

## Shrinking State Funds Trigger Student Bus Safety Concerns

By Claire Suggs, Senior Education Policy Analyst

Shrinking state funding for student transportation and rising costs are making it more difficult for school districts across Georgia to get children to and from school safely. The worsening financial pinch leaves districts with aging bus fleets on the road past their intended life, concerns about student safety and far fewer dollars to invest in the classroom.

*(This report includes a sampling of responses from district administrators to a recent GBPI survey question about busing costs.)*

***“Our buses are beyond the planned life and require extensive labor to repair and maintain. Lack of training is a primary safety concern.”***

*-DeKalb County Schools*

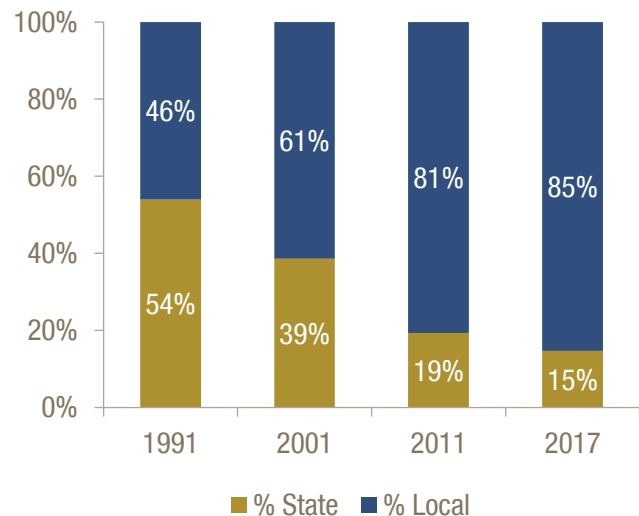
Georgia’s shift of transportation costs from the state treasury to districts is a trend 20 years in the making and affects every district regardless of size and location.

## Decades-Long Slide in State Funding

The state requires districts to provide transportation to all students who live 1.5 miles or more from their schools as well as all for all special education students. At the expense of districts, many school systems also bus students who live within 1.5 miles due to safety concerns, such as a lack of sidewalks, congested intersections and unsafe places to walk. The state should cover the expense of busing these students, according to a 2000 Senate study committee report that examined the transportation formula. The General Assembly never acted on this recommendation.<sup>1</sup>

The state contributed less than 15 percent of the \$884 million districts spent in the 2017 fiscal year to bus students. This is well below the portion it covered in the past.

**State Covers a Dwindling Share of Transportation Costs**

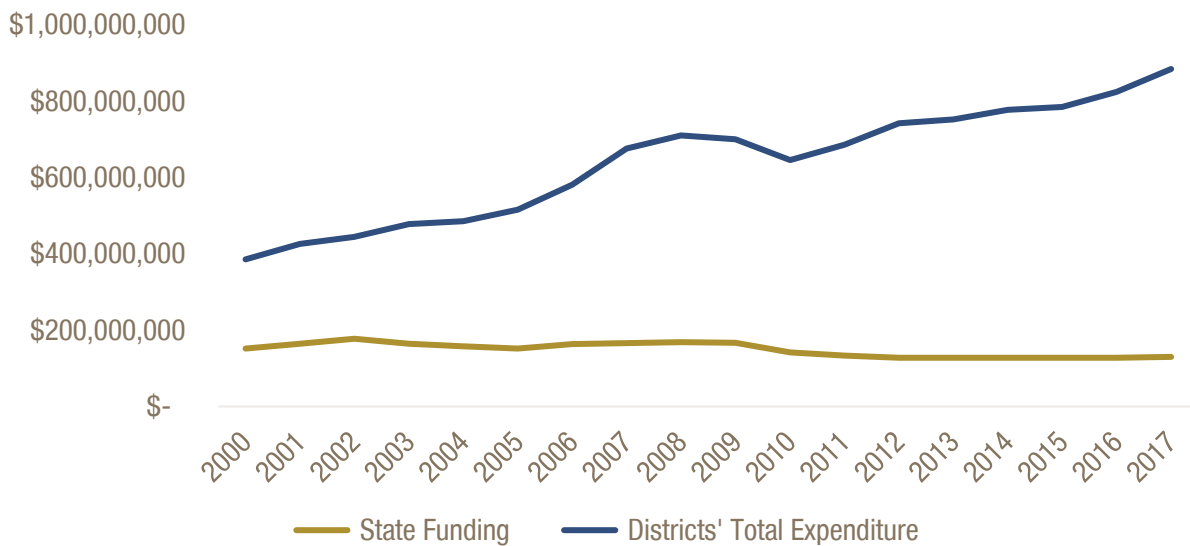


Source: Final Report of the Senate Study Committee on School Transportation, Nutrition and Support Personnel (2000). Georgia State Senate. GBPI analysis of District Expenditure Reports, fiscal years 2001, 2011 and 2017, and State Mid-term Allotment Sheets, fiscal years 2001, 2011 and 2017, Georgia Department of Education.

