SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT	
Contact information: Shawnee Mission School District Purchasing Department 8200 W. 71st Street Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66204 **ATTN: Reed Beebe** **Please note that vendors may request a copy of this RFI in Word format by emailing purchasing@smsd.org.**	DATE: September 5, 2025 RFI NO. 25-010 RFI TITLE: **Student Transportation Services** Responses will be accepted until: Date: **September 23, 2025** Day: **Tuesday** Time: **11:00 a.m. (local time)** **Terms, conditions, and specifications under which responses are requested are included. Please review thoroughly.**

Introduction:

The Shawnee Mission School District ("the District") requests a written response to this Request for Information ("RFI") for the purpose of obtaining information from qualified vendors interested in providing student transportation services capable of meeting the District's needs.

This is a request for information only; this RFI is issued by the District solely for its information and planning purposes, and the RFI does not commit the District to contract for any supplies or services whatsoever.

However, the District intends to use this RFI to prepare a select vendor list for the solicitation of more detailed proposals. At this time, the District is not seeking detailed proposals that outline specific pricing and terms and conditions, but the District intends to follow-up with selected vendor(s) that offer services that are of interest to the District to request formal proposals for the District's consideration, with possible subsequent negotiation of a multi-year contract with the desired vendor.

All RFI responses shall be delivered, and shall adhere to the format, as further indicated herein. The District shall have the right to ask additional questions of – or request additional information from – responding vendors. The responses may, upon review by District staff, result in a qualified list of vendors for the products and services requested in this RFI; should this occur, finalists will be notified, and formal proposals will be requested that include specific pricing and other terms and conditions for the District's consideration.

This RFI includes an overview of the District's student transportation service needs. Due to the number of bus routes and schedules, the District currently would prefer not to share detailed route data through this RFI process, but would make such information available later to vendor(s) selected for additional discussions/negotiations through the RFI process.

Overview:

Geography: The District occupies 72 square miles in northeast Johnson County, Kansas. It services the cities of Fairway; Lake Quivira; Leawood; Lenexa; Merriam; Mission; Mission Hills; Mission Woods; Overland Park; Prairie Village; Roeland Park; Shawnee; Westwood; and Westwood Hills, Kansas. The District is the third-largest school district in Kansas, and its current enrollment is approximately 26,500 students. The District consists of 46 schools and provides a full-range of educational programs and services as authorized by Kansas statutes.

Current Bus Routes: Of the District's approximate 26,500 students, approximately 5,400 students utilize regular education transportation, with approximately 640 students utilizing special education transportation. The District currently has approximately 184 bus routes, along with approximately 215 bus routes for special education needs. Fixed bus routes typically average 13 miles, with special education routes averaging 18 miles. Additionally, bus transportation services are used for approximately 2,000 field trips/athletic events per year. Approximately 123 buses are utilized by the District each year for regular education transportation, with approximately 85 buses utilized for special education transportation.

Current Contract: The District currently contracts with one vendor to provide these bus services. The current contractor provides full fleet management services, including the provision of needed buses, drivers, special education (SPED) aides, and support staff. The current contract for these student transportation services runs through July 31, 2027. The District has utilized this contract since 2017. [NOTE: The District also utilizes a separate vendor for alternative student transportation services (vans), but these services are supplemental to the primary student transportation services, and the alternative student transportation services are outside the scope of this RFI.]

Future Contract: The District currently anticipates that any future student transportation services contract would run from August 1, 2027 through July 31, 2032 (a five-year initial contract term), with the possibility of renewal options that could potentially extend the contract for an additional five years, for a potential ten-year contract. However, the finalized contract term would be subject to negotiation between the District and the selected vendor.

Bus Depot/Fuel: The District currently does not have its own bus depot for the storage and fueling of buses. The current contractor provides the bus depot location. The District currently orders fuel for the contractor's bus fleet, for District-use only. During the school year, the District typically orders 5,000 gallons of diesel and 2,500 gallons of unleaded gasoline per week.

Special Education (SPED): In addition to drivers, buses used to transport SPED students are required to have one aide on board. Some SPED vehicles require lifts for wheelchair accessibility.

