

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**FINAL REPORT OF THE
ESSENTIAL PROGRAMS & SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE**

November 2000

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State Board of Education
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Executive Summary

The question posed to the Transportation Study Task Force a year ago was straightforward: why is there such a variance in pupil transportation costs for different School Administrative Units (SAUs) across the state? The initial concern that prompted this study was the variation across units in regard to Cost Per Student (CPS) and Cost Per Mile (CPM). Units were spending anywhere from approximately \$1 to \$4 per mile or \$150 to \$500 per student. There was no clear understanding about why these variations occurred and what CPS or CPM level should be considered appropriate. In FY1998, the data which formed the basis for our analysis, nearly \$60 million was spent on pupil transportation operations in Maine, with an additional \$5.5 million spent on school bus purchases. The potential savings from even a small increase in efficiency are significant.

To further the study, five additional “core questions” were posed:

1. What are the variations in transportation programs affecting the expenditures and bus purchases within comparable Maine school districts? Why do these variations exist?
1. Is the accounting for transportation expenditures consistent across districts?
1. How do other states fund transportation and bus purchases? What are the strengths and shortcomings of each?
1. Are there more efficient, cost-effective ways of providing and funding transportation and bus purchases in Maine that are appropriate in terms of safety, cost and convenience?
1. Should the state fund transportation and maintenance programs based on a set of statewide standards? If so, how?

Methodology

The task force approached the issue from two analytical directions. First, data analysis was used to try to determine if any relationships existed between variables reported as part of the FY98 transportation data and to test the integrity of the data set as a whole. From this, we hoped to determine relationships that would lead to problem causes and ultimately problem solutions.

Concurrently, the task force embarked on a round of activities designed to develop an understanding of the operational and cost accounting practices employed by SAUs. Through the use of surveys, interviews and site visits, variations in transportation policies and practices were identified. The findings from these two courses of action were periodically presented in task force meetings and discussed freely by the members.

Findings and Recommendation

Throughout this study, the task force has operated under a single guiding principle: any proposed changes to the pupil transportation system must not sacrifice safety and should, where possible, seek to improve safety. We believe that the six major conclusions we have reached can spawn solutions that hold safety as a priority.

1. **Develop and implement a system for centralizing the purchase of buses at the state level.** The state of Maine as a purchasing entity has the ability to provide savings through volume purchasing with vendors when making bus purchases on behalf of all SAUs in the state. State subsidy for bus purchases should be limited to the cost of purchasing buses through a state pooled purchasing arrangement. Minimum standards for buses should be established by the Department of Education. The additional cost of any buses purchased that exceed the standards should be 100% borne by the SAU. It is further suggested that for any SAU purchasing buses other than through the state, reimbursement would be only at the bid level. The state should allow the SAUs to purchase buses through the state pool using a lease purchase arrangement carrying a modest interest charge over a period of up to five years. Bulk purchasing of 200 buses combined with standard specifications could result in annual estimated savings in excess of \$500,000.
1. **Consolidate the management and control of transportation services and the purchase of major consumables (fuel, tires, etc.) to a regional level from the SAU level.** By regionalizing transportation management, maintenance services and facilities and purchasing, SAUs can take advantage of economies of scale. Regionalization will

also facilitate efforts to develop and implement standards on a statewide basis. This effort is ideal for small SAUs that operate in close proximity to one another. To fully realize the other potential economies all the SAUs in any region will need to have appropriate coordinated schedules.

1. **Install computer-based bus fleet management and routing systems in all SAUs.**

Computerized routing systems have proven their worth by helping to optimize all aspects of fleet operations from routes to maintenance. While these systems are usually cost prohibitive for smaller SAUs, the regionalization efforts previously described will make system implementation not only useful but affordable. This technology will enhance record keeping and reporting, student management and optimum routing, and potentially improve efficiency.

1. **Encourage the implementation of best practices and policies in the areas of**

organization, planning, goals, continuous improvement and others. For SAUs that are unable to take advantage of regionalization and computer systems, or for SAUs that do not feel any need to, incentives should be developed that will facilitate policy and practice development that reduces cost, improves safety or promotes efficiency. These include bell times, pooled stops, equipment and maintenance specifications, hiring and training practices, certification requirements and annual audits.

1. **Cost accounting and reimbursement (state subsidy) procedures should be**

redeveloped and standardized. Differences in transportation philosophy and accounting procedures make it difficult to draw true comparisons of transportation costs. Door to door pickups versus walking distance requirements and choosing not to transport secondary students affect costs. On the accounting side, sports team transportation should be charged to the athletic department and field trips to school cost centers. Funding incentives that encourage systems to utilize standardized approaches will help alleviate disparities that presently exist.

6. **The task force strongly recommends that these recommendations be converted into action plans as soon as possible.** The remainder of this report will concentrate on providing answers to the five core questions at the center of this study. We believe that improvements in the pupil transportation in Maine will greatly increase its effectiveness while delivering additional enhancements in safety and cost.

Discussion

There is no shortage of variations among comparable school districts in Maine. Two SAUs may transport the same number of students an equal distance with the same number of buses, but their total transportation spending differs by thousands of dollars. Without conducting full audits of every SAU, we can only hypothesize about why these variations exist. However, based on both empirical and statistical analyses, we believe that the reasons are relatively simple.

Three primary factors contribute to the variations in reported transportation data. First, an across-the-board lack of reporting standards has fostered an environment in which cost comparisons are difficult to make. Standards are also absent regarding what SAUs should be spending money on, such as safety – one SAU may choose to send its drivers to three more safety seminars than another SAU, for example. There is also a difference between SAUs that contract their transportation services versus those that do not. While costs may be similar for private services or in-house fleets, it is difficult to break out contractor’s operating expenses to compare with other SAUs.

The second factor is fleet size. The task force consistently found evidence that significant economies of scale are achieved with increased fleet size. Perhaps the most striking evidence was found during statistical analysis. This is discussed in more detail in the Summary of Statistical Analysis, but briefly: SAUs were placed in five groups, and those that spent more than 120% of their peer group average were deemed “potentially less efficient” for the sake of analysis. Of those SAUs that were considered potentially less efficient, nearly all had fewer than 10 buses in their fleets. In fact, SAUs that had fewer than three buses had to be excluded from statistical analysis altogether due to the extreme skewing effects they had on the data set as a whole.

Third, the task force analysis of transportation policy and practices clearly establishes that some variation in transportation costs reflects philosophical differences. For example, some communities provide door-to-door services while others require students to walk to designated bus stops. Some districts do not transport secondary students and required walking distances vary greatly.

It is also clear that accounting for transportation expenditures is inconsistent across SAUs. On the third page of the survey that was completed by 30 districts, responses were mixed as to what accounts special education, vocational, extracurricular and sports trips were assigned. Some SAUs had separate accounts for these expenditures, some did not. Again, this creates difficulties when trying to analyze comparable districts.

The task force attempted to examine transportation policies and practices of other states. However: 1) information from other states was not easy to obtain and 2) the task force decided at an early stage that it would be more appropriate to try to build a new transportation model from scratch rather than attempt to impose another state's system on Maine. We have included information in the appendix from three states. Two documents, one from Colorado and one from New Jersey, illustrate that those states have grappled with similar issues over the past few years but have not necessarily come to any conclusions. The third document is Chapter 34 of the Education Code in the state of Texas, which governs pupil transportation.

The task force firmly believes that there are more efficient ways of funding pupil transportation in Maine. In the short term, some capital outlay will be required. However, the conclusions we have developed will improve the utilization of resources that already exist. What will be required most is a change in processes and procedures.

Summary of Statistical Analysis

The Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine received 1998 operating data from every SAU in the state that had a student transportation system. The data reported by each SAU included total expenditure, total miles traveled, total pupils conveyed, total buses utilized, and percentage of buses that were contracted from private transportation providers.

We began by narrowing our data. The following types of SAUs were excluded from our analysis:

- Consolidated School Districts (CSDs)
- SAUs that did not fully report data
- SAUs with fewer than 3 buses

We found that it was too difficult to compile data about CSDs due to the complicated nature of their design. SAUs that did not report one or more of the variables previously described were also eliminated because they could not be successfully compared to fully reporting units. Finally, SAUs with fewer than 3 buses were eliminated because we noticed that fixed costs were not sufficiently spread out across 2 or fewer buses. This resulted in statistics that would have corrupted the view of the larger picture. Once these types of SAUs were eliminated, we were left with 175 reporting units.

The next step involved selecting units with similar characteristics and comparing them. We selected and compared groups of units with similar mileage, expenditure or students. The variations we found were quite striking. For example, Units A and B each spent \$500,000 on pupil transportation, but Unit B transported 750 more students than Unit A. Or, Units C and D transported the same number of students, but Unit C spent twice as much as Unit D. These types of variations were representative of those found throughout the entire group. It was clear that we were missing pieces to the puzzle.

Based on the data we have about pupil transportation operations in Maine, it is difficult to determine what is “efficient”. Several variables have been calculated, including Cost Per Student, Cost Per Mile, and Cost Per Student Per Mile, for each unit. These variables do not provide a clear picture of what constitutes efficiency versus non-efficiency. For example, a Cost Per Mile figure of \$2.50 may or may not be efficient depending on the characteristics of the SAU in question.

The group proposed the computation of an “equalizer” variable – a single figure that would most closely relate SAUs to one another regardless of size. A density of student index was created using data from the Maine Department of Transportation. This figure was derived by dividing the number of pupils transported within the SAU divided by the total miles of road in the towns that comprise the unit. This figure is interpreted as the average number of students per

mile of road. It should be noted here that buses often travel several miles outside their districts and these miles are not reflected in the miles of road data for each SAU in this analysis.

Using the density variable, we divided the 175 SAUs into five groups of 35, ranging from the highest density to the lowest. For each group, a high, low and mean (average) measurement has been determined for each variable. The variable of interest here is Cost Per Student Per Mile (CPSPM), which is calculated by dividing the Cost Per Student by the total number of miles traveled by all buses in the unit. For example, if the CPSPM figure is 0.0017, then it would cost $[40 * 0.0017 * 1] = 6.8$ cents to transport 40 students a distance of one mile. This figure is not useful for actual cost analysis, but rather as a tool for comparison of units to one another.

With density as an indicator of physical size and CPSPM as an indicator of cost, it is possible to compare groups of “similar” units.

Within the five groups, we decided (arbitrarily, for the sake of discussion) that units with a CPSPM that exceeded 120% of the group average were “high cost.” The number of high cost units in each tier was as follows:

Table 1: High Cost Units per Tier.

Tier	# of “High Cost” Units	Percent
1	12	35%
2	7	20%
3	14	40%
4	10	29%
5	10	29%

As was previously mentioned, we do not know what constitutes an efficient system. Because a unit is spending more than 120% of its peer group average does not mean inefficiency is present in operations. A unit could be functioning as efficiently as possible and still be spending at a higher level.

However, this grouping does provide one striking statistic: **of the 53 units that spend more than 120% of their peer group average on a Cost Per Student Per Mile basis, 46 have 12 or fewer buses in their fleets.** The statistic implies that units with smaller bus fleets are not able to take advantages of economies of scale in maintenance, labor, purchasing and other factors that are available to larger fleets. This suggests that units with smaller fleets should regionalize their operations by combining with other small fleets in their areas (see Figure 1 next page). It is

also interesting to note that 29 of the 46 units receive over 40% of their funding from the state. Eight units did not have state aid data available. Only six units received less than 15% of their funding from the state.

Figure 1: Cost per Student per Mile for Inefficient Units.

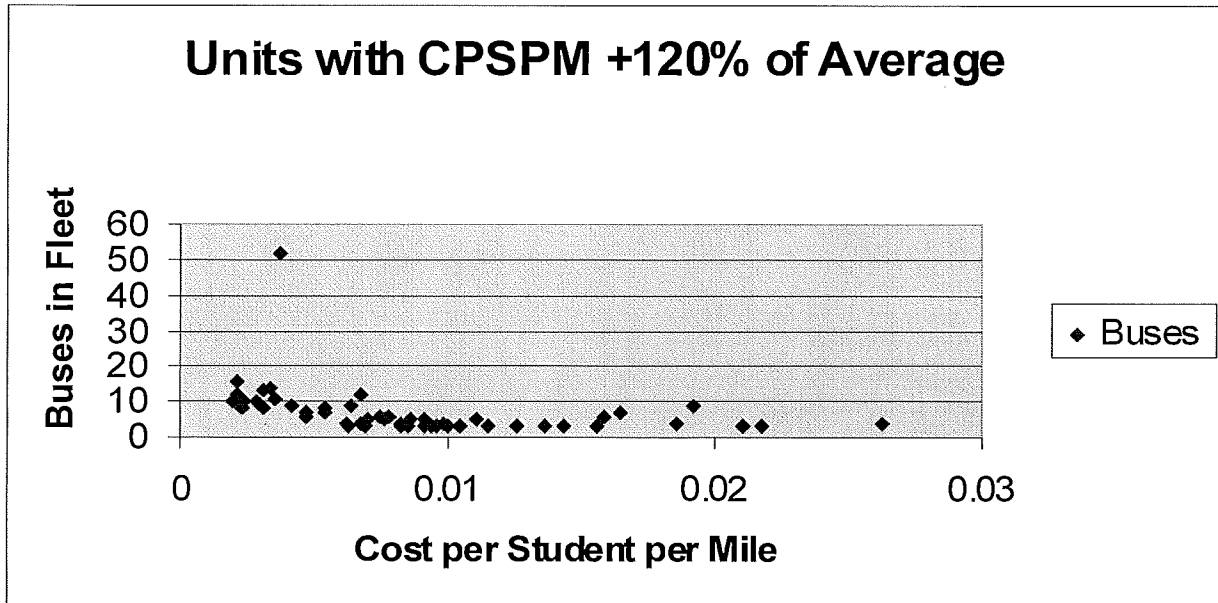


Table 2 below also illustrates the effect of size on efficiency. While the cost per mile decreases with lowering density, all other variables increase. The decrease in Cost per Mile likely corresponds to smaller administrative size. The rise in all of the other variables can be directly tied to a lack of economies of scale.

