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WAGES AND BENEFITS PROVIDED CONTRACTOR-EMPLOYED
SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS IN MONTANA

by

WESLEY CRAIG BREWINGTON

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

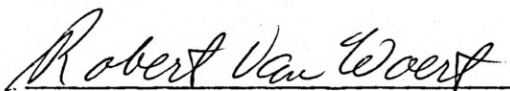
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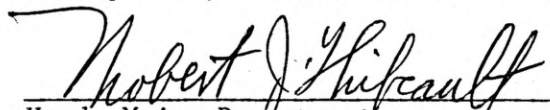
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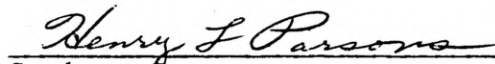
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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to determine what contractor-employed school bus drivers in Montana receive in wages and fringe benefits, and to determine if any differences exist, concerning wages and fringe benefits, between and among the three district classifications.

To collect the required data, a survey was taken of a select sample of private bus contractors representing each classification. The questionnaire form asked questions related to the following: driver wages, fringe benefits, mileage per day, hours spent, extra trips, driver qualifications, and driver duties.

Sixty-nine (68%) of the contractors surveyed responded; 81 percent of the Class I contractors, 59 percent of the Class II contractors, and 68 percent of the Class III contractors.

It was found that Montana school bus drivers received significantly different hourly and mileage rates of pay, depending upon the size of the district, but that their average daily wage was about the same - around \$12.00 per day. Few drivers enjoyed fringe benefit provisions. Rates of pay used for extra trips were found to be too varied for conclusions or comparisons to be made. In the area of driver qualifications, safety instruction prevailed over driver training programs and limitations or restrictions imposed upon drivers reaching age 65 were minimal in effect. Class I drivers, in greater numbers, were required to perform minor duties while the drivers for the smaller two classes assumed more varied and major duties, though fewer drivers were affected.

Based on the findings of this study the researcher recommended that similar studies be conducted in surrounding states; that regional practices within Montana be studied; that driver organizations be studied relative to their influence on costs, wages, benefits, and duties; and that driver attitudes be studied concerning wages, benefits, and union affiliation.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Since an efficient pupil transportation system is a goal and concern of virtually all school systems, and since it has been shown that the adequacy of compensation provided school bus drivers is a major factor in affecting transportation efficiency (Burke, 1967:28), provisions for driver compensation are of importance to educational leaders, administrators, boards of education, and the public at large.

During the 1975-76 school year in Montana, 54,014 public school pupils were transported by bus over a total 85,897 miles per day (Supt. of Public Instruction). The efficient operation of this system should be a paramount importance and concern to institutions and individuals involved.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are two principal types of bus transportation programs operating in and servicing public school districts in Montana, contractor-owned and public-owned. The focus of this study was upon the two hundred fifty-six private contractors supplying services to Montana schools. The primary purpose of this study was to determine the compensatory and fringe benefits provided to drivers employed by school bus contractors in the state during the 1975-76 school year

and, secondarily, to determine what, if any, differences existed among and between district classification types.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

School personnel have been organizing into groups for a number of years. Besides becoming more mutually exclusive, these groups have become more militant in pursuing rights and demands, particularly those related to compensation. Custodial personnel, teaching staff, and administrative personnel have, or are approaching, union affiliation or status. As yet, school bus drivers have not achieved the same degree of organization as have other school groups. They are not now included in negotiations and are not now a negotiating group. However, as the trend toward stronger and more militant organizations continues, it will be of increasing importance for those concerned with the operation of the school systems to understand the situation, circumstances, and practices concerning school bus driver compensation.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

This study was conducted to answer the following questions regarding contractor-employed school bus drivers:

1. What is the average salary of drivers, and the salary range?
2. What is the average wage scale for extra trips, both

athletic and instructional?

3. What routine duties, if any, do drivers perform other than driving?

4. What is the average length of time, and time range, drivers spend completing their routes?

5. What is the average length of bus routes in miles?

6. What, if any, fringe benefits are provided drivers?

7. Are wages and benefits related to district size?

PROCEDURES

In order to complete the stated objectives, it was necessary to construct an instrument to provide the necessary data from which to draw conclusions and make comparisons. A direct mail survey was conducted of the private contractors and the necessary data was compiled from the returns. To achieve reasonable completeness in the study, a sample of one hundred two private contractors, representing the three district classification types, was chosen at random to participate in the study.

