

everdriven

Future of Modern Student Transportation and Safety



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Introduction



A Letter From EverDriven CEO Mitch Bowling

At EverDriven, we believe every student deserves a reliable, safe, and dignified way to get to school—no matter their circumstances.



As the CEO of EverDriven—and as someone who believes deeply in the power of education to transform lives—access has always been at the heart of our mission. For too many students, especially those with specialized transportation needs, getting to school isn't a given. It's a daily barrier. And that's something we're committed to changing.

At EverDriven, we believe every student deserves a reliable, safe, and dignified way to get to school—no matter their circumstances. Whether they're navigating the challenges of homelessness, living in foster care, or requiring specialized accommodations, these students deserve more than a seat on a bus. They deserve a reliable path forward.

Across the country, school districts are modernizing how they serve students—rethinking routes, leveraging new technology including AI, and prioritizing the most vulnerable. And they're doing it with urgency and intention.

This report highlights the incredible work underway—from the solutions already being implemented, to the bold plans districts are putting in place for the future. It also reflects something we've always known to be true: when transportation is frictionless, education becomes more equitable.

Thank you for being part of this modern student transportation movement. The road ahead requires new thinking and continued partnership—and we're proud to travel it with you.

Mitch Bowling

EverDriven CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mitch Bowling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Executive Summary

Today, 98% of school districts around the country are focused on modernizing their student transportation. Why is this effort so important? Modern student transportation is about flexibility, placing students at the center. More kids than ever need access to specialized transportation—from students with special needs, to unhoused or unaccompanied McKinney-Vento students, to children in foster care. These students are among the most vulnerable to chronic absenteeism. Access to education can provide the stability they need, both today and to shape their future.

Yet, serving this population's diverse needs means adding new strategies to the traditional transportation fleet. It's a challenge for school districts everywhere. The good news is districts are already stepping up to the plate in a big way. In partnership with Hanover Research, EverDriven surveyed schools modernizing their transportation to find out what they're doing today, and how they're prioritizing technology for the future.

Districts are investing in technology, expanding transportation choices, and moving toward systems that are:



Safety-first

Prioritizing collision avoidance, driver monitoring, and safety training



Tech-enabled

Implementing GPS, AI-assisted routing, real-time parent communication, and more



Flexible

Embracing small-capacity vehicles or Alternative Student Transportation providers to serve students outside standard routes

The takeaway is clear: Modern student transportation is not just about upgrading buses—it's about designing a multimodal, student-first system that meets students where they are.

Alternative Student Transportation is no longer seen as a fallback option. Districts are now embedding it into their core strategy to drive equity, boost attendance, secure funding, and comply with evolving regulations.

The survey found that school districts are taking their transportation challenges seriously and acting fast. Half of districts have already begun adopting modernized transportation solutions. Among those that have not yet started, most plan to implement these solutions within the next five years (47%).

Nearly all districts have a formal plan for transportation modernization over the next five years, and two-thirds have secured funding.

This approach uses the latest technology to ensure that students get to school safely, on time, and with the personalized service they need to meet their specific needs. Most administrators foresee technology playing a key role in their district's transportation strategy over the next five years. They're taking advantage of technologies like AI to drive efficiency, gain better visibility, and reduce costs.

In fact, administrators expect modernized transportation solutions to address several pain points for their districts, with the most common being high maintenance costs (25%), inefficient bus routes/schedules (24%), and the need to meet regulatory requirements and standards (23%).

What are district administrators and transportation leaders doing now, and how will they handle this increasingly complex issue in the future? Here's what's most clear. They're prioritizing student safety above all else.

Districts plan to adopt or expand upon various technologies to enhance transportation safety, including:



Let's explore more about what school districts are doing to meet the transportation needs of their diverse student population in 2025 and beyond.

Challenges



Challenges in Supporting Students With Unique Transportation Needs

When it comes to transporting students with special needs and McKinney-Vento students, school districts face a variety of challenges. Most districts (88%) face equity gaps of some kind when it comes to transportation access across student groups. Non-regulated states (meaning those without transportation legislation) are more likely to report significant or severe equity gaps compared to their regulated counterparts.

