

**EVALUATION OF SPECIAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS
AND THEIR EFFECT ON TRANSPORTATION SAFETY IN TEXAS**

Becky T. Davies
Robert N. Reinhardt
Leigh Anne Williams

Safety Division
Texas Transportation Institute
Texas A&M University System

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the State of Texas, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) or any political subdivision of the State or Federal government.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the 1960's, there was little requirement for schools to provide transportation for students with physical or mental disabilities. However, in the 1970's public schools began to recognize their obligation to educate disabled students in a "free and appropriate environment," which later became established by law. The right of disabled students to equal educational opportunity and transportation services was established by two Federal statutes: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (also known as Section 504), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975 (Bluth & Rosenfeld, 1993).

Section 504 was passed by Congress as a "general nondiscrimination law," which prohibits school districts from discriminating against disabled students (i.e., denying them transportation services) solely on the basis of a disabling condition. The primary objective of Section 504 was to "remove barriers" (physical, administrative, psychological, etc.) to services encountered by disabled persons. In order to comply with Section 504, school districts were required to make all "reasonable accommodations" to transport disabled students.

IDEA has been viewed as a much more ambitious effort by Congress to ensure that school districts are providing the same access to public education for disabled students as they provide to all other students. IDEA is thus much broader than Section 504, yet more specific in its mandates. Additionally, IDEA's objective is to ensure that all educational services provided (including transportation) are appropriate to each student's needs. There is a strong link in IDEA between "education in the least restrictive environment" and the day-to-day transportation provided to the students.

Transportation services for students with disabilities are individually determined by the school district's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. The primary consideration is whether transportation is necessary for a student to benefit from special education as specified in IDEA, or for a disabled child to have access to a free, appropriate public education under Section 504. The following is a list of some of the questions which might be asked by the committee in determining whether a student needs special transportation services (Thompson, 1994, p. 3):

1. Does the eligible student need transportation in order to benefit from special and/or regular education under IDEA or Section 504?
2. Are students without disabilities in this situation transported?
3. If the student needs transportation, can the student utilize regular transportation services?
4. If not, how can special transportation appropriately accommodate the student's needs?

In the ideal situation, transportation personnel as well as parents join with the ARD committee prior to writing the specific provisions to be included in the child's individualized education plan (IEP). The inclusion of parents and transportation personnel in ARD committee meetings is particularly important when issues of discipline, medical attention, or other individualized needs are discussed.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 has been characterized as a comprehensive civil rights law designed to remove all remaining barriers to equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. As an extension of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,

the ADA guarantees protection against discrimination in both private and public services. However, with respect to school transportation, the primary impetus provided by the ADA might be its bringing to light the importance of the mandates previously issued within IDEA and Section 504. That is, the ADA has brought forth a sense of urgency for school districts to comply fully with the provisions of previous legislation, and include disabled children in as many school activities as possible. In summary, if a school district's special transportation services are already in compliance with Section 504 and IDEA, then that district should also be in compliance with the ADA.

Study Scope and Objectives

In October 1993, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) contracted with Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to implement a survey of independent school districts in the State of Texas on the expected transportation needs mandated by the ADA. The survey was designed to identify and describe the problems associated with increased transportation needs in light of the enactment of the ADA. A second objective was to make recommendations to help Texas school districts meet the anticipated changes in school transportation safety that might result from the 1995 National Minimum Standards Conference.

Chapter Two

METHODOLOGY

Survey Preparation

The survey questionnaire was patterned after the "Survey of Restraint Use by Children and Youth with Handicaps Receiving Transportation Services", a survey previously conducted by Riley Hospital for Children, Indianapolis, Indiana (1987). Representatives from TxDOT and TEA who are actively involved in Texas school transportation issues reviewed the survey instrument, and the final questionnaire was edited to reflect their comments and suggestions (see Appendix A). The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to collect information about the problems school districts are experiencing in providing transportation services to disabled students. Anecdotal information regarding specific problems experienced by individual school districts was also collected.

Survey Distribution

A master list of mailing addresses and contact persons (i.e., transportation professionals) for 1,017 of the school districts in Texas was provided by Sam Dixon of TEA. This mailing list represented over 96% of the school districts in Texas, therefore no attempt was made to contact the remaining districts. TxDOT was identified as the survey sponsor, and TTI was identified as the surveying agency in a cover letter which described the purposes and goals of the survey (see Appendix B). A postage paid return envelope was enclosed with the copy of the survey instrument.

Data Collection and Analysis

The transportation professionals who filled in the questionnaire were encouraged to complete and return the survey within 30 days. Approximately two weeks after the due date, follow-up postcards were sent to each school district that had not responded. When necessary, additional questionnaires were sent to people who had not received the original mailing, or had lost the survey. The data collected was analyzed utilizing PROC FREQ of SAS Version 6.08. Anecdotal responses to open-ended questions are listed under the appropriate question number later in this report. Comments were grouped and information condensed for ease in reporting results.

Chapter Three

RESULTS

Response Rate

Four hundred and seventy-nine (479) of the 1,017 school districts contacted returned questionnaires, for a response rate of approximately 47 percent. However, 158 of the 479 districts, or nearly 33 percent of those who responded, reported that they had no students with special transportation needs. In several of the 158 districts the only disabled students were classified as "emotional problems," while in some of the smaller districts there were no disabled students at all. The school districts with only "emotionally" disabled students reported that these students were transported by parents or on main-stream buses. Undoubtedly, if these districts provided transportation for this classification of students, a different picture might have emerged. The information provided by the 158 districts without students requiring special transportation was not included in the analysis, since the focus of the study was the special transportation needs of disabled students. The responses from the remaining 321 surveys returned provided usable data. Thus, data analysis was conducted on 32 percent of the original 1,017 questionnaires distributed.

Survey Results

In addition to answering questions about specific transportation issues, respondents were asked to provide demographic information about the school district in which they were employed. Ten percent of the school districts reported that they were located in primarily urban areas, and 62 percent were located in rural areas. Approximately 28 percent reported that the

school districts in which they were employed provided transportation services for both rural and urban areas (Figure 1). The total number of students enrolled in each of the school districts ranged from 70 to 200,613. The total number of disabled students reported by all school districts combined was more than 27,000, or approximately 2 percent of the student population. School district size, in terms of area, ranged from 5 square miles to 12,000 square miles. Vehicle miles traveled ranged from 500 miles to 4.5 million miles a year. The number of drivers trained to transport disabled children was approximately one driver per 10 disabled children, and the total number of school bus attendants employed by the districts was approximately 1 attendant for every 18 disabled students.

The age distribution for the disabled students is depicted in Figure 2. The two age groups with the largest number of students were the 6-11 year-olds (37 percent) and the 12-17 year-olds (32 percent). Twenty-four percent of the students were between the ages of 3 and 5, and 7 percent were in the 18-21 year-old range. Figure 3 presents the percentages of students with each type of disability. Sensory impairment (i.e., poor hearing, vision problems) was the most prevalent disability reported (44 percent), followed by emotional/behavioral problems (32 percent). Twelve percent of the disabled children were restricted to wheelchairs, and 7 percent were reported as unable to sit up unassisted. Poor head control accounted for 4 percent of the disabilities and 1 percent of the students required special equipment, such as respirators or intravenous devices.

Respondents were also asked to specify the number of disabled students in their school districts who used each vehicle type (Figure 4). The Type C bus, which holds 24-77 passengers, was used most often. The Type B bus (20-77 passengers), and the Type A bus, which can carry

School District Types

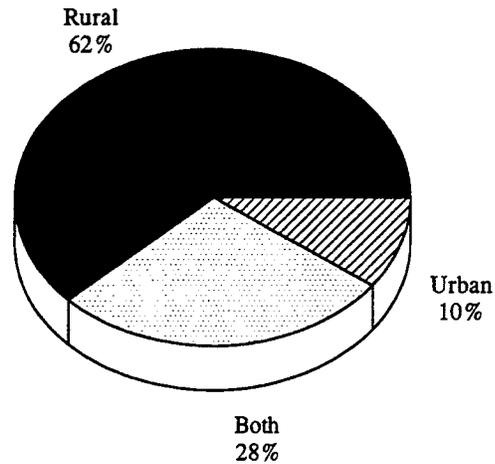


Figure 1. Distribution of school districts by area served.

Age Distribution

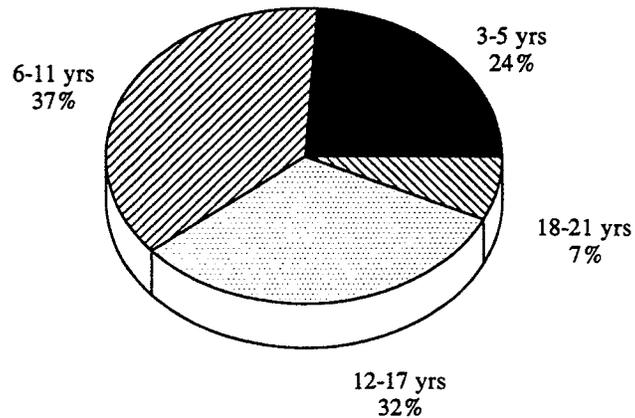


Figure 2. Distribution of disabled children by age group.

