



To: Dr. Mike Riggle
Board of Education

From: Dr. R.J. Gravel
Dr. Kim Ptak

Date: Monday, March 19, 2018

Re: Award of Special Education Transportation Bid

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve a contract with Safeway Transportation for the fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 for special education transportation services. The estimated annual value of the contract is \$1,234,623 and would remain flat for all three years of the contract.

Background

Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/14-1.02; 105 ILCS 5/14-13.01) and Illinois Administrative Code (23 Ill Admin Code, Section 226.750) require that students eligible for special education with transportation services included in their IEP, be provided such services. Board Policy 7140 (Transportation for Special Education Students) states that , “it is the policy of the Board of Education . . . to pay for transportation for special education students under [certain] terms and conditions”. The terms and conditions stated include when a student’s educational program is located in a school other than than the one the student would normally attend; when the the nature of the student’s disability is such that special transportation is required; when the nature of the student’s special program is such that special transportation is required.

In order to fulfill the District’s responsibility to provide special transportation, we have historically partnered with multiple providers. The district currently is utilizing services from (5) providers including: American Taxi, First Student, Safeway, Septran, and 303 Taxi. While the expense of providing these transportation services fluctuates based upon individual student needs, the total estimated cost for 2018-19 is \$1,659,008. Transportation needs identified in a student’s IEP vary, however the majority fall into the following categories:

- Transportation required to and from schools and/or between schools
 - After school activity bus services
 - Bus services to District-approved work study destination
 - Bus services between Glenbrook Off-Campus and other schools
- Transportation required in an around school buildings
- Specialized equipment is required (e.g. lift bus, bus aide, air conditioning)

In an effort to bring more consistency to the transportation program for students with special needs, the Business Services and Special Education departments partnered to review current and future needs. During our review, districts utilizing an existing NSSED services agreement with Septran were informed that service costs would be increasing by 34% effective beginning with the 2018-19 school year.

Recognizing that Septran currently fulfills approximately 30% of the District's special transportation needs, and that such an increase would be substantial, it was determined that we should pursue other options. After discussing the increase with other school districts, Glenview School District 34 (who, along with District 225, is one of the largest users of Septran) decided to partner and conduct a joint bid for special transportation services. Our goal was to gather competitive pricing information, recognizing that we could still utilize the existing NSSED services agreement with Septran should the bid results not be favorable.

A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held with all prospective bidders on January 8, 2018, and bids were opened and read publically on January 26, 2018. Five transportation companies submitted bids, including: Alltown Bus, Positive Connections, Septran, Safeway, and 303 Taxi. The bids were reviewed in detail by the Business Services and Special Education teams of both school districts.

Through the review process, it was identified that bids were submitted with one of two cost structures: per route; per student. Septran, Alltown and Positive Connections only provided route costs and not per student costs. Charging per student is a more cost effective model for special education transportation due to the relatively low number of students typically placed on a vehicle. It also provides greater flexibility to the school district for routing a larger quantity of smaller vehicles, as opposed to a smaller quantity of larger vehicles (e.g vans as opposed to large school buses).

Reviewing the proposals, Safeway Transportation emerged as the lowest, responsible bidder. As mentioned prior, the District has utilized Safeway for the past 5 years to fulfill a portion of our special transportation service needs. The feedback from parents and staff regarding Safeway's prior performance has been extremely positive, with an emphasis that their drivers are friendly, on time, and responsive to the changes in student needs.

On Wednesday, February 21, 2018 we attended a meeting with Safeway's owner, Mr. Lucky Sahota, and toured their service facility in Waukegan, Illinois. During our visit, we met the entire operations team at Safeway (e.g. dispatchers, routers), several drivers, and the leadership team. The company employs over 135 people (many of which have been with the company more than 5 years), and owns 120 vehicles including minivans and smaller passenger buses. Their commitment to their customers is exhibited in their commitment to their staff, offering full-time employment, benefits, and one of the highest hourly wages for both bus aides and drivers. Through our discussion, Mr. Sahota shared that he is seeking to consolidate his overall customer base, and focus more directly on the Glenview, Northbrook and neighboring communities.

In reviewing the bids, and comparing them to our current conditions, accepting Safeway’s proposal is estimated to save the District \$424,385:

Comparison of Bids for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 Fiscal Years			
Provider	Current Agreements		With Safeways’ Bid
	2017-18 Estimated Cost	2018-19 Estimated Cost*	FY 18/19 Estimated Cost
Septran	\$433,992	\$581,550	
Safeway	\$397,615	\$409,543	\$1,234,623
303 Taxi	\$488,625	\$500,840	
American Taxi	\$48,000	\$49,200	
First Student	\$115,000	\$117,875	
	\$1,483,232	\$1,659,008	\$1,234,623

* estimated cost based on historical increases or proposals from vendor.

Additionally, Safeway’s pricing will remain flat for three years (fiscal years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21). A three year comparison projects an savings of \$1,423,958 savings over the three year contract period, compared to our current agreements.