AASA Fuel and Energy Snapshot Survey
Snapshot of Superintendents’ Responses

When asked to share general comments about the effects of rising fuel and energy costs on their districts, superintendents’ comments included:

**General Comments**
- The cost of fuel has definitely forced us to take a closer look at all of our programs. We will do everything in our power to continue valuable programming.
- We've begun to explore alternative calendars but are now concerned with the fact that students may be in homes that lack adequate heat.
- Besides the financial stress on our district, we are seeing the stress on families so that they are impacted by their own ability to afford participation, etc.
- We are at the very beginning of fundamental "re-thinking" of some transportation and energy uses that we have taken for granted as a way of life for years.
- We are VERY worried. Overall funding is an issue and this is turning out to be the ‘straw that breaks the camel's back.’
- Fuel and energy costs are not the only cost increases. Everything is going up -- paper, textbooks, wages and salaries, benefits, insurance, data processing and staff development. It is hard to isolate fuel and energy from the perfect storm of rising costs.
- Of greater concern at the moment is the rising cost of food items and the impact on our food service program; it is certainly linked to the fuel issue.
- The biggest issue has been the short list of applicants who wish to travel 20-30 miles from their home for employment.

**Budget Impact**
- We are anticipating the increase in fuel and energy costs to have at least a million dollar impact on our budget for next year. We are currently in the process of examining ways in which to address that significant deficit moving forward.
- Our costs have doubled in recent years with no additional revenue available to help pay for these expenses.
- It is only a matter of time before the cost of energy and health benefits cause us to eliminate educational opportunities for students.
- We are a small K-8 school district with an operating budget of just over $10 million. Energy costs (oil, gas and diesel) are expected to rise by 140 percent next year. As a consequence, we will be unable to expand educational opportunities for students.
- We have seen our fuel budget rise 59 percent in the last two years (for our small district that is a 250,000 figure). We are sacrificing instruction to pay for fuel. And, in Texas, we are still receiving transportation allotment that is based on 1990s calculations. This is a serious hit to our budget and our kids are paying for it.
• Three years ago it cost us about $32,000 to heat our facility. Our costs for the 2008-09 year are estimated at over $100,000. That does not include fuel increases for buses, which are more than double from three years ago.
• Our propane bid for next year has risen over 60 percent. We are hoping for a mild winter to help us get by.
• Increases in oil prices, particularly in terms of gas, has increased our transportation costs by 127 percent.
• With the length and severity of our winters and the fact that we rely largely on fuel oil for heat, the impact on us has been huge. We expect to have to radically change our thinking on energy consumption in the immediate future.
• We have seen over a 70-percent increase in fuel costs from last year.
• Rising fuel costs have have had a tremendous impact on the pricing of everything we purchase, including food. We have raised our lunch and breakfast prices and still anticipate running in the red in our cafeteria.
• Our transportation contract will be bid for the 2009-10 school year. We are currently in the 3rd year of a 3-year contract.
• High concern, but we had an operating balance in transportation that will allow us time to plan and implement change.

Transportation Impact
• Rural school districts will feel the crunch very hard with rising gas/diesel prices with the distance we travel to other communities/schools.
• We are anticipating an increase in ridership this coming year. We are involved in a pilot project on the benefits of going to a hybrid school bus (one of two districts in the state to be involved with the project) and hope this will help cut down on fuel usage.
• We have seen a sharp increase in the ridership on our bus routes as the price of fuel has increased.
• We are anticipating more students utilizing our transportation system and plan to offer these services to our employees if they are on an existing route.
• We will not know about increased ridership until school starts in the fall. Unless we can get some relief, the rising cost of fuels will compromise every facet of our operation.
• We expect an increase in ridership for next year. We are beginning a fee based transportation program for students not eligible for school bus transportation yet live close to existing school bus stops.
• Due to location of schools along highways and other hazardous routes, transportation is provided to almost all students in the district. Reducing or eliminating bus service is not an option due to safety concerns. Our fuel costs have increased over 40 percent.

State/Federal Actions
• I am amazed that the federal government has not taken steps to help school district deal with unprecedented increase in energy costs.
• The government seems to have their heads in the sand. The want NCLB, but continue to tie our hands and bind our feet as we try to accomplish this goal. We should be working together. Why aren’t the state and federal government concerned?
• Our district cannot continue without assistance from the state.
• The legislature gave Minnesota school districts an extra 1 percent in funding for the upcoming school year. This extra $18,000 is just enough to cover the increase in diesel fuel costs from last school year.
• Kentucky has increased fuel taxes and requires school districts to pay the state tax on fuel while actually lowering transportation reimbursement.
• Although we are faced with large increases in costs, Illinois is not making its transportation payments to districts in a timely manner.
• Districts such as ours with extensive bus routes receive no additional funds to offset those costs to the general budget, so resources available for other general education purposes are more limited than in comparable districts without such busing costs.
• We are hoping our state legislature will eventually allow us to use alternative funding sources, other than the general fund, to purchase fuel. Currently it comes out of the same pool of money as texts, supplies, staff, etc.
• These costs need to be taken out of the education Operating Fund and placed in a fund that generates revenue based on costs to the school district... We should not be balancing fuel and transportation costs against the direct costs of educating our children.
• The state has reduced its funding for transportation by 5 percent, adding to the challenges faced by schools. The town's budget committee has voted to oppose any increase in school expenses in the coming year, so all increases in fuel and energy must be offset by reductions in programs and services.
• Rising fuel and energy costs are impacting local expenditures significantly enough to cause us to place a levy on the ballot next year when we originally thought it would be three years from now.