Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Student Transportation

Transportation Efficiency Review of 2015-16 School Year Transportation Operations

for Lake Chelan School District

10/31/2017

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Report Process and Review Methodology 4

Section One: STARS Relative Efficiency Rating – Review and Comments 4

Section Two: Key Performance Indicators, Analysis and Comments 5

A. Basic Rider KPI 5

B. Special Education Rider KPI 6

C. Cost per Rider KPI 6

Section Three: Review of District Transportation Operations 7

A. Policies and Procedures 7

B. Transportation Operations 8

C. Geographic and Other Constraints 8

Appendix I STARS Efficiency Detail Report

Appendix II Key Performance Indicator T. A. P.

Executive Summary

Lake Chelan School District had a full time equivalent enrollment for the 2015-16 school year of 1,431.79 students. Of those enrolled, Lake Chelan provided home-to-school transportation service for an average of 1080.0 basic program riders and 65.75 special program riders per day (combined AM and PM student counts). The district operated 14.6 school buses to provide this service, at a cost of $624,405.76.

The efficiency system target for Lake Chelan School District would be to operate 9 school buses at a cost of $479,830.76. The district's relative efficiency rating based on data from the 2015-16 school year is 76.85%.

For school districts with a relative efficiency rating less than 90%, a review by the Regional Transportation Coordinator (RTC) is required. RTCs also conduct follow-up reviews for districts moving above 90%. The RTC review was conducted by Dan Payne from ESD105.

The regional transportation coordinator found that the most significant factors constraining the district's transportation operating costs and efficiency were:

The most obvious factor affecting Lake Chelan School District's ability to operate transportation any more efficiently is Lake Chelan itself. The district boundaries include most of the Lake and the district is required to provide transportation around the lake.

Overall Summary:

Because of the rural nature of Lake Chelan school district, and the geographic constraints faced, it's possible that the district's efficiency rating will drift above and below 90% in future years.

Report Process and Review Methodology

A detailed description of the STARS efficiency rating process is available online at: http://www.k12.wa.us/transportation/STARS/default.aspx under Efficiency Ratings. That webpage also provides descriptions of the rating calculation.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) material is included in this document, but for an explanation of each indicator and the methodology, please see the Key Performance Indicators Technical Assistance Paper available online at the website referenced above, and also in Appendix II.

The approach used for the 2017 review of a school district's transportation program involves four sections:

- Review and analysis of the district's STARS relative efficiency rating, and any comments;
- Review and analysis of the district's Key Performance Indicators (KPI), and any comments;
- Review and analysis of the school district's operational details, including identifying constraints and changes from prior years (if any), and any comments.

Using this process, the district's transportation program is evaluated for the efficient use of state fiscal resources. The goal of this process is to attempt to identify best practices that districts can apply to minimize the costs of operating their transportation service.

Section One: STARS Relative Efficiency Rating – Review and Comments

For Lake Chelan School District, the March 2017 relative efficiency score (based on data from the 2015-16 school year) was 76.85%. The Efficiency Detail Report including the cohort districts and predicted resource requirements is provided in Appendix I.

In the 2015-16 school year, Lake Chelan School District reported operating 14.6 buses to transport an average ridership count of 572.9 students with expenditures of $624,405.76. The efficiency rating calculation identified target expenditures of $479,830.76 while operating 9 buses.

Lake Chelan's March 2016 relative efficiency rating (based on data from the 2014-15 school year) was 86.07% and the March 2015 relative efficiency rating (based on data from the 2013–14 school year) was 83.5%.

RTC Analysis and Comments:

Because of the rural nature of the district, it's very likely that Lake Chelan's comparative efficiency rating will drift above and below the 90% threshold. This will often result from changes made to the district cohort group, not necessarily by any changes made in the district that may reflect changes to real or perceived operational efficiency.

The district should focus on the Key Performance Indicators and compare year-to-year values internally to evaluate efficiency and identify areas needing attention.

School District Comments:

Section Two: Key Performance Indicators, Analysis and Comments

This section of the efficiency review process uses three Key Performance Indicators (KPI): the average number of basic program riders per basic program bus; the average number of special education riders per special education bus; and the average cost per rider. These three KPI are helpful in translating efficiency into "ground level" concepts. In addition to each district's KPI, a KPI cohort is developed. The KPI cohort is comprised of the 20 most similar districts based on total ridership.