LIMITATIONS

The survey was limited to one hundred two of the two hundred fifty-six school bus contractors serving the public schools in the state of Montana and residing in a town or city of more than one

hundred people. The sample of one hundred two was chosen because of economics and because this number was a representative sample of the population.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Certain terms used in this study are subject to different meanings and interpretations. The following terms are therefore, defined to give added meaning and significance to the study.

Contractor. An individual, partnership, or corporation which is providing, operating, and maintaining a school bus or buses in accordance with a stipulated agreement with school authorities (Good, 1959).

Public owned bus. A vehicle owned by a school district, municipality, or other unit of governmental organization, and used for the transportation of pupils (Good, 1959).

District Classification. Class I, if it has a population of 6,500 or more. Class II, if it has a population of 1,000 or more but less than 6,500. Class III, if it has a population of less than 1,000. This classification system pertains to the size of the elementary district, not the secondary, but is the only district classification system in effect that is prescribed by state law (Revised Codes of Montana).

SUMMARY

It is essential that all programs of a school system provide desirable standards of operation as efficiently as possible. If administrators, boards of education, staff personnel and the public at large are to understand the factors affecting efficiency, then they must know and understand what is being provided employees within the system.

To determine compensatory provisions of contractor-employed school bus drivers, a survey was conducted of Montana school bus contractors, the focus of which was upon wages and fringe benefits. From the resulting data, conclusions were drawn and comparisons made regarding wages, salaries, and fringe benefits of drivers.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Of the fifty million school children enrolled in educational programs in the United States, it is estimated that between 35 percent and 40 percent are bused daily on over 240,000 school buses, a third of which are privately owned (Summers, 1971:3-5). If the adequacy of compensation provided bus drivers is a major factor affecting transportation efficiency (Burke, 1967:28), it is of great importance to school administrators, boards of education, private contractors, and the people of each district as a whole to know what wages and benefits are provided bus drivers.

A search of the literature was conducted concentrating on two topics relevant to the stated problem. The first area concerned policies and practices in other states while the second area focused upon the state of Montana.

Other States

A review of a number of studies reveals a great variety of variables concerning wages and benefits. The latter are generally provided drivers employed by individual districts, whereas private contractors generally make few if any provisions for health insurance, life insurance, paid vacations, retirement, etc. Those districts providing such benefits do so under existing policies covering school

personnel, usually with the driver providing a pre-determined percentage of the cost of such a policy - a direct reflection of the part-time nature of the job.

Despite a growing concern over the shortage of capable and potentially competent drivers (Allen, 1974:20) few districts or contractors are able or prepared to provide drivers with duties other than driving. An Indiana study reveals that over 94 percent of the bus drivers in that state are not assigned any other job than driving, for which most drivers receive between \$10.00 and \$12.00 per day (Sanders, 1968:23). For these drivers, operating a bus falls into the category of supplemental income.

The literature reveals both a variety of ways in which a driver is paid and a wide range in wages. Drivers are employed on twelve month, ten month, daily, or hourly wage scales. Drivers in New Jersey employed on a twelve month contract are paid on an average between \$4775 and \$5933. Ten month contracts range from \$3270 to \$4678. Although hourly wages range from a low of \$2.55 per hour to a high of \$5.00 per hour, the state-wide average ranges from a minimum of \$3.06 to a maximum of \$3.70 per hour (NJSBA:23). Such ranges are representative of policies and procedures for the United States as a whole.

Montana

During the 1974-75 school year, Montana's 2,000 school bus

drivers traveled 85,897 miles per day on the 1,401 established regular routes, transporting 54,014 of the 171,833 pupils enrolled in the public school system of Montana (Supt. of Public Instruction). Since 1961, the number of pupils being transported has risen from 28,000 to over 54,000 with an accompanying rise in yearly route mileage from nine million miles to 15.5 million miles.

While all school bus drivers must meet universal qualifications - be at least twenty-one years of age, possess a chauffeurs license, and first aid certificate, and pass a medical examination (Montana Department of Public Instruction, 1961), their terms, salaries, and conditions of employment are universally different from district to district, contractor to contractor, save one - all school districts employing drivers must provide a retirement fund (Nussbaum, 1972:11).

