



# Scholar Transportation 2026 Request for Proposal

May 12, 2026

DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES TO:  
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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Lincoln Academy (TLA) is a 4K-12 school educating approximately 730 scholars. For the 2026-2027 school year enrollment will continue to stay at approximately 730. However, The Lincoln Academy is planning to expand in the 2027-2028 school year with approximately 372 additional scholars that year, and every following year, adding additional scholars until at full capacity in the 2030-2031 school year with a total of 1566 scholars.

The Lincoln Academy currently has 6 buses/routes and 1 specialized bus for home to school transportation. In addition, The Lincoln Academy uses transportation for field trips, athletic events, and extracurricular activities.

The Lincoln Academy is seeking proposals for 4K- 12 scholar school bus transportation services for the school years 2026-27 through 2030-31. Sealed proposals will be accepted on or before 4:00 pm on May 26, 2026.

Any proposals received after the date and time listed above will not be considered.

Proposals will be evaluated on an individual basis, and TLA reserves the right to accept or decline any proposal for any reason. After all proposals are evaluated and a final vendor selected, the final selected vendor may be subject to final negotiations as needed.

Questions concerning this RFP are to be submitted in writing, via email, to Amber Aulozzi, [amber.aulozzi@tlabeloit.com](mailto:amber.aulozzi@tlabeloit.com). Responses to questions may result in an addendum.

## **CONDITIONS OF PROPOSAL**

The Proposer shall be fully responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of all scholar transportation services. The purpose of this contract is to hold the Proposer accountable for providing safe, reliable, and efficient transportation services that effectively meet the needs of The Lincoln Academy's scholars. This RFP is intended to establish performance expectations and outcomes rather than prescribe specific operational methods or procedures. The Proposer shall have the flexibility to design and implement its own operational programs, practices, and procedures, provided all required performance standards related to safety, reliability, and service quality are consistently met and all work is performed within the scope of this RFP. The Proposer must ensure that all personnel, equipment, systems, and operational procedures are fully in place and ready for service prior to the commencement of regular operations in September. The first day of school for scholars is September 1st.

1. TLA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or any combination of proposals. The right is also reserved to waive any irregularities in the proposals received.

2. TLA will conduct follow-up inquiries to determine the ability of the prospective contractors to perform the duties required in the contract. As part of this requirement, all prospective contractors shall include the following additional information with their proposal:
  - A brief statement of the history of the contractor
  - State of incorporation and ability to perform business in the state of Wisconsin
  - If the Contractor has ever defaulted on a school bus transportation contract, explain when, where, and why
  - A list of the regional transportation contracts held in the last 15 years
  - A list of references that can address the contractor's performance in the school transportation field.
  - A statement outlining the background, experience, and training of all personnel (excluding drivers) who will be working directly with this contract.
  - A copy of the company's most recent financial statement and audit.
  - Frequency and type of background checks performed
  - Methods for ensuring high quality customer service and flexibility to meet variable needs
  - A resume showing the experience and qualifications of the Transportation Supervisor who will be primarily responsible for the performance of the contract, or the qualifications necessary to fill the position
  - Safety Program
  - Plan to maintain responsiveness/communication with TLA
  - When/how does the contractor keep clients informed of service quality
  - Cost for home to school, special education, aide, field trip, and extra curricular transportation
  - Contractors shall clearly identify any operational assumptions, exclusions, service limitations, or conditions that may affect pricing, performance, scheduling, or service delivery under this contract.
  - Availability of drivers and working busses
3. TLA may request additional information after the proposals are opened.
4. All proposals must follow the legal obligations and requirements as set forth in sections 121.51 through 121.58 of the Wisconsin Statutes, the requirements of the Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.
5. Proposals may be modified or withdrawn prior to the date and time of the proposal opening upon written request.
6. Descriptions of routes currently being operated are available for review at TLA. Route changes for 2026-2027 will be accommodated within the framework of the contract when executed.