Table 2: Averages for Selected Variables.

	<i>Cost per Mile</i>	<i>Cost per Student</i>	<i>CPSPM</i>	<i>Buses</i>
<i>Tier 1</i>	\$2.32	\$288.19	0.0017	20
<i>Tier 2</i>	\$1.86	\$303.38	0.0026	16
<i>Tier 3</i>	\$1.76	\$346.82	0.0044	13
<i>Tier 4</i>	\$1.68	\$358.55	0.0050	11
<i>Tier 5</i>	\$1.55	\$506.55	0.0092	8

N=35 per Tier

DATA CONCERNS

It should be noted that the data used in this analysis was submitted by SAUs and is not easily verifiable. We have found numerous discrepancies in the data that we believe resulted from erroneous reporting. We will state throughout the report that one of the root problems facing pupil transportation is a lack of standards, training and accountability. Not only should smaller bus operations be regionalized, but financial reporting must be standardized, individuals must be trained to report properly and units must be accountable for the funding they receive.

Recommendations and Logic

It became clear at an early stage that a “one size fits all” solution for transportation efficiency would not be appropriate. SAUs are simply too diverse to allow the use of numerical benchmarks or other concrete measures. Instead, our recommendations concentrate on methods rather than outcomes. If SAUs utilize certain methods (processes and procedures) they will be able to operate at a level of efficiency that is appropriate to the individual unit rather than attempting to meet or surpass a generally applied benchmark. No two SAUs are exactly alike, and therefore the best way to evaluate an SAU’s performance is against best practice models. With the recommendations we propose, SAUs will continue to offer high quality, consistent and safe services at the same or lower costs per student or per mile.

The task force has come to the conclusion that the following six recommendations should be implemented:

1. **Develop and implement a system for centralizing the purchase of buses at the state level and provide state subsidies.** Statistical evidence has shown that larger SAUs are, in general, more efficient. We believe this is due in part to the purchasing power that these larger SAUs possess. Small SAUs have no such advantage, and therefore wind up paying more for the same items. By comparison, the purchasing power of the state could dwarf even the largest SAU’s and give smaller units a degree of leverage that would be impossible otherwise. While establishing a centralized purchasing office would take some time and money, the long-term savings are far too great to ignore. There is also a safety concern that could be addressed by

state purchasing. The chart in the appendix, labeled “Maine Publicly Owned School Bus Mileage Profile,” illustrates that nearly half of Maine’s school bus fleet is operating beyond the recommended replacement threshold of 125,000 miles. In many cases districts are operating their buses beyond 200,000 odometer miles. While districts are making a choice to operate buses longer in order to conserve funds, they are potentially endangering the safety of students, drivers and the public while experiencing higher annual maintenance costs.

The task force recommends that subsidies for bus purchases be taken out of GPA and funded through the establishment of a revolving fleet replacement fund that would have a minimum reimbursement percentage per bus and a 100% maximum (the actual amount of subsidy would float above the minimum based on the annual Department of Education subsidy calculations). Subsidies for bus purchases would not be affected by debt service or program/operating cost circuit breakers. In order for SAUs to receive any subsidy for bus purchases or leases, the purchase would have to be made through the centralized state purchasing program. Subsidies would be limited to the approved bid price for the basic type (A, B, C or D) school bus as specified inclusive of approved equipment for the transportation of special education and preschool children and would not cover the cost of any SAU-specified options.

The subsidy would be paid within a reasonable processing time of the receipt by the Department of Education of a completed School Bus Purchase Report (EF-T-20) submitted by the SAU confirming purchase price and delivery date. In addition, if time payments are necessary to enable an SAU to replace a qualified vehicle, the revolving fleet replacement fund would be authorized to provide low- or no-interest loans for a period of up to five years to cover the SAU’s portion of the replacement cost. The determination of the qualification for any subsidized bus replacement would be the responsibility of the Department of Education. The fund would be replenished annually to contain a balance sufficient to fund the replacement of 10% of the active (to be defined) publicly owned or leased school bus fleet (in 1999, 2,046 publicly owned buses were reported as active) plus any adjustment for projected pupil population growth, shrinkage or regulation-driven changes in demand for public school transportation capacity. In addition to the active fleet, the spare fleet should be

examined as well. Currently, many districts in Maine hold two spare buses per every 10 owned. The generally-accepted industry standard is one spare per every 10 owned. By implementing this standard, capital expenditure can be significantly reduced.

2. **Consolidate the management and control of transportation services and consumables purchasing to a regional level from the SAU level.** As demonstrated in the statistical analysis, small fleet size is the root of transportation inefficiency. SAUs with small fleets are often forced to take their vehicles to local, privately-owned garages for maintenance where hourly labor rates are high. Also, each SAU must have transportation management regardless of its fleet size, and many managers are not properly trained if they are trained at all. The result is expensive, poorly run transportation programs. Regionalization effort would solve problems of both cost and quality. First, geographic locations should be identified where multiple SAUs are operating a particular number of buses within a certain number of square miles. Next, a relatively central or convenient area should be selected for a regional transportation center, keeping in mind that a facility may already exist that could be modified. If there is no suitable existing structure, then a new one should be built. The facility, whether new or existing, must have enough storage space, work areas and other amenities to handle maintenance and operations for the SAUs in the region. All aspects of the region's pupil transportation needs would be moved to this new facility. The facility could be run by one or more qualified transportation or business managers (depending on the size of the operations in the region). Qualifications will be determined beforehand, possibly by a committee similar to the transportation task force, and will consist of a certain mix of education and experience. Job descriptions would be drafted and approved prior to the hiring process. Implementation will require greater coordination of school schedules and calendars than we now observe.

3. **Install computer-based bus fleet management and routing systems in all SAUs.** In the survey completed by 30 districts, only five had invested in computerized routing systems. For those that did not, cost and small fleet size were cited as reasons. Once the operations of smaller districts have been regionalized, they will have enough collective buying power to afford such a system and the combined fleet size will warrant such a purchase. Several

software packages are available on the market. We recommend that the Legislature establish a one-time fund for the purchase of computer-based routing and fleet management equipment. Here, the state will again be able to use its purchasing power to set a reasonable price with one of the many transportation software providers.

4. **Encourage the implementation of best practices and policies in the areas of organization, planning, goals, continuous improvement and others.**

Through a process of surveys, site visits, and available data and information, it became apparent that the use of “best practices” would help districts to realize a safe, efficient, and consistent transportation system. Best practices were identified as Policy, Maintenance Strategy, Accounting Practices, Computerized Routing, Bus Specifications & Purchasing, and Personnel Training. From this, the group developed a transportation model addressing each of these areas that would help assist districts in implementing best practices. This model can be found in the Appendix.

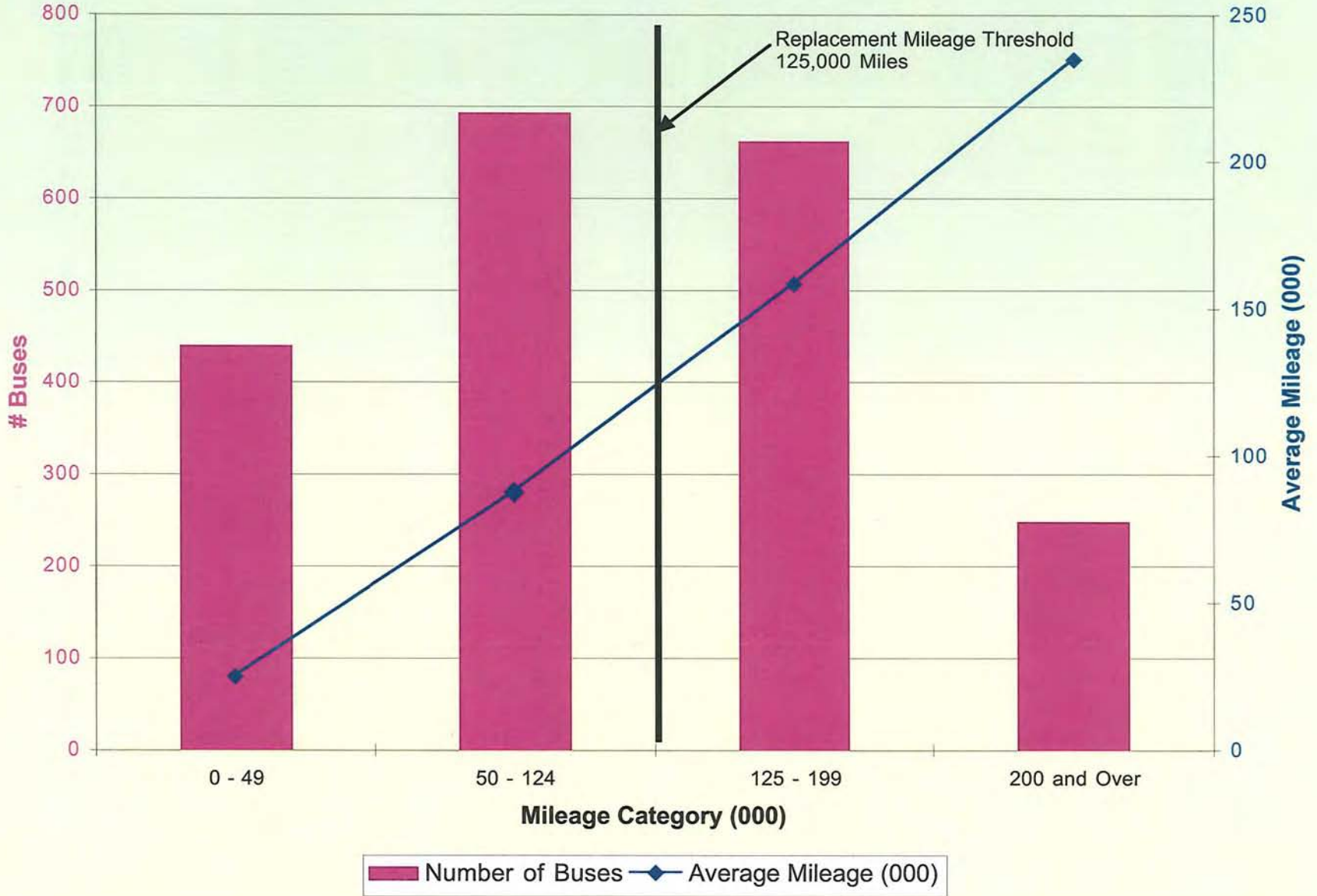
5. **Cost accounting and reimbursement (state subsidy) procedures should be redeveloped and standardized for FY 2002.** It is clear from the survey that accounting procedures across districts are not uniform. The state should develop accounting standards that will be implemented statewide and also conduct annual audits of randomly selected districts. There is currently no accountability for funding given to SAUs, and the task force believes this is unacceptable.

6. **The Department of Education should establish standard reimbursement rates based on a combination of factors identified in this report.** The task force recommends that following implementation of Recommendation 5 above and with the more accurate data collected and further analysis conducted, reimbursement and incentive models be developed and implemented that reward SAUs for implementing the other recommendations of this report.

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Maine Publically Owned School Bus Mileage Profile



FIRST TIER												
BY DENSITY		Rank: 1-35										
Characteristic:	<i>Expenditure</i>		<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>		
High:	\$1,160,000		650,880	3,453	\$3.76	\$458.60	0.0047	52	250.61	27.65		
Low:	\$125,864		63,615	540	\$1.53	\$145.17	0.0004	7	29.34	12.63		
Mean:	\$513,531		233,488	1,804	\$2.32	\$288.19	0.0017	20	108.39	17.07		
Bold type indicates Cost per Student per Mile is over 120% of group average.												
<i>Admin Unit</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>% Contr</i>	<i>% Aid</i>
Bath	\$298,809	65	94054	1476	\$3.18	\$202.45	0.00215	11	53.39	27.65	0	55.57%
Westbrook	\$628,700	29	236462	2094	\$2.66	\$300.24	0.00127	23	82.49	25.38	5	45.96%
Brewer	\$251,793	73	103980	1570	\$2.42	\$160.38	0.00154	10	63.06	24.90	100	56.86%
Biddeford	\$412,550	44	237226	2676	\$1.74	\$154.17	0.00065	23	111.8	23.94	0	47.36%
SAD 35-Eliot	\$609,844	32	396542	2454	\$1.54	\$248.51	0.00063	17	120.37	20.39	0	68.27%
Windham	\$763,236	18	298203	2852	\$2.56	\$267.61	0.00090	28	142.29	20.04	0	51.98%
Mechanic Falls	\$195,635	98	72360	580	\$2.70	\$337.30	0.00466	7	29.34	19.77	0	74.26%
Cape Elizabeth	\$301,054	63	129673	1164	\$2.32	\$258.64	0.00199	14	59.51	19.56	0	32.17%
Sanford	\$1,005,010	8	339886	3181	\$2.96	\$315.94	0.00093	27	165.11	19.27	89	68.16%
South Portland	\$589,857	34	189482	2100	\$3.11	\$280.88	0.00148	18	115.42	18.19	0	29.88%
Winslow	\$298,851	64	142170	1502	\$2.10	\$198.97	0.00140	17	84.78	17.72	0	56.89%
Augusta	\$647,219	27	374943	2851	\$1.73	\$227.01	0.00061	33	162.11	17.59	100	52.24%
Falmouth	\$511,992	38	203579	1680	\$2.51	\$304.76	0.00150	17	97.65	17.20	0	22.73%
SAD 51-Cumberld	\$674,609	23	300408	2202	\$2.25	\$306.36	0.00102	20	128.75	17.10	0	43.07%
Old Orchard Beach	\$125,864	119	63615	867	\$1.98	\$145.17	0.00228	8	51.52	16.83	0	33.63%
Lisbon	\$335,502	55	140151	1139	\$2.39	\$294.56	0.00210	16	70.59	16.14	0	67.81%
Lewiston	\$852,454	12	284809	3024	\$2.99	\$281.90	0.00099	37	187.77	16.10	100	61.14%
SAD 71-Knbunk	\$627,747	30	263822	2426	\$2.38	\$258.76	0.00098	23	150.8	16.09	0	27.61%
Yarmouth	\$487,037	41	147368	1062	\$3.30	\$458.60	0.00311	13	66.39	16.00	0	19.84%
SAD 11-Gardiner	\$833,163	13	387000	2435	\$2.15	\$342.16	0.00088	25	157.58	15.45	100	71.23%
Raymond	\$249,024	75	155939	807	\$1.60	\$308.58	0.00198	10	53.23	15.16	0	29.22%
SAD 60-Berwick	\$996,875	9	650880	3453	\$1.53	\$288.70	0.00044	37	236.02	14.63	0	67.04%
Waterville	\$307,735	60	147361	1317	\$2.09	\$233.66	0.00159	13	90.1	14.62	0	58.47%
Bucksport	\$304,824	61	134604	1050	\$2.26	\$290.31	0.00216	12	72.04	14.58	100	33.66%
Saco	\$372,699	47	211961	1728	\$1.76	\$215.68	0.00102	21	119.57	14.45	0	52.98%

