



Responses to Written Questions

RFP 24-36 Transportation Routing Software

Pre-Bid Conference & Finalist Presentations

Question:

Just to confirm, the mandatory pre-bid conference will indeed be held *only* in person?

Answer:

The mandatory pre-bid conference has been moved to a virtual meeting. An invite will be sent by MPS Procurement team to the vendors that have submitted an Intention to Submit.

Question:

Will the in-person pre-bid meeting be recorded for additional employees within the companies that attend to listen to afterwards?

Answer:

The pre-bid conference will be virtual. Vendors may forward the invitation to additional employees as they like.

Question:

Will the finalist demo be held in-person or virtually?

Answer:

Ideally presentations will be held in person at district headquarters. More information will be provided in the coming weeks. Presentations are slated for the week of August 19 - 23

Question:

How much time will be allocated for each vendor that qualifies to do an in-person demo?

Answer:

Vendors can expect to present and answer questions from the committee for up to an hour.

Question:

RFP Section 1: Overview, Item G reads that the narratives written in response to Sections III and IV may not exceed 10 pages, with double-spaced text in 12-point font. There are over 80 requirements in these



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sections. Would the District consider increasing this page limit, in the interest of receiving proposals that are detailed enough to provide a useful comparison of vendors?

Answer:

Proposals can go beyond the 10 page limit with the understanding that proposals should be as concise as possible while addressing requirements.

Demographics

Question:

How many total drivers, including substitute drivers?

Answer:

The district currently has 55 drivers on staff, this includes route drivers and sub drivers. We do not have special assignment drivers (dedicated drivers for only field trips or athletic trips).

Question:

How many contractor relationships do you have, and which contractors do you work with?

Answer:

MPS contracts with 7 yellow bus service providers and 3 Type III-only service providers. The yellow bus service providers have regular education and/or special education routes; some also provide Type III service.

Our contractors are Bille Bus, MTN, Transit Team, Lorenz, Septran, Minneapolis & Suburban, Great Lakes, MEISA, Frontier, and Rift Valley.

Question:

Of your 18,000 – 19,000 students transported daily, how many are regular education students and special education students?

Answer:

Regular education students: 15470 District students / 1458 Non-public school or charter school students

Special education students: 2156 District students / 156 Non-public school or charter school students

General

Question:

What routing software does the District currently have and is it currently in full use?

Answer:

The district currently uses Edulog eSQL. It is in full use- all routing is done in the software.



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Question:

What aspects of the existing routing software system would the district like the new system to improve upon the most?

Answer:

The district is looking for a routing system that recognizes and can handle the modern needs of students and families, such as students with multiple residences, families' expectation of providing notification when a bus is nearing a stop, ability to send communications directly with families and more.

The routing system should also have a robust reporting function that allows for multiple user types to access information, such as up to date route copies. The routing system should also have the ability to highlight when a route is running late so dispatch staff can address the issue in the moment.

Question:

Has the district viewed product computerized bus routing and or attendance planning software product presentations from any routing software vendors within the past nine months? If so, what products were viewed?

Answer:

We have not had any presentations in the last nine months.

Question:

Regarding the transportation request component, what system/process does the district currently use for Transportation requests and how does that integrate with your current routing solution?

Answer:

The district uses a request form in our student information system, Infinite Campus. School-based staff submit a request on behalf of a family/guardian if the student needs transportation to/from an address other than their home address AND/OR if the student requires special equipment per their IEP AND/OR if the student is enrolled in an afterschool program.

If the student needs transportation to/from their home address, school-based staff mark a checkbox on the student file in Infinite Campus. That flags the student to be assigned to a bus stop, if eligible per district guidelines.

Student demographic information (grade, home address, etc.) and any requests are sent nightly from Infinite Campus to our routing system via a file. MPS created automated processes to transform the data from this file and import into Edulog.

Question:

Does the district have interest in sending student routing information back to Infinite Campus?

Answer:



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Yes, bus stop information is currently sent back to Infinite Campus. Student records include bus stop location(s), morning bus stop time, afternoon bus stop and bus number.

Bus Routes & Runs

Question:

Please explain the route structure for your bus runs. Are you picking up K-12 all in one bus run? Do you pick up high school students and drop them off, then pick up middle school students and drop off, and then elementary school?

