

TO: Corbett School Board and Dr. Fialkiewicz
FROM: Todd Williams, Transportation Supervisor
DATE: JUNE 10, 2024

EPA REBATE AWARD 6-12-24

Several months ago the Board approved Western Bus Sales to apply for the EPA Clean School Bus Rebates for our District. I was made aware last week that our District was awarded the maximum amount of \$200,000 to apply to the purchase of an electric school bus/charging infrastructure. The District has 6 months from the award notification date to complete all the necessary paperwork with Western Bus Sales to receive the rebate funding. The deadline to complete this project and meet all the requirements without penalties is April of 2026. At this time the Board needs to decide if they want to move forward with the purchase of an electric school bus.

The cost of an extended range (185 miles/charge) electric school bus is approximately \$456,000. The cost of the tier 3 charger needed to charge this electric school bus was approximately \$60,000 at the time I met with the manufacturer. The software for the charging station ranged from \$5,000 and up depending on the years purchased. This charger also requires 3-phase power which we have available per PGE, but there would need to be work done before the meter to set this up. I am not sure of the cost for PGE to set up 3-phase for this charging system. I am also not sure of the cost for the electrician to install everything needed after the meter to have the complete system up and charging.

We would only apply the rebate to the cost of the new electric bus since we were awarded \$200,000 and the bus \$456,000. This would leave the remaining balance of bus and charging station/software for the District to cover which is roughly \$320,000. The District would also be responsible for all permit costs as well as all costs related to installation. I think the best location for only one charging station would be next to the HS gym where the buses already park. There would be minimal site preparation as all utilities and road surfaces are already in position. This location would also allow for other districts to charge their buses if they were to drive an electric school bus to our campus.

I know that there is a big push for our district to electrify our fleet and I have a number of concerns for moving forward.

Concern 1. New technology always takes time to work out the bugs and improve. A good example of this is personal electric vehicles. The mileage range on them has significantly improved compared to the first years of their production. If our district were

to wait a few more years to purchase an electric school bus the mileage range will probably follow suit with the personal electric vehicles. In the future, it would most likely meet all of our needs instead of being utilized as a route bus only.

Concern 2: Our District provides transportation for a number of field trips and sports trips that are well out of range for the Extended Range Electric School Bus. If we were to electrify our entire fleet with today's technology we would be forced to rely on outside companies to provide transportation for the many trips out of the mileage range for today's electric school buses. This would end up being a significant cost to our district with no guarantee that the transportation needs would be met. Sports transportation is not a reimbursable transportation cost so our District would be paying 100% of the outside companies costs for every sport trip outside of the range of an electric fleet. These costs are close to double of what it costs for us to do in house.

Concern 3. The ability to keep these buses charged for use. Our District has severe weather numerous times a year. It is my understanding that severe weather conditions provide less than optimum charging conditions and there could be times when a battery would normally be fully charged that it only charged half way. I hear the only way to prevent this is to have the buses and charging stations in a climate controlled building. I would certainly appreciate having a new bus barn that all my buses would fit in, but this would be a significant cost to the district. Our District also experiences the occasional power outages and it seems they have become more frequent and prolonged. If this was the case during the school year we would be forced to cancel transportation until our fleet was charged enough to run.

Concern 4. The campus's aging infrastructure and if the current electrical infrastructure is capable of taking on the added load of the necessary charging stations.

Concern 5. The cost of electricity also seems to be on an uphill trend.

Concern 6. Moving forward with this rebate we would need to retire one of our diesel engine buses that meets current EPA standards that we currently use daily for route. This would leave us with two spare buses which are used anytime there are sports/field trips that are scheduled during route time. One of the spare buses does not meet current EPA standards and there has been an extension given for schools to run these buses one more year past the deadline which was this school year. Our second spare bus does not meet all EPA standards and needs to be taken out of service in 2029. These spare buses were not eligible for the EPA rebate as I try not to run them anymore than necessary due to the emissions concerns the EPA has raised around these engines. There were numerous times this year I was down to one spare bus due to mechanical problems/accidents. When this occurs I am forced to cancel routes/trips to make up for the shortfall.

Concern 7. The total cost to the District after awards. See Cost Breakdown Options in Summary of PGE and EPA Awards that I prepared.

At this time I would support purchasing one extended range electric school bus with the necessary charging infrastructure using the rebate we were awarded by the EPA if this is the direction the Board chooses to go. This will allow us time to see if an electric bus will meet our entire District needs and allow time to see if technology will advance enough for it to work for our District. I know we could miss out on the PGE Funds, but it seems that the agreement with PGE could cost the District millions of dollars to meet all the requirements of the contract. This agreement with PGE would also reduce our fleet's capacity to provide long distance transportation as we would need to remove almost all of our diesel engine school buses from our fleet. Currently half of our fleet of buses has another 10-15 years of life on them before they will need to retire. Completely electrifying would require us to retire these buses earlier than normal. All but 2 of our Diesel Engine School Buses currently meet EPA requirements and over half of the fleet is still eligible for depreciation from ODE.

In my professional opinion we can not put off buying another school bus as we have done numerous times due to budget concerns over the years that I have worked here. If the budget concerns are an issue this year, we should consider purchasing a gasoline engine school bus for under \$150,000. If we have the additional funds in the budget this year then we should consider going forward with the EPA Rebate and spending the extra \$300,000 or more to get an electric school bus.