

School Bus Bids FAQs

January 2013

Why go out for bids now?

These busing contracts have not been put out for significant competitive bidding in 33 years. Since then, the cost of yellow bus service has skyrocketed to \$1.1 billion a year, or \$6,900 per bused student.

As some of our contracts will expire at the end of this school year, the City has decided to solicit new bids for those contracts to secure the best responsible price for this service. Last Year, the City bid out contracts for pre-k bus service and saved \$95 million over five years.

Why would the bus unions strike?

The drivers want job guarantees, known as Employee Protection Provisions, to be included in the new contract bids – something the City is not legally allowed to do. When the City put pre-kindergarten bus contracts out to bid, the Court of Appeals ruled that the Employee Protection Provisions could not be included under circumstances, which are essentially the same as those today.

The union claims the Employee Protection Provisions ensures that bus drivers meet safety standards. Is this true?

This is not true. The bids we issued maintain the central requirements all bus drivers to meet the same safety standards they do now. No other school district in the state or country has an Employee Protection Provision. The following requirements are a part of the current contracts and will remain in the new ones:

- A **Social Security** card, and if not a United States citizen, a Green Card or Resident Card.
- A **New York State commercial driver's license** (CDL) with [CDL "S" \(school bus\) endorsement](#) and ["P" \(passenger\) endorsement](#).
- A **letter from the bus company**, on company letterhead, requesting certification.
- **Three letters of reference** (from individuals, organizations and/or agencies not related by blood or marriage to the driver) that attest to his or her character and work record.
- **19-A final qualification letter** (result of DMV fingerprint process).
- **13 county criminal history check letter** dated within 60 days.
- **Physical performance test** dated within 60 days. This exam is given once every two years.
- **Medical examination** and Purified Protein Derivative Tuberculosis Skin Test (PPD) dated within 90 days. If PPD is positive the results of a chest x-ray are required.
- **Clean drug test results** dated within 60 days.



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

- **Abstract of official vehicle operating record from NYSDMV—19A Active-School Qualified.** If not, driver should provide an add-on to roster letter from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DS-870).
- **Pre-service training certificate**—completion of five hour course provided through an OPT-certified training location.
- **Spring/fall refresher certificate**—two hour required refresher course provided through an OPT-certified training location. Drivers must attend a yearly refresher course.
- **Complete OPT application** signed by bus company representative. Driver will be certified under this company.

Has the City gone to the National Labor Relations Board to try to stop a possible strike?

Unfortunately, there are no legal remedies the City can pursue to block a strike. Last year, the union, Local 1181 of the Amalgamated Transit Union, threatened to strike when we issued the Pre-K bid solicitation, and we asked the NLRB to take action to block a strike. Regrettably, the NLRB denied our request.

How many bus routes does the DOE have?

The DOE has 7,700 bus routes that serve more than 152,000 students, 54,000 of whom have disabilities and require special transportation services.

Of those total routes, the City put 1,100 out to bid last month. Those routes serve 22,500 students with disabilities who require special transportation in grades Kindergarten to 12.

How many students would be affected by the strike?

A system-wide strike would impact all 152,000 students who receive yellow bus services.

How much of the school budget goes to cover the cost of busing?

New York City pays more for yellow bus service than any other large urban district in the country. It costs \$1.1 billion to bus 152,000 students – a per student cost of \$6,900. Los Angeles – second only to New York City in size – pays \$3,124 per student.