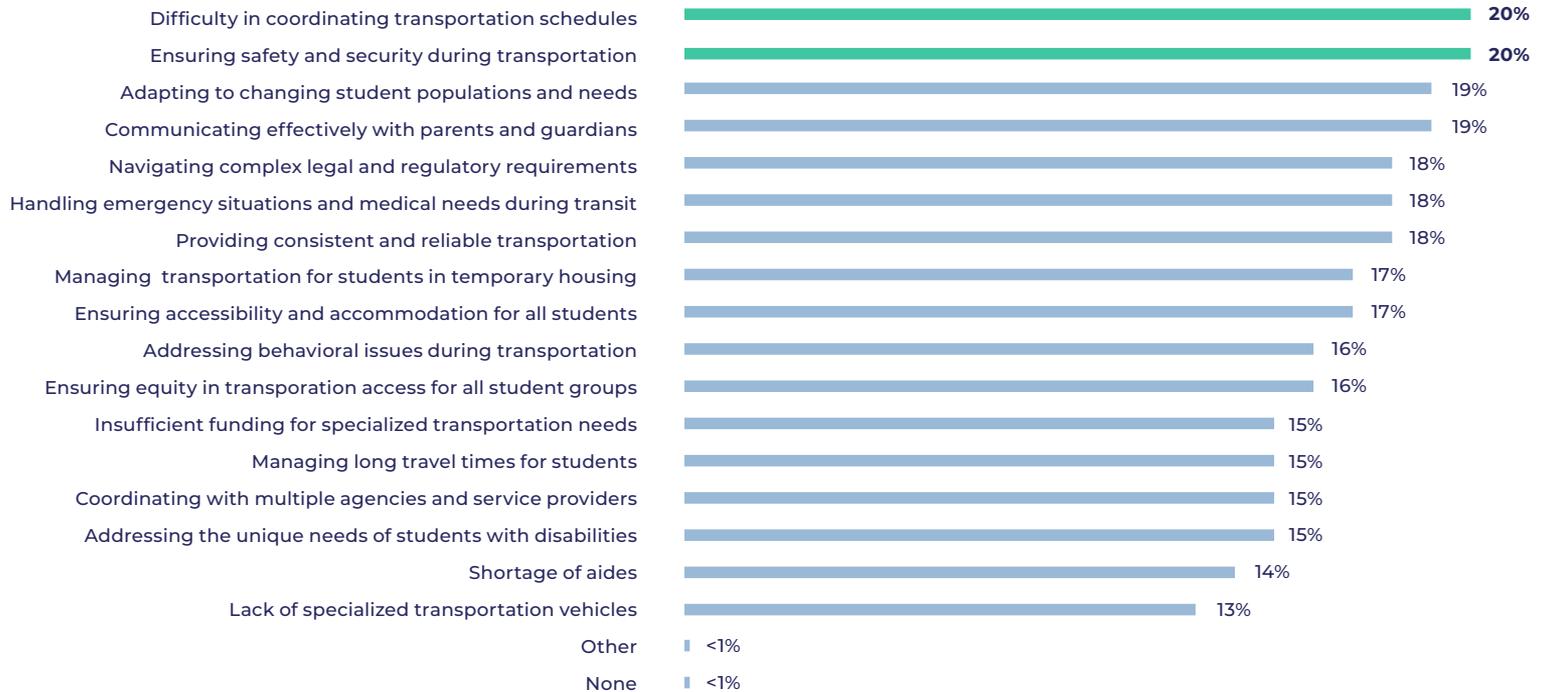
Districts across the country named ensuring safety and security in transportation (20%) and difficulty in coordinating transportation schedules (20%) as top challenges they faced. However, superintendents (24%) and assistant superintendents (37%) were far more likely to cite schedule coordination difficulties as a top challenge, vs. only 17% of transportation directors.

To contrast, transportation directors named student safety as their top concern (24%), illustrating that logistical challenges may not be as critical as safety for employees managing the day-to-day.

Other challenges for districts included adapting to changing student populations and needs (19%), communicating effectively with parents and guardians (19%), and navigating complex legal and regulatory challenges (18%). With the ground constantly shifting underneath districts' feet, many are relying on transportation modernization efforts, including specialized transportation solutions, to alleviate their concerns.



Challenges in transporting special education and McKinney-Vento students:



Respondents could select up to three transportation challenges in response to this question.

