SBF's School District Survey finds that the proportion of school districts making reductions in their transportation service has gradually decreased over the past three years — from 21% to 8%.

BY THOMAS McMAHON, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Change in bus service this year?

- Increased 20%
- Same 72%
- Reduced 8%

School bus service cuts appear to be tapering off. In this year's survey, only 8% of respondents said that their district's level of school bus service for the 2013-14 school year would be reduced compared to the previous school year. In the 2012 survey, 15% were making reductions; in 2011, 21% were.

Charge a school bus fee?

- No 95%
- Yes 5%

Only 5% of the districts surveyed charge a fee for regular transportation. A few of them noted that their fee is just for students who live within the walk zone. For the majority of the districts that charge for bus service, the fees fall in the range of $150 to $500 per year for one student.
Our 2013 School District Survey found an average school bus driver starting wage of $14.32 per hour. That’s a slight dip from last year’s finding, but it’s still above the averages from other recent years.

Transportation directors surveyed make an average annual salary of $64,880. Last year’s survey found a higher average: $71,218.

On average, the school districts involved in the survey have a ratio of 50 buses per dispatcher.

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**2013 SCHOOL DISTRICT SURVEY**

**In favor of lap belts for large buses?**

- Yes: 13%
- Not sure: 14%
- No: 73%

Close to three-fourths (73%) of respondents said that they are not in favor of lap-only seat belts for passengers on large school buses.

**In favor of lap-shoulder belts for large buses?**

- Yes: 19%
- Not sure: 19%
- No: 62%

Lap-shoulder (aka three-point) belts are slightly more popular than lap belts among respondents, with 19% in favor of the lap-shoulder restraints.

**Little change in driver shortage**

- None: 16%
- Desperate: 4%
- Severe: 10%
- Mild: 34%
- Moderate: 36%

As in our 2012 survey, only 16% of respondents this year said that they have no shortage of school bus drivers. Percentages in the other categories are also fairly consistent with last year's findings.

**Drivers unionized?**

- Yes: 36%
- No: 64%

At slightly more than a third (36%) of the districts surveyed, school bus drivers belong to a labor union. For more on this topic, see pg. 40.
School Buses Allow Students, Regardless of Background or Economic Circumstances, Access to an Education.

Respondents represent a wide variety of fleet sizes. For this survey, a questionnaire was e-mailed to directors and managers at school district transportation departments. We received a total of 362 useable responses. Our thanks to everyone who participated.