BOE Regular Meeting
September 14, 2026 7:00 PM

1. Call to Order
   Courtney Ennis, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:08PM. Other Members present: Nicole Serra, Kelly McNamara, Andrew Koniecko, Charles Raymond and Dan Harris. Heather Helwig was excused. Also present: Dr. Roy Seitsinger; Superintendent, Cindy Varricchio; Director of Finance, and Gloria Homiski; Recording Secretary.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment

   Courtney Ennis read emails from Vicky Spicer; teacher and community member, and from Jill Keith; community member. They will be attached to these minutes.

   In person Public Comment:
   Kara Sawyer; parent and Coach, asked if a discipline policy is in place and being followed.

   Kayla Thompson; parent, expressed concern over the time of orientations and open houses this year. She asked that they be reviewed for the future.

4. Consent Agenda
   Moved, to accept the consent agenda as presented. Ennis/Serra. McNamara abstained. Koniecko, Harris and Raymond also in favor. Motion Carries.

5. Old Business: Public Comment
   Superintendent Update
   Board Chair Update

   Dr. Seitsinger thanked everyone for an excellent start to the school year. Buses were on time. Staff and PTO welcomed students. PTO also showed their appreciation to the staff.

   Spanish instruction at PVMS:

   Moved, to discuss reinstating more Spanish instruction at PVMS. Ennis/ Serra.

   Discussion followed.

   Dr. Seitsinger explained that a great deal of work was done in the summer to allow for Spanish instruction for students in grades 4 and 5 at the start of the school year. Kelly McNamara made a request to include Spanish instruction for grade 3 students a few days before the start of school. Dr. Seitsinger recommends the topic go to the Curriculum Committee and is then built into the budget after that for FY28. Kelly expressed her gratitude to the PPMS teacher who agreed to teach grades 4 and 5 as well. She thought that "on paper" it looked as though grade 3 instruction could be incorporated fairly easily. Courtney said she would like to see grade 3 Spanish implementation by the second half of this school year. She stated

that there is no need to pay for additional staff. Nicole stated that she did not know it was being discussed but is grateful that it is.

Andrew asked how much time it took to incorporate Spanish in grades four and five. Ray Bernier stated that scheduling took up a significant amount of time over the summer. Andrew also said the Curriculum Committee will meet and discuss the topic soon.

Courtney amended her initial motion as follows:

Moved, to instruct the Curriculum Committee to gather information from the Principals and Teachers in order to act on Spanish instruction for grade 3 in January 2027 or by the start of the FY28 School Year. Ennis/Serra. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

Courtney also reminded other Board members and staff to copy her on all emails that pertain to the Board.

6. Superintendent's Update
Dr. Seitsinger recognized the 25th Anniversary of the tragedy of 9/11 and asked that everyone pay respect to the memory of that day's events.

New Faculty and Staff Members:
PVMS has 2 new para-educators: Robyn Marien and Marissa Spur. They also have two long term substitute teachers: Ryleigh Pappas and Jordyn Fitch. PPMS hired a new Social Worker: Grace Hartmann, and a new para-educator: Jordan Wheeler.

"I Love You Guys" safety training will take place on September 17th in Hartford. Dr. Seitsinger will attend with Ray Bernier, Chris Pickett, and resident State Trooper; Kris Fisher.

Shipman - CONN OSHA: All schools have been designated as high hazard workplaces by OSHA. There is heightened activity around safety and security.

Quality Breakfast: Thomas O'Connor
Tom shared some paid lunch equity guidance offered by the state for 2026-2027. He explained that breakfast is free to ALL students. He also explained that there are no longer reduced priced lunches. If a student qualifies for reduced lunch, he or she receives free lunch. Tom reviewed the components of a healthy, reimbursable meal. Monthly menus are sent to the state beforehand to be approved and ensure that meals meet state standards. Tom also explained that if students get in line for a meal, we must feed them. Therefore, it is up to parents to set clear expectations regarding food purchases with their children.

