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# NEWS RELEASE

For Release:

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## **SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA ANNOUNCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL REMAIN OPEN IN THE EVENT OF A SEPTA TRANSIT STRIKE**

PHILADELPHIA—The School District of Philadelphia is sending home letters to parents and students and giving notice to employees concerning District operations in the event of a SEPTA transit strike.

Members of SEPTA's largest labor union, Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234, have notified its members of a possible strike. If the TWU decides to go on strike this weekend, any impact to District schools would start the week of November 2.

In a letter to parents, School District of Philadelphia Superintendent Dr. Arlene Ackerman stated that “While I am hopeful that a strike can be avoided, we must take the necessary precautions should a SEPTA strike actually occur.” In the letter the District asks parents to be ware of the following important information:

- All Philadelphia Public Schools and administrative offices will be open.
- All after school programs will operate as scheduled.
- Yellow school bus service will continue to be provided for those students who normally ride yellow school buses. Unfortunately, yellow school bus service will not be available for students who normally ride SEPTA.
- Parents, especially those who ride SEPTA themselves, should make arrangements for children to be picked up promptly from after school programs.”

District employees were also notified all schools, offices and support service facilities will maintain regular hours and all District employees are expected to work a full day. However, administrative offices should consider flextime schedules for employees if such scheduling still enables the office to maintain sufficient staffing levels during regular working hours.

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**Page 2/ School District of Philadelphia announces plans in the event of a possible SEPTA transit strike**

An estimated 54,000 Philadelphia public, charter, parochial and private school students receive a free SEPTA Student Transpass each week for transportation.

Yellow school bus service for students that attend public, charter, parochial and private schools will be provided only for students whose names appear on that school's Route Operations Report. No unauthorized siblings or other students may ride on yellow buses. The School District of Philadelphia does not have the capacity to run alternative transportation for students or staff.

Yellow buses transport an estimated 37,000 students throughout Philadelphia each day.

Parents who use SEPTA themselves to pick up children from after school activities, such as Comprehensive Early Learning Centers, Beacons, and other programs, are reminded that they must make alternative arrangements so that children are picked up promptly, even in the event of a SEPTA strike.

Middle and High School after school Athletics will continue as scheduled; however, parents should be made aware that they must make alternative arrangements for students to be transported home after the game or practice. In the event of a SEPTA transit strike, all School District evening, Saturday programs and Food Services will operate on normal schedules.

The School District also announced that students who normally use SEPTA, and are unable to attend school because of lack of transportation, must be marked absent and coded "10" in accordance with the requirements of the Pennsylvania School Code. This is an excused absence, which requires a note from the parent or guardian. These absences will not disqualify students from any awards where attendance is a factor.

Learning packets will be developed and available for pickup at the Regional Offices by students or parents in the event of a prolonged strike. Details are still being worked out and more information will follow.

Further detail information fro parents and staff is available on the District's main website, [www.philasd.org](http://www.philasd.org). Parents can also contact the School District Parent Hotline at 215-400-INFO (4636) for additional information.

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