

## Dallas-area schools pinching pennies as gas food costs rise

Area school districts are finding ways to cut costs as fuel prices soar. Some are taking shorter field trips. Others prohibit bus drivers from idling. And some are raising prices in the lunch line.

Fuel costs trickle on through everything, said Tony Harkleroad, a Richardson ISD administrator. We either have to cut other things within our budget to cover cost increases like this, or we have to find other ways to raise revenue.

Richardson ISD has made cost-saving moves such as charging kids for bus rides. An upcoming trip to the University of Texas at Dallas, for example, will cost each child \$5 in bus costs. Overnight bus trips to sporting competitions are out.

It was just an added expense that was not necessary, John Kelly, a Richardson ISD transportation official, said of the overnight trips. We felt like they could get adequate competition locally.

Tim Benton, baseball coach at Richardson's J.J. Pearce High School, understands the need to cut back. But he notes the downside to staying local.

You'll end up seeing the same teams all the time, he said.

Richardson ISD estimates that it will pay \$259,000 to fuel its fleet of buses this school year, much higher than the \$139,000 paid in 2004-05.

Louis Gasper, an economics professor at the University of Dallas, said residents generally adapt better when gasoline prices jump by carpooling or limiting shopping trips than a large organization like a school district.

What choice does a school district have? Dr. Gasper said. They still have to get those kids to and from school.

Paying tens of thousands more for fuel can put serious pressure on school districts. And at Dallas County Schools, which provides bus services to Dallas ISD and eight other districts, the higher costs are especially challenging. The bus provider plans to raise its prices by 20 percent next school year, and its customers school districts will feel the pain.

The Dallas school district, for example, will pay \$20 million next school year, up from \$16.7 million.

There's not any question that the rising cost of fuel is going to cause some challenges as we put the next budget together, said Dallas schools spokesman Jon Dahlander.

Dallas County Schools is also looking for ways to trim costs. In its bus yard in Lancaster, standard school buses sit alongside others that burn a cleaner, cheaper fuel alternative: propane.

Propane ended up being the best power for the money, said Deanne Hullender, Dallas County Schools spokeswoman.

A third of Dallas County Schools' buses run on propane. It costs about \$5,500 to retrofit a bus to run on the alternative fuel. The buses can get about the same fuel economy as diesel around eight miles per gallon but propane costs the bus provider about \$1.65 a gallon and emits fewer pollutants. Dallas County Schools pays \$2.85 a gallon for diesel.

But there are drawbacks to propane. It's not as available, and using it requires someone experienced with propane fuel systems to work on the buses.

Some districts are turning to aerodynamics and targeting idling bus drivers to save money.

Fort Worth ISD recently purchased 69 aerodynamic buses that feature slanted hoods to allow smoother air flow and limit drag that wastes gas.

It increases visibility, and it also increases our miles per gallon because of the way the bus is shaped, said Sharon Spears, the district's transportation director.

The cosmetic change accounts for 0.3 miles per gallon more and thousands of dollars saved annually, Ms. Spears said.

In Mesquite, a no idling policy prevents bus drivers from running engines while waiting for students. The rule change saves about 500 gallons of fuel a day, officials say.

Rising fuel prices also mean the cost to transport food from distribution centers to schools is going up, area school nutrition directors say.

Fuel is what is driving it all, said Dorothy Thompson, Allen ISD's nutrition director.

She received the district's bid from its food vendor last week, and many bulk items, such as corn dogs and chicken tenders, have jumped by double-digit percentages.

Because Allen ISD is paying more for food, school officials are considering boosting lunch prices by 5 cents.

The increase may seem small an elementary school and middle school lunch would go from \$1.85 to \$1.90. But when paid daily by thousands of kids, the district expects it can make \$63,000 over the school year.

Lori Snowden has two children in Allen schools. She said she doesn't mind paying more.

Five cents is not that much, she said. I think you're still getting a good amount of food for that price.

Allen ISD is not alone.

Richardson ISD plans to raise the price of a la carte items by a yet-to-be determined amount, and Rockwall school trustees on Monday will consider increasing plate lunch prices by 25 cents.

Dallas ISD is bracing for a possible overall food bill increase of 5 to 10 percent next school year. The district's food cost is now about \$20 million.

It looks like we are anticipating having to increase the price for some a la carte items such as milk, DISD's Mr. Dahlander said. He said that a district advisory committee is examining how much the prices should change.

Irving school officials canceled a contract with a food vendor after finding out the district's grocery bill would jump 10 percent next school year. Plans are under way to shop for a better deal.

School officials have to be careful with their food selections. Federal guidelines require a selection of healthy foods, which tend to be more expensive.

I've been in food services 15 years, and I've never seen a price increase like this, said Michael Rosenberger, food service director for Irving schools. It's a perfect storm of rising food costs and rising energy costs.

Projected fuel cost for Richardson ISD's fleet this year

\$139,000: Fuel cost three years ago for Richardson ISD's fleet

\$2.48: Dallas County Schools' bulk rate for gas per gallon

\$2.85: Dallas County Schools' bulk rate for diesel per gallon

\$1.65: Dallas County Schools' bulk rate for propane per gallon

Fuzhou - May 3 (Xinhua Shen Yu issued) - Fujian Province Office of Education was informed that in order to ensure boarder living grant special funds to effectively implement each and every boarder who will be the province of rural compulsory education stage boarder promote free Breakfast Nutrition Project.

According to reports, free breakfast nutrition projects, according to the one egg a cup of soy milk + + 2-32 steamed bread mode, from every boarding school system of unified organization, with the conditions of the boarding schools to carry out immediately, have not yet Conditions of the boarding

schools as soon as possible to create the conditions for organization and implementation.

In addition, the Fujian Provincial Office of Education said that the rural compulsory education stage boarder living subsidy funds could only be used for boarding students in school during the food subsidy, no department or individual is allowed to use diversion, the grant will be released into the supervision of inspection, the measures do not Specifically, the implementation of the work units and individuals will be informed criticism, leading up to be investigated for responsibility.

## About the Author

From [www.wfaa.com](http://www.wfaa.com):

Get the scoop about the child nutrition programs in Texas public schools, from funding and menu. Comments on the Texas Public School.

The School Nutrition Program is responsible for the administration of the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Afterschool.

Complete directory of featured Nutrition schools with program descriptions. Study Alternative Medicine education techniques. Contact.

Educational goals, including the nutrition goals of the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, should be supported.

Foods and beverages sold at school outside of the federally reimbursable school nutrition programs are referred to as competitive foods because.

National School Lunch Program. Provides nutritious lunches and the opportunity to practice skills learned in classroom nutrition.

The mission of the School Nutrition division is to provide leadership, training and technical assistance, and resources so that local program.

The professional state body providing local meetings, education, jobs, information.

Source: <http://productsherbal.com>