

Leigh Glancie

From: Laura Judson <lauraejudson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 3:47 PM
To: Tim Dunford; Leigh Glancie
Subject: Letter related to Transportation Policy

[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.

Hi Tim and Leigh,

I sent this letter below to Jason Reid yesterday and I was advised that it might be best to send it to you both as well for it to be added to the Policy Committee Feb 6 agenda package.

Thanks for your time on this!

Laura

To Jason Reid,

I am writing to express my concern with School Board 63's definition of French Immersion students from the Sidney/North Saanich area as "Courtesy Riders" who may only be transported to Bayside Middle School on existing bus routes if additional capacity is available and their inclusion does not alter the scheduled bus route.

This approach ignores the needs of all Deep Cove Elementary French Immersion students who have no option to continue French Immersion in their catchment area. These students are automatically enrolled at Bayside Middle School and deserve a spot on a bus to transport them there. Every student from Deep Cove Elementary lives too far from Bayside to walk or bike there.

I am a Sidney parent who enrolled my daughter into French Immersion at Deep Cove Elementary when she was beginning kindergarten. I was assured that she could be picked up at Deep Cove by bus and transported to Bayside Middle School when she reached Grade 6. I often saw a line up of middle school kids doing just that when I dropped my daughter off at school.

I think it is important that the School Board recognizes the needs of these students and families and supports them by offering transportation privileges equal to other Bayside Middle School students. Otherwise, children and families are faced with very difficult decisions. For example, these are the decisions I am facing now:

- a) Prepare my 11-year-old to take public transportation home to Sidney, which involves a transfer and intermittent service. If she missed one bus, she would not simply be able to wait 15 minutes for the next bus, like in Victoria. She would need to walk across Brentwood Bay to a different stop and try her luck there, navigating a different drop off location, route, and possible transfer. Even if I bought her a cellphone (which I would really like to avoid for three more years for her emotional health), she would be faced with a major challenge trying to navigate limited public transportation between Brentwood Bay and Sidney.
- b) Experience professional fallout as I work traditional hours in an office job and cannot leave my workplace for an hour every day at 2pm to drive to Brentwood Bay and then Sidney before returning to the office.
- c) Separate my daughter from her strong and healthy peer group as she enters pre-adolescence, and end her French Immersion education, so that she can attend middle school in Sidney.
- d) Find a safe space in Brentwood Bay for my daughter to sit for 2.5 hours after each school day until I can leave work and pick her up.
- e) Sell our family home, leave our community, and move to Brentwood Bay. This is an incredibly costly option with land transfer taxes and realtor fees reaching tens of thousands of dollars.

I hope you understand that these are excruciating decisions to make. These are the challenges almost every family with students in Deep Cove Elementary's French Immersion program are now having to face.

I sincerely hope that School Board 63 will support my daughter and all French Immersion students from Deep Cove Elementary by supporting the unavoidable transportation needs each child will have after graduating from Grade 5.

Please share this note as part of the February 6th board committee meeting when amendments to the Transportation Policy are being considered.

Sincerely,

Laura Judson

Dear Mr. Reid and School Board Members,

January 31, 2024

I'm writing to express my concerns about the proposed Policy 21 amendments, particularly regarding the potential impact on transportation for French Immersion students in our district. My wife and I have two children in French Immersion at the elementary level.

My main concern centers around the revamped language on "Courtesy Riders". The proposed language adjustments appear to streamline the policy, making it very clear that accommodating French Immersion students in the strategic planning of bus travel within the district is not a priority. I take no issue with clarifying language but let's be clear - these policy amendments will make turning down bus applications easier and the policy changes are focused on this administrative angle. The changes are not in the best interest of French Immersion families.

With French Immersion enrollment hitting record highs, one way of solving the bus transportation challenge is to make the proposed policy changes (and then just deny bus transportation as needed) like this. Denying bus transportation to take a child to/from their French Immersion catchment school will end the educational journeys of many French Immersion students and impose tremendous burden on families. I urge the school board to look at more inclusive ways of solving the challenges of the day.

