

Highlights of [GAO-25-106887](#), a report to the Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works, U.S. Senate

Why This Matters

Federal law has provided over \$5 billion for programs, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Clean School Bus program, that have helped fund the replacement of diesel school buses with less polluting buses. EPA reports high demand for the programs, which have helped fund nondiesel buses in school districts across the country. However, implementation of multiple federal programs raises questions about overlap and potential related inefficiencies.

GAO Key Takeaways

EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) have helped fund nondiesel school buses through four programs—three in EPA and one in DOE. EPA's programs provide grants, rebates, or loans to help pay for less polluting school buses, such as those fueled by propane or electricity. DOE's program has offered grants for energy improvements, including certain school buses. Funding for the four programs is fragmented and programs overlap, but EPA and DOE have coordinated their efforts and taken other steps to address this.

EPA has committed to pay over \$3 billion for grants and rebates for new buses from fiscal years 2022 to 2024. Award recipients have encountered some difficulties deploying new buses, such as delays installing electric bus infrastructure.

EPA collects information to track progress toward program goals, such as emission reductions, but has opportunities to better assess progress. For the Clean School Bus rebates program, EPA does not systematically collect complete information to track factors, such as infrastructure delays, that may hinder deployment of new buses. Further, developing a methodology that generates more complete estimates of emissions from funded buses could help EPA assess the extent to which the programs help reduce emissions.

Examples of Nondiesel School Buses



Propane school bus and fueling station (top); electric school bus and charging station (bottom).

Source: GAO. | GAO-25-106887

How GAO Did This Study

We analyzed relevant laws, federal documents, and federal grants and rebate data from fiscal years 2019 to 2024. We compared elements of the four programs. We interviewed officials from EPA and DOE as well as stakeholders with expertise in transportation or air policy. We also conducted site visits to eight school districts selected for geographic diversity and types of buses funded.

What GAO Recommends

We are making two recommendations to EPA: (1) to gather information to verify deployment of rebate-funded buses; and (2) to develop a methodology for more complete estimates of emission reductions from its programs. EPA generally agreed with the recommendations.

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