



Solicitation Information
April 8, 2015

RFP #7549480

**TITLE: STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT – RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Submission Deadline: Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 2:00 PM (ET)

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at gail.walsh@purchasing.ri.gov no later than **Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 5:00 PM (ET)**. Questions should be submitted in a Microsoft Word attachment. Please reference the RFP# on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

SURETY REQUIRED: YES. PLEASE REFER TO APPENDIX E.

BOND REQUIRED: YES. PLEASE REFER TO APPENDIX E.

**GAIL WALSH
CHIEF BUYER**

Applicants must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at www.purchasing.ri.gov

Note to Applicants:

Offers received without the entire completed three-page RIVIP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM

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Request for Proposals (RFP)
Statewide Transportation System Oversight and Management

The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Purchases, on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is requesting Proposals from qualified vendors to provide Oversight and Management of its Statewide Transportation System, in accordance with the terms of this solicitation.

Instructions and Notifications to Bidders:

Potential offerors are advised to review all sections of this solicitation carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal. Potential offerors must comply with all State of Rhode Island Procurement Regulations, including the General Conditions of Purchase (<http://www.purchasing.ri.gov/RIVIP/publicdocuments/RULES2011/ATTA.pdf>).

Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.

All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the offeror. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.

Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.

All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.

Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and may not be considered. PROPOSALS EMAILED OR FAXED TO THE DIVISION OF PURCHASES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED. The "Official" time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases.

It is intended that an award pursuant to this Request for Proposals will be made to prime contractor(s) who will assume responsibility for all aspects of the work. Joint ventures shall be considered, so long as the contractor's duties and responsibilities are clearly articulated in such form as acceptable to the State. Subcontractors are permitted, provided their use is clearly indicated in the offeror's proposal and the subcontractor(s) to be used are identified in the proposal.

All proposals should include the vendor's FEIN or Social Security number as evidenced by a W9, downloadable from the Division's website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds.

In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in the state until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). *This will be a requirement only of the successful bidder (s).*

Offerors are advised that all materials submitted to the State of Rhode Island for consideration in response to this Request for Proposals will be considered to be public records, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request, once an award has been made.

Also, Submitters should be aware of the State's MBE requirements, which addresses the State's goal of ten per cent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the State MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or charles.newton@doa.ri.gov. Visit the website <http://www.mbe.ri.gov>

Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases web site on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP.

Equal Employment Opportunity (RIGL 28-5.1) § 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy. – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies in all areas where the state dollar is spent, in employment, public service, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Employment Opportunity Office, at 222-3090 or via email raymond.lambert@doa.ri.gov.

RIGL 37-13-3.1 State public works contract apprenticeship requirements. * (a) Notwithstanding any laws to the contrary, all general contractors and subcontractors who perform work on any public works contract awarded by the state after passage of this act and valued at one million dollars (\$1,000,000) or more shall employ apprentices required for the performance of the awarded contract. The number of apprentices shall comply with the apprentice to journeyman ratio for each trade approved by the apprenticeship council of the department of labor and training.

Definitions

For the sake of clarity, the common terms used in this solicitation are as defined below:

- “System Manager” refers to the vendor selected to manage the statewide transportation system as described within the scope of this RFP.
- “RIDE” refers to the Rhode Island Department of Education. RIDE has the responsibility for managing and administering the statewide transportation system, and it’s Director of the Office of Statewide Efficiencies will be the direct report for the System Manager.
- “Statewide Efficiencies” refers specifically to the RIDE Office of Statewide Efficiencies.
- “Bus Contractors” refers to the contracted transportation carriers selected to operate the student transportation system as set forth under the terms of RFP #7548529, “Statewide Pupil Transportation Services for the State of Rhode Island.”
- “School Districts” refers to school districts whose out-of-district special education, nonpublic, charter and career and technical education students are being transported by the Bus Contractors as described in the aforementioned RFP.
- “Management Contract” refers to the contract which will result from this RFP to manage the statewide student transportation system.
- “Transportation Contract” refers to the contract for providing the busing services by the Bus Contractors.

I. BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

1. Statewide Pupil Transportation Services in Rhode Island – Current Status

Rhode Island has in the past decade made an active effort to streamline and provide more efficient services to its citizens. This is needed both to improve the quality of the services provided and to use scarce fiscal resources to achieve maximum results. Rhode Island's school districts are facing many dilemmas in meeting pupil needs with little or no increases in funding, and look to the state for not only direct education aid, but also for statewide solutions to issues not easily handled on a district by district basis. A top priority for both school districts and the state has been the implementation of a single statewide, efficient and well run transportation system for special education, non-public and other pupils who must go out of their school district for their education.

The Rhode Island General Assembly initiated the creation of a statewide transportation system for out-of-district special education and non-public school pupils under an amendment to Sections 16-21.1-7 and 16-21.1-8 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-21.12 entitled "Transportation of School Pupils Beyond City and Town Limits." Ultimately, a statewide transportation system for all pupils that will encompass both within district and out-of-district transportation is contemplated with the out-of-district component as the first phase of this work.

Now in it's the sixth year, the statewide program has matured to encompass 32 of Rhode Island's 36 regular and regional school districts as well as 5 charter schools. At any point during the contract resulting from this RFP, charter schools may opt to enter or exit the statewide program. In the current fiscal year there are 19 charter schools in the State. Approximately 48 non-public and 101 special education schools or programs are served daily along with 5 charter schools and 6 career and technical education centers. In February, 2015, 140 a.m. and 150 p.m. out-of-district special education and 88 regular school buses were operated daily, transporting 809 and 2,424 pupils respectively.

In the event that RIDE and/or the General Assembly make adjustments to the required transportation under this program that necessitate a substantial reduction or increase in the level of service required, compensation required under this contract may be renegotiated.

There are approximately 190 days of service across the System, plus a limited amount of summer school service. Presently, no extracurricular/field trip service is being performed. Four school districts that have district-owned and operated transportation systems (self-operated) are not required to participate in the statewide program. These are Narragansett, New Shoreham, North Kingstown and Westerly. At any point during the term of this agreement any of these districts may choose to outsource their transportation services at which time the requirements of the statewide system would apply. They may also opt to join the statewide program at any time.

RIDE has contractual agreements with two bus operators, First Student and Ocean State Transit, who provide the busing for students in the statewide program. Each contract is in effect for the period 7/1/14-6/30/17, with an option to extend the contracts for up to two additional one-year periods.

The System Manager under this RFP will provide the oversight and management of the statewide system, including planning the routes. The System Manager selected will be totally independent from the vendors engaged to provide transportation (busing) services. The System Manager will function as the agent for RIDE and will report directly to the RIDE Director of Statewide Efficiencies or designee. In addition, the System Manager will serve as a member of the Transportation Advisory Committee whose members are selected by RIDE. This Advisory Committee will provide feedback regarding overall transportation policies, service standards and student discipline, and serve as a conduit for reviewing concerns expressed by school districts and other stakeholders in the system to offer suggestions and provide feedback on suggested resolution.

This Request for Proposals is, therefore, to obtain management services for the statewide transportation system for a three year period, 7/1/2015 – 6/30/18, with an option to extend for an additional two (2) years.

This Request for Proposals will result in a Master Price Agreement that will allow districts to access Transportation Management Services, under the same terms and conditions, for their in-district transportation.

II. System Goals and Objectives

The RFP to operate the statewide system for out-of-district students involves 32 of Rhode Island's 36 school districts. Four school districts are exempted from participation in the system because they operate their own bus system as opposed to procuring these services through a contractor. Those school districts may, however, choose to participate on a voluntary basis and will be included where feasible. A fifth school district (Block Island) is exempted because of size and lack of geographical proximity. Students served by the system include approximately 3,235 students transported to out-of-district programs, with approximately 25 percent of these being students with disabilities. In 2014-15, approximately 238 buses were in use to transport this student population, with approximately 66 percent of these dedicated to transportation of students with disabilities.

The state contracts with two vendors, First Student and Ocean State Transit, to provide transportation with contracts currently in effect for year for three years which began 7/1/14, with renewals possible for two additional years.

School districts using the transportation services described are charged on a fee per (transported) student basis. In addition, the State of RI provides categorical funding to participants in the statewide program that funds a portion of the transportation services provided to non-public/private school students. The System Manager will be responsible for

administering the fees charged to the school districts, and the invoice charges from the Bus Contractors. The school district fee structure currently in use is based on the percentage of riders each district has on the bus over the course of a month to determine their share of the cost of the bus. In addition, additional aides, nurses, and/or school staff assigned to specific students are billed to the resident district of the assigned student.

On an annual basis the methodology used for determining costs will be reviewed by the system manager and RIDE with recommendations made by the System Manager to RIDE for any adjustments that may be necessary. Overall the billing methodology should result in a system that is predictable for districts for budgetary purposes, clear and understandable, easy to manage, and one that ensures that all costs are invoiced.

The Bus Contractors charges will be based on daily charges, with rates defined by hours of service and equipment and staff needed, as defined in the Transportation Contract (Refer to *Appendix D*, RFP #7548529).

The System Manager will be responsible for establishing and collecting fees from school districts, evaluating and approving charges from the Bus Contractors, and maintaining all appropriate financial accounts and records in performance of the contract.

The System Manager will be responsible for maintaining all student demographic data and for designing all routes and schedules. A communications center for parents, and for accommodating and implementing all changes in transportation needs, is an essential component of this function.

A major responsibility of the System Manager will be maintaining all data in support of the statewide system. This includes demographic (student), logistical (routing), financial and all other data such as service specifications that is needed to ensure system accountability. The System Manager will be required to communicate via regular reports on system operations, cost analysis and qualitative elements such as material lateness in service or other logistical and operational problems.

At a minimum, a goal of the statewide system management is to give districts technical assistance on in-district transportation routing and practical advice on costs and service levels. A further menu of additional transportation-related services will be developed and available to districts on a fee for service basis. Districts may also opt to procure Transportation Management Services for their in-district transportation utilizing this RFP by accessing the resulting Master Price Agreement (MPA). Under the MPA, terms and conditions remain the same and pricing will be negotiated between the specific district and vendor.

In the event that additional districts choose to join the statewide system, the System Manager shall conduct such analysis as is required to provide a realistic cost estimate and integration plan to facilitate this decision and any resulting actions that may be necessary.

The System Manager shall implement, monitor, and prepare monthly and quarterly report on RIDE's Performance Management Program with its transportation vendors. (See Appendix D) The results of the on-going monitoring of the Bus Contractor's performance shall be used to facilitate program improvements to ensure the highest levels of customer service throughout the program. The System Manager will also be required to conduct an on-going and annual audit of the bus contractor's overall performance.

III. Scope of Work

The work of this contract is to collect, update and maintain all the necessary data for system management; design all bus routes and runs using route planning software system; establish and maintain a system of communication with bus operators, placement schools, resident districts and parents; prepare all necessary reports to ensure accountability for services provided; and audit all system elements to ensure a quality cost-effective service for Rhode Island's students.

1.0 Overview of Key Tasks

The expectations of the vendor selected from this RFP are described in more detail in the *Scope of Work* requirements that follow. However, the primary functions of the System Manager are described below.

1. Upon award of the contract and by July 1, 2015 the vendor will:
 - In conjunction with the Office of Network and Information Systems and the software vendor, establish the necessary student, geographic, and logistical databases for route planning.
 - Using preliminary routes developed by the current System Manager, the selected vendor will assume the day-to-day oversight of the existing extended school year (ESY) routes for July and August 2015, while also accommodating new students or changes in placements for the ESY program.
 - Route and schedule students for the start of the 2015-16 school year.
 - Establish a communication system for districts and parents following existing standard operating procedures (SOPs) concerning the communication protocols. Review past timelines for start-up and develop a new timeline of tasks for RIDE review/approval.
 - Establish a billing/invoice and accounts receivable process following existing SOP.
 - Work with RIDE to communicate all information on key staff to stakeholders.

- Work with RIDE to establish internal control mechanisms for internal audits, reporting requirements, cost analyses, program implementation, communications, data and all other plans and contract activities for the life of the contract to achieve all of the goals and objectives outlined above.
- Familiarize themselves with RIDE's School Bus Operator Performance Management Program and develop necessary tools to monitor compliance.
- Set up the System Manager/staff office at RIDE utilizing space provided by RIDE in its offices at 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI.

2.0 School Bus Contractor Management

The System Manager will be required to operate in both an oversight and coordination capacity in ensuring that school bus operations are conducted consistently with both the Transportation Contract specifications and the best possible practices to ensure high levels of service, safety, and cost control. While different entities such as school district administrators and the Bus Contractors will be responsible for acting on these procedures, the System Manager will be responsible to facilitate, coordinate, and monitor them. Listed below are the primary operational areas to be addressed.

2.1 Operations Oversight

Procedures: The System Manager will coordinate with the Bus Contractors to ensure that all driver handbooks are comprehensive and include rules/regulations, training requirements, required forms, driver responsibilities, driving practices, procedures, student discipline tips, route information, policies for transporting special education students, first aid and emergency procedures, pertinent telephone numbers, 2-way FM radio procedures, and other significant information.

Student Behavior Management: To ensure the safe transportation of students, the System Manager will annually, and on an on-going basis as needed, review with the Bus Operators the standard operating procedures (SOP) required when dealing with disciplinary infractions occurring on buses. The System Manager will further ensure that conduct reports, witness statements and the like, as required by the standard operating procedure, are collected and recorded in a timely manner and disseminated to the appropriate parties per the SOP.

2.2 Training and Safety Coordination

Safe bus operations are a stringent requirement of the new transportation program. The System Manager will be required to monitor and evaluate all facets of safety requirements, as specified in the contracts with the Bus Contractors. This includes ensuring that vehicles meet contractual requirements and are appropriately maintained, verifying that buses are equipped with the appropriate auxiliary equipment to secure the safety of students with disabilities and ensuring that drivers have the necessary training for safe bus operations, and to respond to the particular needs of students being transported.

2.3 Operational Records Management

The primary function of the System Manager will be to ensure that the transportation contract approved by RIDE is fulfilled according to the conditions set forth within it. To do this, a systemized method of regular reporting by the Bus Contractors will be critical. The System Manager will be responsible for regularly collecting, reviewing and evaluating these reports as part of the verification and control process to ensure that the service quality and cost of transportation services conform to the terms of the contract. The System Manager will also be responsible for preparing quarterly performance reports for RIDE on measures previously agreed to with RIDE and subject to change. In addition, selected elements of the performance reports will be identified and communicated on a quarterly basis to the bus contractors. Compliance with these identified elements will be tracked by the System Manager as part of the performance management program and non-compliance on the part of the bus operators with remediation of these elements may lead to withholding of payments.