Current Investments



Current Investments in Modern Student Transportation Solutions

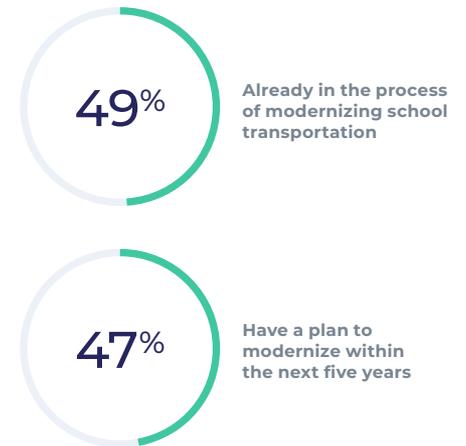
To meet these transportation challenges head-on, most districts are modernizing their transportation approach—and fast. Nearly half of districts (49%) have already begun modernizing school transportation, and 47% have a plan to within the next five years. Nearly all (95%) expect their transportation budgets to increase over the next five years, by an average of 26%. Half of districts spend between \$1 million and \$5 million on transportation annually. These statistics indicate that districts have both the willingness and the budget to make improvements.

In fact, 37% have already turned to alternative or contracted student transportation. In addition, a quarter of districts said they are adopting or expanding their adoption to further enhance transportation safety.

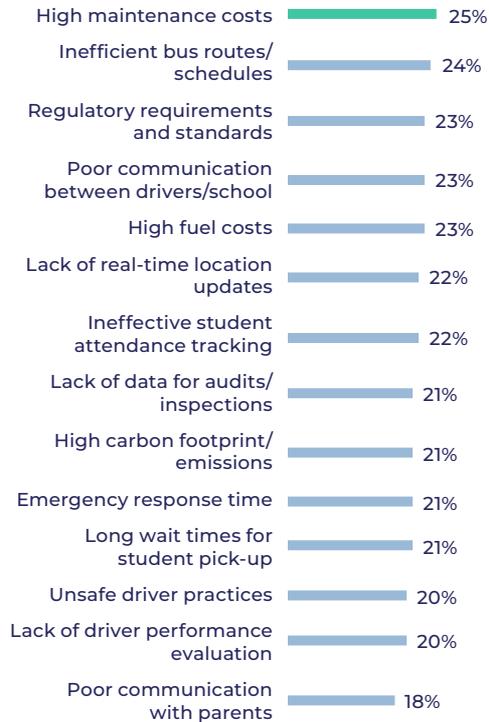
Alternative Student Transportation supports districts' efforts to modernize, providing many of the technology innovations and training programs schools plan to adopt.

Districts have big expectations for modernized transportation solutions to reduce high maintenance costs, inefficient scheduling, and regulatory compliance issues—along with a host of safety issues. Even so, 31% still expect challenges with maintenance and operational costs when implementing modernized solutions.

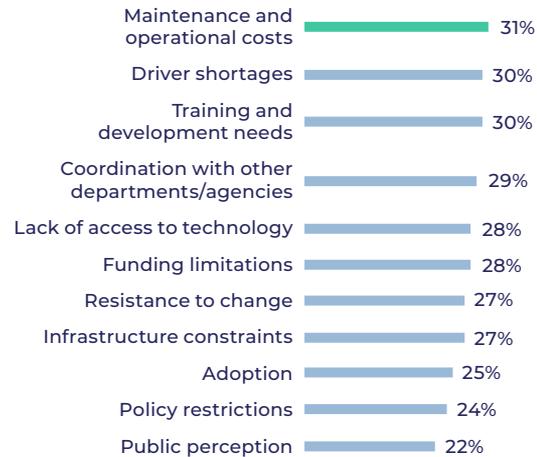
Nearly all districts have started or plan to modernize school transportation within the next five years:



Pain points expected to be addressed with modernized solutions:



Expected challenges when implementing modernized solutions:



Respondents could select all that apply in response to these questions.

Choosing a trusted specialized transportation partner with a track record for success can alleviate these expected challenges. Beyond providing a stable cost structure alone, technology-enabled Alternative Student Transportation addresses issues like driver shortages, training, and coordination—all while reducing chronic absenteeism and meeting unique student needs.

When it comes to technology investments, many districts have already adopted technologies embedded within leading alternative transportation providers. These include real-time GPS tracking systems (52%), AI-assisted routing software (48%), driver monitoring systems (47%), and on-board cameras (39%)—helping with both logistical and safety issues. To communicate more effectively with parents, 44% have adopted parent and student apps, and 37% use emergency communication tools. Many of these investments fall within the wider umbrella of safety and security.

