

A FY 2023 Comparative Review of Nine Mississippi School Districts: Transportation

A Report to the Mississippi Legislature

Report #731 – Volume VI

June 9, 2026



PEER
MISSISSIPPI

Joint Legislative Committee on Performance
Evaluation and Expenditure Review



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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

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June 9, 2026

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Honorable Jason White, Speaker of the House

Members of the Mississippi State Legislature

On June 9, 2026, the PEER Committee authorized release of the report titled
*A FY 2023 Comparative Review of Nine Mississippi School Districts:
Transportation.*

Representatives

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. C. McMahan".

Senator Chad McMahan, Chair

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This report does not recommend increased funding or additional staff.

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CONCLUSION: A review of the transportation programs for nine Mississippi school districts in FY 2023 showed opportunities for districts to strengthen their programs and increase efficiency. For example, three of the eight reporting districts (38%) 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).



BACKGROUND

In FY 2026, PEER received funding to contract with Level Data (formerly GlimpseK12) to conduct a comparative review of nine 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 eight school districts reporting transportation data, three (38%) 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.
- **Five of the eight reporting districts (63%) 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, several districts indicated that students from all grades in a geographic area ride the bus together and are dropped off at their respective schools, while other 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.
- **Six of the eight reporting districts (75%) did not have a sufficient number of substitute bus drivers to prevent occasional service delays.**
Five districts reported using alternative methods to having substitute bus drivers (e.g., merging routes or having transportation department staff provide coverage).

Cost Savings

Five of the eight 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 **\$4.5 million** for bus route improvements and up to **\$119,000** for staffing adjustments.

Exhibit 11 on page 29 provides a summary of projected potential cost savings from bus route improvements in three districts and Exhibit 12 on page 30 provides a summary of projected potential cost savings from transportation staffing adjustments in three 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 \$24,883 in Humphreys to \$66,065 in Jackson City;
 - cost per rider ranged from \$575 in Humphreys to \$1,325 in Harrison; and,
 - annual cost per mile ranged from \$1.62 in Jackson City to \$15.61 in Yazoo City.
- In terms of staffing, the number of buses per mechanic ranged from 14 in Yazoo City to 50 in Rankin.

Issues with Missing Data

As with previous cohorts, some districts in this cohort required multiple requests for clarification of submitted data and in some instances, the data was never clarified. As a result, the assessment team's ability to analyze the data fully was inhibited. Inaccurate data also impairs district administrators' ability to monitor and manage the transportation function in their district effectively.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICTS

1. In FY 2027, 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 Review of Nine Mississippi School Districts: Transportation

Restrictions

This review is a continuation of previous studies conducted by Level Data (previously GlimpseK12) of Mississippi school districts' operational programs and expenses. (See additional information on these previous studies in the Introduction on page 2.) Appendix A on page 32 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.

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 school districts, excluding public charter 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 PEER Reports #719i through #719vi.
9 districts [^]	FY 2023	Cohort 5	Published in this report.*

[^] 50 districts were originally selected for Cohort 4, which included the Aberdeen district, although Aberdeen did not submit any of the requested data for the Cohort 4 review. However, the Aberdeen district was included in this Cohort 5 review and did submit some data for this analysis.

Note: 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 through 5 to calculate medians and performance quartiles for the exhibits in these reports.

For the analysis for this report, Level Data reviewed the remaining nine school districts (see Appendix A on page 32). Therefore, Level Data has 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 has calculated 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.

This report presents data reported by school districts regarding benchmarks (e.g., utilization of bus routing software) and performance indicators (e.g., annual cost per mile). Appendix B on page 33 provides FY 2023 transportation funding and operations data. Appendix C on page 34 provides FY 2023 transportation benchmark data and performance indicators for the districts reporting. This report also provides some regional and national averages as a basis for comparison.

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.

Eight of the nine districts reviewed provided the above-listed benchmark information. Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school; therefore, this district did not provide benchmarking data.¹

Use of Bus Routing Software

Of the eight districts in this cohort reporting FY 2023 transportation data, three districts (38%) did not utilize routing software to manage bus routes.

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 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.

Districts not using bus routing software must manually review routes periodically, which allows school bus drivers to modify routes based on the arrival of new bus riders, which may not necessarily be the most efficient solution. Some districts, due to the time-intensiveness of an annual manual review of routes, may not do so. As student populations shift, either of these methods could lead to inefficient bus routes.

All Cohorts: For the 129 reporting districts in all cohorts, 98 districts (76%) did utilize routing software in FY 2023.

Use of Formal Guidelines for Student Seating on Buses

Of the eight districts in this cohort reporting FY 2023 transportation data, five districts (63%) did not use formal seating guidelines for students 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.

¹ Although Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school, it does have transportation expenses related to transporting athletic teams to games and expenses related to other district-owned vehicles.

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.

For the eight reporting districts, when asked whether specific guidelines were used for seating students on buses:

- two (25%) reported that they allow three elementary students per seat or two high school/middle school students per seat;
- two (25%) reported that they allow three elementary/middle school students per seat and two high school students per seat;
- two (25%) reported that they allow two students per seat regardless of grade; and,
- two (25%) reported that they allow three students per seat regardless of grade.

All Cohorts: Of the 129 districts from all cohorts that provided information for this metric, 66 districts (51%) did not use formal seating guidelines on buses.

Type of Bus Route Methods

In this cohort, the eight school districts reported using various bus route methods for FY 2023. For example, four districts (50%) reported that students from all grades in a geographic area ride the bus together and are dropped off at their respective schools. 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 routing 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 routing 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, eight of the nine districts in this year's cohort provided benchmark information. Of the school districts reporting FY 2023 transportation data within the current cohort:

- Three districts utilized a combination bus routing system exclusively, meaning students from all grade levels are picked up together in a community and then dropped off sequentially at their respective schools.
- Three districts utilized paired or tiered bus routes exclusively, meaning school start times are staggered to accommodate separate bus routes based on the school attended. Each bus makes multiple runs, with each run transporting students to a particular school.
- Two districts reported using both of the above methods.

Bus routing methods could impact the amount of time students ride on buses. For the eight districts reporting, the average maximum bus route time with student riders was 91 minutes, which is 7 minutes less than the state average.

All Cohorts: For the 117 districts from all cohorts that provided information for this metric, the type of bus route method used varied.

Including this year's cohort, the 117 districts providing information for this metric for FY 2023 reported the following bus route methodologies:

- Sixty-eight districts (58%) used the combination bus route system exclusively.
- Twenty districts (17%) used paired or tiered bus routes exclusively.
- Seventeen districts (15%) used dedicated single school bus routes exclusively, meaning a bus is assigned to transport students to and from one school without additional routes.
- Ten districts (9%) used a hybrid approach that combined two of the above methods.
- One district reported using a shuttle method, meaning a route that picks up a group of students from one location and delivers them to another location (e.g. trade school; intra-day routes).
- One district reported using contracted services for bus routes and did not provide the routing method.

Twenty districts did not provide bus route information and Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school.

Use of Substitute Bus Drivers

Of the eight districts reporting FY 2023 transportation data, two districts (25%) reported having at least the recommended 20% level of substitute bus drivers to meet daily service requirements without delays, while six districts (75%) reported having less than the recommended 20% level. Five 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, eight of the nine districts in this year’s cohort provided benchmark information. Two districts (25%) reported having at least the recommended 20% level of substitute bus drivers to meet daily service requirements without delays, while six districts (75%) reported having less than the recommended 20% level. Five districts reported using alternative methods to having substitute bus drivers, such as merging routes or having transportation department staff provide coverage.

