



# VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## District-Wide Bus Transportation Services BID #VPS-FY22-001

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q1: Item 2.4, page 5, states that proposals may not be withdrawn by the bidder during the 180 days following receipt of the proposals. With the proposals due January 11, 180 days puts us into July – it is not realistic to expect a contractor to manage a new contract start-up on such short notice. Please consider changing the 180-day period to 60 days, which would allow an appropriate transition period, should a new contractor be awarded the Vernon contract. Item 2.5 refers to signatures – would properly authorized electronic signatures be acceptable, instead**

A1: The 180-day question was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website. The District will follow state statutes for acceptable signature formats.

**Q2: Item 3.2 1 L, page 9, refers to the District's right to cancel in-person learning under various circumstances – should such cancellations occur, and transportation not be required, is the District open to negotiating partial payments to cover fixed costs and driver wages during such a school closure? During the initial COVID-19 closures last year, were any payments made to First Student?**

A2: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q3: Item 3.2 2 H, pages 12-14, lists various penalties that the District could assess. Please provide the total \$ of such deductions made to First Student over the past 2 school years.**

A3: Less than \$500.00.

**Q4: Item 3.2 3 I, page 15, refers to video systems – how many cameras are required on each vehicle, and in what placements?**

A4: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q5: Item 3.2 3 W, page 16, states that the District will purchase all fuel to be used – is there a diesel tank at the current location on Ferguson Road? If the proposed fleet is a mix of diesel and gas vehicles, how would the district provide gas, if a UST was not available, and the vehicles had to be fueled off site?**

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A5: The first question was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website. Gas is already provided offsite at Town pumps. Contractor is responsible for diesel tank.

**Q6: Item 3.2 4 F, page 18, refers to the District's right to disapprove any driver. Please consider adding the following language:**

***“Any request to remove a driver from service under the agreement shall be in writing, with the reasons stated therein, and shall not be in violation of any federal, state or local law.”***

A6: The District will not illegally discriminate or violate any laws in exercising its rights.

**Q7: Exhibit B, page 37, refers to a 4-hour maximum for daily pricing. To clarify, the reference to ‘stop to school’ and ‘school to stop’ for the hours calculation does not include the deadhead from the contractors yard to the first pick up/school nor the deadhead from the last school/drop off back to the yard, correct? But interval time, the bus empty travel between tiers, would be counted?**

A7: Service is calculated yard to yard, start to finish.

**Q8: Does First Student have a full roster of regularly assigned drivers for all routes? And do they have a full complement of sitting spare drivers?**

A8: Yes, they have full-time drivers for all routes as well as several spare drivers.

**Q9: Please provide a copy of the current contract between First Student and the district, as well as copies of invoices from September & October, 2021.**

A9: Invoices were provided at the pre-bid meeting and the current contract is included in the RFP posted on our website.

**Q10: We note that the routes posted on the district do not include mileages – can the District provide route sheets that include miles, ideally from yard to yard, and sorted by bus #?**

A10: The mileage sheet was provided at the pre-bid meeting and is posted to our website in the pre-bid packet.

**Q11: I pulled the specs for this bid off the website. I wanted to know if you can send me the name of the current contractor and current pricing?**

A11: The current contract is attached to the RFP and invoices were provided at the pre-bid meeting.

**Q12: On Exhibit A, we note that the bell times for Rockville HS and Vernon Center MS are very similar (7:30 – 2:00 and 7:38 – 2:15), while Center Road, Lake Street and Maple Street are on the same schedule (8:15 – 2:45), as are Northeast and Skinner Road (8:45 – 3:15). If the HS and MS are actually on the same tier, we have issues with bus numbers – buses 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 16 go to both schools – are these the same buses running a very tight schedule, or are they different buses going to either the HS or the MS, but with the same numbers?**

**For example:**

***B13 at VCMS, PM, leaves the MS at 3:30, and ends up at Northeast at 4:01; while B13 at Northeast, also PM, leaves Northeast at 3:15 and ends up at Grand Ave & Morrison at 3:32. It seems unlikely that these 2 runs are completed by the same vehicle... this illustrates the need for potential bidders to get completely sequenced route sheets, by unique bus #s, with all tiers listed.***

A12: Buses run on a tight schedule, but run on time each day.

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**Q13: *Please provide a copy of the current First Student fleet list.***

A13: The fleet list was provided at the pre-bid meeting.