One culprit for this decline is the state’s failure to provide the full amount of funding calculated by its own transportation formula. The state’s funding formula called for sending \$320 million to districts in 2017, but instead the legislature approved just \$130 million.

A second cause is rising transportation costs, which are not accounted for in the formula. For example, the number of bus drivers funded through the formula is well below the number of drivers districts now employ to keep pace with enrollment growth. The state also eliminated funding for health insurance for bus drivers, pushing that hefty expense onto districts. School systems also cope with higher fuel taxes and additional tag fees.<sup>2</sup>

### Transportation Cost Rises, State Funding Does Not



Source: District Expenditure Reports, fiscal years 2000 through 2017, and State Mid-term Allotment Sheets, fiscal years 2000 through 2017, Georgia Department of Education.

Another significant financial strain is the state’s low and inconsistent allocation of money for bus replacement. In 2000 the state allotted \$34.5 million to replace buses. That amount drops to \$22.5 million in the proposed 2018 amended budget.<sup>3</sup> Between those years, state funding for bus replacement fluctuated but the overall trend is downward. These spending levels are not sufficient to replace the growing number of buses that are 15 years or older and need to be retired. If the state maintained funding at an inflation-adjusted 2000 level, Georgia would invest nearly \$50 million in bus replacement in 2019.

There are 3,638 buses 15 years or older, about 24 percent of the school buses in daily use across Georgia.<sup>4</sup> The number of buses ready to age out of service grows each year. Buses that are 15 years old “have body and chassis fatigue, have a higher rate of engine and transmission failure, and do not include the latest safety upgrades,” including improved crash and rollover protection, anti-lock braking systems and rear motorist alert signs.<sup>5</sup>

A basic bus with no extras such as air conditioning costs \$77,220.<sup>6</sup> Most districts spend more to ensure buses provide air conditioning and additional features to enhance safety. Georgia districts paid an average of \$92,365 for a bus in the 2017 fiscal year that began July 2016.



The \$7.5 million in bonds allotted in the 2018 budget is estimated to allow about 97 buses to be replaced.<sup>7</sup> Gov. Nathan Deal’s proposed amended budget for 2018 includes an additional \$15 million, enough to replace about 194 more buses. The total amount allocated in 2018 is enough to replace about 5 percent of buses 15 years and older. The governor’s proposed 2019 budget does not include any funding for bus replacement.

School districts are trying to replace buses with local revenue but limited local money restricts how quickly they can do so.

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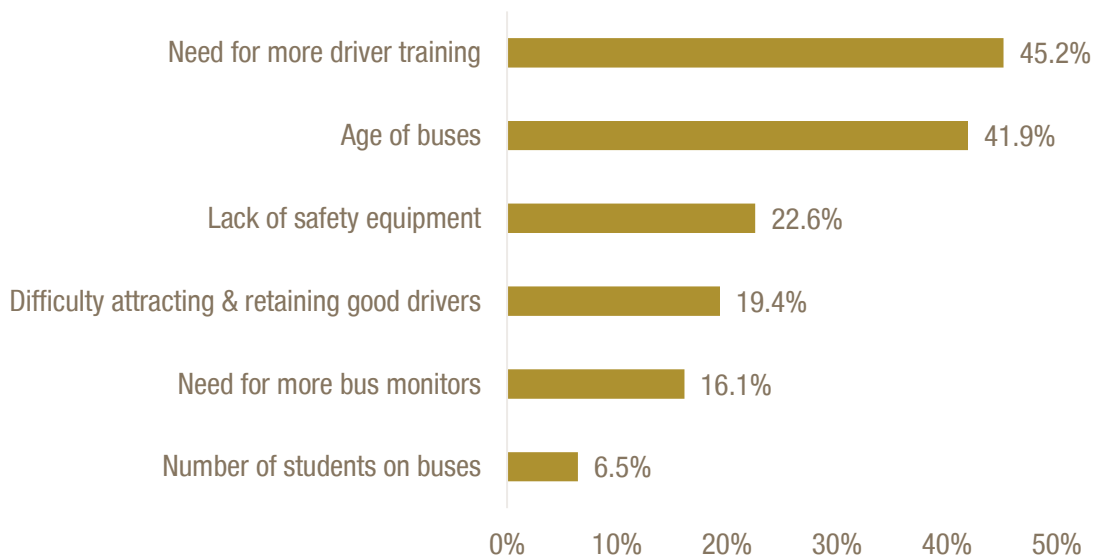
***“We currently have to purchase buses on a four-year lease/purchase agreement and can only afford to lease one bus at a time. We can’t even afford a three-year lease/purchase.”***  
*-Trentlen County Schools*

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## ■ Impact of Transportation Funding Crunch

In summer 2017, GBPI surveyed superintendents about student transportation needs and costs. More than one-quarter of respondents indicated they had concerns about student safety on buses.<sup>8</sup> Most described multiple deficiencies and cited lack of driver training and age of buses most frequently.