Expanding Technology Investments



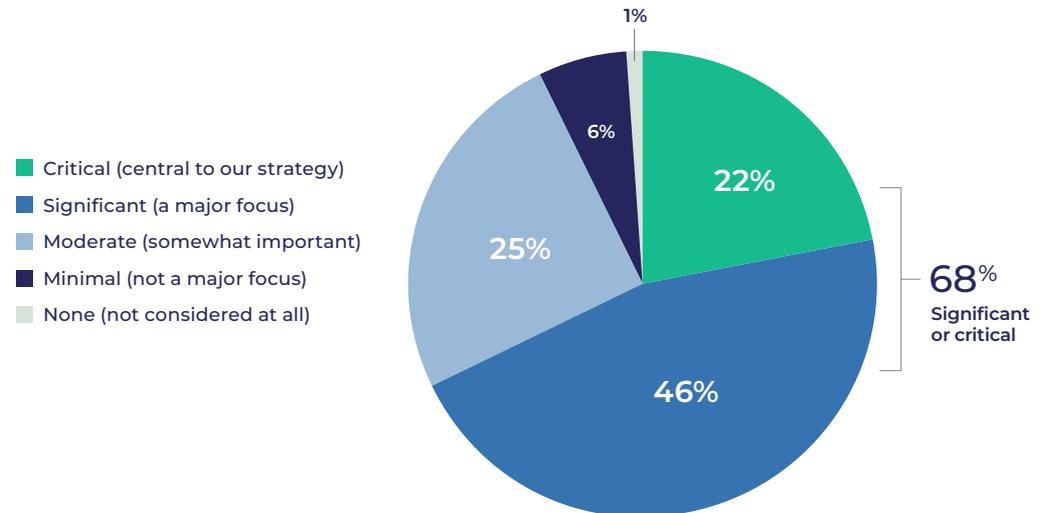
Expanding Technology Investments to Meet Diverse Student Transportation Needs

Nearly 70% of districts expect technology to play a significant or critical role in their transportation strategy over the next five years.

Districts in urban areas (72%) were more likely than suburban (62%) or rural areas (36%) to indicate technology's significant or critical role in transportation strategy.

However, it's important to understand that by investing in technology, districts everywhere can support the needs of a diverse student population safely.

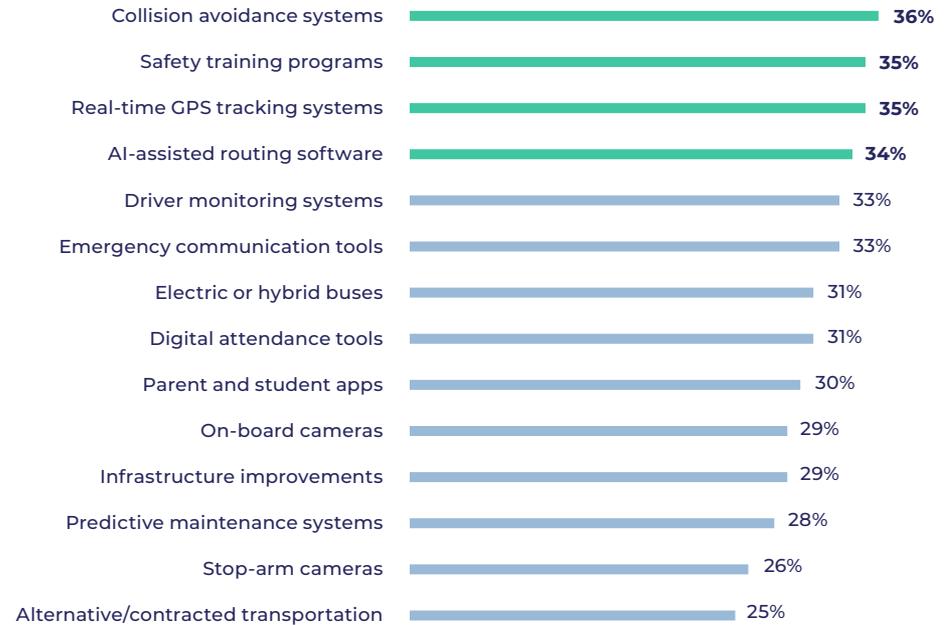
Expected role of technology in transportation strategy:



What technologies and programs are districts looking to adopt or expand upon to improve student safety even further in the next five years? While 37% have already adopted collision avoidance systems, districts said these systems were the top adoption and expansion priority (36%). Safety training programs were also selected as a top priority (35%), while many other areas of future investment or expansion fell in line with current safety investments.