Our district established its French Immersion program in the 1980s and chose to locate the program at a few select schools throughout the district while enrollment was relatively low. I believe at the time there was a lot of discussion about which schools should have French Immersion – North Saanich and Parkland were originally proposed in the North. It seems that current demand and enrollment for French Immersion means that it is time to re-examine where the program is being offered.

There would be a whole host of benefits associated with expanding our district's French Immersion program to more schools, but one major benefit is that those schools would inevitably be closer to where children live, reducing need for expensive bus programs and making it much easier for kids to move to/from school in an active manner, while also probably leading to a reduction of overall carbon footprint. If the district doesn't have the capacity to bring French Immersion kids to schools, then perhaps it's time to bring the French Immersion schools closer to the kids.

While I appreciate the district's commitment to safe, efficient, and active transportation, I encourage the Board to consider the broader context of French Immersion program enrollment and demand. Let's explore solutions that aim to meet this demand and avoid unnecessarily burdening families by simply making it easier to deny bus travel.

Sincerely,

Scott Borstad

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 11:02 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: French Immersion School Bus usage policy change - SD63

From: Kyle Simpson <kgsimpson@gmail.com>
Sent: January 31, 2024 10:34 AM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Cc: Tim Dunford <tdunford@saanichschools.ca>; Adam.Olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Adam.Olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca>; elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca <elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca>; Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca>
Subject: French Immersion School Bus usage policy change - SD63

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To all,

We are deeply concerned about amendments to SD63's Transportation policy and how it may jeopardize access to French immersion in our district. Policy revisions can be viewed here: <https://saanichschools.ca/resources/studentsfamilies/transportation>.

Our eldest child is currently in French immersion at Bayside Middle School and takes the #9/5 bus from Downey/West Saanich each day. Last August, we were told by SD63 administration that there would not likely be a bus for kids in our area of the district who attend French immersion and live outside of the English-language catchment for those schools. While buses were found for the current year after significant pressure from parents, we have been told to expect this may not be the case in future years.

In our view, the foundational problem is that French immersion students are classified as second tier with respect to bus service priority (Administrative Procedure 560). They are considered courtesy riders under District policy 21 (6) as French immersion is designated a "program of choice" and the policy stipulates that: "As French Immersion is a Program of Choice, parents may be required to provide transportation to schools offering French Immersion." Policy 21 (6) reads:

Courtesy riders are district students not otherwise addressed in guiding principles 1 to 45 and may be transported if the legal seating capacity of the bus has not been reached. Seating priority is reserved for those students entitled to transportation by guiding principles 1 to 5. Courtesy riders attending District Programs (as defined in Administrative Procedure 560) will be prioritized over other courtesy riders.

This inequity is systemic in creating a disconnect between the three levels of public school. The District has specified several schools as "French immersion catchment schools," including École Deep Cove, which is mostly French Immersion. As a result of this, École Deep Cove is sought out by many families intending their children to continue French immersion through to graduation. However, students must travel a considerable distance to middle and high school at Bayside and Stelly's to continue their immersion program. This is not practical without a dedicated bus route given the considerable time to travel from Deep Cove to Bayside by car, which is not an option for many parents. It is also not feasible to make the connections necessary to get to Bayside

and Stelly's using the public transit system. And it is not by any stretch reasonable to expect children to walk or cycle 15+ km to school, especially along roads without safe cycling opportunities. In consideration of these facts, we strongly suggest that kids in the French immersion stream in SD63 be given priority. **These are not courtesy riders; they are students who are dedicated to achieving proficiency in the French language.** French immersion was the reason many parents chose to live in proximity to École Deep Cove. Our children should be provided the transportation support needed to continue that education at Bayside and Stelly's without having to move our households. The Province of BC historically provided additional money to support bus service to enable access to French Immersion, and also supported school districts in levying fees if necessary. If this requires additional funding, and it is not available from the Province, we and other parents would be more than willing to support that need.

We ask that the Board consider these various options again and we are copying our MLA, MP and the Minister of Education asking that they all respond with possible solutions. If a solution cannot be found, Bayside and Stelly's will undoubtedly lose a considerable number of students and therefore receive less dedicated Provincial French immersion funding as a result. In fact, many parents may choose not to enrol in École Deep Cove knowing that their children will not reasonably be able to progress in French immersion beyond elementary school. There is also the potential for enrolment to surge at English only schools, which will also have significant negative impacts. The outcomes do not serve the District, the students, or bilingualism.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider.

