



Roger J. Wyan

*"We are in charge of the maintenance and repair of school buses, fleet vans, service trucks, tractors and basically all of the equipment that the district owns." —Vince Carranza, auto mechanic, Tracy Chapter 98*

## What we do



Handling everything from routine maintenance to major overhauls, district mechanics ensure that maintenance equipment, school buses and other vehicles used for transporting students and staff operate smoothly and safely. The preventive maintenance they perform on a daily basis saves school districts money on costly repairs and equipment replacement.

## facts about auto mechanics

■ The going rate for a commercial auto mechanic is about \$100 per hour, while mechanic positions at school districts pay an average starting salary of \$20 to 25 hourly. By having in-house mechanics, districts save thousands of dollars on the repair and maintenance of their vehicles every year.

■ Auto mechanics employed by school districts adhere to strict standards similar to school bus drivers. They have to maintain a clean driving record, attend periodic training sponsored by the Department of Transportation, and they have to pass a proficiency test.

■ It is especially important for school districts to have in-house auto mechanics when emergencies arise. If a vehicle needs emergency attention, whether on the road or in the shop, a school district's mechanic is available immediately to get the vehicle running as soon as possible.

■ Auto mechanics perform every type of job imaginable on a district's vehicles. On any given day, they may be changing tires on a school bus, replacing a transmission or an engine on a fleet vehicle, changing hoses and belts on a tractor, or lubricating lawn mowers. They also update safety devices and install surveillance equipment as needed.



## Useful Web sites

- Car questions answered  
[www.auto-facts.org](http://www.auto-facts.org)
- California Bureau of Automotive Repair  
[www.bar.ca.gov](http://www.bar.ca.gov)
- Free auto repair advice  
[www.2carpros.com](http://www.2carpros.com)

## INSIDER TIPS FROM AUTO REPAIR PROS

■ Preventive care is key to saving money and extending the life of your vehicle. Make sure you change your car's oil regularly and that you inspect the brakes, tires, hoses, belts and other parts that wear during regular intervals.

■ It's important to be aware of any changes in your vehicle's performance and to keep an eye on gauges and warning lights. If your car starts making strange noises, if you experience power loss, greater fuel consumption or trouble starting your car, have it checked out immediately. Replacing a \$50 part now may save you hundreds, or even thousands, if you wait to take care of a problem.

■ With cold weather starting, now is the perfect time to make sure your auto's coolant is in good shape, as well as your windshield wipers and all of your car's lights for night driving. Give your vehicle a visual 360-degree inspection before driving in rainy and cold weather to make sure everything is fine for harsh driving conditions.

■ When taking your car to a commercial mechanic, be sure to do some research and shop around. Look on the Web for the symptoms your car is displaying and get written estimates from all shops you visit.