

# TRANSPORTATION COSTS STRAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGETS

*State allotment falls short of true transportation costs*



Public schools have a specific funding allotment for the cost of transporting eligible students to and from school. The Legislature determines the amount of this allotment and has not increased it since 2019. Since then, inflation has driven all costs higher for school districts.

During the 2022-23 school year, the state transportation allotment provided \$395 million to school districts. However, districts actually spent \$1.98 billion on transportation costs. In other words, there is a significant gap — \$1.6 billion per year — in the amount of revenue that the state provides specifically for transportation and the actual cost of providing those services.

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## HOW DOES TRANSPORTATION IMPACT OVERALL SCHOOL FUNDING?

The gap in transportation funding forces school districts to reduce bus routes and other services, and/or it pulls Basic Allotment dollars from other educational priorities. In other words, Basic Allotment dollars spent on transportation are dollars that otherwise might be spent on classroom programs. With inflation pushing all educational costs higher (utilities, insurance, salaries), those dollars are already scarce.

Because state funding has been largely stagnant over the past six years, many school districts face a funding crisis that affects teacher retention, the availability of academic programs, and other priorities. However, without sufficient transportation services, some students would not be able to attend school. Transportation is a key component of the services that school districts need to ensure all students are learning.

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Legislators can address a significant need by increasing the transportation allotment for school districts. Additional funding would help close the current gap in transportation budgets and leave more dollars for teacher pay, academic instruction, and school safety.

The transportation allotment provides **\$345 million** per year for school districts.

Texas schools spend **\$1.98 billion** per year on transportation costs.

With a **\$20 billion** budget surplus, legislators have the resources needed to boost the transportation allotment.

**Additional funding for transportation will help school districts meet a basic need for many students and free up dollars for other local priorities.**