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Draft

School Transportation and Students with Significant Disabilities: A Cost Analysis Strategy

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to compare the transportation costs associated with three kinds of schools used to provide educational and related services to the vast majority of students with significant intellectual and related disabilities in the USA: home schools, clustered schools and segregated - special - separate schools. A home school is the public school a student would likely attend if she/he was not disabled. A clustered school serves students without disabilities, but it also serves unnatural or disproportionately large numbers of students with disabilities. A segregated -separate school is one that serves only students with disabilities.

Introduction

In 1975 Public Law 94 -142 was passed and for the first time in USA history all children with disabilities were afforded legal rights to tax supported educations. Prior to 1975 approximately one million children in the USA were excluded from public education. Most were among the lowest intellectually functioning 1 - 2% of the extant school age population. Most of the remainder was children with significant physical disabilities and those referred to as severely emotionally disturbed/behavior disordered. This law also mandated that students with disabilities had legal rights to individually appropriate" related services". These included, but were not limited to, occupational, physical and speech and language therapies, psychological services and specialized transportation. Since 1975 the law has been modified and

reauthorized many times. Each time the legal rights of all children to educational and related services have been affirmed (**references**).

In 1975 most public school officials reasoned that the new students they were legally required to serve were similar to, or extensions of, others they were serving. As most school districts operated clustered and/or segregated schools for students who were then referred to as blind, deaf, orthopedically handicapped, emotionally disturbed and mentally retarded, the overwhelming majority of the new students were assigned to clustered or segregated schools. It was inconceivable to almost all that the formerly excluded children who were considered by extant professionals to be too disabled to attend public schools could or should be allowed in home schools. When school administrators decided to locate educational and related services in clustered and segregated schools, they were also responsible for transporting the students from home to school and back. In almost all instances specialized - segregated - separate - handicapped only - transportation services were provided at taxpayer expense.

A Priori Hypotheses

Many, if Not most, school experiences are means to important ends. The ends of concern here are individuals with disabilities living, working and playing in integrated society at school exit and beyond. Thus, when students with disabilities exit school they should be able to walk, wheel or otherwise travel about their communities on public busses and trains, in car pools and in taxi cabs by themselves and with individuals who are and are not disabled to and from a wide variety of vocational, recreation/leisure and general community settings. If they are not taught integrated travel skills during school years, chances are great they will not be developed later. Unfortunately, if they are dependent upon specialized transportation services in post school years, their work, recreation/leisure and other general community environments and activities will be unnecessarily restricted.

Most of the money needed to pay for specialized transportation services comes from the pockets of taxpayers and flows through the budgets of the federal government, individual states and local school districts. However, just because students with disabilities have legal rights to specialized transportation services does not mean they should actually use them. As little as possible should be spent transporting students with disabilities to and from school. As much as possible should be spent on important instructional and related services. The requests, demands, judgments and wishes of parents are important, but rarely sufficient to justify providing unnecessary specialized transportation services. Parents, as contributing members of educational and related service teams, may influence the transportation services are provided. However, safety, cost - benefit ratios, social relationship development and that which best prepares a student for an integrated and productive post school life must be honored when deciding upon transportation services during school years. Finally, assume an important educational or related service is Not portable; i.e. It can only be provided in a specific place. If a student with disabilities actually needs a Nonportable service, we must transport her/him to and from it. Fortunately, most, if Not all, important educational or related services are portable. It is usually better for service providers to travel to and from schools than for students with disabilities to travel to and from services. Unfortunately, the inverse is the state of the practice.

Home Schools

For many good reasons, federal law requires that a school placement be provided in an individually appropriate educational setting as close to home as possible - the least restrictive environment. It also requires that if an IEP does not describe specific restrictions, an individual is to be educated in the school he/ she would attend if Not disabled - her/his home school. "Home" rather than "neighborhood"

is used to refer to the schools of concern here because many students without disabilities do not attend schools in their neighborhoods for several reasons.

So contact with students who are perceived as negative influences can be escaped, reduced or avoided.

Some districts operate “magnet” schools and students choose to travel long distances and experience the associated inconveniences in order to attend them.

Some districts transport large numbers of students across traditional attendance boundaries for racial balance purposes.

Some schools set aside percentages of their capacities and allow “choice” or “random selection” to a limited number of students who do not live in their immediate attendance zones.