Bus Routing Data: The District currently utilizes its student transportation contractor to work with the government of Johnson County, Kansas **("Johnson County Government")** to collect data for the preparation of bus routes. The District provides daily student data (student's name, student's address, etc.) to the contractor. The contractor then works directly with Johnson County Government to collect data (municipal boundaries, school boundaries, etc.) that is then used to route buses. Once per month, the contractor provides the District with an address point file that

contains all student addresses and their respective school paths. As part of this process, the contractor also provides the District with transportation data needed for state funding, such as data regarding the number of SPED riders, mileage, student FTE, etc.

Desired Services:

The District currently desires (or is interested in) the following student transportation services. The list below is not exhaustive, but meant to provide an understanding of key services desired by (or of strong interest to) the District. The District is open to considering additional or alternative services. Also, a vendor's inability to provide all of the desired services is not disqualifying:

Fleet Management: The District is interested in a service partner that can provide a full-service fleet management solution. Desired services include:

- The ability to procure needed vehicles
- The ability to provide adequate staffing
- The ability to develop routes and schedules for bus service
- The ability to maintain service schedules
- The ability to accurately communicate the needed timeframes for implementing services
- The ability to work with District staff in addressing ongoing transportation needs
- The ability to provide timely and accurate billing
- The ability to provide the District with any requested available data or reporting regarding fleet operations
- The ability to provide transportation service for field trips and athletic activities
- The ability to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and requirements for student transportation services

Staffing: The District is interested in working with a service partner that can provide adequate staffing to operate and manage its fleet. Desired services include:

- The ability to recruit, hire, and retain drivers
- The ability to recruit, hire, and retain SPED aides
- The ability to recruit, hire, and retain support personnel (managers, dispatchers, etc.)
- The ability to offer robust staffing to maintain and expand services as needed
- The ability to ensure and document that staff have all federal, state, and local licensing, training, or permits needed to provide service
- The ability to provide adequate professional training (safety, workplace conduct, etc.) to its staff

Fleet Safety, Security, and Comfort Features: The District is interested in the following fleet safety, security, and comfort features:

- Air conditioning and heating systems
- Driver assistance features
- Internal cameras
- Braking systems
- Tire pressure monitoring systems
- Stability control systems
- Rearview and side cameras
- Emergency exits and signage

- Good fuel mileage
- Regular vehicle maintenance service
- Regular vehicle safety inspections
- Reliable vehicles that operate in a variety of weather (rain, cold, snow, etc.)
- Reliable lifts for SPED transport
- Rising seats or booster seats for SPED transport

Fleet Telematics: The District is interested in a fleet telematics solution that offers the following features:

- On-board communication capability
- Real-time live camera systems
- Real-time GPS tracking
- Vehicle travel history
- Real-time speed monitoring
- Real-time driver behavior monitoring (sudden braking, sudden acceleration, etc.)

Family Communication: The District is interested in a vendor that can provide direct communication to parents. Desired features include:

- Real-time bus tracking options for parents/guardians
- Push notifications for delays and arrival times
- Public portals with secure parental/guardian log-ins
- Ability for families to register electronically for bus services

Bus Depot: The District currently does not have its own bus depot. The District is interested in a vendor's ability to:

- Provide a centrally located bus depot with adequate fuel tank capacity for fleet usage
- Secure any federal, state, or local permits needed to operate and maintain the bus depot

Alternative Fuel Considerations: The District currently utilizes a primarily diesel bus fleet. While the District anticipates continuing with a diesel fleet for the initial term of a new contract, the District is interested in working with a service partner that can help the District evaluate a transition to an alternative fuel fleet. Such services might include:

- Analytics regarding availability and costs for various fuel sources
- Communication regarding potential funding sources for an alternative fuel transition
- Analytics regarding the lead time needed for a fleet's fuel transition

School Bus Routing Data: The District currently utilizes its service provider to work with Johnson County Government to generate routing data (see **"Bus Routing Data"** section on page 2). The District is interested in a vendor that can provide similar services.