A survey of eight school districts in July of 1975, at the Montana Conference on Pupil Transportation is representative of the various salary schedules and ranges in effect throughout the state. Glendive drivers received an hourly wage ranging from \$3.50 to \$4.60 per hour, depending on the experience of the driver. Bozeman drivers averaged between \$10.00 and \$12.00 per day while the adjacent Livingston district drivers were paid between \$18.00 and \$20.00 per day. Monthly salaries ranged between \$250.00 and \$300.00 per month in Kalispell and Eureka to Polson's broader \$255-\$315 per month schedule. Libby's somewhat more complicated schedule paid its

drivers \$145 per month base and added 25 cents per seat, 90 cents per mile, and \$1.00 per year of seniority. Columbia Falls employed its drivers in a dual role, paying from \$7200 to \$7600 for driving and school maintenance work. Only two districts reported benefits, health insurance coverage in Livingston and all benefits otherwise provided school employees in Columbia Falls (Montana Conference on Pupil Transportation, 1975).

Although inequities may appear in such a range of wages and benefits, only the larger districts report that a raise in wages would help them find better drivers (Toner, 1973:85). Even so, it should be noted that these variances in wages can be financially beneficial to the largest of districts. A study of the Great Falls system has shown that contractors are able to pay substantially less in wages than the district, especially if the district's policy is to provide benefits for all school employees (Nussbaum, 1972:44-45). The smaller, rural districts generally do not have difficulty in securing drivers, since many of them are ranchers (Toner, 1972:85). There seems to be enough qualified people throughout the state interested in part-time employment that provides supplemental income to fill the needs of the school districts. This lack of a driver shortage, coupled with the assumption that wages paid are a reflection of the local wage level, would account for such variances and apparent discrepancies.

SUMMARY

It is clear from the literature that there is no consistency among practices, policies, or procedures relevant to school bus drivers' wages and fringe benefits. Private contractors and school districts vary considerably in the amount of wages paid and benefits provided, from state to state, district to district, and contractor to contractor. Although there is some concern at the national level that a shortage of drivers may create problems in the future, Montana schools don't seem to have much difficulty in obtaining drivers on a part-time basis.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

This chapter will explain the procedures employed to answer the questions raised by the statement of the problem, that is, (1) what is the range and average salary provided contractor-employed school bus drivers, (2) what fringe benefits are provided, and (3) what, if any, differences exist among the three district classifications regarding said ranges and averages? This chapter presents the design and detailed procedure by which the study was investigated.

POPULATION DESCRIPTION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The population studied consisted of all school bus contractors who provide transportation services to the public school districts in the state of Montana, and who reside in a city or town with a population greater than one hundred. Note should be taken of the fact that numerous districts employ more than one contractor to provide bus services.

From a list of all contractors operating within the state, three sub-lists were drawn, one for each of the three district classifications (I - populations in excess of 6,500, II - populations between 1,000 and 6,500, III - populations less than 1,000). In order to insure a broad state-wide representation, as many localities

as possible and practical were included in the sample. Where a district employed only one contractor, the single contractor was chosen. If more than one contractor provided services, the contractor(s) to be sampled was chosen at random. Utilizing this method, fifty percent of the Class III contractors were surveyed (representing eighty-nine percent of the towns listed as having contractors), forty-nine percent of the Class II contractors were surveyed (ninety-eight percent of the towns listed), and fifty-seven percent of the Class I contractors were surveyed (representing one hundred percent of the cities listed as having contractors).

INVESTIGATIVE CATEGORIES

The investigative categories were intended to answer the broad question, "What wages and benefits are provided contractor-employed school bus drivers?" The categories included:

1. The range and median salary of drivers.
2. The range and median time drivers spend completing bus routes.
3. The median distance drivers travel completing bus routes.
4. The fringe benefits provided bus drivers.
5. The differences, if any, that exist among and between the three district classifications within the suggested categories.

METHOD OF COLLECTING DATA

The instrument used to collect the data consisted of a number of questions requiring the contractor to record actual wages paid, time drivers spent on routes (clock time), length of routes, personal insurance coverage and benefits provided for each driver, as well as the size (by class) of the district(s) served.

The validity of the instrument was determined by requesting a group of five contractors to judge the instrument on the basis of content validity. After several revisions, each agreed that the final draft would provide the necessary data in a form easily read and easily completed.

