ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS BUYERS' GUIDE

2026



SIERRA CLUB
NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

New Jersey Clean Cities

NEW JERSEY ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS BUYERS' GUIDE

DISCLAIMER

This document was prepared by the Transportation Committee of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club and the New Jersey Clean Cities Coalition. Our organizations are dedicated to environmental stewardship and sustainable transportation solutions. The Sierra Club New Jersey Chapter & New Jersey Clean Cities Coalition neither endorse nor recommend any specific products, manufacturers, dealers, lessors, or purchase arrangements. The included lists of companies are provided for informational purposes only. The New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club and New Jersey Clean Cities Coalition are solely responsible for the content of this document. While we have attempted to confirm and verify all information, school districts should contact the appropriate companies and sales reps for current updates to their offerings.

Front Cover: Electric school buses serving Jersey City School District

NEW JERSEY ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS

BUYERS' GUIDE

Replacing our state's diesel fuel school buses with zero emission, battery electric buses is a win-win solution for our school districts. Diesel exhaust not only pollutes the air where children wait to board, but also seeps into the bus cabin while students are driven between their homes and schools. Diesel exhaust from school buses and other vehicles is a leading cause of asthma affecting school age children, especially in our urban core.

Electric school buses reduce more than just air pollution. Since these buses do not require oil changes or diesel fuel, leaking diesel and oil tanks will become a thing of the past, reducing pollution of ground and surface water and costly cleanup in the event of a spill or leakage. Bus operators will save on maintenance and repair costs, offsetting the higher initial cost of these buses over their 20 year useful life.

As of October 2026, a total of 78 electric buses are operating in our state with another 100 in various stages of being ordered or delivered.

As you navigate through the pages of this guide, we hope that you will find valuable insights, tools and actionable information for where, when, and how to purchase electric school buses in New Jersey.

We understand that this transition may come with its challenges, but we are here to support you. Our shared goal is to make this transition successful, ensuring that you reap the full benefits of this forward-thinking decision. Your decision to embrace electric school buses is not only a testament to your commitment to the well-being of your students, but also a powerful step toward a greener tomorrow.

SIERRA CLUB
NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

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ABOUT
OUR ORGANIZATIONS

SIERRA CLUB - NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

The New Jersey Chapter has been leading the charge to replace the state's 20,000 school buses with zero emission non-polluting electric battery buses. Our advocacy was a major factor in the passage of the state's Electric School Bus Program, which allocates $45 million over three years to fund electric school buses and which directs the Dept of Environmental Protection to develop a long term plan to convert all of New Jersey's school buses.

Visit our chapter's web page Electric School Bus Campaign | Sierra Club for up to date information on federal and state incentives and grants and a curated library of case studies and fact sheets.

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NEW JERSEY CLEAN CITIES COALITION

NJ Clean Cities is an independent nonprofit dedicated to the deployment of advanced vehicles using clean, domestic fuels. The coalition serves as a resource for school districts, school bus contractors, and their stakeholders exploring electric school buses. Through education, practical resources, and connections to industry partners, NJ Clean Cities helps answer questions, coordinate and support grant applications, and assist districts in planning for electric buses within their fleets.

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1. Getting Started

Electric school buses offer school districts, charter schools, private schools, and bus contractors an opportunity to reduce students' exposure to exhaust emissions and lower fleet operating costs. Getting started means identifying where electric buses can reliably meet transportation needs and bringing together the people, equipment, and funding to support those assignments.



STEP 1: BUILD SUPPORT AND A PROJECT TEAM

Engage transportation and facilities staff, the business administrator, district leadership, and the school board early in the process. Include drivers and maintenance staff whose experience will help shape the project. Sharing information with students, families, and teachers can build understanding and support.



STEP 2: IDENTIFY A PRACTICAL STARTING POINT

Review existing routes and bus replacement plans to identify one or two shorter, predictable assignments for an initial demonstration or deployment. Confirm passenger needs, full daily mileage, and overnight parking arrangements. For contracted transportation, involve the provider and review contract renewal timelines.



STEP 3: CONNECT WITH PROJECT PARTNERS

Bus providers, charging specialists, and system integrators can help evaluate vehicle options, charging needs, staff training, and project costs. Discuss opportunities to demonstrate a bus on a selected route and clarify the training and ongoing support available. Review funding agency guidance alongside these conversations to understand application requirements and project timing.



STEP 4: ENGAGE THE UTILITY EARLY

Contact the local electric utility as the project takes shape. Work with facilities staff and an electrical contractor or infrastructure consultant to assess existing service, overnight charging needs, and any necessary upgrades. Understanding costs and installation timelines helps coordinate charging readiness with bus delivery.

With groundwork laid and a supportive team in place, you'll be poised to seize opportunities as grant cycles open, ensuring a swift and effective response to funding opportunities.

2. ACQUIRING THE BUS

Districts that own and operate their own bus fleets have numerous ways to acquire electric school buses.

Options include purchasing outright, financing a lease over a number of years (typically 5 with an option to buy or sell at the end of the financing period), or turnkey subscription services. Districts can negotiate various leasing or financing arrangements by working with their dealers.

When acquiring an electric school bus, other costs to consider are the purchase, installation, and ongoing maintenance of charging stations and charge management systems, along with the hiring of an electrical contractor to install the charging stations and connect them to the utility.



PURCHASE VS. LEASE

Electric school buses can be procured outright using a combination of district funds, and federal, state, and utility grants and other incentives.

Buses may be purchased directly by the district from your local dealer or through contracts negotiated by buying cooperatives such as the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (HCESC) and the Educational Service Commission of NJ (ESCNJ). Buses may also be purchased through SourceWell, or the Equalis Group National Cooperative Contract a national educational purchasing co-op. Districts may also purchase related goods and services, including electrical contractors and charging stations through these buying cooperatives.

Buying through one of the established contracts is easier and less time consuming, in that the district does not need to go through a separate bid process. However, this limits the district to a single bus manufacturer, and prices for buses purchased through the buying cooperatives may be higher than the district can obtain in direct negotiation with the manufacturer and dealer. For example, HCESC's offerings provide for a 25% discount from list, but offer a bulk purchase discount of only $100/bus when 2 or more electric school buses are purchased.



An alternative is putting out a bid for a generic bus. This may allow for price competition between different manufacturers, but obviously it is more time consuming and resource intensive for the district.

New Jersey recently made leasing an electric school bus more attractive. Under a new law enacted in 2024 (P.L.2024, c.38), New Jersey now allows school districts to lease or enter into a lease purchase agreement for the acquisition of an electric school bus and related charging equipment and service for the "service life of the electric school bus." Previously, lease and lease to purchase agreements were limited to 10 years, a limit that still applies to diesel and gasoline powered buses. Under NJ statute C.39:3B-5.2, electric school buses with a Gross Vehicle Weight of 25,000 pounds or more may remain in service for 21 years provided that the bus is deemed safe for student transportation.

In any case, the district is advised to bundle the buses, charging stations, and charge management system as a package. This will ensure that the 3 components are compatible with each other and reduces the potential for finger pointing between different vendors if problems arise later on.

The district should consult with the dealer to recommend an electrical contractor with the necessary technical expertise and experience in installing charging stations and high-voltage utility hookups. The contractors' responsibilities will include collaborating with the local utility to provide the required high-voltage service to your bus yard and help plan for future expansion in a cost-effective manner.

The manufacturer or dealer should also provide all necessary training for bus operators, maintainers, maintenance supervisors, and local emergency response personnel.

As with any large purchase, a maintenance contract, including a spare parts inventory, is advised for both the buses and charging equipment.



SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

An alternative to outright purchase or lease is a subscription service. There are firms that provide turnkey subscription deals. For example, Montgomery County in Maryland recently announced a 10-year deal to acquire 326 electric school buses using this model.

In these arrangements, a private company will design the system, purchase the vehicles, hire an electrical subcontractor, interface with the utility company, purchase and install the charging stations, and complete all the necessary hookups, training, and software configuration. Regularly scheduled and routine maintenance are also included in these contracts.

At least one company will even contract back with the school district for routine and scheduled maintenance work, ensuring that existing maintenance staff continue to be employed by the district. School bus drivers remain district employees, and the district continues to be solely responsible for scheduling transportation services.

Prices for the subscription service should be set so that the annual cost is less than the district's current annual total cost of ownership per bus.



Liability insurance may remain the responsibility of the district; however, this should be reviewed and confirmed with the provider.

Each of the companies providing these services has their own billing procedure; these are described starting on page 13.

For contracts that involve replacing a large number of buses, deployment will typically be phased in over the 10-year term of the contract.

Districts need to do a thorough evaluation of the life-cycle costs and benefits of entering into a turnkey subscription deal compared with outright purchase or traditional lease, paying particular attention to what happens at the end of the contract term. If the district does not renew the contract, the ownership of all vehicles, charging stations, and energy management systems remains with the lessor. Districts also have the option of purchasing the equipment at a price negotiated with the lessor. The district should ensure that the contract clearly defines the options for continuing operations at the end of the contract term.



BUS MANUFACTURERS AND DEALERS

THOMAS BUILT BUSES

Thomas Built Buses offers buses for purchase through the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission or SourceWell co-ops. Thomas Built offers numerous leasing and financing options, including a subscription service through Highland Electric Fleets. All Thomas Built buses require DC fast charging stations.

TRAINING

H.A. DeHart & Son provides training at no charge for drivers, department supervisors, and mechanics at the time of delivery, typically at the district's location or at DeHart's facility if preferred. Training generally takes one day, with the duration and follow-up visits tailored to staff needs and comfort levels. A staff trainer provides additional training as needed at no charge.

Training includes a review of charging operation, with charging management software instruction coordinated with the equipment supplier. Each bus comes with a driver's operator manual and first responder guide, while technical manuals are available online for mechanics and support staff.

Dealer Contact:
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Electric Vehicle and Business Development Specialist


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908-509-4287


H.A. DeHart & Sons, Inc.
311 Crown Point Road
Thorofare, NJ 08086


856-845-2800


thomasbusnj.com

RIDE BUSES

Model 1 offers Ride type B, C and D school buses and Collins Type A electric school buses. They also offer Ford E-Transit 9 passenger and wheel chair accessible electric school vans. Model 1 is available through the ESCNJ contract. Rental and lease program options are available on all new and used school bus inventory.

Dealer Contact:
Spencer Sydorko
Senior Regional Sales Manager, East Region


spencer.sydorko@ride.co


609-802-3546


RIDE East Coast Service Center
33 Gregg St.
Lodi, NJ 07644


201-507-8500x902


ride.co

BUS MANUFACTURERS AND DEALERS

BLUE BIRD

Blue Bird/Micro Bird Electric buses are offered in School, Commercial and Shuttle configurations. Buses can be charged using both Level 2 (AC) or Level 3 (DCFC) and can get up to 150 miles per charge. Hoover Truck and Bus Centers offer assistance with in state and federal funding, grant guidance, along with submittals. Blue Bird buses may be purchased through Educational Services Commission of N.J(Bid # ESCNJ 24/25-20). or SourceWell Co-op Purchasing(#063020-BBB).

TRAINING

Blue Bird provides on-site training when suitable space is available, with separate sessions for maintenance staff, operators, and supervisory personnel typically lasting two to four hours each. Access to an electric bus and charger supports hands-on instruction, while an indoor service bay, lift, and a second bus connected to a charger can further enhance training. Ride-and-drive opportunities reinforce the instruction, particularly for operators and maintenance staff.

Training includes energy management software, with reference materials provided and participation by the charging infrastructure provider encouraged. Customers are registered for online manuals, electrical schematics, and follow-up training resources. Online materials are updated regularly, and hard copies are available upon request.

Standard school bus maintenance can be performed in-house. High-voltage and electric drive components require specialized training and tools, with repairs handled through the dealer under warranty. Higher-level training is available as buses age.

Dealer Contact:
Richard Weber Jr.
EV Truck & Bus Sales
Hoover Truck & Bus Centers

r.weberjr@hoovertruckcenters.com
908-202-2317
blue-bird.com

149 Gold Mine Road
Flanders, NJ 07836
973-347-4210

1784 US Route 9
Toms River, NJ 08755
732-341-2128

4313 Rote 130 South,
Edgewater Park, N.J. 08010
856-773-4600

101 Stanhope - Spart Road
Stanhope, N.J. 07874
973-527-7302

IC BUSES

IC buses may be purchased outright through the Educational Services Commission of NJ, or through a lease-to-buy arrangement from the dealers. IC provides federal and state grant preparation assistance through their dealers.

TRAINING

IC provides customer guidance on the My International app, which supports electric buses and combines vehicle monitoring, maintenance management, and dealer communications. Features include remote diagnostics, vehicle health reporting, GPS tracking and geofencing, over-the-air parameter updates, warranty and service contract information, service scheduling, and battery and charging analytics.

Each bus comes with an owner's/user's manual covering operation, controls, and maintenance schedules. Parts lists and electrical schematics are available through the IC Service/Parts portal. Repairs beyond routine maintenance are handled by the dealer, whose technicians receive advanced high-voltage training and use specialized equipment.

North Jersey (north & east of Mercer and Monmouth Counties)

Dealer Contact:
Eric Marello
Sales Manager

emarello@Allegiancetrucks.com

201-481-0105

Allegiance Trucks Newark
46-100 Paris Street
Newark, NJ 07105

732-495-0440

Allegiancetrucks.com

South Jersey (includes Mercer and Monmouth)
Dealer Contact:
Ryan Lackay
Branch Manager

rlackay@wolfington.com

609-234-4220

Wolfington Body Company, Inc.
1315 Route 38, PO Box 160
Mount Holly, NJ 08060

609-267-0763

wolfington.com

ENDERA BUSES

Endera is a manufacturer of Type A 24 passenger school buses based in Ohio. Their electric school bus model A6 is designed with 92 inches of interior width and an all galvanized steel cage construction. The bus comes with a 150 kWh battery and a claimed 150 mile range. Charge time with a DC Fast Charger is estimated to be 50 minutes.

Dealer Contact:
Eric Marello
School & Commercial Bus Sales Manager

emarello@Allegiancetrucks.com

201-481-0105

Allegiance Trucks Newark
46-100 Paris Street
Newark, NJ 07105

732-495-0440

Allegiancetrucks.com

Van-Con

Van-Con, Inc is a 50 year old NJ based company that builds Type A & B school buses. Its electric school buses are built on the Ford E-450 chassis using the Motiv Power Systems' electric drivetrain system. Van-Con, Inc. E-bus purchases can be made through the ESCNJ Co-op. All buses can be configured with a wheelchair lift.

Dealer Contact:
Gordon Horst

732-371-6733

info@vanconbus.com

Van-Con, Inc.
123 William St
Middlesex, NJ 08846

732-356-8484

www.vanconbus.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

HIGHLAND ELECTRIC FLEETS

Highland Electric Fleets is North America's leading provider of Electrification-as-a-Service. Founded in 2019, Highland partners with school districts, municipalities, and fleet operators to make the transition to electric fleets simple and affordable. Highland proudly serves as the Official Electric School Bus Provider of the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games and Team USA. From pioneering vehicle-to-grid technology to managing some of the nation's largest electric school bus fleets, Highland delivers reliable, cost-effective solutions that support local communities and drive the future of transportation. Highland has helped its partners secure $525 million+ in federal, state, and local incentives for school bus electrification.

Dealer Contact:
Christopher Stockwell
Regional Business Manager, Mid Atlantic

christopher.stockwell@highlandfleets.com

717-808-6295

Highland Electric Fleet
200 Cummins Center, Suite 273-D
Beverly, MA 01915

978-288-1105

highlandfleets.com

INCHARGE ENERGY

InCharge Energy provides a similar service specifically in association with Blue Bird Corporation. Blue Bird will survey your property and design, purchase, install and configure your electric bus fleet. Depending on how the contract is structured, the payments are based on either on vehicle miles traveled or kWh usage within the billing period. The typical time frame is 10 years. At the end, the district or contract bus company can buy back the equipment for continued use or extend the contract.

Dealer Contact:
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Account Executive

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973-303-5752

InCharge Energy
3760 Motor Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90034

833-772-4638

inchargeus.com

SYSTEM INTEGRATORS

Systems Integrators are vendor neutral consultants that act as a grant writer and general contractor for districts interested in electrifying their fleets.

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION TECHNOLOGIES LLC

CCMT has been an independent fleet advisor, system integrator, and project manager since 2013 and provides support to public and private school bus fleet owners and operators to go electric. CCMT manages the whole process, from design to engineering, procurement, installation, and commissioning of Level 2 and DCFC charging systems. CCMT also evaluates the environmental, energy, and total cost of ownership (TCO) of going electric as well as grant-writing assistance. In 2023, CCMT secured $18.9 million in USEPA Clean School Bus grants for 42 electric school buses for the Bloomfield, Elizabeth, Newark, and Union City public school districts and for Klarr Transportation, a private school bus contractor in Lakewood, NJ.

Training
CCMT arranges for 1 day training of bus operators and maintainers on the fundamentals of EV charging, driving and maintenance. OEM manuals are provided. Management is trained on the charge management software, and the EVSE vendor will work with management to customize the software to meet the district or school bus contractor's needs.

Dealer Contact:
James Sherman
CEO

jsherman@ccmtdg.com

973-303-2106

Climate Change Mitigation Technologies
1018 Broad Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003

www.ccmtdg.com

REI-V2G

REIV2G is a systems integrator, bringing together renewable energy, EV chargers, E buses and grid expertise to plan, assemble and manage the necessary team of teams (financial, grant/rebate, vehicle, charging, utility, grid, communications, reporting, measurement and Verification) to make fleet electrification produce economic, energy and environmental benefits for the fleet and School District.

Dealer Contact:
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Managing Partner

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484-716-6183

REI-V2G
Philadelphia, PA 19026

REIV2G.com

3. VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

ROUTE PLANNING

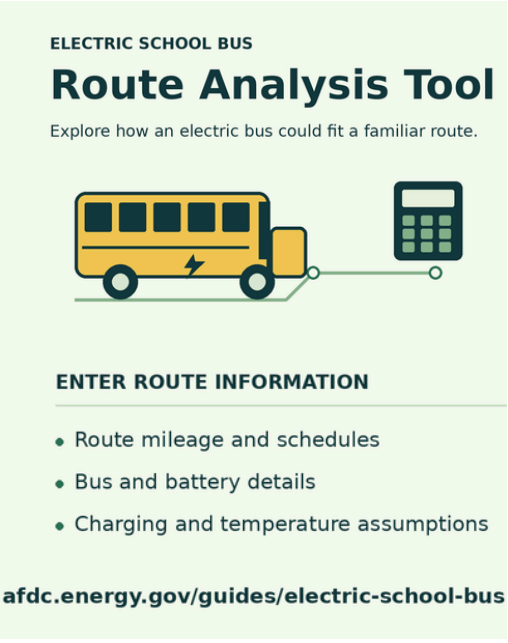
A practical starting point for electric school buses is identifying where the technology can work well and staff can gain confidence. Reviewing the full bus inventory alongside route and trip information helps transportation coordinators and project teams find those opportunities.

Work with the districts transportation supervisor to inventory each bus in your fleet. Document its age, manufacturer, seating capacity, assigned routes, passenger counts, and approximate daily mileage—including travel to and from the bus yard and any additional runs. Record departure and return times, parking locations, and the time available for charging between assignments and overnight. Include field trips, activity runs, and summer service to understand the full range of transportation needs.

With this information in hand, identify one or two of the shortest, most predictable routes as candidates for an initial bus deployment. Routes with manageable mileage, adequate seating capacity, and reliable charging access give drivers and transportation staff an opportunity to become familiar with the bus under everyday operating conditions before considering a larger fleet transition.

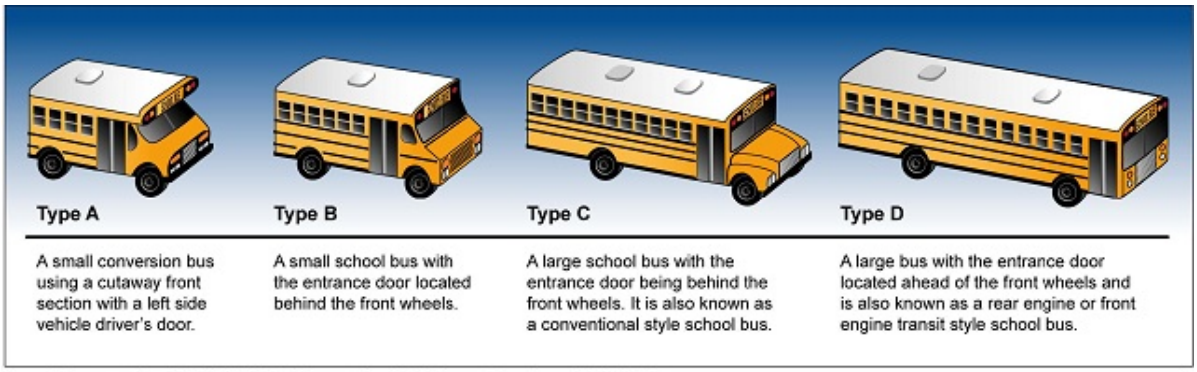
Track energy use, remaining battery charge, charging time, and feedback from drivers and staff. These observations help confirm that the bus completes its assignments with a comfortable range reserve and fits the district's schedule. Operating the bus in different weather and temperature conditions builds staff confidence and provides a clearer understanding of how heating, cooling, and seasonal conditions affect energy use and range.

Starting with a manageable assignment creates an opportunity for early success. This approach allows districts to gain practical experience, and determine which routes they can reliably serve.



BUS SIZE AND SEATING CAPACITY

School buses come in a variety of shapes and sizes, which are classified by letter designation: A, B, C, or D.



Source: GAO presentation of 2015 National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures. | GAO-17-209

Class A and B buses are smaller buses with a seating capacity of 10 – 24 passengers. Class C and D buses typically seat 54 passengers, and differ in design in that Class C buses are built with their engine in front of the bus, while Class D buses have a flat front similar to a NJ Transit bus.

MATCHING MILEAGE REQUIREMENTS AND BATTERY CAPACITY

Battery capacity is the single biggest variable affecting the initial cost of an electric school bus. Therefore, it is important to match the battery capacity specified when purchasing or leasing a vehicle to the expected route mileage within a district.

Nationally, the average driving distance per shift for a typical school bus is about 32 miles, for a total of about 73 miles (and 5 hours of driving) per day. ESBs currently on the market are all more than capable of serving most school districts' short to medium-length routes.

Districts need to inventory their routes and the maximum mileage for each route. Battery capacity can then be matched to the required mileage to minimize costs. Focusing on shorter routes initially may allow a district to deploy more cost-effective buses with smaller battery packs.



The example below is based on a Class C Thomas Built bus, which uses a 226 kWh rated battery pack.

> The largest batteries now available have a maximum battery capacity in the range of 246 kWh. However, manufacturers also specify a "usable capacity," which is the recommended limit above which the battery should not be drained. Typically, the recommended maximum usable energy for its 246 kWh battery is 199 kWh.
>
> The other variable in calculating theoretical range is the vehicle efficiency, expressed in kWh/mile. This will vary based on the manufacturer, bus size, and other factors. Theoretical mileage is then calculated by dividing usable capacity by efficiency.
>
> For a Thomas Built bus with a 199 kWh usable capacity and a 1.44 kWh/mile efficiency, the theoretical range is 199 kWh/1.44 kWh/mile, or 138 miles per charge.

Smaller battery packs can be specified if the daily morning and afternoon round-trip mileage is less than 90 miles. Similarly, Class A and B buses should have a higher kWh/mile efficiency, which will also allow a smaller battery pack.

However, as with gas-powered vehicles, actual miles per charge will vary from calculated miles per charge based on weather conditions, how often the vehicle starts and stops, whether the road is hilly or flat, the heating or air conditioning load, and other similar factors. Driver training is also an important tool to improve energy efficiency.

Monitoring real time kWh/mile usage is critical to maximizing the vehicle's range. New Jersey's first electric school buses hit the road in the fall of 2022, so there is limited in-state experience with which to compare actual versus theoretical mileage. Focusing on your shortest, most predicable routes first, and investing in driver training may offer the best path to successfully integrating ESBs into your service.

HEATING & COOLING SYSTEMS

Options include heat pumps, electric resistance heaters, and diesel powered auxiliary heaters. The choice of these systems may affect mileage range and energy use. Your dealer can discuss what options the manufacturer offers and which would be best for your environment.

With electric HVAC systems, expect that bus mileage range may decrease by 15% during summer months due to air conditioning requirements and by up to 30% or more on the very coldest days due to heating requirements. Optional fuel-fired auxiliary heaters can improve range, but electric heat pumps are recommended as the most efficient heating option.

TELEMATICS

One innovation that is now mostly standard on electric school buses is what is referred to as "telematics." These are diagnostic systems that display and report operating data in real time for use in analyzing operating problems and tracking remaining battery power. Some buses are outfitted with internet access via SIM cards that can provide the owner, operator, and manufacturer with real-time vital statistics such as average kWh/mile, average mileage per full charge, remaining battery charge, mean distance between failure (MDBF), and equipment status.

Charging stations may also be configured to download this data while the vehicle is being charged. This option will require either a cable connection or secure Wi-Fi connection to the facility's local area network.

The manufacturer will also provide the software needed to receive, view, and report on this information.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection provides, installs, and covers the monthly subscription for telematic devices on all vehicles funded with state grants.

4. CHARGING STATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

CHARGING STATIONS

Charging stations range from slower systems using alternating current (AC) to faster systems using direct current (DC). Selecting the appropriate equipment depends on your buses' daily mileage, battery capacity, and available charging time, as well as the electrical capacity at your facility.

Districts can choose individual charging stations or systems that share power among several charging dispensers. When evaluating these options, consider how many buses will need to charge at the same time and how your charging needs may grow as additional buses are added.

Level 1 Chargers
Level 1 chargers use a standard 120-volt household outlet. Because charging a school bus at this power level could take several days, Level 1 is generally not appropriate for school bus operations. Compatibility must also be confirmed with the bus manufacturer.

Level 2 Chargers
Level 2 chargers use 208- or 240-volt electrical service and can be a practical option for buses with shorter routes and sufficient time to recharge overnight. However, not all electric school buses accept Level 2 charging. Districts should confirm compatibility and charging speed with the manufacturer before purchasing equipment.



Depending on the facility's existing electrical service and the number of chargers installed, additional capacity may be needed. Level 2 chargers can cost in the neighborhood of $2,000 -$5,000 for equipment and $1,000–$10,000 or more for installation.

Level 3 or DCFC Chargers

DC fast chargers provide higher charging power and can replenish a bus battery more quickly. This may be useful for buses that need to recharge between morning and afternoon routes or before additional trips.

These chargers are available at different power levels. The appropriate size depends on how quickly the bus needs to recharge and how much power its battery can accept. Higher-powered chargers may require more substantial electrical upgrades and can increase demand charges on the district's utility bill.

Charging costs include more than the equipment itself. Installation, electrical service upgrades, software subscriptions, and maintenance should all be considered when developing a budget. Your charging provider, electrical contractor, and utility can help estimate these costs for your particular site. Due to their power requirements, these chargers can be more expensive, typically costing between $10,000 and $40,000 for the equipment alone, and installation costs can range from $10,000 to over $50,000, depending on the complexity of the site.







RECHARGE TIME

Chargers are rated in kilowatts (kW), while the energy stored in a bus battery is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). A simple estimate of recharge time can be calculated by dividing the energy that needs to be replaced by the charger's power:

Battery Capacity kWh / Charger Power kw = Time

Here's a simple example:

A 200 kWh battery capacity being charged by a 60 kw DCFC will take 3 hours and 20 minutes to charge: **200 kWh/60kw = 3.33 hours**

The below calculator charts additional school bus charging time examples.

EV Charging Time Calculator

Electric school buses • Estimated full-charge time

Battery Capacity	CHARGER POWER (kW) 19.2 kW	60 kW	120 kW	150 kW	250 kW
88 kWh	4h 35m	1h 28m	44m	35m	21m
126 kWh	6h 34m	2h 06m	1h 03m	50m	30m
155 kWh	8h 04m	2h 35m	1h 18m	1h 02m	37m
200 kWh	10h 25m	3h 20m	1h 40m	1h 20m	48m
226 kWh	11h 46m	3h 46m	1h 53m	1h 30m	54m
246 kWh	12h 49m	4h 06m	2h 03m	1h 38m	59m

CHARGING TIME = BATTERY CAPACITY (kWh) ÷ CHARGER POWER (kW)

Ideal estimates for a full charge (0–100%), rounded to the nearest minute.

Actual times may be longer due to charging losses, battery temperature, and charging slowdown.

The vehicle must support the selected charger type and power. Shared charging may reduce available power.

CHARGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Charge management systems are a critical component of the electric school bus procurement process for efficient operations. This software manages the charging process to ensure that buses are charged at the appropriate times to minimize demand and peak power surcharges, thus holding down electricity costs. Charging systems can also manage vehicle-to-grid (V2G) or vehicle-to-building (V2B) systems, in which excess power stored in the bus battery can be resold to the utility company or used to power air conditioning or lighting systems in the school buildings.

Charge management systems are typically third-party products in addition to the chargers themselves that the manufacturer or lessor may bundle with the charging stations to ensure compatibility and functionality. Anticipate monthly or yearly subscriptions as part of the service.



COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

A robust internet connection is imperative for efficient electric school bus charging stations. It enables real-time monitoring of charging stations and facilitates remote diagnostics and troubleshooting. This connectivity allows operators to track energy usage patterns, optimize charging schedules, and remotely initiate software updates for enhanced performance and security. Moreover, it enables seamless integration with charge management systems, grid operators, and third-party platforms, ensuring interoperability and smooth data exchange. Reliable and high-speed internet connectivity forms the backbone of charging stations, enabling them to deliver a seamless and user-friendly experience for school districts.

Considerations for districts include equipment connectivity requirements, service availability at the charging site, and how chargers will operate during an internet outage.

V2G AND V2B EXPLAINED

V2G and V2B are two ways in which stored electricity in the bus's battery can be used to obtain additional revenue or to reduce the cost of utility electricity in school buildings.

In these scenarios, the electric charging station is configured to allow bi-directional flow of power to and from the vehicle and either the utility grid (V2G) or the school campus buildings (V2B).

Buses that are fully charged and sitting idle in the bus yard can be programmed to feed their stored energy back to the utility grid, in which case the school district earns revenue from the utility or sees a reduced payment to the subscription company. In a V2B arrangement, the energy is fed back to the district's building(s) to help run air conditioning, lighting, and other electrical loads, thereby reducing the amount of electricity purchased from the local utility company. The buses' batteries are then recharged at off-peak rates prior to being placed into route service.

If the school district is interested in using the school bus batteries as storage devices to sell power back to the utility company or to provide power to the school buildings during peak load periods, additional equipment, specialized charging stations, and software are required to facilitate and monitor bi-directional power flow.

If the district intends to employ V2G or V2B, this should be specified when the buses are initially purchased, as both the charging stations and the charging port on the bus need to be designed for bidirectional power flow. There will likely be additional requirements by the utility that should also be confirmed.





ENERGY RESILIENCE AND BACKUP POWER

As school bus fleets become electric, severe weather and extended power outages become important considerations in transportation planning. With storms increasing in frequency and intensity, backup power can help districts maintain essential school operations and support transportation during emergency response and disaster recovery.

Solar generation paired with stationary battery storage can support essential building loads and bus charging during an outage. Mobile battery systems and portable charging equipment can provide temporary charging where regular facilities are unavailable. Buses equipped for bidirectional charging can also contribute stored electricity, provided enough energy remains for transportation. To supply building power during an outage, the system needs equipment that safely disconnects the facility from the utility grid and controls the flow of backup electricity.

These investments can also provide value outside emergencies. During the summer, when buses are not needed for transportation, the same bidirectional charging equipment may allow districts to participate in available demand response programs, using stored electricity to reduce demand on the grid and earn program payments.

Working with utilities, electrical engineers, and emergency management teams helps districts identify essential services, match backup power capacity to those needs, and determine how long buildings and buses can be supported during an outage. NJDEP's Sustainable Transportation Eco-Hub Pilot Program brings these transportation and energy resources together at participating schools.