A. Basic Rider KPI

Basic Program Riders per Basic Program Bus KPI by School Year

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Change 2014-15 to 2015-16
64.71	53.69	51.93	54.00	3.99%

This KPI attempts to measure the efficiency of the district's basic program transportation by calculating the average number of students carried on basic program school buses.

General comment: independent of other factors, an increase in the number of basic riders per basic school bus from year to year reflects an increase in efficiency.

RTC Analysis and Comments:

In the 2014-15 school year, Lake Chelan transported an average of 51.93 basic program students per basic program bus. In the 2015-16 school year, this changed to an average of 54.0 basic program students per bus. This was a change of 3.99%.

The district ranks 8th in the Basic Riders KPI within their 21 district KPI cohort. The average basic students per basic bus among all 3rd quartile districts statewide is 59.59.

School District Comments:

B. Special Education Rider KPI

Special Education Riders per Special Education Bus KPI by School Year

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Change 2013-14 to 2014-15
4.43	8.25	3.88	4.76	22.76 %

RTC Analysis and Comments:

This KPI attempts to measure the efficiency of the district's special education transportation by calculating the average number of students carried on special education school buses. It is important to note that special education students may require specialized transportation that limits a district's ability to maximize bus utilization. In special education transportation, student needs preempt efficiency concerns.

General comment: independent of other factors, an increase in the number of special education riders per basic school bus from year to year reflects an increase in efficiency.

In the 2014-15 school year, Lake Chelan transported an average of 3.88 special education students per special education bus. In the 2015-16 school year, the district transported an average of 4.76 special education students per bus. This was a change of 22.76%.

The district ranks 17th in the Special Education Riders KPI within their 21 district cohort. The average Special Riders per Special Bus among all 3rd quartile districts statewide is 8.32.

***For school districts with few or no students requiring special education transportation services, this KPI is of minimal value except for confirming year to year service requirements.**

School District Comments:

C. Cost per Rider KPI

Cost per Student KPI by School Year

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Change 2013-14 to 2014-15
$ 959.47	$ 1,007.01	$ 1,059.38	$ 1,089.95	2.89%

RTC Analysis and Comments:

This KPI attempts to measure the overall efficiency of the district's transportation operation by calculating the average cost of transporting a student.

General comment: independent of other factors, a decrease in the average cost of transporting a student from year to year reflects an increase in efficiency.
In the 2014-15 school year, Lake Chelan's average cost per rider was $1,059.38. In the 2015-16 school year, the district's average cost per rider was $1,089.95. This was an increase of 2.89%.

The district ranks 7th in the Cost per Rider within their 21 district KPI cohort. The average cost per rider among all 3rd quartile districts statewide is $1,124.80.

For districts able to break out the average cost per student between the basic program and the special education program, the year to year change in these values can assist the district in evaluating their transportation operations. However, the workload to break out these costs by program can be substantial.

The district falls within the mid-point of the KPI cohort group in both "Basic Students per Basic Bus" and "Cost per Student", and is below the state average for districts of similar size in the "Cost per Student" KPI. The "Special Students per Special Bus" KPI is of very limited value in a district the size of Lake Chelan due to the changes in student needs and the requirement that those changes be accommodated regardless of whether or not routing changes fit into operational efficiencies.
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School District Comments:

Section Three: Review of District Transportation Operations

The review of district transportation operations is grouped in three areas:

- Policies and Procedures
- Transportation Operations
- Geographic and Other Constraints

The goal of the district review process is to identify changes that the district has made that impact the cost of providing transportation service. The identification of constraints the district faces can help in identifying solutions so that these solutions can be shared with other districts.

A. Policies and Procedures

Policies are the desired high level outcomes as articulated by the school district board of directors. The school district administration and transportation staff develop procedures to accomplish the policy objectives. Examples may include providing transportation for out-of-district 'choice' students or establishing a 2-mile walk area for high school students.

RTC Observations and Comments:

B. Transportation Operations

Transportation operations include all the organizational processes used to manage and run the transportation program on a daily basis from routing to payroll. The age of the fleet impacts maintenance costs, as does a good preventative maintenance program. Any district changes in operations that could significantly impact the efficiency or cost of operations should be noted.

Examples include combining routes to reduce the number of buses or increasing buses to reduce student ride times.

