

**Transportation Policy Review  
Virtual Open House  
October 23, 2023**



# Work Completed to Date

- Provincial Transportation Survey (BC School Districts) (Fall 2022)
- Review of BC School District Policy/Procedure (Fall 2022)
- District survey (Parents/Guardians, Student and Staff (January 2023))
- Policy Committee Direction (January 2023)
- Draft Policy Language (April 2023)

# Next Steps in the Process

- Open House Meetings (zonal meetings and virtual meeting) (Fall 2023)
- Policy Committee reviews final draft policy language (Fall 2023)
- Board Notice of Motion to amend policy (Winter 2024)
- Policy adoption following 2 month consultation (Spring 2024)
- Policy implemented for 2024/25 school year

# Current Policy

- Establish routes that transport students living outside the walk limits (grades K to 5: 4.0 km / grades 6 to 12: 4.8 km) to and from their nearest catchment school. (Policy 21)
- Manage within the operating budget established by the Board. (Policy 21)
- Transport courtesy riders on existing routes only if additional capacity is available. (Policy 21)
- When necessary to address a concern of safety or to serve a district program catchment area, additional school transportation may be provided. (Policy 21)
- Programs of Choice, including French Immersion, are established without transportation assistance from the district. (Policy 24)

# Current Administrative Procedure 560

- Outlines procedure for application and registration for bus service
- Registrations are prioritized in the following order
  1. Students attending catchment school from outside walk limits
  2. Students attending District programs
  3. Students attending school of choice – confirmed after October 1<sup>st</sup> and greatest distance prioritized

# Saanich Specific Observations

- As the Saanich Peninsula is relatively contained, Saanich is able to serve a greater proportion of students relative to many other school districts
- The combination of geographically contained catchments and higher elementary walk limits has resulted in service variation for courtesy riders travelling to their catchment school from within the walk limits.
- Service for district programs varies significantly between zones. For example, there are more options for north zone students travelling to a French Immersion program school than there is for south zone students.
- The 4.0 km walk limit for elementary age students has historically been raised as a concern.
- As routes have evolved over time to meet many transportation needs, wait times and route times have become an increasing concern expressed by parents.
- Late registrations and ghost riders (i.e. register but do not ride) significantly challenge the registration and route planning process in advance of school start up

# Provincial Survey and Policy Review Observations

- Saanich serves a greater proportion of students (29%) when compared to the average of nine other districts with similar geography (23%).
- Of the 33 districts that responded, 15 reported having lower walk limits with walk limits most often being lower at elementary
- Most districts with lower walk limits also designate maximum walking distances to bus stops, minimum spacing of bus stops, or designate certain urban areas as non-service zones.
- Of the 32 districts that responded, 25 reported that fees were not charged.
- More recently developed policies reflect an increased focus on active transportation
- Many policies have language limiting travel times for students travelling to their catchment school and/or specify that routes will not be altered to accommodate courtesy riders.

# What we heard in the survey

- Transportation services are very important to families
- A desire and for many an expectation that policy be changed to increase overall service levels
- Survey Questions: “What should the Board consider when determining how transportation routes and services are established?”

	Distance to Catchment School	Distance to Bus stop	Active Transportation Options / Road Safety	Rider Age	Student Vulnerability	Route Length / Wait Times	Courtesy Riders / Programs of Choice
<b>THEME</b>							
<b>COUNT</b>	85	49	97	59	30	78	42

- Strong support for many considerations in establishing routes that are in conflict with one another (ex. distance to bus stop versus route time). Many respondents selected many or all considerations.



# What we heard in the survey

- Route length/wait times was the theme most often identified as a single priority and many responses described student experience with long route times and/or long wait times between bell time and drop-off or pick-up.
- Road safety and student vulnerability were also often a focus in many responses.
- Many responses noted that safety and serving vulnerable students should be prioritized over active transportation and environmental concerns.
- Many commented on limited active transportation routes in some areas, that active transportation was age dependent and that active transportation was more challenging during winter months.
- Many respondents were opposed to any fees; however, more respondents were in favour of fees to maintain services if necessary or to enhance services.
- Many respondents that were not otherwise in favour of fees, were supportive of a late registration fee if it would improve the timeliness of registrations and the effectiveness of route planning before school start up.

# Policy Committee Direction (Jan 2023)

Following review and consideration of the survey results, in January 2023 the Policy Committee requested that staff assess options for policy revisions that:

- lowers K-5 walk limits considering variation in school geography,
- reflects safety considerations in determining service / routes,
- encourages and supports active transportation and environmental considerations,
- encourages timely registration and discourages ghost riders (students who register and then do not access service),
- focuses route design on optimizing service for students entitled to service by policy,
- clarifies how courtesy riders are defined (including removing contradictory reference to serving a program catchment areas), and
- reflects consideration of supporting vulnerable students.

# Proposed Policy Revisions

Walkthrough and discuss proposed policy revisions.

# Questions?

# Survey Questions

1. Do the proposed transportation policy amendments reflect the key concerns identified to date and the direction from the Policy Committee?
2. Is there anything else the Policy Committee should consider in its review of the transportation policy?

*Thank you for your support today.*

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