



State School Transportation Funding Mechanisms Example: State of Illinois

State Profile:

Total School Enrollment: 2,118,692 (K-12 in public schools)

Total Students Bused: 1,111,260 (K-12 in public schools); 52.5% of all students

Statewide School Transportation Costs:

Total Costs (FY 09): \$853,814,568

- Costs are growing at approximately 5-7% for non-special education students and 7-10% a year for special education students.

State Reimbursements (FY 09): \$586,421,351

Average State Reimbursement per student:

- \$321 per student;
- \$2,869 per special education student;
- Overall, the state reimburses local school districts at approximately 62% of actual costs.

Active Transportation: Approximately \$3.7 million in FY2009 federal Safe Routes to School dollars is available to Illinois schools to make it safer for children to walk and bicycle to and from school. The state provides no additional funding for active transportation programs for school districts.

State Laws on Busing:

Busing Radius: Under state law, Illinois students are mandated to be bused to school when they live further than 1.5 miles from school—unless walking conditions to or from the school are considered a serious hazard to the student's safety.

Hazard Busing: 159,591 students are transported less than 1.5 miles to/from school when their walk to school is considered a hazard. Hazardous route identification is made by Illinois Department of Transportation after request of local school district. No opportunity for public comment is allowed.

- Hazard busing costs the state approximately \$70 million annually to bus children around road hazards that prevent safe walking and bicycling to school.
- The costs of hazard busing have increased 67% in seven years.
- The number of students enrolled in hazard busing is growing at an average of 1.2% per year while overall student enrollment is dropping at about 2.2% annually.

Reimbursement Formula: Illinois provides funding to local school districts for school transportation based on a prior-year reimbursement system. Claims are submitted at the end of each fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Payments are made quarterly in the new fiscal year in equal installments. All reimbursements are subject to state appropriation and not guaranteed. When pro-rating is required, it is applied equally to all school districts with no accounting for efficiency, densities, etc.

Private School Reimbursement: The state also provides reimbursements to parents of children who attend private schools. Reimbursement is for private vehicle or mass transit costs.

Local Funding Sources for Busing: Local districts receiving state transportation funds are required to establish transportation funds and have dedicated transportation taxes. However, transfers between funds are allowed and relatively easy to do.

For More Information:

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