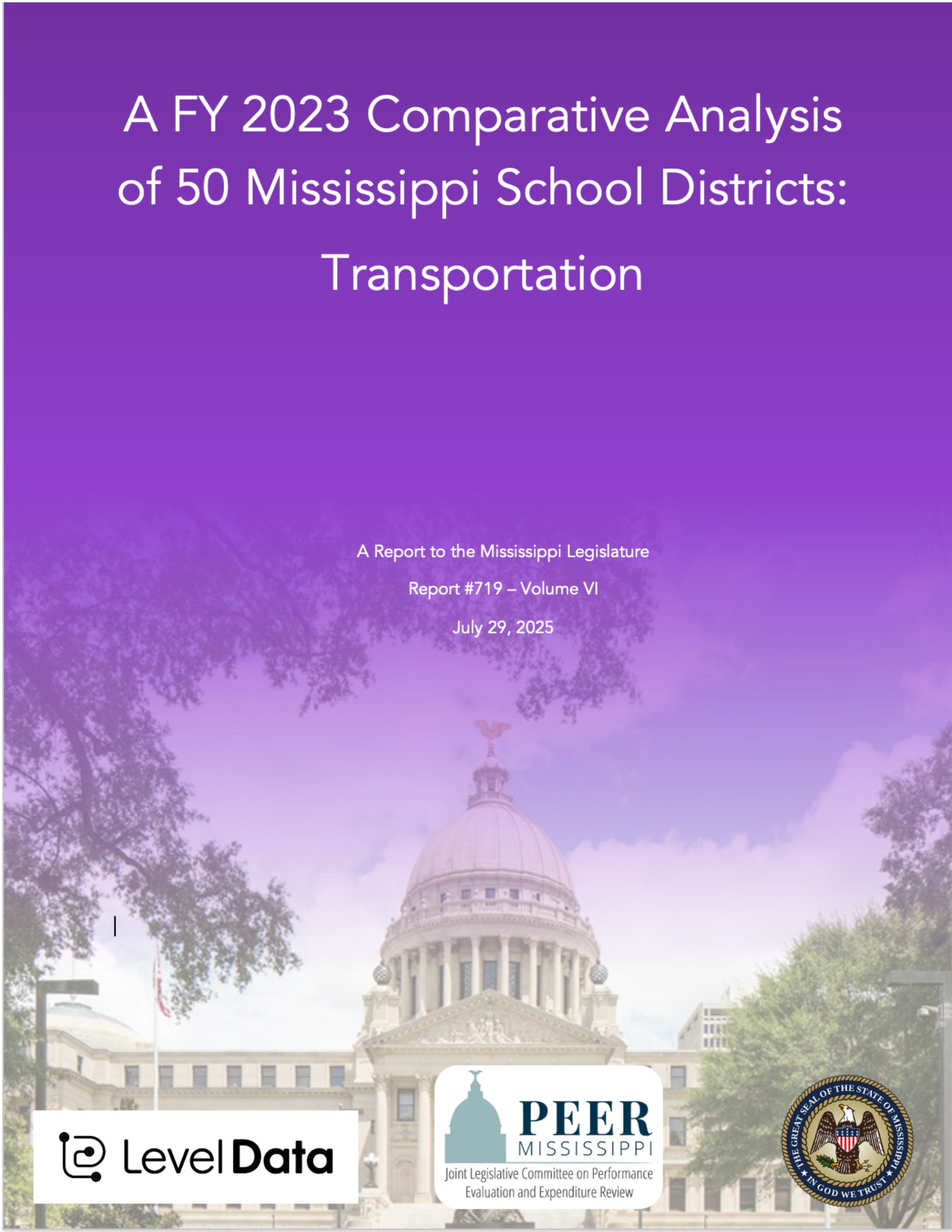
A FY 2023 Comparative Analysis of 50 Mississippi School Districts: Transportation

A Report to the Mississippi Legislature

Report #719 – Volume VI

July 29, 2025



Level Data

PEER MISSISSIPPI

Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review

PEER Committee

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The Mississippi Legislature created the Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER Committee) by statute in 1973. A joint committee, the PEER Committee is composed of seven members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House and seven members of the Senate appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. Appointments are made for four-year terms, with one Senator and one Representative appointed from each of the U.S. Congressional Districts and three at-large members appointed from each house. Committee officers are elected by the membership, with officers alternating annually between the two houses. All Committee actions by statute require a majority vote of four Representatives and four Senators voting in the affirmative.

Mississippi's constitution gives the Legislature broad power to conduct examinations and investigations. PEER is authorized by law to review any public entity, including contractors supported in whole or in part by public funds, and to address any issues that may require legislative action. PEER has statutory access to all state and local records and has subpoena power to compel testimony or the production of documents.

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The Committee assigns top priority to written requests from individual legislators and legislative committees. The Committee also considers PEER staff proposals and written requests from state officials and others.

Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review

PEER Committee

P.O. Box 1204 | Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1204

July 29, 2025

Honorable Tate Reeves, Governor
Honorable Delbert Hosemann, Lieutenant Governor
Honorable Jason White, Speaker of the House
Members of the Mississippi State Legislature

On July 29, 2025, the PEER Committee authorized release of the report titled ***A FY 2023 Comparative Analysis of 50 Mississippi School Districts: Transportation (Volume VI).***

Kevin W. Felsher

Representative Kevin Felsher, Chair

This report does not recommend increased funding or additional staff.

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Table of Contents

List of Exhibits

PEER MISSISSIPPI
Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review

A FY 2023 Comparative Analysis of 50 Mississippi School Districts: Transportation (Volume VI)

Report Highlights

July 29, 2025

CONCLUSION: A review of the transportation programs for 50 Mississippi school districts in FY 2023 showed opportunities for districts to strengthen their programs and increase efficiency. For example, 39 reporting districts (80%) did not use routing software to manage their bus routes, which can help districts achieve maximize efficiency. There was also wide variance in the performance of districts in key areas such as cost per bus and cost per mile, suggesting that districts have room for improvement. Some districts have characteristics that naturally result in greater program efficiency (e.g., dense population of students in a small geographic area). As a whole, reporting districts performed favorably compared to regional peers in certain areas (e.g., cost per mile), while districts slightly underperformed regional peers in other areas (e.g., staffing for maintenance of buses).

BACKGROUND

In FY 2025, PEER received funding to contract with Glimpse K12 (now Level Data) to conduct a comparative review of 50 school districts. This report focuses on one of six non-instructional areas of review—transportation (Volume VI). Other non-instructional reports include:

- Finance and Supply Chain (Volume I);
- Human Resources (Volume II);
- Information technology (Volume III);
- Nutrition (Volume IV);
- Operations (Volume V).

KEY FINDINGS

- **Of the 49 school districts reporting, 39 (80%) did not utilize routing software to manage their bus routes.**
  Bus routing software is intended to help districts achieve maximum efficiency. However, transportation program staff must be proficient in using the software.
- **17 districts (35%) did not use formal guidelines for student seating on buses.**
  Formal guidelines can offer safety, discipline, and accountability benefits.
- **School districts use various bus route methods. For example, 26 districts indicated that students from all grades in a geographic area ride the bus together and are dropped off at their respective schools, while 10 districts assign a bus to transport students exclusively to and from one school without additional routes.**
  No bus route method can be conclusively deemed superior.
- **36 districts (73%) did not have a sufficient number of substitute bus drivers to prevent occasional service delays.**
  Eighteen districts reported using alternative methods to having substitute bus drivers (e.g., merging routes or having transportation department staff provide coverage).
- **As a whole, reporting districts performed favorably on some key performance indicators as compared to regional peers and unfavorably on other indicators.**
  - Overall, districts spent less per bus, less per mile, and less per rider than regional peers.
  - Overall, districts were slightly less efficient in staffing for maintenance of buses than regional peers and slightly less efficient in transporting students than regional peers, as measured by the number of students per bus.

Cost Savings

Twenty-seven of the 45 reporting districts have the potential for cost savings either through bus route improvements or staffing adjustments. Of the districts reporting, annual projected potential cost savings could be up to **$2.09 million** for bus route improvements and up to **$595,000** for staffing adjustments.

Exhibit 11 on page 30 provides a summary of projected potential cost savings from bus route improvements in 20 districts and Exhibit 12 on page 34 provides a summary of projected potential cost savings from transportation staffing adjustments in 16 districts.

While the reported data suggests the potential for cost savings for these districts, each district's administration should carefully review the data and recommendations in light of the particular circumstances of the district.

Variance in District Performance on Key Indicators

- Of the districts reporting on key performance indicators,
    - average annual cost per bus overall in FY 2023 ranged from approximately $16,500 for Richton to approximately $92,000 for Tunica County;
    - cost per rider ranged from $436 in Pontotoc County to $3,462 in Tunica County; and,
    - annual cost per mile ranged from $2.13 in Pontotoc County to $22.51 in Greenwood Leflore.
- In terms of staffing, the number of buses per mechanic ranged from 8.5 in West Tallahatchie to 42 in Tupelo. Some districts' maintenance function may be overstaffed, while other districts' maintenance function may be understaffed.

Issues with Missing Data

Some districts did not provide all of the information requested for this report, which inhibited the assessment team's ability to conduct a complete analysis of transportation functions in the selected districts.

- The transportation department at Aberdeen did not provide any data or information for this report. Further, the departments at Jefferson, Kemper, North Bolivar, Petal, South Pike, and Webster provided a minimal amount of data.

Without timely and accurate financial information, the districts' ability to manage costs and allocate taxpayer funds effectively is compromised.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICTS

1. In FY 2026, each district superintendent, in consultation with the district's transportation program personnel, should review the information from this report and implement each of the relevant district recommendations to increase efficiency, improve service levels, and/or achieve cost savings. These include, but are not limited to:
    a. potential implementation of bus routing software;
    b. potential implementation of formal guidelines for student seating on buses;
    c. annual reviews of bus routes;
    d. identify potential opportunities for bus route optimization;
    e. evaluate approaches for addressing driver absences; and,
    f. assess mechanic staffing levels and spare fleet size.
2. District administrators should also use the information in this report to compare their performance to that of their peers in Mississippi, as well as regionally and nationally, to identify areas for potential improvement, and take action to improve in those areas.
3. For districts unable to provide benchmarking or performance information during this review pertaining to their transportation programs (or provided questionable data), relevant district personnel should take action to begin collecting and monitoring precise transportation data on an ongoing basis.
4. District personnel should provide an annual performance report to the district superintendent regarding the status of the transportation programs using the measures included in this review.
5. District administrators should use the information from annual performance reports to monitor their district's costs and efficiency in operating its transportation program.

A FY 2023 Comparative Analysis of 50 Mississippi School Districts: Transportation (Volume VI)

Restrictions

This review is a continuation of previous studies conducted by Glimpse K12 (now Level Data[1]) of Mississippi school districts' operational programs and expenses. (See additional information on these previous studies in the Introduction on page 2.) For this review, Level Data selected 50 additional Mississippi school districts of varying sizes (based on student enrollments), geographic regions, and accountability ratings. Appendix A on page 37 lists the districts included in this review.

Level Data provided this report to the PEER Committee based on data and extrapolated information provided by the school districts for school year 2022-2023 (i.e., FY 2023). Level Data did not independently verify the data or information provided by the districts or their programs. If the districts choose to provide additional data or information, Level Data reserves the right to amend the report.

All decisions made concerning the contents of this report are understood to be the sole responsibility of any organization or individual making the decision. Level Data does not and will not in the future perform any management functions for any organizations or individuals related to this report.

This report is solely intended to be a resource guide.

PEER staff contributed to the overall message of this report and recommendations based on the data and information provided by Level Data. PEER staff also provided quality assurance and editing for this report to comply with PEER writing standards; however, PEER did not validate the source data collected by Level Data.

[1] In Fiscal Year 2024, Level Data acquired Glimpse K12, which is referenced in previous PEER reports.

Introduction

School district administrators are responsible for spending millions of dollars annually on instructional and operational expenses. While operational expenses could be viewed as a secondary concern to instructional expenses, operational costs could escalate, possibly unnecessarily, without proper oversight and monitoring.

As noted previously, this report is one of a series of reports that provide decisionmakers with comparative data regarding selected Mississippi school districts' key operational programs and associated costs (i.e., human resources [HR], transportation, operations, nutrition, information technology, and finance). Mississippi has a total of 138[2] school districts. To date, Level Data has collected and analyzed the following data sets from Mississippi's districts:

Number of School Districts	Period of Data Collected	Name of Data Set for PEER Purposes	Reporting of Analysis Results*
30 districts	FY 2022	Cohort 1	Published in PEER Reports #690a through #690f.
	FY 2023	Cohort 2	Not published in separate PEER reports. However, selected Cohort 2 data was combined with selected Cohort 3 data in PEER Reports #703i through #703vi.
50 districts	FY 2023	Cohort 3	Published in PEER Reports #703i through #703vi.**
50 districts	FY 2023	Cohort 4	Published in this report.***
8 districts	FY 2023 (projected)	Cohort 5 (projected)	Projected to be published in PEER reports in 2026.

* Appendix A in each respective report lists the districts that were included in the analysis for that report.

** In order to represent a more complete data set and provide a better sense of the true state median, Level Data combined selected FY 2023 data from Cohorts 2 and 3 to calculate medians and performance quartiles for the exhibits in these reports.

*** In order to represent a more complete data set and provide a better sense of the true state median, Level Data combined selected FY 2023 data from Cohorts 2, 3, and 4 to calculate medians and performance quartiles for the exhibits in these reports.

After the final review of the remaining eight districts in FY 2026, Level Data will have collected FY 2023 data for all 138 traditional public school districts in Mississippi. By collecting data from a single fiscal year for all school districts, Level Data will be able to calculate medians and performance quartiles for the entire state on each performance measure. As a result, district administrators will have the comparative data for their districts to identify which operational areas potentially need improvement and which areas demonstrate effectiveness and/or efficiency.

For the analysis for this report, Level Data selected 50[3] of Mississippi's districts with a range of characteristics, including geographic location, enrollment, and grades based on the statewide accountability system to provide data on their

[2] This number does not include Mississippi's public charter school districts.