METHOD OF ORGANIZING DATA

The data obtained from the survey instrument is presented in Chapter 4 in the form of tables and graphs to reveal the range and average salary, and fringe benefits provided bus drivers on a state-wide basis. Ranges and averages were also determined for time spent and distance traveled by bus drivers completing assigned routes. A further breakdown of the data was made for each of the three district sizes: I, II, and III. These figures were then used for the final comparison of characteristics of each size category.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

All comparisons were processed by computer or calculator, whichever was more appropriate to determine the mean, median, and mode (Ferguson, 1971:44-52). All figures were then double checked.

SUMMARY

From the data-collection instrument various computational methods were used to acquire an accurate description of the state-wide range and average salary and fringe benefits provided contractor-employed school bus drivers in Montana. State-wide ranges and averages were also computed for time spent and distance traveled in completing bus routes. A further analysis was then made for each of the three district classifications and a comparison then made to describe the extent and degree of differences that exist. The detailed display of this information can be found in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter provides the analysis of the data obtained from the survey of school bus contractors in the state of Montana. The results are based upon a sixty-eight percent return on the total group sampled, obtained through a direct-mail survey, an extensive telephone follow-up and personal interviews conducted by the writer. Class I figures are based upon an eighty-one percent return, Class II upon a fifty-nine percent return, and Class III statistics upon a sixty-seven percent return. Statistics were reported on 278 drivers.

The relevant statistics for each district classification are reported and analyzed according to district sizes, from largest to smallest. A comparison between and among the district classifications follows.

Class I

Wages. The majority of contractors reporting wages and salaries paid school bus drivers reported such figures on the basis of a daily wage. In those few instances where a rate per trip was reported, the wage was doubled to account for both morning and afternoon trips. Those returns reporting a monthly wage for drivers were broken into a daily wage by dividing the monthly wage by twenty (the average number of school days per month), while those reporting

a yearly wage were adjusted by dividing the total wage by one hundred eighty (the number of days in a school year). The hourly wage, if not reported by the contractor was determined by dividing the daily wage by the number of hours spent driving by each driver. Mileage figures were determined by dividing the daily wage by the total number of miles the driver traveled per day.

Daily and hourly wages, and mileage, varied from contractor to contractor and from class size to class size. (See Table 1, Class I Wages, below.)

Table 1
Class I Wages

Rate	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Hours	\$2.94-\$8.00	\$3.71	\$3.60	\$3.60
Miles	\$0.04-\$0.52	\$0.29	\$0.32	\$0.34
Day	\$5.00-\$17.31	\$12.60	\$14.00	\$14.40
Note: These figures represent actual driving time only. They do not account for time a driver may spend fueling the bus, cleaning it, checking the oil, etc.				

The hourly wage rate for Class I drivers ranged from a low of \$2.94 per hour to a high of \$8.00 per hour. The arithmetic mean of \$3.71 per hour suggests that the majority is clustered at the lower levels of the range. It should be of note that the most frequently

mentioned rate of pay, as well as the fiftieth percentile, fell at the \$3.60 per hour rate, lower than the average.

The mileage rate computed for these drivers varied considerably also, from a low of 4 cents per mile to a high of 52 cents. The average of 29 cents was again below the fiftieth percentile (median) of 32 cents and the most frequently mentioned (mode), 34 cents.

The trend toward variability in wages paid was continued in the Class I districts in the daily wages paid. The lowest paid driver received \$5.00 per day while the highest was paid \$17.31 per day. The average wage was determined to be \$12.60 per day.

Hours and Mileage. From considering the variability in wages paid, one could assume that the hours the drivers actually spent behind the wheel per day and the number of miles traveled per day would be just as variable. An examination of Table 2, Class I Hours and Mileage, below, shows the truth of that assumption.

Table 2
Class I Hours and Mileage

Category	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Hours	1-5	3.5	4	4
Mileage	24-158	49.5	44	44

The wide range in hours spent driving is comparable to the range in miles traveled. However, the average of three-and-a-half hours falls in the upper portion of the 1-5 hour range while the 49.5 mile average falls in the lower portion of the 24-158 mile range. This would seem to indicate that it takes drivers proportionally longer periods of time to travel proportionally shorter distances. The explanation of this seemingly paradoxical situation might lie in the circumstances of the shorter routes - they contain more students in a densely populated area and require more stops, thus a slower traveling speed, than the longer routes. In addition, it may be assumed that the buses in these larger districts negotiate more miles in the city than in the country and are therefore, influenced by traffic patterns and more congested driving conditions.