All Cohorts: For the 117 districts from all cohorts that provided information for this metric, 47 districts (40%) reported having at least the recommended 20% level of substitute bus drivers to meet daily service requirements without delays, while 70 districts (60%) reported having less than the recommended 20% level.

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

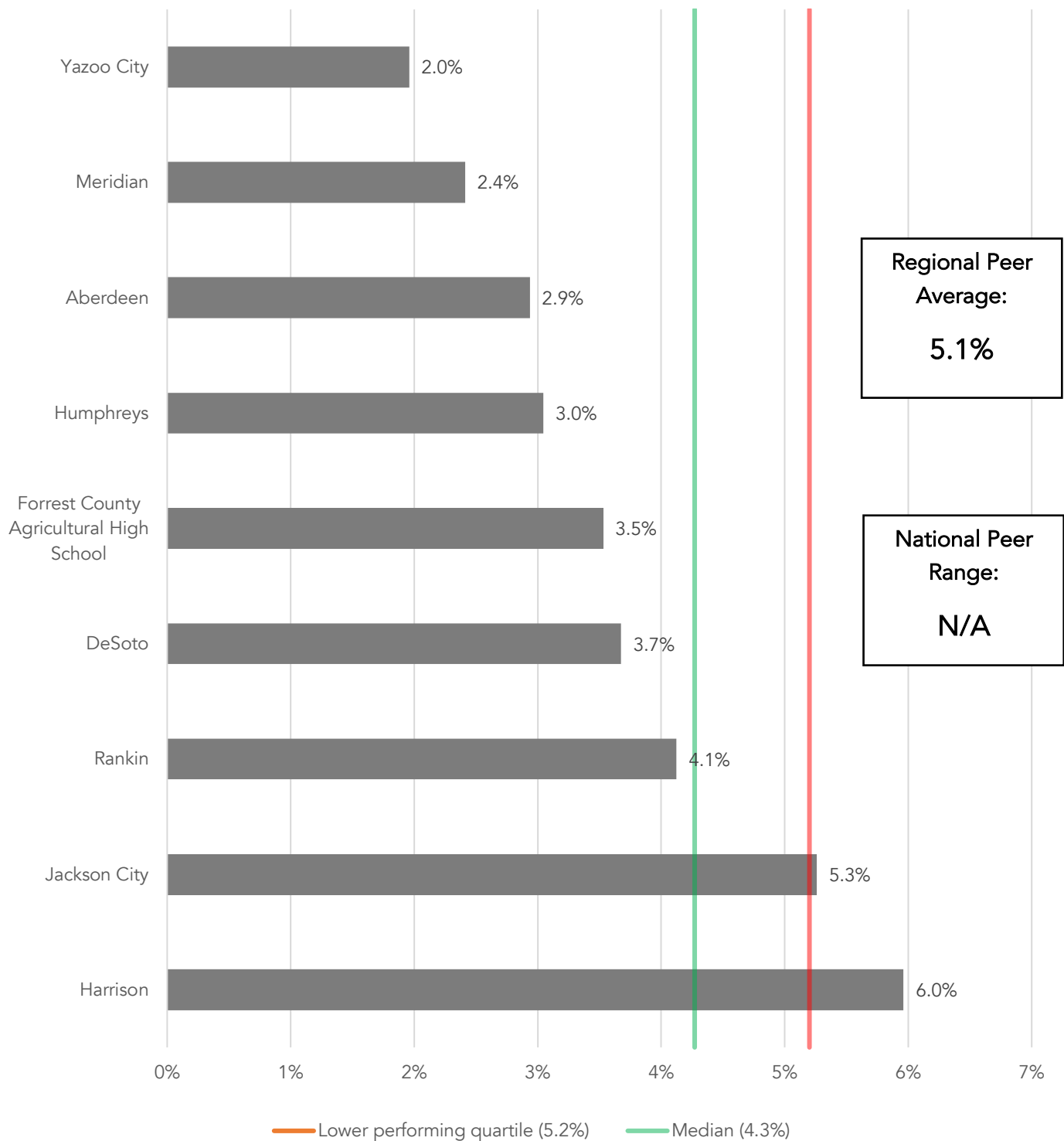
The nine districts in the current cohort averaged approximately 4% transportation expenses as a percentage of total district expenses for FY 2023, which was below the regional peer average of approximately 5%.

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 8 provides transportation expenses as a percentage of total district expenses for FY 2023 for the current cohort. Even though Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from the high school, the district does have transportation expenses related to transporting athletic teams to games and expenses related to other district-owned vehicles. Districts' transportation expenses as a percentage of total district expenses ranged from 2% for Yazoo City to 6% for Harrison. With the lowest percentage in the cohort, Yazoo City continues the trend noted in previous reviews of districts that serve municipalities and surrounding areas reporting the lowest transportation expenses as a percent of district expenses in each cohort while Harrison, with the highest percentage in the cohort, continues the trend of districts primarily serving rural areas reporting the highest percentages in each cohort.

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 needed 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 other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall

For FY 2023, the eight reporting districts' \$38,652 average annual cost per bus overall is below the regional peer average of approximately \$42,000 and less than the low end of the national peer range, which is approximately \$61,000.

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 cost per mile 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, 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 \$24,883 for Humphreys to \$66,065 for Jackson City (nearly two times greater than the state median of \$34,972). (See Exhibit 2 on page 10.) Humphreys is among the lowest 17 Mississippi reporting districts. The Jackson City district's cost per bus is among the six highest reporting districts. 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.

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 other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

Annual Cost per Rider

For the eight reporting districts, the average annual cost per rider of \$991 in FY 2023 was below the regional peer average of approximately \$1,200 and near the lower end of the national peer range of approximately \$950 to \$2,000. Thus, the reporting districts' annual cost per rider compares favorably with that of regional and national peer districts. The Humphreys district's cost per rider is among the lowest five in the reporting Mississippi districts from previous reviews.

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 12 provides the annual cost per rider in FY 2023 for the reporting districts. The annual cost per rider in FY 2023 ranged from \$575 in Humphreys to \$1,325 in Harrison, which serves a primarily rural area of the county. Notably, the Humphreys district, which also serves a primarily rural area, reported the lowest cost per rider. 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 other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

Annual Cost per Mile

For the eight reporting districts in this cohort, the \$6.67 average annual cost per mile was below the regional peer average of \$7.78 and near the lower end of the national peer range of \$5.29 to \$9.41. For all Mississippi districts that provided data for this metric, the state median was \$5.55, thus indicating that reporting districts compared favorably to 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).

