

DOCKETED

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Equity of Funding

School district funding for Home-to-School and mandated Special Ed bus transportation is currently inadequate and inequitable throughout the state. Funding is based on arbitrary historical allocations not related to how many students are enrolled, how many students are riding the bus, how many miles are driven on routes, etc. Because of this, most districts are substantially supporting Transportation programs by encroaching upon the General Fund, which diverts limited resources from the educational program. Districts who have higher levels of students eligible for Free/Reduced lunches currently receive substantially more funding for general education purposes, including supplemental services to socioeconomically disadvantaged students, foster youth, and English learners. Although districts with these demographics have greater challenges to close the achievement gap, districts who may not have high levels of these students experience other challenges -- primarily to sources of funding. Yet . . .their school buses are aging at the same rate. Our input is that the awards should be more heavily weighted on the actual needs of the Transportation fleet, i.e., age of the buses, rather than the demographics of the districts. If the intended use of funds is to foster healthier environment for California students -- it should apply to all California students.

Additionally, in some aging fleets, buses may not be used frequently because of mechanical issues and concerns for safety of children. These buses are also in need of replacement, although they often don't qualify for grants designed to alleviate pollution based on miles driven.

Respectfully submitted,
Melody Glaspey
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