Clustered Schools

Clustered schools are a regular/ general education schools that are attended by an unnaturally large proportion of students with disabilities. Often, a regular/general education school in a specific attendance zone with available space is selected and three, four or five classes of students with disabilities are placed or otherwise established therein. For some with disabilities it may be their home school. However, for the overwhelming majority of students with disabilities, the clustered school is not the one they would attend if they were not disabled

Segregated - Separate - Special Schools

Segregated, separate, special schools are attended only by students with disabilities. Their very nature requires specialized transportation services. Typically, the only persons without disabilities involved are paid to be there. Most students who attend segregated schools must spend extraordinary amounts of time and energy traveling relatively long distances getting to and from.

Sources of Information

It is intended that this instrument could be adapted rather easily and used for many purposes. First, it may be of interest to the study school transit related phenomena associated with an individual student. Parents may be interested in the best transit options for their child. Teachers and therapists may be interested in designing the best transit component of an IEP. School and district level administrators may be interested in the most cost efficient transportation option for a particular student. Second, the instrument can be used to study transit related issues associated with two rather than the three school options delineated. It should also be rather easy to adapt it for use with school options not delineated. Third, it can be used in mediation and due process hearings and other judicial procedures as an information gathering aid to dispute resolution. Fourth, it can be used by school boards and other policy making bodies interested in generating the most fiscally sound educational and related services for large numbers of students.

The information contained in this cost analysis study was or will be obtained from at least the following sources.

- _____ interviews of parents of students with disabilities - live/phone/email
- _____ parent records of school experiences
- _____ student IEP'S
- _____ cumulative school records of students
- _____ Special Education teacher records
- _____ Special Education teacher interviews - live/phone/email
- _____ Special Education administrator records
- _____ Special Education administrator interviews - live/phone/email
- _____ case manager records
- _____ case manager interviews - live/phone/email
- _____ district level school administrator records

- _____ district level school administrator interviews - live/phone/email
- _____ transportation department records
- _____ transportation administrator interviews - live/phone/email
- _____ district business office records
- _____ district level business administrator interviews - live/phone/email
- _____ the school district website
- _____ direct observations
- _____

District Level School Attendance Information

The number of students with special education classifications and IEPs who live in the district and attend different kinds of schools during the 20____ - 20____ school year is presented in Table 1

Table 1. District Students with Disabilities Who Attend Different Kinds of Schools in 20__ 20__

<u>Kind of School</u>	<u>Number</u>
Home public schools	_____
Clustered public schools within the district	_____
Clustered public schools out of the district	_____
Clustered private schools within the district	_____
Clustered private schools out of the district	_____
Segregated public schools within the district	_____
Segregated public schools out of the district	_____

Segregated private schools within the district	_____
Segregated private schools out of the district	_____
Private general education schools within the district	_____
Private general education schools out of the district	_____

Total	_____

Transporting An Individual Student To and From School

The task here is to determine selected transportation and related experiences of an individual student with disabilities. Data gathered in relation to individuals will be collated across students and reported as district level information.

The name or identification number of the student is

The kind of school the student attended is

- _____ a home school.
- _____ a clustered public school within the district.
- _____ a clustered public school out of the district.
- _____ a clustered private school within the district.
- _____ a clustered private school out of the district.
- _____ a segregated public school within the district.
- _____ a segregated public school out of the district.
- _____ a segregated private school within the district.

_____ a segregated private school out of the district.

_____ a private general education school within the district.

_____ a private general education school out of the district.

If this student was not functioning in her/his home school, report the reasons.

_____ The district does not provide the services needed in her/his home school.

_____ Students of her/his functioning levels are not allowed in their home schools.

_____ Students with her/his special education label are not allowed in their home schools.

_____ A family must win in a due process or mediation hearing before their child will be allowed to function in his/her home school.

_____ The principal of her/his home school would Not allow her/him to attend.

_____ Her/his parents do not want him/her to attend the home school.

Are there valid educational reasons why this student was not based in her/his home public school?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If Yes, report the valid reasons.

Distance From Home To School

The student lived _____ miles from his/her home school.

The student lived _____ miles from the clustered school he/she attended, if he/she did not attend his/her home school.

The student lived _____ miles from the segregated school he/she attended, if he/she did not attend his/her home school.

If she/he did Not attend her/his home school, the clustered or segregated school he/she attended was _____ miles farther from her/his home than is his/her home school.

Time In Transit

This student typically left home for school at _____ am.

This student typically arrived at school from home at _____ am.

The amount of time per day the student spent traveling from home to school was _____ min.

This student typically left school for home at _____ pm.

This student typically arrived home from school at _____ pm.

The amount of time per day this student spent traveling from school to home was _____ min.

