

Mason School District (SAU#89)

Request for Proposals

School Bus Transportation

Notice is hereby given that the Mason School District will receive sealed proposals for the implementation of a school bus transportation contract.

Sealed proposals will be received in their final form not later than:

December 4, 2025

13 Darling Hill Road,

Mason, NH 03048

For further information, please contact:

Kristen Kivela – Office – 603-878-2962

Email: kkivela@sau89.nh.gov

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Timetable

The Contractor shall have all buses, routes, materials, and labor in place during July for the 2026-2027 school year, beginning August 24, 2026.

Event:	Dates:
RFP Documents Released	November 19, 2025
RFP Due Date	December 4, 2025
RFP Evaluation	December 8, 2025
Interviews of Potential Providers	December 5, 2025

Mason School District will communicate to vendors of interest by the 3rd week of December

Receipt of Written Proposal Document

Each proposer shall be responsible for the delivery of one (1) original and two (2) copies of the proposal to the Mason School District Office, 13 Darling Hill Road, Mason, NH 03048, on or before Thursday, December 4, 2025 by 4:00p.m. Contractors who do not submit their proposals by this time and date will automatically be disqualified from the proposal process. Facsimiles are not acceptable.

All proposals shall be typed. Proposals shall be tightly sealed in envelopes clearly bearing on the outside the name of the Contractor, his/her address, and "PROPOSAL FOR BUS Transportation" typed on the outside of the proposal.

All proposal respondents will be responsible for the costs associated with the preparation of the requested proposals, and the Mason School District will in NO way be held liable for these costs. The Mason School District is the sole judge of the value and merit of the proposals and reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

Contacts for the Mason School District

The Mason School District official contact for all correspondence, inquiries, and submissions related to this RFP is Ms. Kristen Kivela, Superintendent. The telephone number for Kristen Kivela is 603-878-2962. The mailing address and physical address is: 13 Darling Hill Road, Mason, NH 03048. Office hours are from 8:30A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday.

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS:

Bid Opening Date: Monday, December 4, 2025

- 1) NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Mason School District will accept bids for the 2026-2027 academic year contract for STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICE. Bids will be opened and read aloud in the District Office, 13 Darling Hill Road, Mason, NH 03048. Bids should be submitted for a consecutive three year period, commencing on July 1, 2026 and concluding on June 30, 2029 school year. An option to extend the contract one year shall also be submitted. The actual days of operation and transportation required shall be 177 days during the school year, as determined by the school calendar of the District.
- 2) Sealed proposals shall be delivered to the above address, any time prior to, but not later than, Thursday, December 4, 2025, 4:00p.m. Bids received after this time will be returned unopened to the bidder. Bids will be opened and read aloud.
- 3) Each proposal must be submitted on the bid forms provided with these specifications and must be contained in a sealed envelope, which shall be endorsed on the outside with the following information:
 - a. PROPOSAL FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
 - b. Name and Address of Bidder
 - c. Date and time due
- 4) All bids submitted must be valid for a minimum period of 90 days after the date set for the bid opening.
- 5) Mason School District reserves the right to reject any and all bids, or to waive any informalities, irregularities or technicalities in any proposal, should it deem to be in the best interest of Mason School District to do so. The contract will be awarded, if at all, to the lowest responsible bidder meeting RFP specifications as determined by Mason School District. Bids should be submitted on the premise that Mason School District intends to contract as a single unit, and that the proposal must be acceptable to the Board. While the financial responsibility of the bidder is a significant concern, the Board is equally concerned with the proven ability of the bidder to satisfactorily perform the contract so that the service will be provided in accordance with proposed contract documents.

5.1) After determining that a proposal satisfies the mandatory requirements stated in the Request for Proposal, the comparative assessment of the relative benefits and deficiencies of the proposal in relationship to the published evaluation criteria shall be made by using subjective judgment. The award of a contract resulting from this Request For Proposal shall be based on the lowest responsible bid and best proposal received in accordance with the evaluation criteria stated below:

5.1.1 Cost..... 45%

Total cost of proposal in addition to other costs, such as bus, van, monitor, hourly costs, etc.

