Agenda Item Summary

TO: Dr. Michael Schumacher, Superintendent
FROM: Dr. David Stubblefield, Deputy Superintendent
SUBJECT: Authorization to Contract with Zum Services, Inc. for Student Transportation Services
DATE: January 26, 2026

Recommendation: The Deputy Superintendent recommends contracting with vendor Zum Services, Inc. ("Zum") for student transportation services for an initial seven-year term commencing on August 1, 2026 and ending on July 31, 2033, with the option to renew the service term for an additional three years as mutually agreed by both parties, for a potential ten-year contract term. The estimated initial annual expenditure for Zum's bus fleet services is approximately $18 million, with an average estimated annual expenditure of approximately $21 million over the course of the initial seven-year term; final costs are contingent upon student enrollment and District transportation needs (see "Additional Supporting Information" table below). These services would be funded with Operating Funds. This expenditure meets the goals of Strategic Plan Strategy 1 (Learning) and Strategic Plan Strategy 4 (Technology).

Overview: In September 2025, the District publicly issued a Request for Information ("RFI") for student transportation services to meet the District's bus fleet needs. The RFI noted that the District would utilize the RFI process to prepare a list of select vendors that would subsequently be invited to provide more detailed proposals.

The District received RFI responses from the following seven vendors: Assisted Student Transportation; CalAmp; DS Bus Line/Mobility Beacon ("DS Bus"); Durham School Services; First Student; North America Central School Bus; and Zum. (NOTE: Despite initial participation in the RFI process, DS Bus subsequently submitted a "No Bid" notification letter, informing the District that it would not be submitting a formal bid proposal to the District.)

A cross-departmental District team (with participation from Athletics and Activities, Business and Finance, Information and Communication Technologies, Leadership and Learning, Special Education, Student and Family Services, and Transportation) evaluated and scored the RFI responses using the following criteria:

- The response's adequacy in providing the desired information
- The respondent's qualifications, including past experience with implementing student transportation services to clients of similar size to the District

- The respondent's ability to provide adequate staffing (drivers, aides, support staff)
- The respondent's ability to provide adequate, safe, secure, and comfortable fleet vehicles
- The respondent's ability to provide an adequate bus depot at the commencement of the contract term
- The respondent's ability to provide bus-routing data services
- The respondent's ability to advise clients on alternative fuel considerations
- The respondent's ability to facilitate family communications regarding transportation service
- The respondent's ability to provide desired fleet telematics (that is, the ability to provide real-time tracking and monitoring of bus vehicles as they travel routes)

Out of a possible 100 points, the three highest-scored firms were: Zum (92.1 points); First Student (86.1 points); and Durham School Services (84.1 points). These finalists were interviewed by the District's evaluation team, and the firms were asked to provide product demonstrations of their respective telematic solutions.

The District then invited all three finalists to submit formal service proposals. These proposals were evaluated and scored using the following criteria:

- The ability of a firm to provide buses and a bus depot within the District's desired timeframe
- The ability of a firm to provide and retain desired staffing
- The firm's estimated service costs
- The firm's overall service capabilities, including factors such as available technology options, compliance with all applicable transportation regulations, desired contract terms, and available service/pricing options
- The firm's proposed telematics solution, including the firm's direct experience in utilizing the solution with other clients
- The firm's ability to provide a robust student registration process, including providing multilingual communication features and services
- The firm's ability to provide consulting services regarding the District's consideration of alternative bus fuels

Out of a possible 100 points, Zum (90.8 points) was the highest-scored vendor, followed by First Student (83.9 points) and Durham School Services (80.5 points). Among other factors, the District's evaluation team was impressed with Zum's robust telematics solution (which includes the ability to allow families to track their students' routes in real-time), an easy-to-use public app featuring a robust selection of languages, Zum's commitment to hire qualified bus drivers working for the current service provider, Zum's ability to maintain desired staffing for its clients, Zum's air-conditioned and ergonomic bus fleet, and the ability for parents and guardians to rate driver service using the app (Zum's drivers have an average service rating of 4.9 out of 5 stars).

As allowed by the RFI process, the District then negotiated final contract terms and pricing. To help the District stay within its current transportation budget, Zum and the District negotiated a 5.5-hour base rate, rather than a flat daily rate; the base hourly rate is expected to meet District needs and eliminate Zum's need to charge for additional daily hours that are

not utilized by the District. Also, the parties negotiated an annual 5% escalation rate cap for the first four years of the contract, with subsequent years having a 3.5% escalation rate cap. Zum has also committed to leasing the bus depot site used by the District's current service provider, and has committed to maintain a 10% spare bus ratio to ensure continued service, should a bus break down.

Founded in 2016 and based in Redwood City, California, Zum provides student transportation services for school district's throughout the United States. Zum's clients include Seattle Public Schools, Los Angeles Unified, San Francisco Unified, Kansas City Public Schools, and Omaha Public Schools, among others.

Objective(s): To provide quality student transportation services for District families.

Budget Impact: See "Additional Supporting Information" table below.

Strategic Plan Pillars: Strategic Plan Strategy 1 (Learning) and Strategic Plan Strategy 4 (Technology).

Additional Supporting Information: Below is a summary of estimated annual expenditures for Zum's student transportation services, with final costs contingent upon student enrollment and District transportation needs. Over the course of the initial seven-year term, average annual expenditures are estimated at approximately $21 million; over the course of the potential ten-year term, average annual expenditures are estimated at approximately $22 million. These estimates do not reflect fuel costs (fuel is purchased directly by the District and shipped to Zum's bus depot) and ad hoc field trips and athletic event transportation, which are paid by school/Athletics and Activities budgets as needed.

ANNUAL COSTS 26-27	$17,996,934.37	
ANNUAL COSTS 27-28	$18,896,781.09	
ANNUAL COSTS 28-29	$19,841,620.14	
ANNUAL COSTS 29-30	$20,833,701.15	
ANNUAL COSTS 30-31	$21,875,386.21	
ANNUAL COSTS 31-32	$22,641,024.72	
ANNUAL COSTS 32-33	$23,433,460.59	Seven-Year Average Annual Cost $20,788,416
ANNUAL COSTS 33-34	$24,253,631.71	
ANNUAL COSTS 34-35	$25,102,508.82	
ANNUAL COSTS 35-36	$25,981,096.63	
Ten-Year Average Annual Cost	$22,085,615	