**Q14: *We'd like to also request copies of invoices for Sept and Oct this year... we are particularly interested in any excess hourly charges.***

A14: Please refer to the attached invoices for September and October of this year.

**Q15: *Might I request that, even though the RFP is clear that questions will be answered by December 30, as analyzing routes is a time-consuming but critical process, the district consider responding to these routing issues prior to the 12/30 deadline?***

A15: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q16: *Please provide history of penalties charged in 2019.***

A16: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q17: *Bid states Type 2s require aircon, is this correct?***

A17: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q18: *Does the town have gas tanks at the public works that would be available to the contractor or should we invoice back the gas?***

A18: Gasoline fueling is available at our Dept. of Public Works, 375 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, CT.

**Q19: *Did the town pay First Student anything for the days of distance learning?***

A19: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q20: *Please provide invoice copies for 2019 for home to school, charters, field trips.***

A20: Reports were provided at the pre-bid meeting for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

**Q21: *What is the purpose of the BOE contacting the driver? We are concerned that there might be misunderstandings if the BOE and Dispatch are communicating with the same driver.***

A21: For emergency use. This is limited to key public safety staff and not done routinely.

**Q22: *Why is the department bidding the service? When was the last time this bid?***

A22: This is a five-year contract, last bid in 2017.

**Q23: *Are there any service or performance concerns with your current contractor?***

A23: This is outside the scope of the Q&A.

**Q24: *What service changes may be anticipated during the initial term of the contract; are any funding changes anticipated?***

A24: Budget decisions are made by the Board of Education.

**Q25: *What changes to the service parameters or provisions are being changed in this RFP from previous conditions?***

A25: The previous contract is included in the RFP for reference.

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**Q26: Does the district utilize any smart phone apps to communicate with parents about bus route status, location, etc.?**

**a. is the district interested in an app moving forward?**

A26: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q27: Did the district and contractor negotiate outside of the contractual terms to provide payments to contractor during closure or periods of service reductions related to the pandemic? Please specify details (i.e., a reduced percentage of daily fees, flat amounts, how much was it, number of days). Did this cover to allow contractor to fund driver wages to provide assurances of driver availability for when schools returned to in person.**

A27: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q28: If COVID-19, or similar, requires remote or non-transportation days, will the City provide payment to maintain vehicle and drivers for those days? If so – will it be at a pre-determined percentage rate?**

A28: We will follow the contract.

**Q29: Does the current contractor charge any COVID cleaning fees or is the district providing COVID cleaning on the buses at the district expense?**

A29: No.

**Q30: Scan of the transportation invoices for any and all contracted transportation services including all line item billing details and backup spreadsheets. Please provide invoices from October 2021.**

A30: Sample invoices were provided at the pre-bid meeting.

**Q31: Can you provide a briefing of the summer school transportation services needed.**

A31: Summer school invoices for 2019 and 2021 are attached to the end of this document.

**Q32: Did summer school transportation operate at typical volume during the summer of 2020 or was it reduced due to COVID closure?**

A32: We had no summer school runs in 2020.

**Q33: If summer ran a typical volume during 2020 can you please provide a scan of the transportation invoices for any and all contracted transportation services including all line item billing details and backup spreadsheets for summer school transportation. Please provide invoices from June 2020, July 2020, and August 2020. If summer did not run a typical volume during 2020, can you please provide the invoices from June 2019, July 2019, and August 2019.**

A33: We had no summer school runs in 2020. Please refer to attached 2019 and 2021 Summer invoices at the end of this document.

**Q34: Can you please provide a listing of all current routes, start and end times, miles, garage departure times, etc. Please include current count of monitors by shift, AM, MD, and PM for the route listing.**

A34: This information is included in sample invoices provided at the pre-bid meeting.

**Q35: Can you please provide a copy of the turn-by-turn directions including garage departure and return times for all current routes, regular education, special education, etc.? (Be sure to include AM, PM, midday, KG, pre-K, late routes, etc.)**

*Please provide the turn by turn route directions with stops, stop times, garage leave and return times, etc., sorted by bus, for all routes from the Versa Trans routing software. These should include garage leave and return times. You should be able to print to PDF for these.*

A35: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q36: What is the current full-time and part-time management/customer service staff (not driver and monitor) provided by the current contractor. Is this staffing level sufficient to satisfy the District's needs? Does the district provide any of its own employees to assist with the management of the system? If so can you please elaborate.**

A36: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q37: Please provide a summary of the non-performance damages charged/incurred to the contractor for the 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 20-22 fiscal year.**

A37: We have had 2 or fewer violations per year.