## **TIME FRAME FOR TRANSPORTATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

May 12, 2026 - RFP posted

May 19, 2026 - Questions on proposals due to TLA

May 21, 2026 - Responses to questions distributed to vendors

May 26, 2026 - proposals due by **4:00 pm** (provide 3 copies of the proposal)

May 27th-29 - TLA review of proposals

June 10 - Board Meeting for approval of selected vendor

## **CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

- Safety record
- Computerized routing and scheduling proficiency
- Driver and attendant recruitment, training, supervision and retention
- Quality of fleet
- Quality of communication and technology equipment
- Maintenance and vehicle inspection compliance
- Terminal and parking facilities
- Management experience and training
- Maintenance staff experience and training
- Flexibility and cooperation of the Contractor
- Reference checks on owner, management, and staff
- Cost to TLA
- Scholar Safety
- Financial Statement Information
- Any value-added items provided such as audio/video monitoring technology, vehicle telemetry systems, established communication protocols, etc.

The Lincoln Academy is under no obligation to accept or deny a proposal solely based upon cost.

## **TERM OF THE CONTRACT**

The contract shall extend for a period of five (5) school years. It shall commence on July 1, 2026 and end on June 30, 2031.

In the event of inclement weather days during the year, the minimum number of transportation days will be approximately 170. There will be no payment for regular routes on days when school has been cancelled because of inclement weather or any other situation or act of God beyond the control of TLA.

## **GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS**

1. The contractor shall have exclusive rights to transport scholars in school buses under the terms of the busing contract. There shall be no restrictions to prevent TLA at its option to transport scholars in: private cars, taxi cabs, other transportation providers, school owned vehicles, or to contract with individual parents to transport their own children.
2. In certain cases, a scholar(s) may be placed in a specialized program outside of TLA or TLA may need to transport scholars identified under the McKinney-Vento Act. TLA may contract with parents or another transportation provider if it is more cost effective in these cases.
3. TLA reserves the right to expand or reduce daily transportation services to meet the needs of the scholars at TLA.
4. All items specified in the RFP are to be provided at the Contractor's expense unless otherwise noted.
5. Bus drivers have the responsibility for maintaining proper discipline on their buses. For major or repeated infractions of the rules, the driver will prepare a misconduct report to the Transportation Supervisor for follow up on disciplinary action including principal and parent communication. Incident reports must be shared with the principal as soon as possible.
6. 4k-12th grade scholars aren't required to walk more than 1 mile under current board policy.
7. TLA will maintain Hazard Plan transportation routes and procedures for scholars residing in areas identified as hazardous or unsafe for walking. The Contractor shall provide transportation services for scholars identified under the Hazard Plan in accordance with all applicable Board policies, state requirements, and routing directives established by TLA.

## **THE LINCOLN ACADEMY RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. TLA shall supply to the contractor the names, addresses, telephone number and grades for all scholars transported for use by the contractor to plan routes. Additions and deletions to the original list will be communicated to the contractor as they become known during the summer and school year.
2. TLA will provide the contractor before the beginning of each school year starting and closing times and scholar calendar.

3. TLA and the contractor will work in cooperation in disciplining scholars who do not follow appropriate behavior rules and guidelines.

## **THE CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The contractor shall provide and furnish all buildings, sites, materials, labor, and equipment necessary to transport all eligible scholars to and from their home or authorized location and the school for the term of the contract with the exception of those items listed in this document. The contractor shall make buses available at all reasonable times to The Lincoln Academy for the purpose of transporting the school's scholars and staff to other points and destinations for such curricular, co-curricular, and field trips as may be requested by TLA.
2. The contractor shall, at its expense, procure and maintain in effect any and all licenses, permits, and certifications, which are or may be required by the regulatory bodies for the performance of scholar transportation services.
3. The contractor shall assume all costs of the transportation operation, including but not limited to costs for buildings, sites, vehicles, communication and technology equipment, maintenance, supplies, accessories, all required insurance coverage, and salaries and benefits for drivers, attendants, and all other employees necessary to carry out the services required.
4. The contractor will be responsible for all routing and scheduling involved in the scholar transportation system. The routes will be prepared according to TLA standards for length of ride, walking distance to meet the bus, and comfortable seating capacity. There must be a continuing effort to combine routes whenever possible.
5. Scholar data will be treated as confidential information and will not be given or sold to any third party by the contractor.
6. The contractor shall furnish to TLA before the beginning of each school year a listing of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all drivers and attendants, along with their assigned routes. TLA reserves the right to request that drivers be reassigned or replaced if in the opinion of TLA they are unsatisfactory in their assignment.
7. Before August 10th of each school year, the contractor will provide TLA with a complete set of all routes. This includes maps of each daily route indicating scholar names, location and time of pickup.
8. The contractor must provide information to parents and/or guardians related to scholar pick up and drop off times.

