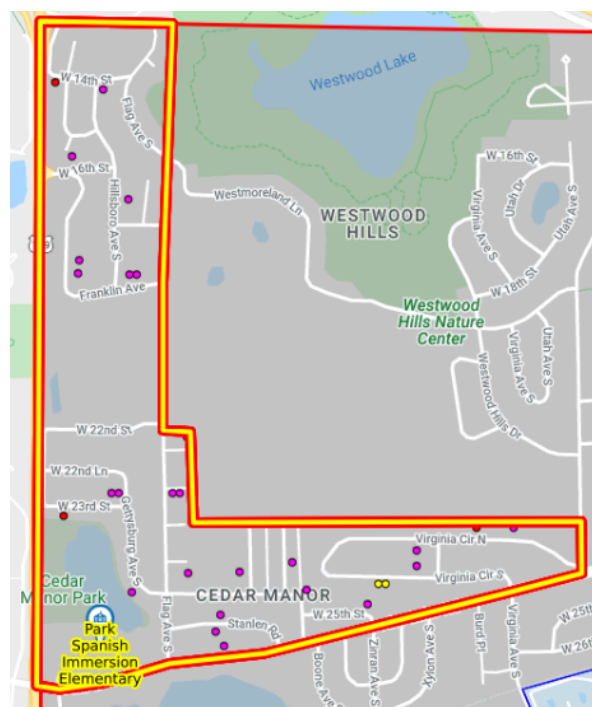
Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to recommend that St. Louis Park Public Schools eliminate the non-transportation zone currently in place for Park Spanish Immersion (PSI).

Background

As part of the FY2023 budget reduction plan, the district implemented approximately \$4.8 million in budget cuts. Expanding non-transportation zones at district schools contributed approximately \$383,000 toward those reductions.

At that time, PSI did not have a non-transportation zone due to its unique location, bounded by Cedar Lake Road, Highway 169, and a park. To promote consistency and equity across schools, a small non-transportation zone (see image below) was established at PSI. In addition, the district sought to reduce bus ride times and improve transportation efficiency for students attending PSI from across the district.



Current Conditions

In the years since the non-transportation zone was implemented, traffic congestion around PSI has increased significantly. Construction on Cedar Lake Road has further constrained an already congested corridor. In response, the district has modified parent pick-up procedures and implemented Car Rider Pro to improve the efficiency and organization of student pick-up.

The Transportation Department has also begun a district-wide review of non-transportation zones in response to increasing vehicle traffic at all schools. While traffic congestion is present throughout the district, it has become particularly problematic at PSI because the school is surrounded by heavily traveled arterial roadways that limit safe access and create bottlenecks during arrival and dismissal.

Analysis

Preliminary analysis indicates that the PSI non-transportation zone can be eliminated without increasing transportation costs.

PSI's status as a district-wide elementary school creates unique transportation conditions. Some existing routes do not operate at full capacity, providing sufficient room to accommodate students currently residing within the non-transportation zone. Transportation staff estimate that these students can be incorporated into two existing routes, adding approximately five to six minutes to each route while remaining operationally manageable.

Because district transportation operates on a tiered schedule, elementary routes must conclude in time for buses to serve secondary students. As a result, extending route lengths significantly is not feasible. However, the modest increase associated with serving the current PSI non-transportation area can be accommodated within existing route structures.

Although eliminating the PSI non-transportation zone would make PSI the only elementary school without such an area, PSI's unique circumstances distinguish it from other schools. Its location along major roadways, increasing traffic congestion, district-wide attendance boundary, and unusually long transportation routes create conditions that justify a different approach. Given that the non-transportation zone can be eliminated without additional cost and with only a minimal impact on route times, maintaining the current restriction is difficult to justify.

Future Considerations

The district remains committed to an annual comprehensive review of non-transportation zones at all schools. As future budget capacity becomes available, the district may consider restoring transportation service in additional areas where operationally feasible.

Next Steps

When the expanded non-transportation zones were implemented as part of the FY2023 budget reductions, the School Board reviewed the changes during a study session, and formal board action was not required.

Similarly, administration recommends discussing this proposed change at the June 9 School Board meeting and, pending board feedback, communicating the change to affected PSI families as soon as possible so they may plan accordingly for the upcoming school year.