Background Information on “Propane” Powered School Buses in America

Portland Schools Could Save 50% by Running on Propane Autogas
PERC SMARTBRIEF | MAR 12, 2012
The public school district in Portland, Ore., has been using propane autogas in its bus fleet for nearly 30 years, according to a new case study from PERC. The district recently bought 10 new Type-A school buses from Collins Bus that use CleanFuel USA's propane autogas injection system. Plans call for Collins to deliver another 90 of the buses to the district. The school district's "projections for 2012 show a 50% savings for its propane autogas purchases when compared with those for gasoline," says Andy Leibenguth, the district's transportation director. Download the case study.

Ind. school district to acquire 5 propane autogas buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | MAR 6, 2012
Tippecanoe School Corp. in Indiana's Tippecanoe County will add five new propane autogas school buses next month. Grants and several donations paid for the cost of the buses, said Sequoyah Bible, the district's energy management administrative assistant.

Colo. school district tests propane autogas-powered school buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | FEB 28, 2012
School District 11 in Colorado Springs, Colo., has entered into a lease-to-buy deal with Blue Bird to test the efficiency of propane autogas-powered school buses. Three schools from the district recently started testing the new buses: the Galileo School of Math and Science, Wasson High School, and Scott Elementary School.

N.J. school district to convert diesel buses to propane autogas
PERC SMARTBRIEF | FEB 23, 2012
The school district in Randolph Township, N.J., plans to gradually convert its fleet of diesel-powered school buses to propane autogas to slash fuel and maintenance costs and reduce emissions. "As old buses are retired, they are being replaced with ones that run on propane. We already have two propane-fueled buses in operation with three more on order. In the next budget cycle we expect to have four more," said Michael Neves, the school district's business administrator.

Fla. county's schools to test propane autogas-powered buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | FEB 24, 2012
School officials in Seminole County, Fla., want to retrofit two school buses to run on both propane autogas and diesel to evaluate the efficiency of the conversion. The school district could invest a total of $2.7 million to convert the entire fleet if officials are pleased with the results. If the plan is approved, the retrofits could be done next month.

Ariz. city school district orders 6 more Blue Bird propane buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | FEB 13, 2012
Mesa (Ariz.) Public Schools is planning to add six more Blue Bird Propane-Powered Micro Bird Type C Vision school buses to the 27 Blue Bird units it ordered in November. "We looked at all options when considering alternative fuel. Surprisingly, hybrid was nearly twice the cost of our propane units -- not a reasonable solution for our fleet. Propane was the obvious solution," said Transportation Director Ron Latko.

Ga. school board OKs retrofitting of 20 buses to propane autogas
PERC SMARTBRIEF | JAN 24, 2012
The Hall County (Ga.) Board of Education on Monday approved plans to retrofit 20 school buses to run on propane autogas. The board approved an agreement with Ferrellgas and CleanFuel USA to provide fuel and help install fueling stations for the buses. The stations will also be open to other individuals with propane autogas-powered vehicles, said Superintendent Will Schofield. The expected fuel-cost savings can be added to teacher salaries, he said.

Texas city ISD acquires 12 propane autogas buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | JAN 20, 2012
The Friendswood (Texas) Independent School District recently acquired 12 new buses powered by propane autogas. Transportation Director Mike Jones received the new buses, which will be added to the school district's fleet.

Ore. school district may add 28 propane autogas buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | DEC 13, 2011
The Bend-La Pine School District in Oregon may soon add 28 propane autogas-powered school buses if the school board approves the district Transportation Department's request to spend around $3.2 million for the acquisition. "I only have three buses right now that I can take off-route, and that does not go very far. ... Getting those extra buses would let us be able to provide more," said Transportation Supervisor Denice Blake.
School district in Missouri acquires 2 propane buses through grant
PERC SMARTBRIEF | NOV 30, 2011
The Chadwick (Mo.) School District purchased two propane autogas-powered school buses through an $86,000 grant from the state Department of Natural Resources. "The buses are magnificent. They are great for our school and even better for the environment," said Chadwick schools co-superintendent Bill Wheeler. The school district is the first in the state to use propane autogas buses.

Texas school district's autogas buses are under construction
PERC SMARTBRIEF | NOV 3, 2011
The 27 propane autogas-powered buses ordered in October by the Humble (Texas) Independent School District will run cleaner than diesel buses, reducing children's exposure to emissions, according to this article. The Blue Bird Propane-Powered Vision buses are being built in Georgia, and two have been delivered and are now in service.