[3] Appendix A on page 37 lists the districts selected for this review. Although 50 districts were selected, only 49 districts provided the requested information (i.e., benchmark data and performance data), either in part or in full. Aberdeen did not provide information for this review.

operational functions and then analyzed data regarding their transportation programs and expenses. The districts selected for review in this analysis were not included in previous PEER reports on transportation programs and expenses (PEER Reports #690f and #703vi).

This report presents FY 2023 data reported by school districts regarding benchmarks (e.g., use of bus routing software) and performance indicators (e.g., annual cost per mile). The report also provides some regional and national averages as a basis for comparison. Appendix B on page 39 provides transportation data for all 50 districts selected for this review. Appendix C on page 42 provides FY 2023 transportation benchmark data and performance indicators for the districts that reported information.

School district administrators should use the information in this report to determine areas for improvement and to make informed decisions regarding their districts' operations.

Conclusions Regarding Districts' Collection of Benchmark Data for Use in Managing Transportation

Benchmarking is the process of comparing and measuring different organizations' activities. Districts can use benchmark data, combined with key performance indicators, to gain insight into identifying best practices and opportunities for improvement and cost reductions. This report surveyed districts' reporting of the following benchmark data:

- use of bus routing software;
- use of formal guidelines for student seating on buses;
- type of bus route methods (e.g., combination route—all students from all grades ride together); and,
- use of substitute bus drivers.

Forty-nine of the 50 districts reviewed provided the above-listed benchmark information.[4]

Use of Bus Routing Software

Of the 49 school districts reporting FY 2023 transportation data, 80% (39) did not utilize routing software to manage their bus routes.

The current cohort's 80% signifies a higher reliance on routing without the benefit of the software. Bus routing software is intended to help districts achieve maximum efficiency regarding bus routes. The software also enables districts to adapt quickly to changes and can include GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking modules for enhanced security. When used correctly, bus routing software can reduce the costs of school district transportation programs, provide program flexibility, and enhance student safety. However, if transportation program employees are not proficient in using the software, positive results are less likely to be achieved.

As noted previously, 49 of the 50 districts reviewed provided benchmark information. Of the 49 districts reporting, 39 (80%) did not utilize bus routing software. Districts not using bus routing software must manually review routes periodically, which is time-intensive and often allows school bus drivers to modify routes based on the arrival of new bus riders, which may not be the most efficient placement. Some districts, due to the time-intensiveness, may not review bus routes on an annual basis. As student populations shift, either of these methods can lead to inefficient bus routes.

Use of Formal Guidelines for Student Seating on Buses

Of the 49 school districts reporting FY 2023 transportation data, 17 (35%) did not use formal guidelines for student seating on buses.

Formal guidelines for student seating on school buses during daily routes can offer safety, discipline, and accountability benefits. Assigned seating promotes order, prevents conflicts, and facilitates tracking of students. It enhances organization during boarding and disembarking. However, it may limit flexibility and spontaneous social interactions among students, potentially affecting their relationships.

Enforcing seating guidelines can also be challenging, as such requires consistent monitoring. There is a risk of inequality or dissatisfaction among students with less desirable seat assignments. Considering each school's unique circumstances and student population, it is crucial to balance the advantages and disadvantages of formal seating guidelines.

[4] The transportation department at Aberdeen did not provide benchmark data for this report.

As noted previously, 49 of the 50 districts reviewed provided benchmark information. Of the school districts reporting FY 2023 transportation data, 17 (35%) did not use formal guidelines for student seating on buses.

When asked whether specific guidelines were used for seating students on buses, the current cohort responded with:

- 19 districts (39%) reported that they allow three elementary students per seat or two high school/middle school students per seat;
- 10 districts (20.5%) reported that they allow three elementary/middle school students per seat and two high school students per seat;
- six districts (12%) reported that they allow two students per seat regardless of grade;
- three districts (6%) reported that they allow three students per seat regardless of grade; and,
- 11 districts (22.5%) reported that they did not follow one of the listed specific guidelines noted.

Type of Bus Route Methods

The 49 school districts reporting FY 2023 transportation data reported using various bus route methods. For example, 26 reporting districts (53%) indicated that students from all grades in a geographic area ride the bus together and are dropped off at their respective schools, while 10 districts (20%) use single direct school bus routes, meaning that a bus is assigned to transport students exclusively to and from one school without additional routes. No bus route method can be conclusively deemed superior; therefore, each district must analyze its own data to determine the best route method.

Districts use various bus route methods. Some districts use a certain approach to maximize efficiency, while others may face challenges in efficient bus routing due primarily to the wide dispersion of students within the district. Therefore, no single bus route system can be conclusively deemed superior across all districts. Determining the best method for any given district should be based on overall population density within the school system boundaries, bus sizes, bell schedules, and the number of daily student riders.

As noted previously, 49 of the 50 districts reviewed provided benchmark information. Of the school districts reporting FY 2023 transportation data within the current cohort:

- 26 districts (53%) utilize a combination bus route system, meaning students from all grade levels are picked up together in a community and then dropped off sequentially at their respective schools;
- 10 districts (20%) rely solely on dedicated single school bus routes, meaning a bus is assigned to transport students exclusively to and from one school without additional routes;
- seven districts (14%) utilize paired or tiered bus routes exclusively. This method involves staggering school start times to accommodate separate bus routes based on the school attended. Each bus makes multiple runs, with each run transporting students unique to a particular school;
- one district (2%) uses shuttle bus services, meaning a route that picks up a group of students from one location and delivers to another (e.g., trade school/intra-day routes); and,
- five districts (10%) did not report their bus routing methods.

Bus route methods could impact the amount of time students ride on buses. For the districts reporting, the median maximum bus route time with student riders was 60 minutes.

Use of Substitute Bus Drivers

Of the 49 districts reporting FY 2023 transportation data, 13 (27%) reported having at least the recommended 20% level of substitute drivers to meet daily service requirements without delays, while 36 districts (73%) reported having less than the recommended 20% level. Eighteen districts reported using alternative methods to having substitute bus drivers, such as merging routes or having transportation department staff provide coverage.

Having a pool of substitute drivers can prevent bus service delays. According to *School Bus Fleet* magazine, a commonly recommended guideline for school districts is to have a substitute driver pool comprising approximately 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers. However, an appropriate percentage of substitute drivers for a district could fluctuate depending on district size, number of buses, historic bus maintenance trends, average absenteeism rate of regular drivers, and route geography. If a district does not have substitute bus drivers, other strategies can be deployed. These strategies include reducing student ridership to allow routes to be consolidated when driver absenteeism occurs, utilizing transportation and school personnel to "fill in" as needed, and establishing the use of full-time utility drivers to rotate as needed. In most cases, these alternative methods increase costs or disrupt daily operations.

As noted previously, 49 of the 50 districts reviewed provided benchmark information. Thirteen districts (27%) reported having at least the recommended 20% level of substitute drivers to meet daily service requirements without delays, while 36 districts (73%) reported having less than the recommended 20% level. Eighteen districts reported using alternative methods to having substitute bus drivers, such as merging routes or having transportation department staff provide coverage.

Conclusions Regarding Districts' Collection of Key Performance Indicators for Use in Managing Transportation

Key performance indicators in transportation include districtwide effectiveness measures such as annual cost per bus and indicators that focus on the operation of a district's transportation department. It is essential to consider all key performance indicators together; one indicator should not be viewed as an overall performance measure.

This study included a review of the following district transportation key performance indicators:

- transportation expenses as a percentage of total district expenses;
- average annual cost per bus overall;
- annual cost per rider;
- annual cost per mile;
- percentage of spare buses;
- number of buses per school;
- number of buses per mechanic;
- percentage of total students that are bus riders;
- number of students per bus; and,
- number of miles driven daily per bus.

Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses

Of the 46 reporting districts, 39 districts reported transportation costs as a percent of total district expenses equal to or less than the regional peer average of 5.1%, indicating that transportation expenses in approximately 85% of reporting districts compare favorably to those of regional peers. Transportation expenses as a percent of total district expenses ranged from 1.5% in Clarksdale to 11.9% in Tunica County.

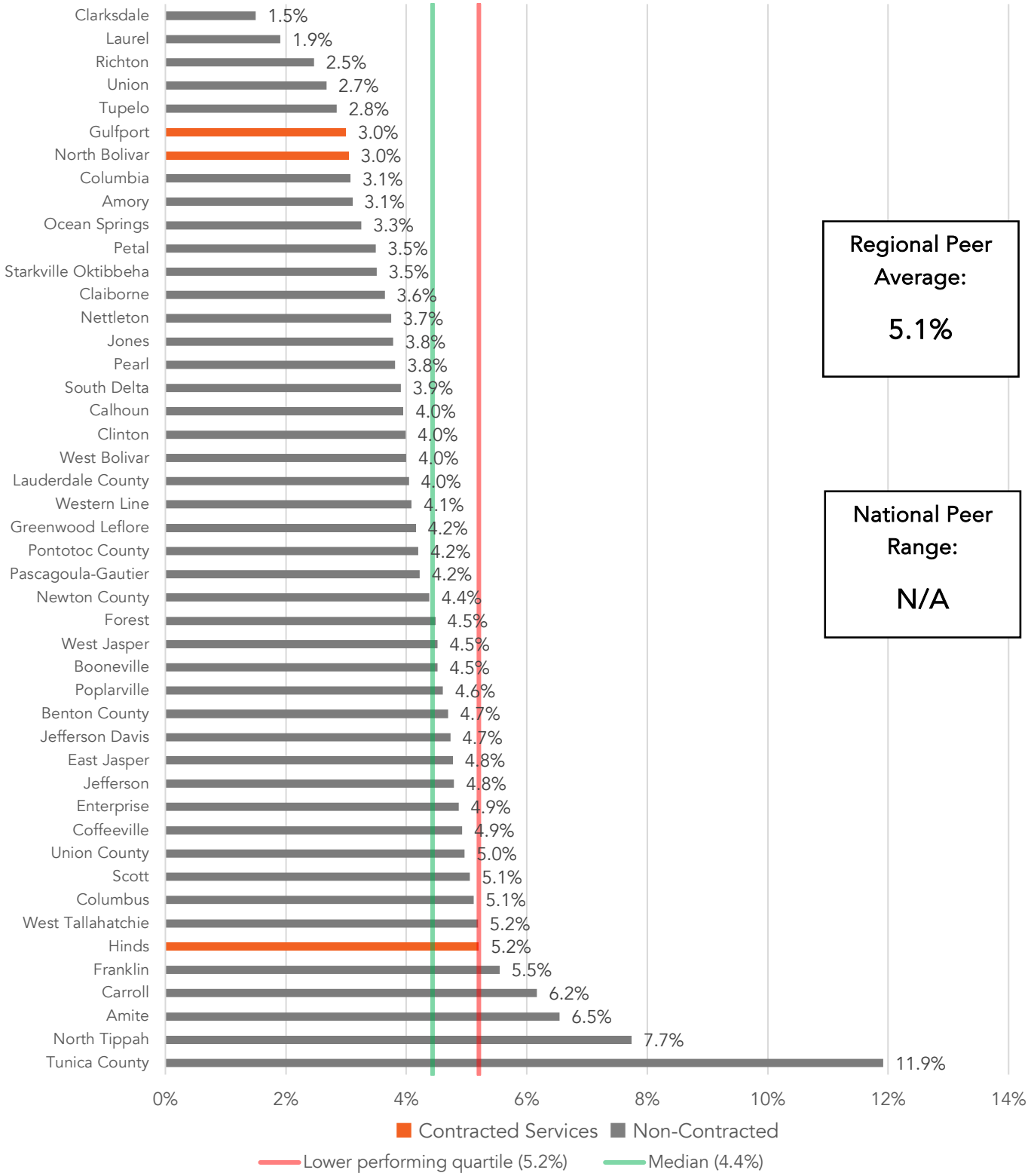
The measure of transportation expenses as a percentage of the total district expenses serves as an indicator of how much districts invest in their transportation programs. This indicator can vary based on factors such as the square miles within the district, population density, number of daily riders, bus condition, and cost of living in the area. While it is generally better for transportation expenses to be a low percentage of the overall budget (indicating efficiency), this must be balanced with the need for proper fleet management and efficient routing approaches to ensure students' safe and effective transportation. Thus, the percentage of a district's overall budget that should be spent on transportation is dependent on the characteristics of each school district.

Exhibit 1 on page 9 provides transportation expenses as a percentage of total district expenses for FY 2023 for the districts reporting. Districts' transportation expenses as a percentage of total district expenses ranged from 1.5% for Clarksdale to 11.9% for Tunica County, almost triple the reporting districts' median of 4.4%. Of the 21 districts at or above the median, 17 districts serve primarily rural areas, which normally increases transportation expenses due to the dispersion of students. Two districts (Enterprise and East Jasper) have primarily dense student populations, but each of these districts also serves adjacent rural areas with less dense populations, which contributes to higher expenses.

Of the 46 reporting districts, 39 districts reported transportation costs as a percent of total district expenses equal to or less than the regional peer average of 5.1%, indicating that transportation expenses in approximately 85% of reporting districts compare favorably to those of regional peers.

Although the factors noted above play a role in determining a district's transportation expenses, Exhibit 1 offers district officials an opportunity to compare transportation expenses to those of other districts of similar size and student density and seek greater efficiency while maintaining transportation services in a safe manner.

Exhibit 1: Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of Total District Expenses



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as an additional 80 Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Kemper, South Pike, and Webster did not provide data.