5.1.2 Reliability. 15%

A description of any safety programs implemented by the contractor.

Inspection records and model year of the vehicles under the control of the contractor.

5.1.3 Experience..... 10%

The previous experience of the contractor in transporting pupils.

The name of each transportation company of which the contractor has been an owner or manager. A record of accidents in motor vehicles under the control of the contractor.

5.1.4 Expertise of Personnel..... 10%

The driving history of employees of contractor

5.1.5 Operational Plan 10%

Documentation of compliance with motor vehicles insurance requirements.

5.1.6 Financial Stability of Proposer... 10%

This is a financial analysis.

6) Any explanation or statement which the bidder wishes to make must be placed in the same envelope with the proposal, but shall be written separately and independently of the proposal and attached hereto. Unless the bidder so indicates, it is understood that the bidder is in strict accordance with the specification requirements. Mason School District reserves the right to reject any and all explanations or statements, should it be in the best interest of the District to remain in strict accordance with the specification requirements.

- 7) Mason School District reserves the right to require, from the successful Contractor, a performance bond for the period of the contract, in the amount of 100% of the regular route. Upon such requirement, the bond shall be filed with the Financial Manager on or before the beginning of each contract year. The bond shall be placed with a surety company having a policyholders rating not lower than “A” and a financial rating not lower than “AAA” in the current edition of Best’s Insurance Guide. Hopefully the financial soundness of the Contractor will preclude this requirement. Should the District require that a performance bond be provided, the cost of the bond shall be paid by the Contractor.
- 8) The bid shall be based on the premise that Mason School District will not be responsible for financing, holding title to, or licensing vehicles. The bid will be the basis of award.
- 9) The Contractor shall provide background checks for all employees who work on a school bus and are in any way involved in the supervision of minor children. The Contractor shall also provide Mason School District access to background check reports and results upon request. The Contractor shall notify Mason School District in writing, of its intention to hire any applicant with a past felony conviction. The proposer must specify how this requirement would be met. Mason School District reserves the right and makes the final decision on Contractor’s employees who may or do provide any service to the District.
- 10) All figures given for passengers, routes, or lengths of routes are based on data available for the 2025-2026 school year.
- 11) The minimum charge for regular routes will be for the 177 days of service.
- 12) Bidders must satisfy themselves, upon examination of these specifications, as to the intent of the specifications. After submission of the proposal, no complaint or claim that there was any misunderstanding in regard to items listed for bidding will be entertained from either party.
- 13) All bids shall be deemed final, conclusive and irrevocable and no bid shall be subject to correction or amendment for any error or miscalculation.
- 14) Bidders must include with their bid:
 - A. A schedule for implementing the Agreement should your firm be selected as the successful Contractor. Your schedule should address:

1. Inspection of vehicles, facility and equipment
 2. Year, make and model of all vehicles
 3. Occupation of terminal facility
 4. Selection, any necessary training and employment of drivers
 5. Employee orientation, especially to District routes and schedules
- B. An organizational chart showing the staffing and lines of authority for key personnel to be used in performing the contract. Include the name(s) and title of management staff responsible for the successful servicing of this contract if awarded.
- C. A summary by narrative, brochure, chart or other means showing the bidder's special qualifications and philosophy which may give the bidder the ability to satisfy all bid requirements. Proposer must clearly demonstrate prior experience in the field of home-to-school and special education needs.
- D. A listing of credit references, including at least three (3) trade or industry suppliers with whom you regularly deal.
- E. A listing of three New Hampshire or Massachusetts school references you currently provide transportation services for.
- F. A statement regarding any instances in which the Contractor, subsidiary or intermediary company, parent company or holding company has been indicted, accused or convicted of a crime or been the subject of a grand jury or criminal investigation. Statement must also list any order, judgment or decree of any court of competent jurisdiction permanently or temporarily enjoining it from, or otherwise limiting its participation in any type of business, practice or activity.
- G. A list of at least five (5) school bus contracts held over the last five years with at least 2 route buses. Examples used by proposers must have been continuous for a period of no less than five years duration.