Types of Disabilities

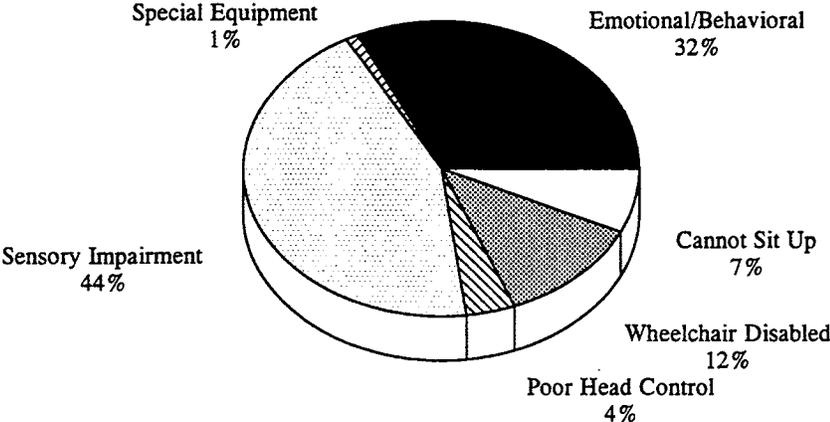


Figure 3. Percentage of students with each type of disability.

Vehicle Types

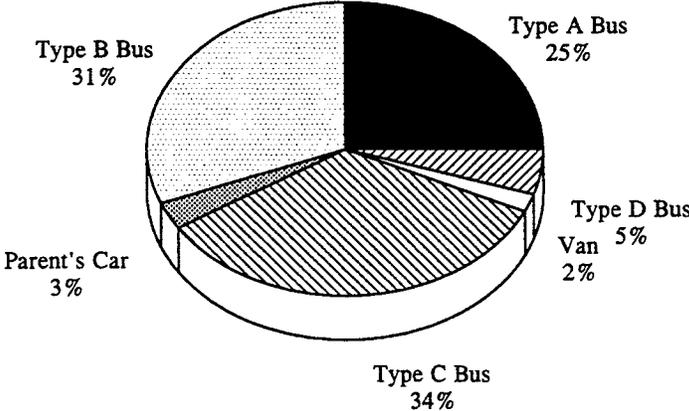


Figure 4. Percentage of each vehicle type transporting disabled students.

11-19 passengers were used less frequently. Only 5 percent of the students were reported as using the Type D bus, which has a 47-83 passenger capacity. Two percent were transported in vans equipped for handicapped persons, and 3 percent in parent-driven automobiles.

When asked how many of their buses had tie-downs positioned for wheelchairs to face forward, almost 42 percent of the school districts reported that none of their school buses were equipped to allow wheelchairs to face forward. Thirty-two percent of the school districts reported having one bus equipped such that wheelchairs would face forward, and an additional 13 percent had two buses equipped to meet this new standard. Only four percent of the school districts have 10 or more of their buses equipped for wheelchairs to face forward.

Comparisons between rural and urban school districts with respect to differences in driver training for handling special situations involving disabled students are shown in Figures 5 through 8. Of the rural school districts, 46 percent reported that their drivers had special training in handling behavioral problems involving disabled students, whereas 75 percent of the urban school districts had drivers who were trained to handle such problems (Figure 5). Eighty-eight percent of the urban school districts reported that their drivers could handle special medical emergencies which might arise. In contrast, only 64 percent of the rural school districts felt that the drivers were trained to handle medical emergencies (Figure 6).

The percentages of school districts in urban versus rural areas wherein drivers kept medical information on their disabled students were much more comparable (Figure 7). However, it is disturbing that only 34 percent of the urban and 27 percent of the rural school districts reported that their drivers maintained necessary medical information for the disabled students they transported. Thus, more than two-thirds of the drivers in these school districts

Driver Training in Handling Behavioral Problems

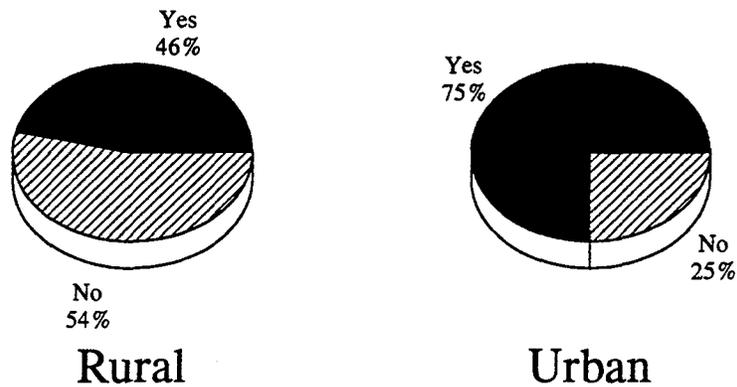


Figure 5. Percentage of drivers trained to handle behavior problems.

Driver Training in Handling Medical Emergencies

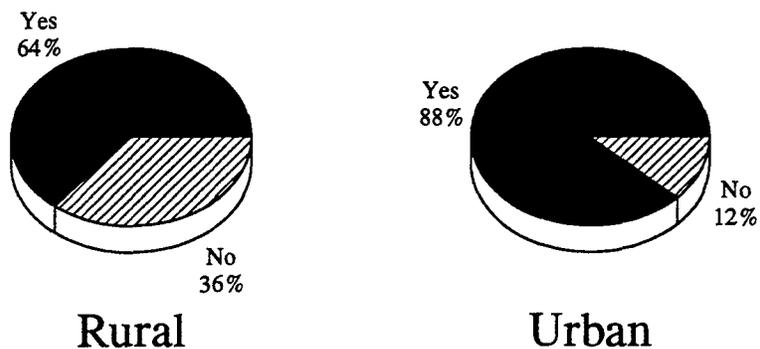


Figure 6. Percentage of drivers trained to handle medical emergencies.

Drivers Keep Medical Information on Disabled Students

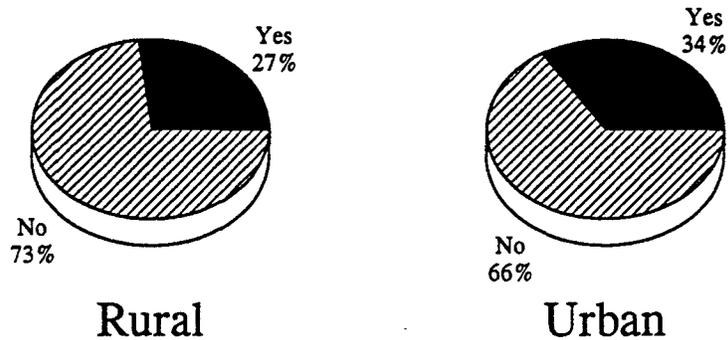


Figure 7. Percentage of drivers keeping medical information on disabled students.

Driver Training in Evacuating Disabled Students

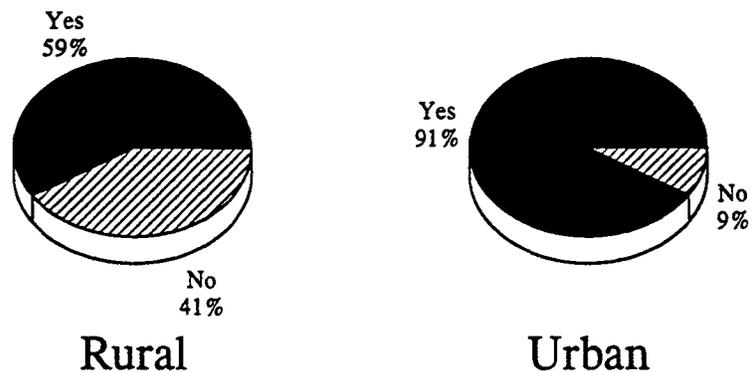


Figure 8. Percentage of drivers trained in evacuating disabled students.

reported having no specific medical information available to them should a problem arise with one of their disabled students. Ninety-one percent of the urban school district drivers have received specialized evacuation training, whereas only 59 percent of the drivers in rural areas were trained to properly evacuate disabled students (Figure 8).

Question number 15 asked the transportation professionals to indicate which persons were involved in planning and reviewing each child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Figure 9 presents the percentages of school districts reporting each person's involvement in the IEP developed for a child. Parents and teachers were the most often involved, with about 90 percent of the school districts reporting that both of these groups were involved in such planning. Approximately 74 percent of the districts said that counselors were involved in IEP planning, and 48 percent involved the transportation directors in transportation planning for disabled students. Drivers participated in planning in only about 23 percent of the school districts, whereas 46 percent of the districts reported that the planning included occupational therapists.

