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Roadblocks in Getting Kids to School:

Trends, Insights and Recommendations for Improving Colorado's School Transportation System

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ABOUT COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

Common Sense Institute is a non-partisan research organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of Colorado's economy. CSI is at the forefront of important discussions concerning the future of free enterprise in Colorado and aims to have an impact on the issues that matter most to Coloradans.

CSI's mission is to examine the fiscal impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Coloradans are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI employs rigorous research techniques and dynamic modeling to evaluate the potential impact of these measures on the Colorado economy and individual opportunity.

Common Sense Institute was founded in 2010 originally as Common Sense Policy Roundtable. CSI's founders were a concerned group of business and community leaders who observed that divisive partisanship was overwhelming policymaking and believed that sound economic analysis could help Coloradans make fact-based and *common sense* decisions.

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At the core of CSI's mission is a belief in the power of the free enterprise system. Our work explores ideas that protect and promote jobs and the economy, and the CSI team and fellows take part in this pursuit with academic freedom. Our team's work is driven by data-driven research and evidence. The views and opinions of fellows do not reflect institutional views of CSI. CSI operates independently of any political party and does not take positions.

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Introduction

The state of Colorado reimbursed \$62 million to K–12 school districts for transportation costs last school year. This was just 21% of the \$290 million it cost districts to get students to and from school (See Figure 1 below). Some districts are working hard to modernize and streamline their services, but school transportation today does not look significantly different than it did 50 years ago. It’s hard to innovate when funding is so severely limited, and because the state plays no role in equalizing transportation funding based on need.

While districts are trying to evolve and offer efficient transportation by using modern technologies like GPS and web-connected tablets, much of what they do provide is of the blunt-instrument variety: running large-capacity school buses on routes based on how many eligible students live in a given area.

Interestingly, in Colorado, school districts are not obligated to provide transportation; they choose to.ⁱ Districts spent \$290 million on school transportation in 2022, to serve the 317,000 students who are eligible for district-provided transportation. Those are primarily students who live outside of the school walk-zone, which is determined by each district. In Denver, for example, to be eligible for district provided transportation, students in kindergarten through grade five must reside more than one mile from their boundary schools; students in grade 6–8 must reside more than 2.5 miles from their boundary schools, and students in grades 9–12 must reside more than 3.5 miles from their boundary schools.ⁱⁱ

The amount of time and resources districts invest in their transportation operations is a clear sign of the important role it plays in meeting the educational needs of students.

Figure 1

Statewide School Transportation Expenditure

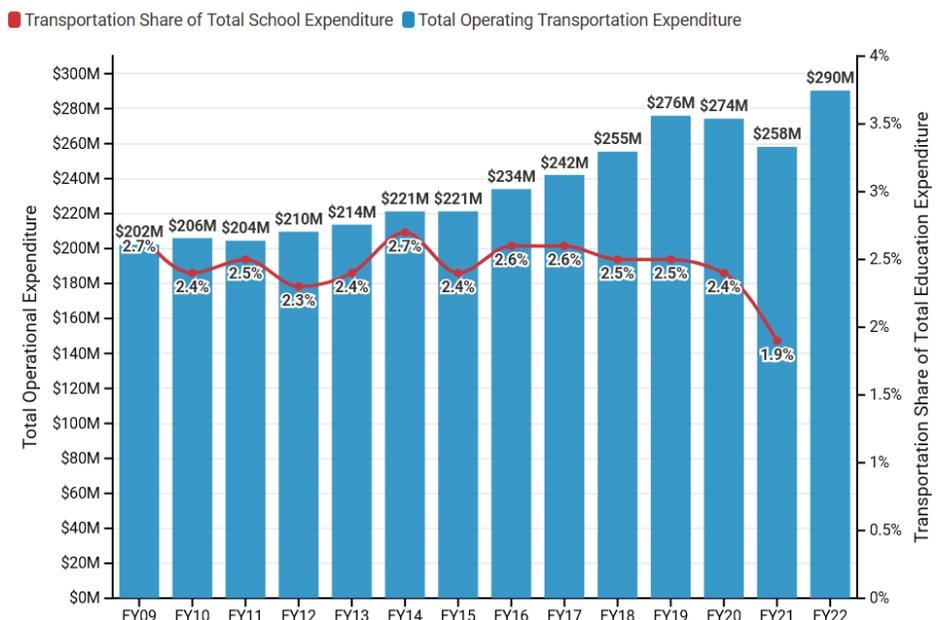


Figure 2

<i>District</i>	Total Operating Expenditure (FY22)	<i>Operating Expenditure (FY09–FY22)</i>	Transportation Share of District Expenditure (FY21)
Denver County 1	\$29,506,651		1.4%
Jefferson County R-1	\$23,454,387		1.8%
Roaring Fork RE-1	\$1,737,671		2.1%

While there are significant insurance, liability and cost challenges to surmount, districts could do more to explore alternative transportation services provided by private companies and nonprofits. Districts use these services to transport some students with disabilities who, for various reasons, cannot ride traditional school buses. The state could fund pilot programs that reward creative problem-solving, test new transportation ideas, study impacts, and scale what works best to serve more students.

Driver shortages will continue to plague district transportation services unless and until schools can pay wages that compete with the private sector and transit systems like the Denver area’s Regional Transportation District (RTD). Another problem is that onerous federal regulations have made it more difficult for people to obtain the Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) required to operate a school bus. There is no rational reason that short-haul school bus drivers should be subject to the same regulations and health screenings as long-haul truckers. Unfortunately, fixing this would require a federal policy change, which seems unlikely in the current political environment. The driver shortage forces districts to cut routes, making yellow-bus transportation less attractive for students and families because ride times increase, and stops are often more distant from homes.

In this report, we analyze available state data on education transportation, and we use specific districts to illustrate what statewide trends look like at the local level. Denver Public Schools is the state's most populous school district and provides urban context. Jefferson County School District (Jeffco) represents a suburban school district with a sprawling geography that includes densely and sparsely populated areas. Finally, Roaring Forks School District illustrates some of the unique issues faced by rural communities. At the end of this report are tables with more detailed data for each of Colorado’s school districts.

Key Findings

What We Know – Statewide Data Trends:

- The state of Colorado reimbursed \$62 million to its 178 school districts in 2022, or 21% of what it cost districts to get students to school.
- Districts are heavily reliant on the traditional large, yellow buses to provide transportation to students; alternative modes meet a very small part of the demand.
- State spending on transportation has gone down over the past decade in real dollars. Inflation-adjusted state reimbursement spending on district transportation has declined by 7.6% over the past 5 years and 8.5% over the past 10 years.
- At the same time, miles driven transporting students to and from schools has decreased by 21% over that same 10-year period. The number of students eligible for transportation has also dropped, albeit more slowly—by 8%—since 2012.
- Statewide data shows significant spending per student to cover transportation costs. Operating expenditures per eligible student show an average cost of \$917 per student in fiscal year 2022.
- Statewide, there has been a modest decline over the past several years of the percentage of district transportation costs reimbursed by the state. In 2017, the state reimbursed at a rate of 23.9%. In 2022, the reimbursement rate was 21.3%.
- Miles driven per eligible student had been declining gradually before COVID-19 hit (from 154.7 in 2012 to 139.7 in 2019), dropped dramatically for two years, and began to recover in 2022 (132.9).
- Total inflation-adjusted district transportation operating expenditures per mile rose by 18% between 2009 and 2019 (from \$5.15 to \$6.06 per mile). Real expenditures surged during COVID-19 to \$8.29 per mile in 2021 and began to ease back down this year to \$6.90 (See Figure 3 below).

What We Don't Know - Key Data Needs:

- Eligibility: What factors are used to define the eligibility of students to whom districts provide transportation and are they comparable across districts? How do walk zones impact access to different schools?
- Utilization/Ridership: Of the eligible students, how many utilize district-provided transportation services? How efficient are existing routes and what is the capacity of bus fleet compared to actual daily ridership?
- Staffing Levels: What is the annual number of drivers needed to cover the district's estimated route miles, and how many drivers were actually

employed to meet that need? How many miles within each district are contracted to third-party services compared to district employees?

- Fleet Diversification: To what degree are districts using alternative modes of transportation other than traditional yellow buses?
- Service Gaps: Why is there such a pronounced gap between the number of eligible students and the number of students who actually utilize district-provided transportation? Is it due to route stops or times, changing family preferences over the course of the school year, or other reasons? How many more students would utilize transportation if access improved and what could state funding do to improve access?