- 15) The bidder shall at all times observe and comply with all laws, ordinances, regulations and codes of the federal, state, county and other local government agencies, which may in any manner affect the performance of the contract, and in particular, such laws pertaining to safety. The Contractor, in performing under this contract shall not discriminate against any worker, employee or applicant, or any member of the public because of race, creed, color, age, sex or national origin, nor otherwise commit an unfair employment practice.
- 16) No contract shall be assigned or any part of the same subcontracted without written consent of Mason School District, but in no case shall such consent relieve the Contractor from his obligations, or change the terms of the contract.
- 17) Contractor shall maintain all equipment solely at their cost used in the transportation of students in accordance with laws and regulations of the State of New Hampshire regarding school buses, and such equipment shall be maintained in good mechanical order at all times to pass NHDOT school bus inspection. Buses shall be kept in clean and sanitary condition and open to examination by the District at all times.
- 18) Contractor shall submit a description of the equipment that he proposes to use in carrying out the contract at the time of RFP submittal and, if the contractor is awarded the bid, prior to the beginning of each school year. The description of equipment must include year, model, capacity, fuel type and any special education needs equipment, including but not limited to, air conditioned buses, vans or vehicles, wheel chair buses, vans or vehicles, wheel chair lift buses, vans or vehicles
- 19) It is understood that all equipment furnished shall comply with all statutes, school bus specifications, and safety regulations in force, and that if any bus equipment owned by the Contractor fails at any time to comply in whole or in part during the term of the contract, it shall be replaced by the Contractor without expense to Mason School District and without claims for adjustment per diem, or per trip, compensation.
- 20) If the successful proposer does not have adequate equipment at the time of award of the contract, the proposer shall present Mason School District with a certified statement from an authorized dealer, manufacturer, or other reliable source, showing that all necessary equipment will be supplied and that all such equipment will be available on-site for use by the Contractor for performance of the contract at least thirty (30) days prior to the first date that pupil transportation services are to be provided. Equipment must be ordered within 14 calendar days after Mason School District notification to the successful proposer(s) of approval of the School Board's award of the contract.
- 21) Standby buses shall be available to be used in the event any buses regularly transporting students shall be inoperable.
- 22) These bid specifications shall be affixed to the contract entered into with the Contractor, and shall be considered an integral part thereof. Should there be determined that there is contradiction between the bid specifications and Contract, terms and conditions as stated in the Contract shall prevail.

- 23) The Contractor agrees that each morning before any school buses are used for transportation, the driver shall inspect same carefully for defects, and remedy any defects before using said vehicles.
- 24) All vehicles shall be equipped with an operable communication system capable of reliably maintaining contact with a base station and/or the District. Contractor, at contractor's expense, will guarantee that the district, throughout the term of the contract and/or contract renewals has provides communication access to the District.

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BIDDERS

- 1) The Contractor must adhere to all laws and policies of New Hampshire and the Mason School District, and shall observe and comply with all laws and regulations pertaining to Equal Employment Opportunity and Fair Employment Practices.
- 2) **SUB-CONTRACTS**
Contractors shall bid on all routes in connection with these specifications. It is unacceptable to Mason School District for the company to sub-contract any portion of the routes to other contractors.
- 3) **HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE**
The Contractor agrees to indemnify, hold harmless and defend Mason School District, their Board, and all administrators, employees, agents, or servants of either/or the District, against all suits, actions, legal proceedings, claims and demands, and against all damages, loss, costs, expenses and attorney's fees, in any manner, caused by, arising from, incidental to, connected with or growing out of the operation of this contract.
- 4) **COLLUSIVE BIDDING**
The Bidder certifies that his bid is made without any previous understanding, agreement or connection with any person, firm, or corporation making a bid for the same project, and is in all respects fair, without outside control, collusion, fraud, or otherwise illegal action.
- 5) **PERSONNEL**
Transportation vehicles shall not be operated by anyone other than a person holding the required license issued to him/her by New Hampshire, and holding a school bus driver's license issued to him/her by the State of New Hampshire, driver shall follow the normal and usual instructions and requirements of Mason School District and shall at all time comply with the motor vehicle laws of the State and all cities, in which such vehicles may be operated and shall present such reports to aid the District as the District may request.

