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Schools Find Power in Numbers.

Across the country, school districts are joining together to negotiate lower premiums for insurance, goods and services.

Between a shortage of bus drivers and the small number of buses that the Old Rochester Regional School District employs in Mattapoisett, Massachusetts, if a bus driver calls in sick for the afternoon sports program, one of the teams loses their ride to a game.

“We have to have the conversation: Well, which team hasn’t missed a game?” said Howie Barber, assistant superintendent of finance and operations.

So, to save money and increase the number of buses and drivers in the fleet, next year Barber will bid with other towns in his district on more than 20 buses—up from the six to eight buses his district currently operates. It requires getting over the mindset that each elementary school represents its own organization, he said.

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ROUTE FIFTY

By Rachel Gottlieb

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