

Top 50 Contractors Grow Fleets, But Rankings Hold Steady

Most operators are continuing to boost fleet size, although many remain in the same spots as on last year's list. The top five companies remain the same, and two new contractors join the list.

By Nicole Schlosser, Managing Editor

According to *School Bus Fleet's* 2017 Top 50 Contractors ranking, most operators are continuing to grow their fleets, even while a substantial number remain in the same spot as on last year's list.

The total number of buses represented in the list is 119,460, which is actually 360 fewer buses than last year. However, more than half (58%) of the contractors returning to the list reported an increase in the size of their fleets.

The biggest spike in fleet size over 2016, by percentage, was reported by

Holcomb Bus Service, which expanded its fleet by 43% and jumped up nine spots from No. 45 to No. 36. That considerable bump is attributed to Holcomb acquiring H.A. DeHart Transportation in May and gaining 75 school buses as a result, according to George Holcomb, vice president of Holcomb Bus Service. Additionally, Butler's Bus Service Inc. expanded its fleet by 26%, which is only two percentage points lower than last year's expansion, and gained three contracts. Apple Bus Co. saw a fleet size increase of 19%, adding nine contracts since last year. The biggest number of buses added was, as with last year, by National Express LLC, at 500. (Last year, the company added 1,000 buses to its fleet.)

Other companies that moved up the list were Selby Transportation Corp., which jumped eight spots (No. 36 to No. 28), Lang's Bus Lines Ltd., climbing four spots (No. 33 to No. 29), and Quality Bus Service LLC, which went up three spots (to No. 40 from No. 43).

In addition to Butler's and Apple's contract gains, Harlow's School Bus Service obtained six new school district contracts. Among the top five, National Express and Student Transportation Inc. each gained 40 more contracts.

Most companies hold steady

The five contractors at the top of the list are the same with one exception: Illinois Central School Bus Corp. has changed its name to North American Central School Bus.

In terms of ranking, just more than one-third of contractors, at 36%, held the same spots as last year, even as they saw gains in their fleet size. (Last year, that number was just under one-quarter of the list.) Those include Suffolk Transportation Service, which gained 100 buses, for a total of 1,300; DATTCO Inc., which acquired 76 more buses, totaling 1,364; and, growing by 50 buses were Royal Coach Lines, with 758 total buses, and Sunrise Transportation, with 600 buses.

Regarding fleet growth among the top five, National Express (No. 2) gained 500 buses, as previously mentioned, for a total of 22,000, Student Transportation Inc. (No. 3) added 190 buses to its fleet, bringing its total to 13,500, and North American Central School Bus (No. 4) increased its fleet size by 117 buses, for a total of 2,817.

First Student, which has consistently held the top spot in recent years, remained in place with 47,000 buses, despite the fact that the contractor's fleet decreased by 2,000 buses this year.

New to the list

Two companies joined the Top 50 in 2017: A & S Transportation of Naples, Florida, took spot No. 35, with 370 buses, and Metropolitan Transportation Network Inc. (MTN) of Fridley, Minnesota, grabbed the 41st spot, with 307 buses. A & S Transportation reported having 20 district contracts, and MTN holds nine district contracts (read a profile on MTN on pg. 22). ■

Not on the list?

We try to contact every school bus contractor each year that might qualify for the Top 50 list. However, we realize there are probably still some large school transportation companies out there that we are not aware of. If your company or another that you know of isn't on this list and you think they should be, please let us know. Send an email to info@schoolbusfleet.com or call (310) 533-2587. Include contact information and the current number of school buses in the company's fleet.



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TOP 50 CONTRACTORS

Rank	Company	Fleet 2017	Fleet 2016	Loss/ Gain	Small Buses	Large Buses	District Contracts	Students Transported
1	First Student Cincinnati	47,000	49,000	-2,000	12,000	35,000	1,200+	3,000,000
2	National Express LLC Warrenville, Illinois	22,000	21,500	+500	5,700	16,300	544	1,000,000
3	Student Transportation Inc. Wall, New Jersey	13,500	13,310	+190	4,050	9,450	290+	1,250,000
4	North American Central School Bus Joliet, Illinois	2,817	2,700	+117	612	2,205	122	200,850
5	Cook-Illinois Corp. Oak Brook, Illinois	2,246	2,300	-54	1,245	1,001	200+	276,000
6	George Krapf Jr. & Sons Inc. West Chester, Pennsylvania	1,638	1,625	+13	345	1,293	30	111,000
7	WE Transport Plainview, New York	1,630	1,615	+15	910	720	100	50,000
8	Sharp Bus Lines Ltd. Brantford, Ontario	1,600	1,589	+11	534	1,066	15	45,000
9	Lamers Bus Lines Green Bay, Wisconsin	1,430	1,400	+30	175	1,255	41	67,000
9	North Reading Transportation Methuen, Massachusetts	1,430	1,290	+140	530	900	50	73,000
11	Dean Transportation Inc. Lansing, Michigan	1,403	1,364	+39	126	1,277	100	50,000
12	DATCO Inc. New Britain, Connecticut	1,364	1,288	+76	551	813	30	110,000
13	Apple Bus Co. Cleveland, Missouri	1,309	1,098	+211	219	1,090	70	47,025
13	Reliant Transportation (a subsidiary of MV Transportation Inc.) Dallas	1,309	1,512	-203	1,189	120	8	18,000
15	Suffolk Transportation Service Inc. Bay Shore, New York	1,300	1,200	+100	700	600	16	50,000
16	The Trans Group* Spring Valley, New York	1,254	1,254	0	684	570	37	44,000