The total amount of time per day this student spent traveling from home to school and from school to home was _____ min.

Transportation Modes

This student typically traveled from home to school as follows.

- ___ walked
- ___ rode a bicycle
- ___ ambulated in her/his wheel chair
- ___ small van
- ___ typical large school bus
- ___ public bus
- ___ train
- ___ taxi
- ___ private limousine
- ___ vehicle of parents
- ___

This student typically traveled from school to home as follows.

- ___ walked
- ___ rode a bicycle
- ___ ambulated in her/his wheel chair
- ___ small van

_____ typical large school bus

_____ public bus

_____ train

_____ taxi

_____ private limousine

_____ vehicle of parents

Travel Companions

Are there valid reasons why this student cannot go to and from school with and as do his/her brothers, sisters, friends and/neighbors?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If Yes, report the reasons.

This student typically traveled from home to school with

_____ No one - alone

_____ other students with disabilities

_____ students without disabilities

_____ students with and without disabilities

_____ siblings

_____ parents

_____ paid adults.

_____ adult volunteers.

This student typically traveled from school to home with

_____ no one - alone.

_____ other students with disabilities.

_____ students without disabilities.

_____ students with and without disabilities.

_____ siblings.

_____ parents.

_____ paid adults.

_____ adult volunteers.

Individual Student Travel Costs

The annual cost of transporting this student to and from his/her home to her/his home school was, or would be if she/he attended his/her home school \$_____.

The annual cost of transporting this student to and from her/his home to the clustered school she /he attends, if she attends one was \$_____.

The annual cost of transporting this student to and from his/her home to the segregated school she attends if she attends one was \$_____.

If the student did not attend her/his home school but would be moved to it, a saving in transportation costs of \$_____per school year would result.

Summary

The student attended a ___home ___ clustered ___ segregated school.

The school the student attended was _____ miles from her/his home.

The home school of the student was _____ miles from her/his home.

The student spent _____ minutes per day traveling to and from the school she/he attended.

If the student attended his/her home school, she/he would have spent _____ minutes per day traveling to and from school.

The student typically traveled to and from school with _____.

If the student attended his/her home school, she/he would quite likely have traveled with _____.

The annual cost of transporting this student to and from the school he/she attends was _____.

If the student attended his/her home school, the annual transportation cost would have been _____.

Transporting All Students With Disabilities To And From Schools

Table 2 contains information pertaining to the kind of schools all district students with disabilities attend the range of miles they live from their schools and the average number of miles they travel each day to get from their homes to their schools and back.

Table 1. Distances From Homes To Schools Disaggregated By Kind Of School

<u>Kind of school</u>	<u>Range</u>		<u>Average</u>
Home schools	_____	to _____	_____
Clustered public schools within the district	_____	to _____	_____
Clustered public schools out of the district	_____	to _____	_____
Clustered private schools within the district	_____	to _____	_____
Clustered private schools out of the district	_____	to _____	_____
All clustered schools	_____	to _____	_____
Segregated public schools within the district	_____	to _____	_____
Segregated public schools out of the district	_____	to _____	_____
Segregated private schools within the district	_____	to _____	_____
Segregated Private schools out of the district	_____	to _____	_____
All segregated schools	_____	to _____	_____
Private general education schools within the district	_____	to _____	_____
Private general education schools out of the district	_____	to _____	_____
	_____	to _____	_____

The total number of students with disabilities who attend home schools in the district is _____.

The total number of miles students with disabilities live from the home schools they attend ranges from _____ to _____.

The average of number of miles students with disabilities live from the home schools they attend is _____.

The total number of students with disabilities who attend clustered schools both within and out of the district is _____.

The total number of students with disabilities who attend clustered schools within the district is _____.

The total number of miles students with disabilities live from the clustered schools they attend in the district ranges from _____ to _____.

The average of number of miles students with disabilities live from the clustered schools they attend in the district is _____.

The total number of students with disabilities who attend clustered schools out of the district is _____.

The total number of miles students with disabilities live from the clustered schools they attend out of the district ranges from _____ to _____.

The average of number of miles students with disabilities live from the clustered schools they attend out of the district is _____.

The total number of students with disabilities who attend segregated schools both within and out of the district is _____.

The total number of students with disabilities who attend segregated schools in the district is _____.

The total number of miles students with disabilities live from the segregated schools they attend in the district ranges from _____ to _____.

The average of number of miles students with disabilities live from the segregated schools they attend in the district is _____.

The total number of students with disabilities who attend segregated schools out of the district is _____.