### Superintendents’ Bus Safety Concerns



Source: GBPI 2017 School District Survey

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***“The high number of children on some of our routes creates safety concerns when supervised by only one driver. Bus monitors could help with supervision and help reduce discipline issues. Aging buses also tend to break down more often than later model buses. A bus on the side of the road is a great concern, creating loading/unloading issues and children arriving late to school or home.”***

*-Dade County Schools*

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While safety is the most urgent concern, lack of adequate state transportation funding creates other challenges for districts. The age of districts' bus fleets drives up local transportation expenses. Older buses cost more to maintain and are less fuel efficient.

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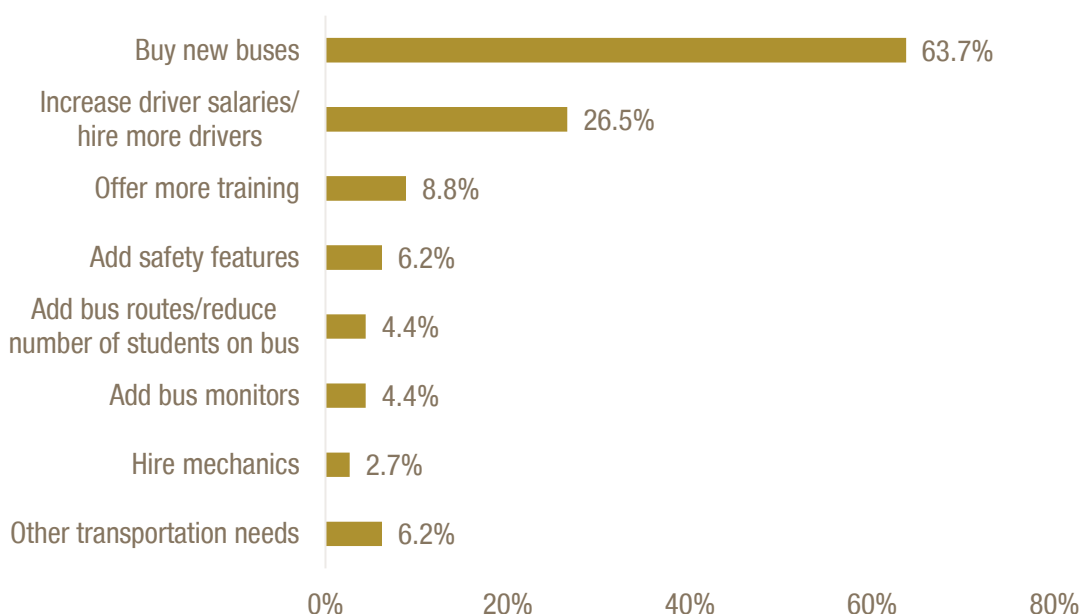
***“We have a very old fleet and have had to hire two mechanics to keep costs down for repairs and maintenance. We still have buses from the 1990s on the road.”***

*-White County Schools*

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Inadequate funding also means districts cannot make critical investments to improve other aspects of their transportation operations. Purchasing new buses is a priority but, if provided more money, districts also want shore up driver quality and other key elements.

### Districts' Critical Transportation Needs



Source: GBPI 2017 School District Survey

Many districts grapple with multiple needs across their transportation programs.

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***“We have to watch our tires closely to get the very largest number of miles out of them without being unsafe for our students. Our fleet is getting old and we need to replace some of the buses. We pay our drivers the absolute lowest salary and, therefore, have a very difficult time finding drivers.”***

*-Turner County Schools*

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A few school districts also noted less common problems including lack of buses suitable for students with special needs as well as insufficient money to cover field trips and transportation for students who participate in after-school programs.

Insufficient transportation funding drains other areas of districts' operations, including instruction. More state investment in transportation, according to survey respondents, can allow districts to redirect local funds to:

- Instruction and school operations including reducing class size, adding instructional coaches, instructional materials, and expanded course offerings
- Reduce millage rate
- Cover rising health care costs
- Reduce deficit

## Conclusion

The state must ensure safe travel for Georgia's students to and from school each day. Lawmakers should fully fund the existing transportation formula and supply enough money to get old buses off the roads. The Georgia Department of Education proposed several options for replacing buses older than 15 years.<sup>9</sup> It estimates that an investment of \$62 million annually between fiscal years 2019 and 2022 will allow districts to replace these old buses. Student safety is at stake, so Georgia lawmakers should not hesitate to make this investment.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Georgia State Senate. (2000). Final Report of the Senate Study Committee on School Transportation, Nutrition and Support Personnel. Atlanta, GA: Same. Retrieved from:

<http://www.senate.ga.gov/sro/Documents/StudyCommRpts/00SchoolTransNutRpt.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Georgia Department of Education. (2017) *Pupil Transportation Division Legislative Report*. Atlanta, GA: Same.