Dr. Seitsinger talked about the tragedy that took place in North Stonington at the beginning of the school year. North Stonington and Preston Community members came together to support the family and the school district. Preston will hold its own After Action Meeting on Wednesday to review the event and discuss how everything was handled. Kiley Young; Regional School Safety Coordinator, will share her own expertise with our district.

BusRight Presentation: Brendan Merrill; Transportation Coordinator,

must find a new GPS tracking system for children since Safe Fleet stopped providing the service. He has been working with BusRight and provided a hand out that is attached to these minutes. This service will ensure safety and will locate students in real time. The annual cost is $27,300.00. Everything is included in this price. The cost of tablets, cards, lanyards, etc. were not included in the Safe Fleet price. This new program can also manage field trips and sports trips. Board discussion followed. They asked to confirm that the price will be pro-rated. They also want to know the funding source that will be used to purchase the program. They asked if there are other options. This information will be brought back to the Board.

Policy 5131.81 Students – Electronic Devices – First Read

Policy 1112.7 Community Relations – Recording Meetings Without Consent- First Read

A Policy Committee Meeting was held earlier in the day to review the above policies.

The Committee recommends the adoption of Shipman's Electronic Device Policy and recommends the CABE version of the Community Relations Policy.

The policies will come back at second read in October.

Policy 5114 Discipline will be brought to the October meeting as a First Read.

DEEP: Excavation of Buried Tank: In 1988 a tank was buried at Preston City School. When the school was later torn down, there was no proof showing that the tank was removed. The Town Building Inspector is taking the lead with Mike House on this project.

Cadence Calendar: Initial Calendar provided to the Board. Activities and events will be added throughout the year. The calendar is presented to BOE Members so that they are aware of student events they are invited to attend.

7. Preston PTO

Kayla Thompson stated that we have had a great start to the 26-27 school year. She thanked Eric McGlone for allowing the PTO to use the PVMS Gym for their bookfair. The Annual Grandparents lunch will be held on Friday, September 18th. Two hundred fifty-one grandparents are expected to attend! This year, the PTO plans to give each teacher $200.00 cash or $300.00 in Scholastic Book money. Teachers can pool money to plan for field trips or buy things for their individual classrooms. Field trips will be scheduled for the corn maze soon. Candy will be donated to Trunk or Treat. The Butterbraid fundraiser will take place in October. A Craft Fair will be held in November.

8. Principals'/Director of Student Services Report/Other Director Reports as Needed

Chris Pickett was very proud of how well the school year started off. He thanked the staff for the smooth opening. Classroom and PBIS expectations have been reviewed with students. Project Oceanology trips are planned for the end of the month. Athletics are up and running – soccer and cross

country. Chris thanked Eric McGlone for all his hard work. Eric hand-painted the soccer fields after the rain washed away the lines. He thanked the PTO for chocolate and coffee!

Ray Bernier also noted that PVMS had a great start to the school year. He always enjoys watching staff and children interact on the first day. He expressed his appreciation of the hard work of the PTO. STAR Testing is underway and the corn maze trips will take place soon. A school wide assembly will be held on Tuesday. Grandparents' Lunch is on Friday. The Book Fair will be open all week. Open house is on Wednesday night.

Craig King was absent - excused.

Moved, to extend the meeting past 9PM. Ennis/McNamara. All in Favor. Motion Carries.

9. Committee Reports
Finance Committee: Kelly reported that a meeting was held on 9-10 to review June and July spending. The audit was reviewed and it was noted that Capital Projects must go to BOF in a timely manner. They talked about non-lapsing purchases and reviewed supplemental state aid grants.

Curriculum Committee: Did not meet

Building Needs Assessment Committee: Dan Harris stated that they are getting prices on building renovations vs building new. They are waiting on the Capital Improvements first. They need money from the town to complete their study.

Transportation Committee: Did not meet

10. Financial/Capital Report
a. FY26 Financial Report:
Cindy Varricchio presented the Year to Date Budget Report. She reported that 1.5% of the overall budget is remaining - that is not a final number until after the audit is complete. The office is still paying bills for 2025-2026. The auditors stated that transfers are not necessary. BOE spending is not itemized. The town expenses are itemized. BOE reports to the bottomline.

