



SCHOOL DISTRICT #22 (VERNON)

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S OFFICE

1401 15TH STREET • VERNON, BC • V1T 8S8 • 250-549-9226

MEMO

From: Sterling Olson, Secretary Treasurer

RE: Proposed Transportation Changes

Date: January 6, 2021

Please be advised that the Board of Education has currently proposed changes to the Transportation Regulation that would be effective for the 2021/22 school year.

Proposed changes will likely affect all registered riders.

Attached are the proposed changes and a Questions & Answers document for your information.

The Board will be considering second reading of these proposed changes at their January 20, 2021 Public Board Meeting. Third reading and adoption of changes may be determined by the Board at their February 17, 2021 Public Board Meeting.

Any comments, questions, or concerns should be sent to Lynn Jameson, Executive Assistant – Corporate, at ljameson@sd22.bc.ca

School District No. 22 (Vernon)

POLICY

Please file in By-Laws, Policy & Procedure Manual

No. 10.1.0

Adopted: May 22, 2013

Amended: Apr 26, 2017

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES MANAGEMENT

Introduction

Although the School Act no longer requires Boards of Education to provide student transportation services, in accordance with this Policy and Regulation, the Board of Education has committed to providing subsidized transportation services.

It is the parent's responsibility to determine how their children will safely travel to and from school or to and from the bus pick up and drop off locations. The district provided transportation services are one option.

The School Board is responsible for the safety of students while being transported by bus, from the time they board the bus in the morning until they disembark from the bus in the afternoon.

The School Board is not responsible for the safety of the route the student may travel to and from the school or bus stop.

Policy

1. The Board may provide subsidized transportation to eligible students (as defined by Regulation) and, where possible, courtesy riders to travel between a designated bus stop and their designated area school. At the Board's discretion, the following options for transportation of students are:
 - A subsidized Board operated bus;
 - Transportation assistance payments to parents;

The Board recognizes that many students are not eligible for bus transportation. The transportation of such students on existing bus routes is authorized, provided space is available. These students are considered courtesy riders. Out of catchment and courtesy riders may be accommodated when space is available.

2. The Board also recognizes that, in some situations, it may be necessary for the district to relocate students or place students from one school to another. These students are eligible for School District transportation options if they are directed to a

school beyond the Transportation Eligibility limits for their home. Prior consideration of available route and space on school buses with Transportation Supervisor approval is required prior to relocation or placement of students.

3. The Board also authorizes the use of school buses for curricular or extra-curricular field trips for students as outlined in Policy 9.8.0 Travel. Staff who are supervising and volunteers who are assisting a field trip or an athletic event may ride a school bus.

- 3.4. The provisions of this Policy and Regulation may be amended through other Board authorized Agreements.

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Students

- 4.5. The Board believes that school buses are an extension of the school. Therefore:

- 4.1. Students travelling on school buses are under the jurisdiction of their principal and are subject to the code of conduct of their school and the School District Code of Conduct Policy 9.14;
- 4.2. First priority for the use of school buses shall be transporting students to and from schools to attend school in accordance with standard school hours.

Related Documents:

Policy 9.8.0 School District Student Travel
Policy 9.14 School District Code of Conduct
School Act, Sections 83 & 85
Motor Vehicle Act

Motor Carrier Act
National Safety Code

School District No. 22 (Vernon)

REGULATIONS

Please file in By-Laws, Policy & Procedure Manual

No. 10.1.0

Amended: May 15, 2019

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES MANAGEMENT

Guiding Principles for Transportation in School District No. 22 (Vernon)

Rider Eligibility

- 1) A Student will be considered eligible for subsidized transportation if his or her home address is at least 2.4 km from the school or schools designated for the catchment area (measured as actual shortest driving or walking distance) by roadways, sidewalks or municipal pathways.

In the case of catchment area changes, students who are grandfathered into their existing school and were considered as eligible riders prior to the change shall retain their eligibility for the remainder of their attendance at the existing school.

This applies only to students currently attending the existing school at the time the catchment area change was approved.