*Latest data available

Rank	Company	Fleet 2017	Fleet 2016	Loss/ Gain	Small Buses	Large Buses	District Contracts	Students Transported
17	Birnie Bus Service Inc. Rome, New York	1,182	1,161	+21	356	826	14	62,000
18	W.L. Roenigk Inc. Sarver, Pennsylvania	898	911	-13	647	251	25	n/a
19	GO Riteway Transportation Group Richfield, Wisconsin	865	800	+65	180	685	49	45,000
20	Huntington Coach Corp. Huntington, New York	828	939	-111	474	354	12	25,000
21	All-Star Transportation Waterbury, Connecticut	818	815	+3	266	552	23	45,000
22	Royal Coach Lines Yonkers, New York	758	708	+50	396	362	27	34,500
23	Alltown Bus Service Inc. Skokie, Illinois	645	540	+105	165	480	13	21,000
24	Sunrise Transportation Lisle, Illinois	600	550	+50	450	150	25	7,500
25	Rolling V Companies South Fallsburg, New York	540	523	+17	290	250	11	12,000
26	Kobussen Buses Ltd.* Kaukauna, Wisconsin	538	538	0	139	399	23	n/a
27	Pennsylvania Coach Lines McKeesport, Pennsylvania	522	509	+13	250	272	19	33,000
28	Selby Transportation Corp. Bronx, New York	505	400	+105	476	29	5	3,300
29	Langs Bus Lines Ltd. Strathroy, Ontario	486	440	+46	150	336	4	25,000
30	Johnson School Bus Service Inc. West Bend, Wisconsin	481	472	+9	139	342	15	30,000
31	Harlow's School Bus Service Bismarck, North Dakota	472	467	+5	11	461	52	16,192
32	Robert's Hawaii School Bus Inc. Honolulu	470	470	0	180	290	22	22,000
33	AA Transportation Co. Inc. Shrewsbury, Massachusetts	452	456	-4	25	427	17	35,000

*Latest data available

TOP 50 CONTRACTORS

Rank	Company	Fleet 2017	Fleet 2016	Loss/ Gain	Small Buses	Large Buses	District Contracts	Students Transported
34	Sheppard Bus Service Bridgeton, New Jersey	420	420	0	50	370	80	n/a
35	A & S Transportation Naples, Florida	370	n/a	n/a	0	370	20	70,000
36	Holcomb Bus Service Bellmawr, New Jersey	340	237	+103	130	210	34	20,000
36	Island Charter Inc. Staten Island, New York	340	340	0	319	21	4	4,500
38	Transporte Sonnell Corozal, Puerto Rico	325	325	0	145	180	11	9,077
39	The New Britain Transportation Co. New Britain, Connecticut	320	324	-4	110	210	4	17,000
40	Quality Bus Service LLC Sparrowbush, New York	313	281	+32	179	134	6	8,200
41	Metropolitan Transportation Network Fridley, Minnesota	307	n/a	n/a	47	260	9	15,000
42	Michael J. Connolly & Sons Inc. Walpole, Massachusetts	300	300	0	4	296	15	26,500
42	Murphy Bus Lines* Arva, Ontario	300	300	0	40	260	5	n/a
44	Butler's Bus Service Inc. Concord, New Hampshire	297	235	+62	35	262	51	15,329
45	Boyo Transportation Harrisburg, Pennsylvania	295	288	+7	69	226	8	n/a
46	Le Groupe Gaudreault Inc. St. Charles-Borromeo, Quebec	271	271	0	36	235	9	14,000
47	Kottke's Bus Service Inc. Andover, Minnesota	210	n/a	n/a	28	182	1	32,000
48	Mainline Transportation Inc. Golden Valley, Minnesota	198	200	-2	117	81	4	10,000
49	Mcllwain School Bus Lines Inc. Johnstown, Pennsylvania	185	200	-15	15	170	7	8,000
50	B & L Transportation Larose, Louisiana	160	170	-10	6	154	2	14,000

*Latest data available



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