

# Zionsville Community Schools

## Board of School Trustees Meeting “Item for Consideration”

**New Business Item 6b • Date: March 10, 2025**

### Purchase of School Buses

#### Category:

<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources, Personnel/Staffing	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance, Budgeting, Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Board Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facilities, Transportation, Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

#### Type of Board of Trustees Consideration Sought:

Action	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Facts of this Matter:

The next stages of the years-long ZCS Bus Replacement Plan call for the replacement of 5 aging buses and the addition of 3 new buses for route expansion and student cohort changes. Mrs. Eaton obtained pricing for buses of the appropriate classes which meet our specifications through the CIESC bus bid program. The CIESC’s joint co-op purchase program for school buses allows school corporations to obtain the best possible pricing using the CIESC’s bulk buying power. Use of the CIESC program conforms to all applicable state regulations and statutes regarding bidding and purchasing of school buses. We have successfully used this program for the past several years.

Mrs. Eaton has recommended that we purchase the following vehicles from the CIESC bid listing at a total expected price of \$1,427,448.00. Per Mrs. Eaton’s recommendation, the 8 total vehicles include seven (7) 78-passenger propane buses and one (1) 63-passenger gasoline bus with a lift.

The total cost outlined above may be reduced to a net figure reflecting trade-in allowances once final values on the buses being retired from our fleet have been determined with the CIESC designated dealer. If it is determined that trade-in is not to our best advantage, other disposition routes like recycling that we have done in the past will be evaluated at that time.

#### Objective POSITIVES related to this item or approach:

The purchase of these buses allows us to update the condition of our fleet to serve students. With the increase in maintenance costs experienced in recent years, continuing the plan for replacement of the oldest buses in our fleet is necessary.

We also note that the specifications of the new buses to be purchased continue our effort to a nearly completely propane fueled fleet. The switch to this alternate fuel type began in 2019 as the first step to an eventual conversion of substantially our entire fleet. Propane fuel is both cheaper per volume and cleaner burning (thus friendlier to the environment) than conventional diesel fuel. The propane buses purchased since 2019 have proven to be very satisfactory in performance. Additionally, these proposed new buses include dual stop arms and stop arm cameras. These are features that are recommended by local law enforcement and have served us well in promoting safety for bus riders and our community.

**Objective NEGATIVES related to this item or approach:**

None identified.

**Opinion/Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board authorize the purchase of the buses as described above.

**Financial Implications, if any:**

Cost, as described above. Funding for the purchase of these vehicles will come from the proceeds of the 2024 Bonds as previously described and, if necessary, the Operations Fund.

Due to volatility in international markets for critical parts for school buses, the CIESC vendor has included in their quote a "Tariff Allotment" of 5% for a quoted amount of \$1,427,448. While they have written that they may not charge us this amount in the final billing, they also have reported that further price increases beyond this 5% are also possible before ZCS is invoiced. While staff view this as a lack of honoring the required quoting process, and we have been part of legal petitions in similar circumstances in the past, we acknowledge the reality of the situation and wish to be sure that we provide safe and appropriate transportation for our students. Given these circumstances, the Leadership Team requests permission to expend up to an additional 5% above the quoted amount for a total permission to expend \$1,498,821. Should final invoices exceed even this amount, staff will either reduce the number of buses being purchased or return to the Board to seek new approval.

**Suggested Wording for a Motion, if any:**

I move to approve the expenditure of up to \$1,498,821 less any applicable trade-in allowances for the purchase of up to 8 passenger buses as presented.