

## Two Groups Share Plans for All-Electric School Buses Funded by California ARB Grants

Written by Michelle Fisher

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The California Air Resources Board (ARB) has announced two grantee awards for the \$1 million available for the FY 2011–12 [Advanced Hybrid School Bus Demonstration Project](#) : Kings Canyon Unified School District in Northern California and the San Diego Air Pollution Control District ( [AP](#) [CD](#) ) in Southern California.

KCUSD Transportation Director John Clements told *School Transportation News* that the district will use the \$496,696 award to purchase two [new all-electric, zero-emissions eTrans school buses by Trans Tech Bus](#) . This will be a demonstration project in which KCUSD will share both hybrid and electric school buses with other public school districts in the Central Valley and Northern California.

These two Type A all-electric buses are anticipated to arrive in KCUSD by Sept. 1 — just in time for the new school year. Currently this district is the only one in the nation operating the eTrans school bus, which has a 220-volt charger that mounts on the wall and uses a regular plug.

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“Our project will involve the deployment of two additional eTrans all-electric school buses and use of our existing eTrans, plus our new IC hybrids to track performance data while loaning several of these new-technology school buses out for trial operations in other public school districts throughout the San Joaquin Valley,” said Clements.

Mike Watt, program coordinator for mobile source incentives, said the San Diego APCD plans to use its \$503,304 grant to put an all-electric school bus on the road within a year. Like KCUSD, the district plans to loan out this school bus to several school districts for test runs.

“The idea is that if this trial is successful, these buses would cost more than a standard bus, but over the life of school bus, it would pay itself off and then some. That is the selling point here. It appealed to us having a local manufacturer ( [TransPower](#) ) that would be involved,” Watt said.

He explained that the APCD will purchase a school bus and equip it with an all-electric battery that will plug in at night. The bus will also utilize regenerative braking to maintain the electric charge, which makes the bus an all-electric “hybrid” since there are two power sources, according to Watt.

“When we get the final grant and go-ahead, the idea is to loan it out to several school districts, let them see how it works and get feedback on how it went as far as fuel savings, pros and cons, etc.,” he said. “We’re in unique position to do that because of the varied topography throughout the county and our rural school districts. This is a good opportunity to see how the all-electric school bus would work in multiple scenarios.”

The purpose of the Advanced Technology Demonstration Projects is to help accelerate the next generation of advanced technology vehicles, equipment or emission controls that are not yet commercialized, states the ARB website. For more information, see the [AQIP FY 2011-12 Funding Plan](#).