Transportation Expenditures (STARS Prior Year Expenditures) by School Year

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
$582,523.49	$564,937.17	$576,768.61	$624,405.76

RTC Observations and Comments:

Transportation expenditures increased from 2014-15 to 2015-16 by 9.8%. The district also transported approximately 30 more students in 2015-16 compared the previous year. In reviewing financial reporting data for 2014-15 and 2015-16, there are two areas impacting expenditures:

1. The amount of debit/credit transfers dropped in 2015-16 compared to the previous year by about $42,000 (24%), which results in an increase in reported to/from expenditures.
2. The reported insurance cost accounted for in Program 99 for 2015-16 increased by ~$13,000 (102%) over the previous year.

C. Geographic and Other Constraints

Geographic constraints can impact the ability of a school district to maximize efficiency. Identifying methods to minimize the impacts of constraints can assist other districts facing similar challenges. Examples of constraints include geographic constraints such as large bodies of water, minimal student density or urban traffic congestion.

RTC Observations and Comments:

The most obvious factor affecting Lake Chelan School District's ability to operate transportation any more efficiently is Lake Chelan itself. The district boundaries include most of the Lake and the district is required to provide transportation around the lake. In addition, Lake Chelan is a rural district requiring some routes to drive long distances to serve relatively few students. The district lacks a "grid" road network requiring routes to drive the same roadway twice to pick up student(s) and return.

School District Comments Regarding Policies and Procedures, Operations, and Constraints:

Appendix I

State of Washington

Superintendent of Public Instruction

School Year 2016-2017 - Lake Chelan School District

Efficiency Detail Report

LAKE CHELAN

					Workload		Site Characteristics (>)				Site Characteristics (<)	
Cohort	**District**	**Weight**	**Prior Year Expenditures**	**Buses**	**Basic Riders**	**Special Riders**	**Avg Distance**	**Number of Dest.**	**Land Area**	**K Rte**	**Road Miles per Sq Mile**	**Students Per Road Mile**
	Lake Chelan		$624,405.76	14	1,080	65	4.50	3	139.1	0	2.66	3.10
Cohort	College Place	17.5%	$296,013.51	8	912	49	2.29	6	29.0	0	3.96	8.37
Cohort	Okanogan	25.0%	$414,461.00	9	775	7	4.94	2	550.8	0	1.55	0.92
Cohort	Quillayute Valley	43.7%	$435,807.62	8	915	89	5.78	3	411.6	0	2.13	1.14
Cohort	Toppenish	13.8%	$972,831.93	18	2,367	117	3.09	9	268.6	0	1.41	6.54
Target	Lake Chelan Target	100%	$479,830.76	9								

Relative Efficiency Rating 76.85%

Site Characteristics (>) are those characteristics where a larger number is more challenging

Site Characteristics (<) are those characteristics where a smaller number is more challenging

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Student Transportation

Key Performance Indicators
Technical Assistance Paper
Customized for Lake Chelan School District

April 2017

Overview

The use of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) provides a straightforward method of analyzing school district transportation operational efficiency.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Regional Transportation Coordinators (RTCs) have standardized the use of three widely recognized KPI:

1. Basic program riders per basic program bus;
2. Special education riders per special education bus; and
3. Average cost per rider.

The value of KPI cannot be analyzed independent of a school district's characteristics. For instance, a rural district may be unable to fill a school bus given the student density. In a similar way, a school district's special education rider KPI is constrained by the number of special education students, where they live and their transportation requirements.

The three KPI are evaluated using the information gathered through the STARS system. The analysis is done across multiple school years to determine trends in student ridership and the cost of transportation service.

The KPI can also be used in comparison to other districts. Since larger districts have more ability to take advantage of economies of scale, the comparison to other districts is done using 20 districts that are close in total student ridership.

Districts wishing additional information or analysis on this report should contact their regional transportation coordinator. Contact information is available at: http://www.k12.wa.us/Transportation/coordinators.aspx.

Discussion of the Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators are sometimes referred to as "benchmarks". The current view within the industry is that the term benchmark has connotations of being a one- size-fits-all standard that provides a hard quantitative line between efficient and inefficient transportation operations. However, actual student transportation operational efficiency is subject to many conditions totally outside school district control. For instance, the geographic distribution of students may place severe constraints on the district's operational efficiency. As an example, in a rural district there may be one student living a great distance up a canyon or isolated highway. Similarly, a special education student may require expensive individualized transportation service. Two districts with otherwise similar conditions may vary in their relative efficiency rating or KPI numbers due to situations such as these. KPI by themselves do not reveal the existence of these extenuating factors (nor does the STARS Efficiency Rating).