<sup>3</sup> Bus replacement money were allotted through the transportation formula until fiscal year 2008. In subsequent years, they were funded through bonds including \$7.5 million in the original 2018 budget. The proposed amended fiscal year 2018 budget includes an additional \$15 million paid out through the Georgia Department of Education's business and finance administration unit.

<sup>4</sup> Georgia Department of Education. (2017) *Pupil Transportation Division Legislative Report*. Atlanta, GA: Same.

<sup>5</sup> Georgia Department of Education. (2017) *Pupil Transportation Division Legislative Report*. Atlanta, GA: Same.

<sup>6</sup> According to the Georgia Department of Education, the cost of a basic bus is \$77,220. A basic bus has no extras including air conditioning. The average actual bus price paid by Georgia districts in fiscal year 2017 was \$92,365. (Georgia Department of Education. (2017) *Pupil Transportation Division Legislative Report*. Atlanta, GA: Same.)

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<sup>8</sup> 113 of Georgia's 180 school districts provided responses to the transportation questions on GBPI's survey.

<sup>9</sup> Georgia Department of Education. (2017) *Pupil Transportation Division Legislative Report*. Atlanta, GA: Same.

## Appendix

District name	How would your district be affected if the transportation formula was fully funded?
<b>Appling County Schools</b>	The amount of the shortfall would allow for the system to hire approximately 15 teachers.
<b>Atlanta Independent School System</b>	The district would be affected in a positive manner relative to our ability to serve students. With a funding formula that covers more of the district's gap general fund costs. Moreover, the district would be better suited to maintain and repair our fleet, upgrade systems to route buses and ensure equipment is up to date.
<b>Bacon County Schools</b>	Buses could be replaced when needed and undue repair expenses would not have to burden local tax dollars. Driver pay could be increased to a reasonable amount which would help with driver retention.
<b>Baker County Schools</b>	The Baker County School District would use that additional transportation funding to provide students with a late bus for after school club meetings, sport practices and after school tutoring sessions. In a poor rural area like ours some of our students ride the bus anywhere from 30-45 minutes to and from school and if not for the bus would not have any transportation to and from school. Providing a late bus would allow those students the opportunity to participate in those activities listed above.
<b>Banks County Schools</b>	I would prefer to reduce the deficit budget amount more; however, we are currently having to buy buses with ELOST funds and we could remain with the same deficit and this increase would allow us to spend those current bus funds on technology improvements for our students. We also might consider adding another activity bus to our fleet.
<b>Barrow County School System</b>	Our fleet of buses are getting older and with growth in our system we are unable to maintain a true 15-year replacement cycle on our buses. So, we would be able to buy additional/safer buses. Hire additional bus drivers so our office staff and mechanics could concentrate on their jobs rather than filling in for bus drivers.
<b>Bartow County Schools</b>	Restore bus fleet
<b>Ben Hill County School District</b>	State funding in this system equals about 32% of the actual cost of providing transportation for students during the school year. For this system the full funding dollars provided would mean that approximately six buses could be purchased to refresh a fleet that is in severe need of new buses. The system is still operating some buses that are over twenty years old.
<b>Berrien County Schools</b>	Purchase additional buses so rotation of the buses would be adequate.
<b>Bibb County School District</b>	We would be able to purchase more buses to improve the health of our bus fleet. We could also provide additional professional training days for our bus drivers.