Desired Budget and Implementation Timeframe:

The District currently spends approximately $15,401,220 per year on established bus routes; additionally, the District spends approximately $535,267 per year on various ad hoc field trips/athletic events, for a total of approximately $16,000,000 in student transportation. (NOTE: This annual expenditure estimate does not include alternative student transportation services; such services are addressed by a separate contract outside the scope of this RFI.) Please note that these estimates are provided to provide a sense of current expenditure levels for student

transportation services, and not as a final budget for future services. The District understands that desired service features may impact cost, and the District is seeking the best value for these services.

RFI Response Requirements:

Submitted responses should be limited to the sections and items identified below. The capacity of the respondent to make a complete and responsive presentation will be favorably considered.

Submittals should contain the following items:

A. **Letter of Interest:** Provide a brief letter expressing the respondent's interest and appropriate qualifications. The letter of interest should include the following information:
   - Title of this RFI **("RFI 25-010: Student Transportation Services");**
   - Name and mailing address of respondent (including physical location, if mailing address is a P.O. Box);
   - Contact person, telephone number, and email.

B. **Completion of Exhibit A Questionnaire:** Respond to the questions listed in **Exhibit A**. Please note that a Word copy of this RFI, including Exhibit A, can be requested by emailing purchasing@smsd.org.

C. **Completion of Exhibit B Checklist:** Please check "Yes" or "No" regarding your firm's ability to provide the desired services listed in the provided checklist. You may also use this checklist to clarify or provide additional information regarding your firm's ability to provide services that address the District's desired services. Please note that a Word copy of this RFI, including Exhibit B, can be requested by emailing purchasing@smsd.org.

D. **References:** Provide three (3) references for similar services provided within the last five (5) years, to institutions of similar size and needs to the District. Provide a brief description of the services provided. If a vendor is selected for subsequent negotiations, the vendor will be asked to provide specific reference contact names, addresses, and telephone numbers that can provide feedback on the proposed products and services.

Response Submittal Instructions:

Responses shall be submitted no later than the time and date indicated herein. Responses submitted to a location or individual other than that listed below will not be considered duly delivered or timely. The District shall not be responsible for re-routing responses delivered to a person or location other than that specified below. Late response submittals shall not be accepted or considered. All responses, whether accepted or rejected, shall become the property of the District and will not be returned. The District reserves the right to waive minor defects and/or irregularities in response submittals and shall be the sole judge of the materiality of any such defect or irregularity. The District reserves the right to seek additional responses if the received responses are deemed unsatisfactory. All costs associated with response preparation shall be borne by the respondent.

All responses must be received no later than **11:00 a.m. (local time), Tuesday, September 23, 2025**. Responses may be submitted electronically via the District's electronic bidding system, **Public Purchase,** or via hardcopy format.

To submit responses electronically, please follow the Public Purchase submission instructions in **Exhibit C**. Please note that other forms of electronic delivery (email, fax, etc.) will not be accepted.

To submit responses in hardcopy format, please send one physical copy (along with a thumb drive containing an electronic copy of the response) to the "Official Contact" address listed in this RFI for delivery in person or via service (US Mail, UPS, FedEx, etc.) in a sealed envelope or box. The packaging should be clearly marked **"RFI 25-010 – Student Transportation Services."**

Please note that vendors may request a copy of this RFI in Word format by emailing purchasing@smsd.org.

Official Contact/Deadline for Questions:

Additional feedback or questions may be addressed by the official contact below:

Reed Beebe
Shawnee Mission School District
8200 W. 71st Street
Shawnee Mission, KS 66204
913-993-6475
purchasing@smsd.org

All substantive questions concerning this RFI must be received no later than **Tuesday, September 16, 2025, by 4:00 p.m. (local time).** The District will address questions via addenda (see **"Addenda/Cancellation"** below); it is currently anticipated that any applicable addenda will be issued by **Thursday, September 18, 2025, by 4:00 p.m. (local time).**

Response and Response Evaluation Availability:

To the extent allowed by the laws of the State of Kansas, including the Kansas Open Records Act (K.S.A. 45-215 *et seq*.), responses received by the District will not be open to public review, nor disclosed to unauthorized persons, prior to award of a contract (or a decision by the District not to award a contract) for the services listed in the RFI. Likewise, the District's evaluation documentation of the received responses will not be open to public review nor disclosed to unauthorized persons, prior to award of a contract/decision not to award. Thereafter, all responses and related evaluation documentation shall be open to public inspection.

