

Leigh Glancie

From: Leigh Glancie
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 11:12 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: FW: Transportation issue SD63

From: Nynke Plouffe <nynkeplouffe@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 4:01:54 PM
To: Tim Dunford <tdunford@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: Transportation issue SD63

[Caution: External Sender] This email is from a sender outside the organization. Do not open attachments, reply, or click links unless you have verified the content and sender are legitimate.

Dear Mr. Dunford,

I am sending you my email communication including an announcement from our school district (SD63) in the Saanich area on Vancouver Island.

As a family with 2 kids attending French immersion (grade 3 in Deep Cove Elementary and grade 7 in Bayside Middle School) we were dismayed to receive the below email about "PENDING" transportation for our children to Bayside and Deep Cove for French immersion.

We were under the understanding that as there is NO FRENCH IMMERSION AVAILABLE in our "home school" , we would have the SAME ACCESS to French immersion as students who live closer to Bayside Middle school and Deep Cove elementary. It should not be a surprise to hear that not having access to bus service to school will limit our kids' access to French immersion. There will also be an additional ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT to having so many parent drivers on the roads, even if we all manage to carpool.

As this announcement has come so close to the start of the school year, this puts our family, and many other families we have talked to, in a very difficult position. As working parents who will find it challenging to drive our kids to and from two different schools, we may have made a different decision about what school our kids would attend had we known we may have to drive him every day for the entire year.

Canada is a bilingual country and our kids, regardless of where they live, should not be penalized for wanting to learn one of our country's official languages.

As per the Transportation Officer's reply below we can only be hopeful at this point, but I would like to be able to count on transport for this coming school year and beyond.

Unfortunately I am not in the position to wait for the outcome and then potentially be stranded with no other option then reduce work hours to drive my children to opposite directions.

Looking forward to a response and any possible advise you might have for us.

With Gratitude,
Nynke Plouffe
2094 Redwing Pl
Sidney V8L 4X1
778-967-1744

Forwarded message -----

From: **Transportation** <transportation@saanichschools.ca>

Date: Wed, Aug 9, 2023 at 7:49 AM

Subject: Re: Bus transportation for programs of choice

To: Nynke Plouffe <nynkeplouffe@gmail.com>, Dave Eberwein <deberwein@saanichschools.ca>

Good morning, thank you for your email. There is only one bus that travels from your area in the morning to Deep Cove Elementary school and one that comes close in the afternoon. This is the same for Bayside Middle school. We have to make sure that all the students riding these two buses that live in the school's catchment have seats on the bus first. We then can assign seating for courtesy riders if there is space. This takes time as these buses that your students need is picking up students for more than one school on their route. The Deep Cove bus you need is picking up students from your area for Parklands Secondary and is very full. We are in the process of moving some students to bus #21 to see if we can free up any space. Bus #15 is the only bus from your area to Bayside and is also picking up students for Stelly's Secondary school. This is the only bus that would work for you, and we have to make sure there is space for students living in the catchment of these two schools before moving onto courtesy riders.

I am sorry for the pain this is causing you and your family, and we are doing our best to find space. We hope to have an answer on transportation for you soon.

Sincerely,

Gord

TRANSPORTATION

Saanich Schools

2125 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton, BC V8M 2A5

We acknowledge and thank the WSÁNEĆ people on whose traditional territory we live, learn, and teach. The WSÁNEĆ people have lived and worked on this land since time immemorial.

From: Nynke Plouffe <nynkeplouffe@gmail.com>

Sent: August 9, 2023 7:14 AM

To: Transportation transportation@saanichschools.ca; Dave Eberwein <deberwein@saanichschools.ca>

Subject: Re: Bus transportation for programs of choice

[Caution: External Sender] This email is from a sender outside the organization. Do not open attachments, reply, or click links unless you have verified the content and sender are legitimate.

I am writing to you with my concerns regarding the below email that went out on July 31st. My daughters attend Deep Cove and Bayside french immersion while we live in Sidney. We heavily rely on the bus schedule to take our daughters to school every day. We have been grateful for years of transportation but have absolutely no solution if the buses are now all of a sudden no longer available to us.

We do not have the means or the time from work to drive to Bayside or Deep Cove in the morning and then again in the afternoon.

We are not in the fortunate position to work less and therefore earn less to make this happen, or spend the gas daily to make these trips.

The BC Transit is not being provided from both locations, not mentioning the safety for an 8 and 11 year old to have to take public transport.

I understand that in your laws, our children are courtesy drivers as we made the choice to raise them bilingual in a bilingual country. But now we are left stranded just before the school year starts and feeling completely unsupported in the academic choice. We now have to force our children to change to an english school after 7 and 3 grades in, and we feel extremely disappointed by the system.

I sincerely hope that changes can be made to this decision as it impacts many families in Sidney and North Saanich.

Our children will most likely miss the first month of school and then we can only hope we can use the bus system. These uncertainties are very frustrating.

I also want to point out that we are not unwilling to pay for a transportation system, as we value our children's education and any support to make the transportation happen.

Looking forward to your response.

Kind regards
Nynke Plouffe
2094 Redwing Pl
Sidney, V8L 2P6
778-967-1744

On Mon, Jul 31, 2023 at 9:42 AM Transportation <transportation@saanichschools.ca> wrote:
Good morning, you received an email Friday July 28 on bus transportation for your students out of their school catchment:

You are receiving this email because a registration application for Bus Service was received from this email address.

*Your application for School Bus Service is **PENDING** as a COURTESY RIDER. Courtesy Riders will be confirmed if there is space by email after October 1st 2023.*

c. Students attending school of choice (courtesy riders). Courtesy riders will be prioritized on a furthest distance basis and ridership will not be confirmed until after October 1, when routes and loads are established.

First, I apologize to the families living in the Royal Oak area attending Prospect Lake Elementary. The boundaries had been changed and the out of catchment locator indicated you were attending the wrong school. This will be taken care of, and confirmation will be sent to you soon. Sorry for the confusion and frustration this may have caused you and your family.

This email was to provide parents with students attending a school outside of their catchment for a program of choice advanced notice that the bus could be full of catchment riders to their school. We are working hard on this and hope to know more by late August on space for courtesy riders.

Students traveling outside of their school catchment to attend another school for a program choice are known as courtesy riders. This includes students traveling outside of their school catchment for French Immersion, Lacross, Hockey, Swimming, Rowing, Golf, etc. Some courtesy riders have been able to find space in the past years, and if there is space available on a bus without altering the bus route, transportation will send confirmation to the email that completed the student's registration online and a bus pass will be sent to the school for them. This part takes time as we have to look at each courtesy rider for their request for transportation.

Sorry for any confusion this first email may have caused. Transportation has to follow the Policy and Procedures as set by the board. I have added Policy 24 below to help explain courtesy riders:

Policy 24 (Programs of Choice) states that programs of choice (including French Immersion) will “Be maintained without transportation assistance from the District”.

Administrative Procedure 214 (French Language Programs) also includes the following: “As French Immersion is a Program of Choice, parents may be required to provide transportation to schools offering French Immersion.”

Board policy requires the district to establish routes that transport students to and from their nearest catchment school and that operate within the operating budget established by the Board. The district does not establish routes for programs of choice including French Immersion. However, courtesy riders may be transported on existing routes if additional capacity is available and not altering the scheduled bus route.

Sincerely,

Gord

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2125 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton, BC V8M 2A5

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