It is recognized that, for the protection of the children, drivers and all other persons coming in contact with the students must be of stable personality and of highest moral character.

The responsibility for hiring and discharging personnel shall rest entirely upon the Contractor. Mason School District shall request in writing the removal of any driver from the Network service who in their opinion is not suitable to operate a bus or provide service acceptable to the Network.

The Contractor shall underwrite all costs incurred to provide qualified drivers, monitors and aids. Such costs shall include all training, physical examinations, license and permit fees, recruitment and any other related fees.

6) SAFETY PROGRAM

The Contractor shall plan and administer a safety program in conformance with the State laws and regulations. The safety program must include, but is not limited to the following:

A. Bus Drivers

- 1) All drivers must be Commercially Licensed by the State of New Hampshire to operate a school passenger bus and comply with Act 163 (criminal record check). All drivers must participate in both classroom and on the road training programs devoted to safety, proper bus operation, special education needs, rules and regulations, and first aid.
- 2) All drivers must participate in a defensive driving course as certified by the National Safety Council.
- 3) All drivers must be reviewed after thirty (30) days of employment and at least annually thereafter and must annually be given a review course on rules, regulations, safety, and first aid.
- 4) The Contractor, at Contractor's expense, shall investigate the driver's criminal record and Motor Vehicle Record with the State of New Hampshire prior to hiring. Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) checks shall be conducted at least every six (6) months thereafter.
- 5) Drivers shall pass a physical examination (including drug screening) prior to hiring and thereafter as required by law.

B. A safety program for personnel will be conducted each month.

C. Students

- 1) The Contractor must assist and participate with the District in providing safety programs as needed for their students.
- 2) All bus routes, bus stops, operation of vehicles, and driver activities must be conducted with the safety of the students as the prime concern.
- 3) In cooperation with Mason School District, Contractor must provide training to the students of the District on the proper boarding, disembarking, bus riding procedures, and evacuation procedures at least twice per year. In addition, Contractor will provide this training prior to students entering Kindergarten each year if the District requests such training.

- 4) The bus driver must continually monitor the behavior of all students to insure that safe bus riding procedures are being followed. If not, the District must be notified immediately.

The Contractor agrees that school administrators may, from time to time, ride a bus or otherwise observe the general operation of the bus service.

7) INSURANCE

Contractor shall carry, pay for, and keep in force, with a company or companies licensed to do business in New Hampshire, comprehensive general liability and comprehensive automobile liability.

The Contractor shall provide Workers Compensation Insurance for its employees in statutory limits.

The Contractor shall present and maintain current certificates of insurance throughout the term of the contract to the District giving evidence of the insurance coverage. A Certificate of Insurance or other evidence of insurability must be submitted with proposal. A Certificate of Insurance must be submitted annually to the District, upon renewal or upon obtaining a new insurance company, throughout the life of this transportation agreement.

Each insurance company shall agree not to terminate their coverage without thirty (30) days written notice to the District and to the Contractor, and to include this clause in the insurance policy and in the certificate of insurance.

Notwithstanding any terms, conditions or provisions, in any other writing between the parties, the contractor/permittee hereby agrees to effectuate the naming of the District as an unrestricted additional insured on the contractor's/permittee's insurance policies, with the exception of Workers' Compensation.