9. The contractor will be responsible for proper supervision of drivers to ensure that the routes are being run correctly and on time. Also included in this supervision should be an annual evaluation of all drivers in the areas of driving competency, understanding of laws, regulations, and TLA policies.
10. The contractor shall be responsible for conducting emergency evacuation drills and shall notify TLA prior to conducting drills. The drivers will be required to maintain records listing the date, time, and location of the drills.
11. The contractor has shared responsibilities for the discipline of scholars.
12. The contractor shall provide to TLA all necessary information, for the preparation of reports required by state agencies or TLA. In particular, tracking and reporting individual scholar ridership.
13. TLA will be responsible for determining scholar busing eligibility based upon TLA transportation policy. The contractor will also be called on to measure the distance from home to school when it is not possible to determine eligibility by using a map.
14. The contractor will reschedule regular route buses as needed in unforeseen events including, but not limited to early release, late start and emergency dismissal.

## **TERMINAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. The terminal shall be staffed and operating during school day with hours starting before the first bus is scheduled to depart for AM routes and ending after the last bus has returned from PM routes.
2. During non-school days, the terminal is expected to be operated during normal business hours.
3. On holidays and during breaks, it is at the discretion of the contractor to hold operating business hours.
4. While on a trip there shall be a designated office member on call that the applicable driver can reach in case of emergency. That office member will have the appropriate skills and ability to rectify the driver's emergency and allow the trip to continue as normal with minimal interruption to the trip.
5. The terminal shall include at a minimum the following features:
  - a. A fully equipped, OSHA compliant maintenance shop with service bays and bus washing bay to adequately service the fleet.
  - b. Appropriate office space for terminal and management personnel and all appropriate office furniture, equipment and technology.

- c. Base station for the radio dispatch of all buses.
- d. Driver area where all drivers can check in and out and receive training.
- e. Telephone service with minimum of two (2) incoming lines and an emergency contact list that includes home and cell phone contact information for at least two appropriate contractor personnel.
- f. Parking space and electrical connections for all vehicles.

## **COMPUTER ROUTING AND SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS**

1. TLA uses Skyward software for scholar data management. Preferably, the contractor will implement and maintain a routing and scheduling program that is compatible with TLA hardware and software.
2. TLA will provide necessary scholar data to the contractor for use in routing and scheduling.
3. The contractor will be responsible for maintaining TLA's map including bi-annual calibration of the map.
4. Drivers shall become familiar with the routes that he/she is to drive prior to his/her first trip on each route carrying scholars. Practice driving the route at least once is the preferred method.
5. Before the commencement of each school year the contractor shall have each driver that is assigned a route to perform a dry run of their respective route. This dry run is to ensure the accuracy and timing of their route. Drivers shall report all scheduling conflicts or errors to the appropriate terminal management.
6. TLA prefers the contractor to have a parent and TLA accessible tracking app.
7. Curricular, co-curricular, and field trip scheduling may be done via a computerized program mutually agreed upon by the contractor and TLA.
8. If any bus is delayed for any reason, the bus is likely to arrive late to its destination, the driver of the bus shall notify the dispatcher on duty, and the dispatcher shall notify TLA.
9. The contractor shall set up bus routes to minimize buses necessary to provide safe and reliable transportation services under terms of this contract.