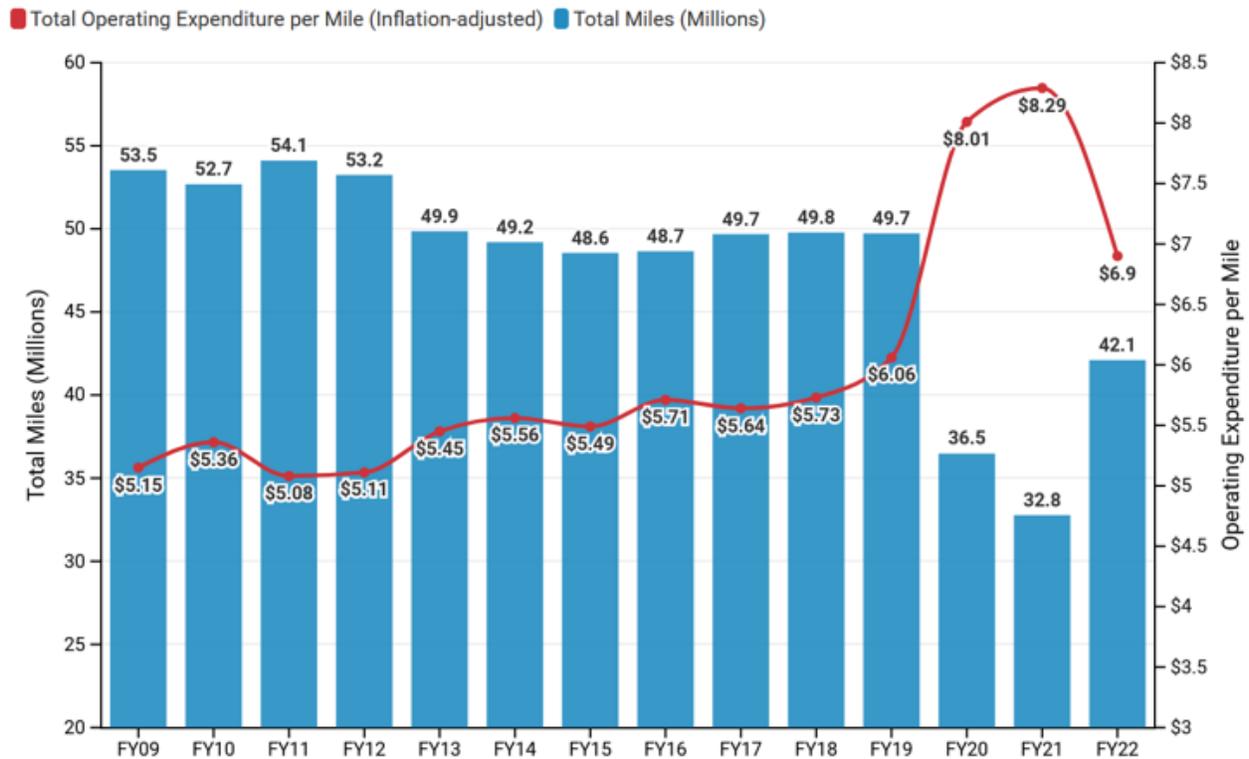
Recommendations for the State:

- The Colorado Department of Education should be directed to collect from districts, and make available to the public, information on transportation eligibility standards, ridership, costs for each mode of provided transportation, and staffing levels. The collection and analysis of this data should be used to identify inefficiencies and disparities, and to inform improvements and innovations. This data could also be used to reimburse districts more accurately for their costs, rather than reliance on single count data.
- With a robust understanding of the data, policymakers can assess if there are better ways to fund transportation and at what levels. The current transportation funding method relies on annual categorical funding rather than inclusion in the school funding formula—is that the best approach?
- CDE should also pursue ways to reduce the regulatory burden on school districts by streamlining transportation reimbursement processes.
- The legislature should designate dollars to establish a Transportation Innovation Fund. The fund would be used to incentivize community-specific problem-solving, pilot and study alternatives to outdated transportation models, and implement and scale solutions that have positive impacts and potential broader applications. Modes of transportation beyond the traditional school bus—like contracting with private companies, rideshare services, public transportation, carpooling, and even electric scooters—are worthy considerations for districts working to modernize their respective transportation portfolios.
- Driver shortages, caused by a complex host of factors, will continue to be a huge barrier to efficient transportation. The state could help ameliorate this problem by advocating changes to adverse federal policies that place unnecessarily onerous restrictions on driver eligibility. The state's elected federal officeholders should push for national changes to CDL requirements that have made driver recruitment more challenging.

Recommendations for School Districts:

- Labor unions sometimes exacerbate the driver shortage problem by resisting innovative bonus and incentive programs which help attract and retain drivers. Districts must push hard to negotiate sensible contracts that allow maximum flexibility.
- Districts should pursue opportunities to collaborate and partner with neighboring districts. This could result in mutually beneficial cost-sharing of transportation resources and help students who may want to attend schools in neighboring districts get rides to those schools.
- Finally, districts should invest in building their own robust and reliable talent pipelines by providing their students with education and training programs that lead to fulfilling, well-paying careers in transportation and logistics.

Figure 3
Miles Travelled and Real Expenditure per Mile



District	Operating Expenditure (FY22)	Miles Travelled (FY22)	Real Expenditure per Mile (FY09–FY22)	Expenditure per Mile (FY22)
Denver County 1	\$29,506,651	2,215,408		\$13.32
Jefferson County R-1	\$23,454,387	3,408,312		\$6.88
Roaring Fork RE-1	\$1,737,671	295,991		\$5.87

Data Deficiency

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is required to collect only enough data on school transportation to calculate reimbursements to school districts. Every September, districts must complete a cumbersome form known as the CDE-40, detailing their previous school year's operating expenditures on transportation, the number of route miles scheduled on a specific count day in October, and the number of days that school year on which students were transported. Although CDE releases these data from the CDE-40 form, the department is not directed to collect other, more meaningful data about school transportation costs and student ridership in Colorado.

This lack of meaningful data makes any kind of systematic analysis difficult at best. Individual districts collect different types of data, including actual ridership, for internal use, but there is no standardized method of data collection, no categories universally used, and no central repository for this district data.

For example, in many districts, operating expenses have increased over the last decade even as miles and eligibility have declined. Denver is a case in point: in real dollars, Denver's operating expenses have doubled while miles have decreased by 21% and eligibility has declined by 9%. Why is this the case? The answer has implications on resource allocation, student access and equity, transparency and accountability, and good governance. Until we have that information, though, we cannot answer important questions like this.

We believe the state should take a greater interest in knowing how eligibility standards are set at the district level, what the effective impacts are across districts, to what degree eligible students are being served, and why there is such a pronounced gap between eligible students and ridership. Additionally, insights into any alternatives to yellow buses would allow for the development, testing, and scaling of new transportation models.

Collecting and disseminating such data would benefit policymakers and the general public alike. It's difficult for lawmakers and public policy professionals to consider improvements to and innovations in education transportation when there is such little reliable data on current utilization and effectiveness or, for that matter, the true costs of providing transportation to all students who want and need it.

Given these realities, we have done our best to provide an overview of school transportation costs and challenges, but the scope of our analysis is limited by this insufficiency of data. Given the implications of insufficient and inequitable transportation options on the educational trajectory of Colorado students, it would

behoove the state to begin collecting more meaningful and robust data on district transportation policies and practices.

School Transportation Funding in Colorado

Transporting students to and from school, athletic events, and field trips is an expensive proposition. It is a service that families have come to expect from school districts over the decades. It is also an important piece in the educational equity conversation. Families, especially those of limited means, should not have to worry about whether their children get safely to and from their schools of choice every day.

In Colorado, the vast majority of state education funding is disbursed to districts based on a complex school funding formula, which includes allocations for the general education program, at-risk students, and district conditions, like cost of living. However, this formula only comprises a portion of the support districts receive from the state.

In 2022, according to the Legislative Council Staff’s Research Publication No. 773, *2022 School Finance in Colorado*, about \$344.5 million was allocated through “categorical programs,” which are earmarks to serve particular student groups and other highly targeted purposes. The major categorical programs provide funding for instruction for English-language learners, special education, gifted and talented programs, vocational education, and school transportation.

School districts that provide transportation are reimbursed for some of the cost of transporting pupils between home and school. The reimbursement formula is two-pronged: it takes into account mileage and costs. Transportation expenditures that are reimbursable include items such as motor fuel and oil, vehicle maintenance costs, equipment, facilities, driver employment costs, and insurance.ⁱⁱⁱ

For fiscal year 2021–22, the state budget included \$62 million for the transportation program (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5
The State's Declining Share of Transportation Spending

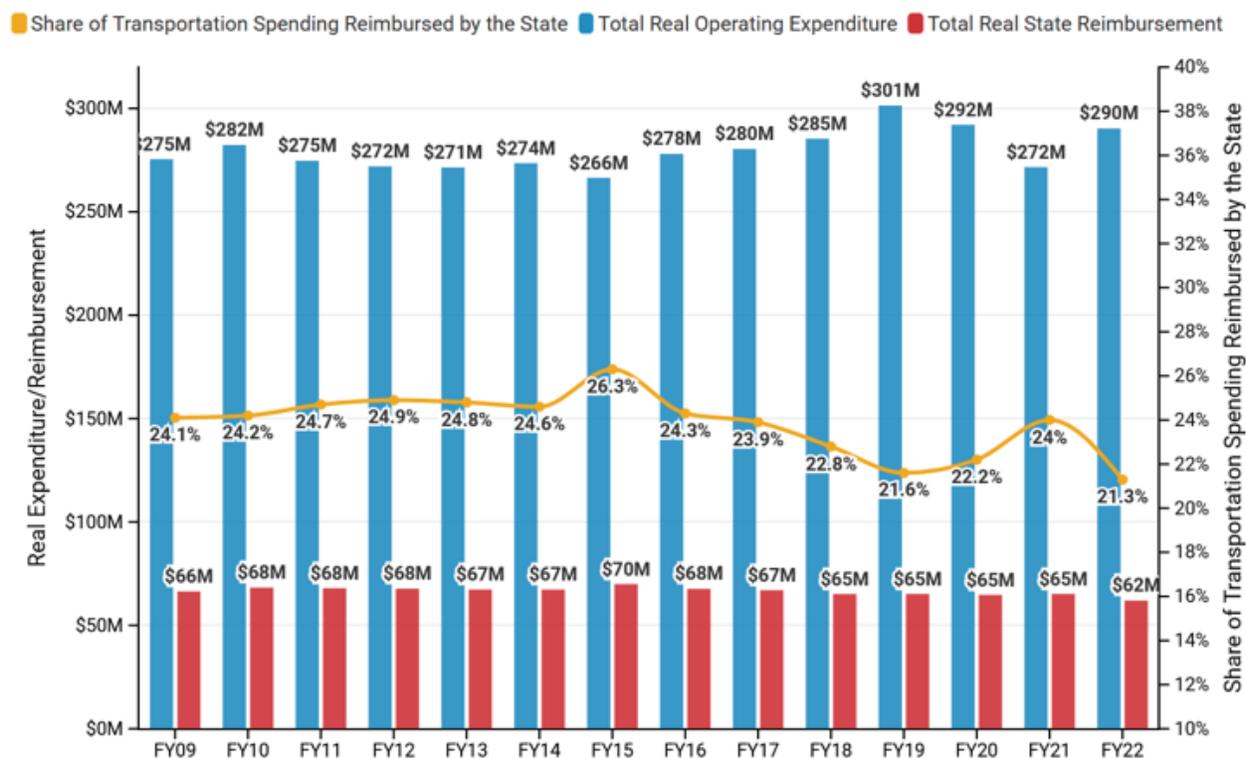


Figure 6

District	Operating Expenditure (FY22)	State Reimbursement (FY22)	Share of Expenditure Reimbursed by the State (FY09–FY22)	Share of Expenditure Reimbursed (FY22)
Denver County 1	\$29,506,651	\$5,929,397		20.1%
Jefferson County R-1	\$23,454,387	\$4,937,352		21.1%
Roaring Fork RE-1	\$1,737,671	\$373,883		21.5%