Technologies districts plan to adopt or expand upon:

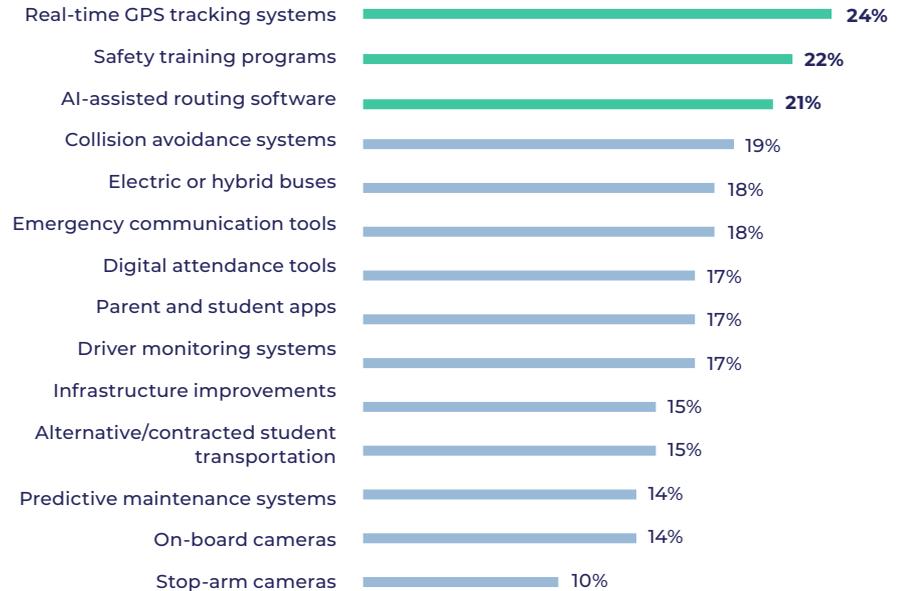


Respondents could choose all that apply in response to this question.

Unsurprisingly, districts named similar technologies as the most beneficial for specialized groups. The top selections all centered around student safety, including real-time GPS tracking systems, safety training programs, AI-assisted routing software, and collision avoidance systems. These similarities demonstrate that districts prioritize safety above all else when considering their student population's unique needs. When it comes to alternative/contracted student transportation, districts recognize the importance of expansion in this area to serve specialized student populations.



Technologies that will be most beneficial for specialized groups:



Respondents could choose all that apply in response to this question.

The Bottom Line



Districts Expect Safe, Technology-Enabled Transportation

The future of student transportation is already taking shape—and it's defined by safe, tech-enabled, and flexible solutions that prioritize every student's right to access education.

Districts are no longer thinking of Alternative Student Transportation as a backup plan. Instead, they're integrating it as a core part of their strategy to deliver equity, improve attendance, achieve funding goals, and meet rising regulatory expectations.

This shift is driven by:

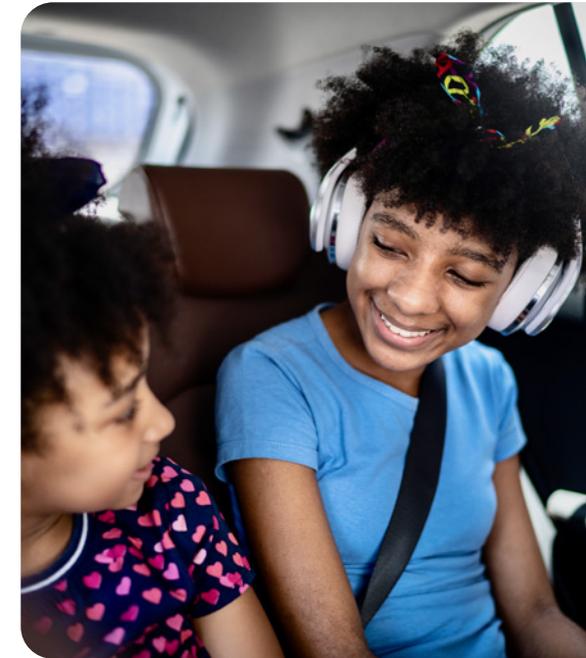
- A growing need for personalized transportation for McKinney-Vento, special education, and foster care students
- Budget uncertainty, which demands scalable and efficient models
- Technology advancements, including AI, that enable real-time visibility, routing optimization, and safety controls

At EverDriven, we believe that modernization means:

- Right-sized rides for each student's needs
- AI-powered systems that enhance transparency and accountability
- Reliable access that reduces chronic absenteeism and fuels academic equity

This year, we've safely transported over 31,000 students more than 33 million miles—with a 99.99% safety record.