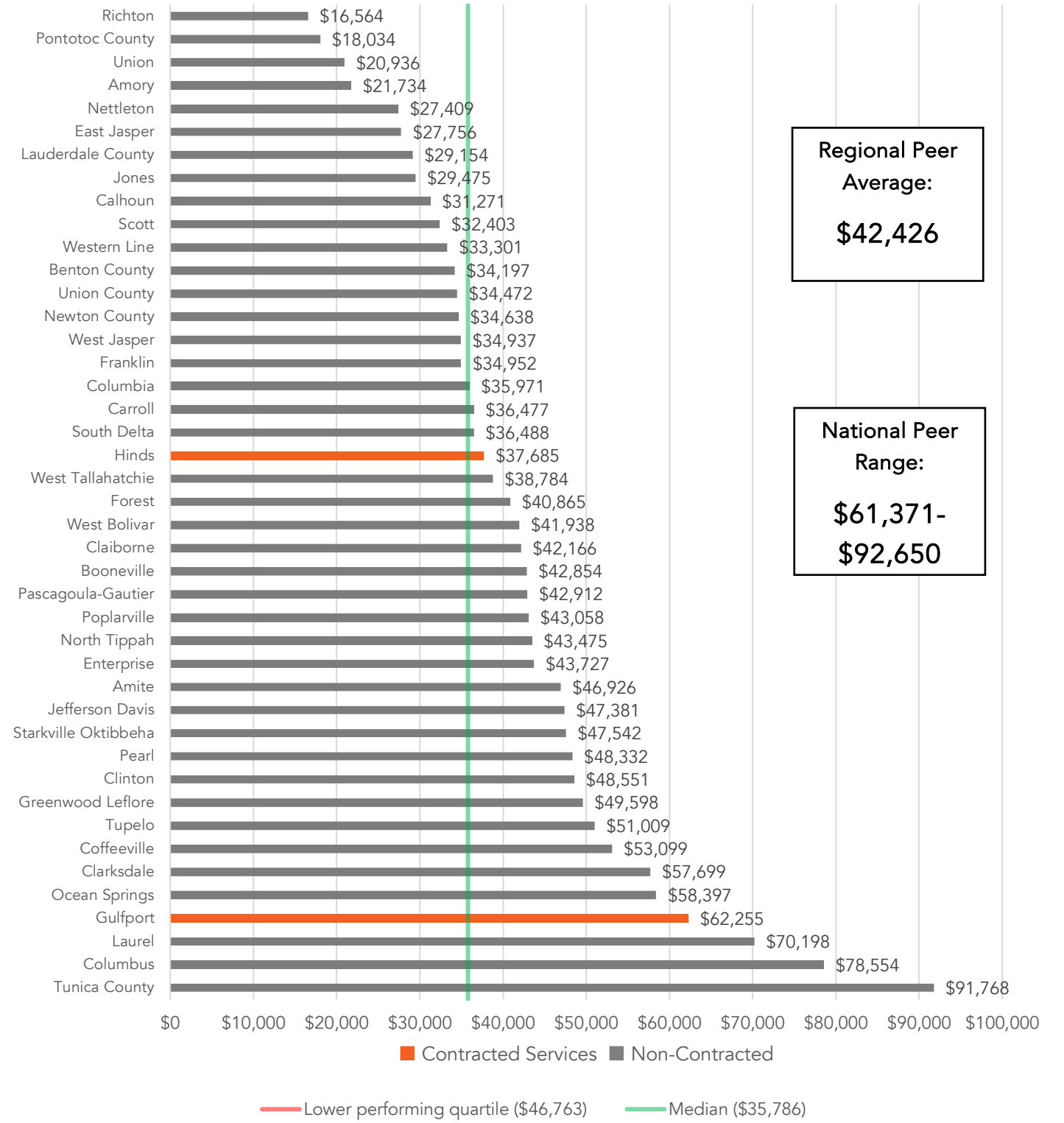
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall

For FY 2023, the reporting districts' $35,786 median average annual cost per bus overall is below the regional peer average of $42,426 and less than the low end of the national peer range of $61,371 to $92,650.

The average annual cost per bus overall is a measure of the cost efficiency of a transportation program and should be reviewed in relation to other measures, including cost per rider, cost per mile, percentage of spare buses, and number of buses per school. A greater than average annual cost per bus may be appropriate based on specific conditions or program requirements in a particular district. A less than average cost per bus may indicate either a well-run program or favorable conditions in a district (e.g., high-density student population), especially if one or more other cost measures are at or below average.

Of the districts reporting, the average annual cost per bus overall in FY 2023 ranged from $16,564 for Richton to $91,768 for Tunica (over two times greater than the median). (See Exhibit 2 on page 11.) Because factors such as the size of the district, the percentage of students in the district that rely on bus transportation, density of students, number of mechanics per bus, and bus route efficiency play a role in overall bus costs, this metric should not be unilaterally used to determine the efficiency of a district's transportation program. For example, considering only Laurel's cost per bus overall may suggest that the district's transportation program is inefficient, since it is the third highest reported cost. However, the district's total transportation expenses as a percent of total expenses are the second lowest at 1.9%. In other words, Laurel's data suggests that the program may be inefficient using one metric, but more efficient than other districts using another metric. Therefore, all metrics should be considered when reviewing a district's transportation program efficiency rather than relying on one metric (e.g., cost per rider versus cost per bus).

Exhibit 2: Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall in FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as an additional 80 Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Jefferson, Kemper, North Bolivar, Petal, South Pike, and Webster did not provide data.

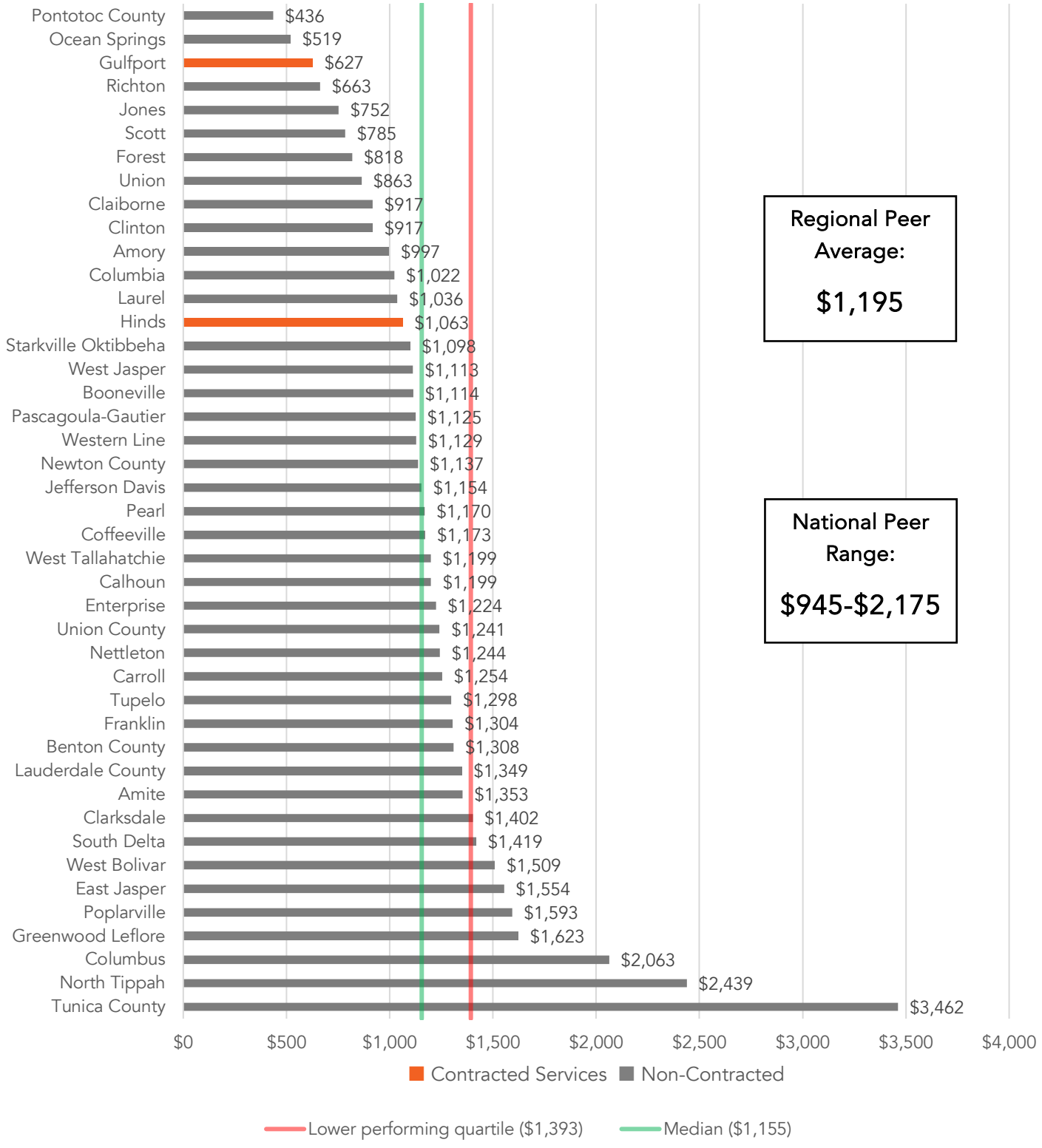
Annual Cost per Rider

For the reporting districts, the median annual cost per rider of $1,155 in FY 2023 was below the regional peer average of $1,195 and on the lower end of the national peer range of approximately $945 to $2,175. Thus, the reporting districts' median annual cost per rider compares favorably with those of regional and national peer districts.

The annual cost per rider is a measure of the cost efficiency of a transportation program and should be reviewed in relation to other measures, including cost per bus, cost per mile, number of riders per bus, and routing techniques employed by the district. A greater than average cost per rider may be appropriate based on specific conditions or program requirements in a particular district. A less than average cost per rider may indicate that transportation personnel operate their programs well or that the district itself has characteristics that naturally result in greater efficiency (e.g., a dense population of students in a small geographic area).

Exhibit 3 on page 13 provides the annual cost per rider in FY 2023 for the reporting districts. The annual cost per rider in FY 2023 ranged from $436 in Pontotoc County to $3,462 in Tunica County. The 22 districts above the median are mostly rural districts which typically have higher transportation costs due to the dispersion of students. Each district's unique circumstances, such as density of student population and percentage of enrolled students that ride buses, along with other metrics in this report, should be considered when reviewing the efficiency of a district's transportation program.

Exhibit 3: Annual Cost per Rider in FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as an additional 80 Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Jefferson, North Bolivar, Petal, Kemper, South Pike, and Webster did not provide data.

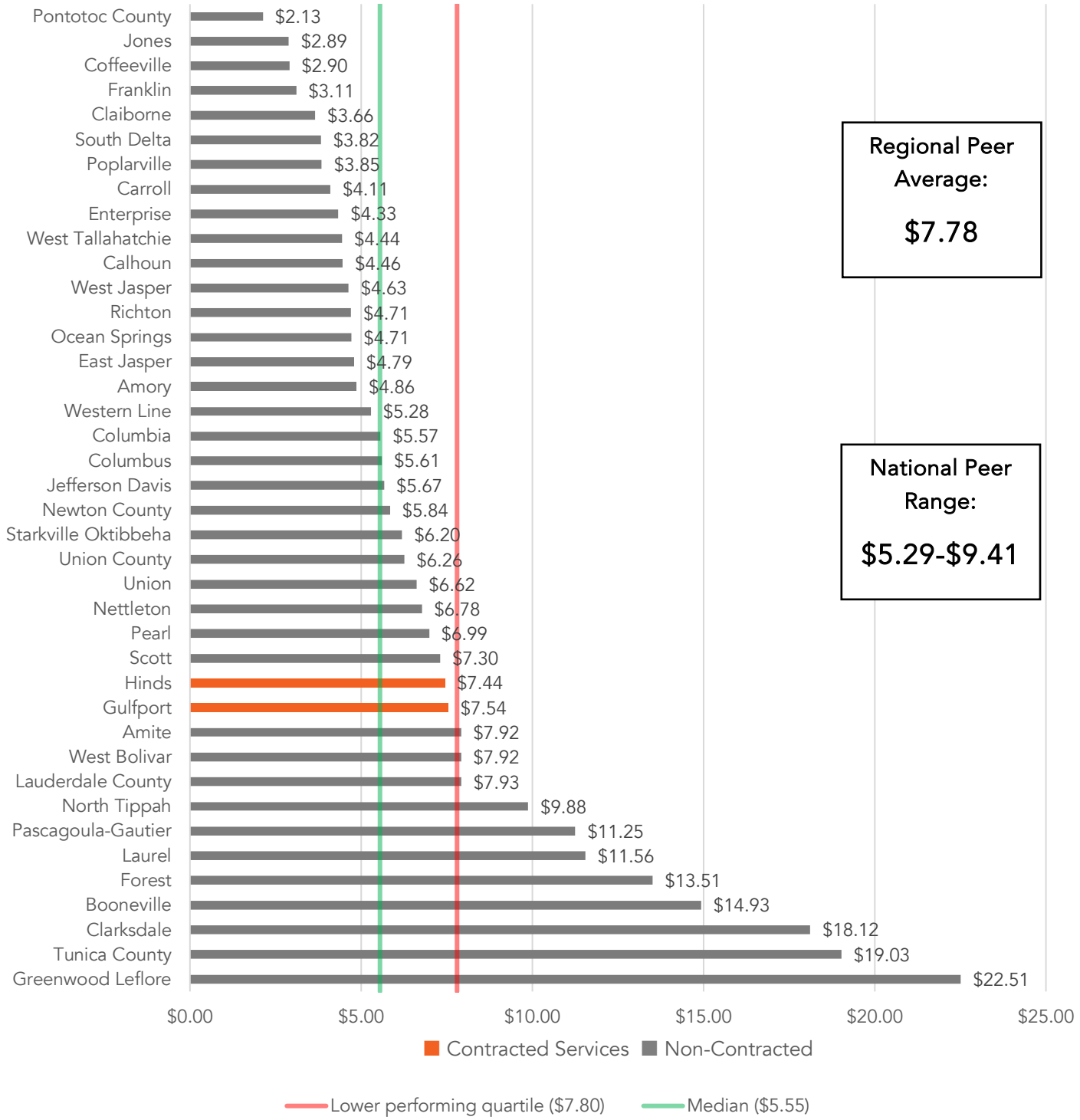
Annual Cost per Mile

In FY 2023, the reporting districts' $5.55 median annual cost per mile was below the regional peer average of $7.78 and at the lower end of the national peer range of $5.29 to $9.41, indicating that overall, the annual cost per mile of districts in this cohort compare favorably to those of regional and national peers.