Kyle Simpson

3 children, 1 currently attending Bayside middle school and 2 attending Deep Cove elementary school

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:02 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: French Immersion School Bus usage policy change - Feedback to SD63

From: Kaine Sparks <kainesparks@gmail.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 5:03 PM
To: Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca>; elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca <elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca>; ADAM.OLSEN.MLA@leg.bc.ca <ADAM.OLSEN.MLA@leg.bc.ca>; Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>; Tim Dunford <tdunford@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: French Immersion School Bus usage policy change - Feedback to SD63

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Thank you for taking the time to read and consider.

Kaine Sparks

The Best Dad to 3 children, 1 at Bayside middle school and 2 at Deep Cove elementary school

Leigh Glancie

From: Leigh Glancie
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:08 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: FW: French Immersion School Bus usage policy change - Feedback to SD63

From: Sarah Sparks <sarah.sparks@me.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 4:20 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Cc: Tim Dunford <tdunford@saanichschools.ca>; Adam.Olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Adam.Olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca>; elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca <elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca>; Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca>
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In our view, the foundational problem is that French immersion students are classified as second tier with respect to bus service priority (Administrative Procedure 560). They are considered courtesy riders under District policy 21 (6) as French immersion is designated a "program of choice" and the policy stipulates that: "As French Immersion is a Program of Choice, parents may be required to provide transportation to schools offering French Immersion." Policy 21 (6) reads:

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This inequity is systemic in creating a disconnect between the three levels of public school. The District has specified several schools as "French immersion catchment schools," including École Deep Cove, which is mostly French Immersion. As a result of this, École Deep Cove is sought out by many families intending their children to continue French immersion through to graduation. However, students must travel a considerable distance to middle and high school at Bayside and Stelly's to continue their immersion program. This is not practical without a dedicated bus route given the considerable time to travel from Deep Cove to Bayside by car, which is not an option for many parents. It is also not feasible to make the connections necessary to get to Bayside and Stelly's using the public transit system. And it is not by any stretch reasonable to expect children to walk or cycle 15+ km to school, especially along roads without safe cycling opportunities.

In consideration of these facts, we strongly suggest that kids in the French immersion stream in SD63 be given priority. **These are not courtesy riders; they are students who are dedicated to achieving proficiency in the French language.** French immersion was the reason many parents chose to live in proximity to École Deep Cove. Our children should be provided the transportation support needed to continue that education at Bayside and Stelly's without having to move our households. The Province of BC historically provided additional money to support bus

service to enable access to French Immersion, and also supported school districts in levying fees if necessary. If this requires additional funding, and it is not available from the Province, we and other parents would be more than willing to support that need.

We ask that the Board consider these various options again and we are copying our MLA, MP and the Minister of Education asking that they all respond with possible solutions. If a solution cannot be found, Bayside and Stelly's will undoubtedly lose a considerable number of students and therefore receive less dedicated Provincial French immersion funding as a result. In fact, many parents may choose not to enrol in École Deep Cove knowing that their children will not reasonably be able to progress in French immersion beyond elementary school. There is also the potential for enrolment to surge at English only schools, which will also have significant negative impacts. The outcomes do not serve the District, the students, or bilingualism.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider.

Sarah Sparks

Mother to 3 children, 1 at Bayside middle school and 2 at Deep Cove elementary school

Leigh Glancie

From: Leigh Glancie
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:09 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: FW: Sd63 Transportation Concerns

From: Erin Baillie <erin.l.baillie1@gmail.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 4:24 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Cc: Tim Dunford <tdunford@saanichschools.ca>; elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca <elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca>; Adam.Olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Adam.Olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca>; rachna.singh.mla@leg.bc.ca <rachna.singh.mla@leg.bc.ca>
Subject: Sd63 Transportation Concerns

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We are greatly concerned about amendments to SD63's Transportation policy and how it may jeopardize access to French immersion in our district. Policy revisions can be viewed here:
<https://saanichschools.ca/resources/studentsfamilies/transportation>.

