

Compton Unified School District

Compton, CA

- 25 Thomas Built Electric Buses
- 25 Tellus DC Fast Chargers

The Challenge

Our partners at Compton Unified School District (CUSD), located in southern Los Angeles County, are deeply committed to providing equitable, forward-looking opportunities for its students. However, its school transportation system, like many across the country, was powered by aging diesel buses. These vehicles contributed to air pollution in a community where **1 in 11 children suffer from asthma**, and lacked modern amenities that support a safe and comfortable student experience.

CUSD sought to **improve transportation for its 20,000 students** to help navigate the financial, logistical, and infrastructure-related hurdles of electrification.



The Solution

Through funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean School Bus Program (Round 1), Compton Unified acquired 25 new electric school buses, marking its first step toward full fleet electrification. The district partnered with Highland Electric Fleets, Durham School Services, Thomas Built Buses, and Southern California Edison to ensure a seamless transition from diesel to electric.

Key elements included:



Operational Support

Full support from Highland Electric Fleets under its Electrification-as-a-Service (EaaS) model, ensuring reliable charging and maintenance services without upfront capital costs.



Fleet Electrification

Deployment of **25 Thomas Built electric school buses** (17 Type A, 8 Type C) to serve students across the district.



Infrastructure Buildout

Highland completed the Charge Ready Transport buildout **6 months faster than anticipated** (12 vs. 18 mos), and installed **25 Tellus DC fast charging stations** to support the transportation of 20,000+ students.



Technical Training

Hands-on training for drivers and technicians, led by Durham, Thomas Built, Highland, and Optimal EV.

This project was made possible by a collaborative public-private effort and represents just the beginning, as CUSD plans to deploy an additional **25 electric buses in the near future**.



Why It Matters

CUSD's electric bus deployment addresses both environmental justice and educational equity:



Community Health

Zero-emission buses reduce exposure to harmful pollutants in a community disproportionately impacted by air pollution and pediatric asthma.



Student Safety & Comfort

Modern vehicles offer quieter rides, improved safety features, and air conditioning for year-round comfort.



Environmental Leadership

Our partner is demonstrating bold climate action in one of California's most densely populated urban areas.

"These new electric buses are an investment in our students' future, providing safe, clean transportation as they pursue their dreams."



— Superintendent, Compton Unified School District
Dr. Darin Brawley

The Results



Historic First Deployment: CUSD's first 25 electric school buses began service in spring 2025.



Charging Infrastructure Built: 25 fast chargers installed to power the new fleet.



Workforce Readiness: Local technicians trained to maintain and operate the new electric buses.



Future Expansion: After seeing the value of the initial rollout, the district is moving forward with Highland to double the fleet and footprint, bringing 25 more electric school buses to the community.



Since switching to electric school buses, our partner has **reduced maintenance requirements, lowered operational expenses,** and **gained protection** from diesel price spikes and fuel market volatility.

About Highland

Highland Electric Fleets is the leading provider of electrification-as-a-service for school districts, governments, and fleet operators in North America. Founded in 2019, Highland offers a unique suite of products that make it simple and affordable to upgrade to electric fleets today. Active in 30 states and Canada, Highland is responsible for the first use of electric school buses in a commercial vehicle-to-grid (V2G) program and the largest electric school bus project in the United States to date.