As an example of how statewide transportation spending plays out at the local level, here are examples from urban, suburban, and rural districts.

- Denver Public Schools spent a total of \$29.5 million on transporting students during the 2021-22 school year. Of that total, \$5.9 million—20%—was reimbursed by the state.
- Jeffco Public Schools spent \$23.5 million on transportation last year and received a state reimbursement of \$4.9 million (21%).
- The rural Roaring Fork School District (RFSD) spent \$1.7 million on transportation, and was reimbursed \$374,000 (22%).

Districts do not get any reimbursement for athletics, field trips, or other extracurricular activities.^{iv} Direct transportation-related costs, including driver salaries and benefits, are also included in the reimbursement calculation.

Districts must submit their CDE-40 forms by September 15th each year to receive reimbursements for the prior fiscal year (July 1st–June 30th). The form requires a count of mileage scheduled on the count day in October, the number of days during the year those routes were driven, and a detailed breakdown of current district operating expenditures.

Some district transportation directors have advocated for a different way of calculating state reimbursements. Because route miles scheduled in October are likely to differ substantially from miles driven later in the year, using a single count day probably underestimates route miles driven on average throughout the year, they say. Multiple count days or calculating reimbursements based on ridership headcounts would be more accurate and equitable.

Districts have developed various systems—ranging from high-tech, web-connected tablets to stainless steel clickers, clipboards, and manual entries—to keep track of how many students and which students ride particular routes and on which days. This makes it more feasible for reimbursements to be based on headcounts rather than route miles.

Transportation funding and the other categorical allocations require regular legislative updates to ensure that they keep up with inflation, as required by law, which also guarantees that the funding amount is no less than the previous year. Even with those measures in place, the real value of those dollars, adjusted for inflation over the last decade, amounts to a gradual decline. In fiscal year 2012, state reimbursements to school districts totaled \$67.8 million (in 2022 dollars), and that number dropped to \$62 million in fiscal year 2022—a decrease of 8.5%.

At the same time, miles driven transporting students has decreased by 21% over that same 10-year period. The number of students eligible for transportation has also dropped, albeit more slowly—by 8%—since 2012 (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7
Eligibility and Enrollment

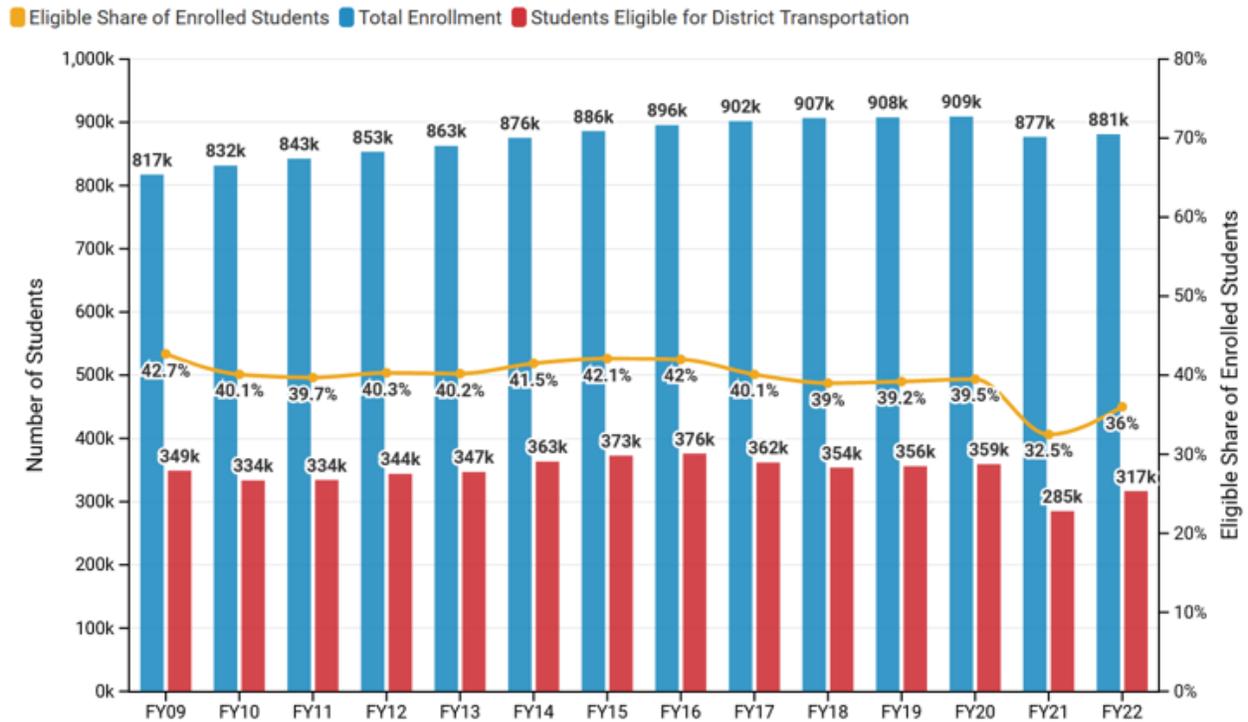


Figure 8

District	Students Eligible for District Transportation (FY22)	Total District Enrollment (FY22)	Eligible Share of Enrollment (FY09–FY22)	Eligible Share of Enrollment (FY22)
Denver County 1	35,502	88,889		39.9%
Jefferson County R-1	28,111	78,473		35.8%
Roaring Fork RE-1	1,288	5,306		24.3%

Actual ridership is a data point the state does not collect. In Jeffco during the current school year, just over half of eligible students use district-provided transportation per data provided directly from the district: 28,111 are eligible and 12,404 are riding.

District transportation chiefs say that one thing the state needs to improve is the reimbursement system for special education transportation. Paperwork requirements are onerous and time-consuming, they say, for reasons that are not clear.

Jared Rains, the rural Roaring Fork School District’s transportation director, said that less paperwork and easier access to funding would free up time for intensive

communication with the families of the district's four dozen students with disabilities, who require customized transportation.

Even the seemingly more straightforward task of transporting the general population of students is fraught with logistical challenges. In more urban areas, drivers can fill buses by running short routes of 15 to 20 minutes, and do this several times during a morning shift. By contrast, in Roaring Fork, to fill a bus can often require a 45-minute route. Fewer drivers often means fewer routes and even longer loops. This impels families to opt out of transportation and to drive their children to school instead.

Driver Shortages

One issue that has plagued school transportation in Colorado since even before the COVID-19 pandemic is a shortage of bus drivers. The pandemic only exacerbated an already mounting problem. Driver shortages have multiple causes, and these deficits also create a ripple effect of other challenges to transporting students efficiently, effectively, and equitably.

In Roaring Fork, which includes the communities of Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, and Basalt on Colorado's Western Slope, driver shortages have meant a reduction in routes in the sprawling, mountainous district that covers 900 square miles. Director Rains said that his department has had to reduce routes, cutting entire neighborhoods out of its transportation system.

Director Rains reported that about 1,700 of the district's 5,100 students ride buses and that more would ride if the district had the capacity to take them. RFSD attempts to offer stops as close to the eliminated routes as possible, but, in many cases, this means that students ride the bus for unacceptably long periods of time, or arrive at school too early or have to stay too long after the school day ends.

The driver shortages in Roaring Fork are caused by a number of factors, Director Rains noted. First, is the challenge of providing a competitive wage. The district has remained competitive, paying a starting salary of \$23 per hour, which matches the area's public transit district, because of a recent mill levy override that boosted wages for bus drivers as well as teachers and other district staff.

The pandemic, however, caused some older drivers (many of them retirees) to reevaluate the health risks of driving buses full of masked and unmasked kids. This caused attrition. RFSD went from having 38 drivers in 2019 to 18 today. Director Rains said he used to get a couple of qualified applicants each month for driver jobs, and now many months pass without a single application arriving.

Another challenge cited by Director Rains is the split-shift nature of school bus driving. Drivers work three to four hours in the morning, get a few hours off, then work another three to four hours in the afternoon. RFSD helps counter this challenge by employing as many of its drivers as possible in second jobs within the district, which they can work between shifts (i.e., health aides, custodial or food-service work).

Jefferson County Public Schools, a large suburban district in the Denver metro area, has experienced similar problems recruiting and retaining drivers. Greg Jackson, Jeffco's transportation chief, said that the wage issue is the main culprit. He contends that Jeffco's inability to offer competitive compensation ties back to inadequate state reimbursements for bus transportation.