The policy naming the district as additional insured shall:

- be an insurance policy from an A.M. Best rated "secured" or better, New Hampshire admitted insurer;
- provide for 30 days' notice of cancellation;
- State that the organization's coverage shall be primary coverage for the district, it's Board, employees and volunteers.
- State that the policy affirmatively provides coverage for claims of negligent hiring, training and supervision, which may arise in the context of sexual molestation, abuse, harassment, or similar sexual misconduct.

The contractor/permittee agrees to indemnify the District for any applicable deductibles.

The insurance producer must indicate whether or not they are an agent for the companies providing the coverage.

Required Insurance:

- Commercial General Liability Insurance in an amount of not less than \$5,000,000
- Commercial Vehicle Liability coverage for bodily injury and property damage in an amount of not less than \$10,000,000 combined single limit

- Workers' Compensation
Statutory Workers' Compensation and Employers' Liability Insurance for all employees.

Contractor/permittee acknowledges that failure to obtain such insurance on behalf of the District constitutes a material breach of contract and subjects it to liability for damages, indemnification and all other legal remedies available to the district. The contractor/permittee is to provide the district with a certificate of insurance, evidencing the above requirements have been met, prior to commencement of work or use of facilities.

8) ROUTES AND SCHEDULES

The school district will provide to the successful contractor a complete listing of eligible passengers along with their home address, grade, and school assignment. In addition, the district shall make arrangements to update such listings for the contractor over the summer recess with respect to additions and deletions of students requiring transportation

Mason School District will make available to the successful contractor a listing of Board approved guidelines for pupil transportation within the District along with a complete listing of approved walking zones for each school.

All routing shall become the responsibility of the contractor, subject to District approval. Contractor, will have and maintain, at Contractor's cost, routing software to be used for District purposes.

Routes developed by the contractor are to be completed by July 15, and submitted in hard copy of each year of the contract and forwarded to the District for approval. Routes will indicate a route number, bus number, all stop locations, estimated number of passengers and start and end time for the route. The District will cooperate with the contractor by approving the routes or suggesting needed changes in a reasonable and timely manner.

Conflicts regarding eligibility of riders and stop locations will be decided by Mason School District or its designee. The contractor agrees to abide by all decisions of the Board in this area.

All schedules shall be in keeping with safety to school children so as to deliver students within a reasonable time, as determined by the District, prior to the start of school and so as to deliver them to their respective stops within a reasonable time, as determined by the District, after the final loading of the bus. Contractor and Contractor's staff will provide and maintain, for all drivers, up to date student names and if available addresses, of all students assigned to their routes. Drivers will keep such student logs with them when driving and will maintain student confidentiality at all times. Contractor will immediately provide Mason School District with such student logs when requested by the District.

9) REQUIRED RECORDS

The Contractor shall maintain complete and accurate records of all trips provided and all miles traveled under this contract, all disciplinary actions, and such other reports the District may request and/or such other reports which may be required under all applicable laws.