Some examples of operational records requirements include the following:

- Pertinent records for program and fiscal audits that school districts and/ or RIDE may be subjected to;
- Projected budgets for expenditures and revenues for the next fiscal year by March 15th ,which will be updated as required;
- Projected values for purchase orders to encumber funds for each vendor by June 1st and updated as required;
- Monthly and YTD projected comparisons against budgeted values;
- Compliance reports for drivers' license checks, CDL endorsements, specific training required by RIGL's and other qualification requirements;
- Summary of Bus Contractor staff and driver training and in-service instruction compliance records;
- Bus Contractor mileage reports and compliance audit results for reported fuel consumption;
- Bus Contractor asset lists prior to the start of each year with monthly updates;
- Bus Contractor preventive maintenance compliance reports and vehicle state inspection logs;
- Monthly student load count reports listing the number of students at each bus stop who rode on each bus on a selected day;
- Monthly driver route lists showing assigned bus route drivers, by route and by type of vehicle;

- Monthly transportation bus incident/accident reports describing all incidents, accidents or injuries occurring on bus routes or trips; and
- Other reports as requested by RIDE.

2.4 Quality Assurance

Ensuring that transportation services are being delivered to the students in a reliable, timely and safe manner is central to the success of the statewide transportation system. As such, it will be a primary responsibility for the System Manager to consistently monitor the qualitative components of the busing service. This will require regular “on site” checks, spot audits, customer surveys, and regular monitoring of records and reports, including GPS tracking data, in order to ensure compliance with RIDE’s SOPs and the service standards defined in the transportation contract. Some anticipated tasks include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Ensure that all drivers who operate vehicles for pupil transportation have the proper license in compliance with all state and federal background checks, criminal history checks, and drug/alcohol testing prior to transporting students and staff of the school district.
- Ensure that all drivers do a pre-trip inspection of their vehicles and that appropriate forms are kept on file by the Bus Contractors which designate the driver, the vehicle, the components inspected, date/time of the pre-trip inspection, and inspecting driver’s signature.
- Ensure that all drivers are dressed appropriately and maintain personal hygiene suitable for working around children.
- Ensure that bus drivers and aides who display inappropriate behavior are warned, suspended or terminated consistent with the standards of the transportation Contract and the Bus Contractor’s internal policies.
- Ensure that all vehicles transporting students have valid state inspections, completed preventive maintenance, proper vehicle certifications, placards, safety equipment, working auxiliary equipment (such as wheelchair lifts) and are clean and mechanically sound prior to transporting students and staff.
- Ensure that all vehicles have the proper insurance coverage as dictated by state regulations and the contractual requirements defined in the agreement with the Bus Contractors.

3.0 Operations Management

3.1 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Internal Operating Procedures (IOPs)

Fundamental to ensuring consistency in the handling of the myriad of issues and tasks associated with day-to-day transportation, RIDE and its System Manager will utilize a set of agreed-upon SOPs and IOPs. An initial set of procedures were developed jointly and are currently in use. The System Manager is required to monitor compliance by its staff and bus contractors with the SOPs and IOPs and recommend revisions that may be necessary, and/or draft additional SOPs or IOPs as necessary, for RIDE's review and approval. (See Exhibit 1 for Selected SOPs)

3.2 Data Management and Coordination

A central and primary activity of the System Manager will be developing, managing and maintaining the school bus routes and schedules operated by the Bus Contractors, as described in the next subsection. In addition, handling invoices from the Bus Contractors, billing client school districts, and communicating to all parties involved in the transportation system (schools, parents, students, bus contractors, RIDE) will be the core responsibility of the System Manager. In order to accomplish this, the System Manager must be the primary data administrator. Some key elements of this responsibility include the following:

- Establishing a standard student data reporting protocol using the *VersaTrans RP* program, or similar web-based program approved by RIDE, and compatible Web-based interfaces with the school districts.
- Regularly updating and maintaining the geographic database for the route planning software.
- Maintaining a computer-based communications system to convey bus schedule changes, student changes, and similar information.
- Providing and maintaining a call-alert, outreach system to communicate with schools and families.
- Maintaining a report library and database for all invoicing and billing such that RIDE can electronically review and authorize these on a regular, cyclical basis.

3.3 Route Development and Management

The System Manager shall be responsible for developing, planning and maintaining the school bus routes and schedules for transportation in the statewide program using route planning software. Please note that *VersaTrans* is the current routing software. In the event that the management company selected under this RFP recommends utilization of a different route planning software, the management company shall ensure that existing data is converted to the new system without additional expense to RIDE.

The System Manager will make an ongoing good-faith effort to identify opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the bus routes and route packages. Where feasible, the System Manager will identify opportunities to modify, pair, combine, or repackage bus routes with the objective to perform Transportation services in the most efficient and effective manner possible. In addition, the System Manager will conduct ongoing route and ridership analysis are conducted and appropriate actions recommended to RIDE to ensure that fleet usage is maximized to the extent possible within established timing parameters.

The process of managing the bus routes will include coordinating the schedules with input from the Bus Contractors. For example, unsafe bus stop locations or disparities in actual versus planned route running times will require coordination and modification using the input and specific knowledge of the Bus Contractors. However, the responsibility for the design of bus runs, placement of bus stops, linking of bus runs within bus routes, altering stop sequences or street paths, and similar activities will be the sole responsibility of the System Manager¹

The System Manager will also provide and maintain a computerized roster system with student rosters by bus, by bus stop and by student. These reports must provide at least the following data: student name, grade, morning and afternoon bus number, morning and afternoon bus stop, and morning pickup time. The report must also include any specific needs concerning transportation for students. In the event of additions or changes to existing routes, such changes are to be provided to each school and the Bus Contractor as soon as possible with the change to start not earlier than 48 hours from distribution of the change. After the start of the school year, route changes or other schedule changes necessitated by new students requiring transportation shall be implemented within three days unless a delay is unavoidable and approved in advance by RIDE.

3.4 Routine Dispatch Operations

The dispatch function of the System Manager will be primarily one of coordination. The direct communications with drivers, assignment of trips and substitute drivers, and other daily transportation functions will reside with the Bus Contractors. The System Manager will act as the primary point of contact with RIDE, bus contractor terminal managers, school administrators, special education supervisors, and parents in the daily coordination of transportation functions. Some possible examples of expected functions include, but are not limited to:

- Employ additional temporary staff as required for call-center functions for 4 to 6 weeks at the start of each school year.
- Handle first-line school administrator and parent complaints and concerns in a courteous and expeditious manner.
- Convey route changes or bus schedules to schools and parents.

¹ All school bus routes and stops must be checked and approved by the local police chief of each city and town for safety hazards within ninety days before the start of the school year, (Rhode Island general Law, Title 31, § 31-20-10.3).

- Communicate on a daily, as needed, basis with the terminal managers of each Bus Contractor regarding late buses, route changes, breakdowns, accidents, discipline issues, etc.
- Provide phone coverage and command/ control functions during inclement weather and during accidents or emergencies.

To ensure that the bus lineups do not cause any unnecessary congestion or hazardous conditions at the school loading zones, the System Manager will work with the receiving schools to provide recommendations for improving bus lineup for arrivals and departures at all schools when necessary.

3.5 Emergency/ Inclement Weather Response

Inclement Weather: In cases of inclement weather, or forecasted inclement weather conditions, the System Manager will monitor communications from districts as well as the local news network weather postings and work with the school districts and Bus Contractors ensure that transportation is adjusted to respond to delays, early releases and closings. Information will be communicated to the terminal managers via email as soon as it becomes available and updated information will be sent to the terminal managers detailing the schools and weather districts represented on each route. Where inclement weather conditions warrant, the same procedures will be performed during school hours.

Accidents: The System Manager will be responsible to compile all data for accidents involving school vehicles under contract to RIDE. The role of the System Manager should be as the primary information center during the accident following the steps as outlined in the SOP and reviewing the results of the post-accident investigation as a safety/quality control function. The System Manager, after analyzing the information gathered post-accident, is responsible for advising RIDE regarding any actions that may be recommended for the contractors and/or its employees related to the accident. System Manager responsibilities include the following:

- Notify RIDE's Director of Statewide Efficiencies, or designee; the appropriate school district superintendent, transportation director, or building principal immediately by phone when an accident occurs.
- Include in the notification the name of every person on the vehicle at the time of the accident including information about possible injuries, and other information requested by the appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- Ensure that the Bus Contractors submit a detailed, written report the System Manager within 24 hours of an accident and all other mandated reports within the prescribed time limit.

Community Emergency Response: In the event of a civil emergency, the System Manager will work with the school district and the Bus Contractors to fully cooperate with local, county, state, and federal emergency management personnel for the use of any or all school vehicles to be used in the evacuation of facilities or communities as requested by emergency management

personnel. The resulting procedures and communication protocols should be integrated with the local and state emergency management structure. Where such emergency responses are necessary, the System Manager will coordinate with the Bus Contractors to keep accurate records regarding any expenses, mileage, and personnel used so that all or partial costs can be recovered, if possible.

4.0 Financial Management

The System Manager will have the primary responsibility for evaluating, tabulating and maintaining all records related to financial transactions associated with the provision of statewide student transportation services, with direct reporting responsibility to the RIDE Office of Statewide Efficiencies. The tasks associated with the financial management of the program will entail primarily two areas: (1) managing transactions with the Bus Contractors, and (2) managing billing and adjustments with the school districts receiving the bus service. The following subsections explain these requirements in greater detail.

4.1 Budget Activities

This will include preparing the billing rates and the annual transportation budget for client school districts using the transportation services each year. To do this, an annual cost projection will be prepared that is based upon the anticipated Bus Contractors costs, System Manager fees, and other relevant costs related to the provision of statewide transportation services.

4.2 Vendor Invoicing Review

Invoices from the Bus Contractors will be reviewed on a monthly basis and submitted to the RIDE Office of Statewide Efficiencies for payment on or before the 10th of each month. The review of the invoices will entail specific procedures to verify the validity of the Bus Contractors charges submitted, including the following:

- Verification of rate charges and hours with dispatch records and allotted route hours.
- Review and verification of route changes that impact the service hours charged by the Bus Contractors due the addition of students, programs, or other changes to scheduled bus routes..
- Adjustments for missed scheduled routes and authorized extra time such as inclement weather, cancelled routes, and other schedule adjustments.
- Quarterly calculation and adjustments for variances from the contract baseline fuel costs.

The System Manager will review any such adjustments or billing discrepancies with the Bus Contractors, and keep a written record of the results of the discussion and the adjustments. After this, the System Manager will approve payment and submit the adjusted invoice to the Office of Statewide Efficiencies for final authorization and payment not later than the 15th of

the month. The System Manager will work closely with the Office of Statewide Efficiencies to resolve any payment discrepancies and will serve as the primary point of contact for invoicing questions for both the Bus Contractors and districts.

4.3 School District Billing for Transportation Services

The System Manager, in conjunction with the Office of Statewide Efficiencies, will prepare and manage the monthly billings to participating school districts. This will require a careful review of the number of students transported for each school district in order to prepare invoices on a monthly basis. The preparation of invoices will follow established internal operating procedures and an agreed upon methodology for invoicing. Upon authorization by RIDE and issuance of invoices by the System Manager, internal records will be updated. The System Manager is responsible for follow-up with the districts on outstanding payments and documenting the results of the contact on the internal system. The System Manager will review on a monthly basis the accounts receivable status with the Statewide Efficiencies Office to ensure timely payment by the school districts and resolve any payment discrepancies or billing disputes.

4.4 Transportation Contract Audit Activities

The System Manager will be responsible for conducting regular annual audits and periodic on-site inspections/audits to ensure that the Bus Contractors are performing under the terms of the Transportation Contract. The timing of these audits and detailed procedures involved will be drafted on an annual basis by the System Manager and recommended to RIDE for approval. Key audit functions will involve compliance with all aspects of the bus operator contracts and performance management program.

Examples of key audit functions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Review compliance reports for drivers' license checks, CDL endorsements, physical examination certifications, Epi Pen and Glucagon administration training, criminal and substance abuse records, and other required qualification requirements.
- Review Bus Contractors staff and driver training and in-service instruction compliance records.
- Verify monthly bus mileage reports and compare to expected live running and deadhead mileage from route planning software.
- Review reported fuel consumption levels based on operating miles and gallons charged to individual buses.
- Inspect Bus Contractors preventive maintenance compliance reports, vehicle state inspection logs, repair back log reports and other shop records to ensure proper maintenance of the fleet.

- On-site physical condition assessment of the condition of the Bus Contractor's terminal facility, staging area, and the bus and school vehicle fleet.
- Compare monthly student load count reports showing the number of students at each bus stop with the number assigned to that stop as part of the route schedule.
- Compare driver route reports showing assigned bus route drivers and route time allotment, to route schedules in the route planning database.
- On-site route audits to verify reported miles and time for selected individual bus routes.
- Evaluate transportation bus incident/accident reports describing all incidents, accidents or injuries occurring on bus routes or trips.
- Evaluate compliance with the performance management program.

5.0 Client Services

5.1 Transportation Advisory Committee: RIDE has established a Transportation Advisory Committee to provide guidance and feedback on an as needed basis for transportation issues that may impact the statewide program. The System Manager will be expected to work with RIDE and the Advisory Committee to define solutions to issues brought to the Advisory Committee.

5.2 Communications Functions

Effective and efficient communications will be the central function of the System Manager. Given the challenging characteristics of a statewide system that integrates a centralized transportation network now serving 32 school districts with transportation to over 160 locations, primarily within Rhode Island, it will be important for the System Manager to have a well-organized internal management plan and communications technology system in place. They must have the capacity and capability to provide a single point-of-contact to the various entities using the transportation system and to respond quickly and effectively to various service questions and concerns that will arise in day-to-day operations. Some examples of the basic communications requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The System Manager's personnel must staff the office each day schools are in session from approximately 6:30 a.m. until the last child has been dropped off.
- School district personnel, Bus Contractor personnel, and other appropriate individuals must be able to contact the System Manager and/or staff at anytime for emergency purposes.

- When schools are dismissed early or regular dismissals experience adverse weather conditions, the System Manager's office must have staff on duty until every student has been safely transported to their designated stop and be available to answer all parent, bus contractor and school district inquiries about the status of vehicles and service.

Telecommunications and digital information capability maintained by the System Manger is central to the service requirement of this RFP. The overarching objective is to enable a caller to reach a live contact on the first attempt, with secondary responses, such as voice or e-mail, provided such that any non-emergency contact will be responded to on the same day, or within eight hours of the following business day for late or after-hours inquiries. As part of these general requirements, it is important that the System Manager have the procedures in place to deal with multi-lingual requirements for non-English speaking parents and students. Use of the State's existing telephone system is assumed. The communications system envisioned includes, but is not limited to the following requirements:

- Sufficient staff to answer all incoming calls from 6:30 a.m.² until the last student drop off. Voice mail as a routine response is NOT acceptable.
- A general access number that is serves as the main telephone line for the program.
- Separate telephone lines for each of the System Manager's staff that can be accessed via transfer from the general access number or direct dialed.
- A separate direct/emergency access number provided only to key school district personnel, such as the transportation director and business manager or school superintendent, and principals at schools being transported.
- A separate cell phone number, provided by the transportation manager, shall be available for use by the terminal managers and RIDE to ensure quick access to the manager.
- A web page for the statewide transportation system on the RIDE website that provides a portal for public e-mail communication with the System Manager and publicly disseminates transportation information. The System Manager will be responsible for keeping the web page up to date by providing necessary updates to the Office of Statewide Efficiencies for processing.

² Or earlier as needed for inclement weather. See Section 3.4.

5.3 Transportation Notifications and Requests

The System Manager will notify in writing each parent or guardian at least two weeks prior to the start of the new school year of their child's bus assignment listing the vehicle number, stop location, and loading time for each student receiving transportation service. The System Manager will be responsible for any printing costs, postage costs, and any other costs related to the written notification of parents. Notification must include the address, telephone number and other appropriate information to allow parents/guardians and school district administration and transportation personnel to respond with any new or corrected information.

The System Manager will also notify each parent or guardian in writing or via telephone whenever students are reassigned to new buses, bus stops, or a change in the stop pickup and delivery times for a particular bus route are changed. As a general guideline, the System Manager shall notify parents and school district administrative and transportation personnel of the changes at least two (2) days prior to implementation. New students may expect to wait up to three (3) days for a bus assignment where material alterations to a route are required to accommodate service to their stop unless a delay is unavoidable and approved in advance by RIDE. The System Manager will be responsible for all postage and processing costs for written notifications.

RIDE and its existing transportation management company have developed and fully implemented an online transportation registration system utilized by parents and school districts to add/drop/change a request for transportation services. Any database program used by the management company hired under this contract must have the ability to import new student registration data from the transportation registration system in text or excel to reduce the potential for data errors.

In order to ensure prompt action with changes to student programs, residence location, and other variables, the System Manager will ensure that specific protocols are followed by the bus contractors, the districts and schools. Such protocols must also include fast response policies for last minute changes and/or special circumstances.

The System Manager shall provide staff who are knowledgeable about the bus routes, stops and school locations and who can answer public inquiries and requests regarding bus schedule times, safety issues, or any other concerns that are related to student transportation operations. The goal is to provide information to parents and school administrators in a prompt and courteous manner as well as provide information and future access to the Bus Contractor's management team to specific routing information in the online routing system.

5.4 Complaint Management

The System Manager will develop and implement an internal operating procedure and electronic system for the intake, recording, routing, and resolution tracking of requests and complaints received by school district administrators, participating schools, and parents via all different media, such as telephone, facsimile, posted mail, and email. The procedure will also define the necessary documentation to support the appeals process whereby parents dispute a decision

made in response to their concern or complaint. The focus of this effort will be on eliminating double entry of requests and complaints, providing rapid and timely feedback regarding action status, routing to the appropriate staff members for action, and resolving issues in a timely fashion. The electronic system must be capable of generating statistical reports on complaints and exporting data, including anecdotal note information for purposes of analysis.

6.0 Performance Management Programs

The Contract Performance Management Program is a non-punitive, joint, supportive program of contract compliance monitoring and performance measurement designed to enhance and improve Transportation service delivery in a continuous improvement cycle.

6.1 The System Manager will be responsible for administering, monitoring and reporting to RIDE on the Bus Operator's compliance and performance with the standards of performance and performance measures identified each year. In addition, the System Manager will recommend to RIDE program improvements or corrective actions that may be needed. (See Appendix D)

6.2 Exhibit 2 provides an overview of the Contract Performance Management Program for the System Manager. The System Manager will be an active participant in, and will be responsive to the requirements of this program and the Minimum Service Levels and Standards of Performance.

a) **Minimum Service Levels and Standards of Performance**

(1) In addition, and as a supplement to the Contract Performance Management Program, the System Manager will be responsible for meeting or exceeding certain minimally acceptable service levels and standards of performance. The System Manager will monitor, track, account for, and report to the Rhode Island Department of Education the data and information required to determine the System Manager's success in meeting or exceeding the established standards.

The Contractors will comply with three (3) minimally acceptable standards of performance that apply to RIDE, its transportation contractors and its customers.

(1) Reliability – Ensuring the timeliness and accuracy of finances, including payable and receivables and reporting, as well as statistical analysis/reporting, are critical to the success of the program. The System Manager is expected to meet established deadlines. A variance of no more than three (3) days shall be acceptable unless otherwise approved in advance by the Director of Statewide Efficiencies based on unavoidable circumstances. In addition, the System Manager shall ensure that systems are in place to eliminate errors in this area and initiate appropriate corrective action to minimize the potential for reoccurrence. The need for correction to financial data based on known factors on a repeated monthly basis is not acceptable. This is a zero tolerance standard of performance.

- (2) Responsiveness – To meet the needs of RIDE and its customers, the System Manager will ensure that inquiries, student/program changes, data requests, and complaints are handled in accordance with SOPs and IOPs and that resolution occurs in a timely manner. Routine day-to-day routing changes, inquiries, requests and complaints must be responded to, and to the extent possible, resolved within four (4) days unless escalated to the Director.
 - (3) Cost Effectiveness/Efficiency – The System Manager is responsible for ensuring that the statewide program is both efficient and effective from a cost and delivery perspective. Run times, cost per rider and routing efficiencies will be key factors in analyzing effectiveness and efficiency.
- ii) The data and information required to calculate and track System Manager performance will be provided to the Rhode Island Department of Education not later than the 20th of each month for service completed in the prior service month. The data and information will be submitted in a verifiable manner and format acceptable to the Rhode Island Department of Education. The System Manager will be deemed to be in non-compliance if the following events occur:
 - (1) The data is not reported for two (2) consecutive months
 - (2) The data is reported late for four (4) consecutive months
 - (3) One or more standards of performance is not met for two (2) consecutive months; not limited to the same item recurring.
 - iii) If a non-compliance situation occurs, the System Manager is considered to be automatically on notice whether or not the Rhode Island Department of Education sends a formal written notice. A non-compliance condition must be cured within sixty (60) days of its initial occurrence; otherwise a Minimum Service Level Criteria Performance Withholding may be imposed.
 - iv) The System Manager will comply with Rhode Island Department of Education directives to improve operations and outcomes that fall below the established standards.

b) Performance Withholding

- i) The Rhode Island Department of Education may impose a Performance Withholding factor for non-compliance with the Minimum Service Levels and Standards of Performance.
 - (1) The Rhode Island Department of Education may defer payment of up to ten (10) percent of the most recent unpaid regular monthly Transportation invoice submitted by the System Manager.
 - (2) The number of monthly withholding instances is unlimited, and may be repeated for each month of non-compliance with the Minimum Service Levels and Standards of Performance requirements.

- ii) The withheld amount will be paid in full to the System Manager if each non-compliance factor resulting in the Performance Withholding instance is cured within two (2) months of the deferral decision.
- iii) If the non-compliance factor is not cured within two (2) months of the deferral decision, the Rhode Island Department of Education may retain the withholding without obligation to pay the System Manager the withheld amounts.
- iv) The Rhode Island Department of Education will notify the System Manager in formal letter delivered via a traceable method to the address of record for the Contractor contained in this Agreement if a decision to impose a Performance Withholding is reached. The time to cure provision of this section will begin on the date this letter is delivered to the System Manager.

IV. Additional Requirements

- Bidders must evidence a working knowledge of school district operations as it relates to transporting students and the additional requirements for transporting students with special needs.
- Bidders must evidence knowledge about Rhode Island geography, and challenges faced in developing a safe and efficient statewide transportation system.
- Bidders must evidence knowledge of public financing procedures and requirements in Rhode Island, including appropriate accountability measures and fee-for-service structures.
- Bidders must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of student transportation systems and carrier requirements and procedures as well as industry standard information.
- Bidders must disclose any work to be sub-contracted including the specific work to be performed and staffing, organizational structure, and business background of any approved sub-contractor.
- *Performance Bond:* A performance bond will be required upon award of the contract resulting from this RFP. Proposers should refer to *Appendix E – Bid Deposit and Performance Bond* for the terms and requirements of this bond.
- *Bid Deposit:* The proposal submitted in response to this RFP must be accompanied by a refundable bid deposit in the form of a bid bond, a certified check, or a treasurer's or cashier's check issued by a responsible bank or trust company, payable to General Treasurer, State of Rhode Island. The bid bond shall be with a surety satisfactory to

RIDE, and conditioned upon the faithful performance by the principal of the agreements contained in the RFP. The amount of such bid deposit shall be TWO THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$2,500.00). Refer to *Appendix E – Bid Deposit and Performance Bond*.

V. TERMS OF THE CONTRACT

1.0 Length of the Contract

The contract will begin upon issuance of state purchase order (estimated July 1, 2015) and end June 30, 2018 with an option for two additional years. RIDE retains the option of granting a time extension of up to twenty-four (24) months with additional funding if available and if the level of work is expanded by mutual written consent. If necessary, deficiencies in performance of services and/or failure to supply deliverables in a complete and timely manner will be documented in writing by RIDE. Should a pattern of substantial dissatisfaction become apparent, RIDE reserves the right to terminate the contract.

In the event that RIDE and/or the General Assembly make adjustments to the required transportation under this program that necessitate a substantial reduction or increase in the level of service required, compensation required under this contract may be renegotiated.

2.0 Cost Proposal/Terms of Payment

The bidder must prepare a cost proposal reflecting the hourly rate or other fee structure proposed for this scope of services using the Cost Proposal Forms contained in Appendix A.

VI. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

1.0 Questions

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at gail.walsh@purchasing.ri.gov no later than the date and time on the cover page of this solicitation. Questions should be submitted in a Microsoft Word attachment. Please reference the RFP# on all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information. For computer technical assistance, call the help desk at (401) 222-3766 or Linda.moore@doit.ri.gov

2.0 Proposal Preparation and Submission

Proposals (an original plus 4 copies) should include the following:

1. A completed and signed three-page RIVIP Bidder Certification Cover Form, available at www.purchasing.ri.gov.

submitted proposals. Reference checks and related background information will be at the discretion of RIDE, and proposers will be deemed to consent to such inquiries by submitting a proposal.

3.2 Evaluative Criteria

The following is the process and scoring method to be used by the RIDE review team. At its option, the State may choose to eliminate a proposal from further consideration if it is determined at any of the five steps listed below that the proposer is or will be incapable or very unlikely to satisfactorily meet the transportation requirements of this RFP. The review team will evaluate all qualified proposals and rank them based on the following scoring system:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Contractor Understanding of the Issues, Scope of Work, Proposal Questionnaire, and proposed Transition/ Implementation Plan (Appendix C) | (30 points) |
| 2. Capacity of the vendor to effectively administer the program | (20 points) |
| 3. Qualifications of key personnel (including <i>curriculum vitae</i>) | (15 points) |
| 4. Cost Proposal | (35 points) |

Notwithstanding the above, the State reserves the right not to award this contract or to award on the basis of cost alone, to accept or reject any or all responses, and to award in its best interest.

Exhibit 1 – Selected Standard Operating Procedures

Please refer to attachment to view selected Standard Operating Procedures

Exhibit 2 – Contract Performance Management Program Statewide Transportation System Manager

Contract Performance Measurement Plan

The primary tool supporting this portion of the program is a package of interrelated performance measures. This provides for an integrated performance measurement and reporting program that facilitates a comprehensive understanding of System Manager performance, and that provides for feedback to the System Manager. This plan is designed to provide RIDE with a structured and consistent tool to first understand, and then take action to improve both the System Manager and RIDE's performance. The compliance monitoring plan ensures that the System Manager meets their contractual obligations. The performance measurement plan provides an opportunity for the System Manager to demonstrate their commitment and wherewithal to provide service above and beyond the minimum requirements established by the contract.

The structure for the package of performance indicators is based on three major categories of outcome-driven measures:

- *Reliability* – Measures that assist RIDE in determining and improving the timeliness and accuracy of financial and statistical services and reporting by the System Manager
- *Responsiveness* – Measures that assist RIDE in determining and improving the responsiveness of the System Manager to the needs of RIDE and its customers
- *Cost* - Measures that assist RIDE to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of its operations.

The actual measures will be determined annually and submitted to the System Manager prior to the start of service in each contract year. This package of performance measures will not be definitive. Rather, it will be designed to provide a consistent framework, with the expectation that the list of measures will expand and evolve over time. Data collection, measurement, analysis, and reporting of performance will be a continuous effort.

Contract Performance Management Program:

The Contract Performance Management Program is a non-punitive, joint, supportive program of contract compliance monitoring and performance measurement designed to enhance and improve Transportation service delivery in a continuous improvement cycle.

a) Minimum Service Levels and Standards of Performance

In addition, and as a supplement to the Contract Performance Management Program, the System Manager will be responsible for meeting or exceeding certain minimally acceptable service levels and standards of performance. The System Manager will monitor, track, account for, and report to the Rhode Island Department of Education the data and information required to determine the System Manager's success in meeting or exceeding the established standards.

The Contractors will comply with three (3) minimally acceptable standards of performance that apply to RIDE, its transportation contractors and its customers.

- v) Reliability – Ensuring the timeliness and accuracy of finances, including payable and receivables and reporting, as well as statistical analysis/reporting, are critical to the success of the program. The System Manager is expected to meet established deadlines. A variance of no more than three (3) days shall be acceptable unless otherwise approved in advance by the Director of Statewide Efficiencies based on unavoidable circumstances. In addition, the System Manager shall ensure that systems are in place to eliminate errors in this area and initiate appropriate corrective action to minimize the potential for reoccurrence. The need for correction to financial data based on known factors on a repeated monthly basis is not acceptable. This is a zero tolerance standard of performance.
- vi) Responsiveness – To meet the needs of RIDE and its customers, the System Manager will ensure that inquiries, student/program changes, data requests, and complaints are handled in accordance with SOPs and IOPs and that resolution occurs in a timely manner. Routine day-to-day routing changes, inquiries, requests and complaints must be responded to, and to the extent possible, resolved within four (4) days unless escalated to the Director.
- vii) Cost Effectiveness/Efficiency – The System Manager is responsible for ensuring that the statewide program is both efficient and effective from a cost and delivery perspective. Run times, cost per rider and routing efficiencies will be key factors in analyzing effectiveness and efficiency.

The data and information required to calculate and track System Manager performance will be provided to the Rhode Island Department of Education not later than the 20th of each month for service completed in the prior service month. The data and information will be submitted in a verifiable manner and format acceptable to the Rhode Island Department of Education. The System Manager will be deemed to be in non-compliance if the following events occur:

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- One or more standards of performance is not met for two (2) consecutive months; not limited to the same item recurring.

If a non-compliance situation occurs, the System Manager is considered to be automatically on notice whether or not the Rhode Island Department of Education sends a formal written notice. A non-compliance condition must be cured within sixty (60) days of its initial occurrence; otherwise a Minimum Service Level Criteria Performance Withholding may be imposed.

The System Manager will comply with Rhode Island Department of Education directives to improve operations and outcomes that fall below the established standards.

c) Performance Withholding

- i) The Rhode Island Department of Education may impose a Performance Withholding factor for non-compliance with the Minimum Service Levels and Standards of Performance.
 - (1) The Rhode Island Department of Education may defer payment of up to ten (10) percent of the most recent unpaid regular monthly Transportation invoice submitted by the System Manager.
 - (2) The number of monthly withholding instances is unlimited, and may be repeated for each month of non-compliance with the Minimum Service Levels and Standards of Performance requirements.
- ii) The withheld amount will be paid in full to the System Manager if each non-compliance factor resulting in the Performance Withholding instance is cured within two (2) months of the deferral decision.
- iii) If the non-compliance factor is not cured within two (2) months of the deferral decision, the Rhode Island Department of Education may retain the withholding without obligation to pay the System Manager the withheld amounts.
- iv) The Rhode Island Department of Education will notify the System Manager in formal letter delivered via a traceable method to the address of record for the Contractor contained in this Agreement if a decision to impose a Performance Withholding is reached. The time to cure provision of this section will begin on the date this letter is delivered to the System Manager.

d) Contract Performance Assessment

To ensure consistency in the performance of this contract, RIDE will meet with the System Manager on a quarterly basis to provide feedback on performance with the goal of continuous improvement. This is the primary formal method of feedback to be provided to the System Manager. Feedback from the System Manager will help guide any necessary changes.

APPENDIX A

BUDGET MULTI-YEAR PROJECTS

The Contractor estimates that its budget for work to be performed under this Agreement is as follows:

<u>Expense Category</u>	<u>Estimated Expenditures</u>			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1. Employee Salary and Benefits	0	0	0	0
1. Purchased Services	0	0	0	0
3. Supplies and Materials	0	0	0	0
4. Travel	0	0	0	0
5. Printing	0	0	0	0
6. Office Expense	0	0	0	0
7. Other: <i>(describe)</i>	0	0	0	0
8.	0	0	0	0
 Subtotal	 0	 0	 0	 0
 Indirect Cost *	 0	 0	 0	 0
 TOTAL	 0	 0	 0	 0

It is understood and agreed that the amounts indicated above for the several line items are estimates of expenditures to be incurred by the Contractor on behalf of this Agreement and to be claimed by the Contractor for reimbursement under this Agreement. It is further understood and agreed that actual expenditures may vary from the estimates set forth above and that such variations shall not in themselves be cause for disallowance of reimbursement by RIDE; provided, however, that the Contractor shall notify the contract officer of the variance and obtain pre-approval, in writing; and provided further that unless permission of the contract officer shall have been obtained in advance, no expenditure shall be claimed by the Contractor for reimbursement by RIDE under this Agreement if such expenditure shall have been incurred in a line item category not listed above. Transfer of funds between categories requires prior written approval by RIDE. In no event shall the total amount of reimbursement claimed by the vendor under this agreement exceed the total approved contract amount.

**** Attach a copy of the approved indirect cost documentation***

BUDGET DETAIL SHEET *
 FISCAL YEAR _____

EMPLOYEE SALARY AND BENEFIT DETAIL (TOTAL COMPENSATION)**

NAME	POSITION TITLE	NUMBER OF HOURS	HOURLY RATE (including benefits)	SALARY and BENEFIT TOTAL \$
TOTAL REQUEST				

PURCHASED SERVICES DETAIL

NAME	POSITION TITLE	HOURS	HOURLY RATE \$	TOTAL \$
TOTAL REQUEST				\$

OTHER EXPENDITURES DETAIL

EXPENSE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
Supplies and Materials		
Travel ***		
Printing		
Office Expense		
Other: <i>(describe)</i>		
Indirect Cost		

Total \$

* Please include a detail budget sheet for each state fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th)

** Please round hourly rates to the nearest whole dollar and ensure there are no rounding differences with the extended totals.

*** Reimbursement for travel within the continental United States is limited to the per diem rates established by the General Services Administration (GSA). Per diem rates are posted at www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

Appendix B – Proposal Questionnaire

The following questionnaire is a required component of this Request for Proposals. The information you provide will be used for evaluating both the qualifications and the capacity of the Proposer to perform the services described in this RFP. The questionnaire must be filled out accurately and completely and submitted with the other parts of your proposal. Any errors, omissions, or misrepresentations of the information requested may be considered as a basis for rejecting your proposal and may be grounds for cancelling any agreement executed as a result of the Request for Proposals.

When completed, your response to this questionnaire will be considered part of the *System Management Service Agreement*. If you expect that your company policies or practices will change from those currently in place, you must note the policies and practices your company anticipates it will follow if awarded the contract.

I. DESCRIPTION OF CONTRACTOR'S ORGANIZATION

A. FIRM

Firm Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax Number:

Web Page:

B. TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

Corporation (List officers and positions):

State in which incorporated:

Subsidiary (Give name and address of Parent Corporation):

Is your firm or a parent firm publicly held? Yes / No

If not, what private individuals own your firm? Who are the general partners?

C. NATURE OF OPERATIONS

1. Is your firm currently engaged in providing student transportation management services under a contract with a public school district or state agency? Yes / No
 - a. Number of years in business?
 - b. Number of school districts or political entities served?
 - c. Are you currently, or have you ever, provided transportation management services for special education students? Yes/ No
 - d. If yes, for how many years have you provided this service?
2. Please provide a listing of customers, currently being served by your company, that are of equal size to the State of Rhode Island. For each of these please submit the name and phone number of a contact person who has immediate knowledge of your service and performance results.
3. Has any public school district or agency terminated or otherwise ceased to use your company's services over the past ten (10) years? If so, please list the name of the contracting school district, its location, and the reason for termination.

D. MANAGEMENT

In response to this section, please include with your proposal the résumés of the key personnel (if known) described in #1 and #2 below.

1. RIDE strongly believes that the individuals holding the primary management positions are critical to the provision of consistent and high quality transportation management services. While it is understood that the actual persons for these positions may not be selected at this time, please provide the résumé for the person who would be assigned to this project as the Manager. The following points of information should be included in the resume or on a separate document:
 - a. Name and educational qualifications:
 - b. Tenure with your firm in years:
 - c. Experience in related positions within your firm or with other firms in years:

- d. Current and two most recent previous positions, including the location (School District) of the position, the position's title, a description of responsibilities including number of buses and/or drivers, and the dates in which the position was held:
2. Please provide the name(s) of those persons within your firm who would have immediate authority over the Manager you propose in Item 1.
3. Please list key staff members (if known) who will comprise the staff for the System Manager for route planning; customer service and auditing/ financial management, and any other staff positions. Please provide the following information for each of these persons:
 - a. Name (s) and educational qualifications:
 - b. Tenure with your firm in years:
 - c. Experience in related position within your firm or with other firms in years:
 - d. Current and most recent previous position, including the location of the position, the position's title, a description of responsibilities, and the dates in which the position was held:
4. Attach an organizational chart of your firm to this questionnaire indicating the person(s) assigned to this project (If not known at this time, indicate the position(s) on the chart).
5. Explain the relevant industry training that your Firm provides to your management team and staff:

II. TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

A. SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT

1. What experience does your firm have in developing policies and standard operating procedures for student transportation?
2. What is the process you envision for ensuring compliance by the Bus Contractor with the requirements of the Transportation Contract? Examples include driver certification and background checks, preventive maintenance compliance, reported load and mileage, and others.

B. OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

1. Describe the information technology capabilities of your firm. What computer-based logistical planning tools, operations management software, and communication applications have you used or are you using now? (Examples include route planning software, database programs, Internet-based applications, and others).
2. Which student transportation route planning software products have you worked with for other clients? Which are you proficient on? Do you have a current site license for this/ these software products?
3. What is your staff's experience in route planning and design? Have they used technology-based solutions to redesign routing systems, or to optimize routes and schedules? How? What were the results?
4. What are the methods you have used to answer, record, coordinate, follow-up and evaluate public complaints and service requests? How have you coordinated this with the Bus Contractor and School District? What medium including information technology have you used to manage this?
5. For non-routine operations, what are the procedures you use to manage and coordinate communications, command and control for the following: (Describe planning process, communications protocols, how standard operating procedures are implemented and coordinated with schools and Bus Contractor)
 - a) Inclement weather:
 - b) Vehicle accidents or injury incidents:
 - c) Missing child responses:
 - d) School evacuation:
 - e) Community/ civil emergency:

C. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. Has your firm developed transportation budgets and billing schedules? Describe the process used.
2. Describe how you have verified charges received from bus contractors for previous or current clients. How is this done? How frequently? How are additional charges and credits for route changes, calendar variances, etc. checked and authorized?
2. Understanding that the statewide system currently bills school districts for service on a per student rider basis each month, please describe the best practices you have used to ensure that clients/districts are billed in an accurate and timely manner for services.
3. Explain the process(es) you use or have used in the past to audit and verify fuel charges or surcharges from the Bus Contractor. How are gallon usage allowances monitored against authorized vehicle usage under the transportation contract? How frequently is this done? Are “spot audits” performed on site? What controls have you instituted?

D. CLIENT SERVICES

1. How have you managed past contract implementations and roll-outs for clients? Explain the key tasks you coordinated, time lines, and how information technology tools and/ or master plans were integrated.
2. Describe in detail the communications systems used to manage clients. What kinds of technology were employed? What were the procedures and protocols for general communication? Emergencies?
3. How have you managed route and student change notifications? How was this coordinated with the bus contractor? What technology was employed? What forms and conveyance media were used?
4. Describe the process you have employed for managing student disciplinary responses. What role did your firm play with the school district, parent, and bus contractor? How were discipline responses followed-up? Did you audit and evaluate student discipline on the buses? How?

VII. FINANCIAL AND CREDIT INFORMATION

1. Please submit credit references or a Dunn & Bradstreet profile on your company.
2. Please provide terms and conditions for any discount for payments made by RIDE to your firm within thirty (30) or fewer business days of invoice receipt.

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Do you survey your customers, parents, and/or employees to determine satisfaction with the services your company provides? If so, please describe your survey process and what your company does with the final results.

Name of Firm

Name of Authorized Agent (Print or Type)

Title

Signature of Authorized Agent

Date

Appendix C – Proposed Transition/ Implementation Plan

Registration for transportation services for the upcoming summer and fall begins on or about April 1st. Given that the selection of a System Manager for this contract will likely occur by the end of May 2015, we are asking you to describe how you would envision planning and implementing this process in coordination with RIDE, the Bus Contractors, the parents, students, and school administrators.

1. *Initial Implementation Plan:* Please provide a plan and schedule for initially implementing transportation management and routing services should your firm be selected as the successful proposer. Your plan should address:
 - Recruitment / relocation of management and supervisory personnel
 - Selection and training of staff
 - Employee orientation
 - Communications with the Bus Contractors;
 - Updating the website to disseminate information;
 - Database interface or other methods to integrate student, school, and other primary data from the school districts and schools

- Database interface or other methods to integrate accounting and financial data with the Statewide Efficiencies Office.
2. *Organization Structure:* Attach a proposed organization chart showing the relationships with the System manager staff to RIDE (designated person to be determined) and the Bus Contractors. The chart should also show “dotted line” reporting relationships with parents and school districts.
 3. *Start-up Milestone Activities and Dates:* What are the key dates and completed tasks for implementing the contract? At a minimum, your response should include the following:
 - Delivery of a technology rollout plan
 - Management and support staff hired and in place
 - Implementation of route planning software and conversion of existing data
 - Final implementation of student and geographic databases and conversion of existing data
 - Implementation of communications center/ stress testing system
 - Ongoing adjustments to routing for July-Aug 2015 extended school year (ESY) programs – Note: Preliminary routing/schedules for ESY 2015 will be developed by the current System Manager.
 - Development of bus routes and schedules prior to the start of the 2015-16 school year with ongoing adjustments throughout the year.
 - Final review and road audit of bus routes and schedules
 4. *Communication:* Please discuss the communication plan and timeline you will use to ensure that ongoing communication is clear and timely. At a minimum, your response should address the following areas:
 - Coordination/ verification of student or schedule changes with the Bus Contractor;
 - Notification of changes to routes and schedules for special education and regular education students;
 - Emergency/ accident notification and action response plan;
 - Special “hot lines” and other communication media between the Bus Contractor operations center and key RIDE personnel and school administrators;

- Communications technology to be used and process for handling parent complaints, requests, or other contacts;
 - Process for handling non-English speaking parents and students; and
 - Evaluation process to monitor and assess service quality on a continuing periodic basis.
5. *Use of Technology:* How do you plan to use information technology tools to coordinate bus schedules, regular reporting, fleet maintenance, billing, communications to integrate transportation student transportation services for Rhode Island? Be as specific as possible as to the types of tools you are talking about, such as e-mail, software applications you are will use, GPS/ AVL technology, and other relevant items. Please address your plan to implement real time GPS tracking of buses under this contract.
6. *Operating Procedures:* How will you develop procedures needed for operating factors such as how parents are notified of schedule changes, who to contact in the event of unanticipated changes to a student’s transportation needs, daycare transportation, behavior concerns, handling unique physical and medical needs of individual students, and more?
7. *Internal Controls and Audit Functions:* A large part of the responsibilities of the System Manager will involve administering the Transportation Contract and the financial responsibilities around it. What internal control mechanisms, audit procedures, reporting requirements, cost analyses, and data verification procedures will you employ to do this? Some examples of possible areas of administration include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Records needed for program and fiscal audits to which the school districts and/ or RIDE may be subjected
 - Bus Contractor payments and school district invoicing
 - Compliance for drivers’ license checks, CDL endorsements, and other qualification requirements
 - Bus Contractor staff and driver training and in-service instruction
 - Bus Contractor mileage and reported fuel consumption
 - Bus Contractor preventive maintenance vehicle state inspection
 - Student load counts
 - Driver bus route assignments and vehicles

- Bus incidents and accidents, and third party damage claims

APPENDIX D – STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION RFP

The Request For Proposals #7548529, “Statewide Transportation System for Students”, dated March 28, 2014, is appended to this solicitation by a link to the documents on the State Division of Purchases website. The link is as follows:

<http://www.purchasing.ri.gov/bidding/BidDocuments.aspx?BidNumber=7548529&Isridot=False&Status=Awarded>

Proposers should refer to the information contained in the referenced RFP in developing their proposal submission.