<i>Admin Unit</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>% Contr</i>	<i>% Aid</i>
SAD 16-Hallowell	\$205,870	92	94844	789	\$2.17	\$260.93	0.0028	10	54.63	14.44	100	61.49%
Bangor	\$816,806	15	442434	2572	\$1.85	\$317.58	0.0007	30	180.62	14.24	100	47.98%
Glenburn	\$231,558	81	136643	540	\$1.69	\$428.81	0.0031	8	38.97	13.86	88	71.52%
Gorham	\$741,786	20	329337	1961	\$2.25	\$378.27	0.0011	23	142.5	13.76	0	22.23%
Kittery	\$336,498	53	89465	1004	\$3.76	\$335.16	0.0037	52	73.38	13.68	100	35.02%
Brunswick	\$789,561	17	315563	2065	\$2.50	\$382.35	0.0012	26	151.27	13.65	0	48.82%
Hermon	\$215,177	89	110001	823	\$1.96	\$261.45	0.0024	10	64	12.86	0	67.77%
SAD 75-Topsham	\$1,160,000	7	600902	3170	\$1.93	\$365.93	0.0006	34	250.61	12.65	0	53.12%
Wiscasset	\$280,711	69	112931	726	\$2.49	\$386.65	0.0034	14	57.49	12.63	0	22.33%

SECOND TIER													
BY DENSITY		Rank: 36-70											
Characteristic:	Expenditure		Miles	Students	\$/Mile	\$/Student	\$/Student/Mi	Buses	Mi Road	Density			
High:	\$1,386,254		823,685	4,863	\$3.31	\$624.20	0.0098	51	385.20	12.62			
Low:	\$63,895		30,727	182	\$0.97	\$163.45	0.0004	3	20.09	8.81			
Mean:	\$394,989		216,539	1,303	\$1.86	\$303.38	0.0026	16	123.23	10.35			
Bold type indicates Cost per Student Per Mile is over 120% of group average.													
Admin Unit	Expenditure	Rank	Miles	Students	\$/Mile	\$/Student	\$/Student/Mi	Buses	Mi Road	Density	% Contr	% Aid	
SAD 6-Buxton	\$1,386,254	1	695947	4863	1.99	285.06	0.0004	51	385.2	12.62	0	64.20%	
Vassalboro	\$189,120	101	125938	969	1.50	195.17	0.0015	13	77.76	12.46	0	71.77%	
SAD 15-Gray	\$654,270	26	365438	2327	1.79	281.16	0.0008	25	195.69	11.89	0	59.62%	
Calais	\$104,262	120	58933	593	1.77	175.82	0.0030	5	50.12	11.83	100	72.83%	
SAD 22-Hampden	\$498,290	39	309090	2162	1.61	230.48	0.0007	19	183.04	11.81	100	67.64%	
Portland	\$1,195,174	4	381089	2793	3.14	427.92	0.0011	35	236.69	11.80	0	39.52%	
York	\$414,174	43	248532	1666	1.67	248.60	0.0010	13	143.8	11.59	93	3.86%	
SAD 47-Oakland	\$576,919	36	378188	2111	1.53	273.29	0.0007	32	183.37	11.51	0	59.83%	
Arundel	\$143,613	114	91098	588	1.58	244.24	0.0027	5	51.91	11.33	0	57.60%	
Caribou	\$340,983	52	164364	1708	2.07	199.64	0.0012	15	151.51	11.27	0	75.68%	
China	\$256,924	72	130020	850	1.98	302.26	0.0023	13	75.42	11.27	0	66.52%	
Milford	\$103,175	129	31957	328	3.23	314.56	0.0098	4	29.3	11.19	100	74.85%	
Orono	\$90,389	141	54060	553	1.67	163.45	0.0030	6	49.49	11.17	0	52.36%	
Machias	\$115,586	124	49591	300	2.33	385.29	0.0078	6	27	11.11	83	68.32%	
Old Town	\$219,316	86	93304	819	2.35	267.79	0.0029	13	74.81	10.95	100	48.44%	
Auburn	\$663,320	24	333366	2497	1.99	265.65	0.0008	30	229.2	10.89	0	58.07%	
SAD 49-Fairfield	\$811,469	16	441448	2726	1.84	297.68	0.0007	28	259.62	10.50	0	70.68%	
Southwest Harbor	\$72,596	155	30727	279	2.36	260.20	0.0085	3	28.15	9.91	0	3.76%	
SAD 67-Lincoln	\$358,116	49	196471	1114	1.82	321.47	0.0016	21	112.59	9.89	0	60.26%	
Freeport	\$440,642	42	133281	936	3.31	470.77	0.0035	11	96.85	9.66	0	26.48%	
Monmouth	\$157,196	111	124799	787	1.26	199.74	0.0016	9	82.03	9.59	0	66.46%	
SAD 28-Camden	\$216,387	88	168704	1164	1.28	185.90	0.0011	16	121.37	9.59	0	4.75%	
SAD 5-Rockland	\$270,068	70	175162	971	1.54	278.13	0.0016	12	102.21	9.50	0	41.09%	
Poland	\$513,093	37	269121	822	1.91	624.20	0.0023	17	86.84	9.47	88	63.86%	
SAD 52-Turner	\$895,955	11	502833	2180	1.78	410.99	0.0008	32	233.45	9.34	0	67.90%	
SAD 36-Livmre Fall	\$360,963	48	199176	985	1.81	366.46	0.0018	17	105.9	9.30	0	60.42%	

<i>Admin Unit</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>% Contr</i>	<i>% Aid</i>
SAD 43-Mexico	\$409,129	45	186739	1542	2.19	265.32	0.0014	21	168.04	9.18	0	34.16%
SAD 23-Carmel	\$202,342	96	146761	857	1.38	236.11	0.0016	11	93.54	9.16	0	72.98%
SAD 57-Waterboro	\$1,183,101	6	823685	3433	1.44	344.63	0.0004	46	376.96	9.11	0	54.49%
Trenton	\$78,321	152	52468	182	1.49	430.34	0.0082	3	20.09	9.06	100	24.66%
Baileyville	\$85,443	142	57544	314	1.48	272.11	0.0047	6	35.12	8.94	0	6.03%
Hancock	\$63,895	160	66211	342	0.97	186.83	0.0028	5	38.28	8.93	0	43.23%
SAD 63-Eddington	\$355,939	50	204505	777	1.74	458.09	0.0022	15	87.07	8.92	0	65.82%
Durham	\$207,579	91	199316	547	1.04	379.49	0.0019	6	61.97	8.83	83	61.14%
Sabattus	\$190,616	100	88983	516	2.14	369.41	0.0042	9	58.58	8.81	0	n/a

THIRD TIER												
BY DENSITY												
	Rank: 71-105											
Characteristic:	<i>Expenditure</i>		<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>		
High:	\$1,229,759		627,181	2,956	\$2.70	\$619.47	0.0143	41	451.03	8.67		
Low:	\$40,871		19,320	148	\$0.87	\$165.15	0.0006	3	23.79	6.01		
Mean:	\$295,121		166,553	807	\$1.76	\$346.82	0.0044	13	110.53	7.29		
<i>Admin Unit</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>% Contr</i>	<i>% Aid</i>
Jay	\$355,770	51	148483	822	2.40	432.81	0.0029	14	94.82	8.67	0	15.57%
Princeton	\$47,197	179	35796	211	1.32	223.68	0.0062	4	25.17	8.38	0	81.86%
Millinocket	\$165,078	108	141300	343	1.17	481.28	0.0034	10	40.95	8.38	100	57.31%
Orrington	\$198,774	97	98947	419	2.01	474.40	0.0048	6	50.16	8.35	100	47.89%
SAD 50-Thomasto	\$228,362	83	133937	805	1.70	283.68	0.0021	15	96.75	8.32	0	32.75%
Eastport	\$50,204	173	27859	220	1.80	228.20	0.0082	4	26.48	8.31	0	77.03%
SAD 27-Fort Kent	\$325,912	57	268703	1453	1.21	224.30	0.0008	22	175.9	8.26	0	72.15%
Greenville	\$42,939	185	32169	260	1.33	165.15	0.0051	5	31.74	8.19	100	39.69%
SAD 64-Corinth	\$644,918	28	288708	1405	2.23	459.02	0.0016	27	176.62	7.95	100	73.09%
Madawaska	\$217,938	87	111533	705	1.95	309.13	0.0028	11	88.9	7.93	0	41.82%
SAD 1-Presque Isl	\$933,816	10	367875	2079	2.54	449.17	0.0012	31	266.5	7.80	0	70.29%
SAD 40-Waldobor	\$709,973	21	470803	2443	1.51	290.62	0.0006	35	313.91	7.78	0	56.62%
Phippsburg	\$125,899	118	55025	371	2.29	339.35	0.0062	4	47.83	7.76	100	13.49%
Chelsea	\$114,835	125	54978	297	2.09	386.65	0.0070	5	38.65	7.68	0	72.27%
Woolwich	\$231,765	80	85925	502	2.70	461.68	0.0054	7	65.8	7.63	100	55.59%
Dedham	\$64,288	159	45554	210	1.41	306.13	0.0067	4	28	7.50	0	43.38%
SAD 21-Dixfield	\$224,540	85	157232	702	1.43	319.86	0.0020	11	97.36	7.21	0	76.87%
SAD 54-Skowheg	\$1,229,759	3	627181	2518	1.96	488.39	0.0008	37	349.24	7.21	19	44.94%
SAD 56-Searsport	\$329,284	56	239596	985	1.37	334.30	0.0014	14	137.17	7.18	0	65.21%
SAD 41-Milo	\$224,582	84	187137	958	1.20	234.43	0.0013	14	133.89	7.16	0	74.41%
Franklin	\$49,862	174	27383	223	1.82	223.60	0.0082	4	31.19	7.15	0	n/a
SAD 61-Bridgton	\$819,603	14	597782	2082	1.37	393.66	0.0007	35	294.32	7.07	0	42.08%
SAD 42-Mars Hill	\$136,381	116	85188	519	1.60	262.78	0.0031	10	73.66	7.05	0	84.53%
Richmond	\$123,043	120	66207	446	1.86	275.88	0.0042	8	63.96	6.97	0	70.23%
SAD 48-Newport	\$706,244	22	389180	2112	1.81	334.40	0.0009	35	312.1	6.77	0	67.37%
SAD 9-Farmington	\$1,192,084	5	549205	2956	2.17	403.28	0.0007	41	451.03	6.55	0	64.91%

<i>Admin Unit</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>% Contr</i>	<i>% Aid</i>
Tremont	\$52,714	170	35919	212	1.47	248.65	0.0069	3	33.12	6.40	0	6.65%
Dayton	\$74,620	154	48830	225	1.53	331.64	0.0068	4	35.23	6.39	0	56.56%
Greenbush	\$109,989	127	126000	250	0.87	439.96	0.0035	10	39.3	6.36	100	81.04%
Wales	\$80,711	146	44807	188	1.80	429.31	0.0096	3	29.72	6.33	100	n/a
Winter Harbor	\$40,871	186	19320	148	2.12	276.16	0.0143	3	23.79	6.22	0	47.48%
Medway	\$121,329	121	93521	239	1.30	507.65	0.0054	8	38.87	6.15	0	77.11%
Woodland	\$60,634	165	40760	321	1.49	188.89	0.0046	5	52.79	6.08	0	81.26%
Limestone	\$203,187	95	92138	328	2.21	619.47	0.0067	12	54.35	6.03	0	81.45%
Windsor	\$92,145	139	34367	296	2.68	311.30	0.0091	5	49.25	6.01	0	65.72%

