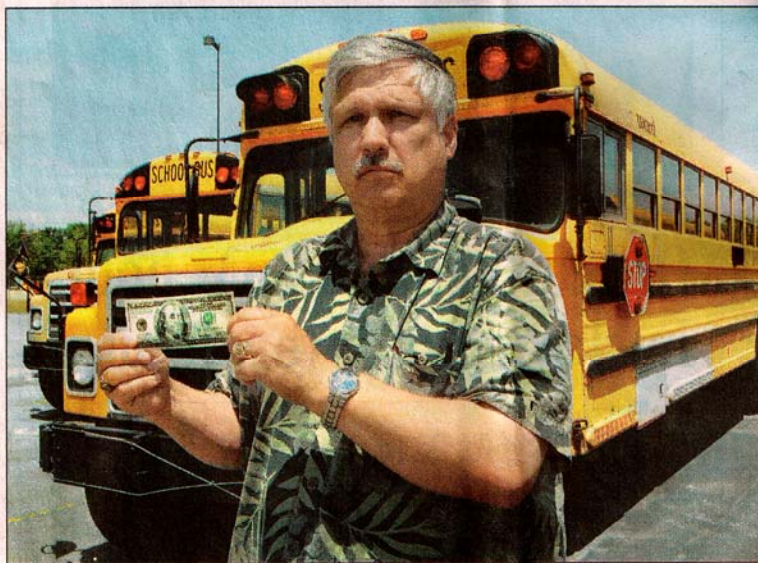


IT'S TRADE-IN TIME



The Enquirer/Joseph Fuqua II

Fairfield school board member Arnie Engel holds a \$100 bill to show what the district will get for one of its old buses as a trade-in value. He says a community group might be able to use the old buses.

Bus donation idea gets cool response

By Michael D. Clark
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FAIRFIELD – A Fairfield school board member wants to try to give away used school buses, but other district officials wonder whether there would be any takers.

Fairfield Board of Education member Arnie Engel plans to propose the bus donation idea during Thursday's board meeting.

Engel won his seat as an anti-school levy activist and wants to make the 16 old buses – some dating back to 1984 – available to community groups that might be willing to pay for repairing the buses.

"The Fairfield schools are buying 18 new buses, (and) we were going to get

about \$150 per bus as a trade-in value. As a matter of fact, 11 of the 16 buses to be traded in are only bringing \$100 each," Engel said.

The remaining five buses will fetch \$250 to \$700 each as trade-ins. Each new bus will cost an average of \$79,000.

"I will suggest to the board that before we dispose of these buses for practically nothing, that we offer them free to the nonprofit organizations of the Fairfield school district community. Organizations such as churches and Scout troops. The community paid for these buses. If we can't get a reasonable price for them, we should offer them to the community at no charge," Engel said.

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Arnie Engel, Fairfield Board of Education member

Fairfield buses

■ Butler County's 10,000-student Fairfield school system is buying 18 new school buses to replace aging vehicles in its fleet.

■ During the average school day, the district's 116-bus fleet transports more than 9,000 students, including those living in the city school district who attend 22 private and Catholic schools.

■ The average age of the bus fleet is 13 years, and all the buses drive a combined average of 6,400 miles transporting students each school day.

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If there are no takers, Engel suggested selling the buses for scrap. He said the 15-ton buses would earn about \$90 a ton, or \$1,350.

But Fairfield Schools Assistant Superintendent and Business Director Rob Amodio said the district has had little interest from buyers.

"There doesn't appear to be a great market for buses that are 15-20 years old with several hundreds of thousands of miles on them," Amodio said.

Moreover, Amodio said, there are strict requirements and expenses involved in selling buses as scrap – such as paying for transporting non-running buses to the scrap dealer, draining all gasoline from the vehicles and stripping them of some materials such as foam cushions on the seats.

Fairfield school board President Mark Morris agreed with Amodio that anything other than trading in the old buses is problematic. "Fairfield schools always try to get the best value for our assets," he said.

"If any scrap yard, anyone else, is interested in these buses, they are certainly welcome to make an offer to us" at 513-829-6300, Amodio said.

The school board will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Fairfield Intermediate School cafeteria at 255 Donald Drive.