

Pupil Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes June 25, 2013

In attendance: Ivan Christensen, Tom Given, Clayton Holt, Von Hortin, Murrell Martin, Wynn Porter, David Roberts, Susan Shultz, Matt White, Bruce Williams.

Murrell gave a report on the Legislative Productivity Audit. The audit seems to be going well with a better understanding of our bus capacity utilization. The audit team is now aware of the previous audit and the progressive things that have been done since that audit.

Susan gave a report on the instructor and drivers certification programs. We are finally to the point where we have a certified instructor, on some level, at each of the 41 school districts. We presently have 146 certified instructors and just over 3,000 drivers. This is a good ratio for us to have in the state and it affects safety and efficiency for us to have well-trained and certified drivers.

Our efficiency, compared to other states, is very good and we operate at over \$300 less per student than the national average.

It was identified that it would be helpful to directors and supervisors if they periodically received a summary update of what projects the curriculum committee was working on.

Associate Superintendent Bruce Williams offered some perspectives and insights for discussion:

- Last year, discussions within the advisory committee and with other groups were very helpful to the process of supporting funding requests for pupil transportation.
- USSA and USBA sets up their funding priorities by September of each year, and it is good for us to continue to be in communication with them.
- It appears that there may be potential increase, about \$130 – 190 million, available to public education. This would be between on-going and one-time funding.
- The State Board of Education is starting their priorities and Bruce is able to keep them informed.
- Priority from the advisory committee would be very helpful to the state board as well as all of the other organizations.
- We should be able to identify the need to replace our old school buses, and clean air is a hot topic right now.
- We need to update and put out the chart previously used to show the state funding levels over the past several years. This chart shows the \$20 million gap between current funding levels and the 85% target for funding.
- We need to do what we can to get on the radar, as some will be forming priorities by mid-August or early September.

Finance Director, David Roberts offered some perspectives and insights for discussion:

- Clean air in Utah is a hot PR and political issue, it is in the media and now seems like the perfect timing.
- We need to be able to show how much we can reduce by replacing old school buses.
- Show how much pollution can be reduced by replacing old dirty diesel buses.
- Not sure things will be aligned this well for replacing old buses.
- Need to get the information to key legislators who have an interest in air quality.
- Clean air should be a passion in the next legislative session.
- Who is going to market the information about school buses?

Other discussions:

- Need to show a plan that insures that buses will actually be removed from service rather than kept on routes and the new buses used on activities.
- While clean diesel buses with EPA requirements are an air quality solution, the diesel is still very expensive; the market is volatile and not consistent.
- Alternative fuels, CNG and Propane, are a Utah Product and it would create more Utah jobs and in the bigger picture has the potential of great savings over several years.
- Selling state support of new diesel buses would be a much harder sale than selling state support for alternative fuel buses.
- Cost sharing or matching funds for grants has been more realistic than 100% of new projects. This would permit funding to replace a lot more buses.
- Having districts apply for it, qualify for it, and agree to reporting requirements would likely be important to the program.
- CNG is not without challenges; the need to have infrastructure and shops that are modified.
- Jordan has been very successful in their approach, and Canyons is reported to be making a renewed commitment to CNG.
- Preparing information on the \$20 million on-going proposal is a matter of updating the chart, but the one-time bus replacement proposal will take more effort and communication.
- Once the proposals are prepared to represent the advisory committee they should be shared with the Energy Advisor to Governor Herbert, key legislators, the LFA, and other organizations.

There was a lot of discussion about possible times to meet again. Both Bruce and David had to leave, and the remaining committee decided to try for August 7th as a possibility. Murrell will follow-up to set up another meeting.