The annual cost per mile measures the cost efficiency of a transportation program. It should be reviewed in relation to other measures, including cost per bus, cost per rider, number of riders per bus, and routing techniques employed by the district. A greater than average cost per mile may be appropriate based on specific conditions or program requirements in a particular district. A less than average cost per mile may indicate that transportation personnel operate their programs well or that the district has characteristics that naturally result in greater efficiency (e.g., a dense population of students in a small geographic area).

In FY 2023, the annual cost per mile for the reporting districts within this cohort ranged from $2.13 in Pontotoc County to $22.51 in Greenwood Leflore, approximately four times the median. (See Exhibit 4 on page 15.) The reporting districts' $5.55 median annual cost per mile was below the regional peer average of $7.78 and at the lower end of the national peer range of $5.29 to $9.41, indicating that overall, the annual cost per mile of districts in this cohort compare favorably to those of regional and national peers.

Exhibit 4: Annual Cost per Mile in FY 2023



The lower performing quartile and the median in this exhibit represent the above reporting districts as well as an additional 80 Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Benton County, Jefferson, Kemper, North Bolivar, Petal, South Pike, and Webster did not provide data. Tupelo and Clinton provided data; however, the data appears questionable and was therefore excluded from the exhibit.

Percentage of Spare Buses

Of the 46 districts reporting FY 2023 spare bus data, 17 (37%) of the districts reported having spare buses in the recommended 10% to 20% range. Twenty-three (50%) of the districts reported more than the recommended upper level of 20% and six (13%) of the districts reported less than the lower recommended 10% level.

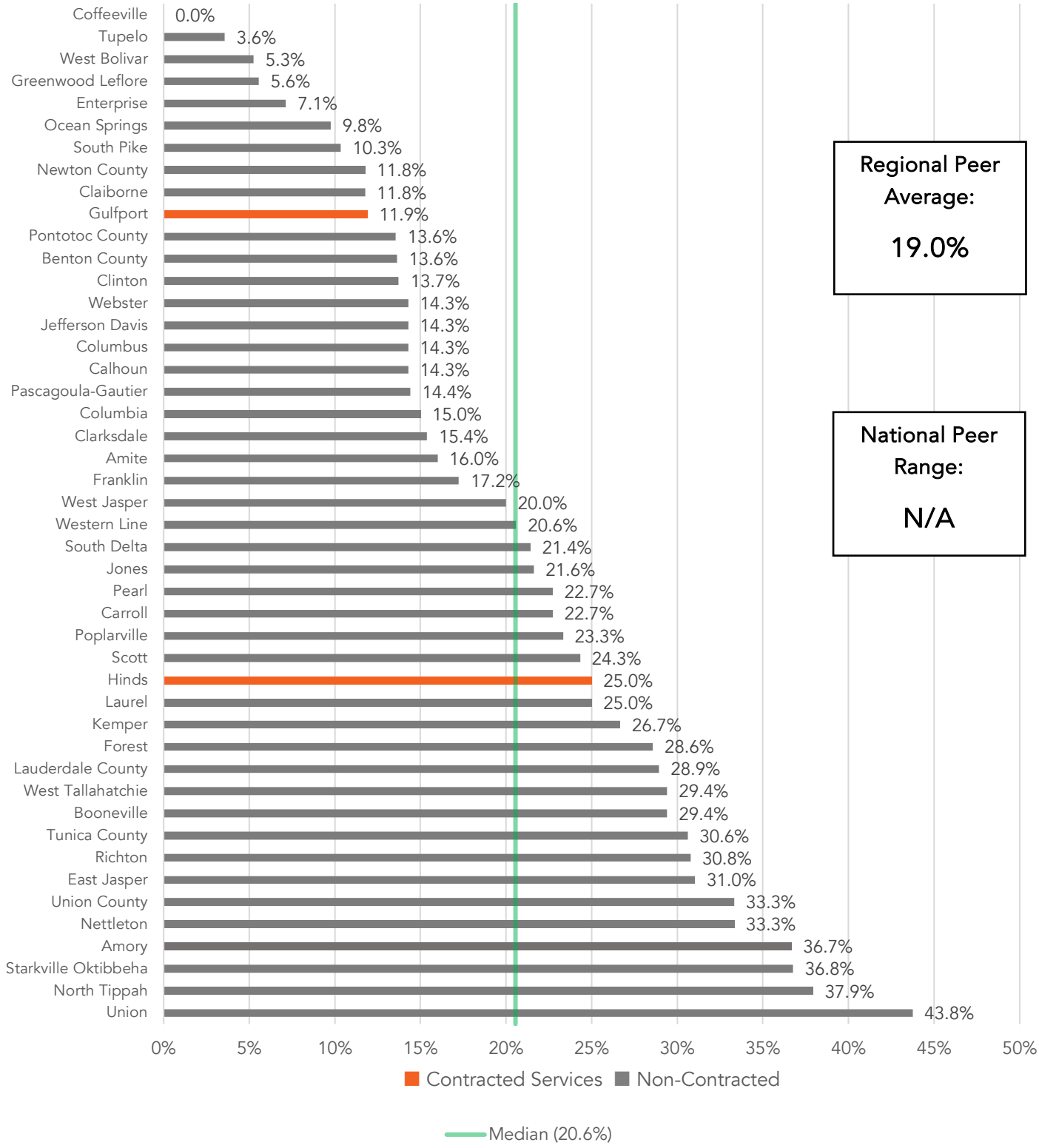
The percentage of spare buses reflects whether a district has the optimal number of spare buses to ensure that routes are covered when buses are undergoing maintenance and repairs, thus minimizing service disruptions. One goal of a well-run transportation department is to procure only the number of buses needed, plus an appropriate number of spare buses. According to *School Bus Fleet* magazine,[5] districts should aim for a spare bus percentage of from 10% to 20% of the total bus fleet. The Federal Transit Administration recommends a 20% spare bus percentage and the Great City Schools identified 15% to 19% as the target range. Maintaining or contracting unneeded buses is expensive and unnecessary and these funds could be used for other operational or instructional expenses.

Of the districts reporting data, 23 districts (50%) had a spare bus percentage higher than the recommended upper level of 20%. (See Exhibit 5 on page 17.) A larger fleet of spare buses enables more flexible maintenance scheduling, decreasing the immediate need for repairs and, consequently, the demand for mechanics. However, a large spare fleet carries an inherent risk of resource underutilization. An excessively large spare fleet may lead to inefficiencies in resource allocation and increased operational costs. Districts must therefore strike a prudent balance in their spare fleet size to ensure optimal maintenance staffing levels and shop throughput without the inefficiencies of overcapacity.

Eighteen districts reported a spare bus percentage of less than 15%. These districts could be at risk of service disruptions when maintenance issues arise due to their low spare bus percentage.

[5] School Bus Fleet is a national entity that has focused on the school transportation industry since 1956. It produces magazines, whitepapers, and provides other essential information on the management and maintenance of school bus fleets operated by public school districts, private schools, Head Start agencies, childcare centers, and contract companies.

Exhibit 5: Percentage of Spare Buses in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and an additional 80 Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Jefferson, North Bolivar, and Petal did not provide data.

Number of Buses per School

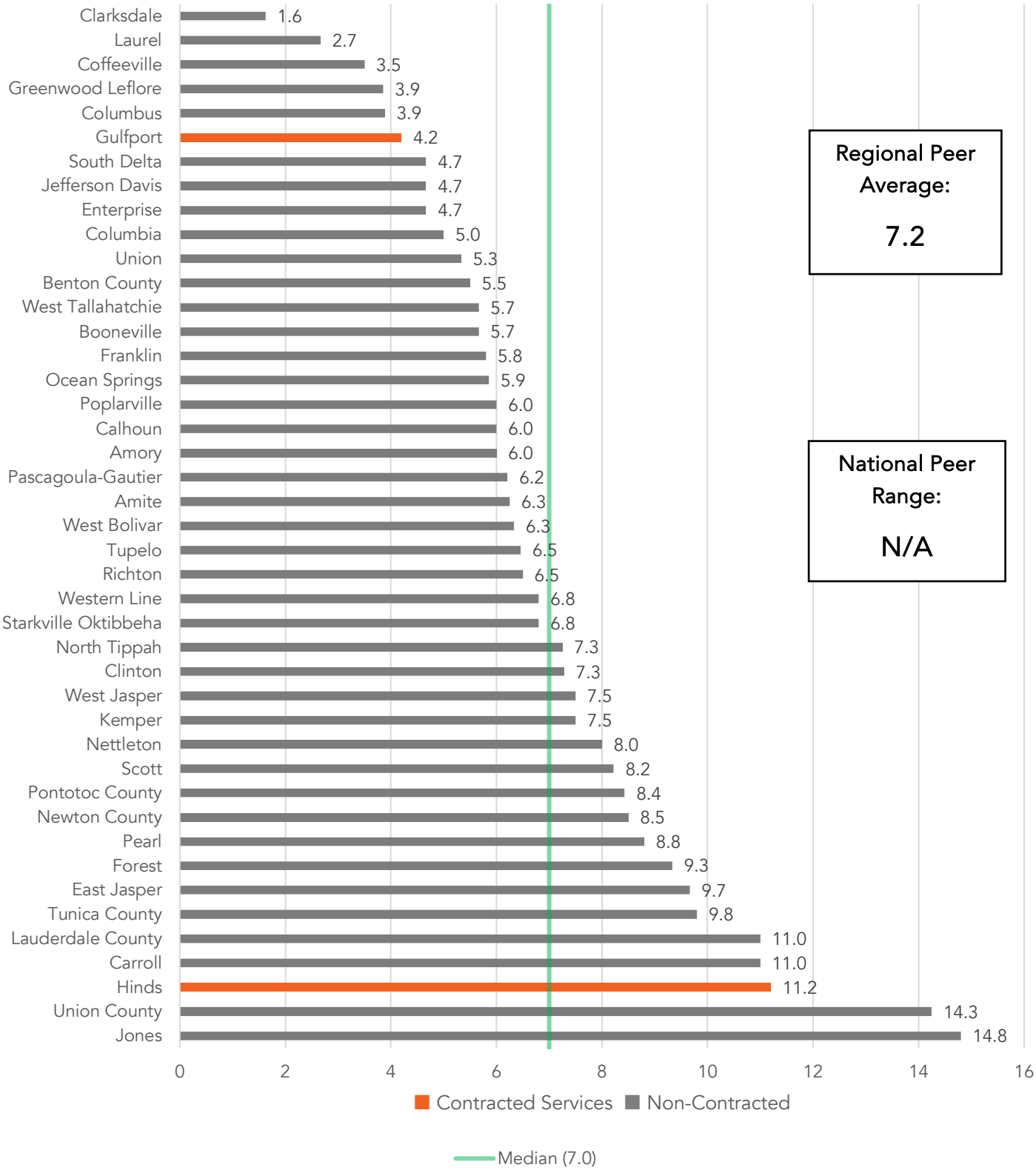
Of the districts reporting FY 2023 data, the median number of buses per school (7) was slightly below the regional peer average of 7.2. However, two districts, Union County (14.3) and Jones (14.8) reported an average number of buses per school of more than twice the median.

The number of buses per school is one measure of efficiency in the district's delivery of transportation services. This measure should be reviewed in conjunction with other measures to gain insight into overall efficiency of the transportation program.

For the districts reporting FY 2023 data, the average number of buses per school ranged from 1.6 in Clarksdale to 14.8 in Jones. (See Exhibit 6 on page 19.) Clarksdale reported transporting 535 students to eight schools, 230 daily miles driven, and a fleet of 11 buses, including two spares. The district's low number of buses in the total fleet contributes to the district's low average number of buses per school. Jones reported transporting 5,800 students to 10 schools, 8,400 daily miles driven, and a fleet of 116 buses in daily operation, plus 32 spare buses. Although Jones reported the highest number of buses per school in the cohort with 14.8, the district's percentage of spare buses is 21.6%, which is just above the upper limit of the recommended range of 10% to 20%. If the district reduced the bus fleet by three buses, the district would have 20% spare buses and be within the recommended range but still have a bus to school ratio of 14.5, more than twice the cohort median of 7.0, which emphasizes the point that one measure should not be used when considering the transportation efficiency of a district.

In addition to Jones, one other district, Union County (14.3) reported an average number of buses per school more than twice the median of 7.0. Each of these is a rural district, which would require a larger number of buses given the dispersion of students throughout the county. However, given the higher average of each district in comparison to the median and that other rural districts report lower averages, district officials have an opportunity to use the information in Exhibit 6 to compare their district to similar districts and possibly identify areas for improvement, such as reducing the number of spare buses or improving routing efficiency.

Exhibit 6: Number of Buses per School in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and an additional 80 Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Claiborne, Jefferson, North Bolivar, Petal, South Pike, and Webster did not provide data.