APPENDIX E – BID DEPOSIT AND PERFORMANCE BOND

BID DEPOSIT

This proposal must be accompanied by a refundable bid deposit in the form of a bid bond, a certified check, or a treasurer’s or cashier’s check issued by a responsible bank or trust company, payable to the General Treasurer, State of Rhode Island. The bid bond shall be with a surety satisfactory to RIDE, and conditioned upon the faithful performance by the principal of the agreements contained in the Request for Proposals. The amount of such bid deposit shall be TWENTY FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$2,500.00).

PERFORMANCE BOND

Notice from the Contractor’s bonding company, which states that the contractor, if awarded the contract, is bondable for the full performance of the contract must be provided and attached.

If required, the annual cost of an annual 100% Performance Bond or Letter of Credit shall be

\$_____ for the first year amount of the contract (Designated Bid Award Amount).

The annual cost of the Performance Bond shall not be included in the proposer’s cost calculation.

IRREVOCABLE LETTER OF CREDIT

An irrevocable letter of credit (LOC), satisfactory to RIDE, may be substituted for the required performance bond. An LOC from the Contractor’s bonding company or bank, must state that an irrevocable letter of credit made out to RIDE will be issued for the full amount of the contract if the Contractor is awarded the contract.

SIGNATURE: _____

PRINTED NAME: _____

COMPANY: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX F – VENDOR INFORMATION AND REFERENCES

The undersigned proposes to furnish services starting July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018, TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES to RIDE in accordance with the aforementioned specifications.

The undersigned offers the following information as evidence of the Bidder’s qualifications to perform the work as bid according to all of the requirements of the specifications. Please answer the following questions:

- 1. Number of years bidder has been in business under the present name: _____
- 2. Has bidder or bidder principal(s) been involved in a Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceeding within the past ten years? _____ Y/N
- 3. Has bidder ever failed to complete any work awarded? _____ Y/N
- 4. Has bidder ever been involved in non-accident related litigation in the past five years? _
Y/N
- 5. Has bidder ever been in any accidents where the result was loss of life? _____ Y/N
- 6. List the names of public school districts with which you are currently contracting and attach letters of reference.

1. School District: _____	Contact: _____
Type of Service: _____	Phone: _____
2. School District: _____	Contact: _____
Type of Service: _____	Phone: _____
3. School District: _____	Contact: _____
Type of Service: _____	Phone: _____

Comments/Explanation (Optional):

Appendix G – Authorization for Release of Reference Information

DATE: _____

NAME OF
PROPOSING BIDDER: _____

I hereby authorize _____ (References) to release any and all information regarding our transportation performance.

Furthermore, I agree to hold _____ (References) both personally and severally, harmless from any liability associated with the provision of this reference information.

The reference information provided will be confidential and used exclusively for the purpose of evaluating the bidder's proposal to provide school bus transportation.

NAME OF AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL: _____
(Print/Type)

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL:

(Signature)

(Date)

APPENDIX H – TAX COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to the applicable *General Laws of the State of Rhode Island*, the undersigned acting on behalf of the Contractor, certifies under the penalties of perjury that, to the best of the undersigns knowledge and belief, the Contractor is in compliance with all laws of the State relating to taxes, reporting of employees and contractors, and withholding and remitting child support. *

**Signature of Individual
or Corporation (Mandatory)

*** Contractor's Social Security Number
(Voluntary) or Federal ID Number

By: _____ Date: _____
Corporate Officer
(Mandatory, if applicable)

* The provision in the Attestation relating to child support applies only when the Contractor is an individual.

** Approval of a contract or other agreement will not be granted unless the applicant signs this certification clause.

*** Your social security number will be furnished to the Rhode Island Department of Revenue to determine whether you have met tax filing or tax payment obligations. Providers who fail to correct their non filing or delinquency will not have a contract or other agreement issued, renewed, or extended, as applicable under the general laws and statutes of the State of Rhode Island.

APPENDIX I – NON-COLLUSION STATEMENT (NOTARIZED)

I (We) hereby swear that this bid is made without the knowledge of or collusion with any other person, firm, corporation, or agent submitting a proposal for furnishing said service, and that only the following persons are interested with the undersigned in making this bid, viz:

Name of Corporate Officer or Individual:

Business Address:

Signed: _____

Post Office Address:

Date: _____

State of Rhode Island

_____, SS. _____

Then personally appeared before me on ____/____/____ (date) and made oath that he/she has read the foregoing proposal, and knows the contents thereof; and that the facts stated therein are true of his/her own knowledge, except such as are stated to be alleged on information and belief and as to those that he/she believes them to be true.

, NOTARY PUBLIC

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: _____

APPENDIX J – STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

The undersigned assures that this proposal has been made in good faith, without fraud, collusion, or connection of any kind with any other bidder for the same work; that the proposer has informed himself/herself in full in regard to the “INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO BIDDERS”, and other information attached to this Request for Proposals. Also he/ she has made their own examinations and estimates and from them submits this proposal. Also that he/ she is in full knowledge that all of the aforementioned information and other materials attached to this RFP shall become part of the contract.

The undersigned understands that RIDE reserves the right to waive any informalities, or reject any and all proposals or any part thereof, and/or accept any proposal or part thereof which are in the best interest of the State of Rhode Island.

With the above understanding, the undersigned proposes to furnish TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES to the State of Rhode Island and to comply in all respects with said specifications for the sum or sums stated.

SIGNATURE: _____

PRINTED NAME: _____

COMPANY: _____

DATE: _____

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RIDEOST.001	General Transportation Definitions		
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Statement

The possibility exists for mistakes to occur as a result of definitional misinterpretation. For purposes of clarity and consistency, the following definitions of common terms shall apply to all services provided and administered by the Rhode Island Department of Education Office of Statewide Transportation.

Procedures

Term	Definition
Accident	The event that occurs when a bus, any part of a bus or any student on board a bus collides with another vehicle, pedestrian, animal, road debris, or other geographical or architectural obstacle. Accidents can result in injury, property damage, and death.
Bell Time	The times school begins and dismisses.
Boundaries	School attendance boundary or area.
Bus Route	A route is the designated path that a bus will travel to pick up students and deliver them to their designated attendance center/s. Routes are comprised of a start time, a series of stops with stop times, and arrival times to the destinations and will generally list the path of travel as well as those being transported.
Bus Stop	A defined location where students wait to board the bus.
Charter & Field Trips	Bus trips to transport students from Districts' schools to other schools for competition or transporting spectators to any event where Districts' students are participating.
Contract Year	12 month period during which the agreement is in-force
Contractor	Any and all bus companies under contract with RIDE.

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Depot Stop	A group-stop where multiple students gather to be picked up by a bus at the same time. Also a group-stop where multiple students are dropped off by the bus at the same time.
Dispatch	Contractor staff assigned with the responsibility for coordinating daily operational activities of route buses.
Districts	Districts participating in Statewide System.
Drop Time	The earliest allowable time for students to be dropped at their school. The earlier a drop time the more productive a bus can be by having more time for a subsequent route. (This can also be the time a student is dropped off after school).
Early Childhood or Pre School Route	Transport students to and from their homes to preschool and early childhood programs at attendance centers designated by the Districts. Applies only to Special Education students for the purposes of the Statewide program.
Excess/Overage Hours	Amount of time that exceeds the hours of service as listed in the contract. Excess/Overage hours are applicable when the sum of all AM and PM route time exceeds the total per day service hours indicated in the contract. This rate is billed in ¼ hour increments.
Extended School Year or Summer School	That period of time when classes are called into session after the regular closing of school and before the opening of the following school year.
General Manager	The contractor employee in charge of the System Manager's office.
Home to School Routes (HTS)	A Route or series of Routes transporting students from designated stops, to and from school, on a daily basis. Students may be regular or special education in all grades served by the Districts, Private Schools, Charter Schools, Career & Technology Centers; Does not include early or late activity routes, midday routes, or other specialty trips.

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Hours of Service	The summation of the amount of time consumed between the time the bus makes its first stop in the AM until it reaches its last destination school, and the amount of time consumed between the time the bus leaves its first school in the PM until it reaches its last student drop-off stop.
Incident	Any situation that occurs on a bus including fighting, bullying, verbal/physical threats, slips, falls, exiting the bus at an unauthorized stop, possession of weapons, possession of drugs, self-inflicted injuries, physical attacks against the bus staff or any student on board the bus, jumping off the bus, throwing objects out the window, sexual assault, sexual misbehavior, wheelchair tipping or falling over, any child left on board after a run is completed (has left the drop-off area), and vandalism of the bus.
Location Manager/Contract Manager	The contractor employee in charge at each bus dispatch location.
Monitors/Aides/Bus Assistants	Individuals who ride on the bus with the driver to assist students/driver as required. A Bus Monitor may be a contractor employee or a District employee, and may be assigned to any Special Education bus route, or non-public bus routes serving students in grades K-5.
Pair	RIDE Definition: Pairing is achieved when there is a bus doing both an AM and PM route. The AM will be assigned one route number and the PM a different route number. This definition may vary slightly across other industries.
Parochial/Private Schools	Private (Non-Public, Non-District) schools participating in Statewide Transportation Program.
Pickup Time	The time the bus needs to be at a school in order to load students in the afternoon. (It is also the time a student is picked up in the morning).
Responsible School Administrator	The individual(s) designated by each school receiving service by the statewide program as responsible for overall

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	transportation matters.
RIDE	Rhode Island Department of Education
RIDE Director of Statewide Efficiencies	The person holding the designated title within the Rhode Island Department of Education and assigned with overall responsibility for the Office of Statewide Transportation.
RIDE Transportation Coordinator	The person holding the designated title within the Rhode Island Department of Education and assigned with oversight responsibility for the System Manager’s office.
Ride Time	The time from when the bus departs after picking up a student until the bus arrives at its destination. Ride Time is particular to each student on the bus and should not be confused with route times within the Hours of Service.
Run	A single segment of a route beginning at the first stop and ending at the school.
Route	The sum of all Runs performed by a single bus. Situations where bell times are tiered a bus may serve a High School run, then a Middle School run, and finally an Elementary run. The sum of all runs is known as Route.
Statewide Student Transportation Program	The program of statewide student transportation administered by the RIDE Office of Statewide Transportation.
Special Education Administrator	The individual(s) designated by each District receiving service by the statewide program as responsible for special education student matters.
System Manager	The contractor responsible for operating the Rhode Island Statewide Student Transportation Program Manager’s office. This office is responsible for the management, oversight, and coordination of the program.
School Bus Stop	The location which students are assigned to board and exit the school bus.

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School Calendar	Official calendar adopted by the Districts' Boards listing all attendance days, holidays, early dismissals, etc. Also the official calendar as approved by non-public school boards listing all attendance days, holidays, early dismissals, etc. Based upon weather or other conditions, calendar may deviate at any time from what is published.
School Year (SY)	A school year starts July 1 and ends June 30 of the following year. This is also known as the Fiscal Year.
Shuttles	A bus route that is planned to carry a group of students from one designated pickup point to one designated delivery point; generally used to meet specific specialized or unique transportation requirements.
Students With Disabilities/Special Education Routes	Routes transporting special education students
State	State of Rhode Island
Transfers	A student transportation assignment that includes a requirement to transfer from one bus route to another as part of a single trip to or from home and destination school

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Procedure Number	Topic		
RIDEOST.002	Communications Protocol		
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Statement

The System Manager is responsible for the implementation of State directives as they apply to the Statewide Student Transportation Program. In this role the System Manager must have ongoing communications with various organizations and individuals that oversee, utilize, provide, interface with, or are impacted by the program. These communications shall be executed in accordance with the instructions contained within these procedures.

Procedures

1. RIDE, the System Manager, and the Contractors shall comply with the specific communications requirements described throughout the individual Office of Statewide Transportation Standard Operating Procedures (series RIDEOST.002).
2. RIDE shall impose standard mechanisms, formats and content for communications wherever deemed necessary by RIDE. The System Manager and Contractors shall comply with any and all such requirements.
3. The Contractors shall apprise the System Manager, and the System Manager shall apprise the Office of Statewide Efficiencies before undertaking any communication of a sensitive or critical nature with any organization or individual. RIDE must pre-approve any such communication. Sensitive or critical communications that fall within these requirements include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Interpretations of law or regulation
 - b. Media contact
 - c. Response to threats to contact Office of the Commissioner or other Agency
 - d. Contact from any legal authority or law enforcement agency
4. A higher standard of care will be exhibited by the System Manager and Contractors in their communications for any instance where, in the professional judgment of the System Manager or Contractor, the seriousness of the situation demands a higher level of attention. Certain specific instances meeting this definition are noted throughout the individual Office of Statewide Transportation Standard Operating Procedure statements.

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RIDEOST.004	Vehicle Incident & Accident Management		
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Statement

Safety is, and always will be the top priority for the Rhode Island Department of Education Office of Statewide Transportation. Should an accident occur, prompt notification to all affected parties and an appropriate incident-specific response shall be the immediate priority of the bus Contractor and the System Manager.

Procedures

Definition of a Minor Accident:

- No injuries and bus is drivable.

Definition of a Serious Accident:

- Any accident with injures requiring medical assistance (any person transported from the scene to a medical facility).
- Any accident with significant damage to either vehicle (any vehicle that must be towed).

Accident Reporting Requirements:

- Accident investigation and reporting is the responsibility of the Contractor operating the vehicle.
- A written report must be submitted to the System Manager at the first reasonable opportunity after the occurrence describing any accident or injury on any bus route or trip, including route segments to and from the terminal, whether or not students are on the bus.
- A written follow-up report stating the corrective action taken shall be submitted within five (5) days after the occurrence.
- Police reports, where applicable, are to accompany each accident report.

Contractor Accident Response Requirements:

Note: RIDE policy requires the Contractor to notify the System Manager immediately after any vehicle incident, accident or injury involving a Contractor vehicle with or without students on board. The System Manager will notify the RIDE Director of Statewide Efficiencies and Program Coordinator as well as appropriate school and district administration.

- The driver will secure the vehicle, ensure the safety of any students, and then notify Dispatch.

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- Contractor will decide whether or not to send a representative to the scene.
- The Contractor will execute the following communications protocol:
 - Dispatch will request whatever emergency assistance is required at the scene. Typically, Dispatch will make a 911 call, if required, but this will not limit the driver from making this call if they have access to a telephone and in their judgment the situation would be most effectively resolved in this way.
 - Dispatch will notify the System Manager immediately after emergency assistance is requested.
 - In the event of a serious accident, the Contractor Location Manager will regularly update the System Manager as more information becomes available.
- The Contractor will provide the following information when contacting the System Manager:
 - Bus route involved
 - Location of the accident
 - Time of the accident
 - Any injuries known at the time
 - If known, name of hospital for injured students
 - How many students on board, if known
 - Indication of severity, if known
 - If the news media is at the scene of the accident
 - Inform the System Manager how the students will get to school/home:
 - In an accident with minimal damage to the vehicle, the students on the bus may stay on the bus and continue to school, or
 - Another bus may be dispatched to pick-up the students on the bus and to continue the route.
 - If possible, estimate the length of the delay in students being picked-up on the remainder of the route.

