

Transportation RFP Review Committee

Update and Recommendation

July 16, 2018

Recommendation to the Board

After meeting together June 4, June 11 and July 9; reviewing the proposals and additional information gathered; entering options into the State Funding Cap spreadsheet to conduct a financial analysis; and much discussion, this committee is recommending that the District not move to contract busing at this time.

Rationale

This recommendation is based on the fact that while there may be advantages to having someone else do our busing, the financial savings to the District would be minimal if at all, and the impact on our employees could be significant.

The following is a summary of the process and information gathered to come to this recommendation.

RFP Review Timeline

May 4 - We received two proposals, one from **Cascade Student Transportation (CST)** and one from **Durham School Services (DSS)**. Both proposals met the minimum requirements set forth in the RFP.

May 9 – Both of the proposals were reviewed by two trustees, the Superintendent, business manager, transportation supervisor and a bus driver. During this meeting the proposals were discussed and a set of questions were developed that were then sent out to the proposers for additional clarification. A survey was also created and sent out to other Districts in Idaho Washington and Oregon to gather input on the topic of contract busing.

June 4 – The above group, along with a community member, a principal and the special education director, met to review the responses and the information gathered. Concern was expressed about having accurate estimates of the costs before we can discuss the proposals. There were questions about how much the State would reimburse us if we went to contract busing. It was suggested that we expand the spreadsheet that Dr. Cox started to include 1) what the State would reimburse us, and 2) the cost of aides on the buses.

June 11 – The entire group met with Doug Scott, a specialist from the State Department of Transportation. He reviewed State funding and showed us how to access the State Funding Cap spreadsheet. We also discussed the need to analyze 1) the financial cost to the District, 2) the impact on our employees, and 3) to look at the other implications this decision would have in the community.

July 9 – The group met and after reviewing a summary of costs to the District based on what we would be reimbursed by the State Funding Cap and the impact on employees, we determined that it would be better to not move to contract busing. However the need for improved services were discussed.

Transportation RFP Review Committee

Update and Recommendation

July 16, 2018

Financial Summary of Proposals

The following is a summary of a financial comparison of the proposals we received to current District costs. Additional information is available on request.

	Proposal	Reimbursement	Cost to District
District Costs		\$1,326,304	\$635,191
Cascade Proposal (Propane buses)	\$2,370,295	\$1,571,604	\$964,236
Durham Proposal	\$2,827,805	\$1,448,183	\$812,992
Durham Proposal (some District buses)	\$1,774,926	\$1,557,481	\$643,477
Durham Proposal (all District buses)	\$1,709,881	\$1,608,002	\$673,641

Survey of Other Districts

In order to determine what other Districts have found concerning contract busing a survey was developed and sent to eight different districts. Here is a summary of the responses received. All responses are available upon request.

- Survey Response Summary:
 - We received 15 responses, 6 Transportation Supervisors, 5 Superintendents or Designee, and 4 Business Managers.
 - All but one have been doing contract busing for at least 10 years.
 - Seven said contract busing was less expensive, three said it was more expensive.
 - More expensive because:
 - "Day to day busing costs more."
 - "Type of fuel allowed."
 - Less expensive because:
 - "No employee costs or purchasing of buses."
 - "Less time managing staff and turnover."
 - Some highlighted advantages:
 - "I don't have a full transportation services building, employees, repair shop ..."
 - "Fewer employee relations problems ..."
 - "Outside company who deals with schedules and maintenance."
 - Some highlighted challenges:
 - "Coordinating communication with driver issues ... student discipline."
 - "Limited control over operations."
 - "... contractors customer service ..."
 - "... a disconnect for parents between which responsibilities belong to which entity,"
- Castleford SD, Idaho –Andy Wiseman, former superintendent, indicated that they went away from contract busing because the contractor was not able to supply enough bus

Transportation RFP Review Committee

Update and Recommendation

July 16, 2018

drivers. He also indicated that the lack of regular drivers led to issues with sub drivers. They found they were able to do a better job of recruiting and managing their own drivers.

Advantages to Contract Busing

In reviewing the two proposals the following distinct advantages were identified:

- Managerial
 - The District would only have to deal with the Contractor's manager.
 - The Contractor would manage employees (hire, fire, drug test, annual training, etc.).
 - The District would not have to track employee time sheets, attendance, sick leave or vacation time.
 - Bus drivers would get higher wages.
- Bus Fleet & Routing
 - The District would not have to do maintenance and upkeep of the fleet, just file reports with the State.
 - The majority of buses would be newer and equipped with cameras and software.
 - The District would have input on route development and changes but would not be responsible for determining which students are on which routes. That information would come to the District via reports from the Contractor.
- Financial
 - The District would only have to write one check each month to the Contractor.
 - The District would no longer need to order buses, parts, oil and fuel.
 - There would be considerable time savings on business office staff each month.
- Public Relations
 - Parents would be able to better track when the bus would be arriving, due to bus tracking software.
 - There would be less calls to the District about which student is on which bus.

In summary the main advantages to moving to contract busing would be 1) savings in time spent by business office staff, 2) fewer employees to manage and 3) less long-term investment in the purchase and maintenance of the fleet.

Disadvantages to Contract Busing

In reviewing the two proposals the following distinct disadvantages were identified:

- Managerial
 - The Contractor may or may not hire our current employees.
 - The District would have less say in the hiring and managing of bus drivers.
 - We would probably lose some drivers to neighboring districts.
 - Bus drivers would not get PERSI and only have up to 4% match.
 - Bus drivers may have to pay more for health coverage.
- Bus Fleet & Routing

Transportation RFP Review Committee

Update and Recommendation

July 16, 2018

- The District would not have the option of taking back the fleet once it is sold, without considerable reinvestment.
- Financial
 - There is no guarantee on the total dollar amount as both proposals have extra hours for activity buses.
 - The Contractor could add 'hidden fees' in future years.
 - We would have to negotiate a contract every few years.
 - Both proposals are more costly than our current expenditures.
- Public Relations
 - Parents would still come to the District with issues. The District would end up being an intermediary between parents and the contractor on any complaints or student discipline issues.
 - Current district employees

In summary the main disadvantages to moving to contract busing would be 1) additional financial burden for the District, 2) less benefits for bus drivers, and 3) more risk for the District if it doesn't work out.

Conclusions

After reviewing the proposals the following conclusions was reached by members of the committee:

1. The cost of going to contract busing would not provide the District with significant financial savings and could result in higher costs once we no longer had our own buses.
2. Moving to contract busing would not provide any significant benefits for current employees. While full time bus drivers might see a slight (\$1,100) annual increase in take home pay, health benefits for them and part-time employees will not be what they currently have.
3. There are a lot of services that the proposers would be able to provide that we currently do not (GPS tracking, cameras, etc.).
4. There are a number of concerns about the current level of service and efficiency in the transportation department.

Transportation Department Recommendations

After reviewing the proposals and discussing the needs of the District the following recommendations for the Transportation Department were identified:

1. Review and improve the efficiency of current routes.
2. Improve communications with parents.
3. Consider working with neighboring districts to explore partnership options.

Transportation RFP Review Committee
Update and Recommendation
July 16, 2018

4. Establish a Transportation Committee to review routes and operations three times during the school year.
5. Contract with a consultant to ensure we are making correct choices as we make changes to improve the services provided by the department.