

TRB Session 449

Tough School Transportation Choices: Balancing
Costs, Funding Cuts and Mode Shift
While Maintaining Child Safety

Bob Riley, Executive Director



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE DIRECTORS OF
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

School Bus Transportation Data

- 26 million students transported daily
- 50% of total students
- 480,000 school buses
- Largest public transportation system
- Minimal federal funding

School Buses

- Safest mode of school transportation
 - 13 times safer than parent driven vehicle
 - 44 times safer than student driven vehicle
- Reduce congestion
- Reduce fuel consumption
- Reduce carbon emissions

School District Budget Dilemma

- Spring/Summer 2008 fuel price escalation
 - Diesel price more than doubled
- Other costs increased significantly
- Food, building maintenance, etc.
- State funding cuts

School District Options

- Reduce/eliminate basic transportation services
- Reduce/eliminate/charge for activity transportation
- Increase walking distance to school/bus stop
- 4 day school week

Selected School District Responses

- Garden City, Michigan – eliminated activity transportation
- Montgomery County, Maryland – gave superintendent authority to increase walking distances
- A small Pennsylvania district cut 2 teaching positions
- 86 school districts initiated 4 day weeks

School Bus Community Perspective

- School buses safest mode of transportation
 - Increase ridership of eligible students
 - Decrease students transported in private vehicles
 - Decrease students transported by teenage drivers

School Buses Reduce Fuel Costs

- 36 cars replaced by one bus
- 17.3 million cars needed to transport students riding buses
- 3.1 billion gallons of fuel saved by students riding buses
- \$11.4 billion in fuel costs saved by students riding buses

School Buses Reduce Carbon Emissions

- 36 cars replaced by one bus
- 2007 buses are 60 times cleaner than pre 1990
- 12,000 buses have been retrofitted with emissions-reduction technology
- New buses have reduced emissions by 95%

American School Bus Council Parent Survey – August 2008

- 87% of parents agree the school bus is the only reliable mode of transportation for many students
- And without school bus transportation equal access to education is limited
- 70% of parents see school buses as a convenience and important part of school system
- More than half of parents disagreed with cutting bus stops or service

NASDPTS Supports

- Increase eligible students riding buses
 - Increased safety
 - Reduced congestion
 - Reduced pollution
 - Reduced fuel usage
- Safe routes to school programs
- Safe routes to school programs expanded to include safe routes to bus stops

Summary

A school bus is the most cost effective solution to save energy, reduce pollution, control congestion and, most important, increase student safety.

Bob Riley Executive Director

National Association of State Director of Pupil
Transportation (NASDPTS)

execdir@nasdpts.org

www.nasdpts.org

www.americanschoolbuscouncil.org