

Choosing Our Path Forward: A Strategic Plan for Related Services

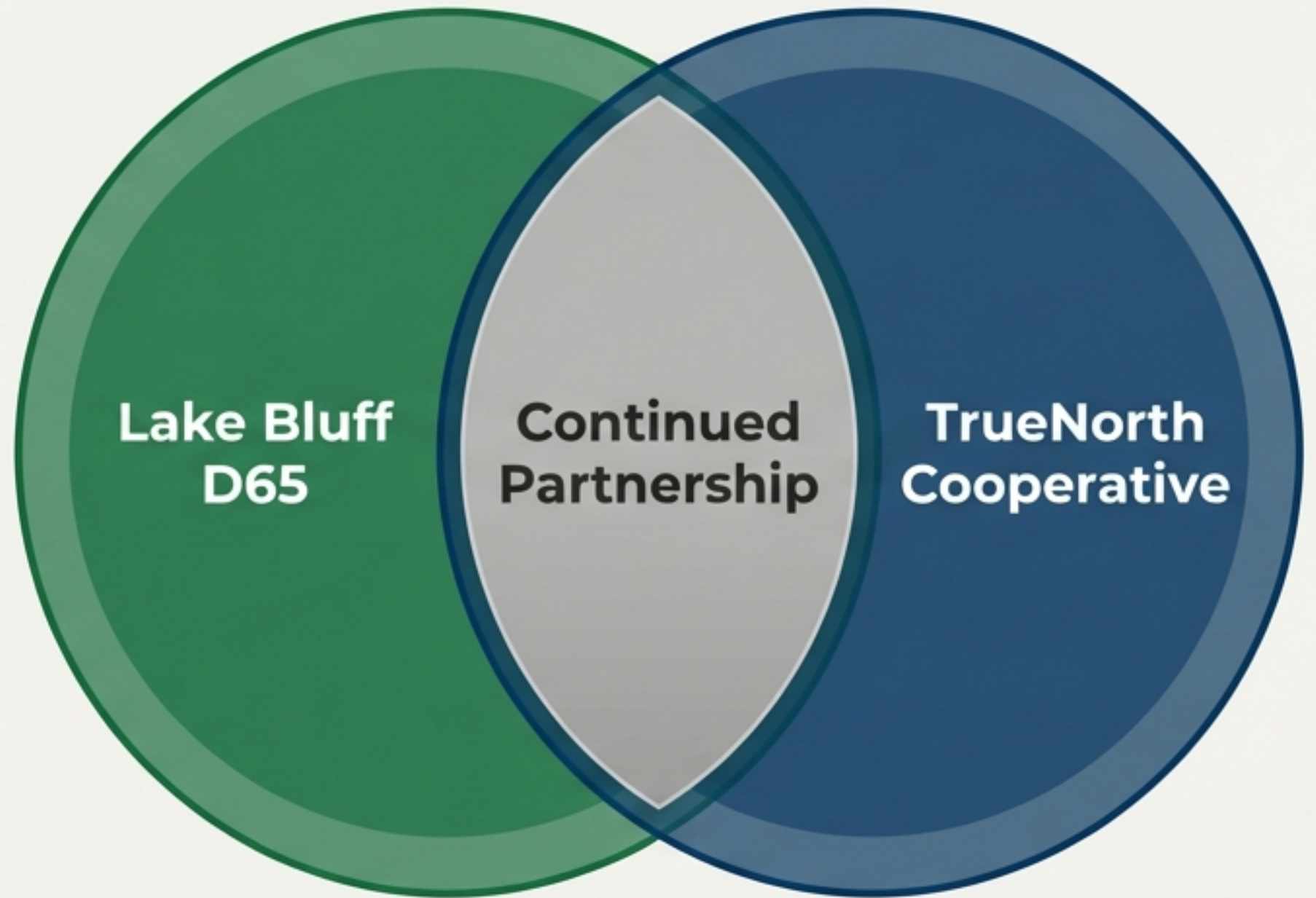
**A Recommendation to the Lake Bluff School District 65
School Board for the 2026-27 School Year**



A Valued Partnership, A Strategic Opportunity

Lake Bluff School District 65 has a successful, long-standing relationship with the TrueNorth cooperative. This plan is an exercise in proactive, long-range planning to ensure we provide the best, most integrated services for our students.

“Lake Bluff School District 65 is committed to the cooperative. With either option that we choose, we will continue to be cooperative members.”



A Strategic Choice for 2026-27: Two Paths Forward

We are at a key decision point for structuring our related services. This presentation outlines two distinct paths, each with its own financial and strategic implications.



Path 1: Continue with the Current Model

- Leverage the established expertise and services of TrueNorth.



Path 2: Build In-House Capacity

- Strategically transition key services to district staff, fostering internal expertise and flexibility.