Question number 16 of the survey requested that respondents indicate the frequency with which they experienced various problems in transporting disabled students (see Figures 10-17). Figure 10 presents a graphic depiction of the frequency with which school districts reported that overcrowding in the vehicle is a problem when transporting disabled students. About 68 percent of the districts reported that overcrowding was not a problem, 19 percent reported that it was seldom a problem, and only 2 percent of the districts felt that overcrowding was a problem they had to face frequently. Fifteen percent of the school districts felt that behavior problems were frequent, whereas about 19 percent of them reported that they never experienced difficulties with

Proportion of Districts in Which Each Type Person was Involved

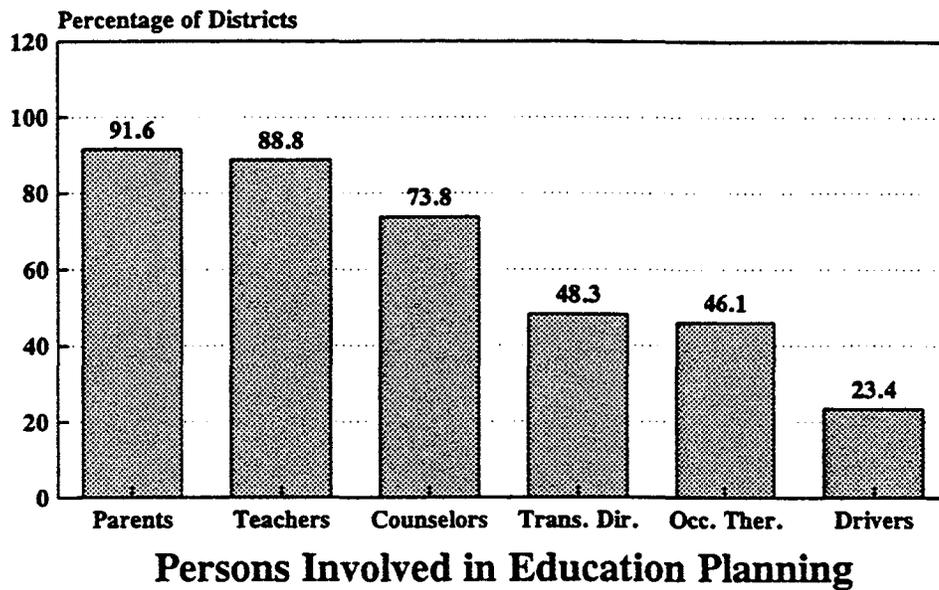
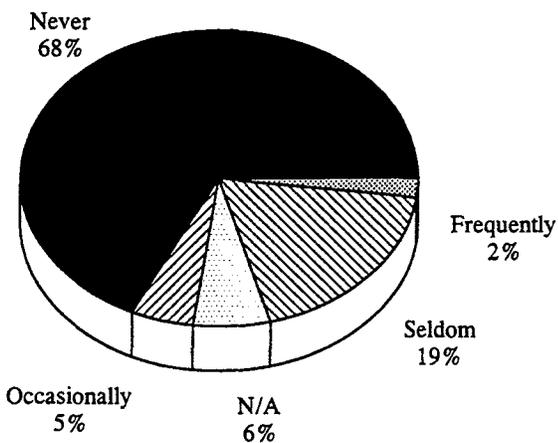


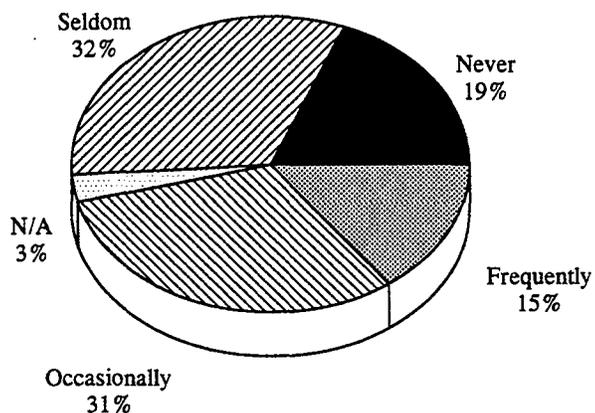
Figure 9. Percentage of school districts involving each group in IEP.

Problems Encountered in Transporting Disabled Students



Overcrowding in Vehicle

Figure 10. Frequency of problem with overcrowding in vehicle.



Behavior Problems

Figure 11. Frequency of behavioral problems.

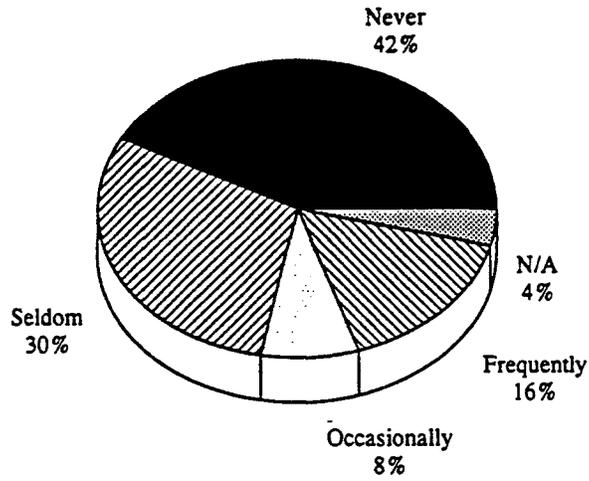
behavior when transporting disabled students. The majority of the respondents (approximately 63 percent) reported that behavior was a problem only seldomly or occasionally (Figure 11).

Overall, the school districts reported that they had adequate personnel to assist in transporting disabled children (Figure 12), with about 72 percent of them reporting seldomly or never needing more personnel than they currently employ. About 16 percent of the respondents said they frequently needed additional personnel to assist in transportation services. As shown in Figure 13, only 6 percent indicated that they frequently experience equipment cost problems, indicating that the cost of equipment does not appear to be a major problem. Likewise, over 80 percent of the districts reported never or only seldomly experiencing problems with equipment costs.

Lack of information about equipment was cited as a frequent problem by only 2 percent of the school districts (Figure 14). Sixty-three percent said that this was never an issue, and 25 percent cited lack of information on equipment as a problem which arose only seldomly. Figure 15 presents the frequency with which specialized restraint systems were reported to be lacking. Approximately 63 percent of the districts reported that they never had difficulties with lacking the restraint systems needed to transport disabled children, and only 3 percent reported that this was a frequent problem.

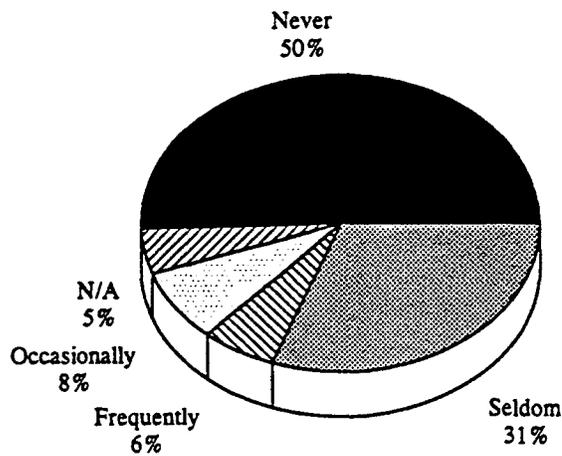
Difficulty securing wheelchairs was not a frequently occurring problem either (Figure 16). Only about 5 percent of the school districts reported frequent difficulty with securing the wheelchairs, and 63 percent said that they never experienced these problems. Similarly, lack of appropriate child safety seats was a frequently occurring obstacle for only 1 percent of the

Problems Encountered in Transporting Disabled Students



Additional Personnel Needed

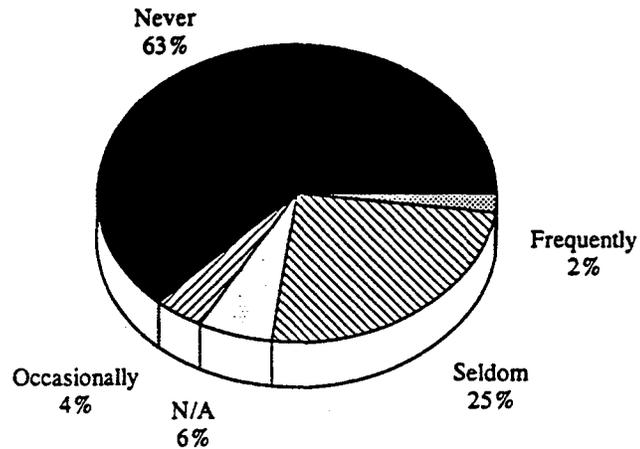
Figure 12. Frequency of problem with additional personnel needed.



