

Mileage Reimbursement Rates

Effective January 1, 2024, the State Mileage Rate is \$.70

Regular Resident District Students: 285% of \$.70 = \$1.9950

Enrollment Option Reimbursement: 142.5% of \$.70 = \$.9975

Here are the steps to calculate the daily pupil transportation reimbursement rate:

1. Determine one-way distance from school
2. Subtract three miles
3. Multiply by current rate

*See student list

State Statute 79-611 requires public schools to provide transportation or pay reimbursement to parents in lieu of transportation for students who live four miles or more from school. Actual reimbursement starts from mile 3.

To pay ALL of our families to drive their own children to school is \$251,354

First Student Contract

Days are set for 175 days, not 176

Description of Service	Unit	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Standard Bus	Per Day, Per Route-Round Trip	\$444.95 (24%)	\$525.04 (18%)	\$551.29 (5%)
Activity Trip	Per Mile	\$3.55	\$4.18	\$4.39
Minimum Trip Charge	Per Trip	\$70.89	\$83.65	\$87.83
Sitting Time	Per Hour	\$29.61	\$34.94	\$36.96
Canceled Trip Fee (No 24-notice)	Per Trip	\$70.89	\$83.65	\$87.83
Buses brought into district for activities	Per Mile	\$2.55	\$3.01	\$3.16
Bus Monitor	Per Hour	N/A	N/A	N/A

Daily Routes in 2023-24 for 175 days=\$188,385.75 (Contracted)

2026-27 contracted amount will be \$294,446.93

Actual costs \$181,567.99

Activity Routes in 2023-24=\$36,673.68

2026-27 amount with same % increase is \$56,330.77

Extra Fuel Charges=\$5528.32

Percentage change of 53.6% from 2023-24 to 2026-27

Reimbursement for routes that qualify is at 65% reimbursement. Homer Community School received \$252,725 in the 2024/25 state aid certification document.

Winnebago Route

We transport 32 students worth \$48,000 of foundation aid, \$1500 per child (approximately).

We paid \$8998.50 to parents to transport their child to school. This is a 100% reimbursement for the school, so the net cost is zero.

If we were to pay 4 van drivers, this would be \$38,016 for salary only, which would only be reimbursable at 65%. This would cost the district \$13,305.60 +other costs. (Keep paying the families).

Activity example and comparison

First Student

Homer to Laurel 86 miles x \$3.55 per mile = \$305.30

South Sioux to 22 miles x \$2.55 per mile =\$56.10

Total \$361.40

Homer Community School Running Route

Homer to Laurel 86 miles x Gas (14.33 gallons x \$3.85 per gallon)=\$55.18 + wear and tear of 86x \$.17 per mile= 14.62 for a total of \$69.80

Two hours of drive time at \$25= \$50

Five hours of seat time at \$23 =\$115

Total \$234.80 (35% less)

Activity 3 month Average

December \$4700

January \$3900

February \$3600

Average \$4066.67 (35% less is \$2643.34)

Not including

Benefit, bus insurance, storage, purchase/lease of vehicle

Purchasing our own fleet-Not really an option.

Leasing our fleet

I contacted Kevin Jochum from Cornhusker International-They have a lease option for busing.

1. Paying Parents for Transportation ("Parent Contracts")

- Districts can pay parents or guardians mileage reimbursement if the district cannot provide transportation.
 - Rates are typically based on IRS mileage rates or a set district rate.
 - Often used for:
 - Remote/rural students
 - Special education students with transportation needs (per IEP)
 - Students attending a nonresident district under open enrollment (sometimes)
 - Must be formally agreed upon and documented in the district's transportation policies.
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2. Fewer Routes / Route Consolidation

- Combine existing bus routes to serve more students with fewer buses.
 - Longer ride times are possible, but fewer drivers and less equipment needed.
 - Some districts also stagger start times between elementary and secondary schools to reuse buses across grade levels.
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3. Designated Pick-Up and Drop-Off Points ("Cluster Stops")

- Instead of house-to-house pick-up, create centralized stops (e.g., a church, community center, gas station).
 - Reduces drive time and mileage, speeds up routes.
 - Must balance efficiency with student safety (distance to stops, busy streets, etc.).
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4. Drop-Off Only at School / Limited Return Options

- Some districts only offer one-way service (e.g., morning pick-up only, or afternoon drop-off only).
 - Families handle transportation the other half of the day if needed.
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5. Use of Vans or Smaller Vehicles

- For low-population areas, special education students, or specific programs.
 - Nebraska allows vans (under 10 passengers) under alternative vehicle policies if properly documented and drivers meet requirements (not a CDL bus license, but still training/screening).
 - Often cheaper to maintain than large buses.
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6. Collaborative Transportation (Shared Services)

- Small neighboring districts share buses or drivers.
 - Often used in ESU cooperatives or where interlocal agreements are in place.
 - Helps rural districts especially when driver shortages hit.
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7. Third-Party Transportation Providers

- Contract with private bus companies or specialized student transportation services.
 - Outsources maintenance, liability, and hiring.
 - Sometimes expensive but helpful if the district can't recruit drivers.
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8. Walking/Biking Incentives

- For in-town students who live within a walkable distance (usually 2 miles or less).
 - Some districts create safe walking maps or encourage walking school buses (groups walking together with adult volunteers).
 - Note: You usually can't deny transportation if the distance exceeds state-defined limits without a formal waiver.
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9. Flex Transportation Options for Special Education

- Special education students with transportation written into their IEPs may need specialized solutions (individual drivers, aides on buses, door-to-door service).
 - Rule 91 and special education funding allows flexibility here, but compliance is key.
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Bonus: "In-Lieu-of Transportation"

- If a district cannot reasonably provide transportation due to distance or hardship, they can offer "in-lieu-of transportation" payments instead — formalized under Nebraska law (especially for extremely remote students).

Things to Watch Out For:

- Policy updates: Any change to transportation must be board-approved and included in the student handbook.
- Equity: Changes must comply with equal access laws, including Title VI (civil rights), IDEA (special ed), and McKinney-Vento (homeless students).
- Reimbursement: Nebraska Department of Education provides state aid for transportation, but only if minimum standards are met (like distance traveled, number of eligible students, etc.).