**Q38: Can you please provide a summary of all shuttles, after school learning, work programs, vocational, etc. routes operated including pick-up and drop-off times, number of one-way trips per shuttle, days of week or estimated annual days, and the assignment in the current route package. Please note if service is connected with and operated by a daily route bus or if separate vehicle is required.**

A38: Extra hours are detailed on invoices provided at the pre-bid meeting.

**Q39: Please provide a copy of the transportation line item budgets for the current year and the past two years.**

A39: The “2021-2022 Approved Estimate of Expenditures” budget book is posted on our website.

**Q40: Do the athletic and field trip expenditures all reside in transportation budget or are these paid at school building level? If provided for elsewhere, can you please provide the following:**

- a. Please provide a copy of the athletic transportation line item budgets for the current year and the past two years.**
- b. Please provide a copy of the field trips line item budgets for the current year and the past three years.**

A40: Budget line items are listed in the “Athletics” section of the “2021-2022 Approved Estimate of Expenditures” budget book posted on our website.

**Q41: Please provide the total cost spent with current contractor (s) for the past two school years.**

A41: Total cost spent for FY2020 was \$1,955,094.84; total cost spent for FY2021 was \$1,927,828.36.

**Q42: Can you please provide examples of operating reports requested and provided by the current contractor for a month the current 2021-22 school year, and example monthly reports from the previous two school years 2019-20, 2020-21.**

A42: We are unclear what reports are being referenced.

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**Q43: Can you please clarify the typical demand for trips that conflict with the AM and PM daily bus routes and the peak demand days? This will be needed to determine the pool of spare buses and drivers.**

A43: Approximately 4 events had to be moved or postponed this year.

**Q44: Please provide a spreadsheet with a detailed summary of the number of field trips and athletic trips operated, the date, times of service, the number of hours for each trip, the number of miles for each trip, contractor assigned, any special equipment, etc. Please provide for the previous school year and the 2019 school year. You may have something similar in this format. This is requested in order for contractors to adequately plan for your needs.**

A44: These reports were given out at the pre-bid meeting for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

**Q45: Does the current contractor provide homeless transportation or low incident transportation or is this provided by a different vendor?**

A45: This service is provided at the discretion of the District.

**Q46: Does the district allow the drivers to bring their preschool children to ride along?**

A46: Yes

**Q47: Has the current contractor been able to keep up with finding sufficient drivers and been able to keep up with peak trip season needs for drivers who conflict with routes?**

A47: Yes, for the majority of routes.

**Q48: Can you please provide a listing of pre-bid meeting attendees and their respective company.**

A48: Please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q49: Page 2. Can you verify if this is considered a Request for Proposal or Invitation to Bid?**

A49: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q50: Page 7, item 3.2. D. States the Contractor will be required to have a terminal location, and to park and maintain vehicles in the Town of Vernon. By way of reference, the current bus contractor rents the terminal and yard facility at 25 Whitney Ferguson Road, Vernon, CT 06066.**

**a. Does the current contractor provide a vehicle maintenance shop at this location?**

**b. Would the district allow vehicles to be parked in the district and maintained at a facility outside of the district provided maintenance support is provided at the bus parking location in Vernon?**

**c. Does the district or Town of Vernon have any facility available for contractor to utilize for this RFP?**

A50: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q51: Page 7, item 3.2, E. requires contractor to provide computerized routing software.**

**a. Can you please clarify the routing software provided today by contractor?**

**b. Clause requires the contractor to provide the district with access and training. How many access points and training?**

**c. Who performs the function of routing the contractor or district employees?**

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A51: Item a. was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website. b. We usually have 5-user access points with training 1 – 2 times per year. c. Contractor does the routing.