FOURTH TIER												
BY DENSITY												
	Rank: 106-140											
Characteristic:	Expenditure		Miles	Students	\$/Mile	\$/Student	\$/Student/Mi	Buses	Mi Road	Density		
High:	\$1,306,397		746,333	2,920	\$2.83	\$594.28	0.0186	46	504.58	5.94		
Low:	\$43,977		27,873	74	\$1.11	\$208.87	0.0006	3	14.61	4.37		
Mean:	\$215,783		131,728	607	\$1.68	\$358.55	0.0050	11	117.74	5.12		
Bold type indicates Cost per Student per Mile is over 120% of group average.												
Admin Unit	Expenditure	Rank	Miles	Students	\$/Mile	\$/Student	\$/Student/Mi	Buses	Mi Road	Density	% Contr	% Aid
SAD 77-E Machias	\$164,392	109	109562	558	1.50	294.61	0.0027	10	93.99	5.94	10	69.48%
SAD 17-Norway	\$1,306,397	2	746333	2920	1.75	447.40	0.0006	46	504.58	5.79	0	62.69%
Lamoine	\$82,244	143	44098	187	1.87	439.81	0.0100	3	32.32	5.79	100	39.31%
Orland	\$165,666	107	65848	291	2.52	569.30	0.0086	5	50.95	5.71	100	55.71%
SAD 34-Belfast	\$605,850	33	353362	1443	1.71	419.85	0.0012	24	254.11	5.68	0	59.38%
SAD 62-Pownal	\$76,815	153	58339	254	1.32	302.42	0.0052	5	45.54	5.58	0	43.60%
Nobleboro	\$53,489	169	27873	205	1.92	260.92	0.0094	3	37.04	5.53	0	46.89%
SAD 31-Howland	\$285,288	67	195113	864	1.46	330.19	0.0017	14	156.98	5.50	0	61.11%
Bar Harbor	\$119,163	122	67625	533	1.76	223.57	0.0033	4	97.25	5.48	100	3.81%
SAD 20-Ft Fairfield	\$171,023	105	122514	698	1.40	245.02	0.0020	9	128.34	5.44	0	74.36%
SAD 29-Houlton	\$324,323	58	174972	1057	1.85	306.83	0.0018	18	195.53	5.41	0	74.53%
Minot	\$119,038	123	67662	326	1.76	365.15	0.0054	6	60.6	5.38	0	68.06%
SAD 37-Harrington	\$249,860	74	189440	1029	1.32	242.82	0.0013	15	192.36	5.35	0	58.21%
SAD 33-St. Agatha	\$130,711	117	105348	427	1.24	306.11	0.0029	9	80.33	5.32	0	77.36%
Easton	\$96,468	136	61888	288	1.56	334.96	0.0054	4	54.21	5.31	0	58.49%
SAD 19-Lubec	\$49,712	175	38324	238	1.30	208.87	0.0055	5	45.19	5.27	0	63.31%
SAD 24-Van Buren	\$156,279	112	56395	435	2.77	359.26	0.0064	9	84.68	5.14	0	82.86%
Acton	\$211,034	90	74871	383	2.82	551.00	0.0074	6	74.57	5.14	100	23.33%
Bradley	\$43,977	184	32032	74	1.37	594.28	0.0186	4	14.61	5.07	100	64.26%
Peru	\$69,147	157	43235	210	1.60	329.27	0.0076	5	42.25	4.97	0	65.65%
SAD 58-Kingfield	\$282,755	68	197468	821	1.43	344.40	0.0017	19	166.2	4.94	0	61.52%
Ellsworth	\$239,221	78	110164	574	2.17	416.76	0.0038	11	116.39	4.93	0	49.56%
SAD 59-Madison	\$393,437	46	238337	931	1.65	422.60	0.0018	20	190.96	4.88	0	52.78%
SAD 44-Bethel	\$497,322	40	269654	1106	1.84	449.66	0.0017	26	226.89	4.87	0	43.16%
SAD 18-Verona	\$100,126	132	35350	181	2.83	553.18	0.0156	3	37.32	4.85	100	n/a
SAD 46-Dexter	\$313,774	59	193578	910	1.62	344.81	0.0018	15	187.9	4.84	0	73.65%

<i>Admin Unit</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>% Contr</i>	<i>% Aid</i>
SAD 25-Sherman	\$184,628	103	116314	490	1.59	376.79	0.0032	13	102.38	4.79	0	71.59%
Surry	\$79,733	149	49093	156	1.62	511.11	0.0104	3	32.68	4.77	100	9.18%
SAD 39-Buckfield	\$192,663	99	154857	758	1.24	254.17	0.0016	13	161.45	4.69	0	75.13%
SAD 30-Lee	\$99,442	134	89810	423	1.11	235.09	0.0026	7	92.74	4.56	0	78.27%
SAD 38-Dixmont	\$143,313	115	96572	350	1.48	409.47	0.0042	10	77.77	4.50	0	72.51%
Hope	\$49,209	176	33865	159	1.45	309.49	0.0091	3	35.36	4.50	100	50.29%
SAD 70-Hodgdon	\$205,092	94	166919	823	1.23	249.20	0.0015	15	184.5	4.46	0	74.39%
Appleton	\$62,171	162	47460	209	1.31	297.47	0.0063	3	47.83	4.37	100	66.63%
SAD 4-Guilford	\$228,648	82	176193	939	1.30	243.50	0.0014	21	214.97	4.37	0	67.61%

FIFTH TIER												
BY DENSITY Rank: 141-175												
Characteristic:	Expenditure		Miles	Students	\$/Mile	\$/Student	\$/Student/Mi	Buses	Mi Road	Density		
High:	\$747,523		496,911	1,612	\$2.46	\$1,216.38	0.0263	31	452.95	4.30		
Low:	\$26,291		20,374	56	\$0.79	\$222.54	0.0009	3	19.73	2.17		
Mean:	\$156,386		98,784	311	\$1.55	\$506.55	0.0092	8	88.42	3.52		
Bold type indicates Cost per Student per Mile is over 120% of group average.												
Admin Unit	Expenditure	Rank	Miles	Students	\$/Mile	\$/Student	\$/Student/Mi	Buses	Mi Road	Density	% Contr	% Aid
Litchfield	\$205,537	93	83577	295	2.46	696.74	0.0083	9	68.6	4.30	0	n/a
Grand Isle	\$26,879	203	22248	96	1.21	279.99	0.0126	3	22.69	4.23	0	n/a
Winthrop	\$267,744	71	149901	294	1.79	910.69	0.0061	13	69.85	4.21	0	55.14%
Alna	\$48,828	178	34073	125	1.43	390.62	0.0115	3	30.45	4.11	0	n/a
Blue Hill	\$110,277	126	73659	253	1.50	435.88	0.0059	5	61.86	4.09	100	9.03%
Westport	\$44,336	183	20374	103	2.18	430.45	0.0211	3	25.4	4.06	0	n/a
SAD 55-Porter	\$584,847	35	324262	1159	1.80	504.61	0.0016	19	287.29	4.03	100	58.44%
SAD 45-Washburn	\$168,714	106	83912	383	2.01	440.51	0.0052	8	95.21	4.02	0	81.47%
Jefferson	\$60,985	163	77284	270	0.79	225.87	0.0029	7	67.14	4.02	0	44.36%
SAD 53-Pittsfield	\$286,000	66	195650	527	1.46	542.69	0.0028	15	131.58	4.01	100	69.04%
Alton	\$96,094	137	46200	79	2.08	1216.38	0.0263	4	19.73	4.00	100	79.94%
SAD 74-Anson	\$302,907	62	166190	858	1.82	353.04	0.0021	14	222.75	3.85	0	62.07%
SAD 26-Eastbrook	\$35,637	191	35075	110	1.02	323.97	0.0092	3	28.64	3.84	0	61.66%
Bristol	\$182,140	104	84436	241	2.16	755.77	0.0090	5	62.85	3.83	100	5.71%
SAD 32-Ashland	\$164,002	110	103557	388	1.58	422.69	0.0041	10	103.27	3.76	0	51.82%
Gouldsboro	\$102,564	131	49251	205	2.08	500.31	0.0102	5	54.57	3.76	0	15.97%
Fayette	\$95,164	138	74159	174	1.28	546.92	0.0074	4	47.09	3.70	0	55.83%
New Sweden	\$34,717	192	30328	156	1.14	222.54	0.0073	4	42.41	3.68	0	84.93%
SAD 3-Thorndike	\$747,523	19	496911	1612	1.50	463.72	0.0009	27	452.95	3.56	0	70.19%
Dresden	\$79,753	148	71396	162	1.12	492.30	0.0069	5	45.77	3.54	0	68.28%
Perry	\$60,654	164	35846	156	1.69	388.81	0.0108	4	44.08	3.54	0	62.55%
SAD 14-Danforth	\$66,353	158	59435	167	1.12	397.32	0.0067	7	48.16	3.47	0	62.11%
Sedgwick	\$81,791	144	37476	132	2.18	619.63	0.0165	7	38.64	3.42	100	44.26%
Pembroke	\$79,189	151	48402	148	1.64	535.06	0.0111	5	43.82	3.38	0	59.81%
Harmony	\$60,626	166	41312	143	1.47	423.96	0.0103	4	42.51	3.36	0	72.22%
SAD 13-Bingham	\$96,510	135	86352	279	1.12	345.91	0.0040	6	88.63	3.15	0	63.27%

<i>Admin Unit</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>\$/Mile</i>	<i>\$/Student</i>	<i>\$/Student/Mi</i>	<i>Buses</i>	<i>Mi Road</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>% Contr</i>	<i>% Aid</i>
Brooklin	\$70,996	156	40617	91	1.75	780.18	0.0192	9	29.75	3.06	100	25.69%
Steuben	\$99,862	133	48500	130	2.06	768.17	0.0158	6	42.69	3.05	100	57.70%
Palermo	\$39,467	187	26919	150	1.47	263.11	0.0098	3	52.58	2.85	0	52.65%
SAD 68-DoverFox	\$336,053	54	208863	633	1.61	530.89	0.0025	23	223.68	2.83	100	72.89%
SAD 72-Fryeburg	\$659,511	25	442403	924	1.49	713.76	0.0016	31	328.07	2.82	36	48.13%
Mount Desert	\$79,509	150	65966	203	1.21	391.67	0.0059	5	74.38	2.73	0	3.64%
SAD 8-Vinalhaven	\$26,291	205	26471	102	0.99	257.75	0.0097	3	41.45	2.46	0	4.78%
Charlotte	\$37,793	189	30969	56	1.22	674.88	0.0218	3	23.26	2.41	0	73.11%
Bridgewater	\$34,265	194	35452	71	0.97	482.61	0.0136	3	32.73	2.17	0	n/a

MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation Efficiency Task Force
From: Geir Jaegersen Center for Research and Evaluation, University of Maine
Date: 18 November 1999
Re: Maine data & information from other states

Please find attached two sets of information:

1) Maine school transportation data from FY 1998, ranked by total expenditure from highest to lowest. At your request, I have assigned ranks to every variable, resulting in 6 different ranks. If anyone would like this file e-mailed to them, please contact me at:

Geir_Jaegersen@umit.maine.edu

I have also calculated the degrees to which each district's bus fleet is contracted.

I would like to propose eliminating districts from this data set that have fewer than 3 buses. Analysis of these districts results in figures that are statistical outliers, probably because the fixed costs of operating buses are not adequately spread out. I do not believe there are many efficiencies to be gained by analyzing these districts.

In the hardcopy report, there were several districts that did not report data for FY 98. Some of these districts were of significant size, and their inclusion may be useful if we can obtain data from them.

2) Information from other states regarding transportation funding formulas or recent transportation efficiency studies. I am searching for information from additional states, but this is a start.



Office of the State Auditor

Colorado Department Of Education School Transportation Performance Audit July 1996

Authority, Purpose, and Scope

This performance audit of the Department of Education's School Transportation Function was conducted under the authority of Section 2-3-103, C.R.S., which authorizes the State Auditor's Office to conduct performance audits of all agencies of state government. This audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. As part of the audit we interviewed and surveyed personnel at the Department as well as at various school districts, reviewed documents, and analyzed data. In addition, we performed tests of the accuracy of data in the Department's transportation database. Audit work was performed between April and July 1996.

The purpose of our review was to:

- Determine whether the Colorado Department of Education is in compliance with all applicable statutory requirements and regulations related to school transportation for K-12 grade students.
- Identify what efforts have been made to contain student transportation costs at school districts.
- Identify areas where the Colorado Department of Education might improve its involvement with school districts in the area of student transportation.

Overall, we found that the Department of Education is in compliance with all statutory and regulatory directives related to student transportation. However, we did find some areas where the Department could improve its role in the areas of analyzing and sharing cost containment information with school districts. In addition, we discuss the use of transportation fees as one method the General Assembly and school districts may want to consider in funding school transportation. The following is a summary of Colorado's school transportation system, issues affecting school transportation funding in Colorado, and school district transportation cost containment efforts.

Overview of School Transportation in Colorado

Last year approximately 265,000 students were transported daily to and from school in Colorado's 176 school districts. According to Colorado Department of Education statistics, this represents about 42 percent of Colorado's total student population. In Fiscal Year 1995 Colorado school districts reported they spent \$89 million to operate their transportation units. This amount does not include costs associated with the purchase or lease of transportation vehicles, depreciation, or other capital outlays. In addition, school districts reported they traveled approximately 46 million miles

during that time period to transport students to and from school. Miles for special activity and sports trips are not reimbursable under statute; therefore, these miles are not included in this figure.

Sections 22-32-113 and 22-51 et seq., C.R.S., provide a regulatory framework for school districts to follow in providing transportation to students within their jurisdiction. Although this framework is established in statute, the General Assembly recognized in Section 22-32-113(1.5), C.R.S., that transportation of students is an optional service provided by school districts. It should be noted that federal regulations governing special needs students require that school districts provide transportation as part of a special needs student's Individual Education Plan.

Statutes Provide for the State To Reimburse School Districts for Certain Operating Costs

While the General Assembly recognizes that student transportation is not mandatory, it has also established a policy of furnishing financial aid to school districts that transport pupils to and from school. The amount reimbursed is calculated using a statutory formula that basically reimburses districts at the rate of thirty-seven and eighty-seven one-hundredths cents for each mile traveled plus thirty-three and eighty seven one-hundredths percent of operating expenditures over that amount. In the event the amount appropriated by the General Assembly to fund public school transportation is less than the amount of the total eligible reimbursement of all the school districts, statutes require the appropriated amount to be prorated to each school district based on its respective entitlement.

