

Remember Fieldtrips?

Rising gas prices change the school experience

For students, a new school year means adapting to new things—a new grade, new teachers, new classrooms, and new subjects. But this year, there could be one more thing to learn to deal with: the elimination of school fieldtrips.

Like peanut butter sandwiches in lunch bags, school fieldtrips are going the way of the dodo. However, the death of fieldtrips has nothing to do with food allergies or even with the safety of students. School boards across the US are considering banning—or have already banned—fieldtrips due to rising gas prices.

For most schools districts, a virtual fleet of yellow school buses are involved in transporting students to and from the classroom. Schools have a hard enough time coping with funding issues and budget problems without an even bigger portion of their meager budgets going to cover the cost of school buses for extracurricular fieldtrips.

Funding issues have already hit schools hard resulting in decreased numbers of teachers, lower salaries, and crowded classrooms. As well, athletics and extracurricular programs are getting the axe.

A survey of school boards by the American Association of School Administrators shows that ninety-nine percent of schools surveyed felt that rising gas prices had an impact on their school.

Some school boards are even considering switching to a four-day school week to help deal with the rising cost of fuel. A shorter school week would decrease fuel costs associated with transportation, heating and cooling, and energy consumption.