Jeffco starts its drivers at \$21.70 per hour, which is more than \$3 per hour less than the RTD starting salary, and also lower than what private sector employers, like Kroger, offer.

Jeffco pays retention and attendance bonuses to augment driver pay, but this requires a delicate dance with the local labor union, which at times has resisted differentiated pay schemes. Despite that, the bonuses have led drivers who receive them to become vocal advocates of the program and active recruiters for the district.

In Denver, transportation chief Albert Samora described problems similar to those experienced by Jeffco and RFSD. He cited another problem, as well: as older drivers retire and Gen-Z drivers begin filling jobs, Colorado's recreational marijuana laws have begun to cause unanticipated trouble. Drivers are subjected to random drug and alcohol tests; alcohol processes through the human body quickly, but THC—the substance primarily responsible for the effects of marijuana on a person's mental state—can show up in tests six weeks after someone has smoked or ingested a marijuana product. A positive drug test leads to dismissal, so young drivers accustomed to using marijuana legally are faced with a dilemma that causes some not to apply for bus driver jobs.

Another cause of driver shortages emphasized by all three districts are stringent health requirements imposed by the federal government on anyone who holds a commercial driver's license (CDL). In the wake of a truck-involved accident caused by a sleepy trucker that severely injured comedian Tracy Morgan in 2014, the U.S. Department of Transportation began flagging people with large neck circumferences or high Body Mass Index (BMI) as possible sleep apnea candidates, imperiling their CDL status. Sleep apnea can cause daytime sleepiness because it can lead to poor

nighttime sleep. Districts have lost drivers over the years because of these new requirements. Furthermore, securing a CDL license opens doors to much higher-paying jobs through private sector companies.

School district transportation leaders argue that these new regulations are too broad and should not apply to bus drivers, who drive short shifts rather than being behind the wheel for many hours at a stretch. There is a strong case to be made that bus drivers should not be required to have CDLs at all, but rather should receive a more relevant school bus driving certification.

Chief Samora said he has had to use almost his entire office staff—all of whom hold CDLs—to drive bus routes because the shortage of regular drivers has been so severe. This, he said, hampers the effectiveness of his entire operation and has a direct impact on safety. Safety is jeopardized, he said, because dispatchers and other key personnel—who would typically respond to accidents—are at times driving routes instead of sitting at their desks doing their actual jobs.

One glaring opportunity is for districts to smartly and intentionally build internal talent pipelines for positions from teachers to professional drivers. In this approach, districts need to demonstrate that transportation jobs are exciting, in-demand, well-paying, and upwardly mobile. If they are, then, by offering the initial education and training that sets a student on the course towards attaining a CDL, districts will have a good chance that some of their current students will become employees in areas of workforce shortage.

Models of Innovation

Colorado needs innovative solutions to ensure that transportation is not a major barrier to students accessing education. Colorado is not alone in this regard. Many states face a broad spectrum of transportation challenges, which are best met with a broad range of effective options. Following are three examples of the kind of transportation innovation Colorado needs, at scale, to better serve students and families.

Transportation for Career and Technical Training

The Colorado Career and Technical Act (CTA) is a state law that provides funding for career and technical education (CTE) programs in Colorado. These programs are designed to prepare students for postsecondary success, with an emphasis on careers in trades and technical fields. CTE programs often include hands-on training, internships, and other forms of work-based learning.

One lesser-known provision of the CTA is the transportation funding it provides to school districts that transport students for the specific purpose of providing technical education and training. Such programs are on the rise; more districts are

working to better align their offerings with high-paying, high-demand jobs in leading industries.

In one example, Littleton School District uses state CTA dollars to transport students from Littleton to Warren Tech Campuses in Jefferson County. Warren Tech is a designated CTE center and self-described springboard to a competitive edge in college readiness and career opportunities. This kind of inter-district collaboration is in fact innovative and all too rare.

Colorado's legislature recognized the value of career-connected learning and the importance of providing transportation resources to make it accessible. In this case, these school districts worked together to create excellent opportunities for students. This is one example of how state budget appropriations can be leveraged to close transportation gaps in public education.

Transportation to Exercise School Choice

In 2022, the Colorado Department of Education launched an innovative pilot project to remove transportation barriers for families that want to opt out of the chronically underperforming schools around them and into other public schools that better serve their needs. The program is one of many efforts to solve deep-seated problems in Adams 14 School District.

The Bright Rides program provides the option for most elementary and high school students in Adams 14 to receive free transportation to high-quality schools in neighboring districts that better meet their needs.

Under this program, transportation is provided for free through HopSkipDrive, a school transportation service that utilizes private vehicles to help students with transportation needs. This door-to-door service is designed specifically for personalized education transportation, and, through its proven track record, is "trusted by parents throughout the country for [its] extensive accountability standards and stellar safety record," according to the Bright Rides website. It adds: "All drivers from HopSkipDrive are fully approved and experienced, so you can rest assured that your child is in good hands." HopSkipDrive operates in a number of Colorado school districts and is not limited to only the Bright Rides program.

Bright Rides allows students who live within the boundaries of five specific Adams 14 schools—three elementary and two high schools—to receive daily transportation to their choice of 65 schools in Denver that perform demonstrably better academically.

In this case, the Colorado Department of Education took a principled and practical approach to putting the power of choice into the hands of parents who need it most, removing transportation as a barrier to accessing better public schools. So long as it proves effective, it should be scaled to serve more families, especially those in areas of chronically poor performing schools.

Transportation Solutions from the Community

A community-based problem-solving approach can be found in Arizona which in 2021 enacted a statewide Transportation Modernization Grant Program, a three-year pilot program.

The legislation provides state funding to explore efficient, safe, cost-effective, and student-appropriate options for transporting K–12 students with diverse needs in the modern era.

The program provides resources in addition to current transportation funding levels to incubate ideas for improving access to reliable and safe transportation for students who attend district schools through open enrollment or attend charter schools. The program is also meant to accelerate innovation and spur efficient transportation solutions.

The state funding is available through a competitive grant process to public schools, local governments, and community partners that want to provide transportation options to get all public-school children safely and easily to the schools that will best help them thrive.

Importantly, the program ensures that rural and remote school and community partners are prioritized by allocating at least 25% of grant monies to their proposals.

In the first round of funding, 71 district and charter systems, nonprofits, and local governments representing every county in the state requested funding to implement their innovative transit ideas.

As a result of the first round of funding and insights from transportation projects across the state, a clear set of core principles was established that should drive policy changes. It suggests that public schools need the state and federal governments to rework school transportation funding and regulations to be:^{viii}

Flexible: Ensure that both funding and the regulatory environment are receptive to a variety of new transportation solutions

Responsive: Ensure that the funding and the regulatory environment are responsive to the unique needs of schools of different sizes and locations and students with varying transportation needs

Inclusive: Make dedicated transportation funding available to all public-school models which provide transportation programming to their students

Collaborative: Allow collaboration across school districts with shared transportation resources and with other community-based partners

Adaptable: Create regular opportunities to modernize infrastructure as well as state and federal regulatory frameworks to keep up with rapidly changing vehicle and transportation tools

A Customized Plan for Colorado

In 2022, a coalition of stakeholders, including school districts and education advocacy groups from across the state, proposed legislation for a transportation innovation program for Colorado.

The resulting bi-partisan legislative measure, sponsored by State Representatives Colin Larson and Mary Young and State Senators Rachel Zenzinger and Cleave Simpson, was titled the “Colorado Transportation Innovation Grant Program.”

The measure aimed to provide additional funding in exchange for innovation and even experimentation. The traditional reliance on the yellow bus model is one way to transport students, but it is not the only way. In many cases, it is not the most sensible way.

Innovation is urgently needed—one of the most pressing reasons is the crippling shortage of bus drivers, which is making it difficult to safely and efficiently transport students to school. Some large school districts, like Jefferson County, are experiencing at least 20% decreases in their workforces.

Accordingly, the measure was designed both to crowd-source solutions and customize them to their respective communities. The legislation proposed a competitive grant designed to improve access to safe and reliable transportation options or develop transit innovations and efficiency solutions for public school students, including students who want to access college and career pathway opportunities.

The funding would permit districts to experiment with more family-friendly and cost-efficient transportation options while enabling the state to assess potential cost savings for public schools.

This type of collective problem-solving approach encourages proposals from across the spectrum—public schools, districts, consortia of public-school districts or schools, BOCES, local governments, and organizations that form innovative community partnerships with public schools—and benefits from pooling ideas and testing various, localized solutions.

This proposed legislation was not passed during the 2022 legislative season, but it warrants reconsideration. Although the state is not as flush with the federal COVID-19 relief dollars originally intended as the measure’s funding source, it would be prudent for legislators to explore other potential funding sources to make such a program a reality in Colorado.

Conclusion

Colorado school districts' transportation models are stuck in the past and in urgent need of modernization. The traditional yellow school bus will not go away overnight, nor should it; for the foreseeable future, buses will play an important role in districts' mix of transportation resources. Regardless, improvements and innovations are needed.

There are some clear steps that need to be taken, and collecting better data is the first. Understanding actual ridership will enable local stakeholders to design better routes and diversify modes of transportation, and more importantly it will improve insights into where further state support is needed.

Next, regulatory burdens need to be addressed. Revamping the state's reimbursement process to be more streamlined and to better reflect actual miles driven and ridership levels would be a welcomed change by school districts. Based on feedback from district transportation directors, the process around funding transportation for students with disabilities could be greatly improved and streamlined. Lastly, changes that need to occur at the federal level to modify the onerous licensing regulations for school bus drivers should be considered.