Number of Buses per Mechanic

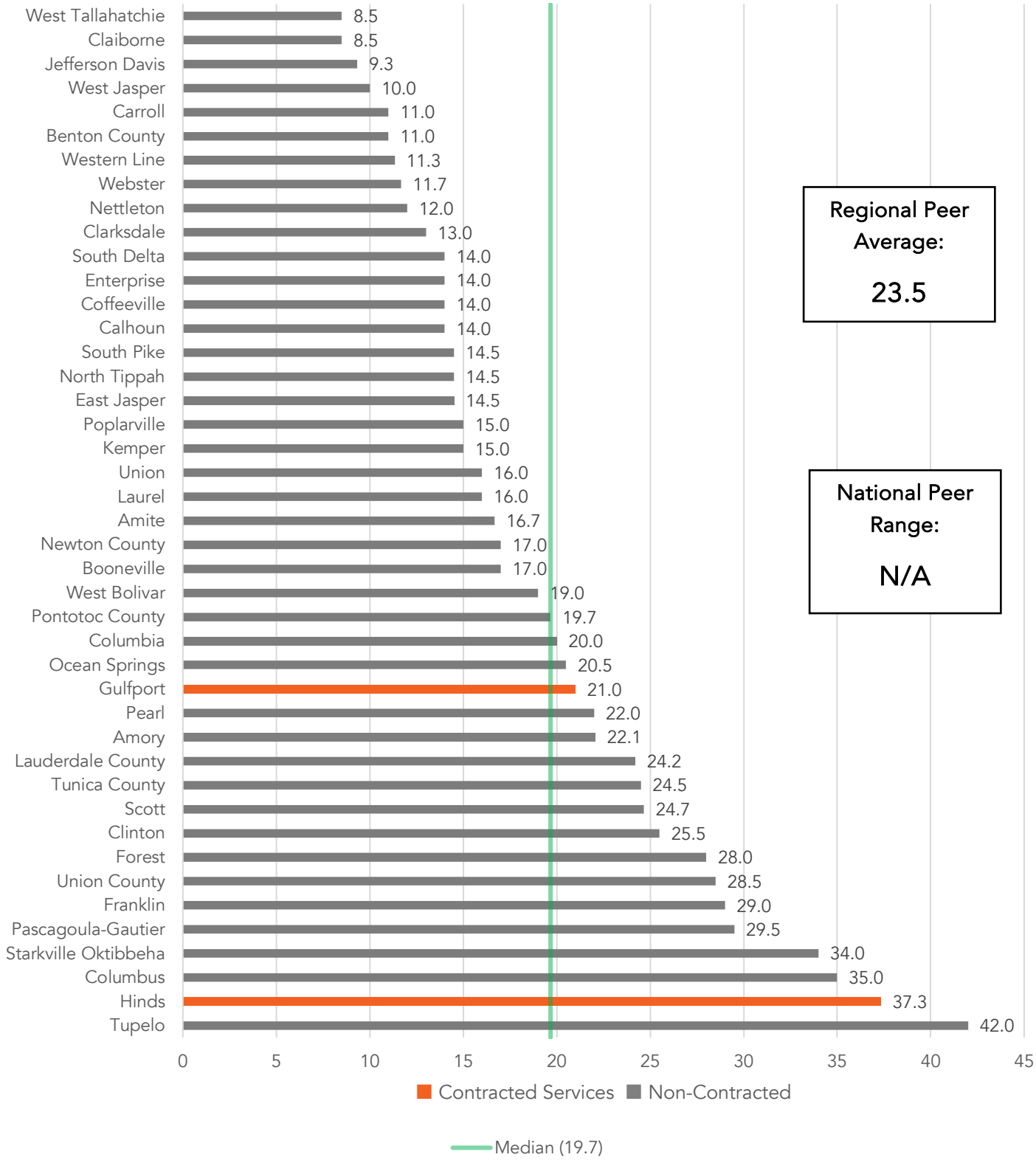
For the reporting districts for FY 2023, the median of 19.7 buses per mechanic is below the regional peer average of 23.5, indicating that overall, the cohort may be slightly less efficient in staffing for maintenance of buses than regional peers. The number of buses per mechanic ranged from 8.5 in West Tallahatchie to 42 in Tupelo.

The number of buses per mechanic measure may be used to evaluate the efficiency of a district's transportation maintenance and repair infrastructure. This measure can also aid in assessing staffing levels, although it should not be the sole determining factor for assessing staffing. Other relevant factors include the age and condition of buses, the number of spare buses available, the complexity of repair activities, and whether the district subcontracts any maintenance/repair activities.

Exhibit 7 on page 21 presents data reported by the districts regarding the number of buses per mechanic. A low ratio of buses to mechanic may indicate a need to review staffing levels, but staffing levels must always be balanced against each district's need for safety, proper maintenance, and avoiding service disruptions.

Seventeen districts reported numbers higher than the median of 19.7. Based on this information, these districts' maintenance function may be understaffed, which could impact transportation services. For example, the Franklin district has a fleet of 29 buses, including spares, and one mechanic. If the sole mechanic had to be absent for an extended period, transportation services could be disrupted. Also, maintenance understaffing could impair proper maintenance of a district's bus fleet and negatively impact safety. Although transportation efficiency is important, student safety and bus fleet reliability are also important and could be negatively impacted by maintenance understaffing.

Exhibit 7: Number of Buses per Mechanic in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and an additional 80 Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Greenwood Leflore, Jefferson, Jones, North Bolivar, Petal, and Richton did not provide data.

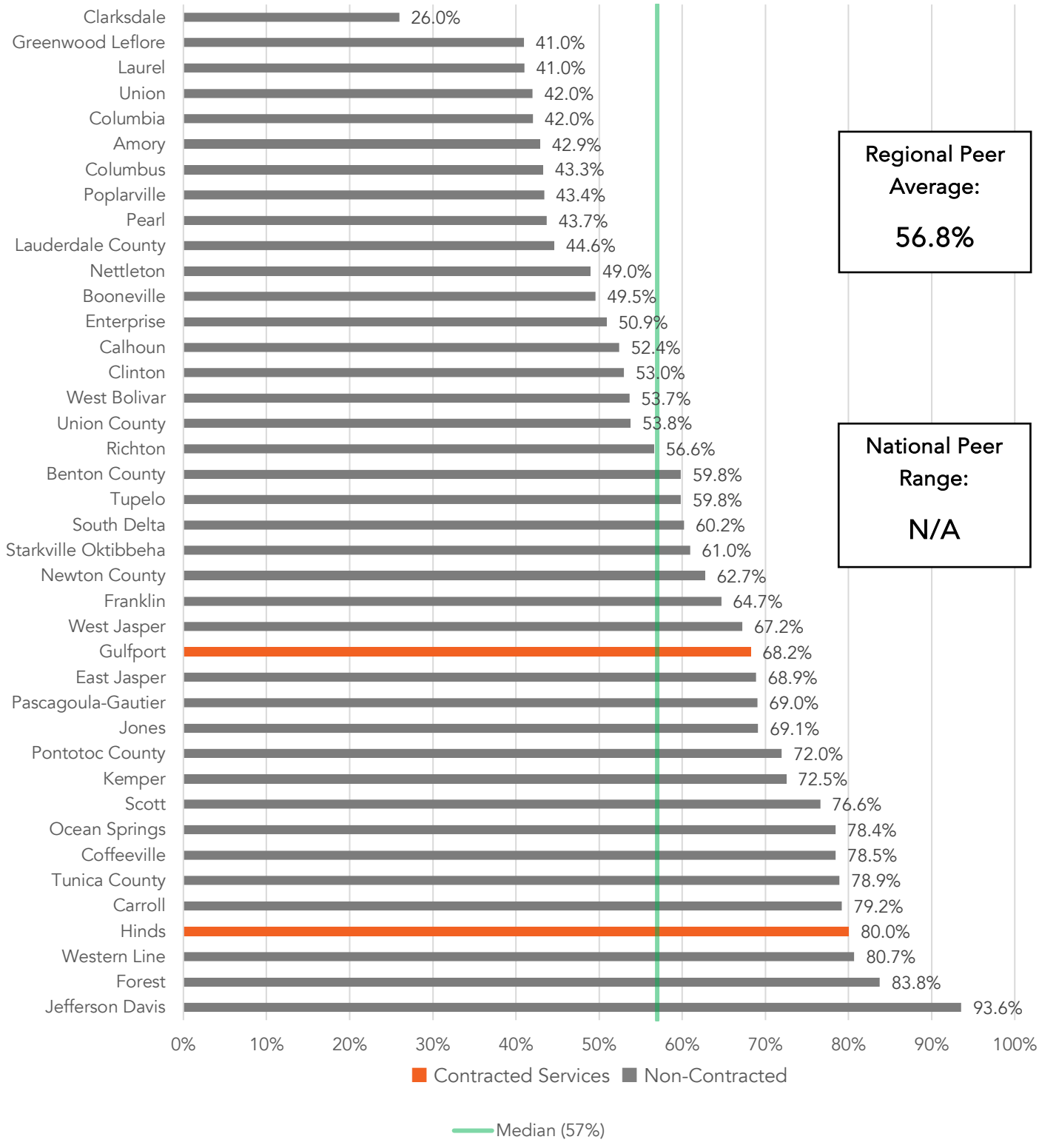
Percentage of Total Students that Were Bus Riders

The reporting districts' percentages of total students that were bus riders in FY 2023 ranged from 26% in Clarksdale to approximately 94% in Jefferson Davis, indicating that districts have a wide range of numbers of students and parents that depend on district transportation. This demonstrates the need to reassess each district's transportation needs and services on a regular basis.

The measure of percentage of total students that are bus riders can assist districts in tracking trends over time regarding the number of students that rely on bus transportation to determine whether the district is providing adequate service levels. If the district's administration finds that the number of students who rely on bus transportation is increasing, it may need to provide additional buses or routes to meet demand. Conversely, if the district's administration notices that the number of student riders in relation to the total number of students has been declining over a period of several years, it may need to re-evaluate its transportation service offerings.

As shown in Exhibit 8 on page 23, in FY 2023 the reporting districts' median percentage of students that were bus riders was 57%, which was equal to the regional peer average. This indicates that students in the reporting districts depend on school transportation slightly more than students in regional peer districts. Ridership ranged from 26% in Clarksdale to 93.6% in Jefferson Davis. As with all metrics, inaccuracies and estimates impact reported information. For example, Jefferson Davis's high percentage is based on reported data that 1,150 out of 1,229 enrolled students rode the bus, with only 79 students in the district arriving at school in parents' vehicles or their own vehicles. Amite reported more students riding the bus than enrolled; therefore, this district was excluded from Exhibit 8. These anomalies demonstrate the importance of districts accurately capturing data in order to measure accurately the need for and effectiveness of district services.

Exhibit 8: Percentage of Students that Were Bus Riders in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and an additional 80 Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Claiborne, Jefferson, North Bolivar, North Tippah, Petal, South Pike, Webster, and West Tallahatchie did not provide data. Amite had a value over 100% and was therefore excluded.

Number of Students per Bus

For reporting districts, in FY 2023 the median number of students per bus of 39.6 was below the regional peer average of 42.2, indicating that overall, the reporting districts may be slightly less efficient in transporting students than regional peer districts.

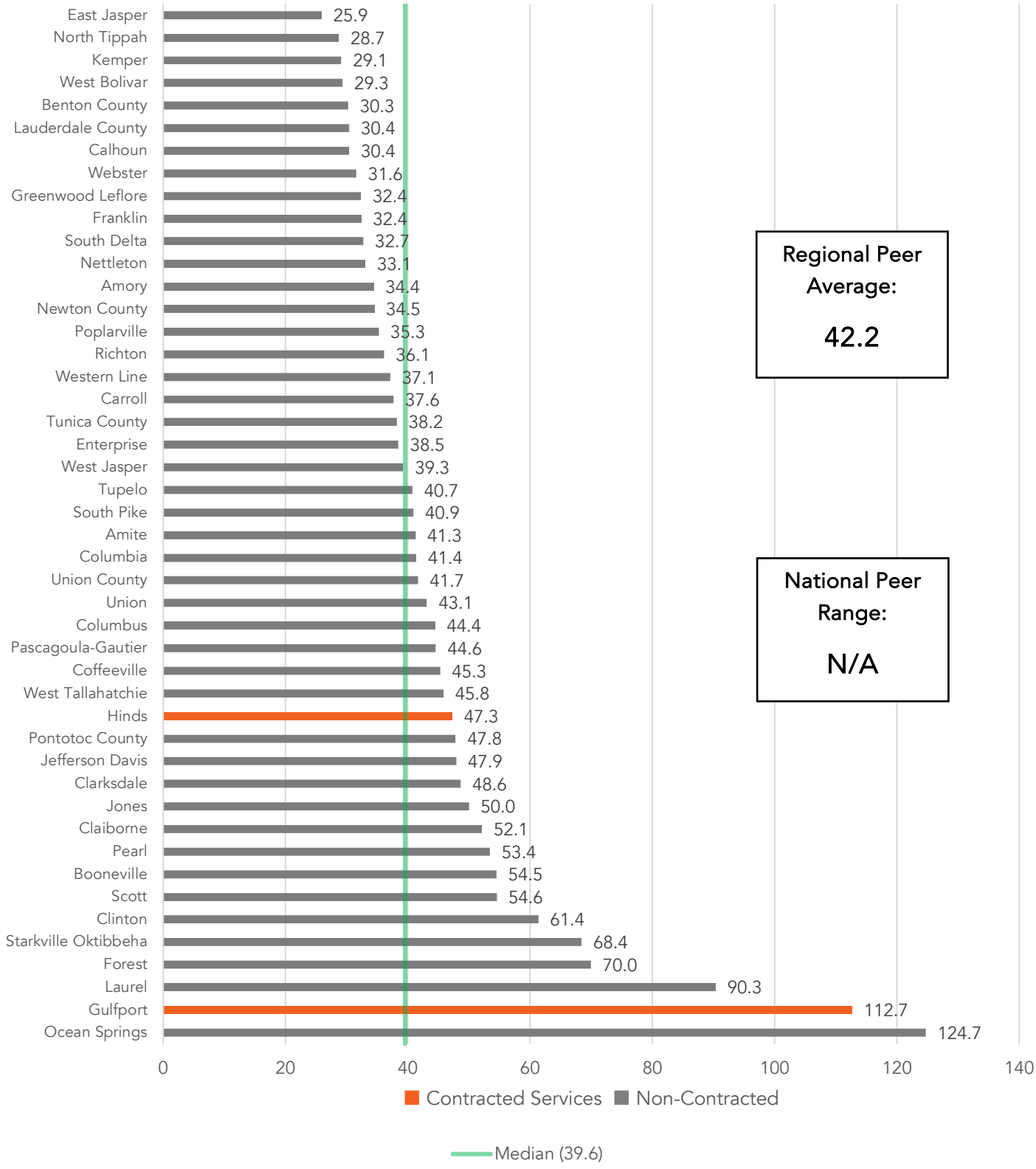
Considering the number of routes per bus, student population density, and bus capacity, the measure of the number of students per bus provides insight to school districts regarding the effectiveness of their transportation services. If the average number of students per bus falls well below the district's average bus capacity, even in areas with low student population density, this indicates the necessity to evaluate routing efficiency. In regions with high student population density, a low number of students per bus suggests potential opportunities for enhancing efficiency through route tiering.[6] Conversely, if districts observe the number of students per bus reaching or exceeding the average capacity without any route tiering, they should investigate individual bus routes for potential issues with student overcrowding.

