

To: Marketing, Planning, & Legislative Committee

Date: August 27, 2026

From: Ryan Jones, Manager of Marketing & Communications

Reviewed by: AMS

SUBJECT: School Outreach Overview

Background:

Prior to 2020, staff would visit many schools in the service area for in-person registration days to promote school bus routes, Youth Clipper cards, and programs such as Pass2Class. Several schools had begun shifting to online registrations prior to COVID, and once the pandemic hit, all of the schools within the County Connection service area switched to virtual registration. Once COVID subsided and it was safe to return to school, many schools continued with online registration.

Summer/Fall School Outreach:

Staff attended two in-person registrations this year: Oak Grove Middle School for 6th Graders (7th-8th grade registrations were done online), and Monte Vista High School for all grades. County Connection staff collected 73 applications for Youth Clipper cards during the visit to Oak Grove Middle School, and 13 applications while visiting Monte Vista High School. Staff also reached out to Pine Hollow Middle School and planned on attending, however, this year the school changed their format to a 6th-grade-only campus camp that does not allow parents, families, or guests (such as County Connection) to attend.

Table 1: Late July – early August outreach efforts for 2024-2026.

ACTIVITY	2024	2025	2026
In-person tabling (schools asked/schools accepted)	24 / 8	24 / 3	3 / 2
PeachJar articles (parent newsletter used by some schools)	17	0	0
Virtual Town Halls (a County Connection pilot program)	0	8	0
Youth Clipper Applications Collected	159	120	85

Over the past few years staff has noticed an increase in visitors to the County Connection website seeking school bus route information, as well as general guidance on riding transit at the start of the school year. In response, staff created a single, “catch-all” webpage for student-focused transit information called “Transit 101”, which continues to evolve each year. The page brings together 600-series route information, fares, program information (such as Youth Clipper and Pass2Class), and tutorials on reading timetables and using apps to track bus arrivals and departures. While the page saw modest engagement from 2024–2025, traffic increased significantly in 2026, with visits nearly matching the combined total of all visits to the 600-series route pages. This growth suggests that students and families are increasingly using online resources to find the information they need to navigate transit at the start of the school year.

Table 2: Web traffic July 1-August 25 (2024-2026) for 600-series route page visits and single school information pages (“Transit 101”).

	2024	2025	2026
600-series route webpage visits	3,708	4,910	4,155
“Transit 101” webpage visits	504	910	4,071

Staff monitors Google Analytics to evaluate how both online and in-person engagement efforts drive traffic to the County Connection website. Since creating the “Transit 101” webpage in 2024, staff has focused on promoting this single, centralized landing page with information tailored to parents and students. This August, *Transit 101* ranked among the top five most-visited pages on the County Connection website (see Table 3), demonstrating increased interest in the resource.

An additional benefit of *Transit 101* is its flexibility as a year-round resource. Rather than creating new webpages or materials each school year, staff can continue to promote the same URL while updating the content with timely information, including school-year schedules, fares, programs, and riding tips. This provides a consistent destination for students and families while allowing staff to measure engagement and refine content from year to year.

Table 3: August 2026, “Transit 101” is fifth most visited page on countyconnection.com.

WEBPAGE	TOTAL VIEWS (ROUNDED)
Routes – County Connection	27,000
County Connection (homepage)	19,000
Route 6	4,000
Route 4	3,700
Transit 101: Youth Rider Guide	3,600
Route 16	3,500

Conclusion:

Overall, staff’s experience over the past three years suggests that traditional back-to-school outreach methods are shifting as schools continue to move toward online registration and student/parent communication. While in-person events remain valuable opportunities to connect directly with students and parents—particularly families of incoming 6th and 9th grade students—the number of available events has declined, schedules often conflict, and attendance can vary significantly. The engagement results also suggest that parents and students increasingly choose to find transportation information independently, a finding supported by data showing increased engagement with social media content directed at parents and students at the start of the school year.

Moving forward, staff is continuing to track how people consume information about our bus service at the start of the school year and is looking at keeping a blended engagement approach of maintaining clear, summarized information and guides online (the “Transit 101” webpage), while participating at select in-person events.

Financial Implications:

Any costs associated with events are included in the Promotions budget.

Recommendation:

None, for information only.

Action Requested:

None, for information only.

Attachments:

None.