Addenda/Cancellation:

The District may modify or cancel this RFI at any time prior to the RFI due date by issuance of an Addendum or Cancellation. Such Addenda and/or Cancellations will be posted on the District's website, currently: **smsd.org (Go to About; Department Teams; Purchasing & Bidding; Bids & Bid Summaries View Page.**
https://www.smsd.org/about/departments/purchasing-bidding/bids-bid-summaries

Selection Criteria:

After the District's initial review of submitted responses, the District intends to choose one (1) to three (3) highly qualified vendors considered best qualified and capable of providing/performing the desired products/services outlined in this RFI and, if desired, request interviews or discussions with select vendors; the District may attempt further negotiation with the goal of executing a final contract with the selected vendor(s). However, the District reserves the right not to make a contract award, to make a partial contract award, or to make a multiple vendor contract award, at its sole discretion, through this RFI process.

The following criteria will be used by the District to evaluate the RFI responses:

- The response's adequacy in providing the desired information outlined in this RFI (5 points);
- The respondent's qualifications, including past experience with implementing student transportation services to clients of similar size to the District (20 points);
- The respondent's ability to provide adequate staffing (drivers, SPED aides, support staff) (20 points);
- The respondent's ability to provide adequate, safe, secure, and comfortable fleet vehicles (20 points);
- The respondent's ability to provide an adequate bus depot at the commencement of the contract term (10 points);
- The respondent's ability to provide bus routing data services (10 points);
- The respondent's ability to advise clients on alternative fuel considerations (5 points);
- The respondent's ability to facilitate family communications regarding transportation service (5 points);
- The respondent's ability to provide desired fleet telematics (5 points)

NOTE: Notwithstanding the listed points above, if the District, in its sole discretion, determines that a firm is incapable of providing an adequate bus depot at the commencement of the contract term, this may result in immediate disqualification if the firm is not able to provide a satisfactory alternative for the District's consideration.

District staff will evaluate the responses based on the presented information, along with the context of any staff knowledge and experience regarding the vendor.

Confidentiality of Respondent Information:

The District is a state agency, and information submitted to the District in response to District solicitations for product or service information is generally a public record. Accordingly, no response shall restrict the District's ability to produce the solicitation response and/or any corresponding documents in response to a lawful request or from otherwise complying with the Kansas Open Records Act (K.S.A. 45-215 *et seq*.)

Confidentiality of District Information:

Respondent acknowledges that any information provided by or obtained from the District in connection with this RFI is the sole property of the District and must be treated as confidential, and that this confidential information is not to be used for any purpose other than replying to this RFI, and that this confidential information must not be disclosed without the prior written authorization of the District, and, if applicable, that this confidential information must be returned to the District immediately upon the request of the District.

Pricing/Cost Model Information for General Information Purposes Only:

Any pricing/cost model information provided by respondents is for general information purposes and is not intended to be binding on respondents. Any legally binding pricing or purchasing commitments will be established only when specified by the express terms of a subsequent bid or negotiation process, or where established through the execution of a written agreement.

The District understands that specific pricing will be determined by the products and services selected by the District, and at this time, the District is interested in information regarding general pricing structure options and general cost ranges, not a finalized price quote.

Information in RFI Only an Estimate:

The District and its representatives make no representations, warranties, or guarantees as to the accuracy of the information contained in the RFI or issued via addenda. Any quantities or data contained in this RFI or related addenda are good-faith estimates provided only as general background information.

Governing Law:

It is understood and agreed that the construction and interpretation of this RFI and related addenda shall be governed by the laws of the State of Kansas.

EXHIBIT A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond to the questions below; a Word copy of the RFI, including Exhibit A, can be requested by emailing purchasing@smsd.org. In addition to completing this questionnaire, please provide a letter of interest and references, along with completing Exhibit B, as outlined in this RFI.