Ore. school district gets sustainability award for green initiatives
PERC SMARTBRIEF | NOV 18, 2011
The Bend-La Pine School District in Oregon was recognized by the area's Environmental Center for its sustainability efforts, which include teaching students about environmentally friendly practices such as recycling, water conservation and energy conservation. The school district also has propane-powered school buses and uses environmentally friendly cleaning supplies.

Ind. school board approves purchase of 4 propane school buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | NOV 13, 2011
Lafayette, Ind.-based Tippecanoe School Corp. is moving forward with its proposal to purchase four propane-powered Blue Bird Type C Vision school buses after the school board signed off on the plan. The school board also approved the TSC's plan to apply for up to $500,000 in alternative-fuels grants from the state's Community Conservation Challenge. TSC has partnered with Ferrellgas and MacAllister Power Systems for the conversion project.

Ind. school is setting trend in propane autogas use in the state
PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 31, 2011
Tippecanoe School Corp. wants to set a trend in Indiana by being the first school corporation in the state to buy propane autogas-powered school buses. The school is planning to buy two autogas-fueled buses next year, and it will also convert three other vehicles to run on autogas. TSC is partnering with MacAllister and Ferrellgas for the project.

Ariz. school district buys 27 propane autogas buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | NOV 4, 2011
The Mesa (Ariz.) Unified School District purchased 27 propane autogas-powered school buses in a bid to reduce fuel and maintenance expenses while cleaning up the environment. Mesa USD is the first school district in the state to buy autogas school buses. "I want to send a message to the community here that we want to be as fiscally and environmentally responsible as we can with the limited resources that we have," said Ron Latko, the district's transportation director.

Atlantic Express buys 25 autogas-powered buses for LAUSD
PERC SMARTBRIEF | DEC 7, 2011
Private school bus operator Atlantic Express purchased 25 propane autogas-powered school buses from Collins Bus for the Los Angeles Unified School District. "Atlantic Express is an important customer for us, and they operate our buses at multiple locations across the country. They should be applauded for their efforts in converting to clean-fuel technologies," said Collins Bus President Kent Tyler.

Mo. school district acquires state's first autogas school buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 21, 2011
The Chadwick (Mo.) School District recently acquired two school buses that run on propane autogas with the help of a grant from the Ozarks Center for Sustainable Solutions and Drury University in Springfield, Mo. The autogas-powered school buses are the first of their kind in the state.

NAPT trade show features latest propane-powered school bus models
PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 28, 2011
A recent trade show unveiled some of the latest designs and technologies for school buses. Several companies displayed their latest models running on alternative fuel, including four that run on propane autogas: the new Micro Bird G5 and the Type C Vision from Blue Bird, a Type A bus from Collins Bus, and a Type C prototype from Thomas Built Buses that is expected in 2013.
Thomas Built to start making propane-powered Type A buses

PERC SMARTBRIEF | NOV 28, 2011

Thomas Built Buses will commence production of Type A propane-powered Minotour small school buses by mid-2012. These buses will run on a CleanFuel USA liquid propane system upfitted by Knapheide on a GM cut-away chassis, said Jed Routh, product planning manager for Thomas. "We obviously won't be able to do every engine technology, but we know that there are different segments of the country that have different needs and we want to meet those needs," said Routh.

Texas commission gives $48,000 to school district for autogas buses

PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 3, 2011

The Texas Railroad Commission awarded $48,000 to the Lindale (Texas) Independent School District after it switched some of its buses to propane autogas. "The grant reduces their capital cost in producing buses. ... In these economic times, it helps the districts save tax money," said Texas Railroad Commissioner David Porter. Seven buses in the school district's fleet run on propane autogas.

Mass. firm wants to have area's first autogas-powered school bus

PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 17, 2011

Whaling City Transit in Westport, Mass., is looking at purchasing propane autogas-powered school buses to add to its collection of green technology. "They are currently being used in other parts of the country and I'd love to see that here. My goal is to have the first propane-powered school bus in the area," said company co-owner Bob Neves. The company draws energy from solar power and used motor oil to reduce operational costs and environmental impact.

Texas city ISD receives $2.9M to buy autogas-fueled school buses

PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 18, 2011

The Texas Railroad Commission, Texas Parent Teacher Association and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality awarded a $2.9 million grant to the Humble (Texas) Independent School District to purchase 27 propane autogas-powered school buses. Texas Railroad Commissioner David Porter will present the grant on Wednesday at the 2011 Clean Fleet Technologies Conference.