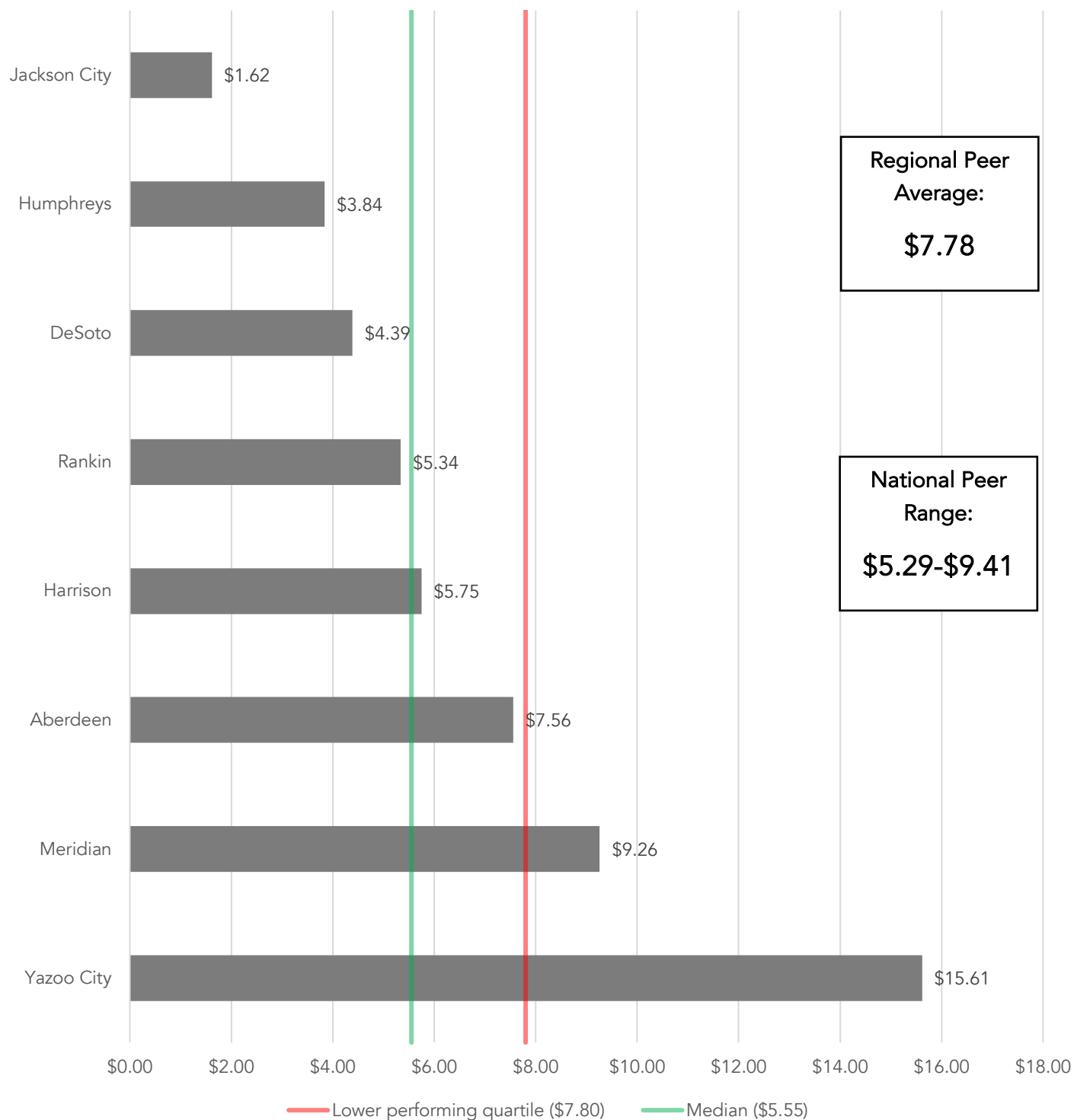
In FY 2023, the annual cost per mile for the reporting districts within this cohort ranged from \$1.62 in Jackson City to \$15.61 in Yazoo City, approximately three times the median of \$5.55. (See Exhibit 4 on page 14.) The Yazoo City district's cost per mile places it among the top five Mississippi districts.

Differences between districts' annual cost per mile is a useful indicator to district officials that further investigation of inputs driving this metric could be beneficial in improving efficiencies. For example, the Jackson City district, which is largely an urban district, submitted data showing that the district had the lowest annual cost per mile (\$1.62), but the highest average number of miles driven daily by buses (34,510), which equates to each bus driving approximately 227 miles daily. The DeSoto district, serving a mixture of urban and rural areas, reported an annual cost per mile of \$4.39 and averaged 19,201 bus miles driven per day with each bus driving an average of approximately 51 miles per day. The Harrison district, serving primarily rural areas, reported an average annual cost per mile of \$5.75 and averaged daily bus miles of 11,526 with each bus driving an average of approximately 59 miles per day. This disparity indicates that Jackson City district officials may wish to review the submitted data for accuracy and also review the efficiency of bus routes with the goal of reducing the number of miles driven by each bus daily, which would decrease the total miles driven, increase the longevity of district buses, and reduce maintenance and personnel costs.

At the other end of the spectrum, Yazoo City reported the highest annual cost per mile (\$15.61) and the lowest average number of miles driven by buses daily (237) which equates to each bus driving approximately 13 miles daily. Aberdeen, with annual cost per mile of \$7.56, reported the next lowest number of miles driven daily (476) which equates to each bus driving approximately 32 miles daily. Yazoo City's high annual cost per mile and low average distance driven by each bus indicates district officials may want to review the reported miles for accuracy. If accurate, district officials may then wish to investigate further to determine factors driving the district's high annual cost per mile.

The cost per mile indicator is determined by adding all direct and indirect costs of transportation divided by the number of miles driven. All factors must be considered when determining the efficiency of any district department. 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 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 other reporting Mississippi districts that were part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

Percentage of Spare Buses

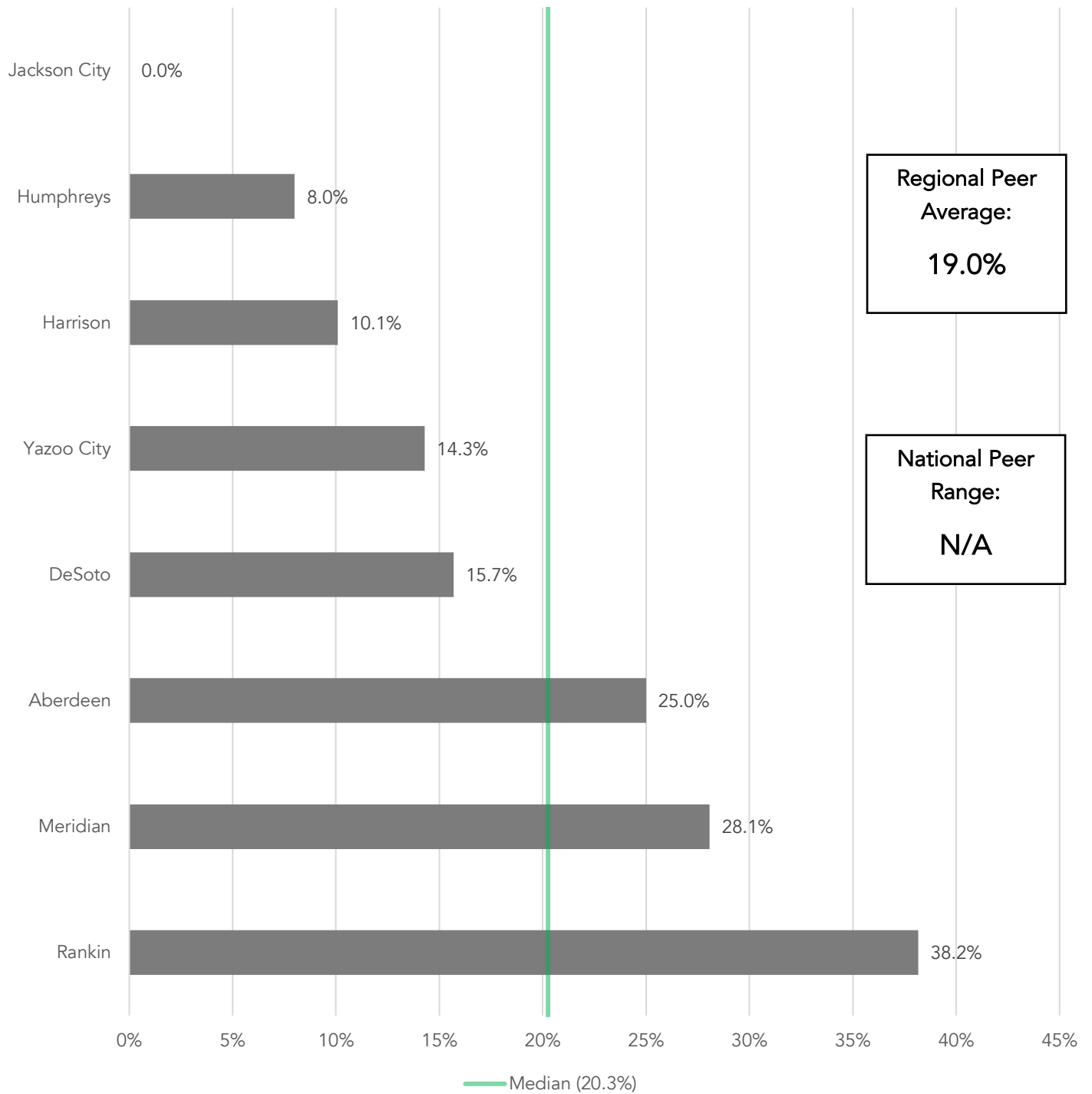
For the eight reporting districts in this cohort, three districts reported more spare buses than the industry recommended level of 20%, while the remaining five districts reported below the 20% level, thereby increasing the risk of service disruptions.