Equipment Costs

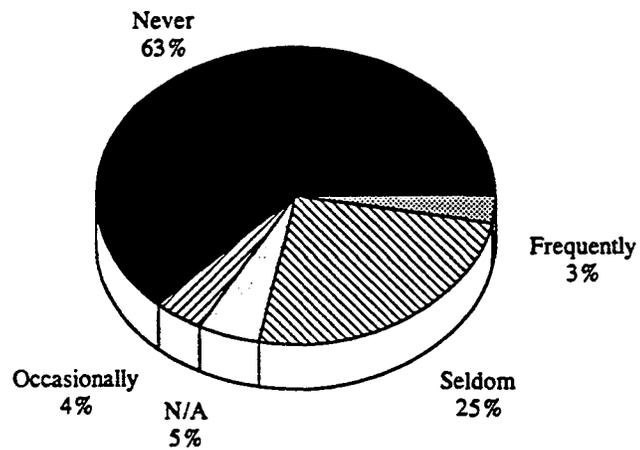
Figure 13. Frequency of problem with equipment costs.

Problems Encountered in Transporting Disabled Students



Lack of Equipment Information

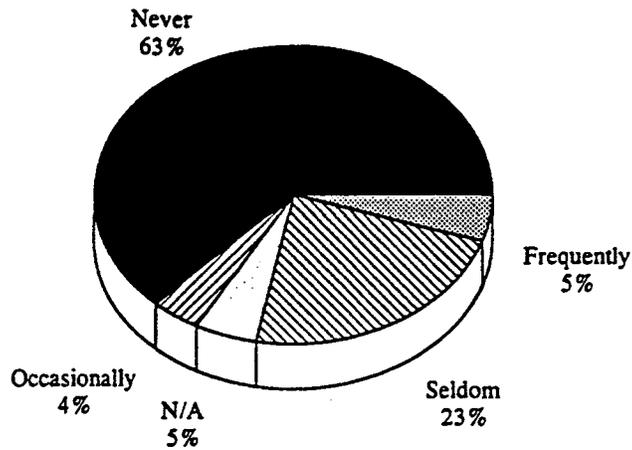
Figure 14. Frequency of problem with equipment information lacking.



Lack of Restraint Systems

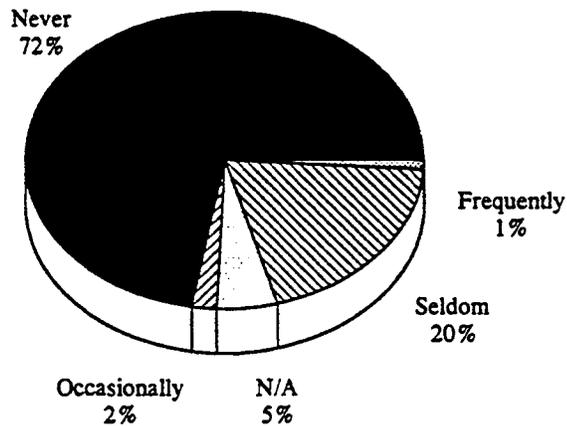
Figure 15. Frequency of problem with restraint systems lacking.

Problems Encountered in Transporting Disabled Students



Difficulty Securing Wheelchairs

Figure 16. Frequency of problem securing wheelchairs.



Inappropriate Safety Seats

Figure 17. Frequency of problem with appropriate safety seats lacking.

respondents (Figure 17), whereas 72 percent of the school districts said that they never had problems with needing more appropriate child safety seats.

The next three questions (#17, 18, and 19) surveyed the frequency of more specific difficulties related to equipment. When asked to indicate the frequency of problems encountered with the wheelchairs and wheelchair adaptations currently available on their buses, the problem cited as most frequently occurring by the districts was with wheelchair tie-downs. Sudden stops posing a danger was cited as the next most frequently occurring issue, followed by problems with wheelchair lifts. Seating other students while wheelchairs were being used was the least problematic situation encountered.

Children freeing themselves from restraints was the most frequently occurring problem involving specialized restraint systems. Difficulty applying the restraints and unclear instructions for using restraints were the next two most frequent issues, and improperly installed restraints were the least frequently cited problem. Safety seats improperly installed was reported as never being a problem. Safety seats not being available was cited as a frequent problem by only 2 percent of the districts, and children freeing themselves from safety seats was very rarely a predicament these school districts had to face.

Summary of Anecdotal Information

Appendix C provides a listing of the anecdotal responses obtained from the surveys, and the following is a synopsis of the quantitative and qualitative information obtained. In response to question number 8, the most frequently occurring comment with regard to providing door-to-door service for disabled students was that the school district required all special education buses

to furnish such service. Other respondents cited the particular limitations of certain students as posing unique situations in which door-to-door service appeared to be the only alternative available.

In response to question number 20, the majority of the school districts reported that only a few of the disabled students required some sort of special medical equipment (e.g., respirators, IVs) for use on board the bus. In response to the request to describe the nature of problems with special equipment, the majority of the comments regarded the need to be extra careful with oxygen tanks and respirators. A few of the respondents reported difficulties tying down the equipment or having trouble with the safety belts because of special equipment. Some of them cited special provisions made for certain students and special equipment supplied by outside agencies. Generally, the responses indicated that the school districts had solved their special equipment problems, and had drivers and aides trained to meet the needs of their students. However, one transportation specialist complained of running an ambulance service rather than school transportation.

When asked to explain the most commonly occurring instances of disabled children being suspended from transportation services, the majority of the transportation specialists cited discipline problems, which ranged from refusal to remain seated to acts of violence against drivers/aides. Cursing, threatening, and fighting with other students as well as refusing to comply with the rules were also reported.

Seventy-nine percent of the school districts reported not having to suspend any students in the past year due to behavioral problems that could not be solved otherwise. Only about 11 percent of the districts had suspended 1 to 3 students, and the average length of suspension was

3 days. The most commonly occurring reason for a disabled child being expelled from transportation services involved posing a serious threat to other students and the drivers/aides. Specific instances of injury to others were cited. The students were typically banned from riding the bus until an ARD committee could be held and other arrangements made for their transportation to school (e.g., parents are paid to transport the student).

In response to the request for additional information regarding specific difficulties not previously addressed, the majority of the comments received dealt with equipment problems. Most of the concerns expressed were related to difficulties encountered in transporting wheelchair students. Loading and unloading students presents a major problem for the school districts when their buses do not have lifts. One school district noted a serious situation with too many wheelchairs on one bus, resulting in not having enough room to walk down the aisle. The next most frequently mentioned equipment obstacle was lack of air conditioning on many of the buses used to transport disabled students, as well as the cost of purchasing air conditioning for transporting students who really need it.

Child safety seat and safety vest requirements were cited as problems with regard to liability issues. Lack of cellular telephones or radios for use in emergencies was a dilemma faced by a few of the school districts. Obtaining new buses to replace outdated, ill-equipped older buses was the only solution available to solve some of the equipment problems for the districts. Some of the districts reported that "co-oping" with other districts was the only way to transport disabled students in a time- and cost-effective manner, while providing quality transportation for these students.

A few of the school districts reported needing additional personnel to assist in the transport of their disabled students. In particular, the need for more drivers and bus monitors was the biggest obstacle. Emotionally disturbed students require more supervision than can currently be provided by the school districts under their current transportation standards. One respondent suggested using the same teacher/pupil ratio for the bus as provided in that district's classroom. A shortage of bus driver applicants who have commercial driver licenses posed a problem for a few of the districts. The need for better in-service training for drivers to handle situations involving communicable diseases and first aid emergencies, as well as understanding the individual needs of students, was one of the more specific problems reported.

Parents who are not home from work to receive their children, or do not have the children ready for pick up, was a frequently cited problem. Similarly, confusion over where to pick up a child and drop him off is a frequent problem, and may cause delays in the routing. Some of the transportation professionals reported that parents make unreasonable demands on the bus driver, such as wheeling the child into the house.

The need to add more routes due to "inclusion" of special education students has caused some serious routing problems for some of the districts. Meeting the students' needs while operating efficient routes can be very challenging for the transportation directors, and some students must necessarily be subjected to lengthy bus routes in order to accommodate a few other students. Running additional buses was cited by some of the districts as the only viable solution to their routing problems.

Lack of information on the disabled students in their care was a dilemma faced by a few of the school districts. Also, the lack of communication between ARD committees and the

transportation services can compromise the quality of the transportation provided to some students. The cost of having to run a bus for a single student was cited as a problem by a few of the districts. Other districts were apprehensive of future problems in attempting to comply with the mandates of Section 504 and the ADA, especially obtaining the funds necessary to meet the needs of all of the students.

A few of the school districts reported that they had no current problems transporting disabled students. Typically, transporting students who do not need special equipment (but who qualify as special education students) presented the fewest difficulties. Some of the school districts were able to offer solutions to the dilemmas they had faced. Generally, the solutions involved purchasing additional, more up-to-date equipment. Unfortunately, the majority of the school districts are not in the financial position to solve their equipment problems so readily.

Chapter Four

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Findings

As might be expected, the majority of the difficulties school districts experience in providing service to special needs students deals with necessary equipment and personnel. The demand for more specialized transportation is growing rapidly, and school districts are faced with serving the needs of a rapidly growing student population. Although the total number of disabled students reported by the districts represented only 2 percent of the student population, meeting their needs requires extra effort on the part of the transportation professionals and others who serve them.