Fringe Benefits. Fringe benefits were not found to be universally provided by contractors serving the Class I districts. This apparently substantiates the conclusion from the literature that private bus contractors in other states and in Montana, view bus driving as a part-time job providing supplemental income, as opposed to a full-time occupation.

The single most common fringe benefit provided, personal liability insurance for the driver, affected only 31 percent of the drivers covered by the survey. All categories of fringe benefits were of minor affect on drivers, as can be seen in Table 3, Class I Fringe

Benefits.

Table 3
Class I Fringe Benefits

Benefit	% Drivers Affected	Benefit	% Drivers Affected
Liability Insurance	31%	Medical Insurance	18%
Sick Leave	11%	Vacation Leave	21%
Paid Holidays	10%	Pension Plan	10%

Compared to liability insurance, medical insurance coverage for drivers seems not to be much of a concern for contractors since only 18 percent of the drivers received such coverage.

As for the various forms of time off from work, vacation leave is the most popular (21 percent of the drivers affected) while sick leave and paid holiday provisions are less frequent (11 percent and 10 percent respectively). The specific amount of time granted for vacation leave ranged from 5-12 days, with one district reporting one week of leave per year of service. Sick leave provisions specifically mentioned either a nine or ten day limit. The six days of paid holiday time and the pension plan were directly attributed by the contractors to the driver's Teamster affiliation. The only other

fringe benefit mentioned was to a single driver by a single contractor who allotted two gallons of gas per day for personal use.

Duties. In addition to completing their assigned route and maintaining order on the bus, the instrument asked what duties the driver(s) were expected to perform for the contractor. (See Table 4, Class I Duties.)

Table 4
Class I Duties

Duty	% Drivers Affected	Duty	% Drivers Affected
Check safety equipment	83%	Clean Interior	100%
Check oil, water levels	38%	Clean Exterior	-0-
Fuel bus	87%	Other (tires)	22%
General service	-0-		

The most common duty requirement was that of cleaning the interior of the bus. Virtually all Class I drivers were expected to do so. The vast majority of drivers were also expected to fuel their bus (87%) and check the safety equipment (83%). The responsibility of checking oil and water levels was delegated to only 38 percent of the drivers while only 22 percent were required to check the tires for air pressure and wear.

Requirements. Contractors were also asked if they placed specific requirements on their drivers, specifically if they required drivers to attend a driver training program or a safety instruction class, or if they placed limitations on drivers continuing past 65 years of age. Attendance at driver training programs and safety instruction classes was required of eighty percent of the drivers in Class I districts. In addition, 17 percent of the drivers were provided the option of attending a driver training program and 19 percent were provided the option of attending safety instruction classes. Only 22 percent of the Class I drivers were, or would be, affected by limitations imposed upon drivers reaching 65 years of age (either forced retirement or satisfactory completion of a yearly medical examination).

Class II

Wages. The statistical information obtained from the Class II contractors has been determined using the same methods and procedures used to arrive at the reported figures for Class I drivers.

As might be expected from the Class I results, the Class II driver's wages were quite varied, the ranges for hourly and daily wages being even more extreme. (See Table 5, Class II Wages.)

Table 5

Class II Wages

Rate	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Hour	\$2.00-\$10.16	\$4.10	\$3.70	\$3.50
Mile	\$.05-\$.48	15.5¢	\$.12	\$.23
Day	\$5.00-\$31.50	\$11.00	\$10.00	\$7.00

The hourly wage range, from \$2.00 per hour to \$10.16 per hour was the most extreme of any class, the mean of \$4.10 per hour falling in the lower portion of the range. Noticeably lower than the average are the median and mode, \$3.70 and \$3.50 respectively. Significantly affecting the average is the percentage of drivers in the \$3.50-\$4.00 per hour category (slightly more than 74 percent).

The mileage wage scale for Class II drivers ranged from 5 cents per mile to 48 cents per mile, the mean being 15.5 cents. Although the single most frequently reported mileage figure was 23 cents per mile, it should be noted that the fiftieth percentile is at 12 cents per mile, noticeably lower than the average for all drivers of 15.5 cents.

