



Ohio School Transportation

Understanding Ohio School Transportation . . .
By Pete Japikse, OSBA
Pjapikse@ohioschoolboards.org

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved

OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.



The Yellow School Bus is a critical part of our student's lives

What used to be considered a convenience, is now essential in the lives of our student's families, and often the only way a child can get to school safely.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Benefits of the schoolbus:

- Convenience – no parent travel
- Essential when parents are not available to take a child to school
- Maximizes safety for the students
- Dependable – shows up every day at the same time

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



The schoolbus is a workhorse

- Ohio ridership:
 - 800,000 riders, 14,000 buses
 - 1,000,000 miles per year
- National ridership:
 - 25 million riders, 480,000 buses
 - 10 billion passenger trips

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Ohio Transportation costs

(FY15 data)

- Average annual operating cost: \$49,269
 - Typically higher for urban, lower for rural
- Purchase cost of new bus: over \$82,000
- Effective working life of a bus: 10-12 years
- Annual mileage: 12-14,000 miles
- Average age of state fleet: over 10 years old

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Cost details per bus

- Average parts & repair cost: \$3,100 / year
 - Older buses can be \$5-6000 per year
 - New bus – base costs of \$1000 for upkeep
- Average bus fuel cost: \$5,449 / year
 - (can be higher for multiple tiers and rural districts)
 - 2000 model year economy: 4-5 mpg
 - 2013 model year economy: 9-10 mpg

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved

The conclusion . . .

- Newer buses are less expensive to operate
- Higher costs to operate an older bus could be better invested in a newer bus
- Operating cost is tied to the number of buses and the age of the bus

Minimize cost by using fewer, newer buses

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved

Urban transportation

- Our urban schools face some unique challenges including:
 - High numbers of school choice programs
 - Open enrollment within large geographic areas
 - High operating costs - labor
 - Difficulty in operating buses at high load efficiency
 - Accommodating multiple school calendars

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved

Summary of Urban transportation data for FY15

School	Buses	Public Students	Nonpublic Students	Charter Students	Bus Riders	Transit riders	Average cost per bus
Akron	105	2679	1161	1048	4050	294	1511
Cincinnati	338	16170	3411	3650	9840	12187	1115
Cleveland	222	13183	3973	341	4758	10892	2917
Columbus	746	21939	1819	6591	26761	1893	1361
Dayton	165	4188	733	1911	6464	Not reported	1483
State	14056	756028	54398	22495	787654	26011	902

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved

School choice transportation

State	Who determines bus rider policy?	Parochial Transportation		Community School	
		In - district	Out - of - district	In - district	Out - of - district
Ohio	State mandates	Required. Must meet asynchronous calendar. Must be along existing route and meet public calendar	Required within 30 minutes. Must meet asynchronous calendar	Required. Must meet asynchronous calendar. Must be along existing route and meet public calendar	Required within 30 minutes. Must meet asynchronous calendar
Indiana	District determines eligibility	No service	Permissive, but must be within 10 miles of district	No service	Permissive, but must be within 10 miles of district
Pennsylvania	District determines eligibility	District determines eligibility	District determines eligibility	District determines eligibility	District determines eligibility
Kentucky	District determines eligibility	If parochial school uses transportation they must reimburse public district	No service	state has no openenure public schools	state has no community schools
Michigan	District determines eligibility	No service	No service	No service	No service

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved

Impact on vehicle traffic

City	Buses	Cars required if no buses available
Akron	105	2827
Cincinnati	338	7061
Cleveland	222	3461
Columbus	746	17394
Dayton	165	4227
State	14,204	538,830,892

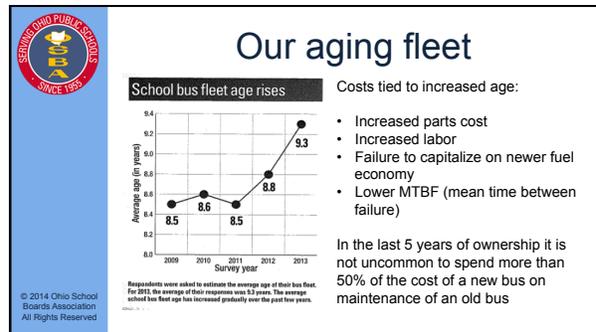
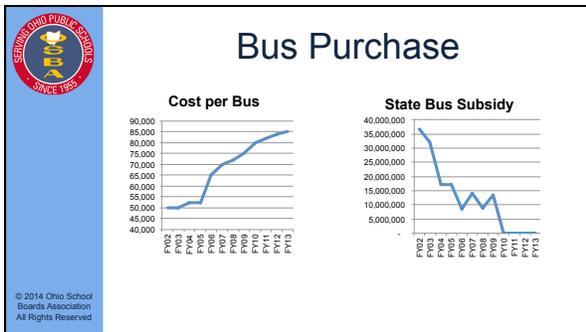
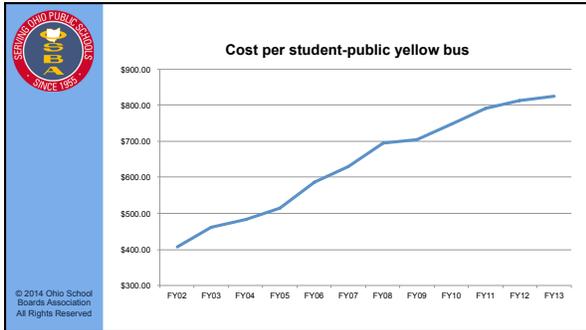
© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved

With bus service . . .

. . . without.

Photos courtesy of American School Bus Council

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



- Factors we cannot control**
- Road salt reduces usable vehicle life by 5 years (per national fleet studies)
 - Smaller buses (for special education) have a shorter life span – due to heavier use during the school year
 - Having an older bus fleet requires additional labor investment to maintain buses

- Ohio's transportation needs:**
- Help with purchasing buses
 - Funding for all students transported
 - Incentives for efficient operations
 - Additional funding for low-density districts
 - Increased funding for special education transportation
 - Keep transportation funding separate
 - Assistance with the added costs for nonpublic, community, and STEM schools



Bus Purchase

- Older buses result in higher costs.
- In new work we are compiling, it appears that a more effective life cycle for a school bus is 7-8 years, not the 10-12 that is current practice.
- Districts need assistance to 'get out of the old bus hole' so they can break the high cost cycle.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Funding for all students

- Many districts transport students that live less than 1 mile from school.
- Many districts are beginning to transport preschool typical students.
- This transportation helps to reduce absenteeism, and keeps children safe.
- Currently preschool typicals and students less than 1 mile from school are excluded from funding by current budget law
 - This restriction should be removed.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Efficiency rewards

- Districts like the concept of being paid additional funds for operating efficiently
- If we reward efficiency, districts can reduce transportation costs by using fewer buses.
- The aggregation of reduced costs across many districts can help to reduce demand on the budget.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



School Choice

- Public Districts are required to transport students to Nonpublic, Community and Stem schools.
- They are also required to operate buses for these students - even on days they are closed (based on OAG 83-096).
- This is expensive and not funded.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



School choice assistance

- To help schools manage the asynchronous calendar, we could:
 - Eliminate the requirement for asynchronous days
 - Re-institute special funding for those days (which used to be done)
 - Consider a supplemental addition to the school transportation funding formula to accommodate these students

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



School choice efficiency

- It is difficult for districts to operate efficient transportation for nonpublic, community and STEM schools.
- There are no district controlled boundaries, which requires service to wide geographical areas for fewer students. This translates to higher cost.
- The use of a funding supplement in the formula would help to address this cost.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Special Education Costs

- The costs for special education transportation have been skyrocketing – due to transportation costs and continual identification of additional students and special needs.
- The average cost to transport special education students is well over \$5000 per year, compared to under \$1000 for regular education students.
- The set-aside that funds this has not been increased since 2009 (currently set at \$60 million). We need to increase this amount, possibly as much as \$30 million.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Pay transportation separately

- Districts want to be paid for all of their calculated transportation funding, without the use of gain caps.
- A district that restores high school busing or adds service needs to receive all the associated funding so they can afford to provide the service.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Ohio Funding

- Historically:
 - Per student or per mile
 - Multifactor regression analysis (predictive)
 - Flat rate
 - Stakeholder's formula
 - Per student / per mile with caps and guarantee

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Funding Discussion points . . .

- Per pupil / per mile is simple to calculate, and accommodates differences in districts
 - It does not by itself address wealth, density, or encourage better service
 - It also does not encourage efficiency unless a specific qualifier is added

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



Funding discussion, cont.

- Transportation funding should:
 - Encourage good local policy
 - Be easily understood and transparent
 - Be fully funded and allowed to work
 - Based on data that is already available
 - Not be limited by caps
 - Include a component to purchase buses for those who need them most.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



The school's commitment

- Funding provided should be used as effectively as possible.
- Transportation should be operated so that costs are minimized but as many students as possible can ride.
- Transportation funding should be restricted to transportation use.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved



A funding proposal . . .

- We have been working with stakeholders to identify elements of a funding formula that supports many of these issues.
- Many of these folks I also worked with during my tenure with ODE.
- There is no need to reinvent the wheel – we are prepared to assist and offer ideas that we believe meet many needs.

© 2014 Ohio School Boards Association
All Rights Reserved