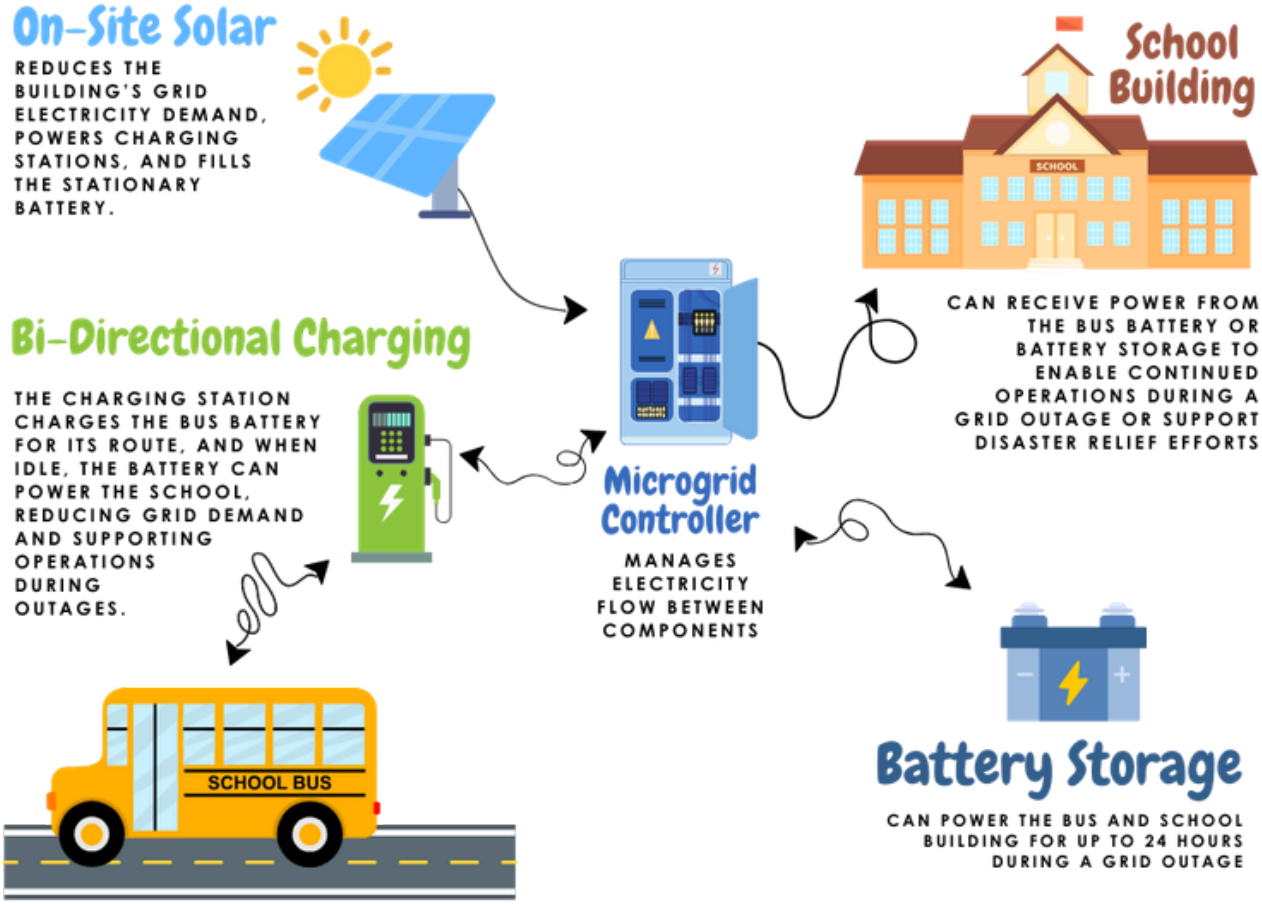


NJDEP SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION ECO-HUB PILOT PROGRAM

NJDEP's Sustainable Transportation Eco-Hub Pilot Program brings these technologies together at participating schools. Each eco-hub combines electric school buses and bidirectional charging with on-site solar panels, stationary battery storage, and a microgrid controller. When buses are parked and available, their batteries can provide an additional source of electricity for school buildings. Together, these resources can help lower electricity costs, reduce demand on the utility grid, and support continued power during outages.

The pilot began in late 2025 and will work with up to four schools. Feasibility assessments are planned for 2025–2026, followed by design in 2026–2027, implementation in 2027–2028, and data collection and analysis in 2029. NJDEP will use the findings to evaluate costs, emissions reductions, and system performance and inform future bidirectional charging efforts. The program is currently fully subscribed, but interested schools can join the waitlist by contacting drivegreen@dep.nj.gov.

For more information, visit NJDEP's Sustainable Transportation Eco-Hub webpage.



CHARGING & TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

PROTON GROUP

Proton Group delivers reliable and scalable EV charging solutions to support the efficient operation of electric school bus fleets, empowering schools to transition to clean, sustainable transportation.

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5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITY PLANNING

Detailed site planning is critical to a smooth transition to electric school buses. Close coordination between your school bus provider, your local utility, your electrical contractor, and any EV consultants is essential to avoid delays and excess costs. The location of charging stations is perhaps the most important decision, as it will affect the cost of installing the charging stations and ensure that buses can be moved around the parking area while buses are being charged.

SITE PLANNING

Siting your charging stations needs to be carefully thought out. To reduce utility and trenching costs, you want the charging stations to be located as close as possible to your existing electrical service infrastructure.

However, you also need to look at how the proposed location of the charging stations impacts bus movement in your storage yard. Buses may have to be moved around to allow multiple buses to be charged at the charging station each night.

A qualified EV consultant can help with planning and design.

UTILITY CONNECTIONS

Connecting to the local utility company is a critical component of the process of putting electric school buses into service. A fleet of electric school buses will require higher voltage service than is typically delivered to a bus facility, and due to supply chain issues, there may be a long wait time for the necessary service to be delivered.

Your electrical contractor, in conjunction with your dealer, can help define how much power capacity the utility needs to deliver.

In planning your electrical requirements, contact your local electrical utility service provider as soon as you start thinking about acquiring electric school buses to let them know that you are planning to electrify your bus fleet. Ask them to do a site survey with you and your consultant, if you have one.

Information that the utility will need includes:

- The number and type of vehicles to be charged
- The anticipated deployment timeline
- The number and type of charging stations you will purchase (e.g., Level 2 or DCFC)
- Where on your property you will locate the charging stations

The utility needs to determine if they have existing capacity to bring the additional power load to your facility. If capacity in the form of higher voltage service needs to be installed, the utility may charge you for the cost of this “make ready” service. Under proposed state guidelines, the utility company may be able to include these costs in its rate base and would therefore not charge the district. But at this time, the district is still liable for all “make ready” costs incurred by the utility.

As most locations will gradually phase in their transition to electric school buses, discuss with your utility and contractors the most cost-effective schedule to expand utility service to your facility consistent with your transition schedule for fleet conversion.

UTILITY ENGAGEMENT

Depicted in this map are New Jersey's four private electric utility service areas, along with several municipal power authorities that serve local communities across the state. Working closely with your electric utility is essential — reach out early in the process to discuss your plans, understand available programs, and ensure that electrical capacity and infrastructure needs are addressed from the start.