New Case Study: School District Cuts Costs, Emissions with New Buses

PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 7, 2011

The Zeeland Public School District in western Michigan has cut operating costs and reduced harmful emissions by adding nine new Blue Bird Vision school buses that run on propane autogas. A new case study from the Propane Education & Research Council, which provided funding for the research and development of the Vision, makes it easy to share the Zeeland story with school districts and other operators of on-road fleets. Download the case study.

Mich. city ISD studies operational costs of 3 different school buses

PERC SMARTBRIEF | SEP 15, 2011

The Lenawee Intermediate School District in Adrian, Mich., is conducting a comparative study on the operational costs of a propane autogas-fueled school bus, conventional diesel buses and hybrid school buses. The school district will monitor the performance of each bus type for two years to determine which is more economical to operate, said LISD Superintendent Jim Philp. LISD will look at the buses' maintenance costs along with their fuel efficiency and purchase price, Philp said.

Case Study Helps Introduce School Bus to Fleet Operators

PERC SMARTBRIEF | SEP 26, 2011

The Zeeland Public School District in western Michigan has cut operating costs and reduced harmful emissions by adding nine new Blue Bird Vision school buses that run on propane autogas. The Blue Bird Vision was developed with funding from the Propane Education & Research Council. Check out a new case study.

Florida county school district plans to buy more autogas-fueled buses

PERC SMARTBRIEF | AUG 22, 2011

The Indian River County (Fla.) School District is planning to add 11 propane autogas-powered buses to its 111-bus fleet this year, said George Millar, the school district's director of transportation. Three buses in its fleet already run on the fuel. Propane autogas is cheaper, cleaner burning and safe to use, Millar and other district officials said, adding that autogas-powered buses are also quieter than their diesel counterparts.

Houston ISD receives top green fleet award for using autogas buses

PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 14, 2011

The Houston Independent School District grabbed the top spot in Government Fleet magazine's 40-best school district green fleets for using propane autogas-powered school buses. The school district purchased autogas buses in August through a $2.2 million grant.
Texas school to receive $2 million to buy additional autogas buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | AUG 23, 2011
The Northside (Texas) Independent School District will receive a $2 million federal stimulus grant from the Department of Energy and Texas’ State Energy Conservation Office to buy additional propane autogas-powered school buses and to upgrade the school district's four autogas refueling stations. The school district currently has 383 autogas-fueled buses. Texas Railroad Commissioner David Porter will present the check to school district Superintendent John Folks on Wednesday.

Calif. school district is transitioning bus fleet to propane autogas
PERC SMARTBRIEF | JUL 28, 2011
The Plumas Unified School District in Quincy, Calif., is transitioning its fleet of 31 buses to propane autogas because of the fuel's efficiency and affordability, according to Ken Pierson, PUSD's transportation supervisor. PUSD is switching to propane autogas in part because buses with diesel engines have a particulate filter that needs to be frequently cleaned, and the cleaning system costs $25,000, Pierson said. Nine out of the school district's 31 buses run on autogas, and school officials are planning to buy more in the future, Pierson said.

More fleets turning to propane autogas-powered buses and trucks
PERC SMARTBRIEF | OCT 7, 2011
More fleet owners and school districts are considering alternative-fuel vehicles and finding propane a cost-effective solution, according to Roush CleanTech. "They've run enough test vehicles to prove the economics make sense," says Todd Mouw, vice president of sales and marketing at Roush CleanTech. The Mass Transportation Authority of Flint, Mich., for example, will roll out buses powered by propane autogas instead of compressed natural gas because of the fuel's economic advantage. "With propane, we found we could set up fueling stations for around $20,000 at each of our facilities," which "was far less than the $1.2 million for each that was projected for the CNG option," said Flint MTA's General Manager Edgar Benning.

Texas town's school district rolls out 25 propane autogas buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | AUG 11, 2011
A $2.3 million stimulus grant from the Department of Energy's Clean Cities program funded the purchase of 25 propane autogas-powered school buses and the installation of a propane fueling station at Eanes Independent School District in Westlake, Texas. The school district expects to save as much as $75,000 annually in fuel and maintenance costs by using propane. "It's a real privilege to bring districts the benefit of a clean fuel like propane," said Texas Railroad Commission Chairwoman Elizabeth Ames Jones.

Texas school district board approves purchase of propane buses
PERC SMARTBRIEF | JUL 20, 2011
The Midland, Texas, Independent School District board has signed off on a proposal to purchase seven propane autogas-fueled Blue Bird school buses and install a 20,000-gallon fueling station through a $700,000 grant from the Railroad Commission of Texas. "This will not only be ... cost free for the school district, but will impact us as to how we will purchase buses in the future," an official said.