**Q52: Page 7, item 3.2, H. notes a manager and dispatcher is to be provided to serve the district. Are these staff members to be dedicated to Vernon or are they allowed to be shared with other contracts?**

A52: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q53: Page 5 item 2.4 and Page 9, item 3.2, L. Section 2.4 notes proposal should be for no less than 180 days and Item 3.2. L. indicates no more than 185 days. Can you please clarify the expected number of operating days proposers should assume for the school year?**

A53: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q54: Page 9, item 3.2, 1, L. Can you please clarify the practice that was put in place to address COVID pandemic closures? How was the contractor compensated for remote learning days? Was contractor paid in full or a portion in order to compensate drivers and monitors their regularly scheduled pay? What will be the practice moving forward? Typically, we saw contractors reimbursed at least 70% for pandemic closures.**

A54: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q55: Page 10, item, 3.2, 1, O and P. Can you please clarify how route additions and deletions are handled? Does the district and contractor utilize existing rates or will rates be renegotiated for additions and deletions?**

A55: This is based on the student population.

**Q56: Page 10, item 3.2., 1, Q. Notes contractor is to make route changes within one business date of receipt of change. Is this the practice today? One day is a very short turnaround. Typically, we see 3 business days. This allows the contractor to research the change, review the routes impacted, and allow time to notify all potential parties of route changes that are made, etc. Would the district consider amending this to 3 business days?**

A56: We will accept 3 business days.

**Q57: Page 12, item 3.2, 2, F and H, item 2. the late bus penalties incur at 9 minutes late. Industry standards we see are typically at 15 mins or more late. Would you consider amending this provision?**

A57: RFP is correct.

**Q58: Page 14, item 3.2, 3, C. indicates a list of vehicles, age, and mileage is required. Can you please provide the current listing of vehicles provided by the current contractor? Please include the vehicle age, seating capacity, configuration of wheelchair buses (seated and wheelchair capacity), if they require air-conditioning and if any are non-yellow buses or cars, age, etc. Page 15, item, 3.2, 3, item I. Requires video cameras. Can you please clarify the make of the system provided today and how many camera heads the district is expecting?**

A58: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q59: Page 16, item 3.2, 3, item V. indicates standby vehicles, however it does not specify the exact quantity. Can you please clarify the quantity of spare buses all proposers should provide to ensure all are proposing to meet the same requirements?**

**a. How many spare buses and types are provided today?**

**b. How many spare buses are needed in order to meet conflicting trip demand?**

**c. Page 20, item 3.2, 4, item T requires 15% spare. Are you requiring 15% spare ratio or something greater to accommodate trip bus requirements?**

A59: Fleet list was given at the pre-bid meeting; this list includes spares.

**Q60: Page 16, item, 3.2, 3, item W. Indicates the district supplies the fuel directly. Does the district provide fuel to a contractor provided fuel tank? If no fuel tank exists, does the district procure wet fuel delivered directly to the vehicles and pay for the “wet fueling” fee?**

A60: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q61: Page 18, item 3.2, 4, item K. Requires contractor is to comply with minimum wage standards. Are there any minimum wage requirements beyond CT and Federal minimum wages? Such as a minimum pay rate expected for typical positions? Are there any prevailing wage requirements specific to Town of Vernon that are to be followed? If so, can you please provide clarity so all proposers are aware of the requirements.**

A61: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q62: Page 19, item 3.2, 4, item L. Requires a “driver trainer” be available to ride and check drivers and routes. Do you expect this position to be full-time and separate from route drivers?**

A62: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q63: Page 20, item 3.2, 4, item U. Notes contractor is to assume responsibility of any and all labor unions.**

**a. Are the employees of the current contractor represented by a labor union? It is our understanding the drivers and monitors are represented by the Teamsters. Please provide a copy of the labor agreement, any amendments, or memorandums of understanding for current contractor and any district employed transportation employees and any amendment letters, memorandums of understanding, or modifications thereto. If no agreement, please provide wage rates, wage scale, paid time off, and a summary of benefits, etc. for the current contracted and any district employed transportation employees.**

**b. Please provide a count of employees by position, their seniority date, and their pay rates.**

A63: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q64: Page 22, item 3.2, 7, item C. Notes contractors are to follow board policies. Can you please provide copies of the policies?**

A64: All Board policies are posted to our website.

**Q65: Page 31, item 4.17. Regarding termination. Typically, we see a notification and cure period leading up to terminations. Where the district provides written notice within 5 days of an infraction, the contractor is provided 30 days from notice to cure an infraction. If infraction is cured then a termination would cease. If after 30 days the contractor does not rectify the concern, the district then would provide written notice to terminate. Would the district consider amending and including a notice and cure period for terminations?**

A65: The RFP language is correct as written.

