

## Nonpublic School Transportation Fact Sheet

- Nonpublic school transportation is provided up to a statutory ceiling of \$884.00 per student. Public schools districts will typically use their own vehicles first for public school students, and then, if any vehicles and drivers are available, will transport nonpublic school students. Thus, the majority of nonpublic school transportation occurs through private contractors. Public school transportation has no per-pupil ceiling for transportation, although public school transportation costs less because students are generally located within a more concentrated geographical area. Therefore, the cost of the routes is less than those for nonpublic school students because transportation depends upon the number of miles traveled by the bus and the number of stops. *However, no eligible public school student will be denied a ride due to cost.*
- Even though transportation costs should logically decrease because of the recent drop in fuel costs, bus owners contend that rising costs for insurance and salaries (many contractors are using unionized workers) are the problem.
- A significant number of public school transportation coordinators and bus company owners have told our administrators and parents that the ceiling MUST be raised, or our students may not be able to receive transportation.
- Nonpublic schools have attempted a variety of options in order to maintain transportation within the \$884.00 per pupil ceiling. These include the following:
  - Centralized stops,
  - Changes in arrival and dismissal times in our schools,
  - Having routes bid at fewer than 180 days (i.e. 176, 175) in order to have transportation for student during the majority of days the school is in session.
  - Mixing public and nonpublic schools students on busses.

**We have run out of ideas in this regard. The only remaining solution is to raise the per-pupil amount.**

- The transportation statute authorizing the per-pupil amount calls for an annual increase, in direct proportion to the increase in the State transportation aid per pupil in the year prior to the pre-budget year compared to the amount for the pre-budget year or by the CPI, whichever is greater (N.J.S.A. 18A: 39-1a). Both the Corzine Administration and the Christie Administration have frozen this amount, thus ignoring the requirement for any annual increase. If the increases required by statute and tied to the annual changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) had been followed, the ceiling would now be \$1,047.00.
- It is important for parents to tell their own frustrating stories of what has happened in recent years in their attempts to have their children transported to a nonpublic school.
- We recognize that some of the problems have been caused by a lack of knowledge/competency on the part of district personnel and a state-wide shortage of drivers and buses. The New Jersey Catholic Conference and others have been working to deal with those issues. However, the contrast between transporting public school students (some of whom are neighbors of our children) and nonpublic school children needs to be described in real terms and in detail to the Governor.