

Response to Questions on the FY 2012 Budget

Request By: Chairman Bulova

Question: Please research if comparable jurisdictions to Fairfax County have school bus replacement programs. What is the comparable average age of these bus fleets? What are best practices in this field?

Response: The Fairfax County Public Schools Transportation Division sent a survey to municipalities within Virginia to see if the jurisdictions had school bus replacement funds. A total of 29 jurisdictions responded to this survey, and none of the responding jurisdictions reported having such a fund.

The Department of Vehicle Services also sent out an informal survey to 16 of the larger jurisdictions that responded to the FY 2009 ICMA Performance Measurement program and completed a template on fleet management. Of the 10 jurisdictions that responded, none reported having a school bus replacement fund. One jurisdiction described a bus replacement fund, but it was for “14 passenger mid-buses” for the Juvenile Services Department. In Fairfax County, those buses would be included in the Vehicle Replacement Reserve (VRR).

Based on these responses, it is apparent that school bus replacement funds are not prominently utilized, either within the Commonwealth of Virginia, or by larger municipalities across the country. However, a number of the jurisdictions that responded to the survey indicated that having such a fund would be beneficial if funding was available.

We were unsuccessful in getting data on the age of other bus fleets. Until 2008, the ICMA fleet survey included a category for buses that included the average age of the bus fleet. Beginning in 2009, however, buses were eliminated from the fleet template, likely because so few jurisdictions responded to the questions on bus fleets.