The percentage of spare buses reflects whether a district has the optimal number of spare buses. Having spare buses ensures 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*, districts should aim for a spare bus percentage of from 10% to 20% of the total bus fleet. The Federal Transit Administration also recommends a 20% spare bus percentage. Districts must balance the expense of maintaining spare buses with the need for consistent route coverage.

Of the eight districts in this cohort reporting data, the Jackson City district reported no spare buses and the Rankin district reported a 38% level of spare buses. (See Exhibit 5 on page 16.) In addition to Jackson City, two other districts, Harrison and Humphreys, reported a spare bus percentage of approximately 10% or less, which is below the industry-recommended spare bus percentage; thus, the risk of service disruptions in these three districts is increased.

Four of the eight reporting 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.

Exhibit 5: Percentage of Spare Buses in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and other reporting Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

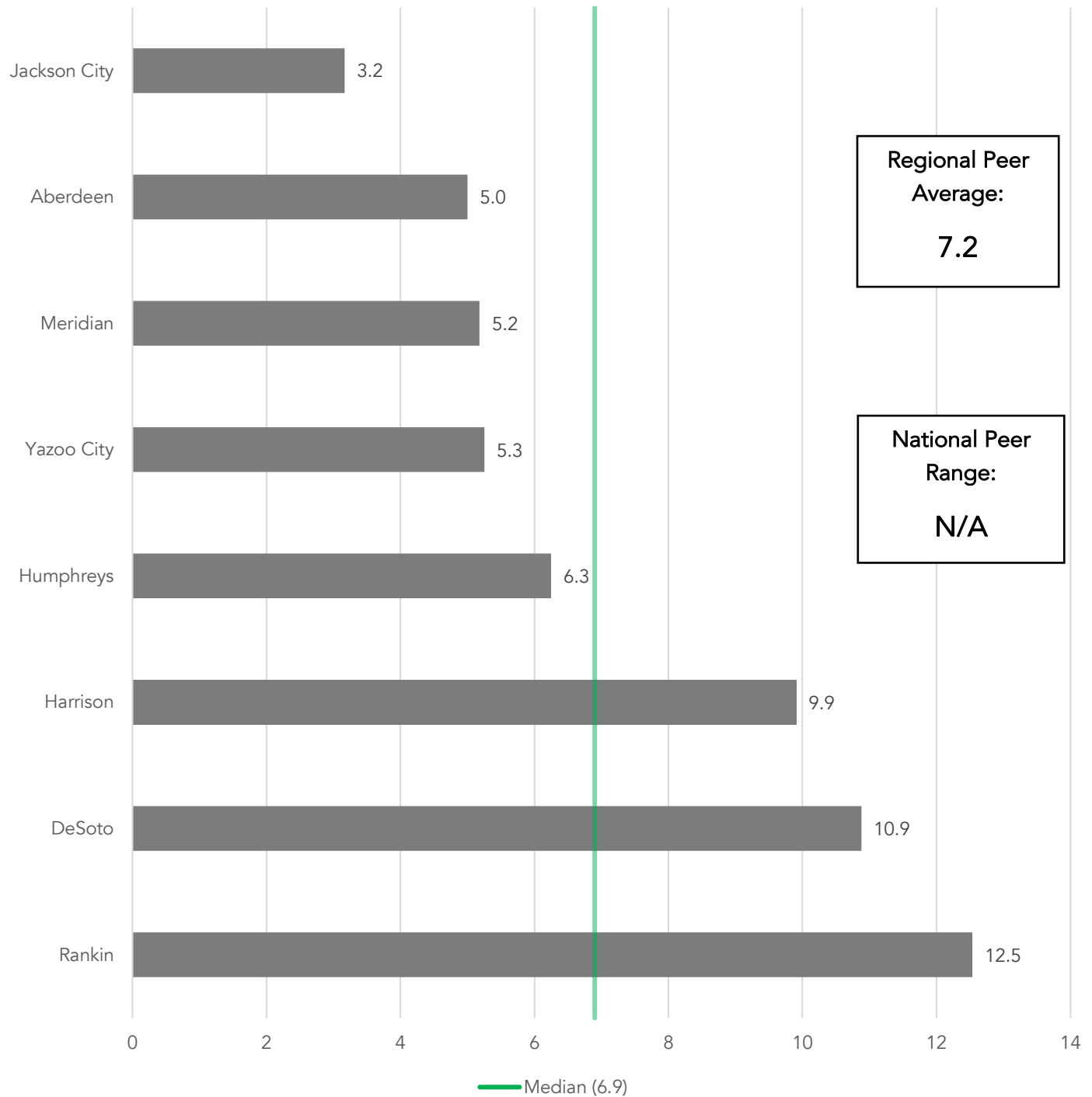
Number of Buses per School

For the eight districts in this cohort reporting FY 2023 data, the approximately 7.3 average number of buses per school, including spare buses, was slightly above the state median of 6.9; thus, this cohort's number of buses per school is consistent with that of state peers.

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

Exhibit 6 on page 18 shows that five districts reported a lower number of buses per school than the state median. Rankin, DeSoto, and Harrison reported a higher number, which could suggest that these three districts are less efficient. However, removing spare buses from the analysis offers a clearer indicator of routing efficiency based on the number of buses per school. Districts provided a breakdown of the number of buses to include both regular buses and spare buses. According to this information reported by districts, for the eight districts in the cohort reporting FY 2023 data, the number of buses per school, excluding spare buses, ranged from 3.2 in the Jackson City district (as noted on page 15, the Jackson City district reported no spare buses) to 9.2 in the DeSoto district. The Jackson City district, primarily an urban district, transported approximately 7,700 students daily to 48 schools, while the DeSoto district, a mixture of urban and rural areas, transported approximately 20,500 students daily to 41 schools. Each district reported using routing software. Although DeSoto reports more buses per school, the district also serves rural areas and needs additional buses, whereas a mostly urban district such as Jackson City has students more densely located in a smaller area. Also, Jackson City reported seven more schools than DeSoto, even though Jackson City transported 38% fewer students when compared to DeSoto. This comparison serves as an example of how districts may report differing results for a metric indicating one district is more efficient than another, but a closer analysis of the data shows how other factors impact the reported information and therefore conclusions concerning efficiency should not be drawn without consideration of all factors.