ROCKLAND ELECTRIC CO.

877-434-4100

oru.com

ev@oru.com

PSE&G

800-249-1837

PSEG

PSEG-Electric.Vehicles@pseg.com

JCP&L

888-352-0908

JCP&L

NJEVDriven@firstenergycorp.com

ATLANTIC CITY ELECTRIC

800-642-3780

atlanticcityelectric.com

evsmart-ace@icf.com

LOCAL PERMITTING

Once your infrastructure plans are complete, they must be submitted to your municipal zoning and building inspection officials for approval.

Your electrical contractor will submit the permit applications to your local zoning officials. A site survey is normally required as part of the application process.

Following zoning approval, building, electrical, and construction permits must be obtained from your municipality. These applications must include the proper sub code sheets and construction drawings.

Failure to schedule site inspections in advance may delay your ability to begin service with the electric school buses even if all the infrastructure has been installed and the buses delivered.



6. Grants, Subsidies, and Tax Credits

STATE OF NEW JERSEY GRANT PROGRAMS

The State of New Jersey has three grant programs available to school districts, charter schools and other private schools to purchase electric school buses and charging infrastructure. Private school bus contractors are also eligible to apply for funding on behalf of the school districts they support.

New Jersey Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

The state's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI – commonly pronounced Reggie) provides variable funding based on programmatic revenue. Money raised by the RGGI program is allocated to the NJ Dept of Environmental Protection, Board of Public Utilities, and Economic Development Authority to fund various grant programs aimed at reducing greenhouse gases generated by the transportation sector. These programs are described below.

NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection – Electric School Bus Program

Under legislation signed by Governor Murphy in 2023, NJDEP administers the Electric School Bus Program. The program allocates $15 million annually for 3 years starting in 2024 to fund grants to school districts and school bus contractors to purchase electric school buses and associated charging infrastructure. Districts typically are reimbursed for the cost of the buses and chargers after they have paid the vendor, but advance payment may be requested.

The funding cycle for year 3 of the program closed on August 28, 2026. Districts and school bus contractors who are interested in applying for future grants should sign up to receive notifications of new funding cycles at NJDEP| Stop the Soot | Electric School Bus Program. NJDEP will accept applications outside of the grant cycle and fund additional projects as program dollars become available. The Sierra Club is actively working with legislators to renew the program for another 3 years.

Under this program, NJDEP will provide $304,000 per bus for each bus and Level 2 charging station, or up to $320,000 per bus with a DCFC charging station. Buses that are designated for use in overburdened school districts are eligible for an additional $30,000 per bus plus charging station. NJDEP is limiting funding to Class C & D school buses with a minimum of 44 or 70 student seating capacity, with allowances made for wheel chair accommodations. Other minimum requirements for the buses are described in the grant solicitation documentation Round 3 Electric School Bus Grant Solicitation.

Districts can apply for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 16 buses per grant cycle. Buses must be new, zero emission electric battery powered; neither hydrogen fuel cell nor repowered buses are eligible for funding.

Districts may opt to purchase or lease buses under the grant program. While the grant program does not require a district to scrap diesel buses, those that do will be awarded additional points during the application scoring process.

School bus contractors are eligible to apply but their application must be paired with a specified school or district.

Districts and contractors who receive grants under this program are able to piggy back their grant with incentives offered by PSEG, Atlantic City Electric, and JCP&L for charging infrastructure.

Applicants awarded grants under the ESB Program are automatically enrolled in NJDEP's Fleet Advisor Program, which provides free, upfront, personalized technical support including an on-site electric infrastructure assessment, vehicle options, cost projections, and other recommendations to ensure projects are successful.

NJ Economic Development Authority

NJ Zero Emission Incentive Program (NJZIP)

The New Jersey Zero-Emission Incentive Program (NJ ZIP), administered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), is a voucher pilot program designed to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (Classes 2b to 8) by offsetting their up-front purchase costs.

Funded through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the program launched its first round on April 6, 2021, with its latest iteration, Phase 3, opened for vendor applications on July 31, 2025, followed by purchaser applications on November 25, 2025, backed by an initial $37.5 million allotment.

Vouchers range from $15,000 to $175,000 per vehicle depending on weight class, with additional funding bonuses available for small businesses, school buses, and diverse-owned companies. As of 2026, more than $53 million in voucher funding has been approved; however, the program's purchaser portal is temporarily closed as it is completely oversubscribed and running on a waitlist, while vendor applications formally closed on May 8, 2026. To stay up to date on funding cycles, sign up at NJ ZIP - NJEDA.

Take Charge

The NJEDA Take Charge Program supports charging infrastructure for private fleets, including eligible private school bus contractors, but does not provide funding directly to school districts. Grants range from $100,000 per project to $5 million per applicant, covering 50% of eligible project costs, with additional funding available through qualifying bonuses.

To qualify, projects must combine EV charging infrastructure with on-site renewable energy generation, such as solar, and/or battery energy storage to help power the chargers. Standalone charging installations are not eligible. Participating fleets must have at least two existing commercial-use vehicles that are registered or domiciled in New Jersey, or will use the proposed charging infrastructure in the state. Charging-as-a-Service (CaaS) providers and property owners installing chargers for tenant fleets may also apply when partnering with an eligible commercial fleet.

The reimbursement rate can increase by five percentage points for projects in designated Overburdened or Adjacent Communities, and another five percentage points for eligible small businesses, bringing total reimbursement to 60% when both apply. Small businesses are defined as having 25 or fewer full-time employees or less than $5 million in annual gross revenue.

Applications can be submitted through the NJEDA Take Charge Program webpage and are reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants should confirm eligible purchasing and construction timelines with NJEDA before incurring project costs.

NJ Board of Public Utilities Clean Energy Program

The BPU's Clean Fleet Electric Vehicle Incentive Program supports local and state governments as they transition their fleets to EVs. Eligible entities include local schools, municipal commissions, state agencies or boards, state commissions, state universities, community colleges, county government and county authorities in addition to municipalities, municipal utility authorities, state agencies, and nonprofits.

The FY27 program window launched on July 1, 2026, but due to high demand, all available funding was quickly allocated, and the state paused new applications on July 24, 2026.

The Clean Fleet EV Charging Program dashboard provides transparent and interactive access to relevant program data on reserved/approved incentives over time. The dashboard is updated monthly with the most recent data.

To view the dashboard, program information and application forms, visit the BPU's Charge-Up Fleet EV Program webpage at Clean Fleet EV Program | Charge Up New Jersey (njcleanenergy.com)

FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

Clean School Bus Program

Under the budget adopted by Congress in the spring of 2025, unobligated federal funding under the Inflation Reduction Act has been rescinded. Clean School Bus grants and rebates that have been approved previous to the passage of the budget bill are still being processed. The NJ Sierra Club and New Jersey Clean Cities will publicize new grants cycles if and when they are announced on our websites and newsletters.