The extreme range apparent in the daily wages paid has an influence on the average of \$11.00 per day. Again, this range (\$5.00-\$31.50) is the greatest of any other class. The median, \$10.00 per

day, probably reflects a more accurate picture of the Class II drivers most common wage per day.

Hours and Mileage. Although the wage ranges of Class II drivers are, on the whole, more extreme than those of Class I drivers, the range for miles traveled and hours spent driving are less extreme. The figures for Class II drivers are depicted in Table 6, Class II Hours and Mileage.

Table 6
Class II Hours and Mileage

Category	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Hours	1-4	2.7	2.5	2
Mileage	31-152	83	83	31

The average length of time drivers in this class spend behind the wheel per day is 2.7 hours, considerably less than the 3.5 hour average for Class I drivers. The Class II drivers also average 83 miles per day, compared to 49.5 for the Class I drivers. The results shown here indicate that Class II drivers travel further faster, perhaps due to fewer passengers, fewer stops, and/or less inhibiting traffic conditions. Whatever the reasons may be, this group averages significantly more miles per day than any other group.

Fringe Benefits. From the results supplied by Class II contractors, it seems that they consider bus driving to be more of a part-time occupation than do the Class I contractors. Whereas, some percentage of Class I drivers were affected by each of the six benefit categories listed, Class II drivers were affected by only two such categories, personal liability insurance and vacation time. Twenty-five percent of the drivers were recorded in each category.

Duties. The duty roster for Class II drivers, as a whole, is somewhat more detailed than for any other group. They were included to some degree in each of the seven categories. (See Table 7, Class II Duties.)

Table 7
Class II Duties

Duty	% Drivers Affected	Duty	% Drivers Affected
Check safety equipment	55%	Clean Interior	75%
Check oil, water level	55%	Clean Exterior	30%
Fuel bus	75%	Other (tires)	35%
General Service	15%		

Similar to the Class I drivers, the majority of Class II drivers are required to fuel and clean the interior of the bus

(75 percent for each category). Over half of the Class II drivers (55%) are required to check the safety equipment and the oil/water levels. The responsibility for checking the tires is delegated to 35 percent of these drivers, while 30 percent are expected to clean the exterior of the bus and 15 percent perform general service duties.

Requirements. The response for this class concerning driver attendance requirements at driver training programs and safety instruction classes, makes it readily apparent that more emphasis is placed on safety instruction than driver training. Contractors in this class require 87 percent of their drivers to attend safety classes while 58 percent are required to attend driver training programs. Drivers having these programs available but not required, numbered only one percent. Less than 10 percent of the drivers were or would be effected by limitations or restrictions after reaching the age of 65.

Class III

Wages. The Class III drivers, though from the smallest district populations, had members making more money than in any other class, on two of the three scales. In the hourly wage category, both lower (\$3.33 per hour) and upper (\$11.00 per hour) ranges were higher than for drivers in the other classes. (See Table 8, Class III Wages, page 26.)

Table 8

Class III Wages

Rate	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Hour	\$3.33-\$11.00	\$6.13	\$5.82	\$7.50
Mile	\$.10-\$.66	\$.23	\$.19	\$.20
Day	\$5.00-\$21.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$15.00

The mileage scale also included higher figures for both the lower and upper ranges (10 cents-66 cents per mile). The average hourly wage rate of \$6.13 was considerably higher for this class, as were the median and mode figures. However, the average pay per mile, while higher than Class II, was lower than Class I drivers. Considering the variability in these figures, it is interesting to note that the average daily wage of \$12.00 is within \$1.00 of each of the other classes.

Hours and Mileage. The range of hours per day Class III drivers actually spent driving is the least of any other class, 1-3½ hours. It is not surprising that the average of two hours is also less than for the other groups, since these drivers received more money per hour but made a comparable daily wage. The average number of miles traveled per day was lower than Class II but higher than Class I figures. The range for this class was as great as any group.

(See Table 9, Class III Hours and Mileage.)