Exhibit 6: Number of Buses per School in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and other reporting Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

Note: This data includes regular and spare school buses.

Number of Buses per Mechanic

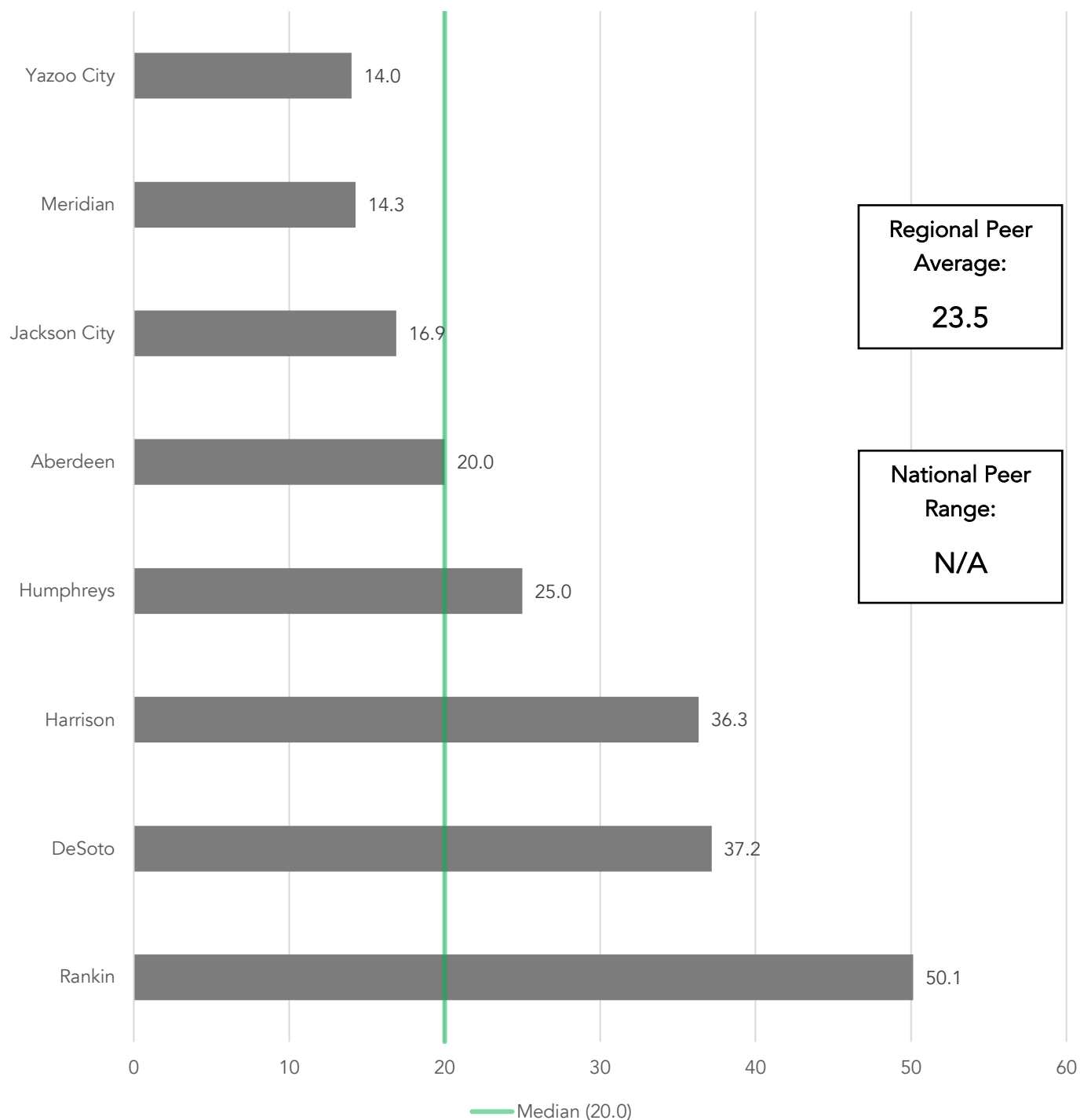
For the eight districts in this cohort reporting FY 2023 data, the average of 26.7 buses per mechanic is above the state median. Thus, mechanics in this cohort's districts service more buses than mechanics in districts in previous cohorts.

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 20 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.

The Harrison, DeSoto, and Rankin districts reported the highest number of buses per mechanic in this cohort (36.3, 37.2, and 50.1, respectively). The state median is 20 buses per mechanic and the regional peer average is 23.5. Thus, the bus maintenance function in these three districts may be understaffed, which could impair proper maintenance of buses and negatively impact safety. Further, if one mechanic were to be absent for an extended period, transportation services could be disrupted. However, as with other transportation metrics, all relevant factors should be considered when reviewing the efficiency of a district's bus maintenance function. For example, the Rankin district's reported figure is impacted by the district having 134 spare buses for its fleet of 217 active buses. Fewer spare buses would lower the district's ratio. Although maintenance efficiency is important, student safety and bus fleet reliability must remain top considerations when evaluating bus maintenance staffing levels.

Exhibit 7: Number of Buses per Mechanic in FY 2023



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and other reporting Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