1. Please discuss your firm's qualifications to provide student transportation services; specifically, please provide a general overview of your staff's applicable education, training, licenses, experience, and past performance. Please include information regarding your firm's years of operation and service to institutions of similar size and needs to the District, as well as general information about your staffing size.

2. Please discuss your firm's ability to implement a student transportation service solution. Specifically, how long does it generally take your firm to acquire the needed vehicles and staffing to service a school district of the District's size? What process is generally followed to ensure the smooth commencement of a new service contract?

3. Please discuss your firm's typical process for hiring and retaining staff. What is the average service term for your firm's drivers? How does your firm typically hire staff (drivers, aides, support staff) to commence a new contract with a school district?

4. Please discuss your firm's typical training programs for staff. What types of training (safety, health emergency response, etc.) are generally provided to staff? How does your firm document that this training was provided/completed?

5. Please discuss your firm's typical safety, security, and comfort features for the bus fleet.

6. Is your firm able to provide transportation service for field trips and/or athletic events? How are such trips/events scheduled and managed by your firm?

7. Please discuss your firm's ability to provide fleet telematics for the bus fleet. What telematic features can your firm provide?

8. Please discuss your firm's ability to provide an adequate bus depot that would satisfy the District's fleet needs. Does your firm already have a bus depot location near the District that might be utilized? If not, how long does it typically take your firm to procure a bus depot facility for your clients by the commencement of a contract term?

9. Please discuss your firm's ability to provide direct communication to parents/guardians. Does your firm have a solution for real-time bus tracking options for parents/guardians? Can your firm provide push notifications for delays and arrival times? Does your firm offer public portals with secure parental/guardian log-ins? Does your firm have the ability for families to register electronically for bus services?

10. Please discuss your firm's ability to provide guidance to clients regarding alternative fuel options. What resources and services can your firm provide to help clients make such considerations?

11. Please discuss your firm's ability to provide bus routing data services to clients. Please see the "Bus Routing Data" section on page 2 – could your firm provide these types of routing services to the District? Have you provided similar services to other clients?

12. The District understands that final costs for services are contingent upon fleet services and features selected by the District, and the District is not seeking a formal or binding quote at this time. However, based on the District's average mileage as listed in this RFI, what is your firm's typical pricing for a regular education single route? What is your firm's typical pricing for a SPED route with aide (without a vehicle lift)? This information is asked to help the District gauge your firm's general pricing for those types of routes, and the District acknowledges that any provided pricing is not determinative of any future contract pricing.

13. Is there any additional information about your firm's ability to meet the needs of the District, not addressed in the questions above or in the District's checklist of desired services, that you would like to share? You are welcome to submit any additional information materials (brochures, online links, etc.) that you think may be of interest to the District.

EXHIBIT B: DESIRED SERVICES CHECKLIST

Please check "Yes" or "No" regarding your firm's ability to provide the desired student transportation services listed below; a Word copy of the RFI, including Exhibit B, can be requested by emailing purchasing@smsd.org. In addition to completing this questionnaire, please provide a letter of interest and references, along with completing Exhibit A, as outlined in this RFI. **NOTE: The District understands that some firms may not be able to provide all of the desired services listed below, and the inability of a firm to provide all desired features is not automatically disqualifying for consideration.** The checklist below is meant to help District staff determine which desired services may be available from a vendor.

Desired Services	Yes	No
Fleet Management		
The ability to procure needed vehicles		
The ability to provide adequate staffing		
The ability to develop routes and schedules for bus service		
The ability to maintain service schedules		
The ability to accurately communicate the needed timeframes for implementing services		
The ability to work with District staff in addressing ongoing transportation needs		
The ability to provide timely and accurate billing		
The ability to provide the District with any requested available data or reporting regarding fleet operations		
The ability to provide transportation service for field trips and athletic activities		
The ability to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and requirements for student transportation services		
Staffing		
The ability to recruit, hire, and retain drivers		
The ability to recruit, hire, and retain SPED aides		
The ability to recruit, hire, and retain support personnel (managers, dispatchers, etc.)		
The ability to offer robust staffing to maintain and expand services as needed		
The ability to ensure and document that staff have all federal, state, and local licensing, training, or permits needed to provide service		
The ability to provide adequate professional training (safety, workplace conduct, etc.) to its staff		
Fleet Safety, Security, and Comfort Features		
Air conditioning and heating systems		
Driver assistance features		
Internal cameras		
Braking systems		