The auditors were here in August and are expected to return in October.

Moved, to accept the June and July 2026 YTD budget report as presented. Ennis/McNamara. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

Capital Plan: Dr. Seitsinger stated that the top two priorities on the Capital Plan are the HVAC System and the new fencing project.

Other important projects: engineering for the water system and the air flow analysis.

Courtney stated that she does not want to keep the two electric signs and the welcome sign on the Capital List.

Moved, to pay the following projects out of the non-lapsing account: HVAC, fencing, water and air. Raymond/McNamara. Koniecko, Harris, Ennis and Serra opposed. Motion Fails.

Moved, to fund the HVAC study and the fencing (waive the bid process for Fencing) through state aid grants. McNamara/Ennis. Raymond opposed. Harris, Serra, Koniecko in favor. Motion Carries 5-1.

Moved, to fund the air flow analysis and the water study with the non-Lapsing fund. McNamara/Ennis. Serra, Harris and Koniecko in favor. Raymond abstained. Motion Carries.

The remaining items will go forward to the BOF.

Moved, to remove the 3 signs from the capital list before it goes to the BOF. Ennis/Koniecko. Harris, Serra and Raymond Opposed. McNamara Abstained. Motion Fails.

11. Adjournment

Moved, to adjourn the meeting at 9:40PM. McNamara/Ennis. Unanimous. Motion Carries.

Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Clarification RE:July 13 Public Comment

1 message

Victoria Spicer <spicerv@prestonschools.org> Tue, Jul 14, 2026 at 8:43 AM
To: Courtney Ennis <ennisc@prestonschools.org>, Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Hello,

I just wanted to reach out to the board to express clarification regarding my public comment made at the Monday July 13th BOE meeting.

Firstly, I wanted to thank the board for removing the motion on the table to move to public comment. I appreciate having the opportunity to be heard in a timely way, thank you.

In regards to clarification, directly after my remarks, Ms. Kayla Thompson made a public comment which incidentally insinuated she was "opposite of me and wants Spanish at the grade school level". I want to publicly clarify that in my July 13th public comment made just prior to hers, I did not insinuate that I do or do not want Spanish at the grade school level. Instead, I merely expressed my surprise that it was still being entertained, suggested polling parents, and provided potential insider optics as to the potential inequities of reallocating current staff.

Please share this with fellow board members as you see fit, or as opening public comment in next meeting.

As always, thank you for your time, commitment to our town, and consideration.

All my best,

Victoria Spicer (she/her)
6th & 8th Grade Social Studies Teacher
Preston Plains Middle School

T: 860-889-3831
E: spicerv@prestonschools.org
www.prestonschools.org/schools/preston-plains-middle-school

1, CT-164, Preston, CT 06365

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Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>

Re: Question: climate survey results?

1 message

Jill Keith <jillskeith@gmail.com> Mon, Sep 14, 2026 at 2:30 PM
To: Courtney Ennis <ennisc@prestonschools.org>
Cc: "Dr. Preston - BOE" <seitsingerr@prestonschools.org>, Gloria Homiski <homiskig@prestonschools.org>, Jill Keith <jillskeith@gmail.com>

Thank you, Courtney. I truly appreciate your courteous reply and follow-up.

I wished to request my email reply be added to tonight's BOE public comment for the benefit of all BOE Members, staff, families, and the community. However, I didn't reply before noon today as I'd hoped and planned.

~

You're welcome to read this in my absence if you receive it in time, given it's an outstanding topic (among others) about which I've been corresponding with Preston administrators. *(I'd recommend referencing but not reading supplied website addresses.)*

* climate survey - I look forward to reading the analysis and improvement plan, particularly given there are state mandates about it and the Preston school administrators have been discussing school staff climate interventions at BOE meetings during previous years. It's also been a critical state priority item for decades. I'm hopeful a robust survey/results like the following were used and implemented:
https://schoolclimate.org/inquiry/?
https://www.waterbury.k12.ct.us/districtschoolclimateplan

* Preston Public Schools continue to violate current school law by not attaching BOE meeting packets to posted agendas, as well as presentations, data, etc to posted BOE meeting summaries. The school website format continues to be wonky with missing items often on the school and town website. (I'm sorry; I couldn't think of a nicer way to say that. Perhaps the BOE could vote to comply henceforth with the legal reference previously provided.)