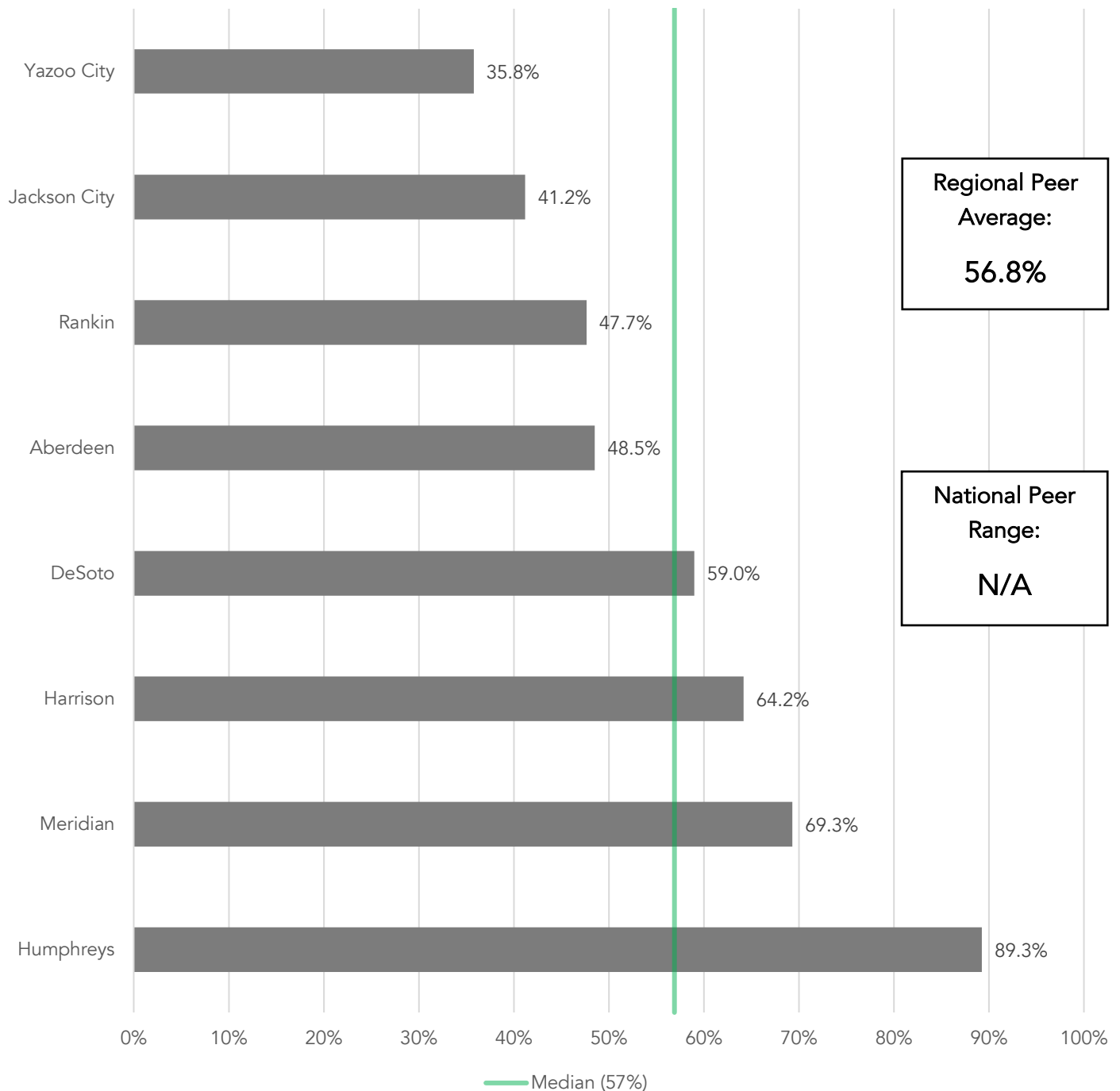
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders

The reporting districts' percentages of total students that were bus riders in FY 2023 ranged from approximately 36% in Yazoo City to approximately 89% in Humphreys. This shows that districts have a wide range of numbers of students and parents that depend on district transportation and 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 22 in FY 2023, the reporting districts' average percentage of students that were bus riders was approximately 57%, approximately the same as the state median and regional average. This indicates that students in the reporting districts depend on school transportation approximately the same amount as do students in other Mississippi and regional peer districts. However, as with all metrics, inaccuracies and estimates impact reported information. For example, Humphreys's high percentage is based on reported data that 1,081 out of 1,211 enrolled students rode the bus, with only 130 students in the district arriving at school in parents' vehicles or their own vehicles. While it is possible, in a county system, that a small number of students provide personal transportation, it is likely these numbers may not capture ridership accurately. Such anomalies demonstrate the importance of districts accurately capturing data 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 other reporting Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

Number of Students per Bus in FY 2023

For the eight reporting districts, in FY 2023 the average number of approximately 49 students per bus was higher than the regional peer average. Thus, the reporting districts were slightly more efficient in transporting students than regional peer districts. The district reporting the lowest number of students per bus in the cohort, Aberdeen with 33 students per bus, still transported more students per bus than 37 other Mississippi districts.

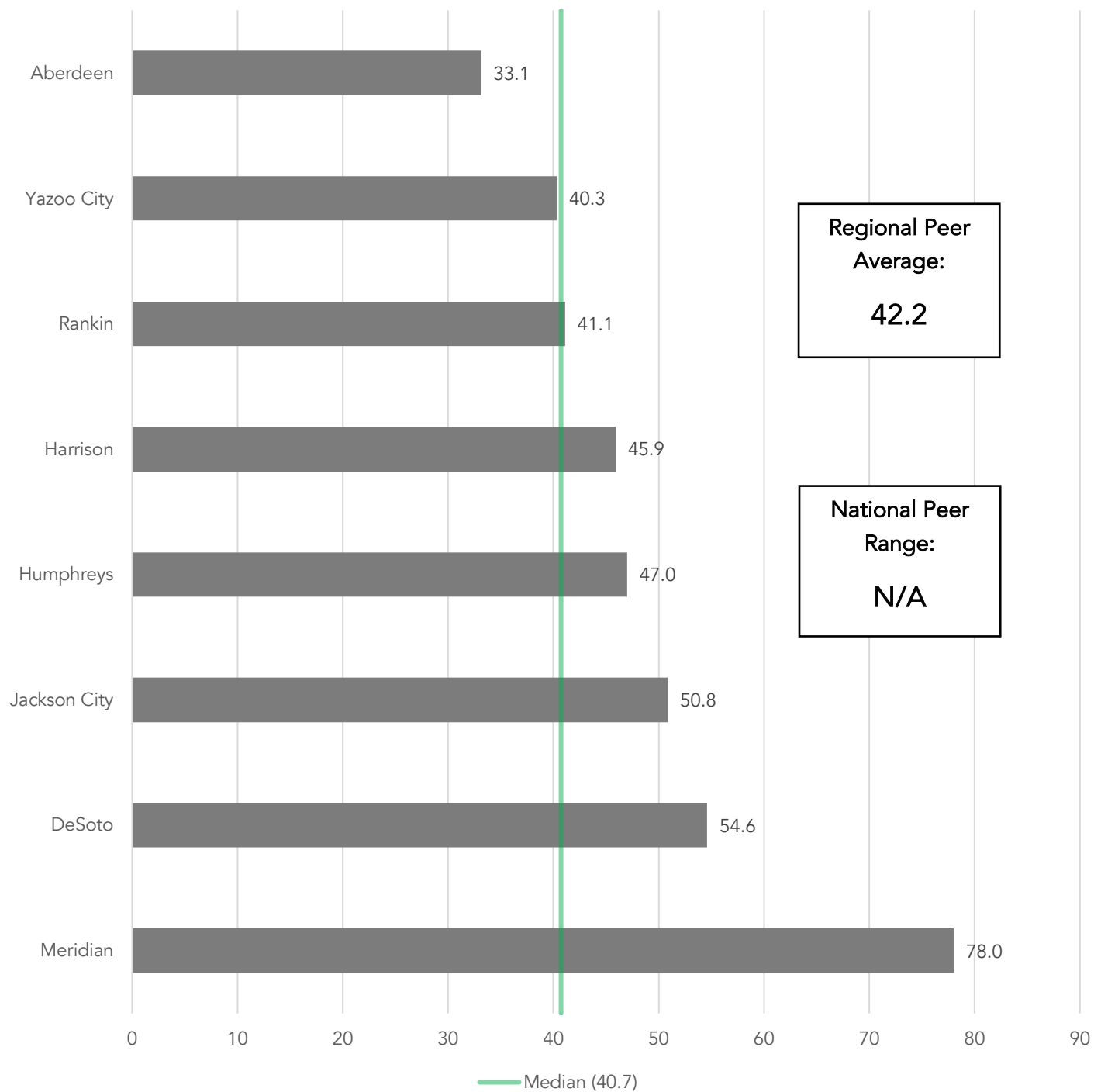
Considering the number of routes per bus, student population density, and bus capacity, the measure of the number of students per bus provides insights to school districts regarding the effectiveness of their transportation services. If the average number of students per bus falls well below the district's 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.² Conversely, if districts observe the number of students per bus reaching or exceeding the average capacity without any route tiering, they should analyze individual bus routes for potential issues with student overcrowding.