Funding is a major issue, and more resources are needed to serve more eligible students—however, money alone will not solve districts' transportation woes. As districts work to attract and retain qualified drivers in this hyper-competitive labor market, they should also seize the opportunity to show students that in-demand, well-paying careers in their transportation departments are worth considering.

The best hope for improvement, though, will come from those closest to the districts' transportation operations and those most affected by it. Crowd-sourcing solutions, testing innovative ideas, and incentivizing stakeholders' engagement through a Transportation Innovation Fund would be immensely valuable.

Colorado legislators have a major role to play in steering education transportation in the right direction. It is time to re-evaluate the funding model and consider new ways of transporting students between home and school.

District Transportation Data

The following tables highlight transportation data across all Colorado school districts, showing costs for providing student transportation, number of eligible riders, and route miles driven by districts,^{viii} all of which are important to understanding the current education transportation system. However, there are crucial pieces of data that are missing—information that are not currently collected by the state—that limit the state’s ability to improve and innovate for a better future.

Figure 9 provides the basic data that each school district submits to CDE, CDE’s transportation reimbursements to the districts, and total enrollment counts.

Figure 9

FY22 District Transportation Data					
District	Total operating expenditure	State reimbursement	Regular pupil transportation miles	Student eligibility	Student enrollment
ADAMS-ARAPAHOE 28J	\$12,136,018	\$2,535,834	982,778	10,829	38,451
CLEAR CREEK RE-1	\$731,064	\$170,328	178,948	248	696
DENVER COUNTY 1	\$29,506,651	\$5,929,397	2,215,408	35,502	88,889
JEFFERSON COUNTY R-1	\$23,454,387	\$4,937,352	3,408,312	28,111	78,473
ADAMS COUNTY 14	\$2,409,422	\$488,004	151,164	5,806	6,114
HARRISON 2	\$3,131,882	\$639,068	330,810	9,954	13,002
GARFIELD 16	\$288,068	\$62,245	49,421	1,125	1,225
MAPLETON 1	\$1,896,811	\$389,891	274,897	5,662	9,002
TELLURIDE R-1	\$121,199	\$37,184	23,547	472	876
LAKE COUNTY R-1	\$331,217	\$70,240	47,753	919	1,010
BAYFIELD 10 JT-R	\$523,273	\$109,034	69,520	1,290	1,311
JOHNSTOWN-MILLIKEN RE-5J	\$1,203,195	\$266,116	183,199	3,307	3,783
GUNNISON WATERSHED RE1J	\$341,063	\$115,988	117,878	2,081	2,081
TRINIDAD 1	\$260,090	\$59,176	52,635	925	789
PEYTON 23 JT	\$370,636	\$83,919	82,225	1,300	614
SARGENT RE-33J	\$102,086	\$26,921	22,050	330	330
DELTA COUNTY 50(J)	\$1,598,874	\$368,506	309,400	4,426	4,738
MONTE VISTA C-8	\$197,719	\$42,235	32,850	461	1,074
NORTH CONEJOS RE-1J	\$240,291	\$65,017	75,312	1,005	1,005
CHERRY CREEK 5	\$25,930,104	\$5,242,625	1,622,648	21,051	53,558
SUMMIT RE-1	\$1,167,928	\$240,371	135,536	1,749	3,620
CENTER 26 JT	\$150,669	\$30,857	22,765	282	617
ELBERT 200	\$106,005	\$23,165	21,546	259	281
BRIGHTON 27J	\$7,227,047	\$1,516,218	961,199	10,731	20,338

FY22 District Transportation Data

District	Total operating expenditure	State reimbursement	Regular pupil transportation miles	Student eligibility	Student enrollment
SIERRA GRANDE R-30	\$200,840	\$41,797	24,215	265	259
ADAMS 12 FIVE STAR SCHOOLS	\$9,871,042	\$2,033,714	1,095,038	11,904	36,078
HOEHNE REORGANIZED 3	\$187,879	\$40,586	29,678	314	314
GARFIELD RE-2	\$1,571,176	\$453,377	254,592	2,577	4,614
SOUTH CONEJOS RE-10	\$77,759	\$21,705	14,162	140	149
BURLINGTON RE-6J	\$149,179	\$53,165	71,010	699	749
OTIS R-3	\$145,631	\$30,286	21,460	211	211
MOFFAT COUNTY RE:NO 1	\$605,049	\$162,050	148,801	1,463	2,118
EAGLE COUNTY RE 50	\$2,113,015	\$439,496	350,149	3,395	6,689
WINDSOR RE-4	\$1,203,195	\$491,628	359,716	3,353	8,104
WESTMINSTER 50	\$571,850	\$599,348	231,751	2,131	8,320
ARCHULETA COUNTY 50 JT	\$931,179	\$205,644	170,150	1,511	1,712
LITTLETON 6	\$6,033,115	\$1,225,494	586,206	5,055	13,698
WELDON VALLEY RE-20(J)	\$0	\$23,217	17,446	144	225
ACADEMY 20	\$8,043,079	\$1,728,123	1,386,126	11,167	26,400
WEST GRAND 1-JT.	\$601,266	\$43,726	28,978	225	393
OURAY R-1	\$31,966	\$7,274	8,300	64	189
WILEY RE-13 JT	\$2,752,168	\$13,489	13,416	103	262
SANFORD 6J	\$102,509	\$25,031	37,563	288	369
GREELEY 6	\$4,856,558	\$987,703	493,142	3,767	22,170
PARK COUNTY RE-2	\$197,692	\$48,362	52,398	399	596
STRASBURG 31J	\$310,258	\$70,741	91,655	685	1,171
POUDRE R-1	\$10,186,989	\$2,209,062	1,649,578	12,312	29,941
ALAMOSA RE-11J	\$571,850	\$124,661	111,663	832	2,188
CHERAW 31	\$59,221	\$19,584	17,202	128	231
DOUGLAS COUNTY RE 1	\$22,558,826	\$4,637,739	2,587,623	18,889	63,876
COLORADO SPRINGS 11	\$5,130,762	\$1,139,711	1,044,701	7,595	23,366
PLATEAU VALLEY 50	\$102,505	\$22,257	16,790	120	305
GILPIN COUNTY RE-1	\$264,882	\$58,475	52,038	371	437
COTOPAXI RE-3	\$185,904	\$42,633	29,473	208	208
CENTENNIAL R-1	\$137,365	\$30,476	28,248	189	203
WIDEFIELD 3	\$4,481,011	\$832,209	526,845	3,524	9,370
FLORENCE RE-2	\$585,000	\$152,176	168,797	1,105	1,426
SHERIDAN 2	\$835,929	\$169,235	54,600	348	1,177
SANGRE DE CRISTO RE-22J	\$131,868	\$32,122	20,876	131	246
MANCOS RE-6	\$95,864	\$30,730	36,144	225	485
PLATTE CANYON 1	\$673,918	\$148,236	134,879	837	837

FY22 District Transportation Data

District	Total operating expenditure	State reimbursement	Regular pupil transportation miles	Student eligibility	Student enrollment
SALIDA R-32	\$257,871	\$57,223	46,488	281	1,313
PUEBLO CITY 60	\$2,752,168	\$505,752	313,558	1,799	15,134
SWINK 33	\$36,408	\$12,690	18,106	103	312
MONTEZUMA-CORTEZ RE-1	\$998,285	\$232,527	306,099	1,724	2,618
ST VRAIN VALLEY RE 1J	\$9,958,336	\$2,177,233	1,830,686	10,282	32,406
FOUNTAIN 8	\$4,481,011	\$947,188	536,010	2,937	8,302
MESA COUNTY VALLEY 51	\$7,667,316	\$1,703,229	1,678,056	9,032	21,315
EAST OTERO R-1	\$182,522	\$49,119	61,784	329	1,358
BUFFALO RE-4	\$124,898	\$31,097	49,063	258	305
ELIZABETH C-1	\$926,562	\$235,035	277,117	1,455	2,412
PARK (ESTES PARK) R-3	\$415,600	\$92,937	70,728	369	1,058
SOUTH ROUTT RE 3	\$198,750	\$78,453	49,580	255	339
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS RE-2	\$895,588	\$188,650	128,694	650	2,640
DEL NORTE C-7	\$142,151	\$31,905	33,460	168	403
ROCKY FORD R-2	\$151,446	\$39,367	31,080	155	676
PLATTE VALLEY RE-7	\$511,011	\$123,482	103,554	516	1,078
WEST END RE-2	\$501,535	\$48,561	55,046	272	272
AULT-HIGHLAND RE-9	\$457,058	\$135,561	184,969	910	1,013
GILCREST RE-1	\$599,465	\$138,431	150,992	739	1,892
EATON RE-2	\$520,786	\$118,404	135,406	658	1,994
PRIMERO REORGANIZED 2	\$158,911	\$37,308	43,987	213	228
BOULDER VALLEY RE 2	\$16,123,216	\$3,303,369	1,695,807	7,979	29,011
MONTROSE COUNTY RE-1J	\$1,893,002	\$349,021	395,076	1,813	6,061
CONSOLIDATED C-1	\$171,608	\$38,140	36,716	168	361
RANGELY RE-4	\$188,870	\$46,208	55,604	250	494
ROARING FORK RE-1	\$1,737,671	\$373,883	295,991	1,288	5,306
MANITOU SPRINGS 14	\$624,112	\$133,812	92,462	402	1,329
WRAY RE-2	\$181,701	\$98,275	156,969	669	749
VILAS RE-5	\$43,665	\$6,735	14,729	62	222
LEWIS-PALMER 38	\$2,313,999	\$505,269	460,003	1,899	6,637
BUENA VISTA R-31	\$351,949	\$76,612	65,928	264	1,052
DURANGO 9-R	\$1,653,487	\$365,463	352,027	1,406	5,797
THOMPSON R-2J	\$5,443,254	\$1,166,514	872,040	3,446	15,291
CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE (CSI)	\$1,629,488	\$349,868	305,660	1,179	21,947
BENNETT 29J	\$604,773	\$149,300	209,916	778	1,249
BRUSH RE-2(J)	\$501,535	\$113,602	114,696	425	1,394
MANZANOLA 3J	\$61,230	\$13,623	7,290	27	151

