



## Staff Report

**RE: Ballwin Summer Day Camp Transportation**

**Department/Program: Parks and Recreation**

**Explanation:** The Community Center operating budget includes \$85,000 for day camp expenses and specifically \$17,000 for field trip transportation for Ballwin Summer Day Camp. Field trips are offered each of the 10 weeks of camp. Bids were solicited and three bids were received by bid closing.

First Student Inc.	\$16,731.00	Transportation provider for past 3 years
Durham School Services	\$14,882.70	Provider prior to 2023
JED Transportation	\$25,418.75	Charter Buses

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends awarding First Student Inc. the 2026 contract in the amount of \$16,731. This is \$1,848 more than low bidder Durham School Services. There are several reasons outlined in the memo attached but when it comes to camper safety, reliability, and local knowledge First Student is the priority choice. As stated in the attached memo from Recreation Superintendent Adam Peper the difference in cost “represents a reasonable and responsible investment in the safety and quality of Ballwin Summer Day Camp.

**Submitted By: Chris Conway, CPRP, Director of Parks and Recreation**

**Date: 2/23/2026**

# Memo

**To:** Chris Conway, Director of Parks and Recreation

**CC:**

**From:** Adam Peper, Superintendent of Recreation

**Date:** 2/11/2026

**Re:** 2026 Bus Bid

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A bus bid was created and distributed to three (3) local bus companies that indicated they rented school buses in our area. The bid was also posted on the city website and the Countian. Three bus bids were received. Below are the bid results.

Company Name:	Total Bid for all 2026 season field trips	Notes:
FirstStudent Inc.	\$16,731.00	Bus provider for the past 3 years
Durham School Services	\$14,882.70	Provider in previous years, before 2023
JED Transportation	\$25,418.75	Not school buses, Charter buses

After reviewing all submitted bids for 2026 season field trip transportation services, staff recommends awarding the contract to **First Student Inc.** in the amount of **\$16,731.00**.

While Durham School Services submitted the lowest bid at \$14,882.70, several operational and safety considerations support selecting First Student Inc. as the best overall value for the City.

First Student Inc. has served as our transportation provider for the past three years and has consistently delivered reliable, professional, and timely service. Their familiarity with our field trip schedules, camper needs, loading procedures, staff expectations, and emergency protocols provides a significant operational advantage. This continuity reduces risk and ensures a smooth transportation process for our campers and staff.

Safety and reliability are our top priorities when transporting youth participants. First Student has demonstrated dependable on-time performance, well-maintained buses, and strong communication with staff. Maintaining this established relationship helps ensure a consistent level of service and minimizes uncertainty.

Although Durham School Services previously provided service prior to 2023, that contract was not well received. Additionally, Durham is located approximately 17 miles from our facility, resulting in an estimated 30-minute travel time for buses to reach our site. This distance raises concerns regarding potential delays, particularly for morning departures and afternoon pick-ups, which could impact field trip schedules and camper supervision.

Durham provided one municipal reference, which was positive; however, that municipality only utilized their services in 2024 and not in 2025, limiting the depth of recent performance history available for review.

The difference between the lowest bid and First Student's proposal is \$1,848.30 for the entire 2026 season. Staff believes this difference represents a reasonable and responsible investment to secure proven reliability, local service presence, operational familiarity, and the highest level of safety assurance for our campers.

For these reasons, staff recommends awarding the 2026 field trip transportation contract to **First Student Inc.** as the best overall value to the City.

Adam Peper

Superintendent of Recreation  
Ballwin Parks and Recreation