- 2) Students may be expected to walk up to 2.4 km to the nearest bus stop.
- 3) A student must be registered **and have paid any transportation fees each year as an eligible or courtesy rider** in order to ride the school bus. Registration forms will be available year round. **Student registration for transportation and payment of any fees is required prior to June 30th of each year to be eligible for transportation services the following year.**
- 4) To remain eligible a student must ride a minimum of 50% of the time.
- 5) If a student meets the criterion for home-school distance after being placed by the District at a school other than his or her catchment area school(s), the student will be given the same consideration as other eligible students.
- 6) Seats that are not required for eligible students on school bus routes will be made available to courtesy riders based on the criterion of youngest children first and furthest home to school distance and courtesy acceptable ride criteria.

~~Courtesy ridership is subject to cancellation at any time, with a one-week notice, based on the receipt of an application for the transportation for a newly identified eligible student living within the catchment area.~~

- 7) In the case of a student residing with parents or caregivers in more than one home, one address will be accepted for eligibility purposes. However, where possible, consideration will be given to an alternate stop on the same route or a courtesy seat on another route within the same catchment if a parent submits an application. **A transportation fee may be charged for each route assigned.**
- 8) In the event that students with courtesy riding privileges have to be displaced due to the registration of eligible students living further from the school, the first criterion for priority will be distance from the school and the second criterion will be the accommodation of an older sibling travelling with a younger student. Ties will be broken in favour of the youngest student.
- 9) **Students enrolled in schools outside their catchment area school are not provided transportation services as eligible riders unless specifically identified. These students may access transportation services as courtesy riders.**
- 40) Students enrolled in **the following** programs of choice **will be** ~~are not~~ provided transportation services as eligible riders. ~~Students may access transportation services as courtesy riders.~~

~~Examples of~~ **Programs of choice for transportation include:**

- a) Montessori
- b) French Immersion
- c) ~~Academies~~ **Academy of Inquiry and Adventure Okanagan (AIAO) @ Fulton Secondary School**
- d) **Forestry Program @ Charles Bloom Secondary School**

10) Special Needs Transportation

Transporting students with special needs should be provided service in the most inclusive and least restrictive form possible. The first choice for eligible riders will be to provide mainstream service with their peers, utilizing a special needs bus only when meeting the criteria set by the Director of Student Support Services and the Manager of Transportation

- a) The district may establish specified catchment area resource rooms for secondary students and will provide transportation service as an eligible rider in the most inclusive and least restrictive manner for students to attend their catchment area resource room. Secondary students who live outside of the set km limit and have placement in their District Resource Room will be considered eligible for transportation services to attend the school with the resource room designated for their catchment area.

- b) Students with physical disabilities who require wheelchair accessibility and/or physical supports to walk who attend their elementary catchment school or designated secondary catchment resource room will be considered eligible for transportation.

11) All riders must abide by the District Code of Conduct.

Routes

- 1) Transportation routes will be established to operate within the operating budget. The Board may establish a user fees within the operating budget each by May of each year.
- 2) Routes will be established to ensure transportation for those students living outside the walk limit in the Rider Eligibility, point one.
- 3) Priority will be given to those living farthest away from the school in order to ensure legal capacity of the bus provides for available seating.
- 4) School bus routes are established by the Board through the ~~Manager~~ Supervisor of Transportation Services on the basis of safety, efficiency of service, and environmental impact.
- 5) Route changes must be approved by the ~~Supervisor~~ Manager of Transportation Services or delegate. Bus stops (for any one bus) should be spaced not less than one (1) km apart. The Manager Supervisor of Transportation Services shall locate the stops to ensure maximum safety and efficiency. Consideration shall be given to have bus stops spaced closer when safety concerns are raised such as lack of sidewalks, traffic speed, visibility issues, gravel roads, etc.
- 6) A minimum of fourteen (14) eligible students is required for the establishment of a bus route. A route extension may be considered depending upon the number of eligible students living beyond a bus stop. Road conditions, availability of turn around, impact on existing run schedule will be considered by the ~~Manager~~ Supervisor of Transportation in discussion with the transporting driver before approval is given.
- 7) Where possible, routes will be designed to minimize the time students spend on a bus with an upper limit of sixty (60) minutes as a guideline.
- 8) Where possible students should be delivered to school not more than forty-five (45) minutes before their classes begin and should be on their way home not more than forty-five (45) minutes after their classes end.