We currently have 2 children attending Deep Cove Elementary School in the french immersion program. One in grade 4 and one in grade 1. Both who have had great success with the program and both of which would like to continue on with the french immersion program. We chose where we bought partially for the beautiful area and partly because of the close proximity to the school as well as for bus stops to bayside and stellys down the road.

In our opinions, the foundational problem is that French immersion students are classified as second tier with respect to bus service priority (Administrative Procedure 560). They are considered courtesy riders under District policy 21 (6) as French immersion is designated a "program of choice" and the policy stipulates that: "As French Immersion is a Program of Choice, parents may be required to provide transportation to schools offering French Immersion." Policy 21 (6) reads:

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In consideration of these facts, we strongly suggest that kids in the French immersion stream in SD63 be given priority. These are not courtesy riders; they are students who are dedicated to achieving proficiency in the French language. French immersion was the reason many parents chose to live in proximity to École Deep Cove. Our children should be provided the transportation support needed to continue that education at Bayside and Stelly's without having to move our households. The Province of BC historically provided additional money to support bus service to enable access to French Immersion and also supported school districts in levying fees if necessary. If this requires additional funding, and it is not available from the Province, we and other parents would be willing to support that need.

We ask that the Board consider these various options again and we are copying our MLA, MP and the Minister of Education . If a solution cannot be found, Bayside and Stelly's will undoubtedly lose a considerable number of students and therefore receive less dedicated Provincial French immersion funding as a result. In fact, many parents may choose not to enroll in École Deep Cove knowing that their children will not reasonably be able to progress in French immersion beyond elementary school. Additionally, even IF all parents can drive their children to Bayside, all of the extra cars on the road will have a negative impact on the environment. The outcomes do not serve the District, the students, bilingualism, or the environment.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your response and learning how we can continue to support the process for a favourable outcome for the children in our home and the community.

Regards,

Erin & David Baillie

Leigh Glancie

From: Leigh Glancie
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:52 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: FW: Feedback French Immersion School Bus policy change

From: Nynke Plouffe <nynkeplouffe@gmail.com>
Sent: January 31, 2024 7:13 AM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Cc: Olsen.MLA, Adam <adam.olsen.mla@leg.bc.ca>; ca.tdunford@saanichschools.ca <ca.tdunford@saanichschools.ca>; jason.howe@cpf.bc <jason.howe@cpf.bc>; outreach@cpf.bc.ca <outreach@cpf.bc.ca>; elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca <elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca>; Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca>
Subject: Feedback French Immersion School Bus policy change

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To all,

We would hereby like to express our deep concern about the changes being proposed to the SD63's Transportation policy. These changes will affect many families that attend French Immersion Elementary, Middel and High school in our school district. The changes have been published on the school district's website: <https://saanichschools.ca/resources/studentsfamilies/transportation>.

Our oldest daughter is currently in French immersion at Bayside Middel School and takes bus 15 and bus 22 each day. Our youngest daughter is currently in French Immersion at Deep Cove Elementary and she takes bus 9 and bus 2 every day. They both enjoy French Immersion very much and would like to finish their education in French. For us as parents, we made the conscious choice to have our children educated in the French system to prepare them for our bilingual country.

Last summer, we received an email from the district transportation director with the news that there would not be a bus for available for our kids and any other kids in our district who attend French immersion and live outside of the English-language catchment for those schools. Luckily many parents put replied to this and expressed their concern and buses were found for most children, including ours. However, now again we are faced with this news that the buses will not be available to our children in the coming years and this would cause major problems for us as a family and we would not be able to get our children to and from school.

We believe that the issue is that French immersion students are classified as second tier with respect to bus service priority (Administrative Procedure 560). They are considered courtesy riders under District policy 21 (6) as French immersion is designated a "program of choice" and the policy stipulates that: "As French Immersion is a Program of Choice, parents may be required to provide transportation to schools offering French Immersion." Policy 21 (6) reads:

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District Programs (as defined in Administrative Procedure 560) will be prioritized over other courtesy riders.

