

From: Steven Fernandes, Director of Transportation, Modesto City Schools

To: New York Times Letters to the Editor

Thursday, September 24, 2026

Dear editor,

Re “[Why Some Schools Are Hitting the Brakes on Electric Buses](#)” (Sept 23, 2026)

As a school transportation director, this article caught my eye, particularly their experiences with operational issues. I felt compelled to share that here in Modesto, California, our electric school buses now make up more than half our route bus fleet and have proven incredibly reliable.

Our electric school buses had a remarkable 97% uptime during the 2025/2026 school year. We’ve found that with so many fewer parts than our diesel buses, we have experienced a lower labor expense. And that’s before we factor in the fuel savings. With the outrageous price of diesel right now, we’re seeing significant savings on our electric buses. Savings are especially noteworthy when you consider our district’s transportation solar project; 67% of the electricity we use for our buses is free.

Adopting any new technology can bring challenges, but I’ve seen firsthand that this technology works. Given the harmful impact that diesel exhaust can have on students’ lungs, I hope all districts are given the resources to transition to clean, electric buses.

Steven Fernandes
Modesto, California