- 9) Where reasonable, routes will be planned so that students are able to travel without having to transfer from one bus to another in a single direction.
- 10) If there are less than fourteen (14) eligible students for a bus route, the individual providing transportation of the student(s) to the catchment school may be eligible for transportation assistance payment based on mileage from the home address to the school. **Students attending Programs of Choice are not eligible for Transportation assistance payments.**
- 11) Transportation assistance payments described in the above guideline are calculated currently at .20 cents per km plus .30 cents per child with a maximum of \$10.00 per day.
- 12) If a family has more than one student attending a given school, only one transportation assistance payment will be made.
- 13) If transportation or a transportation assistance payment is provided on behalf of a student on the wait list for his or her catchment area school and the invitation to return mid-year is declined in favour of a September entry, school bus transportation or the transportation assistance payment will be continued for the balance of the current school year. However, if the student remains at this school in the following year the student transportation charge will apply or transportation assistance payments will be discontinued.
- 14) Students must be registered and assigned to a route by the Transportation Department before the bus pass will be issued.
- 15) Students will not ride the bus unless they have been registered.
- 16) Transportation services and allowances will not be provided to students over 19 years of age. ~~students not enrolled in district schools or programs.~~
- 17) **Transportation services may be provided to students residing outside the school district boundaries or for students attending other educational institutions inside school district boundaries if space is available, approved by the Manager of Transportation, and fees are assessed and paid.**
- 18) **Additional service routes and/or route extensions may be supported if fully funded by additional fees from the users of these routes or extensions. Any additions shall be approved by the Secretary Treasurer on an annual basis.**

Proposed Transportation Policy and Regulation Changes

Questions and Answers

December 11, 2020

Question:

Why is the Board proposing changes to this Policy and Regulation?

Answer:

The school district initiated a process several years ago to align transportation services with current board Policy and Regulations. This resulted in several changes/reductions over the years impacting several students, families and communities.

The last of these changes identified was to eliminate bus routes/runs not required as per Policy and Regulation which would affect many students. There are currently routes/runs that have historically been in service that are not in alignment with Board Policy and Regulation and are not providing a consistent application of transportation service.

Question:

My child is an “eligible” rider with transportation to their catchment area school. Will these changes affect me?

Answer:

Yes. You will be required to register and pay any transportation fees in order to ride the school bus by June 30th of each year to be eligible for transportation services the following year.

In addition, you currently are only assessed a registration fee of \$25. The Board has not yet determined how the proposed changes will be funded. The Board may choose to increase the fee you pay to offset the cost of changes to the transportation service for programs of choice like French Immersion.

But your child’s eligibility for transportation will not change.

Question:

What happens if I don’t register and pay by the times established by the Board?

Answer:

You will not be considered an eligible rider. Seats not required for eligible riders will be made available to courtesy riders so you may be able to register and pay later if a seat is available.

Question:

I have a child in Beirsto and two children enrolled in French Immersion at Seaton. We live outside the catchment area and were told at the beginning of the year that there would be NO bussing available to our kids this year so we did not register them with the service. If the transportation regulations change, as per the attachment sent out, can we now register our kids for bussing? The deadline is June 30th in the regulation.

Answer:

There is no change to busing for this school year. Yes, you will be able to register for next year. You will be required to register and pay any transportation fees in order to ride the school bus by June 30th of each year to be eligible for transportation services the following year.

Question:

If the revisions are approved, are French Immersion children then considered regular riders or courtesy riders?

Answer:

Students enrolled in French Immersion would be provided transportation services as eligible riders.

Question:

Our son attends Beirsto and we are finding that bussing issues have caused an extreme amount of stress for our family. We live and work up at Silver Star mountain and have not been able to secure bussing for the last 3 years. We are always told that the bus is completely full but when we have spoken to some other people on the bus they have often reported that the bus always has plenty of room. I hear this is because they are holding space for eligible riders who may or may not want to ride throughout the year? We are really hoping to be able to have access to bussing in the years to come as eligible riders, as it will definitely take a lot of stress off of our family.

Answer:

With the proposed changes, students attending Beirsto would be considered eligible riders. Currently they are considered courtesy riders.

Question:

How much is this change going to cost?

Answer:

The Board has not determined the cost of this change.

Question:

There are several students who reside in the community of the Valley of the Sun (VotS) who are technically out of District. At least 2 students in VotS are part of 2 home families, one parent of which lives well within District boundaries. The question is: how much would it cost for the bus to drive to the Valley of the Sun, as they used to do, to pick up the students who live there?

Answer:

There are proposed additions to the Regulation under section 17 & 18

17) Transportation services may be provided to students residing outside the school district boundaries or for students attending other educational institutions inside school district boundaries if space is available, approved by the Manager of Transportation, and fees are assessed and paid.

18) Additional service routes and/or route extensions may be supported if fully funded by additional fees from the users of these routes or extensions. Any additions shall be approved by the Secretary Treasurer on an annual basis.

The district would need to review the specific details and determine the costs. It is anticipated this would happen later in the spring if the proposed changes are approved.

Question:

Are kids within 2.4km from their catchment school able to get a bus seat if they want one?

Answer:

Students residing within 2.4 km would still be considered courtesy riders. Seats that are not required for eligible students on school bus routes will be made available to courtesy riders based on the criterion of youngest children first and furthest home to school distance and courtesy acceptable ride criteria.

All students would be required to have registered and have paid any transportation fees each year in order to ride the school bus.

Question:

My daughter is considered a courtesy rider for BX elementary. We live within the 2.4 km radius. Will students within 2.4Km from their catchment school get a bus seat if they register and pay.

Answer:

Students residing within 2.4 km would still be considered courtesy riders. Seats that are not required for eligible students on school bus routes will be made available to courtesy riders based on the criterion of youngest children first and furthest home to school distance and courtesy acceptable ride criteria.

Question:

So my 5 year old and 7 year old daughters are supposed to walk to and from school on Silver Star road where cars do not obey the speed limit and there is no sidewalk for them to be on?

Answer:

It is the parent's responsibility to determine how their children will safely travel to and from school or to and from the bus pick up and drop off locations. The district provided transportation services are one option. The School Board is responsible for the safety of students while being transported by bus, from the time they board the bus in the morning until they disembark from the bus in the afternoon. The School Board is not responsible for the safety of the route the student may travel to and from the school or bus stop.

Question:

How is the Board paying for these increased service levels?

Answer:

The Board will need to determine whether any increased costs will be funded through increased rider fees or the use of operating funds.

Question:

How does the Board currently pay for transportation?

Answer:

The Board allocates approximately \$2 million in operating funds towards transportation and collects approximately \$160,000 from rider fees.

Question:

What is the current average cost of providing transportation?

Answer:

The average cost per student is approximately \$900 per year.

Question:

Will the cost of providing transportation to programs of choice be similar to the cost of transporting students to their catchment area school?

Answer:

The costs have yet to be determined. It is likely the cost per student will be greater as students will be picked up from across the District to get to a program of choice as opposed to just within a defined catchment area.

Question:

If the Board uses operating funds, won't that affect other programs and services?

Answer:

Any operating funds used for one purpose are then not available for another purpose. Any increased costs for transportation would require a reduction in costs in another area.

Question:

What will be the impact on rider fees?

Answer:

The Board currently charges all riders a registration fee of \$25. In addition, courtesy riders are charged an additional fee of \$175.

If, for example, the costs of these increased services levels were \$500,000, this would require a rider fee of \$300 per student, including the registration fee.

Question:

What does the Kelowna school district charge for rider fees?

Answer:

They charge an annual fee of \$300 for one child, \$600 for two children, \$750 for three children, and \$900 for four or more children.

Question:

If I have a student who resides at two different residences and requires two different bus routes, why do I have to pay two fees?

Answer:

Rider fees are currently assessed per seat, not per student. If a student is requiring two seats, this means that another student will not be able to pay and ride.