* Director of Special Education: reasons why Preston did not receive the state's High-Quality Special Education Grant; include the state's written response to Preston's grant application

[I also wonder why Preston still reports 0 students to the CSDE as gifted/high potential during the last two (and 20) years, despite increasing admin a day a week all year for that process. Are there still typos in the screening/identification process? Have teachers been trained about who to refer? Are all PreK-8/12 students being universally screened with the OLSAT? Are all high potential learners removed from Preston's public schools in favor of accelerated home school and private school options? Are there other reasons? Has this been analyzed?

*FOIA records... Superintendent training took place; the FOIC complaint was withdrawn; yet, redacted records were never received. Reminder: I was provided BOE Member, teacher and parent email content and addresses about last year's budget with their personal and sensitive information included.

* Kudos to BOE Members who advocated and assisted schools to do the following:
- 👏 Congratulations on implementing some Spanish back to Preston
- 👏 Congratulations on adopting Shipman and Goodwin's Policy Program

* Thank you to
- those who comply with your important directive to be copied on all correspondence and to you for always replying and for keeping all BOE Members informed. Bravo, too, for creating BOE goals and supporting teachers/students/instruction.
- you, Dr Seitsinger, and music teachers for inquiring about a potential piano and keyboard donation.

Most sincerely,

Jill
Jill S Keith
cell: 860-884-9719
jillskeith@gmail.com

On Sun, Sep 13, 2026, 9:28 AM Courtney Ennis <ennisc@prestonschools.org> wrote:
Hi Jill,

I'm sorry you have not received this. I will follow up tomorrow morning when everyone is back in the office. I had assumed the survey was posted with the minutes.

Courtney
On Sat, Sep 12, 2026 at 10:09 PM Jill Keith <jillskeith@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello,
I'm disappointed i never received a reply.
Will you reply this school year?
Kindly add this to correspondence for Monday's Regular September Board of Education meeting.
Thank you,
Jill
Jill S Keith
cell: 860-884-9719
jillskeith@gmail.com

On Wed, Aug 19, 2026, 8:41 AM Jill Keith <jillskeith@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello - would you kindly reply all and answer this question for Gloria?
Would you also please attach a copy to your reply?
Thank you.

On Tue, Jun 30, 2026, 12:27 PM Jill Keith <jillskeith@gmail.com> wrote:
Hi Gloria and Courtney:

Is the Culture and Climate report posted somewhere for the public to review?
If so, would you kindly direct me to it?
If not, can it be emailed to me?

In the future, will the Board of Education consider attaching all meeting documents to the agenda in accordance with this?
https://www.cga.ct.gov/2024/rpt/pdf/2024-R-0062.pdf

I attached a portion of that legislative guidance, as well as the meeting summary for reference.

I copied myself to remind me to check in about this next month.

I also noticed the Communication Committee does not seem to be functioning?

Wishing all a very special 4th of July.

Sincerely,

Jill

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program

FROM: Shannon K. Yearwood, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, Connecticut State Department of Education

DATE: May 5, 2026

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum No. 08-26
Paid Lunch Equity Guidance for School Year 2026-27

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently issued guidance addressing the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) tool for school year (SY) 2025-26. USDA Memo SP 06-2026: Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Year 2026-2027 explains the PLE exemption provided by section 743 of the Continuing Appropriations, Agriculture, Legislative Branch, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Extensions Act, 2026 (Public Law 119-37, the 2026 Appropriations Act), enacted on November 12, 2025.