The primary strength of KPI is when they are used over time to provide an ongoing method of evaluating one district's transportation operations. Year to year review of the basic statistics revealed by the KPI should be an essential part of each district's self- evaluation of their transportation department's performance.
Some additional description of these individual KPI and how the data collected through STARS is used to calculate each KPI may help to clarify their relevance and their impact on a district's STARS

efficiency rating.

Basic Program Riders per Basic Program Bus

The number of basic program riders per basic program bus is a critical measure of efficiency. For calculating the riders per bus, the total student ridership count (the combined AM plus PM count collected through the STARS reporting process) is divided by two in order to reflect students per bus. The number of buses used is collected from STARS routing data.

Special Education Riders per Special Education Bus

As in the basic riders KPI, the total special education student ridership count (combined AM plus PM) is divided by two and the bus count is collected from STARS route data.
Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 392-172A-02095 says that school districts should, when possible, limit the one-way transportation times for special education students to no more than 60 minutes. A district may also have one or more students with an IEP that requires individual transportation (without other students). These two factors can restrain efficiency.

Greater inclusion of special needs students onto basic education buses is to be encouraged where possible. Greater inclusion may result in fewer overall special education routes (reducing expenditures), but may result in lower special riders per special bus ratios … since the remaining special needs students may demand a higher level of individualized service.

Overall, this KPI category is one that should be carefully evaluated to ensure that student needs are prioritized.

Average Cost per Rider

This KPI provides the district's average cost of transporting students to school. Again, the total student ridership count (combined AM plus PM) is divided by two in order to reflect an average cost per student. This KPI reflects all students provided with transportation in the special program categories and not just special education students.
Special education students typically will generate a significantly higher cost per student due to fewer students per bus, greater distances between stops and longer routes.

Districts that are able to break out costs between basic program and special program are encouraged to do so for the additional benefit it will provide.

District KPI

The Lake Chelan School District's KPI are as follows:

1. Basic program riders per basic program bus KPI

Basic Rider KPI 2013-14	Basic Rider KPI 2014-15	Basic Rider KPI 2015-16	Change in Basic Rider KPI
53.69	51.93	54.	3.99%

General comment: independent of other factors, an increase in the number of basic riders per basic school bus from year to year reflects an increase in efficiency.

2. Special education riders per special education bus KPI

Special Ed Rider KPI 2013-14	Special Ed Rider KPI 2014-15	Special Ed Rider KPI 2015-16	Change in Special Ed Rider KPI
8.25	3.88	4.76	22.76%

General comment: independent of other factors, an increase in the number of special education riders per school bus from year to year reflects an increase in efficiency.

If a school district does not have special education students requiring transportation, this KPI has limited meaning, except to be noted when comparing the overall cost per rider KPI with another district of similar size that does have special needs students requiring transportation.

3. Average cost per rider KPI

Average Cost per Rider KPI 2013-14	Average Cost per Rider KPI 2014-15	Average Cost per Rider KPI 2015-16	Change in Average Cost per Rider KPI
$ 1,007.01	$ 1,059.38	$ 1,089.95	2.89%

General comment: independent of other factors, a decrease in the average cost per rider from year to year reflects an increase in efficiency.

Cohort District KPI

To further provide comparison with similar districts, a KPI cohort is developed. This cohort is based on sorting all school districts by total students transported and selecting ten districts above and below the district in question, when possible. For districts at either end of the student load spectrum, the closest twenty are selected. The resulting group is referred to as the KPI cohort. Each district is compared within this group for each KPI. The next four pages show the four tables developed to display the KPI Cohort information. Each table has the district highlighted in yellow. The sort order of each table is determined based on having the number representing the greatest efficiency at the top of the table.

Generally, if all districts had exactly identical student ridership requirements, identical geographic constraints and were similar in the other factors impacting the efficiency of transportation of operations, the districts should remain in the same order. A rise in the district placement in a KPI table indicates more efficient operations compared to the districts lower in the table. A drop in placement reflects less efficient operations relative to the other districts.

Table 1 shows the KPI cohort group. This table shows the districts that will be used for comparison in the following tables. It may be worthwhile noting the range in student ridership within the cohort, as larger student ridership provides more opportunities for routing efficiently. These are referred to as 'efficiencies of scale' and are common in all efficiency evaluations.