As shown in Exhibit 9 on page 25, although the reporting districts' median number of students per bus in FY 2023 of 39.6 was below the regional peer average of 42.2, districts' numbers of students per bus ranged from 25.9 in East Jasper to 124.7 in Ocean Springs. In some districts, when a bus completes one route, it is used for another route, meaning that a bus transports more students in total than the bus's seating capacity would be for a single route. Staggered starting times between schools in a district allow this routing method.

East Jasper's relatively low number of students per bus (25.9) could indicate that the district has an excess number of bus routes and/or an excess number of buses. District officials should periodically review current routes to seek greater efficiency and when available, use routing software to determine current route efficiency and seek improvements.

[6] *Route tiering* is a method for transporting students in which buses run multiple routes based on staggered school start times. For example, buses might pick up and drop off students to elementary schools first and then pick up and drop off middle and high school students at their respective schools.

Exhibit 9: Number of Students per Bus in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and an additional 80 Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Jefferson, North Bolivar, and Petal did not provide data.

Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus

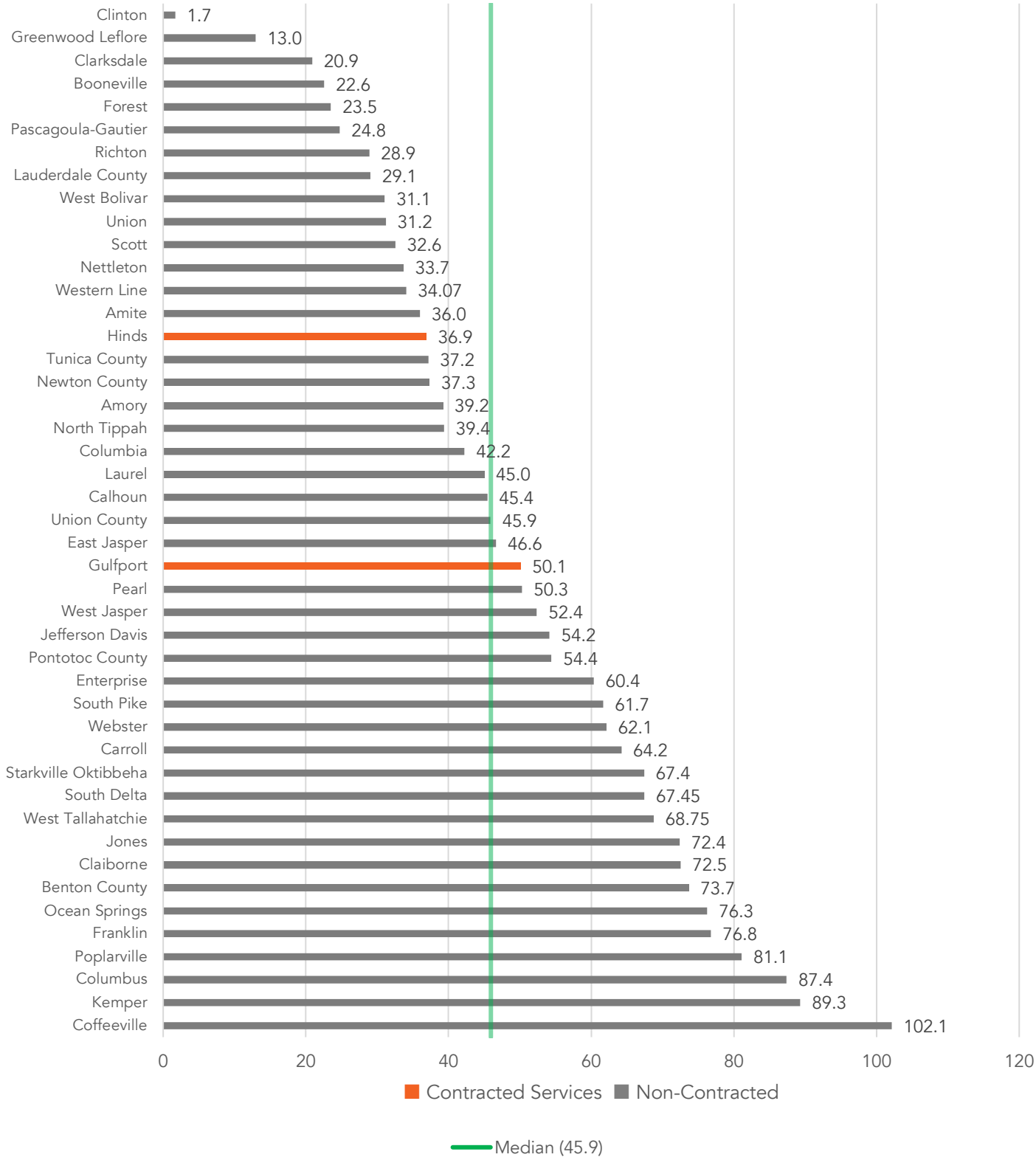
For the reporting districts, the miles driven daily per bus in FY 2023 ranged from 1.7 miles reported in Clinton to 102.1 miles reported in Coffeeville, with a median of 45.9. Although several factors such as size of the district and density of students, affect the miles driven daily per bus, the range of miles driven reported by the districts indicates possible anomalies that would affect district officials' ability to assess the efficiency of bus routes.

As shown in Exhibit 10 on page 27, districts reported a wide range of miles driven daily per bus in FY 2023. Clinton reported the lowest miles driven daily at 1.7 miles per bus. This data should be verified, as it appears to be a distinct outlier from all other districts. Coffeeville reported the highest number of miles driven daily per bus at 102.1. The district also reported a small bus fleet (7) to transport 317 students to two district schools, resulting in a ride time of 120 minutes for some district students.

Analyzing the daily mileage per bus in relation to the routing design approach and student population density offers districts information pertaining to the quality of service provided to students. This analysis should consider all driven miles, both with and without riders. When the mileage exceeds an average of 60 miles per bus and no route tiering is in place, districts should conduct a thorough examination of individual routes to identify whether students are experiencing excessive ride times or whether buses are traveling large distances without any riders. Conversely, average mileage figures at or below 35 miles may suggest possibilities for route consolidation or the implementation of route tiering strategies.

The information in this report affords district officials an opportunity to gauge their district against districts of similar size and population density, identify possible inaccuracies, and determine whether routes should be reviewed for possible improvements in efficiency. However, given the anomalies present in the data, officials should not rely solely on this information in making routing decisions.

Exhibit 10: Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and an additional 80 Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2.)

Note: Aberdeen, Jefferson, North Bolivar, and Petal did not provide data. Tupelo provided data but did not respond to requests for clarification of the data.

Conclusions Regarding How Districts' Data Collection May Impact Transportation Costs

Some districts did not provide all of the information requested for this report, which inhibited the assessment team's ability to conduct a complete analysis of transportation functions in the selected districts and inhibits districts' ability to manage transportation program and costs.

As noted previously, Level Data selected 50 of Mississippi's 138 school districts with a range of characteristics, including geographic location, enrollment, and grades based on the statewide accountability system to provide FY 2023 data on their transportation functions. The transportation department at Aberdeen did not provide any data or information for this report. Further, the departments at Jefferson, Kemper, North Bolivar, Petal, South Pike, and Webster provided a minimal amount of data. Districts should consider taking action to obtain precise cost information and other types of benchmarks and performance indicators such as those noted in this report. Without timely and accurate financial information, the districts' ability to manage costs and allocate taxpayer funds effectively is compromised. District administrators should also use such information to compare their district's costs and efficiency with those of other districts.

Conclusions Regarding Cost Savings

Potential Cost Savings

Of the districts reporting, annual projected potential cost savings could be up to $2.09 million for bus route improvements and up to $595,000 for staffing adjustments.

Twenty-seven of the reporting districts have the potential for cost savings either through bus route improvements or staffing adjustments. Exhibit 11 on page 30 provides a summary of projected potential cost savings from bus route improvements in 20 districts and Exhibit 12 on page 34 provides a summary of projected potential cost savings from transportation staffing adjustments in 16 districts. Nine districts had projected potential cost savings in both categories. The total annual projected potential cost savings could be up to $2.09 million for bus route improvements and up to $595,000 for staffing adjustments. While the reported data suggests the potential for cost savings for these districts, each district's administration should carefully review the data and recommendations in light of the particular circumstances of the district.

Exhibit 11: Projected Potential Cost Savings from Bus Route Improvements in Reporting Districts Based on FY 2023 Data

District	Projected Potential Cost Savings	Recommendations
Amite	< or = $140,775	The transportation department's percentage of total district expenses was higher than the state median, as well as the regional average. Cost per student and cost per mile were also higher. Due to the lower numbers of student riders per bus, approximately five buses are not currently at full capacity. If, by consolidating buses or staggering bells to allow for tiered routing, the district could reduce the number of buses by five, it could realize the projected potential cost savings. This would bring the district more in line with the state peer median.
Benton County	< or = $88,230	The district's cost per rider is higher than the state peer median. These costs directly impact the percentage of total expenses, which is also higher than the state median. Indicators used to determine cost per bus were not provided by the school district, so further analysis was not possible. The district should review current routes to determine where there is an opportunity to improve route efficiencies. If the district could bring its cost in line with the state peer medians, it could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Carroll	< or = $43,771	The transportation department's percentage of total district expenses was higher than the state median, as well as the regional average. In addition, costs per student were high and the ratio of buses per school exceeded the state median by eight buses. With only two schools, the district demographics may not allow consolidation of routes, but currently three buses are below capacity (not including the special needs buses). If two of these routes could be consolidated, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Clinton	< or = $97,102	The district's costs per student rider are lower than the state peer median as well as the regional average; however, the district's ratio of buses per school is higher than the state median, as are costs per mile. Both indicators are also higher than the regional average. The district should review current routes to determine whether there are opportunities to reduce the number of buses per school and identify efficiencies within the routing of buses. If these indicators are brought in line with state medians, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Coffeeville	< or = $32,301	While student rider costs and the district's percentage of total expenses are lower than regional averages, both indicators are higher than the state median. All other indicators are lower than the state median. The district's one elementary and one high school are located at the same site, allowing for potential route consolidation. If the district could bring these costs in line with the state median, it could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Columbus	< or = $188,529	The transportation department's percentage of district expense is higher than the state median. The cost per student is also higher than both the state median and regional average. The district has committed to a tiered busing system for its nine schools in an attempt to combine buses; however, 11 of those bus runs are well undercapacity (excluding special needs buses). Depending on the demographics of the district, if possible, honing the routing to reduce four buses would result in the projected potential

District	Projected Potential Cost Savings	Recommendations
		cost savings. This reduction would bring the district closer to the state median in these two indicators.
East Jasper	< or = $99,921	The transportation department's percentage of total district expenses was higher than the state median. In addition, the district's costs per student were higher than the median as well as the regional average. Also, the ratio of buses per school was high. Currently, the district has 20 bus routes that serve the three schools. Of those 20, 12 currently are under capacity and of those 12, six drive fewer than 25 miles. Based on system demographics, it might be possible, through staggering bell schedules, to use a tiered routing system and reduce the number of bus routes by six. This reduction could bring these costs closer to the state median and result in the projected potential cost savings.
Enterprise	< or = $46,118	While student rider costs and the district's percentage of total expenses are lower than regional averages, both indicators are higher than the state median. All other indicators are lower than the state median. The district is comprised of one elementary, one middle school, and one high school at two different locations. The district should review its routes to determine whether efficiencies could be realized. If the district could bring these costs in line with the state median, it could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Franklin	< or = $104,853	The transportation department's percentage of district expenses is higher than the state median as well as higher than the regional average. Also, the costs per student rider are high. Currently, 24 bus routes are used to serve the five schools. Of those 24 bus routes, seven are currently under capacity. Depending on the demographics of the district, the department may consider reducing the number of bus routes by five (one per school) through staggered bell schedules and tiered routing. If this reduction were possible, the district could realize this potential savings. By bringing these costs down, the district will be more in line with the state peer median.
Jefferson Davis	< or = $64,772	Due to the district's relatively high overall transportation costs as a percentage of the total district budget and costs per mile being higher than the state median, the district should review bus routes for possible improvements. Other information was not provided to the review team; therefore, a complete analysis was not possible of potential cost savings. If the district could bring its costs in line with the state peer median, it could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Lauderdale County	< or = $69,969	The district's costs per student and per mile are higher than the state median and the regional average. In addition, the ratio of buses per school is excessive compared to the state median. With 86 bus routes for 11 schools, there may be potential for a reduction of bus routes. Eleven of the 86 routes are currently driving 20 miles or less and four buses are significantly under capacity (excluding special needs buses). The district currently uses a staggered bell schedule, so the potential for tiered routing exists, which could provide for routing efficiencies. Depending on the demographics of the district, a reduction of four routes would move the district closer to the state median and realize the projected potential cost savings.