The total number of miles students with disabilities live from the segregated schools they attend out of the district ranges from _____ to _____.

The average of number of miles students with disabilities live from the segregated schools they attend out of the district is _____.

Table 3 contains information pertaining to the kind of schools students with disabilities attend, the range of times they spend getting to and from their schools and the average amount of time they spend getting to and from their schools each day.

Table 3. Travel Times from Homes To Schools Disaggregated By Kind Of School

<u>Kind Of School</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Average</u>
Home schools	_____ to _____	_____
Clustered public schools within the district	_____ to _____	_____
Clustered public schools out of the district	_____ to _____	_____
Clustered private schools within the district	_____ to _____	_____

Clustered private schools out of the district	_____	to	_____	_____
All clustered schools	_____	to	_____	_____
Segregated public schools within the district	_____	to	_____	_____
Segregated public schools out of the district	_____	to	_____	_____
Segregated private schools within the district	_____	to	_____	_____
Segregated private schools out of the district	_____	to	_____	_____
All segregated schools	_____	to	_____	_____
Private general education schools within the district	_____	to	_____	_____
Private general education schools out of the district	_____	to	_____	_____
	_____	to	_____	_____
	_____	to	_____	_____

The total amounts of times per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from home schools each day range from _____ min to _____ min.

The average amount of time per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from home schools each day is _____ min.

The total amounts of times per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from clustered schools in the district range from _____ min to _____ min.

The average amount of time per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from clustered schools in the district is _____ min.

The total amounts of time per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from clustered schools out of the district range from _____ min to _____ min.

The average amount of time per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from clustered schools out of the district is _____ min.

The total amounts of times per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from segregated schools in the district range from _____ min to _____ min.

The average amount of time per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from segregated schools in the district is _____ min.

The total amounts of time per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from segregated schools out of the district range from _____ min to _____ min.

The average amount of time per day students with disabilities spend in transit to and from segregated schools out of the district is _____ min.

Table 4 contains information pertaining to students with disabilities who attend their home schools and the different kinds of companions who travel to and from school with them. The percentages of different kinds of companions all students with disabilities travel to and from home schools with are also presented.

Table 4. To And From Home School Travel Companions Disaggregated By Kind Of Companion

<u>Kind of companion</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
No one - alone.	_____	_____%
Other students with disabilities	_____	_____%
Students without disabilities	_____	_____%

Students with and without disabilities	_____	_____%
Siblings	_____	_____%
Parents	_____	_____%
Paid adults	_____	_____%
Adult volunteers	_____	_____%
	_____	_____%
	Total	100%%

As can be discerned from table 4 _____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend home schools travel to and from them with students who are not disabled.

_____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend home schools travel to and from them with _____.

_____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend home schools travel to and from them with _____.

_____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend home schools travel to and from them with _____.

Table 5 contains information pertaining to students with disabilities who attend clustered schools and the different kinds of companions who travel to and from school with them. The percentages of different kinds of companions all the students with disabilities travel to and from clustered schools with are also presented.

Table 5. To And From Clustered School Travel Companions Disaggregated By Kind Of Companion

<u>Kind Of Companion</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
No one - alone	_____	_____
Other students with disabilities	_____	_____
Students without disabilities	_____	_____
Students with and without disabilities	_____	_____
Siblings	_____	_____
Parents	_____	_____
Paid adults	_____	_____
Adult volunteers	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Total	_____	100%

As can be discerned from Table 5 _____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend clustered schools travel to and from them with students who are not disabled.

_____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend clustered schools travel to and from them with

_____.

_____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend clustered schools travel to and from them with

_____.

_____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend clustered schools travel to and from them with

_____.

Table 6 contains information pertaining to students with disabilities who attend segregated schools and the different kinds of companions who travel to and from school with them. The percentages of different kinds of companions all the students with disabilities travel to and from segregated schools with are also presented.

Table 6. To And From Segregated School Travel Companions Disaggregated By Kind Of Companion

<u>Kind Of Companion</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
No one - alone	_____	_____
Other students with disabilities	_____	_____
Students without disabilities	_____	_____
Students with and without disabilities	_____	_____
Siblings	_____	_____
Parents	_____	_____
Paid adults	_____	_____
Adult volunteers	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Total	_____	100%

As can be discerned from Table 6, _____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend segregated schools travel from home to school and back with students who are not disabled.

_____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend segregated schools travel from home to school and back with _____.

_____ or _____% of the _____ students with disabilities who attend segregated schools travel to and from them with _____.