<b>Bleckley County Schools</b>	Instead of pushing our fleet long past its expected useful life, we could upgrade our fleet of school buses. We could also install cameras on all buses both internal and "stop-arm" cameras to increase the safety of our students. We could pay drivers more in order to attract more qualified drivers. We currently struggle to attract and retain good drivers.
<b>Brooks County Schools</b>	We would be able to update our fleet and have more reliable buses and improve the quality of our school bus drivers and bus safety.
<b>Buford City Schools</b>	We would provide additional support to our transportation department with personnel, utilize the funds for maintaining our current fleet, and provide additional professional learning for our drivers.
<b>Bulloch County Schools</b>	<p>Additional new buses would be purchased to get our school system up to the expected schedule of buses; increase in driver and monitor pay to help with recruiting and retaining good employees; hire one additional mechanic to handle the volume of AC issues on buses rather than outsourcing all of this work; increase safety training for drivers.</p> <p>We have developed a funding formula by which we allocate funds to each school principal. The principal then decides on the number of personnel and programs that are offered at his or her school to best meet the needs of their particular students. We were unable to fully fund our new funding formula based on monetary constraints. If we had received the full Transportation funds, we most likely would have been able to fully fund our formula to the schools.</p>
<b>Burke County Schools</b>	Full funding of the transportation formula would allow BC to fund additional bus driver salaries as well as the purchase of school buses.
<b>Calhoun City Schools</b>	We would hire additional drivers in order to reduce the number of students on our buses and/or purchase buses.
<b>Calhoun County Schools</b>	We would be able to update our bus fleet.
<b>Camden County Schools</b>	<p>Currently bus purchases are funded partially by the state bond grant and partially by local revenue. These funds would reduce the burden on the local funding.</p> <p>In additional the funds would reduce the current strain on the general fund for supplies, training, bus repairs, and other transportation related costs.</p>
<b>Candler County Schools</b>	There is a shortage in bus drivers. If transportation was fully funded we could increase recruitment, training, and incentives to obtain the number of drivers needed to run all routes.
<b>Carroll County Schools</b>	Being fully funded would allow us to provide more consistent service because we would have less break downs due to the age of our fleet. In addition, a newer fleet would provide us with a smaller carbon foot print.
<b>Cartersville School System</b>	This would be a great assistance in helping us reduce local taxes as well as reduce budget pressure in the transportation area.
<b>Charlton County Schools</b>	Reestablish a bus replacement program

<b>Chattahoochee County Schools</b>	We have not qualified for bus bonds in several years. Our fleet is old. We would purchase one 84 passenger bus and add cameras to all buses
<b>Chattooga County Schools</b>	Hire additional drivers and replace older buses more frequently
<b>Cherokee County School District</b>	Cherokee County School District spends almost \$20 Million now on pupil transportation, with over \$18 Million of that coming from local property tax collections. If transportation were fully funded within the QBE formula, the School District would be in a position to roll-back the property tax millage rate by up to 2.5 mills, a significant (13.2%) reduction in the overall millage rate in Cherokee County.
<b>Clarke County School District</b>	Reduce the deficit that is predicated for the current budget for FY2018. CCSD plans a deficit of about \$3 million for the 2018 budget.
<b>Clayton County Public Schools</b>	Increase driver and mechanic salaries, upgrade the maintenance shop and purchase new buses.
<b>Cobb County School District</b>	Additional Local funding would be freed up to pay for additional needs based on the District's strategic plan.
<b>Coffee County School System</b>	Our district would be able to purchase much needed buses and also purchase new bus engines. Additional safety training could be implemented as well.
<b>Columbia County School District</b>	Hire more staff needed in central transportation office, need to replace bus barn that is 50+ years old, help offset local cost
<b>Commerce City Schools</b>	Buy new buses
<b>Coweta County School System</b>	Would allow our system to purchase additional buses and to improve salary and benefits to retain and recruit bus drivers
<b>Crisp County Schools</b>	We have to use lots of local funds to support our transportation cost. We could that local money to other instructional areas.
<b>Dade County Schools</b>	Transportation is an area of great concern today for Dade County Schools. It is difficult to purchase and keep late model buses on our routes. The maintenance costs rise with the aging of our fleet. Lack of applicants for drivers because of low salaries and benefits compound the issues with meeting the transportation needs of our students. Professional learning is needed to keep our staff up-to-date on safety issues and bus protocols. If fully funded some of these concerns could be addressed with scheduled purchases of new buses to replace older model vehicles, providing incentives to attract quality drivers, providing for bus monitors, professional development, and reducing the number of students on routes with high numbers.
<b>Dalton Public Schools</b>	If transportation was fully funded where total state revenues actually increased, and assuming the state does not reduce another area to fund transportation, this could provide more financial resources that lessen the burden on the local tax payer. It could also provide resources that enables the district to make improvements in other areas of our operations - like instruction. The district would like to add math coaches and instructional technology coaches, but currently do not have the resources to do so.