On the basis of the funding formula, Colorado's school districts were eligible to receive about \$44 million in Fiscal Year 1995 for transportation. However, the State appropriated \$36 million to fund school transportation costs. Historically, the State has appropriated between 74 percent and 82 percent of the amount school districts are eligible to receive by statute. In addition, this amount covers between 38 and 42 percent of total transportation operating expenditures incurred by school districts. The transportation costs not covered by the state reimbursement must be covered by other school district funds.

Colorado Statutes Provide a Mechanism for School Districts To Charge Fees

Section 22-32-113(5), C.R.S., allows school districts to hold special elections to vote on whether the district can charge a fee to fund excess transportation costs. Excess transportation costs are defined as current operating expenditures for pupil transportation less the amount reimbursed by the State. The statute provides that the fee shall be waived for any students who are eligible for meals under the "National School Lunch Act." Also, special needs students cannot be assessed fees as their transportation is federally mandated. Fees approved and collected by the district would be deposited in the school district's general fund and offset funding not provided by the State. According to department staff, one school district has tried to increase its funding by charging fees since this section of the statute was enacted. In 1993 Larimer County's Thompson R-2J school district held a special election, but the initiative did not pass.

Senate Bill 96-158, introduced during the last legislative session, attempted to amend this section of the law. The bill's proposed amendments would have changed the law so that a special election was not necessary for a fee to be charged. Instead, a two-thirds majority vote by the school board would be sufficient. The bill also imposed a limit on the fee of \$50 per semester per family. In addition, only families using school transportation would be charged the fee. The bill lost on

second reading in the House of Representatives.

Information from California's student transportation system showed that approximately 100-125 of its 996 school districts are charging fees to students for school bus transportation. The California statute provides that the maximum rates to be charged not exceed \$2.17 per individual trip and \$4.34 per round trip. Also, districts cannot charge fees to indigent or special needs students. Fees being charged by districts range from \$.25 per trip per day to \$1.00 per trip per day.

Analysis of Fee Rates Necessary To Fund School Transportation

Although no Colorado School districts are currently charging transportation fees, the assessment of fees could be used by the State and school districts to fund transportation costs in the future. The following chart provides a general picture of the user fees that would be necessary to fund transportation operating costs depending on what costs the user fees were designed to cover. The chart shows the user fee necessary to replace the state appropriation; the user fee that would be necessary to totally fund the amount allowed by statute; and the user fee necessary to fund total operating costs for Fiscal Year 1995.

ANALYSIS OF USER FEES NECESSARY TO FUND FY 1995 TRANSPORTATION OPERATING COSTS

	State Reimbursement	Allowed by Statute	Total Operating Costs
Total Cost	\$35,990,270	\$43,883,406	\$89,017,470
Number of Pupils Transported	264,633	264,633	264,633
Total Cost Per Student	\$136.00	\$165.83	\$336.38
Number of Transportation Days	180	180	180
User Fee Per Student Per Day	\$0.76	\$0.92	\$1.87

Source: State Auditor's Office Analysis of Colorado Department of Education Data.

The chart is a broad analysis of user fees on a statewide basis. It should be noted that variables such as school district size, special needs students, and low-income families would need to be addressed if this concept were to be adopted.

As noted above, current statutes do provide for fees to be imposed if they are approved by the electorate. However, fees approved under current statutes are limited in that fees can only be set to recoup excess operating expenditures and cannot be used to offset any of the State's funding. If statutes were modified to allow districts to charge user fees to fund all or a portion of transportation costs, state and school district general fund dollars currently used for school transportation could be used to cover other K-12 education costs.

School Transportation Cost Containment Efforts

As part of our review we met with personnel from five of the State's large metro Denver school districts and interviewed personnel from seven smaller rural districts. The most significant cost driver cited by the school districts we spoke with is transportation of special needs students. Two federal statutes require schools to provide specialized transportation for students with disabilities. They are The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). School district personnel reported that special needs costs are high due to several factors:

- These programs are for a very few number of students, yet the cost of vehicles is the same or higher than regular school buses.
- Each disability is unique. This requires drivers and other transportation staff to be trained in all areas and aspects of disabilities for safety reasons.
- Many of these students have to be transported to their programs outside the boundaries of the district, either because a program is not available in the district or the parents want a specific program for their child.

Based on information provided by school districts, the cost to transport special needs students is on average seven times that of a regular education student.

Governor-Sponsored Audits

In August 1994 the Governor challenged 20 of the largest school districts in the State to conduct performance audits for the purpose of generating cost savings that could then be shifted to classroom education. The audits could focus on performance areas or energy efficiencies. We contacted the 20 school districts to determine the status and results of the audits. As a result of these audits, several cost containment areas were identified for school transportation. These included route consolidation, tiered busing, elimination of positions, and the coordination of teacher in-service days. We could not determine the savings achieved by districts because many of the districts are still analyzing and implementing the results of these audits.

MATES Group Is Focusing on Cost Containment

The Metro Area Transportation Efficiency Study, or MATES group, was formed out of the need for the larger metro districts to share information on their transportation departments and ideas on how to run more efficiently. The districts involved are Adams 12, Aurora, Boulder, Cherry Creek, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson, and Littleton. Currently the Colorado Department of Education reports that it has not been invited to participate with this group. The primary focus of this group is to gather comparative information on all participating school districts for efficiency purposes. The initial information gathered compares information such as cost per mile, employee turnover, fleet size, and cost per student category. In the area of special education, the analysis specifically focused on the costs for each district, as well as cost per mile and cost per special needs student transported. The group is in the preliminary stages of analyzing the data and expects to move forward on identifying potential efficiencies in the coming months.

Role of the Colorado Department of Education

The Colorado Department of Education plays a small role in cost containment efforts for transportation units at school districts. However, the Transportation Safety Unit is occasionally involved with studies called Technical Assistance Evaluations. These reviews are performed at the request of a school district. Our review of these studies showed that a few included efficiency areas. However, most dealt with policies, operations, and compliance issues.

Most of the districts we talked with said that they would like to see the Department get more involved in analyzing cost containment areas. Many of the larger districts said that this would be

more valuable than the periodic compliance reviews conducted by the Department. At a minimum, school districts said they would like to see the Department act as a clearinghouse for information on cost containment efforts taken by other districts. We also believe the Department should become more active in cost containment efforts because it is in the best position to share information among all districts.

We recommend the Colorado Department of Education increase its involvement with school districts in the area of cost containment by a) focusing more of its efforts on cost containment, b) participating with groups such as MATES to ensure the Department is involved in cost containment efforts at the district level, c) acting as a resource for cost containment and best practice information, and d) disseminating cost containment information to all districts.

Colorado Department of Education Response:

Agree. The Colorado Department of Education will carefully evaluate current activities and resource allocation, and will make every effort to redirect any available resources toward cost containment activities, provided that such resource allocation will not compromise the primary goal of safe transportation of children to and from school and school related activities, in keeping with the basis and purpose of CRS 22-51-108 and CRS 42-4-1904. This will include participating with groups such as MATES, acting as a resource for cost containment and best practice information, and disseminating cost containment information to all districts.



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Comments to sao.ga@state.co.us



Take Me To . . .

Transportation Aid Incentive Factors

I. Background

New Jersey has one of the most inefficient school transportation systems in the country. The New Jersey Associated Press Managing Editors in an article entitled, "On the road to cost efficiency, reforms stuck in the slow lane" highlighted one of the reasons for inefficient school spending. The fewer students on a bus, the more buses that are needed. And that means more tax dollars spent to buy, operate and maintain them." A study by the Public Affairs Research Institute also criticized school transportation practices in New Jersey. As part of the Government That Works Initiative, Deloitte and Touche conducted a study of our transportation system and concluded that the state should promote efficiency in school transportation by incorporating efficiency factors into the transportation formula.

In light of these criticisms, the Legislature established in the new school funding law a transportation aid formula which for the first time includes the concept of an incentive factor which addresses the issue of inefficient practices (i.e. bus utilization) of districts. For the 1998-99 school year, the Legislature established in CEIFA an efficiency of 1(one), thereby providing full formula funding for all districts. For future years, the Legislature provided that, "The Governor shall submit to the Legislature at least 60 days prior to the budget address proposed transportation incentive factors applicable to the following school year and thereafter along with supporting data. The incentive factor shall be deemed approved by the Legislature unless a concurrent resolution is passed within 60 days of the date of submission."

II. Goals of the Initiative

Pursuant to the Legislature's direction in CEIFA, the Department of Education must provide a means of motivating districts to be more efficient. It is important to note that although many districts are either efficient or marginally inefficient, only some are so inefficient that it is necessary to require a behavioral change. A comprehensive system of local planning and accountability, implemented under state supervision, is needed to make these districts more accountable to their taxpayers for instituting efficient practices. Such changes will also provide an appropriate incentive to other districts that are marginally inefficient.

III. Description of Proposed Efficiency Plan

Vehicle capacity utilization will be calculated for all school districts in the state based on vehicle utilization criteria. Basically, these criteria involve passenger occupancy rates and the number of routes a bus runs each day. The standard to which all school districts should initially be motivated to achieve is 120% of vehicle capacity (some buses would have to be used for more than one route). It

should be noted that in the 1997-98 school year, the first year of implementation of the plan, about 14% of the districts met or exceeded this standard.

Improvements over the past year have resulted in 30% of the districts meeting or exceeding the standard.

Districts will receive notification of their current vehicle capacity utilization percentage, and the 120% standard in sufficient time for them to consider efficiencies to move to the 120% standards as they prepare their budget. Vehicle capacity is based upon 90% of the total number of seats available for district use. The vehicle utilization percentage is calculated by dividing the total number of eligible regular public, nonpublic and special education students without special needs who received transportation services by the vehicle capacity.

Districts whose vehicle utilization falls below 75% must develop a corrective action plan outlining how they intend to improve. The plan must be presented by the superintendent to the local school board for a public meeting and adoption, prior to submission to the Commissioner no later than September 1.

In developing their corrective action plans, districts must involve the general public, thereby empowering voters to be more informed of their district's transportation system and its financing.

The vehicle utilization percentage of each district will be included in the School Report Card and Comparative Spending Guide annually.

Each district that files a corrective action plan must demonstrate annual progress toward its own goals of efficiency. The Commissioner may take appropriate administrative steps to insure proper and timely implementation of the corrective action plan. The current efficiency factor of 1 (one) will be continued for 1999-2000 in order to provide districts an opportunity to develop and begin implementing their plans. However, where a district fails to show a good-faith effort to improve, the Commissioner may take appropriate action, including selectively withholding aid with approval of the State Board of Education.

It should be noted that approximately 70% of school districts are operating at less than the established standard of 120% of their vehicle capacity. These districts will need to take voluntary steps to be more efficient in order to avoid falling below the standard as those districts currently below that level improve their rankings through implementation of their corrective action plans.

For subsequent years, the efficiency factor will be submitted biennially by the Governor to the Legislature as part of the Report of the Cost of Providing a Thorough and Efficient Education.

Implementation and Assistance Plan

This plan contains the following elements that are intended to help districts develop and implement their corrective action plans:

1. Fair notice to districts below 75% vehicle utilization so that budgetary changes may be accomplished in a timely fashion.
2. The department will identify best practices which districts could adopt to achieve 120% vehicle capacity. These practices include:

- Tiered opening and closing of school times;
- Coordination of the school calendar (Public and Nonpublic);
- Providing out-of-district transportation through a consolidated transportation services agency;
- Optimizing route design;
- Designing routes with multiple destinations;
- Mixing public and nonpublic school students on the same routes;
- Standardizing ride-time policies for all districts participating in consolidated services and;
- Package bids with tiered routes.

3. The formula incentive factor of 1 (one) shall be continued.



15-945 . Transportation support level

A. The support level for to and from school for each school district for the current year shall be computed as follows:

1. Determine the approved daily route mileage of the school district for the fiscal year prior to the current year.
2. Multiply the figure obtained in paragraph 1 of this subsection by one hundred seventy-five.
3. Determine the number of eligible students transported in the fiscal year prior to the current year.
4. Divide the amount determined in paragraph 1 of this subsection by the amount determined in paragraph 3 of this subsection to determine the approved daily route mileage per eligible student transported.
5. Determine the classification in column 1 of this paragraph for the quotient determined in paragraph 4 of this subsection. Multiply the product obtained in paragraph 2 of this subsection by the corresponding state support level for each route mile as provided in column 2 of this paragraph.

<u>Column 1</u> Approved Daily Route Mileage per Eligible Student Transported	<u>Column 2</u> State Support Level per Route Mile for Fiscal Year 1984-1985
0.5 or less	\$1.55
More than 0.5 through 1.0	\$1.25
More than 1.0	\$1.55

6. Add the amount spent during the prior fiscal year for bus tokens and bus passes for students who qualify as eligible students as defined in section 15-901.

B. The support level for academic and vocational and technological education and athletic trips for each school district for the current year is computed as follows:

1. Determine the classification in column 1 of paragraph 2 of this subsection for the quotient determined in subsection A, paragraph 4 of this section.
2. Multiply the product obtained in subsection A, paragraph 5 of this section by the corresponding state support level for academic and vocational and technological education and athletic trips as provided in column 2, 3 or 4 of this paragraph, whichever is appropriate for the type of district.

<u>Column 1</u> Approved Daily Route Mileage per Eligible Student Transported	<u>Column 2</u> District Type <u>02</u> or <u>03</u>	<u>Column 3</u> District Type <u>04</u>	<u>Column 4</u> District Type <u>05</u>
0.5 or less	0.15	0.10	0.25
More than 0.5 through 1.0	0.15	0.10	0.25
More than 1.0	0.18	0.12	0.30

For the purposes of this paragraph, "district type 02" means a unified school district or an accommodation school that offers instruction in grades nine through twelve, "district type 03" means a common school district not within a high school district, "district type 04" means a common school district within a high school district or an accommodation school that does not offer instruction in grades nine through twelve and "district type 05" means a high school district.