**Q66: Page 37, Exhibit B. Regarding the calculation of four hours per route. Is this calculated with a minimum of 2 hours for AM and 2 hours for PM shift. This is typical industry practice?**

**a. How are middays and late runs billed? Are they billed at an hour minimum? This is typical industry practice?**

**b. Does the time billed to district include pre-trip and walk times?**

A66: a. Invoices were given at the pre-bid meeting. b. No, it is yard to yard.

**Q67: Page 37, Exhibit B indicates type I vehicles could be 65-77 passenger buses. Can you please clarify the minimum expectation for capacity? Typical capacity is 71 or 72 passenger and the capacity range of 65-77 would have three different vehicle capacities and initial vehicle purchase price.**

A67: This was answered at the pre-bid meeting – please refer to the pre-bid meeting minutes posted to our website.

**Q68: Page 37, Exhibit B. can you please provide an updated form and specify the current volume of excess hours by route type, midday hours and routes per day, late run hours and routes per day, annual charter/field trip hours projected, and current volume of monitors and monitor hours per day to be used in the calculation. This way all proposers are bidding under the same circumstances for ease of proposal evaluation on behalf of the district.**

A68: Please refer to invoices given at the pre-bid meeting that are posted to our website in the pre-bid packet.

**Q69: A bus mileage report was provided at the pre-bid meeting. Can you please confirm if this mileage report contains all miles for the routes operated per school day? Including the deadhead mileage to/from the contractor facility and in between routes?**

A69: Yes, includes deadhead time.

**Q70: A bus fleet report was provided at the pre-bid meeting. Can you please clarify the seating capacity and wheelchair capacity of the lift buses?**

A70: A full-lift = 24 passengers + 3 wheelchairs; a mini bus lift = 21 passengers + 2 wheelchairs

**Q71: At the pre-bid meeting you indicated the name of the district fuel vendor who also provide a quote in the past for a fuel tank. Can you please provide the name, contact information, etc. for the district fuel vendor who can provide a quote for a fuel tank? Also, please provide any relevant past information on this subject.**

A71: East River Energy is our current vendor. 800-336-3762.

**Q72: Page 19, item 4, S. indicates bus monitors may be provided by the district or contractor. Can you please clarify the practice today? Are bus monitors provided by the district? Do the report to the bus garage or are they picked up and dropped by routes before and after school?**

***Do the additional route time fees include any additional cost for monitors? Can you please clarify the routes where monitors are provided? Does the contractor provide any bus monitors? If so, can you please clarify the quantity and routes they ride.***

A72: Monitors are employees of the Contractor.

***Q73: Can you please clarify if there are any abbreviated schedules such as pre-k, early childhood, or late runs that operate less than the 180-day school year. Please clarify the routes impacted by these schedules.***

A73: This information is reflected in the sample invoices provided at the pre-bid meeting.

**Questions still requiring an answer from the pre-bid meeting:**

***Q: Would we guarantee 180 days payment to the Contractor?***

A: The terms of the RFP will remain in effect.

***Q: Would the District accept Route Reduction Protection?***

A: The district is agreeable to route reduction protection language as follows:

In the event that there is a greater than 10% reduction in routes during the term of the contract, the district will pay the contractor 20% of the daily rate for each route reduced over the 10% reduction threshold. In the event that the number of routes increases during term of the contract to 10% or more the original number of routes, the contractor will agree to discount the daily rate charged to the district by 20% for each additional route over the 10% increase.

**Modification to RFP by District:**

*The following language is being substituted on page 11, Section 2 Paragraph A under the "Payment" section:*

*The new language will read:*

**2. Payment and Compensation:**

A. Based upon the compensation amounts set forth in **Exhibit B**, attached hereto and made a part hereof (collective, the "Compensation", which Compensation consists of the "Daily Rate" and the "Hourly Rate" set forth on **Exhibit B**) the School District hereby agrees to make payments to the Contractor for Services performed based upon detailed invoices submitted by the Contractor to be paid within thirty (30) days after receipt of an invoice for actual Services provided in the prior month. Based upon the Hourly Rate, the Contractor shall provide the School District with separate monthly invoices for field trips or additional Services provided by the Contractor at the direction of the School District, and payment of such invoices will be due within forty-five (45) days of the date of each invoice. Payments for invoices with discrepancies may be delayed.

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