



(Docket No. 131757)

E.W., By His Mother and Next Friend, Chandres Johnson *et al.*, Appellees, v. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF EAST ST. LOUIS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 189, Appellant.

*Opinion filed June 25, 2026.*

Justice O'Brien delivered the judgment of the court, with opinion.

This case concerns what is required of a public school district under state law when transporting students to and from a nonpublic school. East St. Louis School District No. 189 (District) provided bus services to students including the plaintiffs, traveling to and from Bowman Catholic Elementary School. But the District stopped providing them bus service in 2022, stating it had a shortage of bus drivers. The two plaintiffs' parents filed for an order requiring the District to keep busing the children to their nonpublic school, and the circuit court ruled in favor of the District, holding that the law did not require the District to modify its routes to pick up the students.

The appellate court reversed. The critical language of section 29-4 of the School Code provides that the District should provide "such transportation to extend from some point on the regular route nearest or most easily accessible to their homes to and from the school attended, or to or from a point on such regular route which is nearest or most easily accessible to the school attended by such children." The appellate court held that "to extend" in the statute required an expansion of the District's route. The supreme court reversed the appellate court. The legislature limited the scope of transportation to provide for pickup and drop-off at points along the already-existing regular route. The legislature's use of the word "extend" here was oriented toward making available, rather than enlarging. As a result, the District's transportation obligation was limited to points along its regular bus routes.