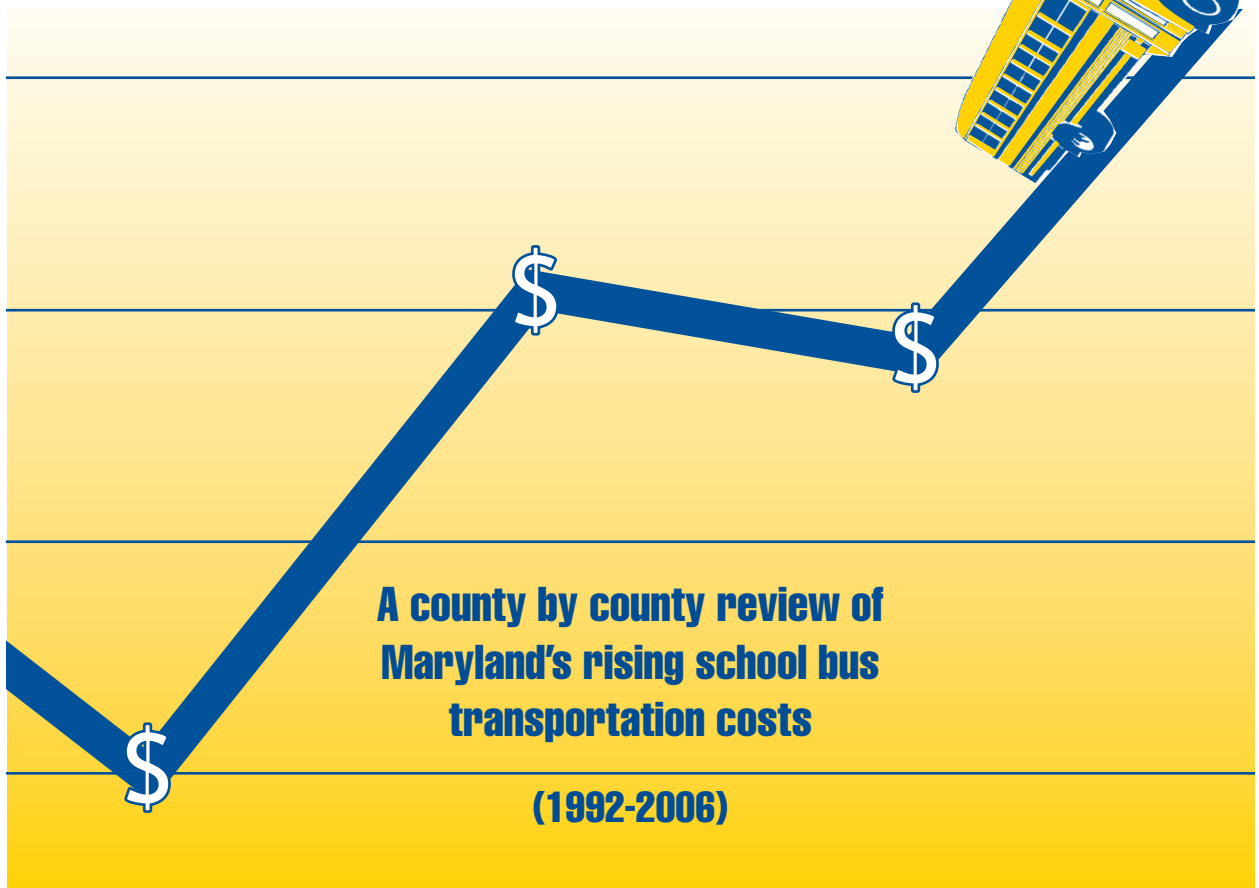
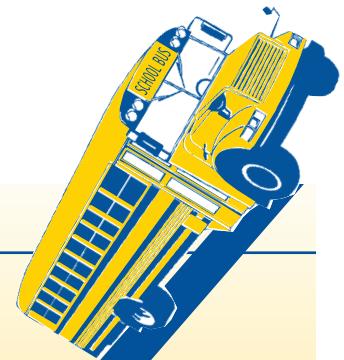


# Yellow SCHOOL BUS Blues





**Smart growth better supports schools and makes communities stronger. School budgets are too tight to have scarce dollars disappear out of school bus tail pipes.**

# Executive Summary

**T**he location and design of new development greatly affects the costs incurred by governments and taxpayers. Public schools are no exception. Decisions about where to locate new schools and whether to maintain existing neighborhood schools have major consequences for strained budgets. Broader local and state policies that can encourage low-density development outside existing communities also affect school budgets.