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System Manager Accident Response Requirements:

Upon notification of an accident by the Contractor, the System Manager will execute the following protocol:

- In the event of an accident with injuries that require medical assistance, the General Manager or designee will immediately, via telephone and e-mail, notify:
 - The RIDE Director of Statewide Efficiencies; and
 - The RIDE Program Coordinator if the Director is not available at the time.
 - In the event of all other accidents, the General Manager or designee will immediately, via telephone and e-mail, notify the Director of Statewide Efficiencies and the Program Coordinator.
 - In the event of a serious accident, the General Manager or designee will regularly update the contacts above as more information becomes available.

Note: For incidents of a sensitive or critical nature, as defined in RIDEOST.004, RIDE shall provide direction and pre-approval of all following communications.

- Following the initial RIDE notification, the System Manager will then immediately contact the schools of attendance for all students represented on the bus with the information listed below. If the accident occurs before or after school hours and no staff are available at the school, the responsible school administrator will be contacted via mobile phone:
 - The bus number involved in the accident
 - School of attendance for all riders
 - Accident details, to the extent they are known.
 - If known, names of students and any injury specifics. *Note: If names are not available at the time of the call, this information will be provided as it becomes available.*
 - Length of bus delay, if there is an estimate provided by the bus contractor.
- The System Manager will contact the parents or guardians of students known to be on the bus. If there are many students on the bus, the System Manager may use the "Call Alert" automated messaging system. *Note: The call alert will not be used for any injured students. A phone call will instead be placed by the System Manager's office.*
- The System Manager will contact parents or guardians of students yet to be picked up on the effected route(s). If there are many students that have not been picked up, the System Manager may use the "Call Alert" automated messaging system. The following information

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will be conveyed:

- Inform them of the accident
- Give them estimated delay time, if available. Otherwise, say another bus is being dispatched and we cannot provide the exact time of arrival
- For more information, contact the Contractor bus terminal
- When applicable, the System Manager will notify the designated school district contact when accidents with injuries occur.
- The System Manager will follow-up with telephone calls to parents of injured students on the same day as the accident to determine the severity of injuries and will report this information to the RIDE Director of Statewide Efficiencies and the RIDE Program Coordinator.

Tracking Accident Reports:

The System Manager should immediately remind the Contractor bus terminal that Collision Reports and Police Reports (if applicable) should be submitted to the System Managers office within Five (5) business days since the occurrence.

- Complete the accident checklist found on the J drive under the accident folder; print a copy to put in the accident binder
- Log accident in Stars under the Accident/Incident/Workers Comp tab
- Log in Accident Log on the J drive the information requested

Once the reports have been submitted, the System Manger should

- Attach both Contractor collision report and police report to the checklist; copies should be placed in the accident binder
- Refer back to the log in Stars and Accident log on the J drive and input the drivers name and all applicable fields.

Minor Accident Exceptions:

In the event of a minor accident, the System Manager will follow the same reporting and communication protocols with the followings exceptions:

- Follow-up with parents after initial contact is not required.

News Media Contact:

- Any and all contact or requests for information from media outlets to the System Manager will be referred to the RIDE Director of Statewide Efficiencies.

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RIDEOST.005	Student Incident Reporting Requirements		
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Statement

The safety of passengers is the top priority for the RIDE Statewide Student Transportation Program.

Student passengers are expected to observe general classroom conduct, behave in a safe manner and listen to directions given by the driver, monitor, and school official while being transported. When the required standards of behavior are violated, it is expected that the responsible adult will attempt to resolve the situation. Whenever incidents escalate, the bus driver and monitor (if assigned) will submit formal written documentation in accordance with these procedures.

Procedures

Student passengers are expected to demonstrate the following behaviors while being transported and while boarding or disembarking the vehicle:

1. Cooperate with the driver and/or monitor at all times
2. Board the bus in single line and be seated promptly, or move to the rear of the bus if no seat is available
3. Keep head, arms and all other parts of their body inside the bus
4. Stay seated while the bus is in motion; this is a state law
5. Do not shout or make loud noises
6. Refrain from the use of profanity or other crude language
7. The use of portable media devices is permitted only with personal headphones
8. Photos and videos of you or others will never be taken while on board the bus.
9. Keep aisles clear of all objects at all times
10. Do not throw objects of any kind
11. There is no eating food, drinking beverages or chewing gum on the bus
12. Do not litter or deface bus property; restitution will be sought for vandalism
13. No smoking is permitted on any school bus
14. Possessing alcohol, drugs, fireworks, or weapons on the bus is illegal
15. The emergency door is to be used for emergencies only
16. Students are to cross the street in front of the bus only, and upon signal from the driver that it is safe to do so

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RIDEOST.005	Student Incident Reporting Requirements		
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17. Students are to exit the bus only at authorized stops

Incident reporting instructions for bus operations staff:

- Timely reporting is critical – complete Incident Reports immediately upon return to the bus dispatch location. Incidents requiring police or ambulance assistance must be reported to dispatch immediately. Dispatch must report immediately to System Manager.
- Obtain direction and advice from your location manager before submitting an Incident Report.
- All Incident Reports are to be submitted on Form 005 – Bus Incident Report, and in accordance with the following:
 - Students should be identified by first name and the first initial of last name only.
 - The driver and monitor, where present, should each submit a separate form for each incident.
 - State fact only; Subjective opinions, hearsay, assumptions and third party statements are not factual and may not be used. Report only what was witnessed or heard first hand.
 - Do not spell out profanity in full – use of abbreviations or blanks are sufficient.
 - Only recent behavior may be documented – not past history.
 - Write clearly and legibly.
 - All reports must be dated and include signature.
 - Reports will be submitted to the Location Manager for review and approval.
- The Location Manager will submit the Incident Report to the System Manager for review and approval; the System Manager will respond as soon as possible after receipt of a properly completed Incident Report.
- **For Special Education Students only:** The Location Manager is NOT to send report to the school. This process is handled by the System Manager.
- **For Non-Public students only:** Once approved by the System Manager, the Location Manager will submit the report to the responsible school administrator with a copy to the System Manager.
- When the incident is of a sensitive or critical nature, as defined in RIDEOST.002, the Location Manager will speak directly to the General Manager and the responsible school administrator before submitting the approved report.

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Procedure Number	Topic		
RIDEOST.005	Student Incident Reporting Requirements		
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- The responsible school administrator shall be asked to acknowledge the receipt of the report.

Incident reporting instructions for System Manager staff:

- The System Manager will ensure the following before approving the Incident Report for submission to the responsible school administrator:
 - Confirm the date and time of incident;
 - Confirm student identity (First Name, Last name Initial);
 - Review content for detail, looking for fact driven description and proper use of wording;
 - Confirm signature, and bus/route identification.
 - For sensitive or critical incidents, as defined in RIDEOST.002, pre-approval from RIDE shall be required before granting approval to the Location Manager. As part of the pre-approval RIDE shall provide the System Manager with any special instructions required as to communicating the incident to the school.
- The System Manager shall notify the Location Manager of a completed review and provide instructions as to corrections required for resubmittal, or provide notification of approval.
- **For Special Education students only:**
 - The System Manager shall notify the responsible school administrator of the incident by faxing the Incident Report to the school. *Note: for sensitive or critical incidents, the General Manager will first call the school to alert them of the incoming fax and to seek further direction.*
 - Discipline is at the direction of the responsible school administrator and the special education administrator. *Note: Transportation is a legal requirement of the student's IEP and service cannot be denied regardless of the disciplinary action taken.*
- The System Manager shall retain a final copy of the submitted Incident Report in the record.

STATEWIDE SYSTEM SCHOOL

Bus Incident Report

STUDENT'S FIRST NAME: _____ STUDENT'S LAST NAME - INITIAL ONLY: _____ DATE OF INCIDENT: _____	SCHOOL: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 1ST NOTICE <input type="checkbox"/> 2ND NOTICE <input type="checkbox"/> 3RD NOTICE DRIVER'S NAME: _____
ROUTE NUMBER: _____ TRIP AM-PM: _____	DRIVER'S NAME: _____
NOTICE TO PARENTS 1. The purpose of this report is to inform you of a disciplinary incident involving the student on the school bus. 2. You are urged to both appreciate the action taken by the driver and to cooperate with the corrective action initiated today.	
DRIVER'S REPORT: <input type="checkbox"/> VIOLATION OF SAFETY PROCEDURES <input type="checkbox"/> DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/> FIGHTING - PUSHING - TRIPPING <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> EXCESSIVE MISCHIEF <input type="checkbox"/> WRITING <input type="checkbox"/> SMOKING <input type="checkbox"/> EATING - DRINKING - LITTERING <input type="checkbox"/> RUDE - DISCOURTEOUS - ANNOYING <input type="checkbox"/> UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____
PRELIMINARY ACTION: <input type="checkbox"/> CHECKED STUDENT'S FOLDER <input type="checkbox"/> HELD CONFERENCE WITH STUDENT <input type="checkbox"/> CONSULTED COUNSELOR <input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONED PARENT <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	PRESENT ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT REGRETFUL, COOPERATIVE <input type="checkbox"/> PLACED ON PROBATION <input type="checkbox"/> RECURRENCES WILL BE REPORTED <input type="checkbox"/> SUSPENDED <input type="checkbox"/> DENIED BUS PRIVILEGE UNTIL _____ <input type="checkbox"/> REFERRED TO: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____

(DRIVER'S SIGNATURE) _____
(ADMINISTRATOR'S SIGNATURE) _____

PARENT'S COPY
OFFICE COPY
FIRST STUDENT COPY
RIDE/TRANSPAR COPY

(DATE) _____

Form 005 - Bus Incident Form 08/2/14

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Procedure Number	Topic		
RIDEOST.007	Homeless Students		
Page	Adopted	Last Revision	Next Planned Review
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Statement

Per the McKinney-Vento Act, local educational agencies (LEAs), otherwise known as school districts, must provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their school of origin at a parent or guardian request. The System Manager often receives requests from districts requesting “out of district” homeless transportation (a child that has been identified as homeless and living outside the district boundary). The System Manager shall address these requests (when possible) in an effort to provide safe, efficient and cost effective transportation for the homeless student.

Procedures

NOTE: This procedure is under review by RIDE Special Education and Displaced Students directors. The process is currently in use without the form.

1. Receive email from district.
2. If contact is not the homeless liaison or the liaison’s representative, ask them to have the homeless liaison contact our office.
3. Ensure that e-mailed request has been approved by the homeless liaison from both the district of origin and the district of temporary residence.
4. Save all e-mail correspondence in Homeless file.
5. Create student file in VersaTrans and route student.
6. Calculate the cost and arrange routing.
7. Send a copy of draft communication to Director of Statewide Efficiencies for approval.
8. E-mail to homeless liaisons or the liaison’s representative. Save in homeless file.
9. Wait for final email agreement from liaisons.
10. Receive final agreement from both school district homeless liaisons.
11. Check that district of origin and district of temporary residence have agreed to their share of approximate total bus and monitor cost on the signed agreement. Each district will be billed accordingly.
12. Record in homeless file.
13. Send routes to bus yard.
14. Record on daily change log.
15. Homeless liaison will call parent and fax bus details to the school.

Form: Out of District Homeless Transportation Request and Agreement

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Procedure Number	Topic		
RIDEOST.009	Master Route Reference Table Development & Maintenance		
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Statement
<p>The Statewide Transportation Program serves students from multiple local school districts and programs in multiple locations around the State. Service cancellation, delays, or early dismissals due to scheduled and weather-related events will not always impact every program, school, or local district. A Master Route Reference Table will be maintained by the System Manager’s Customer Service Coordinator to accurately and succinctly summarize the interdependencies that exist on every bus route serviced by the statewide program. The master table will serve as a reference tool on the program website.</p>
Procedures
<p>Timing of Master Table Development & Updates:</p> <p>Not later than one-week prior to the school year and summer session openings of the first school serviced by the statewide program, a Master Route Reference Table will be posted on the website for all regular morning and afternoon bus runs administered by the statewide program. These reference tables will be reviewed and updated for accuracy by the System Manager not less than bi-weekly during the regular and summer school sessions. The date of the most recent update will be posted on the table.</p> <p>Communications Protocol:</p> <p>At the start of the school year and summer session, all families are reminded of the inclement weather policy and are directed to the website. During the school year and summer session, periodic reminders are made to schools encouraging them to remind their parents to check the transportation website for route reference table updates. Notifications will be made at the beginning of the winter season, on or around November 1. Another reminder will be made prior to the winter and February breaks.</p>



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Procedure Number	Topic		
RIDEIOP.009	Master Route Reference Table Development & Maintenance		
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Responsibilities and Assignments	<p><i>General Manager</i> – Overall responsibility for accuracy and completeness. Oversees development and maintenance processes, when specifically delegated by the General Manager</p> <p><i>Customer Service Coordinator</i> – Responsible for the development and ongoing maintenance of the route reference tables</p>
Procedures	<p>For initial posting prior to start of school year and summer session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A route reference table is created listing route information to include resident district, weather district, route number, school, etc. for all students assigned to the route. • Route reference table is sorted and configured to identify, by school and route number, the resident district and the weather district (district where school is located) for all students transported on that route. • All routes are listed by school, by route number to be easily identified by families served. • Route reference table is completed by transportation coordinator. • Route reference table is checked for accuracy by Operations Manager or General Manager to ensure accuracy. • Route reference tables are saved as separate AM and PM PDF files. • An email is sent, with the AM and PM route reference table PDF files attached, to School Construction Finance Specialist requesting posting of updated reference tables to the transportation page of the RIDE website. Removal of current route reference tables is also requested at this time. • The website is checked by the General Manager to confirm posting of new route reference tables.



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	<p>Throughout summer session and school year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All route changes are logged.• Districts and schools affected by route changes are identified on log.• Changes from log are made to AM and PM route reference tables by transportation coordinator.• Changes are reviewed by General Manager.• Route reference tables are saved as separate AM and PM PDF files.• An email is sent, with the AM and PM route reference table PDF files attached, to School Construction Finance Specialist requesting posting of updated reference tables to the transportation page of the RIDE website. Removal of current route reference tables is also requested at this time. <p>The website is checked by the General Manager to confirm posting of new route reference tables.</p>
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Procedure Number	Topic		
RIDEOST.010	Alternate Bus Stop Request		
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Statement

An Alternate Bus Stop Request is defined as a request made to the System Manager by a responsible party requesting that an eligible student be permitted to ride to or from an alternate bus stop on a statewide school bus route. A responsible party is defined as the designated school representative at the student’s school of attendance, presenting the request on behalf of the student’s parent or legal guardian. Such requests shall be considered by the System Manager in accordance with these established criteria and procedures.