As districts continue to modernize, we'll continue to lead with the belief that safe, flexible, and tech-driven transportation is a universal right for every student.



About the Future of Modern Student Transportation and Safety Report

In partnership with [Hanover Research](#), EverDriven surveyed 511 employees of K-12 school districts working in the following roles: transportation director/manager, superintendent/assistant superintendent/board member, chief business officer, and district administrator. The survey sample was made up of decision-makers for the school's/district's decisions on transportation policies and investment. Survey respondents plan on modernizing their transportation technology (e.g. investment, GPS tracking, cameras, electric buses) in the next five years.

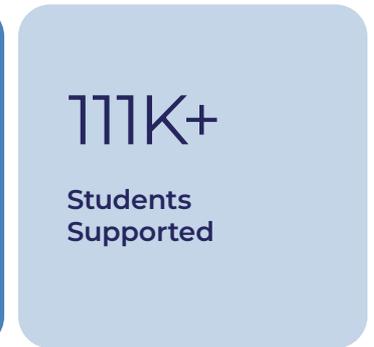


About EverDriven



About EverDriven

EverDriven provides safe, reliable Alternative Student Transportation for school districts nationwide, helping thousands of students with unique needs access their education every day. Through flexible, supplemental transportation, we ensure that students with disabilities, those experiencing homelessness, and others beyond traditional bus routes have a dependable way to reach school and the opportunities it provides.



Districts Served

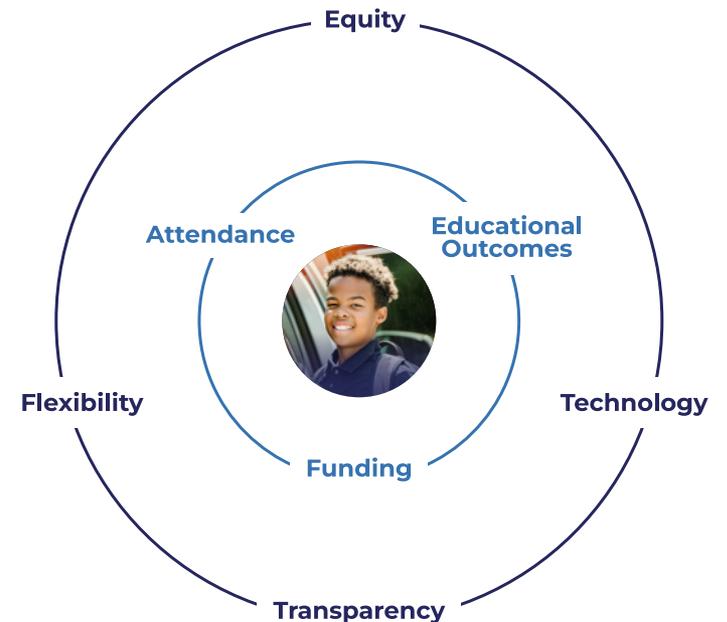
Our Vision for Modern Student Transportation

School transportation is evolving to meet the changing needs of students and families. Today, [62% of districts](#) report an increase in students with special needs. Nearly 50% report growth in McKinney-Vento student populations—students experiencing homelessness or housing instability. These students and those in the foster care system often need door-to-door, customized, or flexible routing that traditional buses can't efficiently provide.

Half of districts say that mixing general education and students with special needs on the same routes is a challenge. That's why the fleet of the future must be made up of a variety of modes of student transportation, empowered by tech, and fueled by transparency. It's all about providing the right ride for the right student at the right time.

EverDriven envisions a future where an ecosystem of vehicles supports every student need.

To keep up with rising demand, ensure equity, and maintain funding, districts must adopt a modern, tech-enabled transportation strategy—with Alternative Student Transportation as an essential way for districts to transport students safely.





Contact

For further information, please [connect with our team](#).

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