District Level Transportation Costs In The 20-- – 20-- school year

Table 7 contains information pertaining to the total and average annual travel costs associated with the kinds of schools students with disabilities attended and the number who attended each.

Table 7. Total And Average Annual Travel Costs Disaggregated By kind Of School

<u>Kind Of School</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>	<u>Average</u>
Home schools	_____	_____	_____
All clustered schools	_____	_____	_____

Clustered public schools within district	_____	_____	_____
Clustered public schools out of district	_____	_____	_____
Clustered private schools within district	_____	_____	_____
Clustered private schools out of district	_____	_____	_____
All segregated schools	_____	_____	_____
Segregated public schools within district	_____	_____	_____
Segregated public schools out of district	_____	_____	_____
Segregated private schools within district	_____	_____	_____
Segregated private schools out of district	_____	_____	_____
Private general ed schools within district	_____	_____	_____
Private general ed schools out of district	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
Total	_____	_____	_____

During the 20-- -20-- school year, the district transported a total of _____ students with and without disabilities from their homes to schools and back.

During the 20--- – 20--- school year, the total district transportation budget for students without disabilities was _____.

During the 20____ -20____ school year, the district transported a total of _____ students without disabilities from homes to schools and back.

The average number of miles students without disabilities traveled to and from schools was _____.

The average annual cost per mile of transporting students without disabilities to and from schools was \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting students without disabilities to and from schools was \$_____.

During the 20-- -20-- school year, the district transported a total of _____ students with disabilities from homes to schools and back.

The average number of miles students with disabilities traveled to and from schools was _____.

The average annual cost per mile of transporting students with disabilities to and from schools was \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting students with disabilities to and from schools was \$_____.

The total number of district students who attended home schools is _____.

The total annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the home schools they attended is \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the home schools they attended is \$_____.

The total annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the clustered schools they attended both within and out of the district is \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the clustered schools they attended both within and out of the district is \$_____.

The total annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the within district clustered schools they attended is \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the within district clustered schools they attended is \$_____.

The total annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the out of district clustered schools they attended is \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the out of district clustered schools they attended is \$_____.

The total annual costs of transporting all district students with disabilities to and from the segregated schools they attended both within and out of the district is \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the segregated schools they attended both within and out of the district is \$_____.

The total annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from within district segregated schools they attended is \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the within district segregated schools they attended is \$_____.

The total annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the out of district segregated schools they attended is \$_____.

The average annual cost of transporting all students with disabilities to and from the out of district segregated schools they attended is \$_____.

During the 20____ - 20____ school year, the total number of vehicles used to transport students to and from schools within and out of the district was _____.

The purchase price of a new large school bus was _____.

The average cost per mile to operate a large school bus was _____.

The cost of making a new large school bus accessible was _____.

The life span of a new school bus was _____ years.

The purchase price of a new school van was _____.

The average cost per mile to operate a school van was _____.

The cost of making a new school van accessible was _____.

The life span of a new school van was _____ years.

The average annual salary of a school bus driver was _____.

The average annual salary of a school bus driver assistant – travel aide- was _____.

The average cost per gallon of fuel was _____.

The total annual vehicle maintenance costs were _____.

The average annual vehicle maintenance cost was _____.

The total annual cost of travel insurance was _____.

The total annual cost of travel insurance for students without disabilities was _____.

The total annual cost of travel insurance for students with disabilities was _____.

Summary - Conclusions - Thoughts

The differences in the distances students had to travel per day to the different kinds of schools were remarkable. Specifically,

Those who attended home schools traveled an average of _____ miles per day

Those who attended clustered schools traveled an average of _____ miles per day

Those who attended segregated schools traveled an average of _____ miles per day

The differences in the amounts of time per day the students spent in transit were dramatic.

Specifically,

Those who attended home schools spent an average of _____ minutes per day in transit. The range was _____ to _____.

Those who attended clustered schools spent an average of _____ minutes per day in transit. The range was _____ to _____.

Those who attended segregated schools spent an average of _____ minutes per day in transit. The range was _____ to _____.

The differences in the companions the students traveled to the different kinds of schools with were predictable. Specifically,

Those who attended home schools typically traveled with _____.

Those who attended clustered schools typically traveled with _____.

Those who attended segregated schools traveled with _____.

When the transportation costs associated with the three kinds of schools are compared, _____ schools are the least costly. Specifically,

The average annual cost of transporting a student with disabilities to and from a home school was _____.

The average annual cost of transporting a student with disabilities to and from a clustered school was _____.

The average annual cost of transporting a student with disabilities to and from a segregated school was _____.

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