*Yellow School Bus Blues* documents one hidden cost of Maryland's recent development patterns. The report examines the rapidly increasing school bus budget. Since 1992 statewide expenditures for school bus transportation have more than doubled, to \$438 million.

*Yellow School Bus Blues* is a snapshot look at the cost of getting Maryland students to school. The data gathered by 1000 Friends from the Maryland Department of Education's Office of Pupil Transportation End-of-Year reports from 1992-2006 include the total miles traveled, total pupils transported, and the total expenditures for each Maryland county.\*

While there are other factors that affect these costs such as inflation, wage increases, rise in gas prices, and the need to open or close local schools, *Yellow School Bus Blues* focuses on two issues local governments can control. Local governments' decisions affect the number of students in the county and where these students live. Land use decisions also determine if schools are located so that students can walk or bike to school.

## Key Findings

- From 1992 to 2006 the total miles traveled by all Maryland county school buses increased by 25%. Maryland school buses now travel over 117.2 million miles a year, a 23 million mile increase!
- Statewide, school bus costs rose 104%. The combined county budgets rose from \$215 million spent in 1992 to \$438 million in 2006. In just under 15 years cost to bus students more than doubled.
- 9 out of 23 Maryland counties saw their total expenditures increase by more than 100%.
- 5 of 23 counties saw their transportation budgets increase despite a decrease in the number of students they transported.

## Recommendations

1000 Friends of Maryland supports policies that:

- Maintain existing neighborhood schools.
- Locate new schools where more students can walk or bike to school.
- Connect schools with bike lanes and sidewalks to make it safe for students to get to or from schools.

Smart growth better supports schools and makes communities stronger. School budgets are too tight to have scarce dollars disappear out of school bus tail pipes.

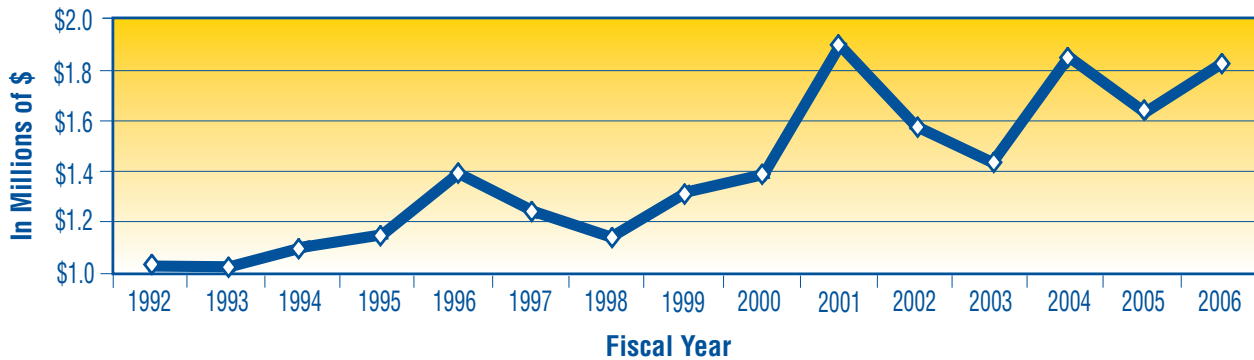
\* Note: full data tables can be found at [www.friendsofmd.org](http://www.friendsofmd.org)