Procedures

1. The school, once receiving a request from a parent/guardian, must submit the following information via email to the System Manager’s office. The request must be submitted a minimum of two (2) business days prior to the requested date of alternate service. The information must be received for both the requesting student as well as a current student assigned to the alternate stop.
 - The full names of the students
 - Students’ address
 - Students’ school of attendance
 - Students’ grade
 - Parents’ name and contact information
 - Assigned bus route and bus stop for both students
 - Description of the request
 - Reason for the request
 - Start and end dates for the requested alternate service
 - Contact person at the school submitting the request

2. Approval of the request will be predicated on the request meeting the following criteria:
 - The request was made by the school in accordance with these procedures; and
 - The alternate bus stop requested is an existing stop on the same bus route to which the requesting student is assigned

OR

 - The alternate bus stop is on another bus route serving the same school and town, and does not create overcrowding on this bus route.

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3. The System Manager will review every request received and will provide a written approval for requests meeting the above criteria to the school within two (2) business days of receipt by the System Manager.
4. Requests that do not comply with the above criteria shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, with a recommendation from the System Manager made to and approved by RIDE. Examples of instances where a case-by-case review will be required include, but are not limited to:
 - The request is for a student not already eligible for service in the statewide system;
 - The requested alternate bus stop is on a different bus route serving a different town; or
 - The request would require establishing a new bus stop.
 - The request was submitted with less than two days' notice.
5. Once any additional required information is received, the analysis will be completed by the System Manager and submitted to RIDE with a recommendation. RIDE will make the final determination and the school will be notified of the result.
6. The costs of approved alternate stop bus service shall be reallocated for long term changes in assignment. Costs shall not be reallocated for single day or other short term requests, unless otherwise pre-approved by RIDE.

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RIDEOST.012	Transportation Program Operating Parameters		
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Statement

Students receiving transportation services within the RIDE Statewide Student Transportation Program will be routed to their school in the most efficient and effective manner possible consistent with safety. For the system to work effectively for all students, it is necessary to establish certain operational parameters. The bus routes administered by the statewide program will be planned and operated in accordance with the following criteria.

Procedures

Eligibility for service:

Students eligible for service within the RIDE Statewide Transportation System include:

1. Students with Disabilities placed in any program outside his or her sending district's boundary.
2. Students attending out-of-district private, charter or career and tech schools within designated regional boundaries.

Courtesy transportation may be provided by the statewide program for any students that do not meet these eligibility criteria on a case by case basis with the approval of the Director of Statewide Efficiencies.

Bus stops:

- Depot Bus Stops may be utilized wherever possible. Students with Disabilities will not be assigned to Depot Stops.
- The placement of Bus Stops shall be determined by the System Manager in line with standard industry practice, with due regard for safety, and in accordance with the following criteria:
 - Stops shall be placed at road intersections wherever possible
 - Safety permitting, no two bus stops serving the same route shall be placed closer than 0.25 miles apart.
- Each student will be assigned one location for morning pickup and one location for afternoon drop-off. Stop locations will be assigned by, and shall be changed only at the discretion of the System Manager.

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- Parent concerns regarding bus stop safety will be addressed and may require approval of RIDE for implementation.
- Students with Disabilities, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 students must have guardian supervision present at applicable afternoon drop-off locations. In the event a guardian is not present to receive one of these students, a call will be made to the guardian and, if necessary, remaining students will be delivered to their stops before returning to deliver the student whose guardian was not present.
- To maximize overall system efficiency, infrequently used bus stops may be eliminated at the discretion of the System Manager. Before a stop is eliminated a call will be made to the family to determine if the stop should remain in force. If a stop is eliminated, effected students will be reassigned to the nearest active stop which may be a depot stop serving the destination school.
- For special needs students, stops will not be eliminated without prior discussion with student’s parent(s) or guardian(s), as well as the special education director of the student’s resident district.

Bus routing parameters:

- The objective for the *maximum* allowable student ride time on any one trip is 90 minutes, defined as the length of time from when the student boards the bus until the student arrives at his/her destination. Some routes may be longer.
- Students will be assigned to buses per accepted industry standard:
 - 3 students per seat for grades K-8
 - 2 students per seat for grades 9-12
 - Average of 1.5 students per seat (i.e., 3 per row) for Students with Disabilities, unless otherwise required per the student’s IEP
- Transfers and shuttles shall be used as necessary at the discretion of the System Manager.
- Busses shall be scheduled to arrive no more than 30 minutes prior to opening bell time at school. Supervision shall be provided by school personnel during this arrival window.
- Busses shall be scheduled to depart no more than 15 minutes after closing bell time at school. Supervision shall be provided by school personnel during this departure window.

Customer service parameters:

- The System Manager will process a transportation change request within two business days of receipt, whenever possible. Newly created bus stops will be implemented two business days after it is sent to the bus yard. The closest active stop will be used as a temporary stop

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- until the new stop begins.
- The System Manager will respond to a service complaint within two business days of receipt.

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Statement

The RIDE Statewide Transportation System will align service with the inclement weather decisions of the school districts being served, but some differences may occur given that students from multiple school districts are served on statewide buses and go to a variety of schools. The statewide system will provide service to a school district whenever schools within that district are scheduled to operate. In order to avoid confusion and ensure safety during inclement weather, it is imperative that schools, parents, and guardians understand and comply with the following procedures.

Procedures

In the event of a school closing:

If **either** the resident public school district **or** the student's destination school district is closed then there will be **no** school bus transportation provided that day. If the student's school of attendance makes the choice to stay open during inclement weather, even though the district it resides within is closed, then there will be **no** statewide school bus transportation provided that day.

In the event of a delayed opening:

Students from multiple districts may be passengers on any one bus. If **any sending district** represented on the bus is operating on a delayed opening, then the entire bus route will be placed on a delayed schedule. RIDE's inclement weather page includes a link to a list of bus routes serving each school. In the event of inclement weather, this list may be utilized to identify which districts are serviced on the route. **The inclement weather status of each school district represented on the route must be identified to determine if the route will be delayed.** The most up-to-date information for all of the statewide bus routes can be found on the RIDE website at: <http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/AdditionalResources/StudentTransportation.aspx> (search for the Inclement Weather link).

In the event of an early release:

If **any receiving district** represented on the bus route releases early then all students on that bus will be released early following the district with the earliest release time (i.e., If one district represented on the route releases at noon and another at 1:00 pm, then the bus will follow the noon release time.) Again, the particular bus and all the districts represented on it can be found on the RIDE website. This must be checked to determine the status of each of the districts represented on the route to determine if a particular route will be operating on an early release schedule.

Users must remain aware that if the **district in which a school of attendance is located** releases early,

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all students from the school riding statewide buses will be released early.

For special education students: Schools educating students with disabilities will not place students on buses for early dismissal until a parent or contact has been reached. Statewide buses will be directed to wait for a maximum of fifteen extra minutes for a contact to be reached. In a situation where no contact has been made, the student will remain at the school and the parent must make arrangements with the school as to how the child will be picked up. For safety reasons, no statewide buses will be returning to schools once they have left the grounds to begin their scheduled route.

For all other students: If an individual school makes the choice to release early, even though the district in which the school is located is not releasing early, statewide buses will be scheduled arrive at the school at their regularly scheduled time, not early. The parent/guardian is responsible to plan accordingly for this situation.

Where to find Inclement Weather information:

Public school districts post school closings, delays and early releases on the following:

NBC Channel 10 Providence weather page closing/delays tab or direct link

<http://www2.turnto10.com/jar/weather/>

ABC Channel 6 Providence weather page closing tab or direct link

<http://ww.abc6.com/category/184901/closings-and-delays>

Local radio stations



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RIDEIOP.013	Inclement Weather		
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Responsibilities and Assignments	<p>The System Manager or, his/her designee, shall monitor and administer the process of tracking inclement weather situations. The decision to delay, close, or adjust the school day rests solely with the local districts' administration. The System Manager, in consultation with the Director of Statewide Efficiencies shall, however, be the final arbiter of the decision on whether to transport students on statewide routes due to unsafe travel conditions.</p>
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The System Manager ensures that all weather related postings are current on the RIDE website to include – Weather/Emergency Closing/Delay Policies, Examples of School Closing Situations, FAQ's, and Route Reference Tables for All Schools. • In the event of predicted inclement weather the System Manager will monitor and update the Director of Statewide Efficiencies. • The System Manager will send current route data files to all Contractor locations listing routes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contractor location - School by district - Resident district of students served by route • The System Manager will be in communication with the Contractor to ensure all current weather information is shared and that Contractor is in state of readiness. • The System Manager will monitor local television outlets subscribing to the Rhode Island Broadcasters Association (RIBA) delay and closing listings. It is also the Contractors responsibility to monitor same to ensure performance as required. • The System Manager will be available to answer all delay and closing questions from parents, schools and the Contractor. • The System Manager will advise the Director of Statewide Efficiencies of weather



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	<p>updates and any issues caused by weather changes, delays and closings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The System Manager will work with the Director of Statewide Efficiencies to determine if a statewide system delay or closing is necessary.
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RIDEOST.016	Payments for Service		
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Statement
<p>The State’s local school districts are responsible for bearing the cost of the services provided to their resident students by the RIDE Statewide Student Transportation System. These procedures establish the parameters for the nature and timing of these charges and payment submission requirements.</p>
Procedures
<p>Basis for payment</p> <p>The services provided will be charged to the districts on the basis of an equitable allocation of RIDE’s actual incurred costs. These costs arise from contractor charges for operating the system on RIDE’s behalf and related overhead expenses.</p> <p>Invoicing and payment</p> <p>RIDE shall invoice the local school districts monthly for services rendered in the preceding month. Payment shall be issued by the district in check form and mailed to RIDE.</p>

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RIDEOST.018	Police Route Review		
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Statement
<p>Local police officials are required by Rhode Island General Law 31-20-10.3 to review for purposes of safety, all school bus routes. The following procedures will be followed in transmitting the required information to local police stations.</p>
Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The System Manager is responsible for delivering route information to every affected local police jurisdiction. • The System Manager will utilize Form 018 to provide this information. • Following the completion of all dry runs and the finalization of bus routes for the start of school, the System Manager will complete the required forms and deliver this information to the local police stations. Upon delivery, the System Manager will obtain the required signature and retain such documentation in their records. • The System Manager will ensure that all routes with a student pick-up in a given Police jurisdiction are covered and delivered to that jurisdiction.

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RIDEOST.019	School Calendar Data Management		
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Statement
<p>There are differences in the school calendars for each of the special education, private, catholic, charter and career & technical schools serviced by the Office of Statewide Transportation, and ongoing changes are common. Maintaining accurate school calendar data is a critical success factor for the statewide transportation program. The System Manager shall collect, monitor and track calendar information for each of these schools, and shall be responsible for all related adjustments to bus schedules and the timely communication of these changes to the bus operators.</p>
Procedures
<p>The school calendar data management process will be a constant requirement throughout the service year. The management of multiple school calendars with interdependent route and bell schedules within the requirements of the established billing process underlies the importance of adherence to the following procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An initial request for calendar information will be sent via email to the designated school contact person at every school concurrent with the opening of the registration process on or about April 1st. This email will be copied to the System Manager and RIDE. 2. An information submission deadline date will be established no earlier than thirty (30) calendar days following the issuance of the request for calendar information. 3. Follow-up with schools failing to comply with the initial request for information will begin immediately after the deadline date and will follow this sequence until the information is received: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Follow-up email to the designated school contact from the System Manager's office; b. Telephone call to the designated school contact from the System Manager's office; c. Request for assistance from RIDE staff, as required. 4. The original email request, all follow-up emails, and all replies received will be retained and stored electronically by the System Manager with date and time stamps in a separate, named email folder. Follow-up telephone calls and responses received will be stored electronically in a log. Both are for future reference and tracking purposes. 5. As school calendar data is received, it will be posted to the Private School Calendar or the Special Education Calendar and maintained in the System Manager's Office. Ensuring the accuracy and completeness of this calendar will be the responsibility of the System Manager. 6. In addition to the Private School Calendar and the Special Education Calendar, a hard copy of

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all calendar information received will be maintained in a consolidated file by the System Manager and organized alphabetically by school.

7. The final Private School Calendar and Special Education Calendar will be completed by August 1st and submitted to each bus operator in support of route planning and service delivery.
8. Calendars shall be filed in electronic folders by school year, Private or Special Ed, and be available to all TransPar and RIDE staff via the Jdrive after August 1st:
 - a. Once the final Private School Calendar and Special Education Calendar have been transmitted to the bus operators, the System Manager will send a follow-up email to each school establishing instructions for submitting alterations, changes, and special requests. The System Manager will be copied.
 - b. When changes are received, the System Manager will review and analyze for any potential adverse impacts before making a change to the Private School Calendar or the Special Education Calendar.
 - c. The System Manager will annotate and highlight the changes on the Private School Calendar and the Special Education Calendar and save the calendar as a new version with date stamp. The hard copy records will be similarly annotated and updated.
 - d. Each revised version of the Private School Calendar and the Special Education Calendar will be submitted to each bus operator, with the date of submission logged and retained for reference purposes. The current practice emails an updated spreadsheet with calendar revisions, additions, or deletions, not a hard copy of each revised calendar.

Additional Notes:

Calendars that call for service in support of early dismissals after 12:00 PM may not be accommodated by the System Manager. The system has tiered routes, meaning they service multiple schools with different bell times. An early dismissal time after 12:00 PM may not provide sufficient time for service before the regular release time for other schools.

Accurate calendar information serves an important role in ensuring the accuracy of the statewide billing process. It is incumbent on all stakeholders including RIDE, the System Manager, and the schools to work together on ensuring calendar information is accurate, complete, and submitted in a timely manner.

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Statement

The overall efficiency and effectiveness of the RIDE Statewide Student Transportation System depends in part on maintaining accurate operational data for student ridership and a roster of Contractor staffing and asset information. Bus routes are planned and local school districts are charged for services on the basis of this information. Live counts of students riding each statewide system bus route, and reporting of related Contractor roster information shall be coordinated by the System Manager and completed by the bus operators.

