



Board of Education

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Executive Director of Business & Operations, Karen Apostoli
DATE: 03-05-2026
RE: Transportation Bid (2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29)

This memo is:

- Information only.
 Information with a recommendation, and a request for Board consent.
 Information with a recommendation, and a request for Board approval by vote.

Date by which a Board decision is needed: 03/19/2026

Previous memos on this topic can be found:

- in previous Board packet(s) dated. 06/02/2016
 or attached to this memo

Basic information:

Per Illinois state law, school districts are required to bid out their bus transportation every 10 years, or at the request of a transportation vendor. Contracts can be for any period up to 10 years, but contracts exceeding 5 years must include a termination option after the first 5 years. Bid awards must consider safety, comfort, service stability, and price.

The bid process:

- Notice of the Transportation Bid was put in the Daily Herald on January 5, 2026.
- 5 companies attended the mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting on January 28, 2026: First Student, Yellow Bus Group, Illinois Central (NACSB), Xtra Care Transportation, and Safeway Transportation.
- The Bid Opening took place on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 1:00 pm at the District office. In attendance were Yellow Bus, IL Central, and First Student.

Bid Results:

- Attached is the pricing from the IL Central bid. These prices represent approximately a 2% increase over current year prices in year 1, and 5% increases in years 2 and 3. Overall, the total proposed increases for the first three years would be just under \$800,000. The bid specified that no transportation vehicle can be over 10 years in age, and the average age of buses could not exceed 8 years. Our current fleet ages range from 2015 - 2021. 15 buses would need to be replaced with new buses.
- First Student's bid included a 19% increase in year 1, and a 4% increase in years 2, 3, 4, and 5 - the overall increase in the first three years would be just over \$3 million. The First Student bid includes new buses.
- Yellow Bus bid exclusively on preschool, activity buses, and special transportation. Year 1 in the bid was a 22% increase over the entire transportation cost (regular routes included) this year, and years 2 and 3 have increases of 5%. This equates to just over a \$2 million increase - not including regular transportation.

Currently, we spend approximately \$6.3 million annually on purchased services with IL Central. A 2% increase would bring that amount up to approximately \$6.4 million.

Background or historical information:

Remote learning during the Pandemic led to an increased Transportation Fund. Tax objections resulted in two years of reduced levies in the Transportation Fund, which reduced the surplus funds.

The proposed FY27 State of Illinois budget has increases in categorical grants for both special education transportation and regular transportation; it is unclear what that increase will be at the district level. IL Central has struggled with communication and performance in recent years. IL Central has paid \$8,250 in liquidated damages for the months of December 2025 and January 2026. That equates to 163 routes.

Previous decisions, actions or parameters that relate to this topic or issue: (Options) 3 options

Recommendations: (Recommendations) and (Evaluate)

The administration is recommending that the Board award the transportation bid for school years 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29 to Illinois Central School Bus.

Other questions? What else does the Board wish to know?: