

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Resolution No. 2026.02/10
Authorization to Upgrade
Center for Performing Arts'
Audio and Lighting Systems

Resolution

Whereas, the Center for Performing Arts (CPA), completed in 2002, serves as a primary instructional and performance facility for Illinois State University, supporting academic programs in the arts, student productions, visiting professional performances, and community events; and

Whereas, the CPA's existing sound and lighting systems have exceeded their useful life, are no longer supported by manufacturers, experience frequent failures, and no longer meet current instructional, performance, or industry standards; and

Whereas, outdated equipment in the theater and concert hall negatively affects instructional quality, limits performance capabilities, introduces safety and reliability concerns, and increases operational and maintenance costs; and

Whereas, a comprehensive upgrade will modernize performance technology, enhance instructional opportunities, improve reliability and safety, and reduce long-term operational risk; and

Whereas, an upgrade to the CPA's public address system is required to integrate with the fire alarm system, providing life-safety voice enunciation throughout the facility; and

Whereas, a competitive public bid resulted in five vetted bids, with Zeller Electric identified as the lowest responsible bidder with a total bid of \$2,566,650; and

Whereas, the total project budget, including design fees and contingency, is \$3,200,000, funded by bond revenue reserves and supported by eligible LED lighting utility rebates; and

Whereas, timely completion is necessary to support academic programming and performance schedules, with construction to begin April 20, 2026, in the Concert Hall on May 2, 2026, and substantial completion required by September 1, 2026;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University authorizes the University to proceed with the construction activities necessary to upgrade the Center for Performing Arts' sound, lighting, and public address systems, including award of the contract to Zeller Electric as the lowest responsible bidder, and to execute all actions, contracts, and expenditures required to complete the project within the approved total budget of \$3.2 million.

Board Action on: _____
Motion by: _____
Second by: _____
Vote: Yeas: _____ Nays: _____

Postpone: _____
Amend: _____
Disapprove: _____
Approve: _____

ATTEST: Board Action, February 20, 2026

Secretary / Chairperson

**Board of Trustees
Illinois State University
Authorization to Upgrade Center for Performing Arts' Audio and Lighting Systems**

Executive Summary

The proposed project will replace aging and obsolete audio and lighting systems in the theater and concert hall that no longer meet current instructional, performance, or industry standards. It will also upgrade the public address system which will be integrated with the existing fire alarm system, a life safety upgrade. Approval of this resolution will authorize the University to proceed with construction activities necessary to modernize the Center for Performing Arts' (CPA) performance technology, improving reliability, safety, instructional quality, and operational efficiency.

Background

The Center for Performing Arts (CPA) was completed in 2002. It is a primary instructional and performance facility for Illinois State University, supporting academic programs in the arts, student performances, visiting professional productions, and community events. The CPA's sound and lighting systems in the theater and concert hall have been in service for many years and experiences frequent technology failures which are no longer supported by the manufacturer. As a result, some systems no longer function as designed, require increased maintenance, experience reliability issues, and limit the technical, as well as teaching, capabilities expected of a contemporary performing arts venue at an educational facility.

A comprehensive upgrade of the sound and lighting systems will address these deficiencies by installing modern, industry-standard equipment and control systems, including LED house and theatrical lighting, speakers, booth control panels, and associated wiring. The project will enhance the educational teaching for students, improve performance quality and flexibility, increase system reliability and safety, and reduce long-term maintenance and operational risks. The proposed improvements are consistent with the University's commitment to maintaining high-quality facilities and supporting its academic and cultural mission.

An upgrade to the fire alarm system is also required for life safety in the form of adding public address enunciation through new devices located throughout the entire facility.

Justification

Approval of the sound and lighting system upgrade is justified based on operational, academic, and risk-management considerations. The existing systems are obsolete and increasingly difficult to maintain due to limited availability and compatibility of replacement parts. Continued reliance on aging equipment increases the likelihood of system failures that could disrupt academic instruction, scheduled performances, and public events.

The proposed upgrade will directly support academic programs by providing students with access to modern performance technology aligned with current industry practices, better preparing them for professional careers in the performing arts and related fields. In addition, improved system reliability and functionality will enhance the quality and flexibility of performances hosted at the CPA's Concert Hall, strengthening the University's ability to attract high-quality productions and serve the broader community.

From a facilities and fiscal perspective, replacing the systems at this time is expected to reduce ongoing maintenance costs, minimize emergency repairs, and mitigate safety and operational risks associated with outdated equipment. Deferring the project would likely result in higher future costs, increased downtime, and continued limitations on instructional and performance capabilities.

Project Plan

Scope and Scale

An outside consultant was hired to develop a set of bid documents that were publicly advertised. The documents were fully reviewed by ISU Facility Services and WKCFCA staff/administrators.

Current Project Status/Schedule

- A public bid opening was held on December 16, 2025. Five bids were received and vetted. Zeller Electric was found to be the lowest responsible bidder with a total bid of \$2,566,650. The overall project budget, including design fees and contingency, is \$3,200,000.00.
- Given the importance of this space for the University and future planning, substantial construction must start on April 20, 2026, in the Concert Hall May 2, 2026, and be substantially completed by September 1, 2026.

Source of Funding

- Bond revenue reserves
- Leverage utility LED lighting rebates to offset project costs.