<b>Dawson County Schools</b>	Reduce millage rate
<b>Decatur County Schools</b>	New buses to replace our aging fleet. We have 70+ buses and are currently only able to replace one per year.
<b>DeKalb County School District</b>	The extra funding would provide much needed buses, allowing for a true lifecycle management plan with regards to buses and equipment. Additionally, bus driver and technician training could be increased to meet the growing shortage and lack of highly qualified personnel now available. The increased funds may provide additional funding to increase pay and to recruit highly qualified personnel.
<b>Dodge County Schools</b>	We would use these funds to upgrade our bus fleet and hire a much needed additional mechanic in the shop.
<b>Dooly County School District</b>	Be able to update fleet of vehicles. Improve safety features on buses and be able to hire monitors for buses for the safety of the students. It would free up federal funds to be used in the after school program.
<b>Dougherty County School System</b>	Receiving an additional \$1.7 million would allow our district, which is in a high poverty area where almost half of our students need transportation, to speed up the purchase of new equipment and buses, provide additional training and support for bus drivers and it would allow us to rely less on special local option sales taxes which can be volatile given the nature of our current economy.
<b>Douglas County School District</b>	We would increase pay for drivers and monitors and replace our older buses.
<b>Dublin City Schools</b>	<p>Our district would receive \$184,744.95 in additional funding for transportation. These funds would allow for us to purchase two more buses on top of the bus we are purchasing with the help of the state's bus bonds.</p> <p>We would purchase a, desperately needed, special education lift bus and also a small activity bus that could be used for special education, as well as, other activities/trips for our system. Our current special education buses are dated 2001 (29 passenger), 2003, and 2006. Only two of those have a wheelchair lifts. We do have a spare special education lift bus, but is a 1990 (27 years old). Our reasoning for an activity bus is that you can have drivers that do not have a CDL drive this bus. Due to the driver shortage we face, this would come in handy. Buying both of these buses, we would spend around \$150 K.</p> <p>The remainder of these funds could help with our diesel expenses, as well as, provide our system an opportunity to develop a driver benefit package that would entice our drivers into longevity with the system. We could, also, build a great package as we continue to try and recruit drivers into our system. We have several drivers who are nearing retirement and our greatest concern is recruiting a younger generation to replace them. These funds could definitely help us in that regard.</p>
<b>Early County Schools</b>	We would be able to purchase new buses to modernize our fleet. All would be air conditioned. We could provide more monitoring for safety with an improved camera system.

<b>Evans County Schools</b>	We would be able to go back to purchasing 2 new buses per year to reduce bus maintenance costs and refresh a very aged fleet.
<b>Fayette County Schools</b>	If transportation were fully funded, additional system funds would be freed up to assist in other areas. The district has minimal flexibility in how transportation resources are utilized. However, other areas are often impacted due to an overall lack of funding. The district would use the additional funding to impact instructional and classroom support resources.
<b>Forsyth County Schools</b>	Increase in the compensation package to recruit and maintain professional drivers.
<b>Franklin County Schools</b>	We currently have over 50% of our fleet that are 10 + years old, this would allow us to update our fleet to meet DOE recommendations for fleet age.
<b>Fulton County Schools</b>	If FCS received full funding under the transportation formula, it would like other districts, use these funds to purchase/replace school buses. Without adhering to the QBE transportation formula, districts within the state cannot meet a suggested 10-year bus replacement cycle. FCS now solely relies on SPLOST money for bus replacements.
<b>Glynn County Schools</b>	Our transportation budget is \$5,803,700 which does not include any funds for new buses. According to the formula we earn \$2,998,673.04 and we are only allotted \$1,131,555.87 with a shortfall according to the state of \$1,867,117.17 but as you can see the state has an unrealistic funding formula for transportation. Our true shortfall is \$4,672,144.13. However, from the states perspective if we were fully funded based on their inadequate formula we will still be short \$2,805,026.96 to provide transportation in Glynn County.
<b>Gordon County Schools</b>	We could give our bus drivers and mechanics a much needed increase in pay, purchase replacements buses for our aging fleet and decrease our millage rate to help reduce some of the burden on our local taxpayers.
<b>Grady County Schools</b>	Purchase new buses thus reducing maintenance costs to system. Possible increase in driver salaries to aid in driver retention and alleviation of driver shortage
<b>Gwinnett County Public Schools</b>	GCPS will receive less funding through the QBE transportation formula in FY18 than it did 10 years ago, while the district has grown by almost 23,000 students. If additional funding for student transportation were to occur this would allow GCPS to:  -- Earmark these funds to aid in supporting the daily operating costs for the transportation program, thus allowing the district to utilize the local monies currently funding this program to be reallocated to support teachers / students in the classroom (instructional materials, instructional support services, student support services)  -- Use additional state funding for a bus replacement program
<b>Habersham County School District</b>	Positively. We would be able to purchase an additional eleven (11) school buses per year to replace aging fleet. Operating newer buses will increase fuel efficiency and lower maintenance costs.