C. The support level for extended school year programs for handicapped pupils is computed as follows:

1. Determine the sum of the following:

(a) The total number of miles driven by all buses of a school district while transporting eligible handicapped students on scheduled routes from their residence to the school of attendance and from the school of attendance to their residence on routes for an extended school year program in accordance with section 15-881.

(b) The total number of miles driven on routes approved by the superintendent of public instruction for which a private party, a political subdivision or a common or a contract carrier is reimbursed for bringing an eligible handicapped student from the place of his residence to a school transportation pickup point or to the school facility of attendance and from the school transportation scheduled return point or from the school facility to his residence for an extended school year program in accordance with section 15-881.

2. Multiply the sum determined in paragraph 1 of this subsection by the state support level for the district determined as provided in subsection A, paragraph 5 of this section.

D. The transportation support level for each school district for the current year is the sum of the support level for to and from school as determined in subsection A of this section and the support level for academic and vocational and technological education and athletic trips as determined in subsection B of this section and the support level for extended school year programs for handicapped pupils as determined in subsection C of this section.

E. The state support level for each approved route mile, as provided in subsection A, paragraph 5 of this section, shall be adjusted by the growth rate prescribed by law, subject to appropriation.

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STATE OF TEXAS

Education Code

CHAPTER 34. TRANSPORTATION

Sec. 34.001. Purchase of Motor Vehicles.

(a) A school district may purchase school motor vehicles through the General Services Commission or through competitive bidding under Subchapter B, Chapter 44.

(b) The General Services Commission may adopt rules as necessary to implement Subsection (a).

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Sec. 34.002. Safety Standards.

(a) The Department of Public Safety, with the advice of the General Services Commission and the Texas Education Agency, shall establish safety standards for school buses used to transport students in accordance with Section 34.002, Education Code.

(b) Each school district shall meet or exceed the safety standards for school buses established under Subsection (a).

(c) A school district that fails or refuses to meet the safety standards for school buses established under this section is ineligible to share in the transportation allotment under Section 42.155 until the first anniversary of the date the district begins complying with the safety standards.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1438, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 34.003. Operation of School Buses.

(a) School buses or mass transit authority motor buses shall be used for the transportation of students to and from schools on routes having 10 or more students. On those routes having fewer than 10 students, passenger cars may be used for the transportation of students to and from school.

(b) To transport students in connection with school activities other than on routes to and from school:

(1) only school buses or motor buses may be used to transport 15 or more students in any one vehicle; and

(2) passenger cars or passenger vans may be used to transport fewer than 15 students.

(c) In all circumstances in which passenger cars or passenger vans are used to transport students, the operator of the vehicle shall ensure that the number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the designed capacity of the vehicle and that each passenger is secured by a safety belt.

(d) In this section, "passenger van" means a motor vehicle other than a motorcycle or passenger car, used to transport persons and designed to transport 15 or fewer passengers, including the driver.

(e) "Motor bus" means a vehicle designed to transport more than 15 passengers, including the driver.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1029, Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1438, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 34.004. Standing Children.

A school district may not require or allow a child to stand on a school bus or passenger van that is in motion.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1029, Sec. 2, eff. June 19, 1997.

Sec. 34.005. Financing.

(a) A school district financially unable to immediately pay for a school motor vehicle, including a bus, bus body, or bus chassis, the district purchases may, as prescribed by this section, issue interest-bearing time warrants in amounts sufficient to make the purchase.

(b) The warrants must mature in serial installments not later than the fifth anniversary of the date of issue and bear interest at a rate not to exceed the maximum rate provided by Section 2(a), Chapter 3, Acts of the 61st Legislature, Regular Session, 1969 (Article 717k-2, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes). The warrants shall be issued and sold at not less than their face value.

(c) The proceeds of the sale of the warrants shall be used to provide the funds required for the purchase.

(d) The warrants, on maturity and in the order of their maturity dates, are payable out of any available funds of the school district and, as they become due, are entitled to first and prior payment out of those funds.

(e) Full records of all warrants issued and sold shall be kept by the school district.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Sec. 34.006. Sale of Buses.

(a) At the request of a school district, the General Services Commission shall dispose of a school bus.

(b) A school district is not required to dispose of a school bus through the General Services Commission.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30,

1995.

Sec. 34.007. Public School Transportation System.

(a) A board of county school trustees or a school district board of trustees may establish and operate an economical public school transportation system in the county or district, as applicable.

(b) In establishing and operating the transportation system, the county or school district board shall employ school bus drivers certified in accordance with standards and qualifications adopted by the Department of Public Safety.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Sec. 34.008. Contract With Transit Authority or Commercial Transportation Company.

(a) A board of county school trustees or school district board of trustees may contract with a mass transit authority or a commercial transportation company for all or any part of a district's public school transportation if the authority or company:

(1) requires its school bus drivers to have the qualifications required by and to be certified in accordance with standards established by the Department of Public Safety; and

(2) uses only those school buses or mass transit authority buses in transporting 15 or more public school students that meet or exceed safety standards for school buses established under Section 34.002, Education Code.

(b) This section does not prohibit the county or school district board from supplementing the state transportation cost allotment with local funds necessary to provide complete transportation services.

(c) A mass transit authority contracting under this section for daily transportation of pre-primary, primary, or secondary students to or from school shall conduct, in a manner and on a schedule approved by the county or district school board, the following education programs

(1) a program to inform the public that public school students will be riding on the authority's or company's buses;

(2) a program to educate the drivers of the buses to be used under the contract of the special needs and problems of public school students riding on the buses; and

(3) a program to educate public school students on bus riding safety and any special considerations arising from the use of the authority's or company's buses.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1438, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 34.009. Contracts for Use, Acquisition, or Lease of School Bus.

(a) As an alternative to purchasing a school bus, a board of county school trustees or school district board of trustees may contract with any person for use, acquisition, or lease with option to purchase of a school bus if the county or school district board determines the contract to be economically advantageous to the county or district. A contract in the form of an installment purchase or any form other than a lease or lease with option to purchase is subject to Section 34.001.

(b) A school bus that is leased or leased with an option to purchase under this section must meet or exceed the safety standards for school buses established under Section 34.002, Education Code.

(c) Each contract that reserves to the county or school district board the continuing right to terminate the contract at the expiration of each budget period of the board during the term of the contract is considered to be a commitment of current revenues only.

(d) Termination penalties may not be included in any contract under this section. The net effective interest rate on any contract must comply with Chapter 3, Acts of the 61st Legislature, Regular Session, 1969 (Article 717k-2, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes).

(e) The competitive bidding requirements of Subchapter B, Chapter 44, apply to a contract under this section.

(f) The commissioner shall adopt a recommended contract form for the use, acquisition, or lease with option to purchase of school buses. A district is not required to use the contract.

(g) After a contract providing for payment aggregating \$100,000 or more by a school district is authorized by the board of trustees, the board may submit the contract and the record relating to the contract to the attorney general for the attorney general's examination as to the validity of the contract. The approval is not required as a term of the contract. If the contract has been made in accordance with the constitution and laws of the state, the attorney general shall approve the contract, and the comptroller shall register the contract. After the contract has been approved by the attorney general and registered by the comptroller, the validity of the contract is incontestable for any cause. The legal obligations of the lessor, vendor, or supplier of the property to the board are not diminished in any respect by the approval and registration of a contract.

(h) The decision of a board of county school trustees or school district board of trustees to use an alternative form of use, acquisition, or purchase of a school bus does not affect a district's eligibility for participation in the transportation funding provisions of the Foundation School Program or any other state funding program.

(i) A contract entered into under this section is a legal and authorized investment for banks, savings banks, trust companies, building and loan associations, savings and loan associations, insurance companies, fiduciaries, and trustees and for the sinking funds of school districts.

(j) A contract under this section may have any lawful term of not less than two or more than 10 years.

(k) A school district may use the provisions of any other law not in conflict with this section to the extent convenient or necessary to carry out any power or authority, express or implied, granted by this section.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1438, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 34.010. Use of School Buses for Extracurricular and Other School-Related Activities.

(a) A school district board of trustees or board of county school trustees governing a countywide transportation system may contract with nonschool organizations for the use of school buses. The county or school district board may provide services relating to the maintenance and operation of the buses in accordance with the contract.

(b) The commissioner shall ensure that the costs of using school buses for a purpose other than the transportation of students to or from school, including transportation for an extracurricular activity or field trip or of members of an organization other than a school organization, are properly identified in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

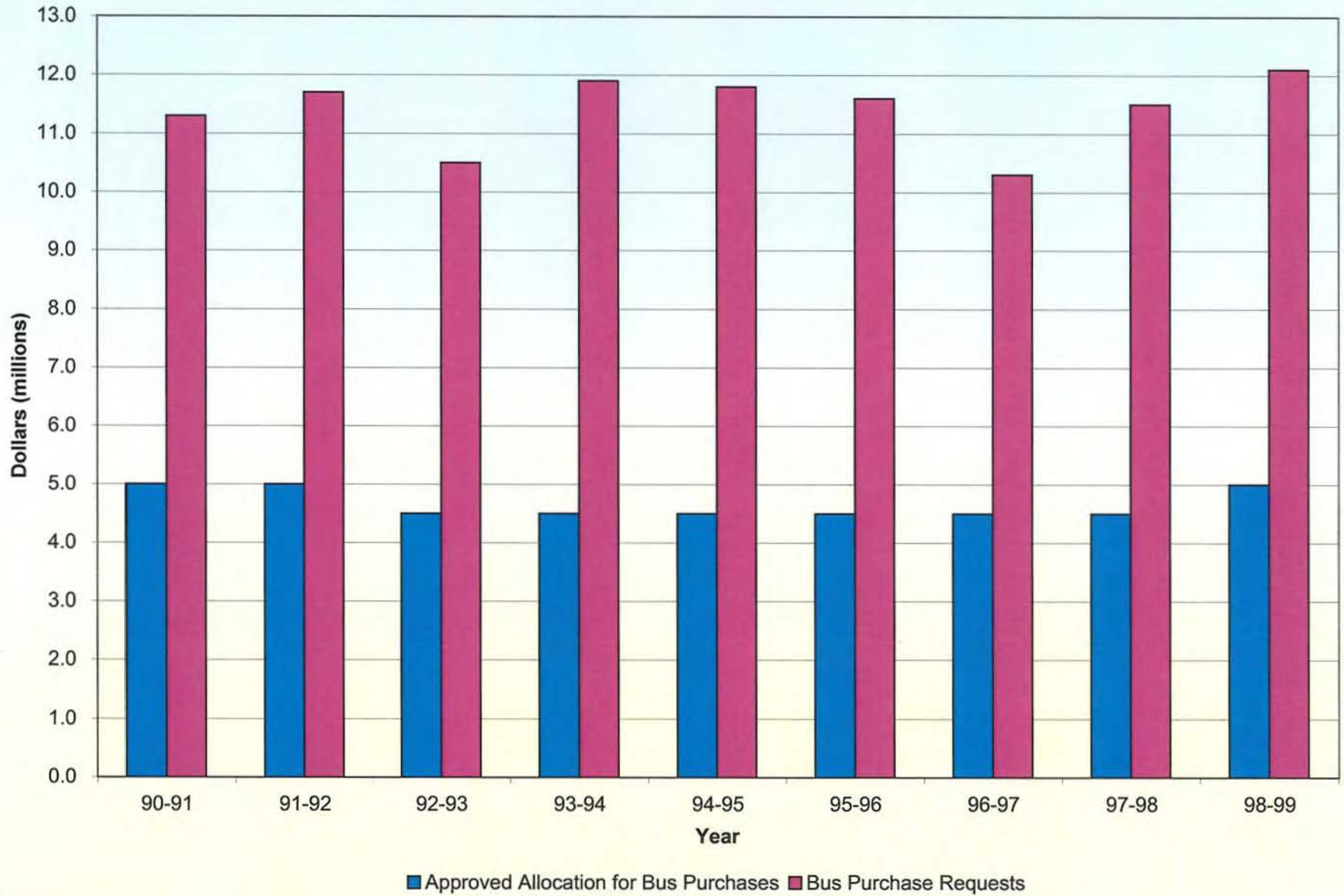
Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Sec. 34.011. Appeals.