Under the 2026 Appropriations Act, for SY 2026-2027, only school food authorities (SFAs) that had a negative balance in the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) as of June 30, 2025, are required to establish a price for paid lunches according to the PLE regulations. An SFA's NSFSA June 30, 2025, balance can be found in the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System) Financial Report under line 3f, Computed Operating Position. Any SFA with a positive or zero balance in its NSFSA as of June 30, 2025, is exempt from PLE pricing requirements.

If the documented weighted average student lunch price was a **minimum of $4.16** for SY 2025-26, the SFA is not required to complete the PLE tool or request an exemption for SY 2026-27.

SFAs Qualifying for the SY 2026-2027 PLE Exemption

1. SFAs that qualify for the PLE exemption for SY 2026-2027, as indicated above, are still required to use their current student price or establish a new paid lunch price; however, they are not required to comply with the PLE pricing requirements or use the PLE tool. To request an exemption, the SFA must complete the Paid Lunch Equity Exemption Request and submit to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) by **June 30, 2026**. To receive the exemption, all questions must be completed and submitted by one of the SFA's two authorized signers. This includes attesting to having a positive or zero balance in the NSFSA as of June 30, 2025. **Note**: The CSDE may request to review the SFA's documentation to support the exemption.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and Special Milk Program

FROM: Shannon K. Yearwood, Bureau Chief
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, Connecticut State Department of Education

DATE: August 12, 2026

SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum No. 12-26
Federal Meal Reimbursement Rates for School Year (SY):
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

This memorandum summarizes the annual adjustments to the federal reimbursement rates for local educational agencies (LEAs) for lunches, breakfasts, afterschool snacks, and milk served to students participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), and Special Milk Program (SMP); and the NSLP reimbursement rate for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated foods for SY 2026-27.

School Breakfast Program

Meal category	Regular rates	Severe need rates *
Paid	$ .42	$ .42
Reduced price	$ 2.24	$ 2.75
Free	$ 2.54	$ 3.05

National School Lunch Program

Meal category	Regular rates	Severe need rates *
Paid	$ .45	$ .47
Reduced price	$ 4.36	$ 4.38
Free	$ 4.76	$ 4.78

* Severe need rates are available to districts where, in the second prior year, 60 percent or more of the students received lunches free or at a reduced price.

Table 4-1. Five-day breakfast meal patterns

Meal components	K-5 Daily	K-5 Weekly	6-8 Daily	6-8 Weekly	9-12 Daily	9-12 Weekly
Milk, fluid, cups	1	5	1	5	1	5
Fruits, cups Vegetables may substitute for fruits Fruit juice together with vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits and vegetables	1	5	1	5	1	5
Grains, MMA), or both (oz eq) Grains must be whole grain-rich (WGR) (at least 80 percent per week) or enriched (cannot exceed 20 percent per week)	1	7-10	1	8-10	1	9-10

Dietary specifications: Daily amount based on the average for a five-day week

Nutrient	K-5	6-8	9-12
Calories	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated fat (percentage of total calories)	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (milligrams): Target 1 through June 30, 2027	≤ 540	≤ 600	≤ 640

For important menu planning notes, refer to the CSDE's *School Breakfast Program (SBP) Five-day Breakfast Meal Patterns for Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12*.

Table 2-1. Five-day lunch meal patterns

Meal components	K-5 Daily	K-5 Weekly	6-8 Daily	6-8 Weekly	9-12 Daily	9-12 Weekly
Milk, fluid (cups)	1	5	1	5	1	5
Fruits (cups) Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits	½	2½	½	2½	1	5
Vegetables (cups) Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetables	¾	3¾	¾	3¾	1	5
Dark green	0	½	0	½	0	½
Red/orange	0	¾	0	¾	0	1¼
Beans, peas, and lentils	0	½	0	½	0	½
Starchy	0	½	0	½	0	½
Other	0	½	0	½	0	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	0	1	0	1	0	1½
Grains (oz eq) WGR (at least 80 percent) or enriched (cannot exceed 20 percent)	1	8-9	1	8-10	2	10-12
MMA (oz eq)	1	8-10	1	9-10	2	10-12

Dietary specifications: Daily amount based on the average for a five-day week

Nutrient	K-5	6-8	9-12
Calories	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (percentage of total calories)	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (milligrams): Target 1A through June 30, 2027	≤ 1,110	≤ 1,225	≤ 1,280

For important menu planning notes, refer to the CSDE's *National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Five-day Lunch Meal Patterns for Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12*.

