

FY 2009 QUESTION NUMBER: 28

QUESTION:

What is the cost for activity buses and how are funds distributed to middle and high schools? How does it operate and what is the cost?

BUDGET PAGE REFERENCE: 1-3, 1-11, 1-22

ANSWER:

The budget for activity buses are \$200,092, \$423,214 and \$244,538 for elementary, middle and high schools respectively. The cost of each activity bus varies depending on the length of the activity bus route and the amount of time it takes to complete the route. The varying cost is a result of the cost of fuel combined with the cost of paying the drivers. At an average cost of approximately \$47 per run, the budget provides for 4,257 routes for elementary school (average of 33 buses per school), 9,005 routes for middle schools (average of 237 per school), and 5,203 routes for high school (average of 208 per school). Using these total amounts, schools were allocated funds based on size and programs at the school. Larger middle schools with large service areas receive three buses three days a week and smaller schools received two buses three days a week. High school buses are allocated in a similar way to middle schools. Larger high schools or schools with larger service areas receive three buses per day for three days a week and smaller schools receive two buses per day for three days a week.

Schools are not penalized for larger service areas or longer runs. Rather, allocations are based on number of buses, not the cost of each bus route. Some schools have indicated that amount of service was not adequate. Additional resources were not available to provide additional buses. However, schools are permitted to use school funds, PTA funds, or grant funds (including Title 1 funds) to provide additional buses. Middle schools were provided larger allocations than high schools because of the amount of extra curricular activities in the schools. High school students, although also involved in numerous activities, have other options including Ride-on bus service and use of their private vehicles. Because of the increased number of requests from schools, the budget for activity buses has been increased for FY 2009. This will allow increases in activity bus allocations to schools.

Also, this year a new online system was used to allow schools to request activity bus service. The new system streamlined the process for requesting the buses by allowing schools to make their year-long requests online. The new system allowed for more equitable allocation to similarly sized schools.