District	Total Riders 2015-16
NINE MILE FALLS	688.7
CLARKSTON	684.6
EATONVILLE	672.7
SOUTH WHIDBEY	671.6
COLVILLE	630.9
ELMA	621.8
NACHES VALLEY	615.4
TONASKET	597.6
OMAK	593.3
HIGHLAND	580.9
LAKE CHELAN	572.9
CASCADE	539.1
KIONA-BENTON CITY	536.1
HOQUIAM	530.8
CASTLE ROCK	529.1
TENINO	524.4
QUILLAYUTE VALLEY	502.6
OCEAN BEACH	495.3
FINLEY	493.5
COLLEGE PLACE	481.3
PIONEER	453.8

Table 2

This table shows the districts sorted in descending order by the value of their Basic Rider per bus KPI.

Change in rank	District	Total Riders 2015-16	Basic Riders Per Basic Bus 2015-16
+10	HIGHLAND	580.9	82.7
+9	COLLEGE PLACE	481.3	66.8
+8	NINE MILE FALLS	688.7	66.4
+7	HOQUIAM	530.8	62.5
+6	CLARKSTON	684.6	61.9
+5	SOUTH WHIDBEY	671.6	60.1
+4	QUILLAYUTE VALLEY	502.6	59.1
+3	NACHES VALLEY	615.4	56.2
+2	LAKE CHELAN	572.9	54.0
+1	ELMA	621.8	53.6
	KIONA-BENTON CITY	536.1	52.3
-1	PIONEER	453.8	50.6
-2	OMAK	593.3	50.2
-3	CASCADE	539.1	46.6
-4	CASTLE ROCK	529.1	42.4
-5	OCEAN BEACH	495.3	40.3
-6	TONASKET	597.6	39.7
-7	FINLEY	493.5	39.2
-8	EATONVILLE	672.7	39.0
-9	TENINO	524.4	35.6
-10	COLVILLE	630.9	30.0

Table 3

This table shows the districts sorted in descending order by the value of their Special Education riders per Special Education bus KPI.

Change in rank	District	Total Riders 2015-16	SpEd Riders Per SpEd Bus 2015-16
+10	COLLEGE PLACE	481.3	18.8
+9	OMAK	593.3	16.0
+8	ELMA	621.8	13.7
+7	OCEAN BEACH	495.3	13.0
+6	HIGHLAND	580.9	13.0
+5	NINE MILE FALLS	688.7	12.4
+4	KIONA-BENTON CITY	536.1	12.3
+3	CASTLE ROCK	529.1	10.2
+2	CLARKSTON	684.6	8.1
+1	QUILLAYUTE VALLEY	502.6	8.0
	CASCADE	539.1	7.6
-1	FINLEY	493.5	7.6
-2	TENINO	524.4	7.0
-3	HOQUIAM	530.8	6.5
-4	COLVILLE	630.9	6.1
-5	PIONEER	453.8	6.0
-6	SOUTH WHIDBEY	671.6	5.3
-7	LAKE CHELAN	572.9	4.8
-8	EATONVILLE	672.7	4.0
-9	NACHES VALLEY	615.4	4.0
-10	TONASKET	597.6	2.3

For districts without Special Education students requiring specialized transportation, the table is only useful while reviewing potential reasons for differences in the next table, Average Cost per Rider.

Table 4

This table shows the districts sorted in ascending order by the value of their Cost per Rider KPI. This sorts reflects that efficiency in this KPI is reflected by a lower cost per student, rather than higher numbers of riders per bus.

Change in rank	District	Total Riders 2015-16	Cost Per Rider 2015-16
+10	COLLEGE PLACE	481.3	$ 615.09
+9	FINLEY	493.5	$ 830.08
+8	QUILLAYUTE VALLEY	502.6	$ 867.17
+7	HIGHLAND	580.9	$ 948.02
+6	NINE MILE FALLS	688.7	$ 976.78
+5	TONASKET	597.6	$ 1,059.73
+4	CLARKSTON	684.6	$ 1,082.78
+3	LAKE CHELAN	572.9	$ 1,089.95
+2	KIONA-BENTON CITY	536.1	$ 1,100.37
+1	NACHES VALLEY	615.4	$ 1,124.95
	ELMA	621.8	$ 1,125.51
-1	SOUTH WHIDBEY	671.6	$ 1,157.29
-2	PIONEER	453.8	$ 1,194.59
-3	HOQUIAM	530.8	$ 1,247.91
-4	OMAK	593.3	$ 1,253.73
-5	CASTLE ROCK	529.1	$ 1,265.38
-6	OCEAN BEACH	495.3	$ 1,330.09
-7	CASCADE	539.1	$ 1,364.71
-8	TENINO	524.4	$ 1,394.18
-9	COLVILLE	630.9	$ 1,663.38
-10	EATONVILLE	672.7	$ 1,704.35