As shown in Exhibit 9 on page 24, although the reporting districts' average number of students per bus in FY 2023 of 48.9 was above the regional peer average of 42.2, districts' numbers of students per bus ranged from 33.1 in Aberdeen to 78 in Meridian, which used the route tiering method. Under the route tiering method, 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.

Aberdeen's low number of students per bus is linked to the district's number of bus routes (7) carrying fewer than half bus capacity. A review of the district's bus routes also showed that buses were assigned to short routes with buses on those routes under capacity. The district does not use bus routing software, which could be a contributing factor to the district's low number of students per bus. Even without routing software, district officials should conduct periodic reviews of current routes and students per bus to improve and maintain routing efficiency.

² *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 other reporting Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus in FY 2023

For the eight reporting districts, the miles driven daily per bus in FY 2023 ranged from approximately 13 in the Yazoo City district to 227 in the Jackson City district, with a median of 44, slightly below the state median of approximately 46. 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 indicated possible anomalies, notably the Jackson City district's reported 227 miles per bus per day, that would affect district officials' ability to assess the efficiency of bus routes.

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 bus³ and no route tiering is in place, the district should conduct a route-level review to determine whether the miles are necessary, whether student ride times are reasonable, and whether buses are traveling substantial distances without riders.

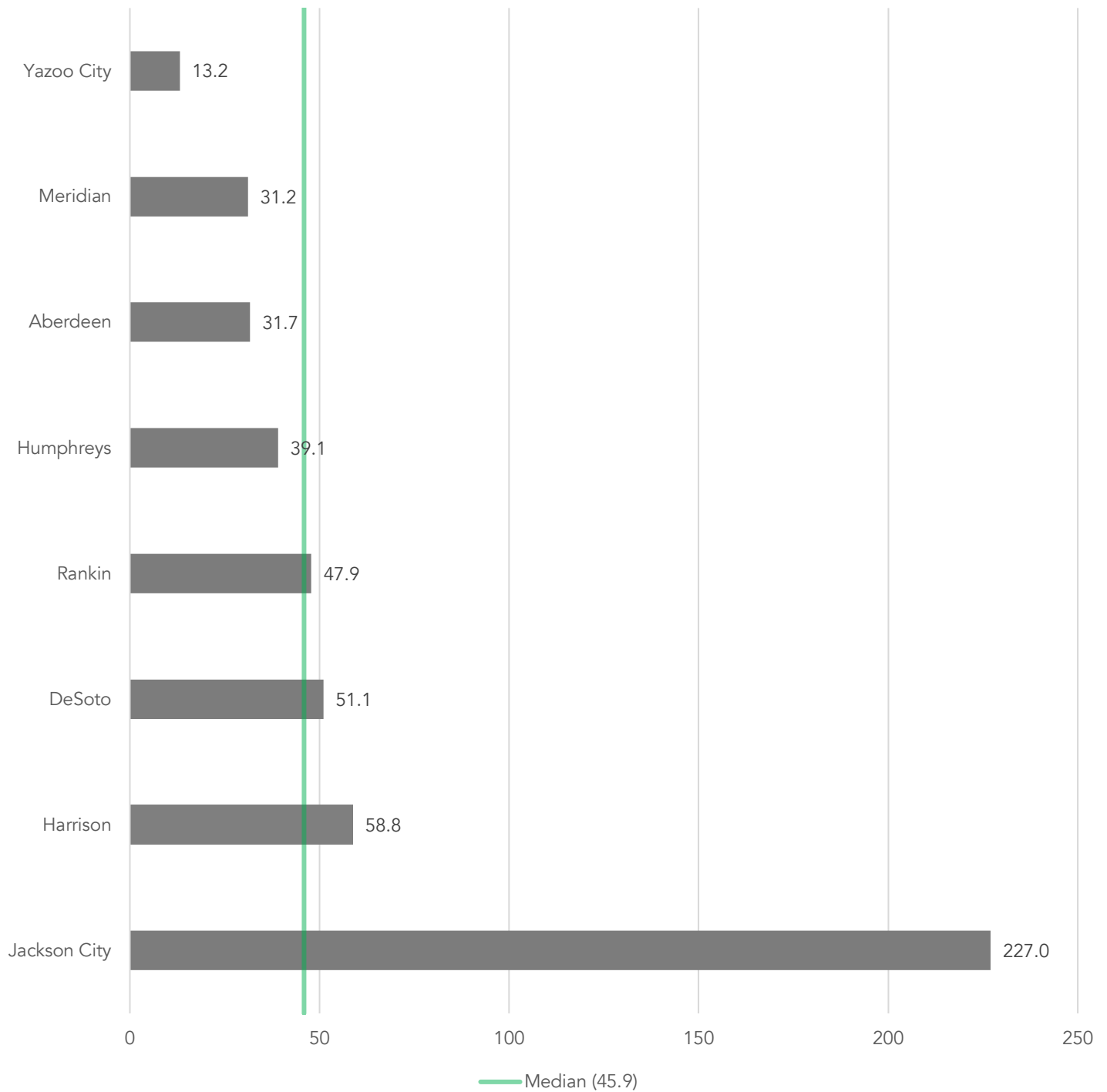
As shown in Exhibit 10 on page 26, districts reported a wide range of miles driven daily per bus in FY 2023. Yazoo City reported 13.2 miles driven daily per bus, which was the second lowest reported number of miles in all Mississippi districts. Since the reported figure includes both morning and afternoon routes, Yazoo City's reported figure means the average route is just over six miles, including distance driven before starting and after ending the route. In other information provided by the district during this review, Yazoo City reported that the maximum time with students on a bus is 120 minutes, which appears to conflict with the average length in miles of the district's reported bus routes.

The high number of miles driven reported by the Jackson City district may be inaccurate. The review team made several attempts to confirm the data with district personnel. Due to the Executive Director's absence during the review, the Chief Operations Officer and department secretary submitted the information available to them.

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 improvement in efficiency. The lack of accurate routing information impedes district officials' ability to manage student transportation effectively and efficiently.

³ Average daily mileage above approximately 60 miles per active bus should be treated as a context-sensitive diagnostic trigger, not a universal standard. Rural districts may reasonably exceed this level due to larger geographic service areas, lower student density, longer distances between stops, and fewer tiering opportunities.

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



The median in this exhibit represents the above reporting districts and other reporting Mississippi districts that are part of separate reviews over the same period. (See Introduction on page 2 for explanation of analysis of cohorts.)

Note: Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from school and is therefore excluded from this exhibit.

Conclusions Regarding How Districts' Data Collection May Impact Transportation Costs

As with previous cohorts, some districts in this cohort required multiple requests for clarification of submitted data and in some instances, the data was never clarified. As a result, the assessment team's ability to analyze the data fully was inhibited. Inaccurate data also impairs district administrators' ability to monitor and manage the transportation function in their district effectively.

As in previous cohorts, the assessment team received data from some districts that required clarification or correction. In some instances, clarified or corrected data was submitted. However, in other instances, the data was not clarified or corrected. As a result, the assessment team's ability to fully analyze transportation data for all districts in this cohort was inhibited. If a district's reported information appears to be an anomaly, either very high or very low, district administrators should discuss the reported data with transportation officials and personnel, determine whether the reported information was accurate, and if not, how to collect the data accurately. Without timely and accurate information, district administrators' ability to provide safe, reliable student transportation, monitor costs, and allocate taxpayer funds effectively is compromised.