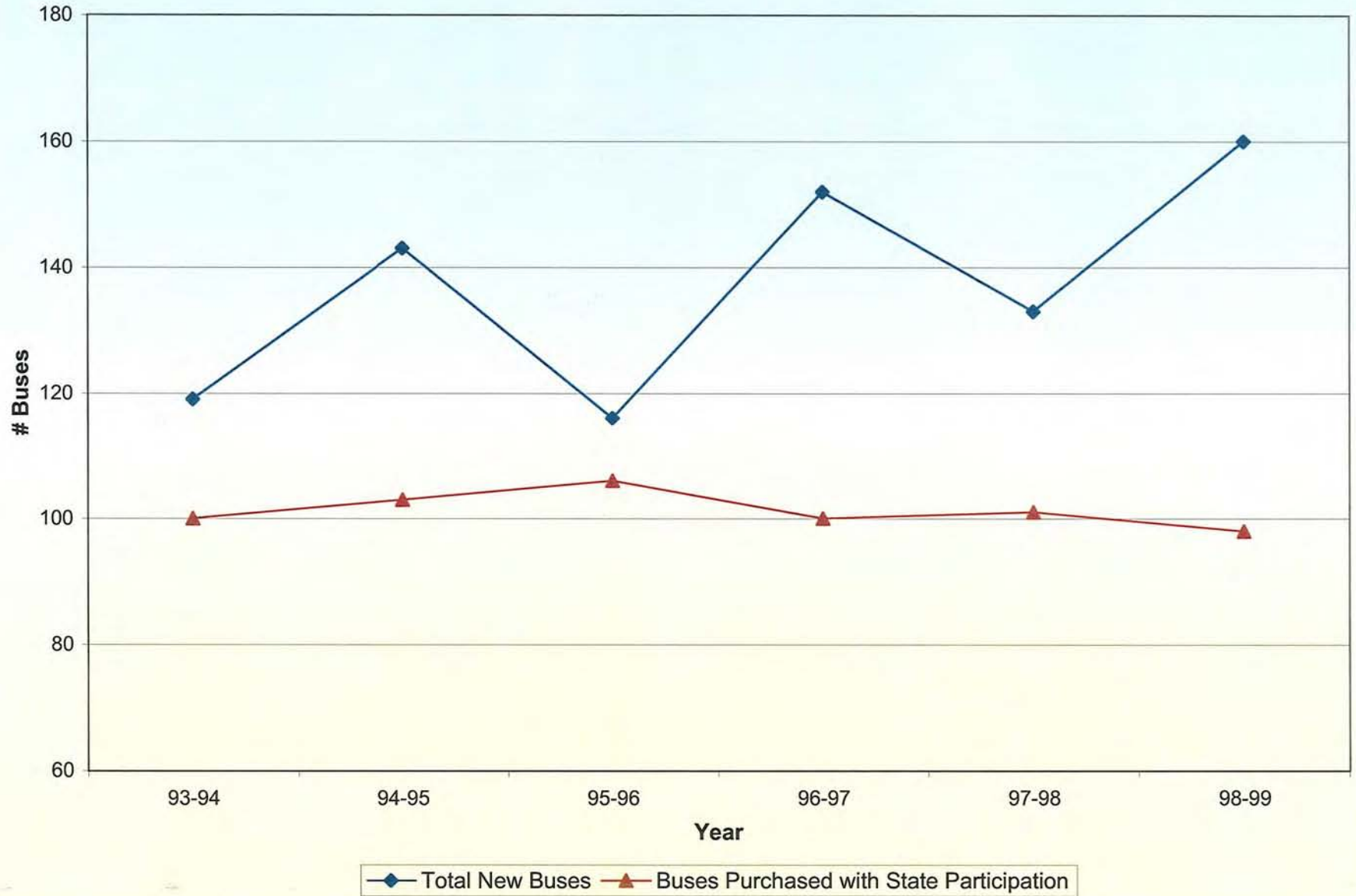
A policy decision of a board of county school trustees or board of trustees of a school district affecting transportation is final and may not be appealed.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

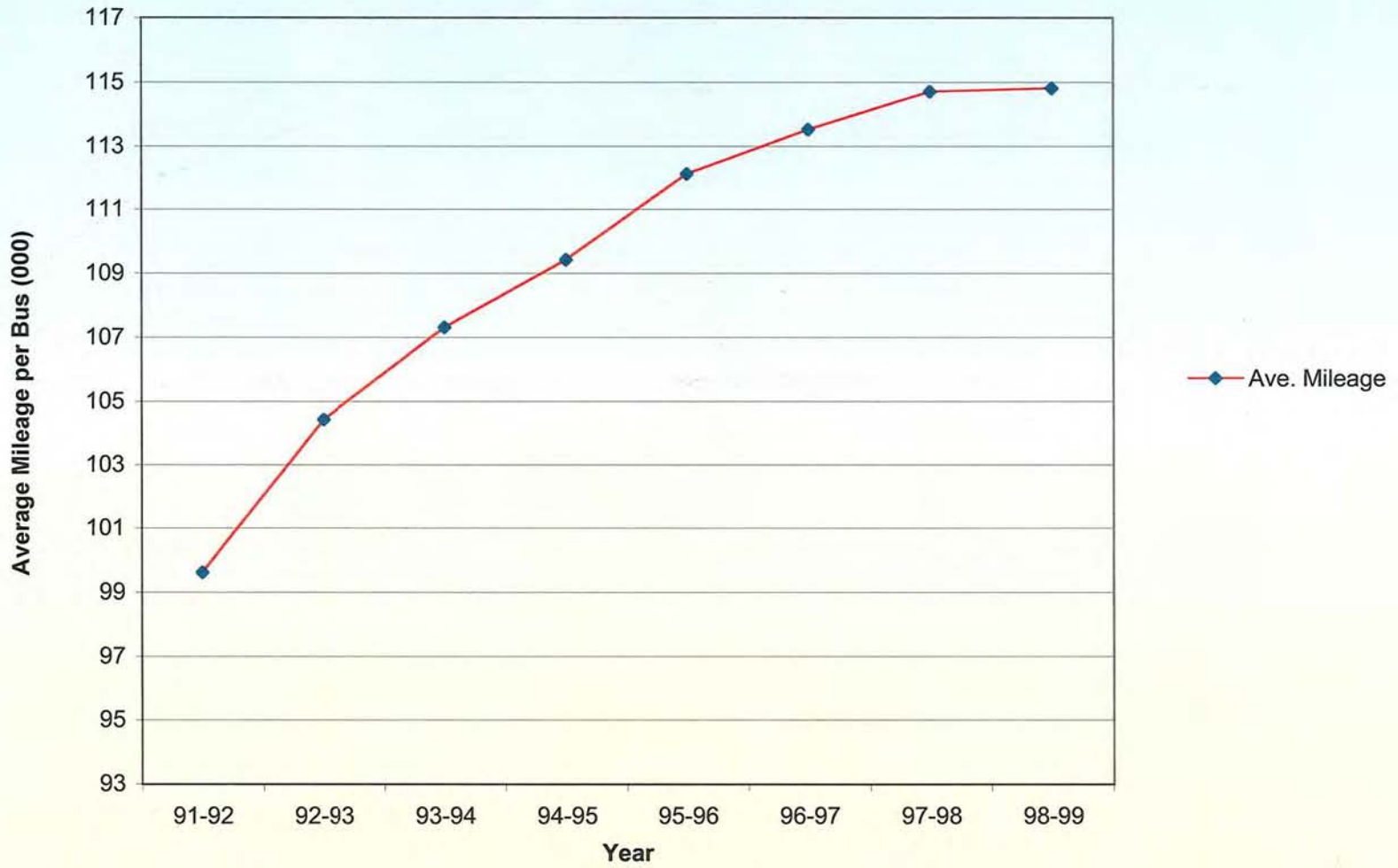
School Bus Purchase Requests vs Funds Available



Annual School Bus Purchases



Average Total Mileage per Bus



Participating Units

Bath School Department (2 surveys —different answers on each)
 Brewer
 Caribou School Department
 Harmony
 Millinocket
 MSAD #1
 MSAD #17
 MSAD #23 & 38
 MSAD #26 & Union #92
 MSAD #30
 MSAD #31
 MSAD #36
 MSAD #48
 MSAD #49
 MSAD #57

MSAD #61
 MSAD #63, CSD #8, Dedham
 MSAD #64
 MSAD #68
 MSAD #75
 Old Town School Department
 Sanford
 School #42, CSD 10, Manchester, Mount Vernon, Readfield & Wayne
 South Portland
 Union #60
 Union #87
 Union #90
 Union 113
 Wiscasset
 Yarmouth

Transportation Policy

	Yes	No
Does your district have transportation policies?	29	2
Do they address:		
Travel of private roads	12	17
Travel on dead-end roads and culdesacs	13	16
Walking distance to stops	22	7
Walking areas adjacent to schools	21	8
Bus stops	21	8
Bus stop clustering	10	16
Bell times	13	14
Age grouping/tier bussing	14	14
Discipline	28	1
IEP's	14	13
Ed Techs on busses	7	22

Maintenance

	# of Buses	Other Vehicles
How many buses/vehicles in your fleet?	6	5
	22	1
	28	8
	37	5
	48	
	31	10
	13	
	16	7
	14	
	35	15
	18	2
	8	
	4	
	14	2
	12	

	# of Buses	Other Vehicles
How many buses/vehicles in your fleet?	17	3
	7	2
	42	15
	13	2
	5	
	32	1
	21	
	7	
	23	3
	Yes	No
Do you have a district maintenance facility?	15	11
Do you contract your maintenance?	12	15
If so, what percent: •10% •30% •100% (9)		
To Whom: •local garage and specialty shops •local garage (6) •commercial garage •authorized dealership •private companies •John T. Cyr (2)		
Does your district have a computerized maintenance system?	4	21
How many mechanics do you employ? •2 •.5 •1 •2.5 •1.5 •1 •2 •1 •3 •2 •3 •5 •2 •1.5		
	Yes	No
Does transportation supervisor or the main office keep maintenance records? •Not good ones •transportation supervisor (4) •at maintenance facility •main office (2) •superintendent (is transportation supervisor)	21	

Accounting

	Yes	No	
Do you contract for any transportation services?	18	13	
What type			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Regular •Special Education (2) •Some individual placements outside district maintenance costs •Community concepts •Special education out of district partial •Occasional field trips •Buses - Taxis •Regular, special education, and extracurricular •Mechanical •All (7) 			
Costs of services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •\$915,000 •40,000 •\$22,250 •\$5,000 •257,000 •.31 per mile •.45 per mile •\$450,000 •71,000 •235,000 			
	Both	Spec. Ed. Cost	Overall Tran. Cost
Is special education transportation included in:	2	5	23
	Yes	No	
Is vocational transportation included in regular Transportation costs?	19	7	
	Ind. School Act./ Sports Budget	Gen. Trans. Costs	
*Are extracurricular and sports trips included in	13	19	
	Yes	No	
Do you transport in vehicles other than school buses?	16	14	
What types			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Caravan—one-on-one, out of district transportation •Ford Winstar minivan •Cars (special education) •Private cars •Private car (special education) but under transportation costs •Vans (only for extracurricular) •Van (6) •Two 8-passenger vans •Vans from John T. Cyr •Vans, rent cab if needed •Passenger vans 			

*Both responses may have been selected.

Computerized Routing

	Yes	No
Does your district utilize a computerized routing program?	5	25
If no, why not?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too expensive • We just looked at one last week. We are not sure if it would be beneficial in our rural community • Not cost effective • Cost (currently reviewing) • Done by contactor • Costs (2) • No need (2) • Never investigated • Contract transportation in most of our towns 		

Bus Specifications/Purchasing

	Age	Mileage
*What is the deciding factor for bus replacement?	18	15
Who develops your school bus specifications when purchasing a new bus?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy • Mechanic, transportation supervisor and business manager • Transportation supervisor/manager/director (10) • Transportation coordinator/business manager/mechanic • Body & Chassis Dealers • Supervisor and mechanics • School board and transportation director • Transportation director and vendor • Superintendent/Transportation director (2) • Business Manager • Director of Transportation and Business Manager • Superintendent 		
	Yes	No
Do your bus specifications reflect minimum standards only?	2	18
Do you typically purchase "low bid"?	16	6
Is your fleet standardized?	13	10
Does standardization play a role in the bid/purchase decision?	13	9
Do you participate in any bulk purchasing efforts with other districts	4	22
If yes, what items:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tires, seat covers • fuel • diesel fuel/gas 		
What entities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town or ?? 		

*Both responses may have been selected.

	Lease	Lease Purchase	Outright Purchase
*Do you obtain buses through:		11	19

Transportation Supervisor

	Yes	No
Do you have a transportation director?	25	3
	Solely	Shared Position
Is this position solely transportation or is it a shared position?	12	12
If shared, with what other position?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •custodial/grounds •business administrator •operation/maintenance •head mechanic •maintenance •assistant principal •head custodial •superintendent •business manager (2) 		
	Time	Cost
What percent allocated to transportation	2/3	
	50%	\$20,000.
	1/2	\$25,000.
	1/2	\$17,000.
	1/2	1/2
	10%	5,000
	50%	14,000
	30%	
	Yes	No
Does the transportation director/supervisor position have a job description?	20	2

*Both responses may have been selected.

What qualifications/background do you require for this position?

- High school diploma or GED; State of Maine school bus driver's license
- Bus license, mechanical, supervisor, ???
- Experience in transportation, supervision, ?? fleet, licenses
- Secondary education experience
- Management skills with teens background
- High school graduate, 5 years supervisory and driving experience
- Experience
- High school
- Local knowledge, mechanical skills, bus driving experience
- Driver experience, mechanical background, personnel management
- Experience/training ?? to ??
- 30 years of experience
- Must meet job description
- Varied
- H.S. diploma, fleet exp., driving exp. Helpful
- Limited requirements—person ????
- Previous experience leadership/technical services

What type of training do you provide your transportation supervisor?

- No in-house training per se, but access to any seminars or courses available
- Not enough
- On going - before or after?
- On-going, course work, seminar
- Attends inservice offering pertinent for position
- Defensive driving, first aid, C.P.R. - workshops
- Sugarloaf conference
- Any that is needed
- Workshops
- State workshops, etc.
- safety, MMT workshops
- Appropriate clinics
- Management/legal/work comp./as needed
- On the job training
- Conferences
- State level conferences
- Nothing defined
- Conference and in-house
- Leadership/technical training

If your system utilizes contracted services, who oversees the contractor?

- Transportation Supervisor /Director (5)
- Superintendent (4)

Comments:

Being new to school "business" this is one area where corporate skills are not easily transferred. Changes are necessary but must be done with support.

MSAD #17 has many software programs that track many different types of information.

Many questions require more than a yes or no—especially fleet standardization and bus replacement

It is going to be difficult to standardize a transportation cost. The geographical variances and weather will be impossible to quantify. I think we need to be careful not to jeopardize this "program cost."

The John T. Cyr Bus Company provides contracted services for all of our bussing needs.

All transportation is by private contact. Major problem is individual special education

transportation as required "right" of contractor vs. getting best price

In some ways by contracting our district reduces (lessens) bussing problems but may not have as much independence as if we own our own fleet.

We contract with John T. Cyr, thus much of above is done by them.