Executive Summary

BusRight Transportation Platform Recommendation

Prepared for Preston Public Schools Board of Education

Recommendation

Approve BusRight as Preston Public Schools' next student transportation platform to strengthen student safety, driver safety, student accountability, operational efficiency, and trust with families.

Why This Matters Now

Transportation has become increasingly complex due to driver shortages, last-minute route changes, limited real-time visibility, and higher expectations from families for immediate communication. Safe Fleet is also discontinuing services, creating a need to transition proactively to a modern platform that preserves family visibility while improving safety and operational control.

At a Glance

Primary Need	BusRight Capability	Safety / Trust Impact	Operational Impact
Safer, more reliable daily transportation	Live GPS, turn-by-turn driver navigation, offline route directions, student check-on/check-off	Confirms where buses and students are; supports faster response during incidents or delays	Reduces manual workarounds, radio traffic, and repeated parent calls

Current Challenges

- **Driver shortages and staffing pressure:** Transportation leadership is often required to drive routes, which limits their ability to monitor operations, communicate with families, and plan proactively.
- **Manual route changes:** Current route adjustments require time-consuming deleting, remapping, tagging, uploading, and saving - especially challenging during last-minute absences or mid-year changes.
- **Limited real-time visibility:** Current tools show where a vehicle is, but do not provide the same live route context, stop completion, student boarding, and ETA detail needed to answer questions quickly.
- **Communication gaps with families:** The District lacks a simple way to send route-specific alerts, which can lead to broader-than-needed messaging or repeated calls to schools and transportation staff.
- **Recurring student tracking costs:** The current card process requires printers, replacement cards, and supplies, creating annual cost and administrative burden.

How BusRight Solves These Challenges

Driver Safety

- Audible and visual turn-by-turn directions on driver tablets.
- Offline route downloads help drivers continue navigating through rural dead zones.
- Less reliance on paper route sheets, phones, or manual interactions while driving.

Student Safety & Accountability

- NFC badges confirm when students board and exit.
- Driver tablet provides green/yellow/red cues for right route, wrong stop, or wrong route.
- Live ridership information helps identify who is on a bus during an incident or emergency.

Family Trust & Transparency

- Families see bus location, scheduled arrival time, and live ETA.
- Parents receive student check-on/check-off notifications.
- Route-specific alerts reduce confusion and ensure messages reach affected families.

Expected Impact

Safer daily operations

Clearer driver guidance, improved visibility, and fewer distractions for drivers covering familiar or unfamiliar routes.

Faster parent response

Transportation and school staff can answer questions using live route and ETA data instead of relying on radio calls or delayed reports.

More efficient route management

Routes can be built, edited, merged, and published quickly, including temporary consolidations due to driver absences.

Stronger student accountability

Student boarding and exiting activity is documented and available in real time.

Improved family confidence

Families receive timely, relevant information about bus location, ETA, and student ridership.

Reduced administrative burden

Student badges and unlimited replacements are included, reducing printer/card expenses and manual replacement workflows.

Implementation and Financial Summary

Proposed investment

$27,300 annually, all-in, based on the proposal discussed with the District. Pricing includes tablets, cellular service, routing, student tracking, parent app, communications, field trips, onboarding, support, student badges, and unlimited replacement cards.

Target timeline

Board consideration after budget referendum results, with onboarding targeted for early fall and full implementation after winter break, if approved. BusRight recommends signing after approval to lock pricing and begin equipment planning.

Board Decision Requested

Approve BusRight as Preston Public Schools' student transportation platform to support a safer, more accountable, more efficient, and more transparent transportation operation for students, drivers, schools, and families.