On the one hand, overcrowding in the vehicle was rarely reported as a problem for those school districts participating in this survey. However, the overcrowding difficulties that were reported appeared to be of such a magnitude as to present a serious safety threat. Students restricted to wheelchairs require the greatest amount of special attention, and the additional physical space needed to accommodate wheelchairs can pose a challenge in transportation. The same situation appears with regard to the personnel required to provide service for special needs students. That is, when additional personnel are needed, it is typically a situation that could present a safety threat to all students and transportation personnel on the bus. The primary reason cited for needing additional personnel was behavior problems, which often require intervention by someone other than the driver. The ratio of bus attendants to disabled students

was approximately 18 students per attendant, a figure that likely could be changed with relatively little cost to the school districts.

Perhaps the most significant finding of the survey was the discrepancy in the training received by drivers in rural versus urban school districts. In virtually every situation evaluated in the survey, rural drivers have much less training, experience, and information available to them than do urban drivers. Some of these skills and materials could be obtained at little or no expense to the school districts wherein they are presently lacking.

One disturbing finding from this survey was the relative absence of transportation professionals and/or drivers participating in IEP. Again, this is a situation which could be easily righted by the school districts. Overall, the comments reflected a general willingness on the part of transportation professionals to go to whatever lengths necessary to solve their transportation problems and comply with legal mandates when serving disabled students.

Recommendations to Texas School Districts

Proposed guidelines for the 1995 National Standards Conference should provide a foundation for the development of new and better resources to aid in the transport of special needs students. Changes in the 1990 standards for school bus operations and safety will be necessary to meet the challenges of providing adequate transportation for all school children. As indicated above, however, there are changes that can be made at the local school district level with relatively little time and expense. One suggestion involves the inclusion of transportation professionals/drivers and occupational therapists in planning and reviewing the transportation needs for disabled students. The "inclusion" of students with disabilities in regular (rather than

special route) transportation is required under both Section 504 and IDEA, and is likely an issue to be addressed within the judicial system if mandates are not closely followed. Previously, inclusion has been addressed by the courts in recognition of IDEA's requirement that student instruction be carried out in the least restrictive environment, and that removal of a student from the traditional school environment should occur only when necessitated by the needs of the individual child. School transportation as a "related service" provided by school districts is at the heart of the mainstreaming effort recognized within both Section 504 and IDEA. Computerized bus routing and provisions for cellular phones and/or radio equipment aboard school buses would also aid in the transport of all students in a safe and timely manner.

As suggested above, the training/experience of drivers in rural areas in handling the needs of disabled students presents a serious deficiency in the State of Texas at this time. Such training would seem to be particularly necessary in these lower density population areas, where access to medical and other emergency services may be limited.

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APPENDIX A

**SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEEDS
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

SURVEY OF TRANSPORTATION NEEDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

NAME _____

TITLE* _____

*(please indicate if transportation is provided by a contracted agency)

SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

Please provide the following information as it applies to the current school year:

1. School District Information:

Total number of students enrolled in your school district _____

Number of **disabled** students requiring special transportation _____

Total population of school district (students, non-students, parents, etc.) _____

School district is primarily: _____ rural _____ urban _____ both rural and urban

Size of school district in square miles _____

Total number of vehicle miles traveled by all school buses in your district _____

Number of drivers in your school district specially trained for transporting disabled students _____

2. Number of disabled students in your school district transported in each age group:

_____ 0-2 years old _____ 6-11 years old _____ 18-21 years old

_____ 3-5 years old _____ 12-17 years old

3. Number of children in your school district with each type of disability:

_____ EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS _____ SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

_____ Cannot sit up unsupported _____ Poor head control

_____ Must lie prone or supine _____ Wheelchair-bound

OTHER

_____ Communicable disease (e.g., HIV/AIDS, hepatitis)

_____ Health requires special equipment (e.g., respirator, catheter, intravenous device)

4. Number of disabled students in your school district using each vehicle type:

_____ Type A Bus (11-19 passengers) _____ Type D Bus (47-83 passengers)

_____ Type B Bus (20-77 passengers) _____ Van equipped for handicapped

_____ Type C Bus (24-77 passengers) _____ Parent-driven automobile

5. How many of each type of school bus in your district is equipped for disabled students?

_____ Type A Bus (11-19 passengers)

_____ Type B Bus (20-77 passengers)

_____ Type C Bus (24-77 passengers)

_____ Type D Bus (47-83 passengers)

6. How many of your school buses have positions for forward-facing wheelchairs? _____

7. How many of your disabled students ride regular bus routes? _____

8. How many disabled students in your school district require door-to-door service? _____
Please give details of service and reason(s): _____

Approximate cost of door-to-door service yearly: _____

9. How many school bus attendants assist in the transportation of disabled students? _____

10. How many bus routes are these attendants assigned to? _____

11. Are your drivers specially trained in dealing with behavioral problems relating to the disabled student?

Yes No

12. Do your drivers receive specialized training with regard to emergency medical situations (e.g., first aid, medications, resuscitation instructions)?

Yes No

13. Do drivers keep detailed medical information on each disabled student?

Yes No

14. Do drivers receive special training in evacuation procedures used for transporting disabled students?

Yes No

15. Which of the following persons are involved in planning/reviewing each child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) with regard to transportation issues:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Directors/Coordinators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapists |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counselors | <input type="checkbox"/> School Bus Drivers |

16. Which of the following problems have you encountered in transporting disabled students? (Check the frequency with which each applies):

| | Frequently (daily) | Occasionally (weekly) | Seldom (monthly) | Never |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Overcrowding in vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Behavioral/emotional problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Additional personnel needed to assist | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Cost of obtaining necessary equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E. Lack of information on equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F. Lack of specialized restraint systems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G. Difficulty securing wheelchairs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| H. Lack of appropriate child safety seats | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

17. What problems do you encounter with the wheelchairs and wheelchair adaptations currently available on your buses? (Check the frequency with which each applies):

| | Frequently (daily) | Occasionally (weekly) | Seldom (monthly) | Never |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Wheelchair lifts | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Wheelchair tie-downs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Sudden stops pose a danger | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Problems seating other students | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

18. What problems do you encounter with the specialized restraint systems currently used on your buses? (Check the frequency with which each applies):

| | Frequently (daily) | Occasionally (weekly) | Seldom (monthly) | Never |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Restraints are not available | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Restraints are improperly installed | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Instructions for using restraints are unclear | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Difficulty applying restraints | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E. Child frees self from the restraint | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

19. What problems do you encounter with the child safety seats currently available? (Check the frequency with which each applies):

| | Frequently (daily) | Occasionally (weekly) | Seldom (monthly) | Never |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Safety seats are not available | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Safety seats are improperly installed | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Instructions for safety seats are unclear | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Safety seats do not meet requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E. Child frees self from the safety seat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

20. Number of disabled students requiring special assistive medical equipment aboard the bus (e.g., respirators, catheters, intravenous equipment, etc.)? _____
 Please further describe the nature of problems you have experienced with special equipment:

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE SURVEY COVER LETTER



HUMAN FACTORS PROGRAM
SAFETY DIVISION

Area Code 409
Telephone 845 • 2736
FAX: 409 • 845 • 6107

April 12, 1994

Dear School Transportation Professional:

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) in cooperation with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) is conducting a survey of the school transportation provided for students with disabilities for the current school year. The enclosed survey is being sent to the Transportation Department of each school district across the State of Texas. The information obtained is crucial to the identification of transportation problems, as well as the associated costs of providing this transportation under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 (formerly addressed in IDEA and Section 504).

The results of this survey will be summarized and presented at the upcoming TAPT conference in Odessa, TX in June 1994; and will be reported at the Texas School Bus Transportation Directors' Training Academy to be conducted at Texas A&M University in August 1994. A formal report will be prepared for TxDOT upon completion of the project, and the results of the survey will be provided to the Texas Education Agency. The information obtained from this survey may prove essential to future policy making and funding decisions affecting school bus transportation in Texas. If your school district provides transportation for students with disabilities, you are encouraged to meet with all personnel involved (e.g., drivers, driver aides, fleet supervisors, counselors, occupational therapists, etc.) and gather their input prior to answering the questions on the survey.

Your timeliness in responding to this request is appreciated (by May 15, please). A self-addressed stamped envelope is included in this packet for your convenience in returning the completed questionnaire. We sincerely hope each of you recognizes the potential usefulness of the data to be obtained from this survey, and takes this opportunity to share with other Transportation Specialists the problems you may have experienced, as well as any solutions you have found to be effective. Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in making this project an effective means of addressing your needs and helping you to better serve your students.