FY22 District Transportation Data

District	Total operating expenditure	State reimbursement	Regular pupil transportation miles	Student eligibility	Student enrollment
ELLCOTT 22	\$564,050	\$147,417	283,406	1,044	1,002
BRANSON REORGANIZED 82	\$70,818	\$19,240	20,258	74	502
FORT MORGAN RE-3	\$817,055	\$201,655	142,450	512	3,381
CANON CITY RE-1	\$682,745	\$147,330	128,960	458	3,325
ENGLEWOOD 1	\$821,127	\$168,666	67,651	240	2,440
MEEKER RE1	\$223,166	\$53,495	75,835	269	724
PRAIRIE RE-11	\$105,174	\$32,300	33,512	118	191
WOODLAND PARK RE-2	\$245,029	\$231,917	230,156	789	1,832
KEENESBURG RE-3(J)	\$1,022,280	\$228,420	246,411	801	2,693
MC CLAVE RE-2	\$102,719	\$24,049	42,768	139	237
CROWLEY COUNTY RE-1-J	\$134,392	\$34,119	50,344	161	405
DOLORES RE-4A	\$266,198	\$61,271	68,065	216	726
HAYDEN RE-1	\$170,642	\$36,778	30,659	96	436
CRIPPLE CREEK-VICTOR RE-1	\$324,936	\$79,764	45,756	142	352
NORWOOD R-2J	\$63,947	\$19,566	21,605	67	199
PUEBLO 70	\$3,315,862	\$746,680	884,566	2,661	10,247
VALLEY RE-1	\$410,422	\$114,317	109,324	322	1,996
IGNACIO 11 JT	\$474,849	\$115,344	93,226	268	640
MOUNTAIN VALLEY RE 1	\$92,313	\$25,927	32,384	92	185
CALHAN RJ-1	\$376,208	\$84,706	100,745	281	446
DE BEQUE 49JT	\$26,332	\$5,767	7,047	19	172
STRATTON R-4	\$70,986	\$16,908	26,696	69	231
FALCON 49	\$4,588,038	\$987,140	767,062	1,977	24,767
BYERS 32J	\$276,505	\$67,648	99,368	254	5,352
DEER TRAIL 26J	\$96,849	\$27,726	56,788	144	295
LAS ANIMAS RE-1	\$113,762	\$29,634	57,010	144	826
FOWLER R-4J	\$88,560	\$26,656	44,075	109	366
ASPEN 1	\$961,194	\$238,566	345,221	850	1,652
FRENCHMAN RE-3	\$114,903	\$28,307	39,543	95	217
ARRIBA-FLAGLER C-20	\$92,988	\$41,773	54,020	128	139
RIDGWAY R-2	\$203,309	\$48,240	62,320	147	335
BIG SANDY 100J	\$266,431	\$61,178	72,846	171	325
LIBERTY RJ-4	\$76,267	\$18,913	28,482	65	64
MOFFAT 2	\$154,828	\$39,954	40,210	91	217
GRANADA RE-1	\$58,723	\$14,060	19,176	41	196
MIAMI/YODER 60 JT	\$328,468	\$86,178	149,486	318	313
AGATE 300	\$89,792	\$20,902	20,306	43	84
IDALIA RD-3	\$181,701	\$47,602	88,290	178	186
AKRON R-1	\$245,029	\$59,807	89,067	179	411

FY22 District Transportation Data

District	Total operating expenditure	State reimbursement	Regular pupil transportation miles	Student eligibility	Student enrollment
HAXTUN RE-2J	\$140,613	\$36,288	63,504	127	341
DOLORES COUNTY RE NO.2	\$208,253	\$49,076	64,622	128	254
FORT LUPTON RE-8	\$950,302	\$233,966	210,805	413	2,482
EAST GRAND 2	\$601,266	\$147,869	224,170	425	1,286
HOLLY RE-3	\$68,497	\$26,722	46,008	87	275
BRIGGS DALE RE-10	\$166,768	\$44,168	71,934	129	186
PLATEAU RE-5	\$173,720	\$43,801	69,760	125	160
LAMAR RE-2	\$186,151	\$44,114	61,203	109	1,573
LA VETA RE-2	\$17,599	\$4,455	3,537	6	207
AGUILAR REORGANIZED 6	\$57,390	\$16,033	18,542	31	114
CREEDE CONSOLIDATED 1	\$10,163	\$6,478	21,347	33	78
SPRINGFIELD RE-4	\$95,999	\$30,949	57,200	84	278
EDISON 54 JT	\$143,099	\$35,692	52,848	72	137
LONE STAR 101	\$75,728	\$20,044	35,136	47	125
ARICKAREE R-2	\$145,830	\$39,372	75,835	101	101
HI-PLAINS R-23	\$149,623	\$43,095	92,016	120	153
PLATTE VALLEY RE-3	\$57,886	\$17,035	21,900	28	133
HANOVER 28	\$377,737	\$90,770	140,970	173	283
PAWNEE RE-12	\$132,600	\$34,316	49,294	58	70
HUERFANO RE-1	\$239,473	\$58,553	60,325	70	512
JULESBURG RE-1	\$29,785	\$8,731	13,040	15	775
EADS RE-1	\$95,973	\$27,587	60,326	66	219
BETHUNE R-5	\$36,215	\$12,378	30,956	33	108
YUMA COUNTY 1	\$347,932	\$64,883	138,489	144	876
HOLYOKE RE-1J	\$191,511	\$51,689	65,515	65	578
PRITCHETT RE-3	\$38,874	\$10,296	19,162	17	66
PLAINVIEW RE-2	\$48,123	\$11,324	20,385	18	137
WALSH RE-1	\$38,874	\$31,555	78,256	68	161
WOODLIN R-104	\$599,465	\$36,235	69,984	60	72
CAMPO RE-6	\$43,665	\$12,097	24,883	21	51
CHEYENNE COUNTY RE-5	\$86,200	\$24,563	29,435	24	188
GENOA-HUGO C113	\$108,887	\$33,233	87,802	63	213
KIOWA C-2	\$116,532	\$43,196	136,592	92	276
KARVAL RE-23	\$49,388	\$17,715	49,140	31	43
KIM REORGANIZED 88	\$56,439	\$19,527	51,097	31	32
KIT CARSON R-1	\$150,699	\$42,519	73,150	43	100
LIMON RE-4J	\$164,338	\$72,459	259,116	131	448
CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN 12	\$198,022	\$71,543	54,638	26	3,641

FY22 District Transportation Data					
District	Total operating expenditure	State reimbursement	Regular pupil transportation miles	Student eligibility	Student enrollment
NORTH PARK R-1	\$11,307	\$5,507	47,069	19	173
HINSDALE COUNTY RE 1	\$4,780	\$2,148	8,280	2	77
SILVERTON 1	\$0	\$0	0	0	86
WIGGINS RE-50(J)	\$182,522	\$0	0	0	819

Figure 10 includes calculations based upon the data in Figure 9 that provide insight into districts' transportation costs and utilization.

Figure 10

FY22 District Transportation Data						
District	Eligible share of total enrollment	Miles per eligible student	Reimbursement per mile	Reimbursement per eligible pupil	Operating expenditure per mile	Operating expenditure per eligible student
ADAMS-ARAPAHOE 28J	28.2%	90.8	\$2.58	\$234.17	\$12.35	\$1,121
CLEAR CREEK RE-1	35.6%	721.6	\$0.95	\$686.81	\$4.09	\$2,948
DENVER COUNTY 1	39.9%	62.4	\$2.68	\$167.02	\$13.32	\$831
JEFFERSON COUNTY R-1	35.8%	121.2	\$1.45	\$175.64	\$6.88	\$834
ADAMS COUNTY 14	95.0%	26.0	\$3.23	\$84.05	\$15.94	\$415
HARRISON 2	76.6%	33.2	\$1.93	\$64.20	\$9.47	\$315
GARFIELD 16	91.8%	43.9	\$1.26	\$55.33	\$5.83	\$256
MAPLETON 1	62.9%	48.6	\$1.42	\$68.86	\$6.90	\$335
TELLURIDE R-1	53.9%	49.9	\$1.58	\$78.78	\$5.15	\$257
LAKE COUNTY R-1	91.0%	52.0	\$1.47	\$76.43	\$6.94	\$360
BAYFIELD 10 JT-R	98.4%	53.9	\$1.57	\$84.52	\$7.53	\$406
JOHNSTOWN-MILLIKEN RE-5J	87.4%	55.4	\$1.45	\$80.47	\$6.57	\$364
GUNNISON WATERSHED RE1J	100.0%	56.6	\$0.98	\$55.74	\$2.89	\$164
TRINIDAD 1	117.2%	56.9	\$1.12	\$63.97	\$4.94	\$281
PEYTON 23 JT	211.7%	63.3	\$1.02	\$64.55	\$4.51	\$285
SARGENT RE-33J	100.0%	66.8	\$1.22	\$81.58	\$4.63	\$309
DELTA COUNTY 50(J)	93.4%	69.9	\$1.19	\$83.26	\$5.17	\$361
MONTE VISTA C-8	42.9%	71.3	\$1.29	\$91.62	\$6.02	\$429
NORTH CONEJOS RE-1J	100.0%	74.9	\$0.86	\$64.69	\$3.19	\$239
CHERRY CREEK 5	39.3%	77.1	\$3.23	\$249.04	\$15.98	\$1,232
SUMMIT RE-1	48.3%	77.5	\$1.77	\$137.43	\$8.62	\$668
CENTER 26 JT	45.7%	80.7	\$1.36	\$109.42	\$6.62	\$534
ELBERT 200	92.2%	83.2	\$1.08	\$89.44	\$4.92	\$409