Answer:

The district has 5 tiers for the morning and afternoon runs:

- 7:30 am / 2:10 pm (Elementary)
- 8:05 am / 2:45 pm (Elementary)
- 8:40 am / 3:20 pm (Middle Schools)
- 9:10 am / 3:50 pm (Elementary)
- 9:25 am / 4:05 pm (Elementary)

Runs are typically 2 or 3 tiers and may include additional work such as shuttle service for our Career & Technical Education high school courses, care and treatment service for students, afterschool program runs, etc.

High schools bell times are 8:30 am – 3:10 pm. Yellow bus service is provided per students' IEPs. Type III service is also provided if students have transportation rights under McKinney Vento. Regular education high school students have a Metro Transit Go To card and do not have yellow bus service.

Question:

Are the afternoon bus runs essentially a 'mirror' of the morning runs? (i.e., are they the same core stop locations? Buses generally run in the same area AM & PM?)

Answer:

Yes, the same bus stops are usually used for both morning and afternoon service. The district allows for alternate addresses so some students have different morning and afternoon stops.

The route does not always include the same schools morning and afternoon, nor operate in the same area of the city. The district tries to have middle school routes the same morning and afternoon to foster a positive relationship between driver and students.



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Question:

What is a type III route?

Answer:

Type III routes are for students who are identified as homeless or highly mobile under McKinney Vento. These students have a right to continue to attend their school of origin regardless of where they live and the school's attendance area. McKinney Vento status is reviewed and renewed annually for the year.

Type III routes are typically performed by taxis, minivans or other limited passenger vehicles.

These routes are a collection of trips that are sent to Type III service providers that can combine trips as it best suits their business.

Reporting

Question:

Can the district provide clarification on what the word usage means or is referring to in this requirement?

Related to this RFP, Minneapolis Public Schools may require at least monthly and annual usage with the ability to sort and categorize information. Is your organization capable of providing the level of detail MPS requires, as described above? Please provide an example of this in the Appendix C.

Answer:

The district is required to submit reports to Minnesota Department of Education on the students we transport, including mileage, classification of route (regular ed, special ed, type III), and more. The district also submits reports and data to the Council of Great City Schools and other agencies and nonprofit groups.

The district needs the routing software to be able to classify type of trips and other information regarding service provided accurately.

GPS, Driver Navigation & Parent-Facing App

Question:

Are you looking for tablets to provide live vehicle GPS tracking for the parent app?

Answer:

The district will incorporate tablets in buses for driver navigation, and potentially student ridership in the future. GPS information would be used for the parent app to notify families when the bus is approaching the bus stop.

Question:



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Is the district committed to staying with Samsara GPS as stated in the RFP or are you open to changing GPS solutions including hardware?

Answer:

The district is committed to staying with Samsara for our GPS software and hardware.

Question:

Are you looking for GPS software compatible with Samsara hardware?

Answer:

No, the district will use Samsara GPS software and hardware.

Question:

Does the District currently provide a parent app? If so, what vendor?

Answer:

The district currently uses Here Comes the Bus as the parent-facing app of our Synovia GPS software

Student Tracking, Tablet Hardware and Software

Question:

To clarify, will the district be using district-owned tablets or is the vendor expected to provide all necessary hardware?

Answer:

The vendor should either be able to provide tablets or interface with a variety of tablets that the district can purchase. The district currently has tablets installed for driver navigation but these tablets will be removed once our current GPS software is replaced by Samsara. Samsara does not provide specific tablet but instead interfaces with a variety of options.

Question:

Does the district currently own tablet hardware, or have a preferred tablet vendor, or do you expect the vendor to provide tablets?

Answer:

The district does not own tablet hardware, nor do we have a preferred vendor. The district is open to having the vendor provide tablets or purchase tablets separately from a 3rd party vendor.



Question:

Regarding contractors, would the district mandate that contractors use tablets you endorse, or would you allow them to operate on different existing hardware they already have?

Answer:

Contractors would be expected to use the same tablets the district would use.

Question:

How many vehicles would you plan to equip with tablets?

Answer:

We expect to need about 430 tablets to cover district and contractor buses assigned to district routes.

Question:

Do the students of your district currently use RFID cards for lunch or any other school related services? How many students would be issued RFID cards, if applicable?

Answer:

No, MPS students currently do not use RFID cards. Student RFID cards for student ridership could potentially be used for early childhood program students through 8th graders. Potentially 10,000 students

Implementation

Question:

Do you plan to have district staff implement initial data, including routes, stops, schedules, geocoding, map editing, and implementation of related data during the training process or do you expect the vendor to implement that data?

Answer:

We expect implementation will be a combination of district staff and vendor staff.