Path 1: Continuing Services Through TrueNorth



Option 1: A Detailed Look at the Current Service Model

This plan maintains our current service model with TrueNorth for the 2026-27 school year. Cost estimates are based on TrueNorth's anticipated fee of \$151,218 per 1.0 FTE.

Speech & AAC Services

Contracted via TrueNorth.

.5 SLP: **\$90,730.**

.1 AAC Coach: **\$15,121.**

Assistive Technology (AT)

AT-OT services and evaluations remain with TrueNorth.

.1 FTE: **\$15,121.**

Physical Therapy (PT)

Services continue through TrueNorth.

.3 FTE: **\$45,365.**

Vision Services

Remain with TrueNorth due to hiring constraints. Cost: Unknown.

Option 1: Complete Financial Snapshot

Additional Costs

Outplaced Students: Two placements (EC & NSAE) including 1:1 aide costs.

Cost: **\$303,294**

Professional Development: District-led CPI training and use of IDEA funds.

CPI Training & Associated Costs: **\$18,345**

PD Support (5% of IDEA funds): **\$13,293**

In-House Supports: APE certification and potential equipment needs.

APE Certification (one-time): **\$250**

**Total Estimated
Cost for 2026-27
\$501,519**

Path 2: Building Our In-House Capacity

Option 2: A Detailed Look at the In-House Model

This plan shifts key related services to district-employed staff, increasing internal capacity and reducing long-term reliance on external providers.

Speech & AAC Services

Hire dedicated district staff.

.7 FTE Speech & AAC Coach: **\$71,329**

Assistive Technology (AT)

Expand existing OT staff role to 1.0 FTE to provide in-house AT evaluations after training.

Additional Cost for 26-27: **\$16,917**

Physical Therapy (PT)

Form an intergovernmental agreement with D67 and D115.

.3 FTE: **\$40,000 (placeholder)**

Vision Services

Remain with TrueNorth (Cost: Unknown).

Note: Could be accessed through other avenues such as the Exceptional Learners Cooperative.

Option 2: Complete Financial Snapshot & Strategic Gains

Additional Costs (Consistent with Option 1)

- **Outplaced Students:** Two placements (EC & NSAE) including 1:1 aide costs.
 - Cost: **\$303,294**
- **Professional Development:** District-led CPI training and use of IDEA funds.
 - CPI Training & Associated Costs: **\$18,345**
 - PD Support (5% of IDEA funds): **\$13,293**
- **In-House Supports:** APE certification and potential equipment needs.
 - APE Certification (one-time): **\$250**

Total Estimated Cost for 2026-27

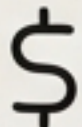

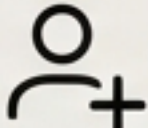

\$478,549

Key Benefits: Long-term cost savings, increased district expertise, and greater flexibility and alignment with district programming goals.

The Strategic Choice: A Side-by-Side Comparison

Option 1: TrueNorth Model #003366

Option 2: In-House Model #107C41

 FINANCIALS	Est. Cost: \$501,519	Est. Cost: \$478,549 <i>Year 1 Savings: \$22,970</i>
 STRATEGIC CONTROL	Services determined by provider contract.	Greater flexibility to align services with district programming goals.
 HUMAN CAPITAL	Relies on external expertise.	Builds a permanent, in-house asset; deepens staff knowledge.
 LONG-TERM VALUE	Costs subject to annual partner fee increases.	Fosters sustainability and greater control over future costs.

Our Recommendation: An Investment in Our District's Future

Option 2 is more than a cost-saving measure; it is a strategic investment in the long-term health and capabilities of our district.



Builds a District Asset

We invest directly in our own staff, creating deep, lasting expertise tailored specifically to Lake Bluff students and curriculum.



Enhances Programmatic Alignment

In-house staff become integral members of our school teams, leading to more seamless and integrated support for students.



Ensures Fiscal Sustainability

Provides immediate savings while giving the district greater control over future costs, insulating us from external rate changes.

A Deliberate & Thoughtful Implementation

A successful transition to the in-house model requires a focused investment in our people, partnerships, and processes.

Investing in People

- Recruitment and onboarding for a dedicated .7 FTE Speech & Language Pathologist.
- Targeted Assistive Technology (AT) and AAC training for our staff, partially supported by IDEA funds.

Investing in Partnerships

- Finalizing an intergovernmental agreement for Physical Therapy services with D67 and D115.

Ensuring Continuity

- A carefully managed transition plan will ensure no disruption of services for any student.

Recommendation & Next Steps

The Recommendation

The administration recommends the Board of Education approve the transition to the In-House Related Services Model (Option 2) for the 2026-27 school year.

The Impact

- Estimated 2026-27 Cost: **\$478,549**
- Estimated Year 1 Savings: **\$22,970**

Next Step

A formal approval will authorize the administration to proceed with the necessary hiring, training, and partnership development to ensure a successful transition.