## **MANAGEMENT AND TERMINAL PERSONNEL**

1. The contractor shall employ appropriate management and office personnel to adequately carry out the responsibilities and requirements of the transportation service.

2. TLA encourages the contractor to be a member of appropriate professional transportation organizations and participate in training offered by such organizations.
3. The contractor will provide on-going training for management and office personnel in areas such as management and customer service training.
4. The contractor will employ at minimum one full-time ASE (or other recognized organization) certified mechanic to adequately service the vehicles and provide a preventive maintenance program. On-going training will be provided to the mechanic(s) to keep current with industry standards and trends.

## **DRIVERS**

1. The contractor shall employ the necessary number of drivers and attendants to fulfill the transportation services required in the contract.
2. All buses shall be operated at all times by trained, competent, safe, and courteous drivers who meet the requirements for school bus drivers as set forth by the Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles. In addition, all drivers will be required to follow all of the TLA's transportation policies and regulations.
3. The contractor will be required to establish and implement a screening, hiring, and training program that includes at a minimum the following:
  - The contractor must conduct a check on the applicant's driving record.
  - The contractor must conduct drug and alcohol testing.
  - The contractor must conduct a criminal background check on the applicant.
  - The contractor must conduct a check of the applicant's references.
  - The contractor must provide a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of behind-the-wheel training.
  - The contractor must provide a minimum of thirty (30) hours of route training (including actual driving of the route), safety training, conflict resolution and discipline training, customer service training, and defensive driving training prior to the driver beginning any assignment.
4. All drivers and attendants must be First Aid and CPR certified.
5. The contractor shall assign an attendant to all special needs routes as requested.
6. The contractor may provide on-going in-service meetings/training programs for drivers and attendants in the area of safety, discipline, customer service, drills, etc.

## **VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS**

1. The contractor shall provide the appropriate number and size of vehicles needed for providing the transportation service as requested for the term of the contract. All vehicles must meet the specifications as prescribed by the federal government, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and TLA.
2. No buses used in the operation of service shall have more than 225,000 miles as of the beginning of each school year. The contractor will be required annually to provide TLA with an inventory of its fleet of vehicles, specifying the chassis, body, mileage, age, size, and VIN number. This shall be provided by August 15th of each year and must be updated as vehicles are replaced or added.
3. The contractor must provide a sufficient number of spare vehicles so as to not cause any disruption in service. A sufficient number of spare vehicles must be available to provide service for all curricular, co-curricular, field trips and for unforeseen vehicular breakdowns. All spare buses must be maintained in the same manner as the regular route buses, and are subject to all the requirements, sans age, for buses listed in the document.
4. All buses used in this transportation service must be equipped with operable two-way radios. A base station is required at the terminal and must be connected to an owned or leased tower.
5. A cell phone shall be used instead of a two-way radio only when the bus will be on a trip outside of the radio boundaries or if the given bus will be operated outside terminal hours. The cell phone will be used when needed and only be used when the bus is parked, secured and out of traffic. The vendor will have a policy on record regarding cell phone usage as it relates to drivers.
6. All buses must have a properly working digital camera system. The system will provide, at a minimum, one audio channel and up to three video channels covering the entirety of the school bus interior space. The contractor is responsible for following all state and federal laws pertaining to handling and storage of bus cameras.
7. The contractor is responsible for maintaining the camera systems in a reasonable fashion to ensure cameras are functional and recording during all school bus operations. At the request of TLA's administration, the vendor is responsible for pulling footage from the camera system during the investigation of an incident.
8. All school buses used in operation shall be equipped with working electrical engine heaters. During cold weather operations, the engine heaters shall be used when a bus will be parked outside.
9. All buses are to be maintained in excellent mechanical condition so as to meet any and all requirements of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation at all times. They shall

be kept neat and clean inside and outside at all times. All buses must be inspected and approved for use by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation annually, and each bus shall carry an inspection certificate. TLA will be provided with copies of all inspection reports. The contractor will be required to keep thorough up to date records of all maintenance work done and TLA shall have access to those files if requested.