Training

Question:

How many users (including contractor employees) will require training with full access to the following modules:

- Routing
- Driver Navigation



- Student Ridership App
- Field Trips
- Parent App/Portal

How many users (including contractor employees) will require training with limited or read only access to the following modules?

- Routing
- Driver Navigation
- Student Ridership App
- Field Trips
- Parent App/Portal

Answer:

Full Access	Read Only Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routing: 20 • Driver Navigation: not sure what 'full access' means for Driver Nav module; all route drivers would need to be able to use Driver Nav, approx. 200 drivers • Student Ridership App: n/a • Field Trips: 5 • Parent App/Portal: not sure what 'full access' means for parent app/portal module; all families would need to be able to use the parent app/portal, approx. 15,000 families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routing: 10 • Driver Navigation: not sure what 'read only access' means for Driver Nav module; all route drivers would need to be able to use Driver Nav, approx. 200 drivers • Student Ridership App: n/a • Field Trips: 10 • Parent App/Portal: not sure what 'read only access' means for parent app/portal module; all families would need to be able to use the parent app/portal, approx. 15,000 families

GIS Services

Question:

For home-to-school transportation, in what county(s) are you transporting students?

Answer:

The district transports students within the 7 county metropolitan area: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties. The majority of students are transported within Hennepin County.

Question:

Do you have a preferred map source? If so, what is it?

Answer:



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The district is interested in a map source that automatically updates to provide the most current mapping information. Not necessarily. The district has been using the Metro GIS data, but would be open to some other source as long as it adheres to our naming convention and contains current information. Google Maps, OpenStreetMap, other GIS source, etc.

Fleet Management Software

Question:

What solution, if any, is currently used for fleet management?

Answer:

The district is not pursuing specific fleet management software. If a vendor provides a module or solution, the district may be interested in the future.

Question:

Does the district intend to purchase a fleet maintenance software system?

Answer:

Not at this time.

Question:

If so, are there any systems you require integration with, such as fuel management?

Answer:

Not applicable

Pricing

Question:

Does the district have a budget range for the routing software or restrictions around pricing?

Answer:

The district is interested in receiving the best product for the best price.

Question:

Is the Pricing appendix intended to be for the cost for the first year only?

Answer:

Under the Software Costs section, please identify if the cost is one-time (first year only) or ongoing (yearly cost).



Software Costs			
List cost of software modules that are included in the proposal. Provide a brief description of the functionality and note if cost is one-time or ongoing.			
Software Module Name	Description of Software	Type of Cost	Cost
Routing			
Reporting/dashboard feature for Transportation and school-based staff			
Comparative Analysis (planned versus actual)			
Family-facing bus stop information, including bus location notification			
Driver navigation			
Student ridership			

Hardware costs, implementation costs and customization costs are assumed to be one-time costs. If there are yearly, ongoing costs for those sections, please identify them.

Training costs, support costs and hardware maintenance costs are assumed to be yearly, ongoing costs. If there are one-time costs for those sections, please identify them.

Contract

Question:

Regarding Section I (Overview), Section T, as well as Section 24 of Appendix 3, are you amenable to allowing for assignment to an affiliate or acquirer in the event of an internal reorg or acquisition?

Answer:

More information would need to be provided to fully answer this specific question.

Question:

Appendix 3, Section 8.1 (the Sample Contract) reads that, “the Contractor expressly waives to the District any claim to copyright pertaining to all new materials, publications, and documents produced as a result of this Contract and agrees that the District shall have exclusive right to and responsibility for their distribution, publication, copyrighting (when applicable) and all other matters relating to dissemination of the materials.” Vendors may offer a pure Software as a Service (SaaS) solution. In that case, Minneapolis Public Schools will not be required to install or operate any software. SaaS solutions are not hosted on premise, they are hosted in the cloud. Therefore, the vendor will maintain ownership of all intellectual property throughout the duration of this contact and beyond. Please advise if this model is acceptable to the District.

Answer:

This question is being reviewed and an answer will be provided by the district before proposals are due.

Question:



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Regarding Section 26.1 of Appendix 3, are you amenable to stating this section is inapplicable since we are providing SaaS?

Answer:

This question is being reviewed and an answer will be provided by the district before proposals are due.

Question:

RFP Section 1: Overview, Item B: Schedule of Proposal reads that October 1, 2024 is the date of "Implementation." Does this mean that implementation must be fully completed by October 1, or is that the date we may begin work? What is the District's intended go-live date?

Answer:

October 1, 2024 would be the date that work can begin. The district's go-live date would be determined by the district and vendor based on an implementation plan.