

FOR ACTION

Lisle Community Unit School District No. 202 Board of Education Meeting April 28, 2025

SUBJECT: Regular Student Transportation Services Bid

RECOMMENDATION: The Administration recommends that the Board approve the three-year bid proposal from Westway Coach.

BACKGROUND DATA: In accordance with the Illinois School Code and recent amendments under Public Act 103-430, which limits transportation contracts to a maximum of ten years, the School District issued a bid in February for regular student transportation services. The current contract was extended into an eleventh year with Westway Coach based on legal guidance received last year, which indicated that existing contracts did not need to be rebid immediately under the revised statute. However, it was recommended that a formal bid be conducted during the current school year. The administration moved forward accordingly to ensure compliance with updated statutory guidance and to promote transparency and competition.

Bids for a three-year contract were opened on March 4, 2025. Three vendors submitted proposals: North American Central School Bus (a division of Illinois Central School Bus), Westway Coach, and First Student. While all proposals were reviewed, only the bids from North American Central and Westway Coach were considered competitive in terms of pricing. The Bid Tabulation is included in BoardBooks for reference.

The Illinois School Code does not require that transportation contracts be awarded solely on the basis of cost. Contracts may instead be awarded by first considering the bidder most able to provide safety and comfort for the pupils, stability of service, and other factors related to quality of service—and then considering price.

The evaluation of proposals considered multiple factors beyond cost, including continuity and stability of service. While the pricing between the two vendors was extremely close, the administration determined that maintaining consistency with the School District's current provider, Westway Coach, would best support the School District's transportation needs at this time. Westway Coach has a long-standing working relationship with the School District and has proven to be responsive and reliable in recent years.

Westway Coach is one of fifteen wholly owned subsidiaries of Cook-Illinois Corporation. Cook-Illinois Corporation is the largest family-owned school bus contractor in the United States, operating over 2,000 school buses in and around the Chicago-land area. Westway will continue to provide services to Lisle 202 from their Lockport facility which is located at 18962 Airport Road just off I-355 and approximately 15 miles from the district boundaries. The operations manager for the Lockport location has been with Cook-Illinois for more than 10 years and has been the operations manager for the last 5 years.

As the School District's current provider, Westway Coach already has the necessary buses and equipment in place to meet the district's needs for the upcoming school year and will not need to acquire additional vehicles on short notice. In addition, because they are currently servicing the School District, Westway already employs the drivers needed to staff all routes and does not anticipate any staffing challenges. Their starting wage of \$25.00 per hour is competitive within the industry.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The estimated annual cost of the contract with Westway Coach is approximately \$1,371,000 for 2025-2026, \$1,426,000 for 2026-2027, and \$1,483,000 for 2027-2028. This results in a total three-year contract amount of \$4,280,000, not including optional performance bond costs.

The School District is projected to spend approximately \$80,000 more for regular student transportation services, a 6% increase, in the first year of the contract. Subsequent years of the contract will increase by 4% each year.

SUGGESTED MOTION: That the Board of Education approve the three-year bid proposal from Westway Coach for regular student transportation services for the 2025-2026, 2026-2027, and 2027-2028 school years in accordance with the Invitation for Bid documents.