Sincerely,

Becky T. Davies
Research Associate

APPENDIX C
LISTING OF ANECDOTAL COMMENTS

8. Please give the details of door-to-door service for disabled students and the reason(s).

- Wheelchair loading, unloading--autistic, mentally retarded.
- Eleven students picked up in morning and returned in afternoon.
- 11 of our students are behavior problems. 5 of our students are wheelchair bound. 2 of our children are MRs.
- The school district services all special education students door-to-door (curb to curb).
- Two students are transported to another school district and are listed in that district's ADA.
- Students are picked up at their house basically because there is no central location to pick up the students. They are so spread apart. A monitor greets parents at the house and helps kids aboard and the bus is met at the school by the teacher.
- 3 wheelchairs, 2 behavior problems, 2 medical problems.
- Students are in wheelchairs.
- Due to handicapping condition (MR) or young age.
- Due to an early education program we serve 7 (3-5 year olds) - 4 hours per day. The students are included in the total number.
- Wheelchairs used.
- Disabilities require such service.
- One is a 5-year old wheelchair bound student. The other is about a 14 year old boy who has trouble walking without falling.
- We have several. Some are wheelchair and deaf Ed. Some are too little to walk.
- All parents come to the street.
- Our student requires a wheelchair bus at his house and gets him out of the wheelchair.
- School district policy all Special Ed. students are picked up and delivered on a door-to-door basis.
- School policy.

- Our student is a deaf mute that cannot walk, sit up, etc... Does not function on a conscious basis and is tube fed.
- Deaf student. He rides on our regular route, so only the aide is a special cost.
- ARD Committee.
- Wheelchair bound.
- Severe and profound capacity (6 months, and age 18).
- Wheelchair assistance, developmental age young enough to require extra supervision.
- All disabled students are provided door to door service.
- Student not mobile--need supervision to door.
- With the emotional/behavioral problems students must be picked up at home. The students with physical limitations are obvious.
- Physically handicapped.
- One MS student.
- Wheelchair ambulatory.
- As long as the disabled (ARD approved) give us an address to pick them up and an address to go back to where to do it.
- Seven mentally handicapped picked up at home and taken home.
- One student attends 1/2 day and we transport him home at noon each day.
- Child is in a wheelchair. An aide or a Special Ed. teacher is with the child at all times. We have a van that picks him up and takes him home.
- Wheelchair parent private contract.
- 2 in wheelchair, 1 is blind.
- One has physical problems with both legs; one is in a wheelchair; one has Down's Syndrome with physical limitations.
- The disabled students are picked up door to door to their home locations. None are located close together, thus giving us no centralized pick up points.

- Wheelchair disability prevents students from self-propulsion.
- Child is in wheelchair. She is picked up at home and taken to another town to an SPH unit, then transported back to her home--Special Ed. main office is there.
- Due to handicapped condition requires door-to-door service.
- Driver drives to front door area.
- Bus picks student up at home and delivers to school in wheelchair.
- Determination of the ARD committee in agreement with the parent indicates the students disability is so severe that a specialized route with specialized driver is required.
- Curb to curb service is provided to all Special Ed. transported students.
- Taken off the lift and parents take them inside the house.
- That's the way its offered.
- Unable to ride regular bus due to handicap and severity of it.
- Only wheelchair and walker students require pickup at their door.
- This student is transported from home to a special school about 70 miles from home.
- None as of today but we have had one and that was because of a broken leg.
- Because we are a small district and do not have that many disabled students, we transport them to a neighboring district or facility for education.
- Wheelchair bound, early childhood, due to mental and physical handicap.
- All students riding Special Education Transportation receive door-to-door services.
- MR-OHI-student cannot function without help at all times.
- 21 are Mary Lee Foundation students at 1 stop.
- Deliver child to/from doorstep, 1 blind, 2-4 years of age and physically handicapped.
- Due to the disabilities, door to door service is provided.

- 2 students are wheelchair bound, 2 students are deaf, and 2 students are physically handicapped.
- Our district delivers all disabled students door-to-door, for the safety of our children.
- 10 cannot manage for themselves.
- All district policy.
- 15 physically or mentally impaired.
- All students identified as having special needs and require transportation as a related service are given curb to curb service by ARD direction and district policy.
- If a student requires special transportation, they will be given door to door service.
- All our special ed. buses go door to door because we are 99% rural.
- This has been the practice in our district's Special Ed. program.
- All picked up at home.
- We are a small district and it is our policy to pick up students at their homes.
- Autistic child and wheelchair child.
- ARD'd into transportation because of a disability that prevents them from riding regular route buses. These students ride on individualized routes with other traffic.
- Students either attend a special class out of their home school boundaries or require a lift bus.
- Students in wheelchair. Students in early education program.
- Need someone supervising them at all times.
- We do not transport these students. They are handled by the special education co-op.
- Home to school and return. Due to handicapping condition and age.
- 2 special ed. teachers ride on bus and walk child to parents.

- 4 students in wheelchairs and unable to maneuver chairs; 2 students unable due to mental impairments.
- 1 is confined to wheelchair.
- We pick up curb to curb which is district policy.
- Wheelchair bound and assistance in walking, bus driver or aide assist on and off bus only.
- Two receive special transportation. Door to door service is requirement for all students who ride the special bus.
- 2 wheelchair bound.
- All students on special transportation buses receive door to door service. Many are early childhood, emotionally disturbed, autistic, blind, hearing impaired, etc.
- 21 students are transported from their homes to school and back. Reasons vary per individual but usually fall under 3 categories student is physically/mentally impaired, does not attend neighborhood school or parent does not have access to transportation.
- Since all of these students are physically or mentally disabled, we leave them at their door with a responsible person.
- Only those who are handicapped so they cannot reasonably function or is physically impaired.
- 4 students--1 is wheelchair bound; 3 behavior problem.
- 1 severe wheelchair, tube-fed student.
- One child is wheelchair bound and her parents work. We pick her up and return her home each day. Another child is emotionally disturbed and an shortened day.
- All pick-up and drop-off are curb to curb.
- Some of them, because of their disabilities and the rest we just run addresses which is door to door. We have been facing this from the beginning. We are a cop-op of 10 school districts.
- We have different programs at different campuses and transport students to their program.
- Severe cerebral palsy--requires support on and off bus. Head injury in wheelchair.

- Standard policy for all special education students.
- Wheelchairs and student inability to care for self requires hand-off between adults.
- Because they are very small and fragile.
- Because of the wide distribution of our student population.
- Each child must be delivered to individual homes and released to their parent or guardian for their protection.
- Student depends on someone to push the wheelchair, load, etc.
- Each student must be door to door because of mental or physical handicaps.
- Parents meet students at the bus.
- Very young child (4 years old).
- Student needs supervisor.
- Turning around in yard without hard surface due to rural locations. Problems are anticipated next year, due to residential care children being added when we have had no previous experience with wheelchairs.
- 1 wheelchair, 1 does not walk and cannot speak and 1 has Down's Syndrome.
- Request by ARD Committee for IEP for student.
- Services are provided to two of the students because they are wheelchair bound and unable to ride the regular bus. The third student is severe and profoundly handicapped and the parents have no reliable transportation.
- Physical/emotional limitations.
- Wheel chair bound.
- Because of their handicapping conditions.
- Unable to walk.
- Wheelchair bound. Early childhood due to mental and physical handicap.
- Wheelchair, walker, stroke and rheu. arthritis.
- Need adult to meet each student.

- About 8 wheelchair or physically handicapped.
- Each student is met by a parent or guardian.
- Severe multi-handicapped students who are unable to get from bus to door of home unassisted.
- Student is blind and requires orientation and mobility from bus to home door.
- 4 wheelchair.
- Need someone to push wheelchairs to and from bus.
- Students either attend a special class out of their home school boundaries or require a lift bus.
- Wheelchair students are taken to house door by monitor because of parents' request and school supply monitor.
- Severe disabilities requiring assistance loading and unloading.
- One student is wheelchair bound with multiple handicaps. The other three are emotionally disturbed and cannot ride regular buses even with an attendant.
- Parent-driven automobile for emotionally disturbed student who is threat to safety of others. Bus with lift for multi-handicapped, visually impaired and autistic students. Bus students require teacher aide, special car seats, special halter vests, and mobile phone.
- Five students are in wheelchairs. Need help walking.
- One student is served by Regional Day School for Deaf and is picked up and returned. One student is wheelchair bound and is also served door to door.
- All special transportation students receive door to door service.
- Not required. We provide this service to the students' homes since we only have a few students. None are physically disabled.
- 134 require transportation to and from their address.
- Bus transportation--MS.
- We get as close as we can to each of our disabled students front door. We do this as a courtesy to our students' parents.
- 3 wheelchair students

- District policy that we make every reasonable effort to pick up and deliver as close to home as possible.
- As courtesy; whenever possible, students are provided door to door service.
- 9 wheelchair; 2 OH ambulatory.
- For safety reasons because their handicaps are severe.
- "MR" students and wheelchair students are transported from home to school and back home.
- All students are picked up at door.
- 89 students requiring special transportation receive door to door service.
- It is our intent to service students at the curblineline of their property. We encourage parents, older siblings, or a responsible authorized other adult to exchange student at property line to minimize district liability on private property.
- District policy.
- 8 wheelchair because of the use of a wheelchair lift. We also make sure that each child is delivered safely.
- 2 - both are in wheelchairs.
- 74 - required by ARD meeting with school district and parent.
- All students are afforded curb to curb presently - no door-to-door requests have been made.
- Students are confined to wheelchairs.
- 3 wheelchair or autistic.
- 2 wheelchair and 4 brain damage.
- This is policy with Special Ed. students.
- They are ARD'ed for special transportation. We run 7 ambulatory buses and 10 ambulatory buses (special ed) have seatbelts.
- Down Syndrome student requires individual assistance.
- Totally unable to move without wheelchair and assistance.

- Paralyzed: We take the student from the front porch of home to the classroom by wheelchair.
- Cannot walk on their own or cannot operate a wheelchair on their own.
- Students are not physically and mentally capable of riding the regular transportation system.
- Wheelchair.
- All 701 receive curb service. At this time, we have not agreed to go beyond that.
- Most of these students have limited social skills and function at a preschool developmental age.
- Students riding Special Ed buses are emotionally disturbed, autistic, blind, deaf, in wheelchairs, Down Syndrome and early childhood students.
- Due to disabilities door to door service is provided.
- Three students cannot walk.
- Children are transported from home to special school.

20. Please further describe the nature of problems you have experienced with special equipment aboard the bus (e.g., respirators, catheters, intravenous equipment, etc.).

- The biggest problem is the student freeing himself/herself from the lap belt. Also the wheelchair tie downs come loose in route and have to be re-secured.
- A systems problem. We appear to be moving from bus transport to ambulance service.
- Tying down equipment.
- Student has to be transported to another school district as part of our Special Ed. Co-op and he has seizures, but we have a phone on our bus and are to stop the bus, call 911 and wait on the side of the road for an ambulance. Our driver knows what to do until the ambulance arrives.
- We hope to eliminate the above problems as we have a new bus ordered with forward facing chair locations and other updated options on it. We are replacing a 1978 model.
- Feeding tube not assisting medical equipment.
- We have not had any problems with the one child and his equipment.
- We usually do not have problems in this area. Most extra equipment is usually mounted to wheelchair.
- We recently began transporting a child that has to be suctioned. We have not experienced any problems with transporting her portable suction machine. Driver aide and Special Ed. Transportation Office staff have received training for this child.
- Determining responsibility for equipment and proper arrangements being made for the transfer (communication), correct usage of oxygen tanks and ventilators by untrained staff until training can be arranged (2 days to 3 weeks).
- Keeping oxygen equipment with student on a number of different buses.
- These students require or have tubes or tracheotomy tubes. There are aides on board these buses to monitor these students.
- Two early childhood students require resuscitation on occasion. Both of these students have personal portable resuscitators.
- We do not serve these students directly and therefore do not have these problems.
- DC to AC current but buses already have the converter.

- Two need to have trained staff ride the bus.
- We had a problem with tie-down straps used to keep a wheelchair in place. We have since removed the straps and replaced them with locks that are attached to the floor of the bus. The locks will lock down the wheelchair.
- Precautions with oxygen bottles.
- Oxygen must be hooked up. Subject to gran mal seizures. Must have medication available.
- We have to be careful where the seat belt is located.
- Driver and aide have had training and we have had no problems.
- One child suffers from severe arthritis and needs a special step to be able to enter a regular Type D route bus. An electrically operated step was installed by a local motor house dealer. However, the step was damaged almost every week because the driver forgot to retract it. We changed the electrical circuit so that the step retracts automatically as soon as the driver closes the door. That solved the problem for now, but I have concerns about the longevity of the product.
- Seals on hydraulic lift need to be replaced 2 or 3 times per year. we probably need to order new cylinders. No other problems.
- Severe multi-handicapped students who are unable to get from bus to door of home unassisted.
- We have a new bus with forward-facing wheelchair positions. We find the 5 point belt system very cumbersome and time consuming. (4 point tie-down on wheelchair plus lap/shoulder belt which is attached at 3 points).
- Only 2 students need respirators on bus.
- IV feeder.
- Proper training for drivers and monitors.
- He has a catheter. We have had no problems.
- Any required item is supplied before transportation begins for the student.
- Portable phone in buses in case of emergency. If so, 911 is available instantly.
- A suction machine is available as needed for one student.

- Transportation is responsible for keeping batteries charged because the equipment is here overnight. We have to make sure the driver and attendant with each student is prepared to use the equipment if needed in route.
- Wheelchairs are not always able to fit or be loaded easily. Some are too bulky; seat belts tangle easily. Seatbelt sizes are not conforming to child size, wheelchair tiedowns are very difficult to work with--no installation instructions. Or, when you get instructions, they are not specific or clear.

21. Please explain the most commonly occurring instances of disabled children being suspended from transportation services due to behavioral problems that could not be solved otherwise?

- We have students that cause daily discipline problems. We have problems with special needs handling those problems.
- Student refuses to stay in seat.
- Threats against bus driver or aide. Violence against driver/aide.
- Fighting, yelling, cursing. Other students' parents request removal. ARD committee agreed.
- Emotional disturbance.
- Both regular and special ed. busing. Aggressive and dangerous behavior toward other students.
- Language that's inappropriate. Knife in possession.
- Autistic child suspended for "health jeopardy."
- Using bad language.
- Cool off days given to students for behavior problems. Cursing, hitting, threatening, etc.
- Shift to one-on-one transportation.
- Fighting, bad language, disrespectful to driver or bus aide.
- All of these students are emotionally disturbed students. These behavior problems are fighting, obscene and foul language, and not remaining in their seats.
- Combative behavior towards peers and/or staff. Exiting bus through rear doors. Threatening behavior directed towards peers or staff.
- Fighting on bus, disrespectful, leaves assigned seat.
- Cursing, fighting among students.
- Child poked bus driver with pencil.
- Behavior problems.

- Constant profanity, aggressive outbursts.
- Aggressive behavior toward driver or other students being transported on the bus. Behavior problems that prevent safe operation of bus or endanger other bus riders.
- Continuous breaking of behavior rules.
- Not known at Co-op.
- Verbal threats ever most common. An aide was needed to monitor the student because of his threats to driver and students.
- None suspended from special ed. transportation. Those suspended were for behavior on regular transportation.
- Fighting, inability to control behavior with peers, refusal to cooperate/comply with bus driver requests.
- Hitting and pinching students.
- Fighting.
- Eligible special education students who are suspended from the regular bus are provided transportation on the special ed. bus or parents are paid to transport the student.
- Most commonly it is an ED. student, sometimes AD whose home life is probably the pits and you feel for the child because you know it isn't their fault that they almost can't behave. Throwing objects, cursing, typical mischief as in other children, simply more pronounced.
- Student uncontrollable by aide/driver.
- Getting out of seats.
- Students are suspended pending an ARD where other arrangements or modifications are made.
- Rude, discourteous, annoying to other students. Staying seated.
- Student was a danger to others.
- Unacceptable language. Failure to stay seated.
- Failure of deaf students to obey the driver on long trips.

- Our ED (emotionally disturbed) children often fight and ridicule our special children. Some are violent and transported separately.
- Very few disabled (special ed) students get bus suspensions because of their "special problems".
- Hitting other students (unsafe behavior).
- Bad language and mean.
- Suspended students have behavioral problems. We do not suspend special students without an ARD meeting.
- Aggressive behavior.
- Cursing.
- Physical violence, failure to follow bus rules.
- Classroom misbehavior--never anything pertaining to bus problems.
- Spitting on monitor/aide.

22. Please explain the most common circumstances of expulsion and how (if) alternative placement was determined.

- The student continued to pose a threat to the driver/aide and to the safe transportation of the other students. Parents agreed to transport at the cost of 27 cents a mile.
- If all else fails, home schooling, visiting teachers.
- School hours were altered instead of expulsion.
- If a child demonstrates a repetitive habit of causing physical harm to others, they can be expelled.
- Students were placed in home schooling by parents due to students actions on the school campus.
- Child was taken off regular bus and put on special ed. bus. Was exposing himself on the other bus.
- They were already in Alternate Education when discipline problem came up.
- ARD committee determined that students were at times uncontrollable and dangerous to the safety of other students and staff. Private contracts with parents were arranged to transport their own children at a rate of \$.25 per mile.
- Behavior harmful to self or others.
- For disruptive behavior. Private handicapped transportation.
- Student was expelled for remainder of school year -- he hit an attendant in the face causing an eye injury.
- Fighting.
- Cutting seats, fighting were common causes, and alternative placement was determined by ARD action.
- Not known at Co-op.
- We had 2 students (ED) who were alternatively placed in another facility in one of our districts. However, we transported them.
- Our school district uses alternate discipline management for special needs students (i.e., points, OCP, privileges, etc.).

- We had to set up an end of the day Special Ed. bus route to take very disruptive students (mainstreamed disabled students) off the regular buses. Their schedules could not be shortened to allow them early release so they could be transported on already running Special Ed. buses.
- Private transportation.
- I have not included the AB/Ed or LD students in this report. There are approximately 200 students in this category and they all ride regular bus routes.