Harmony transports 90 elementary and 60+ high school students in a.m. Two high schools returns students for p.m. run which is 1 hr later than elementary dismissal. Each bus does round trip 20 miles per trip.

Drivers house bus at private homes and are reimbursed for elec. fees to plug them in. Extensive late bus service to support academic support.

We have looked at the privatization model to improve quality and efficiency and are not averse to keeping that as an option.

SAMPLE OF AVAILABLE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DATA (Courtesy Ed Beckwith, MDOT)

County name	Town name	Jurisdiction	Fed functional class	Fed urb-rur	Surface type	Length
Androscoggin	Auburn	Tnwy winter	Local	Urban	Gravel	0.560
Androscoggin	Auburn	Tnwy winter	Local	Urban	Gravel	1.180
Androscoggin	Auburn	Townway	Local	Urban	Gravel	3.490
Androscoggin	Auburn	Townway	Local	Urban	Gravel	12.930
Androscoggin	Auburn	State hwy	Other princ arterial	Urban	Paved	0.050
Androscoggin	Auburn	State hwy	Minor arterial	Urban	Paved	0.240
Androscoggin	Auburn	Reservation	Local	Urban	Paved	0.400
Androscoggin	Auburn	Townway	Local	Urban	Paved	0.410
Androscoggin	Auburn	State hwy	Princ art other f&e	Urban	Paved	0.500
Androscoggin	Auburn	Tnwy winter	Local	Urban	Paved	0.520
Androscoggin	Auburn	State aid	Local	Urban	Paved	0.990
Androscoggin	Auburn	Toll hwy	Princ art interstate	Urban	Paved	5.350
Androscoggin	Auburn	State hwy	Minor arterial	Urban	Paved	5.660
Androscoggin	Auburn	Townway	Minor arterial	Urban	Paved	6.580
Androscoggin	Auburn	State aid	Major/urb collector	Urban	Paved	11.900
Androscoggin	Auburn	Townway	Major/urb collector	Urban	Paved	12.490
Androscoggin	Auburn	State hwy	Other princ arterial	Urban	Paved	15.060
Androscoggin	Auburn	State aid	Minor arterial	Urban	Paved	23.060
Androscoggin	Auburn	Townway	Local	Urban	Paved	127.830
Androscoggin	Durham	Townway	Local	Rural	Gravel	4.450
Androscoggin	Durham	Townway	Local	Rural	Gravel	11.050
Androscoggin	Durham	State aid	Minor collector	Rural	Paved	5.040
Androscoggin	Durham	State aid	Major/urb collector	Rural	Paved	16.700
Androscoggin	Durham	Townway	Local	Rural	Paved	24.730
Androscoggin	Greene	Townway	Local	Rural	Gravel	1.350
Androscoggin	Greene	Townway	Local	Rural	Gravel	14.080

Androscoggin	Greene	State hwy	Minor arterial	Rural	Paved	6.260
Androscoggin	Greene	State aid	Minor collector	Rural	Paved	11.640
Androscoggin	Greene	Townway	Local	Rural	Paved	36.180
Androscoggin	Leeds	Tnwy summe	Local	Rural	Gravel	0.440
Androscoggin	Leeds	Townway	Local	Rural	Gravel	4.190
Androscoggin	Leeds	Townway	Local	Rural	Gravel	11.940
Androscoggin	Leeds	State aid	Minor collector	Rural	Paved	0.860
Androscoggin	Leeds	State hwy	Minor arterial	Rural	Paved	5.380
Androscoggin	Leeds	State aid	Major/urb collector	Rural	Paved	11.150
Androscoggin	Leeds	Townway	Local	Rural	Paved	30.680
Androscoggin	Lewiston	Townway	Local	Urban	Gravel	2.560
Androscoggin	Lewiston	Townway	Local	Urban	Gravel	5.660
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State hwy	Other princ arterial	Urban	Paved	0.070
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State aid	Minor arterial	Urban	Paved	0.100
Androscoggin	Lewiston	Townway	Local	Urban	Paved	0.270
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State hwy	Princ art other f&e	Urban	Paved	0.560
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State aid	Local	Urban	Paved	2.010
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State aid	Other princ arterial	Urban	Paved	2.130
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State hwy	Minor arterial	Urban	Paved	3.380
Androscoggin	Lewiston	Townway	Minor arterial	Urban	Paved	3.740
Androscoggin	Lewiston	Toll hwy	Princ art interstate	Urban	Paved	4.550
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State aid	Major/urb collector	Urban	Paved	10.630
Androscoggin	Lewiston	Townway	Major/urb collector	Urban	Paved	11.380
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State aid	Minor arterial	Urban	Paved	14.000
Androscoggin	Lewiston	State hwy	Other princ arterial	Urban	Paved	14.790
Androscoggin	Lewiston	Townway	Local	Urban	Paved	111.940
Androscoggin	Lisbon	Townway	Local	Urban	Gravel	5.290
Androscoggin	Lisbon	Townway	Local	Urban	Gravel	5.810

TRANSPORTATION MODEL BEST PRACTICES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this transportation model is to identify best practices that would create a safe, efficient, compatible and consistent transportation system for all districts. The following model was developed to assist districts in attaining this system. The model was developed from our study of existing programs, discussion with transportation directors and specifications and procedures from the National Conference on Student Transportation. The components of this model, which include POLICY, MAINTENANCE STRATEGY, ACCOUNTING PRACTICES, COMPUTERIZED ROUTING, BUS SPECIFICATIONS & PURCHASING, and PERSONNEL TRAINING were identified through a process of surveys, site visits and available data and information.

POLICIES

The district transportation policies were identified as the single most important practice directly driving the cost of a safe, effective, and efficient transportation system. These policies should clearly establish expectations thereby defining the level of service that will be provided. Established policies also enable a district to better manage the operation. In order to achieve the maximum effectiveness these policies should address who, what and where and should include policies addressing: OPERATIONS, OTHER BUS USES; NON-CONFORMING VEHICLES AND THE USE OF OTHER VEHICLES TO TRANSPORT STUDENTS; PERSONNEL; STUDENT DISCIPLINE; INFANT, PRESCHOOL AND HEAD START TRANSPORTATION; SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION.

OPERATIONS

Routing:

- Districts should identify what students are eligible for district transportation.
- When developing routes, consideration must be given to travel on private roads and dead end streets, identified walking areas and distances, and bus stop clustering. These not only affect the length of the route in terms of time and mileage, but also wear on the vehicle and fuel consumption. A priority in all of these considerations is safety.
- Districts should consider policies on transporting students to babysitters /day care or visiting (parties).
- Bell times directly effect the length of the route, more specifically in the afternoon so must be considered when developing routes. Consideration should be given to times of all schools that buses must accommodate and the travel distance between them.
- Recommended capacities are set by the manufacturer in a standard school bus, this is in compliance with the National specifications addressing “compartmentalization” which currently negates the use of seat belts in buses. In order to maintain the safety factor of compartmentalization it is necessary that all students are fully within the confines of the seat. Due to the size of students, and the amount of baggage they now carry, districts must take this into consideration when developing policies on capacities.
- When developing the policies addressing route travel and pickup points administration should consider involving parents, police departments and highway crews.
- Age grouping or tier bussing.
- Routes should be completely reworked each new school year.
- Consideration should be given to backpacks/instruments and transporting of larger items.

Extra curricular, activity and athletic trips:

Policies should:

- Clearly state how the scheduling process should flow.
- Address times of regular bus routes so as not to put a further burden on number of buses and drivers available. Consideration should also be given to speed limits, traffic conditions, etc when scheduling trips.
- Clearly state expectations of teacher, chaperones, coaches and driver.
- Address ‘variance of original itinerary’, food issues, ‘other persons’ and emergency procedures.
- Address number of hour’s driver is in service.
- Address out of state and overnight travel.

Storage of Buses:

Policies that address drivers storing buses at homes.

Crash and incident reporting:

Policies that address the procedures for reporting crashes or incidents of injury on the bus.

USE OF OTHER VEHICLES:

School districts are assuming major liability issues when transporting students in vehicles that do not meet the standards for crashworthiness. The NTSB recent reports show that passenger cars, vans and non-school bus vehicles are not built to strict safety standards. School districts who allow students, parents and teachers to transport students for sports or other related trips are also putting the district, teachers and parents in libelous situations. School buses are subject to strict inspection standards and drivers are trained to drive the vehicle under adverse conditions and are subject to drug and alcohol testing. This is not the case for private vehicles or other drivers.

Policy should:

- Clearly establish what types of vehicles students will be transported in, either to or from school or to extracurricular, activity, field trips and vocational sites.
- Address who will drive vehicles.

USE OF SCHOOL VEHICLES FOR MUNICIPAL AND CIVIC GROUP USE:

Policy should address:

- Who would be eligible to use vehicles?
- Who will drive vehicles?
- Any compensation issues for the use of the vehicle.

TRANSPORTING INFANTS, TODDLERS & PRE-SCHOOLERS:

The transporting of this age group presents unique challenges for the district. This age group is required to be transported in safety restraints. The use of integrated seats as well as car seats affects the capacity of the bus, are costly and require additional time to properly install and secure the child.

Policy should address:

- If district will transport any or all of this age group.
- Who will be responsible for providing car seats or other safety restraints that may be required?
- Who would be responsible for securing seats and children in seats?
- Guidelines established by NHTSA for transporting this age group.

PERSONNEL

Policy should address:

- Hiring procedure, drug testing, records check, fingerprinting
- Training – pre service and in service
- Code of conduct
- Dress codes
- Pre trip / post trip inspection
- Record keeping
- Disciplinary procedures
- Necessity of driver to know medical information
- Crash reporting
- Fueling, cleaning and bus maintenance expectations of driver
- Knowledge of routing, disciplinary and other district policies
- All applicable state and federal regulations

DISCIPLINARY

Policy should address:

- Clear rules for bus riding
- Clear discipline procedures for infractions
- Who handles discipline procedure (driver, transportation director, principal, etc)
- Procedure for disseminating information to parents (policy sent home and signed, etc)

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION

Special Education Transportation is unique to each district, however it is imperative that the special education department as well as the driver and aides are knowledgeable in the rules and regulations on transporting students with disabilities as set forth in IDEA 97. These include training of the driver and aide in use of mechanical equipment, as well as knowledge of the medical/behavioral issues for each child. Bus stop/pickup polices, length of route, and inclusion of transportation personnel in the IEP process should also be addressed.

MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

- Computerized program for recording PM schedule, maintenance log, and inventory control.
- Is outsourcing or district owned facilities the most cost effective for the transportation program?
- Define the number of mechanic positions according to fleet size.
- Identify minimal number of spare buses in relation to size of fleet/district
- Define bus replacement process – (IE mileage accumulated, age of bus or both)
- Purchasing initiatives
- Regionalization efforts.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

Training for all personnel is paramount to the safety of the school children being transported and should be a comprehensive as well as continuous process.

SUPERVISOR TRAINING & BACKGROUND

The school unit needs an identified Transportation Director. This position should be defined in relation to the size of the bus fleet, i.e. the larger the fleet the more demanding the position becomes. If the position is shared, it is imperative that the proper attention be given to the transportation unit. The district should identify the expectations for this position and be cognizant of the qualifications of the individual upon assigning them this position.

Qualifications: districts should consider the applicant background in purchasing, budgetary procedures, public relations, employee relations and hiring procedures.

Training: Special Education transportation issues, OSHA laws, federal and state laws pertaining to school buses, and school policies. Any ongoing training provided to administration and staff.

Administrative Role: As a member of the school administration, the transportation director should be involved in the development of school policies, etc.

DRIVERS, AIDES, MECHANICS

- Drivers / Aides – behavior management, laws & regs, school policies, public relations, first aid, stress management, leadership, problem solving, defensive driving, use of equipment, sexual harassment, confidentiality, right to know, etc
- Training for special needs: including IEP procedures, equipment use, specific disability management, etc.
- Utilize applicable training provided for ed techs, teachers
- Mechanics – inspection certification, preventative maintenance, school bus standards, purchasing, etc.

→ Training programs should also be presented to students and should include: expectations for riding the bus, discipline policies, safety procedures, and evacuations.

→ This can be extended to parents (PR) - provide parents with information on all bus policies, training procedures of drivers & students. Incorporate a school bus informational program into the kindergarten screening/registration process.

COMPUTERIZED ROUTING

The task force identified computerized routing as the second most important component for a safe, efficient transportation model. These systems are capable of providing the most efficient routing in accordance to the districts policies, as well as a comprehensive student management plan.

BUS SPECIFICATIONS & PURCHASING

- Buses purchased for the transportation of school children must meet all Federal and State specifications.
- Districts should consider regional bulk purchasing efforts.
- Districts should be cognizant of the needs of their district when 'specing' buses.
- Districts should consider lease purchasing for buses

ACCOUNTING/AUDIT/RECORD KEEPING

Accounting, auditing and record keeping procedures should include:

Records

- Maintenance records
- Driver training records
- Student training records
- Reports that cover: number and type of vehicle used in the system, miles traveled, number of students transported.

Accounting

- Transportation cost should be included in specific budgets as opposed to general fund. Categories are special education, athletic, co-curricular. (IE activities should be charged to school activity accounts)

Audits

REGIONAL EFFORTS:

- Cooperative efforts in routing for out of district special needs, sports and extracurricular trips, vocational transportation
- Sharing of extra buses for sports, breakdowns
- Co-operative buying (buses, fuel, parts, etc)
- Maintenance facilities
- Bus specifications
- Training

CONTRACTED BUSING:

It should be noted that districts, which choose to outsource their student transportation, are still ultimately liable for the transportation system. When contracting, the district should have all policies and procedures in place as part of the contract expectations. This could contain most of the elements of the transportation model and would include driver and pupil training, types of vehicles used to transport, maintenance, etc.
