

Focus on: Electric School Bus Grants



Figure 1. Electric school bus at a charging station.

Why Electric School Buses Matter

Most school buses in Washington and nationwide have diesel engines, which pollute the outdoor air, harming human health and the environment.

Better for children's health

Air pollution negatively affects everyone's health, and diesel emissions make up a substantial portion of outdoor air pollution. EPA has classified diesel exhaust as likely to cause cancer, with 66% of cancer risk from pollutants in the air coming from diesel exhaust. But some groups are especially sensitive, such as children who are still developing. Air pollutants are associated with reduced lung function in children, a health problem that could potentially be reversed with cleaner air, as noted in a [BMJ Paediatrics Open](#) article.¹

Better for the environment

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Washington, contributing 40% of the annual total. Replacing old diesel school buses with electric models helps reduce air pollution as well as the pollution driving climate change. Together with other Washington climate policies, these grants will help Washington achieve the commitment to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions by 95% by 2050.

Electric is Gathering Momentum

Right now, a small fraction of school buses in Washington are electric. However, every year, the number of electric school buses increases, with the goal of all school buses eventually being zero-emission models. In 2024, Ecology received more funding than ever to replace diesel school buses with zero-emission buses, with a large portion of funding coming from the Climate Commitment Act.

Electric School Bus Grant Program

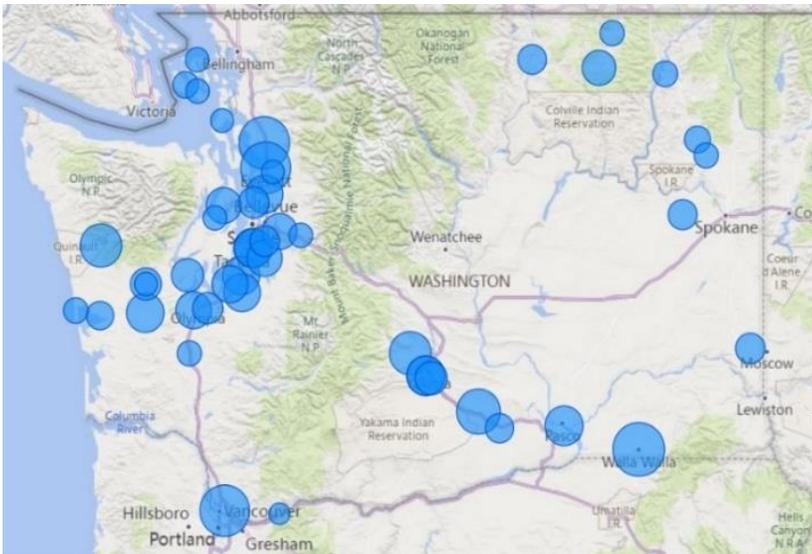
In 2019, Ecology began awarding grants for zero-emission school buses. Washington's portion of the Volkswagen federal settlement program was the first source of funding. In total, 37 electric school buses were

¹ Liu NM, Grigg Diesel, children and respiratory disease, *BMJ Paediatrics Open* 2018;2:e000210. doi: 10.1136/bmjpo-2017-000210

purchased in 14 counties statewide. From 2021-2023, the Washington State Legislature gave funding to Ecology’s Clean Diesel Program, which helped 20 grant recipients purchase 39 electric buses. From 2023 to 2025, the Legislature appropriated an unprecedented \$49 million to help school districts transition diesel school buses to zero-emission alternatives – with \$24 million coming from Climate Commitment Act funds.

Thus far, Washington has invested \$78.3 million to replace approximately 220 diesel school buses with electric school buses and install associated charging infrastructure.

Distribution of Electric School Bus Funding



Partners

We’ve developed a network of partners who can offer technical assistance, resources, and other support for school districts transitioning from diesel to electric buses.

- [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\) Student Transportation](#)²
- [Washington Green Transportation Program](#)³
- [World Resources Institute’s Electric School Bus Initiative](#)⁴
- [EPA Clean School Bus Program](#)⁵

August 2024 map shows the distribution of school bus grants. Bigger circles show larger funding.

Related Information

- [Electric school buses](#)⁶
- [Clean diesel grants](#)⁷
- [Reducing diesel emissions](#)⁸

² <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/student-transportation>

³ <https://www.energy.wsu.edu/GreenTransportationProgram.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/electric-school-bus-initiative>

⁵ <https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus>

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/air-climate/air-quality/vehicle-emissions/electric-school-buses>

⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Clean-diesel-grants>

⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Air-Climate/Air-quality/Vehicle-emissions/Diesel-emissions>



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To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 564-233-9765 or email at AQcommunitygrants@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY, call 711 or 877-833-6341.