FY22 District Transportation Data

District	Eligible share of total enrollment	Miles per eligible student	Reimbursement per mile	Reimbursement per eligible pupil	Operating expenditure per mile	Operating expenditure per eligible student
BRIGHTON 27J	52.8%	89.6	\$1.58	\$141.29	\$7.52	\$673
SIERRA GRANDE R-30	102.3%	91.4	\$1.73	\$157.72	\$8.29	\$758
ADAMS 12 FIVE STAR SCHOOLS	33.0%	92.0	\$1.86	\$170.84	\$9.01	\$829
HOEHNE REORGANIZED 3	100.0%	94.5	\$1.37	\$129.25	\$6.33	\$598
GARFIELD RE-2	55.9%	98.8	\$1.78	\$175.93	\$6.17	\$610
SOUTH CONEJOS RE-10	94.0%	101.2	\$1.53	\$155.04	\$5.49	\$555
BURLINGTON RE-6J	93.3%	101.6	\$0.75	\$76.06	\$2.10	\$213
OTIS R-3	100.0%	101.7	\$1.41	\$143.54	\$6.79	\$690
MOFFAT COUNTY RE:NO 1	69.1%	101.7	\$1.09	\$110.77	\$4.07	\$414
EAGLE COUNTY RE 50	50.8%	103.1	\$1.26	\$129.45	\$6.03	\$622
WINDSOR RE-4	41.4%	107.3	\$1.37	\$146.62	\$3.34	\$359
WESTMINSTER 50	25.6%	108.8	\$2.59	\$281.25	\$2.47	\$268
ARCHULETA COUNTY 50 JT	88.3%	112.6	\$1.21	\$136.10	\$5.47	\$616
LITTLETON 6	36.9%	116.0	\$2.09	\$242.43	\$10.29	\$1,193
WELDON VALLEY RE-20(J)	64.0%	121.2	\$1.33	\$161.23	\$0.00	\$0
ACADEMY 20	42.3%	124.1	\$1.25	\$154.75	\$5.80	\$720
WEST GRAND 1-JT.	57.3%	128.8	\$1.51	\$194.34	\$20.75	\$2,672
OURAY R-1	33.9%	129.7	\$0.88	\$113.66	\$3.85	\$499
WILEY RE-13 JT	39.3%	130.3	\$1.01	\$130.96	\$205.14	\$26,720
SANFORD 6J	78.0%	130.4	\$0.67	\$86.91	\$2.73	\$356
GREELEY 6	17.0%	130.9	\$2.00	\$262.20	\$9.85	\$1,289
PARK COUNTY RE-2	66.9%	131.3	\$0.92	\$121.21	\$3.77	\$495
STRASBURG 31J	58.5%	133.8	\$0.77	\$103.27	\$3.39	\$453
POUDRE R-1	41.1%	134.0	\$1.34	\$179.42	\$6.18	\$827
ALAMOSA RE-11J	38.0%	134.2	\$1.12	\$149.83	\$5.12	\$687
CHERAW 31	55.4%	134.4	\$1.14	\$153.00	\$3.44	\$463
DOUGLAS COUNTY RE 1	29.6%	137.0	\$1.79	\$245.53	\$8.72	\$1,194
COLORADO SPRINGS 11	32.5%	137.6	\$1.09	\$150.06	\$4.91	\$676
PLATEAU VALLEY 50	39.3%	139.9	\$1.33	\$185.48	\$6.11	\$854
GILPIN COUNTY RE-1	84.9%	140.3	\$1.12	\$157.61	\$5.09	\$714
COTOPAXI RE-3	100.0%	141.7	\$1.45	\$204.97	\$6.31	\$894
CENTENNIAL R-1	93.1%	149.5	\$1.08	\$161.25	\$4.86	\$727
WIDEFIELD 3	37.6%	149.5	\$1.58	\$236.15	\$8.51	\$1,272
FLORENCE RE-2	77.5%	152.8	\$0.90	\$137.72	\$3.47	\$529

FY22 District Transportation Data

District	Eligible share of total enrollment	Miles per eligible student	Reimbursement per mile	Reimbursement per eligible pupil	Operating expenditure per mile	Operating expenditure per eligible student
SHERIDAN 2	29.6%	156.9	\$3.10	\$486.31	\$15.31	\$2,402
SANGRE DE CRISTO RE-22J	53.3%	159.4	\$1.54	\$245.21	\$6.32	\$1,007
MANCOS RE-6	46.4%	160.6	\$0.85	\$136.58	\$2.65	\$426
PLATTE CANYON 1	100.0%	161.1	\$1.10	\$177.10	\$5.00	\$805
SALIDA R-32	21.4%	165.4	\$1.23	\$203.64	\$5.55	\$918
PUEBLO CITY 60	11.9%	174.3	\$1.61	\$281.13	\$8.78	\$1,530
SWINK 33	33.0%	175.8	\$0.70	\$123.20	\$2.01	\$353
MONTEZUMA-CORTEZ RE-1	65.9%	177.6	\$0.76	\$134.88	\$3.26	\$579
ST VRAIN VALLEY RE 1J	31.7%	178.0	\$1.19	\$211.75	\$5.44	\$969
FOUNTAIN 8	35.4%	182.5	\$1.77	\$322.50	\$8.36	\$1,526
MESA COUNTY VALLEY 51	42.4%	185.8	\$1.02	\$188.58	\$4.57	\$849
EAST OTERO R-1	24.2%	187.8	\$0.80	\$149.30	\$2.95	\$555
BUFFALO RE-4	84.6%	190.2	\$0.63	\$120.53	\$2.55	\$484
ELIZABETH C-1	60.3%	190.5	\$0.85	\$161.54	\$3.34	\$637
PARK (ESTES PARK) R-3	34.9%	191.7	\$1.31	\$251.86	\$5.88	\$1,126
SOUTH ROUTT RE 3	75.2%	194.4	\$1.58	\$307.66	\$4.01	\$779
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS RE-2	24.6%	198.0	\$1.47	\$290.23	\$6.96	\$1,378
DEL NORTE C-7	41.7%	199.2	\$0.95	\$189.91	\$4.25	\$846
ROCKY FORD R-2	22.9%	200.5	\$1.27	\$253.98	\$4.87	\$977
PLATTE VALLEY RE-7	47.9%	200.7	\$1.19	\$239.31	\$4.93	\$990
WEST END RE-2	100.0%	202.4	\$0.88	\$178.53	\$9.11	\$1,844
AULT-HIGHLAND RE-9	89.8%	203.3	\$0.73	\$148.97	\$2.47	\$502
GILCREST RE-1	39.1%	204.3	\$0.92	\$187.32	\$3.97	\$811
EATON RE-2	33.0%	205.8	\$0.87	\$179.95	\$3.85	\$791
PRIMERO REORGANIZED 2	93.4%	206.5	\$0.85	\$175.15	\$3.61	\$746
BOULDER VALLEY RE 2	27.5%	212.5	\$1.95	\$414.01	\$9.51	\$2,021
MONTROSE COUNTY RE-1J	29.9%	217.9	\$0.88	\$192.51	\$4.79	\$1,044
CONSOLIDATED C-1	46.5%	218.5	\$1.04	\$227.02	\$4.67	\$1,021
RANGELY RE-4	50.6%	222.4	\$0.83	\$184.83	\$3.40	\$755
ROARING FORK RE-1	24.3%	229.8	\$1.26	\$290.28	\$5.87	\$1,349
MANITOU SPRINGS 14	30.2%	230.0	\$1.45	\$332.87	\$6.75	\$1,553
WRAY RE-2	89.3%	234.6	\$0.63	\$146.90	\$1.16	\$272
VILAS RE-5	27.9%	237.6	\$0.46	\$108.63	\$2.96	\$704
LEWIS-PALMER 38	28.6%	242.2	\$1.10	\$266.07	\$5.03	\$1,219