- 10) **EMERGENCY CANCELLATION OF TRANSPORTATION**
The Contractor will follow Mason School District procedures for emergency cancellation of transportation in those cases where weather conditions may preclude the movement of buses or be a safety concern. Contractor, at Mason School District request, will provide professional advice prior to District cancellations due to weather conditions, or emergency closings.
- 11) **CANCELLATION**
In the event that either Mason School District or Contractor shall willfully violate any of the covenants or duties imposed upon by this Agreement, such willful violation shall entitle the other party to terminate this Agreement. The party desiring to terminate for such cause shall give the offending party ninety (90) days written notice to remedy the violation. If at the end of such time the party notified has not removed the cause of complaint or remedied the purported violation, then this Agreement shall be deemed terminated.
- 12) **CONTRACTOR NOT AN AGENT**
The Contractor shall not be held or deemed in any way to be an agent, employee, or official of the District, but rather an independent Contractor furnishing transportation services to the District.
- 13) **SUPERVISION OF LOADING AND UNLOADING**
The Contractor agrees that the driver of each bus shall supervise the loading and unloading of his/her bus at all pick-up and delivery points and the Contractor will provide office operation for reporting transportation problems.
- 14) **STUDENT MANAGEMENT**
Rules and regulations regarding bus passenger discipline shall be given to each student and to the Contractor by the District. When a passenger causes an undesirable situation on any bus, the driver shall report passenger's name and/or description of the situation to his supervisor, who shall, no later than the following day, turn in a report to the District. All vandalism damages to the Contractor's equipment or facilities will be the responsibility of the Contractor; however, the Districts will assist the Contractor in receiving restitution for damaged equipment.
- 15) **OPERATING EXPENSE**
The Contractor shall provide and compensate its drivers and other personnel and pay all expenses pertaining to operating the buses, such as State license, oil, lubrication, tires, antifreeze, all repairs and maintenance, storage, washing, and fuel.
- 16) **FUEL & FUEL STORAGE**
The Contractor shall provide fuel for the operation of the buses under this contract. In order to provide the lowest fuel expense and greatest fuel economy, all buses provided by the Contractor for service under this contract must be powered by diesel engines. The Contractor will be responsible for compliance with all State and Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines, rules and regulations concerning bulk fuel storage.
- 17) **EQUIPMENT**
All vehicles provided by the Contractor shall comply in every respect with all state and federal laws, as well as local regulations and ordinances applicable and pertaining to the transportation of pupils in effect at the commencement of the contract period and promulgated during the life of the contract period.

All buses must be inspected daily. Daily inspection will include but not be limited to brakes, lights, tires, radiators, oil, gas, heaters, and all safety appliances and accessories. Records of such inspections shall be maintained by the Contractor, and made available to the Mason School District on demand.

18) CONTRACT

CONDITIONS

Compensation:

Transportation of students to and from school is required for a minimum of 177 days during the regular school term.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mason School District is located in Mason, New Hampshire.

The following information is a summary of Mason School District's current pupil transportation program.

Current Transportation program:

Mason School District currently has 2 routes/buses that serve Mason with transportation to/from the Middle and High Schools in Milford, NH and 2 routes/buses that serve Mason with transportation to/from the Elementary School in Mason. We serve approximately 175 students daily on our various routes.

Transportation program beginning August 1, 2017 – June 8, 2018:

The intent of the district is to have school bus transportation for our students who attend three different locations, adhering to the school hours as follows: Middle School start time is 7:30a.m. and ends at 2:10p.m. High School start time is 7:40a.m. and ends at 2:12p.m. Elementary School start time is 8:50a.m. and ends at 3:25p.m.

Given the above school hours schedules, potential bidders must base their bids on the following:

- 1) The first student pickup should be no earlier than 6:11a.m. and the last student drop off time no later than 4:30 p.m. Using as few buses as necessary. Allowing routes 1 hour and 10 minutes of running time for AM and PM routes.
- 2) Using a minimum number of buses for cost efficiency while maintaining all student safety requirements.

Your proposal must include the number of buses; daily and annual cost per bus; size of bus; meeting all NH DOT specifications. In addition, your written plan must include hours of student pickup, arrival at school, departure from school, and last student drop off time.

In addition, you must include an hourly rate for field trips, and other school transportation needs, as well as hourly or trip cost for monitors or aids. Contractor will be responsible for hiring monitors or aids for any transportation need. Mason School District maintains removal of monitors or aides as it does for other employees of the Contractor.

PRICING PAGE

CONTRACTOR: _____

DATE: _____

Regular Transportation Vehicle Type	Total Number of Vehicles	Total Number of Days per Year	Cost per Bus per Day	Total Cost per School Year
78/89 Passenger				
65/77 Passenger				
48/54 Passenger				
29-42 Passenger				
19-28 Passenger				
Special Needs Trans.				
35/48 Passenger				
Wheel chair busses				
Wheel chair bus with lift				
Special trips hourly rate				
Vocational				
Late buses				
Sub Total				
Sports / Activity Trips				
Grand Total				

Submitted By: _____

DATE: _____

FIRM NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

BY: _____

TITLE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____