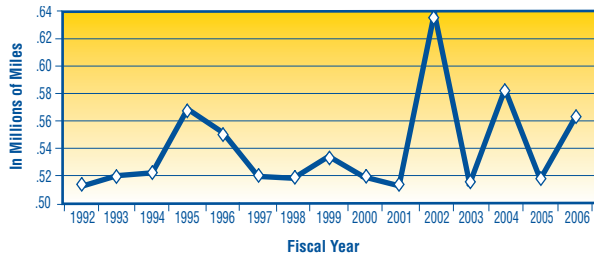
# Talbot County

Talbot County experienced an 82% increase in total expenditures. Its school bus budget reached \$1.8 million in 2006, more than an \$800,000 increase since 1992. The number of students transported decreased 16%, yet during this same time the number of miles traveled by buses increased 11%. The annual cost per student rose 117%, from \$311 in 1992 to \$675 in 2006.

### Total Expenditures



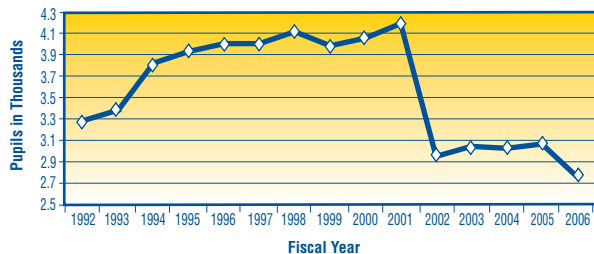
### Total Route Miles



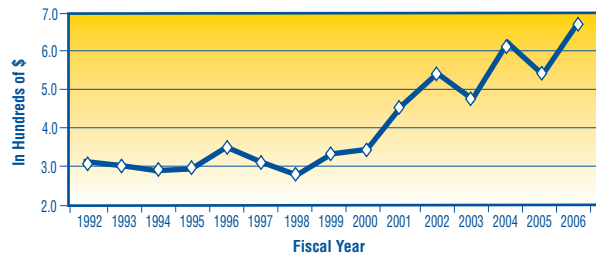
### Overall Trend

Fiscal Year	Expenditures Per Pupil	Total Expenditures	Total Pupils Transported	Total Route Miles
1992	\$311.36	\$1,016,579	3,265	510,948
2006	\$675.86	\$1,849,156	2,736	565,362

### Total Pupils Transported



### Total Expenditures Per Pupil





Over fifteen years Maryland saw a tremendous increase in its school bus budget and miles traveled. The total route miles traveled increased 25%. The number of pupils transported rose 28%, and the average expenditures per pupil in the state increased from \$459 to \$734. The total cost to bus students in Maryland more than doubled by increasing 104% from \$214.8 million in 1992 to \$437.8 million in 2006.

# State Overview

### Total State Expenditures



### Total Route Miles: All Counties



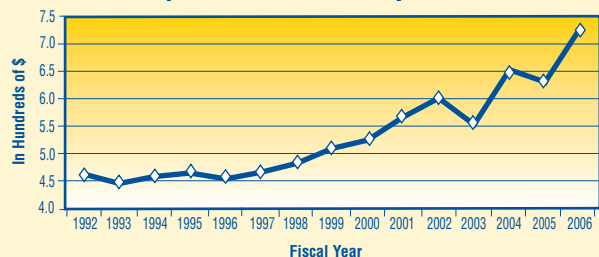
### Overall Trend in State Totals

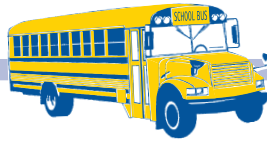
Fiscal Year	Expenditures Per Pupil	Total Expenditures	Total Pupils Transported	Total Route Miles
1992	\$462.60	\$214,817,603	464,375	93,861,680
2006	\$733.91	\$437,781,016	596,503	117,194,801

### Total Pupils Transported: All Counties



### Total Expenditures Per Pupil: All Counties





1000 Friends of Maryland  
1209 N. Calvert Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
tel: 410.385.2910  
[www.friendsofmd.org](http://www.friendsofmd.org)