



Local School Transportation Funding Mechanisms Example: Shawnee Mission School District, Kansas

State Profile:

State Busing Statistics: Approximately 210,000 students are transported by school bus across the state of Kansas. The average per-pupil cost for busing in Kansas is \$566.

State School Transportation Funding: In 2007, the state provided local school districts with a total of \$143 million in school transportation reimbursements. Approximately \$92 million is distributed to support the transportation of students who live more than 2.5 miles from school. The reimbursement formula takes into account the per pupil cost of transportation, density of the district in terms of students transported, and square miles in the district.

For 2007-2008, the state share represents approximately 77% of the total cost of school transportation. In addition, the state subsidizes 80% of the cost of transportation for special education students, totaling \$51 million.

School District Profile:

Number of Schools: 49 schools, serving northeast Johnson County, KS, a suburb of Kansas City.

Total School Enrollment: 27,859 students

Total Students Bused: Approximately 9,000 students bused (32% of all students). The school district utilizes a staff of 226 contractors and 1.5 district staff to provide bus services.

Local School Transportation Costs: The school district spends \$9.2 million annually on school transportation, which represents 4% of total school district expenditures. The school district spends a total of \$1,020 per student transported.

Kansas reimburses local school districts for approximately 77% of the cost of transporting students living more than 2.5 miles from school. The remainder of transportation costs for those students is absorbed by the local school district. In addition, the school district buses 965 students within the 2.5 mile radius who have been deemed to face hazardous conditions when walking or bicycling, entirely at local expense.

Potential for Cost-Savings with Safe Routes to School: The primary opportunity for trimming transportation costs would be to address the hazards faced by the 965 students bused within the 2.5 mile radius of schools. Often, hazardous conditions for children walking and bicycling can be addressed by installing sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks; stationing crossing guards at key intersections; and reconstructing intersections to slow traffic near schools. If the hazards could be addressed (which can often be funded through infrastructure grants from the federal Safe Routes to School program), the school district could cut back on bus service for these children—a potential cost savings of close to \$1 million per year if all hazard busing were to be eliminated. In addition, non-infrastructure Safe Routes to School programs, such as Walking School Buses, could be organized so adult volunteers could walk with groups of students to overcome hazards such as crossing busy streets without adult supervision.