Table 9
Class III Hours and Mileage

Category	Range	Mean	Median	Mode
Hours	1-3.5	2	2	2
Mileage	24-158	66	75	73

Fringe Benefits. Fringe benefits provided bus drivers by Class III contractors continued the trend established by Class II contractors - the smaller the class size, the fewer benefits provided. Only one benefit category was mentioned by these contractors, personal liability insurance, with only 15 percent of the drivers affected.

Duties. Class III drivers were, like the other groups, expected to perform a wide range of duties. As in the other classifications, the greatest number of drivers (78%) were responsible for cleaning the interior of the bus. A larger percent (61%) of these drivers are required to check the oil/water levels than in the other groups. However, fewer Class III drivers assume the duties of checking safety equipment, fueling, and other (tires) than do the other drivers. (See Table 10, Class III Duties.)

Table 10

Class III Duties

Duty	% Drivers Effectuated	Duty	% Drivers Effectuated
Check safety equipment	50%	Clean Interior	78%
Check oil, water levels	61%	Clean Exterior	20%
Fuel bus	56%	Other (tires)	-0-
General service	11%		

Requirements. Although Class III drivers are provided the least amount of fringe benefits, they are also the least restricted in the sense of being required to attend driver training programs and safety instruction classes. Mandatory attendance at driver training programs effects only 10 percent of the drivers in this class, even though an additional 21 percent have the program available. Of more importance to the contractors are safety classes, 32 percent of the drivers required to attend and an additional 21 percent having these classes available. Limitations imposed upon drivers reaching the age of 65 affected, or would affect, 16 percent of the drivers.

COMPARISON

The statistical differences among the three district classifi-

cations pertaining to hourly wages and wages per mile appear to be significant. The average Class I driver receives \$3.71 per hour, the Class II driver receives \$4.10 per hour, and the Class III driver receives \$6.13. Average amounts of money per mile for Class I drivers is 29 cents, Class II is 15.5 cents, and Class III is 23 cents per mile. However, the average daily wage per driver has a leveling effect - Class I is \$12.60, Class II is \$11.00, and Class III is \$12.00. The daily wage received mitigates the apparent differences in hourly and mileage rates.

One could argue that Class I drivers get paid less per hour, but they average fewer miles traveled per day, 49.5 miles, as compared to 83 miles per day for Class II and 66 miles per day for Class III. Class I drivers also average more hours per day than Class II or Class III drivers.

As for rates of pay relative to extra-duty assignments, activity and instructional trips, no single method was common to any group. Each contractor utilized a different schedule, many noting that the school district itself managed and financed such trips. Therefore, from the data received, no conclusions or valid comparisons could be determined for extra trips.

Fringe benefits were more prevalent among the Class I drivers but even the largest category reported, personal liability insurance, affected only 31 percent of the drivers of that group. All other

categories for this group were reported but affected less than 22 percent of the drivers, hardly significant. The only common benefit reported within all classifications was liability insurance, but again the percentages are slight (25 percent of the Class II drivers and 15 percent of the Class III drivers).

The duty assignments for drivers seems to reflect the size of the class involved, and the size of the contractor's operation. Of the Class I contractors, 55 percent reported employing over twenty drivers. All drivers in this group were expected to clean their own bus, and over 80 percent were required to perform the minor duties of fueling and checking the safety equipment. They were not expected to perform such major duties as cleaning the exterior of the bus or general service (grease, oil change, filters, etc.), and only 38 percent were held responsible for oil and water levels. These expectations changed somewhat for Class II contractors (43 percent reported employing five drivers). Smaller percentages of drivers were expected to complete minor duty assignments, while larger percentages assumed tasks of greater significance to the continued operation of the bus. Duties for Class III drivers generally paralleled those of the Class II drivers, with some small variations in percentages effected.

Driver attendance at driver training programs and safety instruction classes varied with the size of the district, the larger

ones requiring greater attendance than the smaller districts - the only exception being in the Class II districts where 7 percent more drivers were required to attend the safety classes than in the Class I districts. Although Class I drivers were required to attend both types of programs on an equal percentage basis, the Class II and III drivers were required to attend safety classes in significantly greater percentages than those whose attendance was mandatory at driver training programs.