Information on the EPA's Clean School Bus Program can be found on their website: Clean School Bus Program | US EPA

Diesel Emissions Reduction Act

The EPA's 2026 Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) National Program offers approximately $180 million in competitive grants to replace or upgrade older diesel vehicles and equipment, including school buses. Eligible applicants include school districts and other governmental agencies with jurisdiction over transportation or air quality, as well as qualifying nonprofit organizations. Private school bus contractors cannot apply directly but may participate through an eligible applicant.

For eligible battery electric school bus replacements, EPA funding may cover up to 45% of the bus purchase price, with the remaining 55% provided through eligible nonfederal matching funds. Charging equipment, installation and related electrical upgrades are not eligible for funding and cannot count toward the required match. Existing diesel buses must meet EPA's engine model year, ownership, mileage and remaining useful life requirements. Replaced buses generally must be scrapped or permanently disabled within 90 days after the new buses become operational, unless EPA approves an alternative scrappage plan.

Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by January 22, 2027, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Applicants must have an active SAM.gov registration and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) before applying. Complete eligibility requirements, application materials and informational webinar details are available on the EPA DERA National Program webpage.

7. EV MYTH BUS'TING

MYTH: ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES PRESENT A FIRE HAZARD



A 2016 USDOT study found that on average, there is one diesel or gasoline school bus fire every day, mostly starting in the engine area, running gear, or wheel area. The presence of a tankful of flammable diesel fuel or gasoline makes these fires extremely dangerous. In contrast, we only know of 11 school bus fires since 2023* in both the US and Canada involving an electric battery bus in 8 separate incidents (most of which were parked at the time the fire started). There were only 27 fires involving an electric transit bus globally since 2010 out of 250,000 vehicles [Source: Why do ebuses catch fire? (evfiresafe.com)].

- No one was injured in any of the school bus fires, and none of the fires were caused by the buses' electric batteries. A NJ News12 report from May 14, 2024 implied that a school bus which had caught fire in Sayreville was an electric school bus, but in fact the vehicle was actually a diesel bus. There have been no incidences of an electric school bus fire in New Jersey.

The lithium ion batteries used in electric school buses are specially designed to minimize the impact of a fire should one start. The batteries are located under the bus chassis, and are contained in a 10 mm thick aluminum casing. In addition, the battery management system optimizes temperatures within the battery regardless of external temperatures. Also, the battery packs are built with thousands of smaller cells so that any thermal event in one cell is isolated and cannot spread to neighboring cells.

In the event of a fire, the fire is contained by cooling the battery with water until there is no excessive heat (which may take several hours.) At that point, the battery can be removed from the bus and moved to a safe location. (Source: Are Electric School Buses Safe? - Greater New Haven Clean Cities Coalition (nhcleancities.org) There are also fire extinguishers specifically designed to put out lithium ion battery fires.

MYTH: ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES USE MORE ENERGY THAN DIESEL ONES



Researchers found a striking insight while monitoring energy consumption at bus barn chargers for the MOVER project in Hood River, OR. The chargers share an electrical meter with several 120-volt circuits installed to power block heaters, which keep diesel bus engines warm in cold weather. Over the course of three winter months, the data showed that each of the 11 diesel buses consumed 313 kWh per month simply to maintain engine warmth—nearly identical to the 314 kWh that an electric passenger van used in that same period to transport students over hundreds of miles.

Credit: Linkedin post by Joseph Wachunas. New Buildings Institute MOVER Project in Hood River, OR.

MYTH: ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES EXCEED THE WEIGHT LIMIT ON LOCAL BRIDGES



Both Blue Bird and Thomas Built electric buses have the exact same GVWR as their diesel models, 33,000 GVWR. The GVWR for IC's Next-Gen Electric CE Series bus is slightly greater at 35,000 GVWR. The GVWR applies to the maximum weight permitted, not what the actual weight is. No vehicles can exceed the GVWR and most school buses are well under, as the GVWR applies to a fully occupied school bus. While NJ limits the vehicle capacity of school buses to 54 passengers, diesel powered school buses with higher seating capacities up to 72 passengers all easily meet the 33,000 GVWR restrictions, as do 54 passenger electric powered school buses.

8. Additional Resources

- **Sierra Club**

  Electric School Bus Campaign | Sierra Club

  Check out the New Jersey Chapter's webpage for the latest information on legislation, bills and funding.

- **New Jersey Clean Cities Coalition**

  Electric School Bus Training Video Library

  This comprehensive YouTube playlist provides resources on all school bus electrification topics from various national Clean Cities & Communities partners.

  Electric School Bus Initiative

  Provides information on opportunities to participate in NJ based ESB projects.

- **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**

  Drive Green

  An important guide to New Jersey's electric vehicle funding program.

  Electric School Bus Grant Program

  The Electric School Bus Grant program provides funding to replace diesel school buses with battery-electric school buses per P.L. 2022, c.86.

  Diesel Modernization Program

  Provides funding for diesel-to-diesel and diesel-to-electric projects designed to improve air quality, especially in areas that do not meet the national standards.

- **World Resources Institute**

  Step by Step Guide for School Bus Electrification

  A detailed guide to the things to know, steps to take, stakeholders to consult, and questions to ask for a successful and equitable transition to electric school buses. WRI also offers technical assistance for ESB related questions.

National Lab of the Rockies (NLR)

Technical Assistance & Resources for School Districts

The National Lab of the Rockies (NLR) has a team of experts offering a variety of support and resources for school bus fleet managers. This includes help for planning and implementation of both zero-emissions buses and the infrastructure necessary to operate them. Support is available to awardees, applicants, and potential applicants of the EPA Clean School Bus Program. Other tools & resources include:

- ESB Route Analysis spreadsheet
- ESB Charging Station Planning Form
- ESB RFP Template
- Guide for Fleet Managers to plan and implement charging infrastructure

Catalyst Mobility (formerly CalStart)

Making the Right Connection: A Guide to Selecting Chargers that Fit Your Electric School Bus Fleet

Catalyst Mobility's guide helps school bus fleets through selecting the most suitable charging technology—AC, DC fast, or bidirectional—by comparing costs, power needs, and operational impacts. It helps fleet managers and school administrators make informed decisions to ensure electric school buses operate efficiently, meet range requirements, and align with financial and infrastructure goals.

Electronic version available for download at

This document was prepared by the Transportation Committee of the Sierra Club, New Jersey Chapter and the New Jersey Clean Cities Coalition.

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