**SBCTA**

**Draft News Release**

**Contact Info**

**San Bernardino County Students (K-12) Ride Free on Public Transit**

As the start of the school year approaches, there is good news for high school, middle school and elementary students all over San Bernardino County. K-12 students now ride free every day, on every bus system in the County. That includes Omnitrans, Victor Valley Transit, Mountain Transit, Basin Transit and Needles Area Transit.

“We are very excited about this program,” SBCTA Board President Dawn Rowe states. “ It provides a financial break to families and gives them more options. Whether riding to school, for after school fun, or for a weekend outing, kids ride free.”

The free fares are being promoted with the tag line “You’re now free to GO,” emphasizing not only that the fare is free, but that public transit offers youth the chance to gain independence.

The free fare program is being implemented separately by each system. Identification requirements and rules may vary. Riders are encouraged to visit their local transit system website to learn more:

* Omnitrans – omnitrans.org, 800.966.6428
* Victor Valley Transit Authority – vvta.org, 760.948.4021
* Mountain Transit – mountaintransit.org, 909.878.5200
* Basin Transit – basin-transit.com, 800.794.6282
* Needles Area Transit – cityofneedles.com/transit, 760.326.2113 ext. 115

The K-12 Student Free Fare Program is sponsored by SBCTA and was approved by the Board of Directors in March 2023. It is a one-year pilot project, funded primarily with Low Carbon Transit Operations (LCTOP) funding which seeks to reduce carbon emissions by increasing transit use.

**About SBCTA**

Serving more than 2.1 million residents of San Bernardino County, the SBCTA is responsible for cooperative regional planning and furthering an efficient multi-modal transportation system countywide. The SBCTA administers Measure I, the half-cent transportation sales tax approved by county voters in 1989, and supports freeway construction projects, regional and local road improvements, train and bus transportation, railroad crossings, call boxes, ridesharing, congestion management efforts, and long-term planning studies.