SUMMARY

Although noticeable differences were found between and among the three district classifications in hourly wages and mileage rates, bus drivers in all three classes averaged between \$11.00 and \$12.60 per day. Hours spent driving were directly related to the size of the classification studied, drivers averaging more hours as the district size increased. The percentage of drivers in all three classes who enjoyed fringe benefits was found to be minimal. Drivers in the two smaller classes generally assumed less minor duties in smaller percentages than did Class I drivers, but tended to perform more major duties in greater percentages. Driver attendance at driver training programs was expected of greater percentages of drivers as the district size increased. Safety instruction classes were found to be required much more often than driver training programs, in the two smaller classifications.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Burke has shown that the efficient operation of pupil transportation systems is directly related to the compensation provided school bus drivers. With this in mind, this study was undertaken to discover what types of driver wages and fringe benefits were provided by private contractors within the state of Montana during the 1975-76 school year.

Nationally, practices for compensating drivers, wages paid, and fringe benefits provided have been inconsistent and variable from state to state, district to district and contractor to contractor. This may be due to the general belief that bus driving is a part-time job providing supplemental income. The general lack of fringe benefits provided drivers by contractors would seem to support such a belief.

This study was designed to survey those contractors who operate within Montana to discover what wages are paid, what fringe benefits are provided, what duties drivers perform and what, if any, differences exist between and among the drivers serving the three district classifications. The instrument used to collect the data was validated by submitting it to five contractors. It was then mailed to a representative sample of one hundred two private bus contractors throughout the state.

CONCLUSIONS

A comparison of school bus drivers salaries between and among the three district classifications, to determine the differences in wages, indicates that significant differences exist in both hourly wage rates and mileage rates, depending upon the size of the district. However, the average wage of drivers is about the same, on a daily basis, irregardless of district size.

From this study the writer has concluded that any comparison of wage rates between drivers in one district classification and drivers in another is meaningless if only hourly or mileage figures are used. Simply stated, there are too many determining variables - road conditions, miles traveled, time necessary, pupil load, etc. - to make a valid comparison. All that can really be stated is that average daily wages are approximately the same for Class I, II, and III drivers.

The writer, in his review of related literature in Chapter 2, found that, nationally, private bus contractors generally provide few, if any, fringe benefits for drivers. The conclusion drawn from this study is that Montana contractors provide few such benefits. The majority of those drivers who do enjoy fringe benefits work in the largest of the districts and those who have extensive benefit coverage and provisions are affiliated with the Teamsters Union.

The writer has concluded that there appear to be differences, based on district size, related to duty assignments of drivers. Those contractors serving the larger districts generally employ a relatively large number of drivers who are expected to fuel, clean the interior of the bus, and check the safety equipment. In the smaller districts the contractors employ a few drivers who assume responsibility for the continued operation of a specific bus, or the contractor assumes the duty himself. These contractors do not need, nor can they justifiably maintain, full-time maintenance or mechanical help. They do what is necessary themselves or rely on their driver.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer, in researching driver compensation, found very few statistics concerning driver wages or fringe benefits. No state in the Rocky Mountain region had any such information. It is, therefore, recommended that similar studies be conducted in surrounding or adjacent states to arrive at some sort of perspective concerning this topic.

From the extreme ranges found in wage scales throughout the state, the question of regional practices presents itself. Are these ranges due to regional influences? Are they peculiarly local in nature? These questions have yet to be answered. Since this study did not divide the state into geographical areas, it is recommended

that such a survey be undertaken to determine if differences exist that are dependent upon geographical location.

In the area of fringe benefits, it was found that extensive provisions were provided only to those drivers affiliated with the Teamsters Union. What effect does such provisions have on transportation costs to the district? Do extensive fringe benefit provisions effect the transportation services provided the school? What effect does union affiliation have on wages or duty assignments? A study should be made to provide answers to these and related questions concerning driver/union affiliation.

A study should also be made to determine driver attitudes toward wages and fringe benefits, their duty assignments, and the desireability of union affiliation. Such a study would provide some insight into areas that could become of chief concern. This type of data would then enable contractors and school officials to gain a better perspective on the situation of drivers as they see their job.

A major recommendation of this writer is that drivers receive compensatory provisions commensurate with their responsibilities. The wages and fringe benefits they receive should be a direct reflection of their driving responsibility, as well as the duty assignments they perform.

With studies of the above types available for school administrators, boards of education, and taxpayers to use, a better under-

standing of contractors, drivers and employment conditions would be possible, thus increasing the likelihood of operating and maintaining a reliable and efficient pupil transportation system.

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