<b>Haralson County School District</b>	We would be able to update our fleet of buses and get back on track with our replacement schedule. We also could increase our efforts for recruitment, retention and training for our drivers.
<b>Heard County Schools</b>	We would be able to absolutely eliminate our deficit spending. Our current transportation budget runs over \$1 million. This full funding would allow us to balance our budget and also give us funds with which to separate our elementary and middle/high students instead of them all riding together. We would be able to run separate elementary and middle/high routes.
<b>Henry County Schools</b>	The current QBE transportation formula does not cover our annual fuel cost. If operating costs were fully funded, revenue could be used in areas of technology, professional learning and the instructional classroom for student achievement.
<b>Houston County Schools</b>	It would free up the local dollars required to fund our transportation costs. The state only funds 13% of our actual Transportation costs each year.
<b>Jackson County Schools</b>	Jackson County Schools presently has 102 busses. 75% of these busses are fully depreciated and require extensive maintenance. If transportation were appropriately funded, the district would be able to utilize those funds to better support transportation needs and ultimately free up funds to support the instructional program needs.
<b>Jasper County Schools</b>	Yes, fully funding transportation would give us an additional 1 million to use in the general operations of the school
<b>Jeff Davis County Schools</b>	The system would hire more bus drivers, raise the salary to make the job more desirable, hire another mechanic to lessen the work load and out sourcing of repairs, update equipment.
<b>Jefferson City Schools</b>	We could offer the drivers additional salary, so that we could potentially retain more drivers to fill critical positions.
<b>Jefferson County Schools</b>	We'd be able to try to get our fleet caught back up (this is another area that we've limped along in due to QBE earned funds not paid to us (austerity). Maybe an increase in bus driver pay....and it'd go a long way in covering rising cost of health insurance.
<b>Johnson County Schools</b>	We would be able to purchase much needed buses. We would not have to use SPLOST funds for this hopefully.
<b>Jones County School System</b>	We could replace older buses that are out of warranty.  We would be able to implement salary increases for bus drivers in order to maintain and recruit bus drivers for the system.
<b>Lamar County Schools</b>	We wouldn't have a shortage of bus drivers, and could replace older worn out buses at a faster rate rather than just waiting on the state transportation bond
<b>Lanier County Schools</b>	Purchase additional buses

<b>Laurens County Schools</b>	Laurens County is one of the largest counties in the state with 88 bus routes. QBE is not sufficient to fund the district's transportation costs. Laurens County's transportation budget is 3,000,000 and QBE funding is \$953,426. Local revenues and general fund balance is used to supplement the transportation budget.
<b>Lee County Schools</b>	The additional funding would be used to offset the real cost of transportation and those funds would be put back to use in the classroom to reduce class size by hiring additional teachers which have been reduced from austerity and never replaced as that funding returned but was taken away with higher health insurance cost for non-certified employees.
<b>Lincoln County School District</b>	We would be able to afford newer, more reliable and safer buses for the transportation of our students.
<b>Long County School District</b>	Long County School District would be able to upgrade an aging bus fleet.
<b>Lowndes County School System</b>	We would be able to update our fleet with newer, more energy efficient buses.
<b>Lumpkin County Schools</b>	Lumpkin \$908,662.03 \$423,306.14 \$(485,355.89)  Purchase additional buses and increase compensation for bus drivers.
<b>Madison County Schools</b>	Newer buses, shorter routes
<b>Miller County Schools</b>	The District would be able to purchase a 33 passenger bus.
<b>Monroe County Schools</b>	We would be able to increase bus driver's salaries, add bus monitor positions and purchase additional buses and needed equipment, such as cameras for all of our buses.
<b>Morgan County Schools</b>	Purchase of buses
<b>Murray County Public Schools</b>	Replace buses older than 10 years that are currently being used in providing the every day route service. Many buses used in daily routes are older than 10 years but must continue to be used for everyday route service.
<b>Muscogee County School District</b>	The district would use these funds to fund the critical work that is essential to achieving the district's mission, vision, values and strategic anchors as we work to become a premier school district.

<p><b>Oconee County Schools</b></p>	<p>Oconee County Schools would receive an additional \$994,000 if the Transportation formula was fully funded. This money would be used to modernize our aging fleet which would result in an increase in overall safety and reliability. The modernized fleet would help in the efficiencies of fuel usage and lessen repair costs. Although Oconee County Schools meets the required safety standards, additional funds would enhance our efforts. This additional earned funding will also allow allocations of local funds to be redirected specifically towards instructional needs.</p> <p>Additional school trips would be planned to allow our students to participate in opportunities not available on our campus.</p> <p>As our special needs population increases, the demand for specific adaptations require added funding, training and equipment. These adaptations further strain our local funding stream.</p>
<p><b>Oglethorpe County Schools</b></p>	<p>We would be able to replace our aging buses. Many are 15 years or more.</p> <p>Add additional routes which would shorten the travel time for students - many students travel close to 2 hours per route.</p>
<p><b>Paulding County School District</b></p>	<p>If the transportation formula was fully funded, it would allow us to focus more resources on Instruction, decreasing class sizes and increasing program support (such as ESEP). Another possibility would be to increase technology expenditures.</p>
<p><b>Pierce County School District</b></p>	<p>It would be a tremendous benefit. For FY18 we earned \$444,774 for transportation in the QBE allotment. To operate our transportation system, it is necessary to appropriate \$1.4 million. We also need to replace many buses due to age and mechanical issues with some of the buses. The bus bond funding for the coming year has been halved. Anything that can narrow the gap between the funding we receive and the actual cost of operating a transportation system in our rural school district will help our students, the district and the community.</p>
<p><b>Putnam County Schools</b></p>	<p>If the state were able to reinstate the transportation funds, the Putnam County Charter School System would rearrange dollars to increase the experiential opportunities our students have to both STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and the Humanities.</p>
<p><b>Quitman County Schools</b></p>	<p>The system could buy school buses to replace the old ones that require so much maintenance.</p>
<p><b>Schley County Schools</b></p>	<p>We would use the funds to pay for increasing employee cost of health care and hopefully update our fleet.</p>
<p><b>Screven County Schools</b></p>	<p>Bus replacement and driver training in professional development especially in student management. Ideally, I would like to have monitors on the bus to assist with student management and to provide a second adult on the bus.</p>
<p><b>Seminole County Schools</b></p>	<p>Seminole County could update our bus fleet. The bond buses, though welcome, do not provide enough revenue.</p>

