

My name is Jude Schwalbach, and I'm a senior education policy analyst with Reason Foundation, a national 501c(3) nonprofit policy research organization. I'm testifying on [Iowa House File 134](#).

Iowa H.F. 134 ensures that a school district cannot limit or stop other school districts from transporting transfer students using open enrollment across the district's boundaries. While this proposal doesn't require that school districts provide transportation to cross-district transfer students, it ensures that school districts willing to provide transportation to cross-district transfers are not stopped from doing so. H.F. 134 would be a step in the right direction.

[Regulatory blocks](#) on students' transportation options unduly restrict their education options, especially students from low-income households whose parents lack the means to drive them to another school district. Weakening these regulatory barriers by letting school districts transport cross-district transfer students can help students access schools that are the right fit.

Iowa policymakers should also consider creative policy reforms that alleviate the transportation burden for low-income families. For instance, [Wisconsin](#) reimburses the cross-district transfer students from low-income families for up to [\\$1,218](#) per year in mileage expenses for student transportation costs. Iowa policymakers could provide a similar service to cross-district students from low-income families when the receiving school district cannot provide transportation to them.

Finally, to ensure that school districts clearly communicate their transportation options to students using cross-district open enrollment, they should be required to post all open enrollment policies and procedures, as well as their available capacity by grade level, on their websites. This ensures that the open enrollment process is transparent and easy for parents to navigate.

Strengthening Iowa's open enrollment policy would help ensure that public schools are available to all students and further empower families to find public schools that are the right fit for their kids.