FY22 District Transportation Data

District	Eligible share of total enrollment	Miles per eligible student	Reimbursement per mile	Reimbursement per eligible pupil	Operating expenditure per mile	Operating expenditure per eligible student
BUENA VISTA R-31	25.1%	249.7	\$1.16	\$290.20	\$5.34	\$1,333
DURANGO 9-R	24.3%	250.4	\$1.04	\$259.93	\$4.70	\$1,176
THOMPSON R-2J	22.5%	253.1	\$1.34	\$338.51	\$6.24	\$1,580
CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE (CSI)	5.4%	259.3	\$1.14	\$296.75	\$5.33	\$1,382
BENNETT 29J	62.3%	269.8	\$0.71	\$191.90	\$2.88	\$777
BRUSH RE-2(J)	30.5%	269.9	\$0.99	\$267.30	\$4.37	\$1,180
MANZANOLA 3J	17.9%	270.0	\$1.87	\$504.56	\$8.40	\$2,268
ELLCOTT 22	104.2%	271.5	\$0.52	\$141.20	\$1.99	\$540
BRANSON REORGANIZED 82	14.7%	273.8	\$0.95	\$260.00	\$3.50	\$957
FORT MORGAN RE-3	15.1%	278.2	\$1.42	\$393.86	\$5.74	\$1,596
CANON CITY RE-1	13.8%	281.6	\$1.14	\$321.68	\$5.29	\$1,491
ENGLEWOOD 1	9.8%	281.9	\$2.49	\$702.78	\$12.14	\$3,421
MEEKER RE1	37.2%	281.9	\$0.71	\$198.87	\$2.94	\$830
PRAIRIE RE-11	61.8%	284.0	\$0.96	\$273.73	\$3.14	\$891
WOODLAND PARK RE-2	43.1%	291.7	\$1.01	\$293.94	\$1.06	\$311
KEENESBURG RE-3(J)	29.7%	307.6	\$0.93	\$285.17	\$4.15	\$1,276
MC CLAVE RE-2	58.6%	307.7	\$0.56	\$173.01	\$2.40	\$739
CROWLEY COUNTY RE-1-J	39.8%	312.7	\$0.68	\$211.92	\$2.67	\$835
DOLORES RE-4A	29.8%	315.1	\$0.90	\$283.66	\$3.91	\$1,232
HAYDEN RE-1	22.0%	319.4	\$1.20	\$383.10	\$5.57	\$1,778
CRIPPLE CREEK-VICTOR RE-1	40.3%	322.2	\$1.74	\$561.72	\$7.10	\$2,288
NORWOOD R-2J	33.7%	322.5	\$0.91	\$292.03	\$2.96	\$954
PUEBLO 70	26.0%	332.4	\$0.84	\$280.60	\$3.75	\$1,246
VALLEY RE-1	16.1%	339.5	\$1.05	\$355.02	\$3.75	\$1,275
IGNACIO 11 JT	41.9%	347.9	\$1.24	\$430.39	\$5.09	\$1,772
MOUNTAIN VALLEY RE 1	49.7%	352.0	\$0.80	\$281.82	\$2.85	\$1,003
CALHAN RJ-1	63.0%	358.5	\$0.84	\$301.44	\$3.73	\$1,339
DE BEQUE 49JT	11.0%	370.9	\$0.82	\$303.53	\$3.74	\$1,386
STRATTON R-4	29.9%	386.9	\$0.63	\$245.04	\$2.66	\$1,029
FALCON 49	8.0%	388.0	\$1.29	\$499.31	\$5.98	\$2,321
BYERS 32J	4.7%	391.2	\$0.68	\$266.33	\$2.78	\$1,089
DEER TRAIL 26J	48.8%	394.4	\$0.49	\$192.54	\$1.71	\$673
LAS ANIMAS RE-1	17.4%	395.9	\$0.52	\$205.79	\$2.00	\$790
FOWLER R-4J	29.8%	404.4	\$0.60	\$244.55	\$2.01	\$812
ASPEN 1	51.5%	406.1	\$0.69	\$280.67	\$2.78	\$1,131
FRENCHMAN RE-3	43.8%	416.2	\$0.72	\$297.97	\$2.91	\$1,210

FY22 District Transportation Data

District	Eligible share of total enrollment	Miles per eligible student	Reimbursement per mile	Reimbursement per eligible pupil	Operating expenditure per mile	Operating expenditure per eligible student
ARRIBA-FLAGLER C-20	92.1%	422.0	\$0.77	\$326.35	\$1.72	\$726
RIDGWAY R-2	43.9%	423.9	\$0.77	\$328.16	\$3.26	\$1,383
BIG SANDY 100J	52.6%	426.0	\$0.84	\$357.77	\$3.66	\$1,558
LIBERTY RJ-4	101.6%	438.2	\$0.66	\$290.97	\$2.68	\$1,173
MOFFAT 2	41.9%	441.9	\$0.99	\$439.05	\$3.85	\$1,701
GRANADA RE-1	20.9%	467.7	\$0.73	\$342.93	\$3.06	\$1,432
MIAMI/YODER 60 JT	101.6%	470.1	\$0.58	\$271.00	\$2.20	\$1,033
AGATE 300	51.2%	472.2	\$1.03	\$486.09	\$4.42	\$2,088
IDALIA RD-3	95.7%	496.0	\$0.54	\$267.43	\$2.06	\$1,021
AKRON R-1	43.6%	497.6	\$0.67	\$334.12	\$2.75	\$1,369
HAXTUN RE-2J	37.2%	500.0	\$0.57	\$285.73	\$2.21	\$1,107
DOLORES COUNTY RE NO.2	50.4%	504.9	\$0.76	\$383.41	\$3.22	\$1,627
FORT LUPTON RE-8	16.6%	510.4	\$1.11	\$566.50	\$4.51	\$2,301
EAST GRAND 2	33.0%	527.5	\$0.66	\$347.93	\$2.68	\$1,415
HOLLY RE-3	31.6%	528.8	\$0.58	\$307.15	\$1.49	\$787
BRIGGSDALE RE-10	69.4%	557.6	\$0.61	\$342.39	\$2.32	\$1,293
PLATEAU RE-5	78.1%	558.1	\$0.63	\$350.41	\$2.49	\$1,390
LAMAR RE-2	6.9%	561.5	\$0.72	\$404.72	\$3.04	\$1,708
LA VETA RE-2	2.9%	589.5	\$1.26	\$742.50	\$4.98	\$2,933
AGUILAR REORGANIZED 6	27.2%	598.1	\$0.86	\$517.19	\$3.10	\$1,851
CREEDE CONSOLIDATED 1	42.3%	646.9	\$0.30	\$196.30	\$0.48	\$308
SPRINGFIELD RE-4	30.2%	681.0	\$0.54	\$368.44	\$1.68	\$1,143
EDISON 54 JT	52.6%	734.0	\$0.68	\$495.72	\$2.71	\$1,987
LONE STAR 101	37.6%	747.6	\$0.57	\$426.47	\$2.16	\$1,611
ARICKAREE R-2	100.0%	750.8	\$0.52	\$389.82	\$1.92	\$1,444
HI-PLAINS R-23	78.4%	766.8	\$0.47	\$359.13	\$1.63	\$1,247
PLATTE VALLEY RE-3	21.1%	782.1	\$0.78	\$608.39	\$2.64	\$2,067
HANOVER 28	61.1%	814.9	\$0.64	\$524.68	\$2.68	\$2,183
PAWNEE RE-12	82.9%	849.9	\$0.70	\$591.66	\$2.69	\$2,286
HUERFANO RE-1	13.7%	861.8	\$0.97	\$836.47	\$3.97	\$3,421
JULESBURG RE-1	1.9%	869.3	\$0.67	\$582.07	\$2.28	\$1,986
EADS RE-1	30.1%	914.0	\$0.46	\$417.98	\$1.59	\$1,454
BETHUNE R-5	30.6%	938.1	\$0.40	\$375.09	\$1.17	\$1,097
YUMA COUNTY 1	16.4%	961.7	\$0.47	\$450.58	\$2.51	\$2,416
HOLYOKE RE-1J	11.2%	1007.9	\$0.79	\$795.22	\$2.92	\$2,946
PRITCHETT RE-3	25.8%	1127.2	\$0.54	\$605.65	\$2.03	\$2,287
PLAINVIEW RE-2	13.1%	1132.5	\$0.56	\$629.11	\$2.36	\$2,674
WALSH RE-1	42.2%	1150.8	\$0.40	\$464.04	\$0.50	\$572

FY22 District Transportation Data						
District	Eligible share of total enrollment	Miles per eligible student	Reimbursement per mile	Reimbursement per eligible pupil	Operating expenditure per mile	Operating expenditure per eligible student
WOODLIN R-104	83.3%	1166.4	\$0.52	\$603.92	\$8.57	\$9,991
CAMPO RE-6	41.2%	1184.9	\$0.49	\$576.05	\$1.75	\$2,079
CHEYENNE COUNTY RE-5	12.8%	1226.5	\$0.83	\$1,023.46	\$2.93	\$3,592
GENOA-HUGO C113	29.6%	1393.7	\$0.38	\$527.51	\$1.24	\$1,728
KIOWA C-2	33.3%	1484.7	\$0.32	\$469.52	\$0.85	\$1,267
KARVAL RE-23	72.1%	1585.2	\$0.36	\$571.45	\$1.01	\$1,593
KIM REORGANIZED 88	96.9%	1648.3	\$0.38	\$629.90	\$1.10	\$1,821
KIT CARSON R-1	43.0%	1701.2	\$0.58	\$988.81	\$2.06	\$3,505
LIMON RE-4J	29.2%	1978.0	\$0.28	\$553.12	\$0.63	\$1,254
CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN 12	0.7%	2101.5	\$1.31	\$2,751.65	\$3.62	\$7,616
NORTH PARK R-1	11.0%	2477.3	\$0.12	\$289.84	\$0.24	\$595
HINSDALE COUNTY RE 1	2.6%	4140.0	\$0.26	\$1,074.00	\$0.58	\$2,390
SILVERTON 1	0.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
WIGGINS RE-50(J)	0.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

ⁱ <https://codes.findlaw.com/co/title-22-education/co-rev-st-sect-22-32-113.html>

ⁱⁱ

http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/cms/lib/CO01900837/Centricity/Domain/53/Routing_Eligibility.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ https://cosfp.org/wp-content/uploads/edbuild_-co_-_categoricals_-_final.pdf

^{iv} <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/sftransp>

^v "Bright Rides." Bright Rides, 2022, brightrides.org. Accessed 9 Jan. 2023.

^{vi} <https://aforarizona.org/2022/05/08/driving-excellence-a-for-arizona-release-k-12-transportation-policy-brief>

^{vii} https://aforarizona.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Driving-Excellence_May-2022.pdf

^{viii} <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/sftransp>