<b>Social Circle City Schools</b>	Newer buses and possible salary increase for bus drivers
<b>Taliaferro County Schools</b>	We would buy two new busses to replace our aging bus fleet, the newest being 5 years old.
<b>Tattnall County Schools</b>	We would update our fleet. If fully funded, we would be able to shift local funds that we currently spend on transportation to instructional expense, which would improve student achievement.
<b>Taylor County Schools</b>	It would free-up some of our general fund money that is currently going to cover the excess transportation costs.
<b>Thomas County Schools</b>	For FY 2018 our transportation operating budget is \$2.7 million and we will receive state funding of \$864,000. Full funding of the transportation formula would provide relief for our general fund budget in that it would eliminate our budget deficit and allow us to increase transportation employee salaries to a respectable level. Budget relief would provide funds to further reduce class sizes and to enhance instruction throughout the district.
<b>Thomaston Upson Schools</b>	Should transportation be fully funded our district would be funded at 66% whereas currently it is only funded at 27% with QBE funds. With full funding we would only need 34% from local property revenues whereas now we need 73% from local sources.
<b>Thomasville City Schools</b>	Because we are a city school system, we do not receive transportation funding even though we provide transportation to many of our students.
<b>Toombs County Schools</b>	We would be able to replace aging buses at the traditional 10-year cycle rate. We are currently on a 20-year rotation.
<b>Treutlen County Schools</b>	We would be able to replace buses and ensure that our fleet is up-to-date. We currently have to purchase buses on a 4-year lease/purchase agreement and can only afford to lease one bus at the time. We can't even afford a 3-year lease/purchase!
<b>Troup County School District</b>	We could maintain a newer and more efficient fleet of buses. Our replacement schedule would benefit from more funding.
<b>Turner County Schools</b>	At this time, we have to watch our tires closely to get the very largest number of miles out of them without being unsafe for our students. Our fleet is getting old and we need to replace some of the buses. We pay our bus drivers the absolute lowest salary and therefore, we have a very difficult time finding drivers.
<b>Union County Schools</b>	Additional buses would be able to be purchased.
<b>Vidalia City Schools</b>	It would aid in offsetting the rising cost of health insurance to the district and the increased contribution to TRS

<b>Walker County Schools</b>	If operating costs were fully funded in the QBE transportation formula, our district would be able to compensate drivers and monitors at a more appropriate and competitive rate of pay. The district would be able to add monitors on all buses, not just special needs buses. The district would be able to add additional bus routes which would reduce the number of students per bus and the amount of travel time per bus.
<b>Walton County Schools</b>	Additional buses and drivers, driver training, recruitment, and retention
<b>Warren County Schools</b>	Our county is so large but most of our students live within 1.5 miles of the school. However, they have to be transported or they would be walking along a major highway. Our buses are all over ten years old. We need to buy buses and need transportation to be funded fully to be able to do so.
<b>Washington County Schools</b>	We could purchase buses that we so badly need and pay bus driver salaries and benefits.
<b>Wayne County Schools</b>	Our district has not been able to purchase new buses (with the exception of bus bond funded) for several years. Our fleet is very old. We would be able to allocate local funds to purchase buses and use the state funds to increase the operational budget for our transportation department.
<b>White County Schools</b>	Purchase more buses! We have a very old fleet and have had to hire 2 mechanics to keep costs down for repairs and maintenance. We still have buses from the 1990's on the road.
<b>Whitfield County Schools</b>	Currently we are working on about a 22-23 year bus replacement. If we were able to receive our full funding allotment, it would greatly help us begin to improve this replacement cycle. Our idea goal would be to cut this cycle back to a comfortable 10-12 year cycle. This would decrease our bus maintenance costs drastically, as well.
<b>Wilkinson County Schools</b>	We would be able to complete our bus replacement rotation.