District	Projected Potential Cost Savings	Recommendations
Nettleton	< or = $82,227	Due to the district's high costs per student rider, high costs per mile, and a ratio of buses per school being higher than the state median, the district should review routes for possible efficiencies. With 16 bus routes serving three schools, the district currently runs three buses for 10 or fewer miles per day. This would indicate the possibility of consolidation of routes. If routes could be combined, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings and move toward the state peer median.
North Tippah	< or = $130,425	All cost indicators and the ratio of buses per school are higher than the state median. The cost per student and the percentage of the district expenses are significantly higher than the state peer median as well as the regional average. The district's four schools are served by 18 bus routes. Thirteen of those 18 buses are currently under capacity and five are driving less than 25 miles (12.5-mile run), indicating the possibility for consolidation. Depending on the demographics of the district, by staggering bell schedules to allow for tiered routing or honing the current routing, the district could reduce its routes by five. By doing so, it could realize the projected potential cost savings and move toward the state median.
Pontotoc County	< or = $75,742	While the district's cost per student and cost per mile are in line with the state median, the ratio of buses per school (8.4) is high. The seven district schools are served by 51 bus routes; eight of those routes (none are special needs) are fewer than 25 miles (12.5-mile runs). Depending on the demographics of the district, the possibility exists of consolidating routes or developing a tiered route system using staggered bell schedules. Reducing seven buses (one per school) would move the district closer to the state median, thus it could realize the projected potential savings.
Poplarville	< or = $77,504	While the transportation percentage of the district expenses is higher than the state median, the most significant indicator is the cost per student, which is higher than both the state median and the regional average. The district's five schools are served by 23 routes. Of those 23 routes, 15 are currently under capacity and three are driving fewer than 20 miles (10-mile runs). Depending on the demographics of the district, there may be efficiencies available through the consolidation of bus routes. By reducing routes by three, the district could realize the potential projected savings. These savings would begin to move the district toward the state peer median.
Tunica County	< or = $275,304	Costs per student and the percentage of transportation expenses to district expenses are all higher than the state median as well as the regional average. The ratio of buses per school is also higher. The district did not provide the data necessary to provide an analysis of the cost of miles per bus. This is a rural district serving over 1,200 students. The five schools are served by 34 routes; 12 of those 34 routes drive less than 20 miles (10-mile runs). While one route is only five miles, another is 138 miles. Also, seven of those short bus routes are currently under capacity. An additional 10 buses also have capacity. The district should review its routing to determine possible consolidation or reassignment of buses. By reducing the number of bus routes by five (one per school), the district would realize the projected potential cost savings.
Tupelo	< or = $275,443	This district's cost per student and cost per mile are higher than the state peer median. The district's 13 schools are served by 81 routes. All but three of those 81 routes are under 25 miles (12.5-mile runs). The district's buses are small (35) and are at capacity, but with the staggered bell schedule, there is the possibility of tiered routing, which would allow for a reduction of buses. The district should review its current routing system

District	Projected Potential Cost Savings	Recommendations
		to determine whether tiering would allow for the reduction of nine bus routes. If this were achieved, the district would realize the potential projected cost savings and bring it in line with the state peer median.
Union	< or = $82,732	All of the cost factors are higher than the state median. Also, the ratio of buses per school is higher. The district's four schools are served by 38 bus routes. Of those 38, currently eight are under capacity (excluding special needs). Using a dedicated routing system may not be the most efficient design. The district should review its current system to determine whether tiering or a combination routing system would allow for a reduction in bus routes. Reducing the number of buses by four (one per school) would bring the district's cost per student in line with the peer median. This reduction could realize the projected potential cost savings.
West Jasper	< or = $69,874	Due to the district's high overall transportation costs as a percentage of the total district budget and high number of buses per school, the district should review bus routes for possible improvements. Currently the district's four schools are served by 24 bus routes. Of those 24 buses, 12 have the capacity for additional students and three of those routes are less than 10 miles long. By reducing the ratio of buses per school and bringing its costs in line with the state peer median, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings.
West Tallahatchie	< or = $46,540	Due to the district's relatively high overall transportation costs as a percentage of the total district budget and high costs per student rider, the district should review bus routes for possible improvements. Currently, three of the bus routes are fewer than 25 miles (12.5-mile run) a day. If the district could reduce its fleet by two, it could realize the projected potential cost savings and move toward the state peer median.
TOTAL	**< or = $2,092,132**	

Exhibit 12: Projected Potential Cost Savings from Transportation Staffing Adjustments in Reporting Districts Based on FY 2023 Data

District	Projected Potential Cost Savings	Recommendations
Amite	< or = $23,800	The district employs 1.5 bus mechanic FTEs (full-time equivalents), which results in a ratio of buses to mechanics of 17:1. The state median is currently 20:1. By reducing the staffing by 0.5 FTE, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings. Other factors must be considered before reduction, such as the condition of the current fleet and other duties assigned to these personnel. If the district could realize the reduction, it could bring staffing levels in alignment with the state peer median.
Benton County	< or = $47,600	The district employs two bus mechanics for its fleet of 22 buses. The number of buses per mechanic (11:1) is lower than the state median of 20:1. The district should evaluate its staffing levels considering these factors. If the district could bring staffing levels in alignment with the state peer median, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Calhoun	< or = $47,600	The district employs three bus mechanics for its fleet of 42 buses. The number of buses per mechanic at 14:1 is lower than the state median of 20:1; therefore, the district should evaluate its staffing levels. If the district could bring staffing levels in alignment with the state peer median, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Carroll	< or = $47,600	The district employs two FTE mechanics to maintain the district's fleet of 22 buses. The number of buses to mechanic (11:1) is below the state median of 20:1. Considering these factors, the district should evaluate its staffing levels. If the district could bring staffing levels in alignment with the state peer median, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings.
Claiborne	< or = $47,600	The district employs two mechanics for its fleet of 17 buses, resulting in a ratio of 8.5 buses per mechanic. The district could reduce its personnel by one and still be less than the state median of 20:1. If the district could bring staffing levels in alignment with the state peer median, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings.
East Jasper	< or = $23,800	The district employs two mechanics to service its fleet of 29 buses. This results in a ratio of buses to mechanics of 14.5:1, which is lower than the state median of 20:1. By reducing positions to 1.5 FTEs, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio to 19.3:1, thereby moving in line with the state peer median.
Jefferson Davis	< or = $47,600	The district employs three mechanics to service its fleet of 27 buses, resulting in a ratio of buses to mechanic of 9:1. By reducing positions by one, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio to 13.5:1, which is still below the state median of 20:1. Depending on the condition of the fleet, the district should consider reducing its mechanics positions to 1.5 FTEs, which would results in a bus to mechanic ratio of 18:1, still below the state median.
Kemper	< or = $23,800	The district employs two mechanics to service its fleet of 30 buses. This results in a ratio of buses to mechanics of 15:1, which is lower than the state median of 20:1. By reducing positions to 1.5 FTEs, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio to 20:1, in line with the state peer median.

Newton County	< or = $23,800	The district employs two mechanics to service its fleet of 34 buses. This results in a ratio of buses to mechanics of 17:1, which is lower than the state median of 20:1. By reducing positions to 1.5 FTEs, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio to 23:1. Other factors such as the condition of the fleet must be taken into consideration, but a reduction would bring the district more in line with the state peer median.
North Tippah	< or = $23,800	The district employs two mechanics to service its fleet of 29 buses. This results in a ratio of buses to mechanics of 14.5:1, which is lower than the state median of 20:1. By reducing positions to 1.5 FTEs, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio to19:1, which is still lower than the state median. This reduction would bring the district more in line with its peers.
Poplarville	< or = $23,800	The district employs two mechanics to service its 30 buses, resulting in a ratio of buses to mechanic of 15:1. This is lower than the state median of 20:1. By reducing positions to 1.5 FTEs, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio to 20:1, which is in line with the state peer median.
South Pike	< or = $23,800	The district employs two mechanics to service its 29 buses, resulting in a ratio of buses to mechanic of 14.5:1. This is lower than the state median of 20:1. By reducing positions to 1.5 FTEs, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio to 19:1, which is in line with the state peer median.
Webster	< or = $47,600	The district has 35 buses in its fleet and employs three mechanics, resulting in a ratio of buses to mechanic of 12:1, which is lower than the state median of 20:1. By reducing positions to two FTEs, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio to 17.5:1, which is still lower than the state peer median. Depending on the condition of the fleet, the district could consider an additional 0.5 reduction, which would bring the ratio to 23:1.
West Jasper	< or = $47,600	The district employs three mechanics to service its fleet of 30 buses, resulting in a ratio of 10:1, much lower than the state median. By reducing positions to 2 FTEs, the district could realize the potential cost savings and reduce its ratio of buses to mechanic to 15:1, which is still lower than the state peer median. Depending on the condition of the fleet, an additional 0.5 reduction would bring the district in line with the state peer median at 20:1.
West Tallahatchie	< or = $47,600	The district's fleet of 17 buses is serviced by two full-time mechanics. This results in a ratio of buses to mechanic of 8.5:1. The state median is 20:1. By reducing staff to one full-time mechanic, the district would realize the potential cost savings. The resulting ratio of 17:1 is still below the state median, but further reduction would need to take into account the condition of the fleet and other duties assigned to personnel.
Western Line	< or = $47,600	The district employs three mechanics to service its fleet of 34 buses, resulting in a ratio of bus to mechanic of 11:1, which is below the state median of 20:1. By reducing its staffing to two mechanics, the district would realize the potential cost savings and a ratio of 17:1.
TOTAL	**< or =$595,000**	

Recommendations

1. In FY 2026, each district superintendent, in consultation with the district's transportation program personnel, should review the information from this report and implement each of the relevant district recommendations to increase efficiency, improve service levels, and/or achieve cost savings. These include, but are not limited to:
    a. potential implementation of bus routing software;
    b. potential implementation of formal guidelines for student seating on buses;
    c. annual reviews of bus routes;
    d. identify potential opportunities for bus route optimization;
    e. evaluate approaches for addressing driver absences; and,
    f. assess mechanic staffing levels and spare fleet size.
2. District administrators should also use the information in this report to compare their performance to that of their peers in Mississippi, as well as regionally and nationally, to identify areas for potential improvement and take action to improve in those areas.
3. In those districts that did not provide benchmarking or performance information during this review pertaining to their transportation programs (or provided questionable data), relevant district personnel should take action to begin collecting and monitoring precise transportation data on an ongoing basis.
4. District personnel should provide an annual performance report to the district superintendent regarding the status of the transportation programs using the measures included in this review.
5. District administrators should use the information from annual performance reports to monitor their districts' costs and efficiency in transportation program operations.

Appendix A: List of School Districts Included in this Review

1. Aberdeen*
2. Amite
3. Amory
4. Benton County
5. Booneville
6. Calhoun
7. Carroll
8. Claiborne
9. Clarksdale
10. Clinton
11. Coffeeville
12. Columbia
13. Columbus
14. East Jasper
15. Enterprise
16. Forest
17. Franklin
18. Greenwood Leflore
19. Gulfport
20. Hinds
21. Jefferson
22. Jefferson Davis
23. Jones
24. Kemper
25. Lauderdale County
26. Laurel
27. Nettleton
28. Newton County
29. North Bolivar
30. North Tippah
31. Ocean Springs
32. Pascagoula-Gautier
33. Pearl
34. Petal
35. Pontotoc County
36. Poplarville
37. Richton
38. Scott
39. South Delta
40. South Pike
41. Starkville Oktibbeha
42. Tunica County
43. Tupelo

44. Union
45. Union County
46. Webster
47. West Bolivar
48. West Jasper
49. West Tallahatchie
50. Western Line

* Aberdeen failed to provide benchmark or performance data for this review.

SOURCE: PEER.

Appendix B: School District Transportation Data for FY 2023

District	Annual Actual District Operating Expenditures	Number of Daily Regular Route Buses	Number of Daily Special Education Route Buses	Average Number of Miles Driven Daily	Number of Daily Riders	Annual Actual Transportation Expenditures
Aberdeen	Data Not Provided					
Amite	$17,925,519	20	1	756	867	$1,173,143
Amory	$20,994,519	17	2	745	654	$652,015
Benton County	$16,032,268	17	2	1,400	575	$752,329
Booneville	$16,119,785	11	1	271	654	$728,525
Calhoun	$33,219,363	30	6	1,636	1,095	$1,313,387
Carroll	$13,003,800	15	2	1,092	640	$802,490
Claiborne	$19,673,920	14	1	1,088	782	$716,820
Clarksdale	$50,096,334	7	4	230	535	$750,081
Clinton	$62,111,121	40	4	75	2,700	$2,476,117
Coffeeville	$7,541,993	6	1	715	317	$371,691
Columbia	$23,388,653	15	2	718	704	$719,417
Columbus	$53,714,188	27	3	2,622	1,333	$2,749,399
East Jasper	$16,867,684	19	1	933	518	$804,931
Enterprise	$12,579,021	12	1	785	500	$612,175
Forest	$25,527,321	18	2	470	1,399	$1,144,227
Franklin	$18,271,259	21	3	1,843	777	$1,013,595

District	Annual Actual District Operating Expenditures	Number of Daily Regular Route Buses	Number of Daily Special Education Route Buses	Average Number of Miles Driven Daily	Number of Daily Riders	Annual Actual Transportation Expenditures
Greenwood Leflore	$64,459,163	46	5	661	1,650	$2,678,290
Gulfport	$87,185,242	30	7	1,854	4,169	$2,614,696
Hinds	$81,092,428	78	6	3,099	5,345	$4,220,743
Jefferson	$18,427,315	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	$883,353
Jefferson Davis	$28,041,979	23	1	1,300	1,150	$1,326,662
Jones	$115,315,660	105	11	8,400	5,800	$4,362,276
Kemper	$37,245,419	20	2	1,965	641	Not Provided
Lauderdale County	$87,261,514	73	13	2,500	2,615	$3,527,685
Laurel	$58,858,392	11	1	540	1,084	$1,123,173
Nettleton	$17,560,472	15	1	539	529	$657,819
Newton County	$26,864,791	28	2	1,120	1,036	$1,177,694
North Bolivar	$19,495,654	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	$593,486
North Tippah	$16,281,656	17	1	709	517	$1,260,780
Ocean Springs	$73,576,583	31	6	2,822	4,614	$2,394,284
Pascagoula-Gautier	$119,956,511	90	11	2,500	4,500	$5,063,592
Pearl	$55,710,015	28	6	1,710	1,817	$2,126,600
Petal	$72,669,281	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	$2,536,367
Pontotoc County	$25,326,091	48	3	2,776	2,439	$1,064,012

District	Annual Actual District Operating Expenditures	Number of Daily Regular Route Buses	Number of Daily Special Education Route Buses	Average Number of Miles Driven Daily	Number of Daily Riders	Annual Actual Transportation Expenditures
Poplarville	$28,033,807	22	1	1,865	811	$1,291,750
Richton	$8,721,682	8	1	260	325	$215,331
Scott	$47,430,407	52	4	1,824	3,055	$2,397,796
South Delta	$13,071,925	10	1	742	360	$510,837
South Pike	Not Provided	25	1	1,604	1,064	Not Provided
Starkville Oktibbeha	$92,190,657	37	6	2,899	2,943	$3,232,840
Tunica County	$37,721,343	32	2	1,264	1,299	$4,496,637
Tupelo	$150,674,894	76	5	Not applicable*	3,300	$4,284,734
Union	$39,557,305	34	4	1,744	1,583	$1,964,909
Union County	$12,531,218	8	1	281	388	$334,971
Webster	Not Provided	28	2	1,864	948	Not Provided
West Bolivar	$19,917,324	17	1	559	528	$796,815
West Jasper	$23,195,876	23	1	1,257	942	$1,048,122
West Tallahatchie	$12,710,995	11	1	825	550	$659,332
Western Line	$27,695,197	25	2	920	1,003	$1,132,222

*Tupelo reported 18 total miles; however, this data was not clarified and was therefore excluded.