Tire pressure monitoring systems		
Stability control systems		
Rearview and side cameras		
Emergency exits and signage		
Good fuel mileage		
Regular vehicle maintenance service		
Regular vehicle safety inspections		
Reliable vehicles that operate in a variety of weather (rain, cold, snow, etc.)		
Reliable lifts for SPED transport		
Rising seats or booster seats for SPED transport		
Fleet Telematics		
On-board communication capability		
Real-time live camera systems		
Real-time GPS tracking		
Vehicle travel history		
Real-time speed monitoring		
Real-time driver behavior monitoring (sudden braking, sudden acceleration, etc.		
Family Communication		
Real-time bus tracking options for parents/guardians		
Push notifications for delays and arrival times		
Public portals with secure parental/guardian log-ins		
Ability for families to register electronically for bus services		
Bus Depot		
Provide a centrally located bus depot with adequate fuel tank capacity for fleet usage		
Secure any federal, state, or local permits needed to operate and maintain the bus depot		
Alternative Fuel Consideration		
Analytics regarding availability and costs for various fuel sources		
Communication regarding potential funding sources for an alternative fuel transition		
Analytics regarding the lead time needed for a fleet's fuel transition		
Bus Routing Data		
Is your firm able to provide the school bus routing data services outlined in the "Bus Routing Data" section provided on page 2?		

<u>CLARIFICATIONS</u> -- If you would like to clarify or provide additional information regarding your firm's ability to provide services that address the District's needs, you may do so below:

EXHIBIT C

VENDOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING BIDS/PROPOSALS/RESPONSES VIA PUBLIC PURCHASE

The District will be using Public Purchase, a free web-based e-Procurement service. Vendors submitting bids/proposals/responses via Public Purchase will need to follow the two-step registration instructions detailed below. Please register as soon as possible so that you have access to the District's bids and bid notifications.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Register with Public Purchase:**

   Use the link below to begin the registration process. ***It can take up to 24 hours for your account to become active.*** **You will receive an email from notices@publicpurchase.com letting you know your account is activated. Be sure to add this email address to your contacts to avoid the bid notification emails being sent to your junk folder.**

   https://www.publicpurchase.com/gems/register/vendor/register

   If you are already registered with Public Purchase, please proceed directly to step 2.

2. **Register with The Shawnee Mission School District:**
   1. Once you have received your activation email from Public Purchase log in to www.publicpurchase.com and accept the terms and conditions of use.
   2. Click on the "Tools" tab located on the far right of the menu header.
   3. On the new list of sub-tabs, click on "Agencies"
   4. Search for the agency: **Shawnee Mission School District** - Make sure the Registration Status field is set to "All"
   5. Once you find the result, please click on the [Register] tab on the far right of the agency name.
   6. Complete the registration steps with the agency.

It is important that this second part of the registration is complete or you will not receive notifications of upcoming quote opportunities via Public Purchase from the **Shawnee Mission School District.** *It is your responsibility to keep the information up to date, particularly the contacts and email addresses.*

Why the switch?

Using this service will make the quoting process easier for us and our suppliers. The Public Purchase eProcurement System was designed exclusively for use by government agencies and their vendors.

Benefits to Vendor

This eProcurement system will create a single location in which to view open bids and award information for previous bids issued through the Public Purchase website. This system will also provide you with automatic notification and transmittal of bid solicitations to vendors. In addition, Public Purchase gives you access to bid opportunities with other government entities.

All of this is provided at no charge to you.

If you need any assistance with this process, please contact Public Purchase at support@publicpurchase.com or use their Live Chat during business hours. It can be found in the upper left corner of the website.

NOTE: As an alternative to electronic submission, hard copy bids/proposals/responses may be submitted as outlined in this solicitation document.