23. Please provide the details (and solutions) for specific problems your school district may have experienced in past years in transporting disabled students which were not specifically addressed above:

- Emotionally disturbed students require more supervision on a bus than one driver and one attendant can provide. The solution is to use the same teacher/pupil ratio for the bus as they have in the classroom.
- No solution has been given with regard to 4 emotionally disturbed students who continue to pose a threat to driver/aide. The students are completely self-contained on the school bus and at school. Their day has been shortened to six hours. TEA has offered no help or advice except to get them to school any way we can. We cannot suspend them from transportation (so we've been told, due to their being labeled ED). Their teacher is now riding with the students, but to no avail.
- We had an outdated bus which had outdated equipment and had to be repaired constantly. The school district purchased a new Blue Bird bus with all the appropriate equipment to transport our students 2 years ago.
- "Slight" Problem: Parents not being at home when their child arrives.
Solution: Parents are required to give an alternate drop off location with phone number and name of person. If no alternate drop off can be provided, child is returned to school. We rarely have a problem with this any longer.
- Student behavior change when weather changes. They tend to be more frustrated during the hot season. It would be helpful if all buses from all districts would furnish air conditioning for the students.
- This District was not prepared for this growth in our area for special needs transportation. We currently have new buses on order.
- We are having air conditioner problems. Parents learn we have several buses with A/C and obtain from the doctor that their son/daughter must have A/C, not knowing that A/C doesn't work or work well on school buses. Often the A/C is a comfort factor, not medical, by then its too late. The Dr. seldom backs down.
- In the past we did not have a vehicle that would accommodate wheelchairs and aides had to lift children in and out of van. We need better in-service or training for drivers to handle students with communicable diseases or first aid emergencies. Current problems -- no way to reach someone in case of vehicle or medical emergencies. Need cellular phone or radio.
- Parents moving every time the rent comes due. Trying to work pick up and drop off times that are convenient with school and parents. Having someone home we can turn student over to.

- Our student was riding in a car seat strapped in a seat. However, this school year he began to really grow taller and larger. The Spec. Ed Director suggested that we get a wheelchair because his small child's wheelchair was too small. She also recommended that we get a bus equipped with a lift and wheelchair restraints and parking. The driver and I had trouble with Administration and School Board, but finally talked them into a customized wheelchair and a van bus with a lift.
- Receiving proper communication concerning ARD and Health information on students.
- Behavior of students is our #1 problem. We have one student with MS or MD that rides a regular bus. Students, teacher's aide, and driver gives assistance when needed.
- Getting the bus monitor to be more aware of what is going on.
- Length of routes.
- Having enough bus drivers is always our major problem.
- None other than expense of running a bus for a single student.
- We had a problem because the student was in a wheelchair. We got a van with a lift. This solved our problem.
- In most instances the disabled children live in directly opposite sites in the district. We have to run two buses so that the children will not have to be on the bus more than 40 minutes each run. If we used an aide to ride the regular 71 passenger bus, the aide would have to leave the transportation building at 6:25 a.m. each morning.
- Amount of time bus has to stay on route.
- Maybe we are sheltered or else have a great system. We very seldom have problems with our handicapped kids. We do have cameras on some routes, but not on the route which serves the handicapped. (It is a regular bus route as well.)
- No specific problems have been experienced in the past year.
- The only children we transport are deaf students to a regional day school. No special equipment is needed. The mother of the deaf student drives the bus. She uses sign language to communicate.
- Replacement of older buses with new buses with updated safety equipment.
- Few solutions. Mostly new problems.

- Problem: Loading massive numbers of wheelchair students (sometimes 10 to 12 per bus) presents special problems even with trying to walk down the middle of the bus. Just imagine what it would be like to try to do an emergency evacuation of these students.
Education (Solution?): With more mainstreaming of students, use 3 and 4 wheelchair capacity buses, promoting better and safer individual care for each student. This is a very expensive option. Perhaps a "state" contract.
- Too many wheelchair students and not enough room. Can only carry 2 wheelchair students at a time. Another student has stroller type chair that slides at every turn because the wheelchair restraints are not enough for this student.
- We have a shortage of bus driver applicants who have their CDL license and are certified to drive a school bus. We have found no solution for this problem, but would welcome any suggestions on how to contact these people, especially to use as substitutes.
- No one at home to receive wheelchair bound students when bus arrives in p.m. Parents want driver to wheel child into house.
- A child needing door-to-door services lived in a housing project on private property. Initially, the directions to the driver were to pick up and deliver the student at the entrance of the project rather than enter private property. After reviewing the child's needs, a decision was made to have the driver enter private property and provide door-to-door service. The area for the bus to turn around was limited and a concern for liability was at issue. The parents moved vehicles to create a larger area for the bus to maneuver more safely.
- Purchasing air conditioned buses for burn patients and asthma sufferers.
- Although we do not have specially trained drivers, we have four who are adequate enough for special transportation. We would like to have a training program.
- Need to add more special ed routes due to inclusion.
- Helping transportation staff understand the individual needs, goals and behavior of students, and appreciating the need for consistent procedures. Getting all staff (transportation and special ed) to view the bus as an extension of the classroom and that all are teams.
- Efficiency in operation of route to meet all the needs of students in respect to time in school.
- The schedules are not always convenient to parents. Parents not home to receive students. Long bus routes for students due to large area in our district.

- In times past we have had problems related to where we should pick up and deliver our handicapped children. They may have a permanent address in our district but the mothers would ask us to deliver the children or pick up the children many miles away at a babysitter's or grandparents house. There do not seem to be any set rules for these kinds of problems.
- Child safety seats and wheelchairs should have more stringent requirements for school bus vehicle transportation. Today's transportation involves more infants and buses are not designed for infant seats. SOLUTION: To increase school bus safety, Integrated Child Restraint Seat by C.E. White Company will be looked into.
- Had a student who was mentally retarded that would not stay seated and could undo her seat belt as the van was taking her home. She would get mad and slap the students and sometimes the bus driver if he was not assertive. She has since left the district.
- Addition of students adding to length of route. Solution is to periodically brainstorm with map to be most efficient in running of route. Solution is to periodically brainstorm with map to be most efficient in running of route. Need to run additional routes for physically aggressive students so they are not transported with young students/mentally retarded student/fragile student.
- Safety vest did not come in large enough size. No one will modify due to liability reasons.
- Our school district has developed an alternative school for the emotionally disturbed. In transporting the students, our transportation department picks up individual students when going from their regular campus to their alternative campus. This is not used during regular bus routes, only during school time.
- I am not aware of any problems from the past. However, I am leery of future problems associated with transportation from Section 504 and ADA. I am afraid that the potential cost of transporting these persons, if each is fully implemented could place a burden on the local taxpayer. If funding for these requirements are provided by the state or federal governments; them, we as a district, can possibly meet the needs of both of these requirements. If, however, neither the state or federal governments put any money into the program, I feel we will not be able to fund the programs, on the local level, without placing an undue burden on the local taxpayers.
- Not receiving enough information on students.
- Our biggest problem is having someone at home in the afternoon to accept special students from bus. And getting one specific student on the bus and seated sometimes takes us 5-7 minutes. No physical reason, just stubborn--hearing impaired.

- We need to send our special drivers to a comprehensive first aide course. We are lucky in one way and that is that our driver is also employed by the special ed cooperative.
- Problem--dealer installed wheel chair locks (1987 model)--will not fit new wheel chair designs. Solution--we installed an aeroquip wheel chair tie down system (4 point) with two adjustable and two rachetting tie down straps per chair.
Problem--A type A school bus allows the installation of only one forward facing wheel chair position because of the limited space available. Solution--buy a bigger bus.
Problem--presently we do not have a spare wheel chair bus. Solution--very well planned preventive maintenance. Budget for a new bus and use the old one as a backup.
- We are fortunate to only have 1 disabled student in our district requiring transportation. The child is transported in a van to an area school that provides specialized services. We are currently co-oping with another school utilizing their specialized equipped vehicle. Our school does not have vehicles equipped for transportation of disabled students due to funding and the lack of need at this time. It is anticipated that we will contract these services if the need becomes greater.
- Sometimes parents are not home and it creates a problem, because we have to keep the student on the bus until his/her parent arrives.
- We contract with Dallas County transportation. We encounter no problems with our students and bus transportation.
- The wheelchair bound child is transported to the school for speech therapy. She is loaded by an incline ramp at the back of the bus and secured at the back of the bus. A lift on the side of the bus would be safer for loading and unloading. This is the only child transported on this bus. We transport 7 children to another school district, which is 40 miles one way trip. These children are placed in restraint seat belts for the trip.
- Could use assistance for bus driver.
- Our district has a policy of providing a monitor on each route. By doing so, we eliminate most behavioral problems. Our monitors communicate constantly with the teachers and aides using their methods when dealing with the children. Our most recent concern is the significant number of ED students and their behavior. Some of these students pose a potential danger in the overall safety of the bus. We are currently focusing on this; trying various methods.
- At times we have had to run two routes to transport students to vocational job sites, etc.