Conclusions Regarding Cost Savings

Potential Cost Savings

Of the districts reporting, annual projected potential cost savings could be up to approximately \$4.5 million for bus route improvements and up to \$119,000 for staffing adjustments.

Five of the districts reporting have the potential for cost savings either through bus route improvements or staffing adjustments. Exhibit 11 on page 29 provides a summary of projected potential cost savings from bus route improvements in three districts and Exhibit 12 on page 30 provides a summary of projected potential cost savings from transportation staffing adjustments in three 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.

Forrest County Agricultural High School was excluded from the cost savings analysis because it does not transport students to and from school on a daily basis.

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

District	Projected Potential Cost Savings	Recommendations
Aberdeen	< or =\$171,862	The transportation department's cost per student and cost per mile were higher than the state median. Due to the low numbers of student riders per bus, approximately five buses are not currently at full capacity. If consolidating buses or staggering start times would allow for tiered routing and the district could reduce the number of buses by two, it could realize the projected potential cost savings. This would bring the district more in line with the state peer median.
Harrison	< or =\$2,417,892	The district's cost per rider, cost per bus, and cost per mile were all higher than the state peer median. These costs directly impact the percentage of total expenses, which was also higher than the state median. In addition, the district's ratio of buses per school exceeded the state median by approximately three buses per school. The district should review current routes to determine where there might be 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.
Jackson City	< or =\$1,887,985	The district's cost per rider was higher than the state peer median and the national average. Due to the large number of riders, these costs directly impact the percentage of total expenses, which was also higher than the state median. The district should review current routes to determine where there might be 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.
TOTAL	< or = \$4,477,739	

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

District	Projected Potential Cost Savings	Recommendations
Jackson City	< or =\$47,600	The district employs nine bus mechanics, which results in a ratio of buses to mechanics of 17:1. The state median is currently 20:1. By reducing staffing by 1, the district could realize the projected potential cost savings and bring the ratio to 19:1. 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 into alignment with the state peer median.
Meridian	< or =\$47,600	The district employs four bus mechanics for its fleet of 57 buses. The ratio of buses per mechanic (14:1) is lower than the state median of 20:1. The district should evaluate its staffing levels considering these factors. If the district could reduce the number of mechanics by one, it could realize the projected savings and bring staffing levels closer to the state peer median.
Yazoo City	< or =\$23,800	The district employs 1.5 full-time bus mechanics for its fleet of 21 buses. The ratio of buses per mechanic, 14:1, is lower than the state median of 20:1; therefore, the district should evaluate its staffing levels. If the district could reduce its staffing by .5, it could realize the projected savings and bring the ratio (21:1) more into alignment with the state peer median.
TOTAL	< or =\$119,000	

Recommendations

1. In FY 2027, 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. potentially implementing bus routing software;
 - b. potentially implementing formal guidelines for student seating on buses;
 - c. conducting annual reviews of bus routes;
 - d. identifying potential opportunities for bus route optimization;
 - e. evaluating approaches for addressing driver absences; and,
 - f. assessing 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 that 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 their transportation programs.

Appendix A: List of School Districts Included in this Review

1. Aberdeen
2. DeSoto
3. Forrest County Agricultural High School (AHS)
4. Harrison
5. Humphreys
6. Jackson City (i.e., Jackson Public Schools)
7. Meridian
8. Rankin
9. Yazoo City

SOURCE: PEER.

Appendix B: School District Transportation Data

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	\$21,926,518	14	1	476	497	\$643,788
DeSoto	\$412,505,230	327	49	19,201	20,535	\$15,164,551
Forrest County AHS*	\$11,536,784	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	\$407,251
Harrison	\$200,005,627	164	32	11,526	9,000	\$11,925,352
Humphreys	\$20,424,605	21	2	900	1,081	\$622,085
Jackson City	\$190,914,337	132	20	34,510	7,729	\$10,041,888
Meridian	\$88,364,142	36	5	1,278	3,199	\$2,130,509
Rankin	\$240,695,064	196	21	10,388	8,921	\$9,925,050
Yazoo City	\$33,995,601	16	2	237	726	\$666,090

* Forrest County AHS does not transport students to and from the school and therefore the district does not have buses for daily student transportation. However, the district does have transportation expenses related to transporting athletic teams to games and expenses related to other district-owned vehicles.

Appendix C: FY 2023 Transportation Benchmark Data and Performance Indicators for Districts Reporting

Aberdeen			
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; and 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	2.94%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	\$32,189.40	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	\$1,295.35	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	\$7.56	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	25%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	5	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	20.0	=	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	48.54%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	33.13	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	31.73	–	N/A

DeSoto			
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	3.68%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	\$34,001.24	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	\$738.47	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	\$4.39	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	15.70%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	10.9	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	37.17	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	59.01%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	54.61	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	51.07	+	N/A

Forrest County Agricultural High School			
Benchmark Data Not Reported			
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	3.53%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	Data Not Provided (District does not transport students to and from school.)		
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			

Harrison			
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	5.96%	+	+
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	\$54,703.45	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	\$1,325.04	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	\$5.75	+	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	10.09%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	9.9	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	36.33	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	64.18%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	45.92	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	58.81	+	N/A

Humphreys			
Benchmark Data Reported			
Benchmark	Yes	No	Notes
Uses bus routing software?		x	
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?		x	The district noted that it has drivers run double routes, if possible, to cover absences.
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	3.05%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	\$24,883.39	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	\$575.47	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	\$3.84	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	8%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	6.3	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	25	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	89.27%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	47	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	39.13	–	N/A

Jackson City			
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) as well as having dedicated substitute 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	5.26%	+	+
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	\$66,065.05	+	+
Annual Cost per Rider	\$1,299.25	+	+
Annual Cost per Mile	\$1.62	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	0%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	3.2	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	16.89	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	41.2%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	50.85	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	227.04	+	N/A

Meridian			
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	2.41%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	\$37,377.36	+	–
Annual Cost per Rider	\$665.99	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	\$9.26	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	28.07%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	5.2	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14.25	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	69.33%	+	+
Number of Students per Bus	78.02	+	+
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	31.17	–	N/A

Rankin			
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; and 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	4.12%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	\$28,276.50	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	\$1,112.55	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	\$5.34	–	–
Percentage of Spare Buses	38.18%	+	+
Number of Buses per School	12.5	+	+
Number of Buses per Mechanic	50.14	+	+
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	47.65%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	41.11	+	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	47.87	+	N/A

Yazoo City			
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) as well as having dedicated substitute 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	1.96%	–	–
Average Annual Cost per Bus Overall	\$31,718.56	–	–
Annual Cost per Rider	\$917.48	–	–
Annual Cost per Mile	\$15.61	+	+
Percentage of Spare Buses	14.29%	–	–
Number of Buses per School	5.3	–	–
Number of Buses per Mechanic	14	–	–
Percentage of Total Students that are Bus Riders	35.78%	–	–
Number of Students per Bus	40.33	–	–
Number of Miles Driven Daily per Bus	13.17	–	N/A

Performance Evaluation

Lonnie Edgar, Deputy Director
Jennifer Sebren, Deputy Director
Taylor Burns
Emily Cloys
Kim Cummins
Kelsi Ford
Will Harper
Matthew Holmes
Ryan Morgan
Meri Clare Ringer
Colby Spence
Sarah Williamson
Julie Winkeljohn

Administration

Kirby Arinder
Stephanie Harris
Gale Taylor

Quality Assurance and Reporting

Tracy Bobo
Bryan "Jay" Giles

Reapportionment

Ben Collins