

## Talking Points on Nonpublic School Transportation

- Transportation is the lifeblood of nonpublic schools. Many times, when children cannot get a ride, their parents cannot get them to school, and they will then transfer to public school at greater expense to the taxpayer.
- Nonpublic transportation routes cost more than public school routes because they involve fewer children traveling more miles. Nonpublic school students, for example, normally do not live in enclaves, so the population is more spread out throughout a given region, making the ride more costly.
- We are at the mercy of private bus contractors who basically can charge whatever they want, and our parents are held hostage by that figure. These private contractors currently serve over 85% of the nonpublic school routes.
- No public school child is ever denied a ride to school because of transportation costs.
- In order obtain rides within the per-pupil amount, we have tried cluster stops, asking districts to mix public and nonpublic school students on the same buses where feasible (this is permitted by the New Jersey Department of Education), and even reducing the number of days for which a route is bid in order to get a ride for the majority of school days. We have also eliminated half-days in our schools wherever possible because half-days are more costly for bus operation and affect the amount of the bid for transportation.
- Our loss of transportation was directly related to districts and private contractors following the spacing guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control during the pandemic. As a result, the normal 54 passenger bus was limited to 50% capacity (27 students) with the result that the state funding was unable to cover the cost.
- The per-pupil amount for nonpublic school transportation was frozen for 17 years and we are trying to recover from that freeze. Given the fact that legislation was enacted in 2003 which provided for an increase in the nonpublic transportation ceiling commensurate with the Consumer Price Index figure, the figure now should be at least \$1,150.00. Therefore, we are asking for an increase of \$150.00 per pupil to \$1,150.00 in an attempt to get more transportation for our children and to assist parents who need to find alternatives to busing.
- Attached is the breakdown for the current school year regarding the number of eligible nonpublic school students transported contrasted with the number of nonpublic school students getting aid-in-lieu (note columns A-6 and A-7 on the printout). This is the first time since the inception of nonpublic school transportation in 1968 that the number of students given aid-in-lieu payments exceeded the number transported. We believe that this is primarily pandemic related, given the dearth of school bus drivers in the state. However, the base amount for nonpublic transportation should be increased in order to assist parents who are transporting students and are affected by the inflationary costs related to the pandemic.

COUNTY CODE	County Name	Nonpublic Transported A-6	Nonpublic AIL A-7	Nonpublic Transportation 20.1 to 30 D-1	Nonpublic Transportation >30 D-2	Nonpublic AIL 20.1 to 30 D-3	Nonpublic AIL >30 D-4
01	ATLANTIC	880.0	928.0	-	-	8.0	1.0
03	BERGEN	2,825.0	4,264.0	-	-	7.0	-
05	BURLINGTON	804.0	1,867.0	1.0	-	8.0	-
07	CAMDEN	407.0	2,549.0	-	-	10.0	2.0
09	CAPE MAY	204.0	207.0	-	-	1.0	-
11	CUMBERLAND	27.0	795.0	-	-	-	1.0
13	ESSEX	581.0	3,378.0	1.0	-	22.0	-
15	GLOUCESTER	515.0	1,893.0	-	-	-	-
17	HUDSON	15.0	757.0	-	-	-	-
19	HUNTERDON	-	612.0	-	1.0	-	-
21	MERCER	702.5	2,241.0	-	-	4.0	-
23	MIDDLESEX	1,013.0	3,719.0	7.0	-	17.0	1.0
25	MONMOUTH	2,976.0	3,162.0	12.0	-	2.0	-
27	MORRIS	1,386.0	2,618.0	4.0	-	7.0	2.0
29	OCEAN	25,040.0	3,720.0	10.0	1.0	14.0	4.0
31	PASSAIC	4.0	2,547.0	1.5	-	8.0	2.0
33	SALEM	-	170.0	-	-	-	-
35	SOMERSET	199.0	2,804.0	-	-	6.0	3.0
37	SUSSEX	840.0	258.0	-	1.0	-	-
39	UNION	345.0	2,119.0	-	-	-	1.0
41	WARREN	28.0	234.0	-	2.0	-	4.0
		38,791.5	40,842.0	36.5	5.0	114.0	21.0