



COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 15

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT | 1100 N Smith Street • Palatine IL 60067 | 847.963.3900 | www.ccsd15.net
Judith Gritter, Director of Transportation

DATE: June 30, 2026
TO: Board of Education
Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Judith Gritter, Director of Transportation
Diana McCluskey, CSBO
RE: 9.2 Approval of Bid Award #26-020 - School Buses

At the May Board of Education meeting, transportation presented a recommendation regarding the purchase of replacement buses to enhance and update the District's transportation fleet. During the discussion, a Board member requested additional information regarding the overall value of the proposed purchase and the fact that the buses being proposed were *new* buses. This memorandum serves as a response to those questions and requests Board approval of the recommendation.

Following a comprehensive review of proposals submitted by Central States Bus Sales, Midwest Bus Sales, and Midwest Transit Equipment, Administration has determined that the proposal submitted by Midwest Transit Equipment provides the best overall value to the District while supporting the long-term operational and maintenance needs of our transportation department.

Evaluation of Proposals

Midwest Bus Sales – Thomas/Freightliner Buses

According to the specifications provided by the dealer, the Thomas/Freightliner buses have a longer wheelbase (273 inches between axles) than the majority of our current fleet. This increased length exceeds the capacity of the hydraulic lifts in our transportation workshop, preventing our mechanics from performing even basic preventative maintenance in-house.

While the District currently owns one Thomas bus, it is a wheelchair bus with a shorter wheelbase and does not present the same maintenance challenges. Purchasing additional Thomas/Freightliner buses would increase maintenance costs, require greater reliance on outside service providers, and potentially extend vehicle downtime.

Midwest Transit Equipment – International (IC) Buses

The five used 24-passenger International (IC) buses proposed by Midwest Transit Equipment, as opposed to the Bluebird buses offered by Central States Bus Sales, are similar in body style and engine specifications to the majority of the smaller buses currently operating in the District's fleet.

This consistency provides several significant advantages:

- Easier and more cost-effective maintenance and repairs;
- Ability to purchase replacement parts in larger quantities, reducing costs;
- Greater efficiency in stocking and managing inventory;

- Increased ability to utilize components from retired buses to support active fleet repairs; and
- Reduced mechanic training requirements due to familiarity with equipment and systems.

The more buses we have with the IC body style, the more economical we can be with regard to replacement parts and maintenance. Standardizing vehicle types across the fleet allows the District to utilize existing inventory, purchase parts in bulk, and repurpose components from retired buses when appropriate. These efficiencies help reduce long-term operating costs and minimize vehicle downtime.

In addition, the pricing of the Midwest Transit Equipment proposal provides the District with the opportunity to purchase **seven total buses within the approved budget**, including two new 2027 71-passenger buses. These larger buses share a very similar chassis and suspension system to the five 2026 IC EV buses currently in our fleet, further supporting fleet standardization and maintenance efficiencies.

Additional Value to the District

An additional advantage of the Midwest Transit Equipment proposal is the District's ability to acquire **seven total buses within the approved budget**. The pricing of the five used 24-passenger IC buses creates sufficient budget capacity to purchase **two new 2027 71-passenger buses**, providing the District with additional fleet replacement opportunities without increasing the overall expenditure.

These two new 71-passenger buses share a very similar chassis, suspension system and body panels to the five 2026 IC EV buses currently in our fleet, further enhancing fleet standardization and maintenance efficiency.

As a result, the District is able to purchase **more buses for the investment while simultaneously improving fleet consistency, reducing future maintenance costs, and maximizing operational efficiency.**

Bid Tabulation

Vendor	Description	Amount
Midwest Transit Equipment	Two (2) New 2027 71-Passenger Buses	\$305,904
Midwest Transit Equipment	Five (5) Used 24-Passenger Buses	\$448,295
Total Recommended Purchase	Seven (7) Buses	\$754,199

Recommendation

Administration recommends awarding the purchase of seven (7) school buses to Midwest Transit Equipment, Kankakee, Illinois, in the total estimated amount of **\$754,199**. The purchase includes two (2) new 2027 71-passenger buses for **\$305,904** and five (5) used 24-passenger buses for **\$448,295**.

Approval of this recommendation will allow the District to maximize the value of its investment, increase fleet standardization, reduce future maintenance costs, and continue replacing aging vehicles with equipment that best meets the operational needs of the transportation department.