10. All vehicles must be equipped with GPS tracking devices.

## **INSURANCE**

1. Prior to the commencement of any work under this Agreement and as a condition precedent to payment, Contractor shall provide The Lincoln Academy with Certificates of Insurance (COI) evidencing the coverage required herein.
2. Contractor shall maintain, at its sole cost and expense, the following insurance policies:
  - a. Commercial General Liability (CGL): Including bodily injury, property damage, and completed operations with limits not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 in the aggregate.
  - b. Workers' Compensation: Employer's Liability Each Accident \$100,000, Disease – Each Employee \$100,000, Disease – Policy Limit \$500,000
  - c. Automobile Liability: Covering all owned, hired, and non-owned vehicles with a combined single limit of \$1,000,000.
3. The Lincoln Academy shall be named as an Additional Insured on the General Liability, Professional Liability and Automobile Liability policies.
4. Contractor shall provide Client with at least thirty (30) days' prior written notice in the event of any cancellation, non-renewal, or material reduction in coverage.

## **ESCALATION CLAUSE**

1. Please provide a proposed escalation schedule for years two through five of the contract. All rates for the second through the fifth years of the contract will be adjusted in accordance with the annual variation shown from June of the previous year to June of the current year in the Consumer Price Index (all urban consumers, all items - U.S. city average). The maximum allowable percentage increase in any one contract year will be 3%. In the event that the Consumer Price Index went down the contractor would be held harmless.

## **INDEMNIFICATION**

1. The transportation contract will contain an indemnity clause. The contractor shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless TLA, its officers, agents, and employees from any and all claim, suit, loss, liability, damage, penalty, expense or fee, including, without limitation,

reasonable attorney fees and court or arbitration costs on account of injuries to or death of any and all persons whatsoever, including contractor, its subcontractors, agents, employees, and any and all damage to property to whomsoever belonging, including property owned by, rented to, or in the care, custody, or control of the parties hereto, including the loss of use resulting from, arising or growing out of, or in any manner connected with or occasioned, in whole or in part, by reason of operation of contractor, its subcontractors, their employees or agents under this contract.

## **TERMINATION AND PERFORMANCE**

1. In the event the contractor shall fail to carry out the terms, conditions, or specifications of this contract for any reason, The Lincoln Academy shall, upon reasonable notice to the contractor, and its refusal, immediately have the right to furnish or cause to be furnished the transportation herein agreed to be furnished by the contractor.
2. The contractor shall not assign or sublet any contract entered into TLA, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of TLA. In the event the ownership of the company is acquired, transferred, or altered, TLA shall have the right at any time thereafter to terminate the contract. The use of drivers or buses from other terminals within the same company during times of need are the only exception.

## **HOURS OF SERVICE**

1. TLA regular school day for scholars is from 8:00 am- 3:30 pm. Breakfast will be provided for scholars and will begin at 7:30 am. Buses should arrive by 7:30 am, if they arrive early scholars should be held in the bus until 7:30 am.

## **DEDICATED SPECIAL EDUCATION ROUTE**

1. TLA will need transportation for some of our special education scholars.

## **BUS AIDES**

1. Please provide a pricing structure for bus aide service.

## **CURRICULAR, CO-CURRICULAR, AND FIELD TRIPS**

1. School bus transportation services for the TLA's athletic teams, musical groups, and other groups will be needed throughout the school year. It also involves providing school bus transportation for field trips both during school hours and/or extending beyond school hours or on non-school days.
2. If a trip requires extended hours, or an overnight stay, upon TLA's approval, the contractor will be reimbursed the actual cost for meal and lodging expenses up to the stated maximum.

3. The contractor will prepare a separate invoice for each trip taken that will include the detail of the movement and the appropriate purchase order number. All invoicing and payment for trips will be through TLA.