Procedures

Bus Attendance Reports:

Student stop by stop attendance reports provide a week long view of student ridership on all statewide bus routes. Attendance reports (Form 020A) shall be completed by the Contractor assigned to the route in accordance with the following:

- Student attendance shall be recorded at each bus stop on the Attendance Report form provided by the System Manager.
- Attendance will be reported for the bus service each day during the first full week of every month for every bus route operated by the Contractor.
 - The collection week will be adjusted by the System Managers for vacations and holidays as required.
- The Contractor Location Manager will ensure that all drivers understand the process and are given the Attendance Report for their route in advance of the monthly attendance reporting week.
- Contractor drivers will complete the Attendance Report for each student assigned to the route for each day of the entire attendance reporting week, indicating:
 - Student in attendance on the bus with an "X" for the day.
 - Driver will note any actual stop times that are different than indicated.
 - Driver will note any riders not listed on the Attendance Report.
- The driver will submit completed attendance report to the Contractor Location Manager immediately after completing the final route of the data collection week.
- The Contractor Location Manager will review each attendance report for accurate completion and will submit all properly completed reports to the System Manager not later than the

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Wednesday following the attendance reporting week.

Contractor Bus Attendance Report information:

A completed Bus Attendance Report is completed by each contractor location during the first full week of each month during the service year. The completed information must be submitted to RIDE by Wednesday of the following week. Refer to sample Form 020 – Bus Attendance Report.



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RIDEIOP.020	Recording Ridership Counts		
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Responsibilities and Assignments	<p>Bus Attendance Report (Form 020A2) will be collected, logged and filed by the <i>System Manager</i></p> <p><i>Contractor roster data (Form 020B) will be collected, logged and filed by the System Manager.</i></p>
Procedures	<p>The following steps shall be followed to record monthly operational data submitted by the bus contractors:</p> <p>For Bus Attendance Report data:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bus attendance is taken by drivers or monitors to record the boardings of students at their stops. If a student fails to board over a period of time the student may be "inactivated". See below for details. Counts are taken for one week per month starting in July. 2. Bus attendance collection forms (Form 020A2) to be sent to terminals approximately one week prior to the week in which attendance will be taken. 3. Collect the faxed or emailed copies of the Bus Attendance Reports (Form 020A2) and contractor roster sheets (Form 020B) from all contractor garages. 4. Log the Bus Attendance Reports by contractor garage on the log count sheet located on the J-Drive->RIDERSHIP 13-14 Folder->"MONTH" folder 5. A copy of the Ridership Report should be given Special Education router and Private school router for follow up on non-riders. 6. Private school ridership reports will be reviewed by the Private School Router starting in November. Routes will be analyzed for options to reduce ride times; maximize use of fleet; and reduce fleet requirements. Results of analysis will be reviewed with Director of Statewide Efficiencies with a recommendation for further action. 7. All confirmed non-riders will be identified, tracked and contacted using the RIDE approved Ridership script and the School Reach System. Parents will be



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	<p>given a 2 business day window to the call alert in case of errors. In the event that a discontinued rider needs transportation in the future, they would be required to register for transportation.</p> <p>8. The bus router will then remove all confirmed non-riders from each route and update the route accordingly looking for opportunities to maximize efficiency. The Router will then send the Contractor the updated route for implementation</p> <p>For contractor roster data:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The monthly updated roster sheets are to only be emailed in an excel sheet. 2. Log the student counts by contractor garage on the log count sheet located on the J-Drive->[Contractor name] CHECK LIST Folder->[school year] folder->Student check list file->Monthly Roster [school year] tab. 3. Copy and paste the updated information onto the tab corresponding to the appropriate Contractor garage. 4. You can locate the master Log the student counts by contractor garage on the log count sheet located on the J-Drive->[Contractor] CHECK LIST Folder->2013-2014 folder->Student check list file->Monthly Roster 2013-2014 tab. 5. Once you have logged which contractor garage submitted the count sheet and logged the log sheets received by routes, you will need to keep the hard copy count sheets by month in a binder. <p>In the event that a contractor location has failed to submit any of the required monthly data:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Contact the appropriate Contractor Location Manager via telephone. ii. Request compliance with the data submission requirements and a date on which it will be submitted. iii. Record the results of this conversation and send via email to the System Manager. iv. Follow-up to ensure the data is submitted on the promised schedule.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">v. If the required data is not submitted, alert the System Manager via email.vi. Ensure that non-compliance is tracked in the KPI's and actions taken.
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RIDEOST.022	Bus Evacuation Plans		
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Statement
<p>Ensuring the safety of student passengers must be the first priority of the System Manager and the Bus Contractor. The System Manager will ensure that Bus Evacuation drills are accomplished in accordance with Rhode Island General Law. The bus Contractor will conduct required bus evacuation plans.</p>
Procedures
<p>Bus Contractor:</p> <p>A bus evacuation drill will be established and performed for each PCCT route twice per school year. The first evacuation drill is due within the first 10 days of school and will be performed by students on all routes upon arrival at their schools no later than the last school day in October. The second evacuation drill is due during the month of April to be performed no later than the last school day in May.</p> <p>System Manager:</p> <p>The System Manager will collect the evacuation plans, document compliance and file by school year and route.</p>

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RIDEOST.023	Medicaid & Transportation Log Processing		
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Statement
<p>Under federal law, school districts are eligible to receive payment from Medicaid for health services delivered to Medicaid-eligible children with disabilities. The System Manager and Contractor shall assist the school districts in this important process, as it applies to these students' transportation services, by tracking and reporting related student ridership data to the school districts. The following procedures specific to this responsibility will be followed.</p>
Procedures
<p>Bus Contractor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus drivers will track the required ridership data for eligible individual students with disabilities using Form 023 – Transportation Log: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form 023 must be filled out in ink, signed and dated by the driver • Each Form 023 must be checked for accuracy by Contractor Location Manager • Completed and verified forms must be submitted in hard copy to System Manager not later than the Friday of the second week following the month of service being reported <p>System Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify that all required forms are received and correct • Submit the verified forms to the school districts in hard copy via mail. • Retain electronic records of all forms processed, organized by school district and student



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Responsibilities and Assignments	The System Manager will collect and process all Transportation Log forms following the procedure as outlined.
Procedures	<p>All related forms received from the bus Contractor will be processed as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check all forms for accuracy and completeness <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Any Transportation Log forms that are not properly completed are to be scanned for internal record-keeping and stored in Jdrive>Sped Routes>Transportation Logs>Sent back to yards b. These forms are also to be returned via mail to the appropriate Contractor Location Manager yards for correction and resubmission 2. Sort completed and verified Transportation Log forms by district 3. Track Transportation Log forms in the excel spreadsheet located in the JDrive>Sped Routes>Transportation Logs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Track missing Transportation Log forms using the spreadsheet tabulation b. Follow-up with Contractor Location Manager via telephone when missing Transportation Log forms 4. Scan Transportation Log forms, saving the file in each school district's folder by month in JDrive>Sped Route>Transportation Logs 5. File a hard copy by district in alphabetical order by students last name 6. Mail the original package of Transportation Log forms to each school district 7. Track for subsequent receipt of missing and corrected forms; alert the System Manager if Contractor Location Manager is non-responsive

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Procedure Number		Topic	
RIDEOST.026		Bus Contractor Audits	
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Statement

All vehicle transportation services of the RIDE Statewide Transportation System are provided through private contractors. The System Manager is responsible to RIDE for the oversight of the contractor's performance relative to their contractual requirements. An annual scheduled Contractor audit will be conducted by the System Manager as one of the mechanisms utilized to ensure contract compliance and to enhance transportation system performance. The annual audit will be conducted in accordance with these procedures. An additional unscheduled audit(s) may be conducted at the discretion of the System Manager to monitor compliance issues.

Procedures

Audit content:

The audit is conducted in three parts, each of which is focused on different aspects of the Contractor's operation as it relates to the statewide system, the legal, and the contractual responsibilities of the bus Contractor:

1. A review of all bus driver and monitor files;
2. A review of vehicle maintenance files;
3. An onsite inspection of all buses providing service within the statewide system.

It is the Contractor's responsibility to provide the System Manager with the appropriate documents and access to Contractor assets to accomplish the requirements of the audit. The response and action taken on the previous year's audit (if any) shall also be made available.

Audit timeline and milestones:

Each Contractor audit will be conducted separately and annually at each Contractor location that is providing service to the statewide system. The approximate timeline on which the audit will be conducted, and the major milestones in the process are as follows:

1. During the month of December RIDE and the System manager will collaborate on modifications to the audit process, content, and confirm the general timeline.
2. An audit planning call between the System Manager and the Contractor will be completed on or about the 1st week of January to plan and reach consensus on the specific timeline and process to be followed for each Contractor location.
3. Audit templates and information requirements, together with the audit timeline and process outline will be distributed to the Contractor's Location Managers on or about the 2nd week of January.

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4. A follow-up call with the designated Contractor management team will be completed on or about the 3rd week of January to gauge progress on information collection and audit preparations, and to provide an opportunity for the System Manager to address any Contractor questions.
5. The Contractor will return pre-populated audit templates to the System Manager on or about the 3rd week of January.
6. The Contractor will provide the required bus driver and monitor files to System Manager on or about the 2nd week of February.
7. The System Manager will conduct the onsite audit of maintenance processes and vehicles on or around the 3rd week of February to coincide with the school district winter break week.
8. The audit findings will tabulated and returned to the Contractor for review, comment, and correction of factual errors on or around March 1st.
9. Audit deficiencies must be corrected by the Contractor and noted on the audit templates for return to the System Manager no later than end of the 2nd week of March.
10. Draft audit reports will be made available by the System Manager for review by the RIDE Director of Statewide Efficiencies on or around the 1st week of April.



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RIDEIOP.026	Contractor Audit Process		
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Responsibilities and Assignments	<p>Driver and monitor files will be reviewed for all Contractor locations by the Customer Service Coordinator.</p> <p>On-site review of maintenance files will be completed by the TransPar Audit Team (includes General Manager and corporate resources).</p> <p>On-site bus inspection will be completed by TransPar Audit Team.</p> <p>Follow up of forms returned for further explanation and updates will be completed by the Transportation Coordinator and General Manager.</p> <p>Final report narrative and editing will be completed by the TransPar Audit Team.</p>
Procedures	<p>There are three distinct parts to the Contractor audit process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A review of all bus driver and monitor files; 2. A review of vehicle maintenance files; 3. An onsite inspection of all buses providing service within the statewide system. <p>Notes regarding the procedures to be followed in completing the audit are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audit of driver and monitor files will be done first. The Contractor will send all statewide driver and monitor files to the System Manager with copies of all appropriate training and certification documents. • Maintenance files will be reviewed on-site. There are multiple maintenance garages servicing statewide buses. Visits to each maintenance location will be scheduled with advance notice for contractor readiness. Key items to be reviewed in the maintenance audit process include preventative maintenance dates and inspection paper work. It is important to document failed inspections and reasons for failures. Re-inspection passing dates must be noted. • Physical inspection of all statewide buses will occur on site at contractor facilities. A Contractor employee (typically a lot man, tech or trainer) will assist. All audit template criteria will be reviewed for compliance including



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	<p>vehicle age, mileage, seat condition, safety equipment and other contractually required equipment. Cleanliness and overall appearance of the bus will be noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contractor accident reports included and summarized accident spreadsheet.• Other contractor checklists are completed for inclusion to include bus evacuations and monthly reporting.• Follow up review of all audit processes will begin as soon as data is tabulated. The review process takes approximately one to two weeks.• Following review of all audit processes, deficiencies are reported back to the bus yards with 2 weeks to correct.• Updated checklists and spreadsheets indicating corrected deficiencies are returned to the System Manager for final review.• A narrative review is written outlining overall performance, areas of concern, areas of commendation and recommended corrective action.• A final draft review is assembled for initial presentation to RIDE.
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RIDEOST.027	Process for Removal of Contractor Bus Driver or Monitor		
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Statement
<p>Bus drivers and monitors represent the front line for service delivery in the RIDE Statewide Student Transportation System. As such, certain behaviors and sustained poor performance cannot be tolerated. RIDE reserves the right through contract to investigate any Contractor employee's performance and to request removal or reassignment of any driver or monitor. The following procedures will be followed in making this determination.</p>
Procedures
<p>Acting through the System Manager, RIDE will request the removal or reassignment of a bus driver or monitor by submitting Form 027 – Employee Removal Request to the Contractor's Location Manager directly responsible for the employee. The process leading up to, and following this determination will be as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The initial complaint or issue will be reviewed and investigated by the System Manager in accordance with RIDEOST.028. 2. The System Manager will require the Contractor Driver and Monitor to complete a Statewide Incident Form detailing their view of the incident. 3. The Contractor Location Manager will submit a report detailing his/her findings to include recommendations. 4. Findings will be communicated to and discussed with the Director of Statewide Efficiencies and the Transportation Coordinator. 5. If suspension, removal or other action is indicated by the Director of Statewide Efficiencies, Form 027 will be completed by the System Manager and delivered to the Location Manager. 6. Investigation by the Contractor Location Manager and regional management is to be completed as soon as possible within five days following the reported complaint. 7. The System Manager will review the Contractor response to the request and suggested resolution before making a final recommendation to the Director of Statewide Efficiencies and the Transportation Coordinator.

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8. The final decision and required disposition of the employee will be communicated to the Contractor via telephone phone and an updated Form 027.
9. No driver or monitor removed from service at the direction of the RIDE/System Manager will be reinstated without the approval of the Director and/or Transportation Coordinator.
10. The Contractor has the right to request a review of the decision by sending a letter addressing the concerns along with a recommendation for further action to the Director of Statewide Efficiencies.

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RIDEOST.028	Customer Complaint, Request, and Appeal Management		
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Statement
<p>The objective of the RIDE Statewide Transportation System is to provide safe, timely and efficient transportation service to its student passengers and customer school districts. The System Manager is tasked with facilitating the prompt, equitable, and timely resolution to customer requests, issues, complaints, and appeals related to the services provided. These procedures describe the process to be followed by customers and the System Manager to achieve a proper resolution to customer concerns.</p>
Procedures
<p>The System Manager shall maintain an inventory of the complaints and concerns received from principals, parents and patrons. Complaints and concerns shall be classified into one of two broad categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety (accidents, incidents, stop changes, student behavior) • Service (timeliness, responsiveness, information) <p>The administration of the system shall include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record number (CSR #) • Date opened • Source, with contact information • Contractor • Driver, if applicable • School served • Description of issue • Resolution • Closing call to source • Date closed <p>Concerns or requests that cannot be resolved within the established guidelines and procedures of RIDE shall require the approval of the Program Coordinator.</p> <p>Weekly, the System Manager shall provide a report of all resolved and open items.</p>



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RIDEIOP.028	Customer Complaint Request and Appeal Management		
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Responsibilities and Assignments	<i>General Manager</i> – Responsible for system oversight and daily follow-up on active files unless delegated to their Designee <i>Responsible Staff Member</i> – The staff member taking the original customer call.
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