Aberdeen
Benchmark Data Not Reported
Performance Data Not Reported

Amite			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		×	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff) and utilizes "trail" or "standby" buses that are daily dedicated with drivers just for this purpose
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	6.54%	+	+
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$46,925.74	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,353.11	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$7.92	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	16%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	6.25	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	16.67	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	Not Clarified*	N/A	N/A
Number of Students per Bus	41.29	+	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	36	_	N/A

*Amite reported ridership of 100.12% and this data was therefore excluded, as ridership cannot exceed 100%.

Amory			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.11%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$21,733.83	_	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$996.96	_	_
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.86	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	36.67%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	6	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	22.06	+	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	42.91%	_	_
Number of Students per Bus	34.42	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	39.21	_	N/A

Benton County			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Did not report		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.69%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$34,196.76	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,308.40	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	Data not Provided		
Percentage of Spare Buses	13.64%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	5.50	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	11	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	59.83%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	30.26	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	73.68	+	N/A

Booneville			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		×	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.52%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$42,854.42	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,113.95	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$14.93	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	29.41%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	5.67	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	17	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	49.55%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	54.50	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	22.58	–	N/A

Calhoun			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.95%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$31,271.11	_	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,199.44	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.46	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	14.29%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	6	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	52.42%	_	_
Number of Students per Bus	30.42	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	45.44	_	N/A

Carroll			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff), uses drivers that do extra routes
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	6.17%	+	+
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$36,476.81	+	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,253.89	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.11	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	22.73%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	11	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	11	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	79.21%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	37.65	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	64.24	+	N/A

Claiborne			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.64%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$42,165.85	+	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$916.65	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$3.66	-	-
Percentage of Spare Buses	11.76%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	Data not Provided		
Number of Buses per Mechanic	8.5	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	Data not Provided		
Number of Students per Bus	52.13	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	72.53	+	N/A

Clarksdale			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Tiered/Paired – A route that has one bus making multiple runs, each run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	1.5%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$57,698.55	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,402.02	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$18.12	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	15.38%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	1.63	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	13	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	25.97%	_	_
Number of Students per Bus	48.64	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	20.91	_	N/A

Clinton			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	**Yes**	**No**	**Notes**
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		×	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Shuttle – A route that picks up a group of students from one location and delivers to another (e.g., trade school/intra-day routes)		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	**FY 2023**	**Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median**	**Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average**
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.99%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$48,551.32	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$917.08	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	Data Not Clarified	N/A	N/A
Percentage of Spare Buses	13.73%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	7.29	+	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	25.5	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	52.98%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	61.36	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	1.7	–	N/A

Coffeeville			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.93%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$53,098.76	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,172.53	+	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$2.90	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	0%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	3.5	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	78.47%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	45.29	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	102.14	+	N/A

Columbia			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.08%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$35,970.84	+	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,021.90	_	_
Annual Cost per Mile	$5.57	+	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	15%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	5	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	20	+	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	42.03%	_	_
Number of Students per Bus	41.41	+	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	42.24	_	N/A

Columbus			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff); utilizes "trail" or "standby" buses that are daily dedicated with drivers just for this purpose; other drivers double routes when subs aren't available.
Bus route method used	Tiered/Paired – A route that has one bus making multiple runs, each run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	5.12%	+	=
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$78,554.26	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$2,062.56	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$5.61	+	-
Percentage of Spare Buses	14.29%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	3.89	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	35	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	43.25%	_	_
Number of Students per Bus	44.43	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	87.4	+	_

East Jasper			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	**Yes**	**No**	**Notes**
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	**FY 2023**	**Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median**	**Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average**
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.77%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$27,756.23	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,553.92	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.79	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	31.03%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	9.67	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14.5	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	68.88%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	25.9	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	46.65	+	N/A

Enterprise			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (_), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (_), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.87%	+	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$43,726.78	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,224.35	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.33	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	7.14%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	4.67	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	50.92%	_	_
Number of Students per Bus	38.46	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	60.38	+	N/A

Forest			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.48%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$40,865.25	+	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$817.89	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$13.51	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	28.57%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	9.33	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	28	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	83.77%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	69.95	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	23.52	–	N/A

Franklin			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff) and the district doubled routes
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	5.55%	+	+
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$34,951.54	_	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,304.50	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$3.11	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	17.24%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	5.8	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	29	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	64.7%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	32.38	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	76.79	+	N/A

Greenwood Leflore			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff) and First Student has a "driver bench" (staff to cover routes in case of absence)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.16%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$49,597.96	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,623.21	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$22.51	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	5.56%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	3.86	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	Data not Provided		
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	40.95%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	32.35	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	12.96	–	N/A

Gulfport			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	Other drivers completed the routes
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$62,254.68	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$627.18	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$7.54	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	11.9%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	4.2	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	21	+	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	68.24%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	112.68	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	50.11	+	N/A

Hinds			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (_), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (_), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	5.2%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$37,685.21	+	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,063.00	_	_
Annual Cost per Mile	$7.44	+	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	25%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	11.2	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	37.33	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	80.04%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	47.3	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	36.89	_	N/A

Jefferson			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Did not report		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (_), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (_), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.79%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	Data not Provided		
Annual Cost per Rider			
Annual Cost per Mile			
Percentage of Spare Buses			
Number of Buses per School			
Number of Buses per Mechanic			
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders			
Number of Students per Bus			
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus			

Jefferson Davis			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.73%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$47,380.78	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,153.62	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$5.67	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	14.29%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	4.67	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	9.33	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	93.57%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	47.92	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	54.17	+	N/A

Jones			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.78%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$29,474.84	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$752.12	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$2.89	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	21.62%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	14.8	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	Data not Provided		
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	69.13%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	50	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	72.41	+	N/A

Kemper			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	
Bus route method used	Did not report		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	Data not Provided		
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall			
Annual Cost per Rider			
Annual Cost per Mile			
Percentage of Spare Buses	26.67%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	7.5	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	15	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	72.51%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	29.14	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	89.32	+	N/A

Lauderdale County			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.04%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$29,154.42	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,349.02	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$7.93	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	28.93%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	11	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	24.2	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	44.6%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	30.41	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	29.07	–	N/A

Laurel			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		
Bus route method used	Tiered/Paired – A route that has one bus making multiple runs, each run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	1.91%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$70,198.31	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,036.14	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$11.56	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	25%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	2.67	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	16	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	41.01%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	90.33	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	45	–	N/A

Nettleton			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff), utilizes "trail" or "standby" buses that are daily dedicated with drivers just for this purpose
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.75%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$27,409.13	_	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,243.51	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$6.78	+	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	33.33%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	8	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	12	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	48.98%	_	_
Number of Students per Bus	33.06	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	33.7	_	N/A

Newton County			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.38%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$34,638.06	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,136.77	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$5.84	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	11.76%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	8.5	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	17	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	62.75%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	34.53	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	37.33	–	N/A

North Bolivar			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.04%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	Data not Provided		
Annual Cost per Rider			
Annual Cost per Mile			
Percentage of Spare Buses			
Number of Buses per School			
Number of Buses per Mechanic			
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders			
Number of Students per Bus			
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus			

North Tippah			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	7.74%	+	+
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$43,475.17	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$2,438.65	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$9.88	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	37.93%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	7.25	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14.5	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	Data not Provided		
Number of Students per Bus	28.72	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	39.39	_	N/A

Ocean Springs			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Tiered/Paired – A route that has one bus making multiple runs, each run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.25%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$58,397.18	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$518.92	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.71	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	9.76%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	5.86	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	20.5	+	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	78.43%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	124.7	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	76.27	+	N/A

Pascagoula-Gautier			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Tiered/Paired – A route that has one bus making multiple runs, each run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.22%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$42,911.80	+	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,125.24	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$11.25	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	14.41%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	6.21	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	29.5	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	69.04%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	44.55	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	24.75	–	N/A

Pearl			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.82%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$48,331.82	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,170.39	+	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$6.99	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	22.73%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	8.8	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	22	+	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	43.71%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	53.44	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	50.29	+	N/A

Petal			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Did not report		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.49%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	Data not Provided		
Annual Cost per Rider			
Annual Cost per Mile			
Percentage of Spare Buses			
Number of Buses per School			
Number of Buses per Mechanic			
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders			
Number of Students per Bus			
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus			

Pontotoc County			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.2%	_	-
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$18,034.10	_	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$436.25	_	_
Annual Cost per Mile	$2.13	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	13.56%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	8.43	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	19.67	=	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	71.97%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	47.82	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	54.43	+	N/A

Poplarville			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.61%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$43,058.33	+	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,592.79	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$3.85	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	23.33%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	6	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	15	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	43.39%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	35.26	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	81.09	+	N/A

Richton			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e. transportation department staff, school staff, etc.)
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	2.47%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$16,563.93	_	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$662.56	_	_
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.71	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	30.77%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	6.5	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	Data not Provided		
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	56.62%	=	_
Number of Students per Bus	36.11	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	28.89	_	N/A

Scott			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Did not report		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	5.06%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$32,402.65	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$784.88	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$7.30	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	24.32%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	8.22	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	24.67	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	76.6%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	54.55	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	32.56	–	N/A

South Delta			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.91%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$36,488.38	+	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,418.99	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$3.82	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	21.43%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	4.67	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	60.2%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	32.73	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	67.45	+	N/A

South Pike			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	Data Not Provided		
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall			
Annual Cost per Rider			
Annual Cost per Mile			
Percentage of Spare Buses	10.34%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	Data not Provided		
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14.5	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	Data not Provided		
Number of Students per Bus	40.92	+	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	61.69	+	_

Starkville Oktibbeha			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Tiered/Paired – A route that has one bus making multiple runs, each run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	3.51%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$47,541.76	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,098.48	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$6.20	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	36.76%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	6.8	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	34	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	60.96%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	68.44	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	67.42	+	N/A

Tunica County			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Tiered/Paired – A route that has one bus making multiple runs, each run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	11.92%	+	+
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$91,768.10	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$3,461.61	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$19.03	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	30.61%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	9.8	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	24.5	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	78.92%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	38.21	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	37.16	_	N/A

Tupelo			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		×	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	2.84%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$51,008.74	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,298.40	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	Data Not Clarified*	N/A	N/A
Percentage of Spare Buses	3.57%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	6.46	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	42	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	59.84%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	40.74	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	Data Not Clarified*	N/A	N/A

*Tupelo reported 0.22 miles driven daily per bus and therefore that data is not included.

Union County			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		x	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		x	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.97%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$34,472.09	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,241.26	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$6.26	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	33.33%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	14.25	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	28.5	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	53.81%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	41.66	+	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	45.89	=	N/A

Union			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	2.67%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$20,935.69	_	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$863.33	_	_
Annual Cost per Mile	$6.62	+	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	43.75%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	5.33	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	16	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	41.99%	_	_
Number of Students per Bus	43.11	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	31.22	_	N/A

Webster			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	Data Not Provided		
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall			
Annual Cost per Rider			
Annual Cost per Mile			
Percentage of Spare Buses	14.29%	_	_
Number of Buses per School	Data not Provided		
Number of Buses per Mechanic	11.67	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	Data not Provided		
Number of Students per Bus	31.6	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	62.13	+	N/A

West Bolivar			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		×	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes "trail" or "standby" buses that are daily dedicated with drivers just for this purpose and bus mechanics
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$41,937.65	+	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,509.12	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	$7.92	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	5.26%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	6.33	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	19	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	53.66%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	29.33	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	31.06	–	N/A

West Jasper			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?	✓		
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.52%	+	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$34,937.40	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,112.66	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.63	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	20%	–	+
Number of Buses per School	7.5	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	10	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	67.24%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	39.25	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	52.38	+	N/A

West Tallahatchie			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?	✓		
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?	✓		The district utilizes school system staff (i.e., transportation department staff, school staff)
Bus route method used	Combination – A route that has one bus pick up all students within a geographic area and then stop at multiple schools, dropping off students		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	5.19%	+	+
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$38,784.26	+	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,198.79	+	_
Annual Cost per Mile	$4.44	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	29.41%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	5.67	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	8.5	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	Data not Provided		
Number of Students per Bus	45.83	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	68.75	+	N/A

Western Line			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		×	
Has formal guidelines for student seating on buses?		×	
Has a substitute driver pool of at least 20% of the total number of regular bus drivers?		×	
Bus route method used	Dedicated – A route that only has one bus run picking up specific students for a specific school		

Performance Data Reported			
Performance Indicator	FY 2023	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) State Peer Median	Below (-), Above (+), or Equal to (=) Regional Peer Average
Transportation Expenses as a Percentage of the Total District Expense	4.09%	_	_
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	$33,300.65	_	_
Annual Cost per Rider	$1,128.84	_	_
Annual Cost per Mile	$5.28	_	_
Percentage of Spare Buses	20.59%	=	+
Number of Buses per School	6.8	_	_
Number of Buses per Mechanic	11.33	_	_
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	80.69%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	37.15	_	_
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	34.07	_	N/A

James F. (Ted) Booth, Executive Director

Reapportionment
Ben Collins

Administration
Kirby Arinder
Stephanie Harris
Gale Taylor

Quality Assurance and Reporting
Tracy Bobo
Bryan "Jay" Giles

Performance Evaluation
Lonnie Edgar, Deputy Director
Jennifer Sebren, Deputy Director
Taylor Burns
Emily Cloys
Kim Cummins
Kelsi Ford
Rucell Harris
Matthew Holmes
Chelsey Little
Debra Monroe
Ryan Morgan
Meri Clare Ringer
Sarah Williamson
Julie Winkeljohn