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In consideration of these facts, we strongly suggest that kids in the French immersion stream in SD63 be given priority. These are not courtesy riders; they are students who are dedicated to achieving proficiency in the French language. Our children should be provided the transportation support needed to go to a French Immersion elementary school and continue that education at Bayside and Stelly’s without having to move our households. The Province of BC historically provided additional money to support bus service to enable access to French Immersion and also supported school districts in levying fees if necessary. If this requires additional funding, and it is not available from the Province, we and other parents would be more than willing to support that need.

We ask that the Board consider these various options again and we are copying our MLA, MP and the Minister of Education asking that they all respond with possible solutions. If a solution cannot be found, Deep Cove, Bayside and Stelly’s will undoubtedly lose a considerable number of students and therefore receive less dedicated Provincial French immersion funding as a result. In fact, many parents may choose not to enroll in École Deep Cove knowing that their children will not reasonably be able to progress in French immersion beyond elementary school. There is also the potential for enrolment to surge at English only schools, which will also have significant negative impacts. The outcomes do not serve the District, the students, or bilingualism.

Thank you for considering this feedback and we are looking forward to hearing back.

Kind regards,

Nynke and Al Plouffe

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 4:18 PM
To: Robin Thomsen
Cc: Leigh Glancie; Dave Eberwein
Subject: Re: SD63 Transportation Concerns

Hello Robin,

Your letter has been received and will be included in the materials for the policy committee and Board meetings in February.

Best Regards,

Jason

Jason Reid (he/him)

Secretary Treasurer, Saanich Schools

2125 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton, BC V8M 2A5

☎ 250-652-7300 📠 250-589-6598

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: Robin Thomsen <robinthomsen@hotmail.com>

Sent: January 29, 2024 2:06 PM

To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>

Cc: Tim Dunford <tdunford@saanichschools.ca>; Adam.Olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Adam.Olsen.MLA@leg.bc.ca>; elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca <elizabeth.may.c1e@parl.gc.ca>; Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca <Rachna.Singh.MLA@leg.bc.ca>

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of the district who attend French immersion and live outside of the English-language catchment for those schools. While buses were found for the current year after significant pressure from parents, we have been told to expect this may not be the case in future years. We also have a daughter currently in Grade 1 French Immersion at École Deep Cove who will benefit from the bus service in a few years as well.

In our view, **the foundational problem is that French immersion students are classified as second tier with respect to bus service priority** (Administrative Procedure 560). They are considered courtesy riders under District policy 21 (6) as French immersion is designated a “program of choice” and the policy stipulates that: “As French Immersion is a Program of Choice, parents may be required to provide transportation to schools offering French Immersion.” Policy 21 (6) reads:

Courtesy riders are district students not otherwise addressed in guiding principles 1 to 45 and may be transported if the legal seating capacity of the bus has not been reached. Seating priority is reserved for those students entitled to transportation by guiding principles 1 to 5. Courtesy riders attending District Programs (as defined in Administrative Procedure 560) will be prioritized over other courtesy riders.

This inequity is systemic in creating a disconnect between the three levels of public school. The District has specified several schools as “French immersion catchment schools,” including École Deep Cove, which is mostly French Immersion. As a result of this, École Deep Cove is sought out by many families intending their children to continue French immersion through to graduation. However, **students must travel a considerable distance to middle and high school at Bayside and Stelly’s to continue their immersion program. This is not practical without a dedicated bus route** given the considerable time to travel from Deep Cove to Bayside by car which is not an option for many working parents. It is also not feasible to use the public transit system, and it is not reasonable to expect children to walk or cycle 15 km to school, especially along roads without safe cycling opportunities.

In consideration of these facts, **we strongly suggest that kids in the French immersion stream in SD63 be given priority. These are not courtesy riders; they are students who are dedicated to achieving proficiency in the French language.** French immersion was the reason many parents chose to live in proximity to École Deep Cove. Our children should be provided the transportation support needed to continue that education at Bayside and Stelly’s without having to move our households. The Province of BC historically provided additional money to support bus service to enable access to French Immersion and also supported school districts in levying fees if necessary. **If this requires additional funding, and it is not available from the Province, we and other parents would be willing to support that need.**

We ask that the Board consider these various options again and we are copying our MLA, MP and the Minister of Education asking that they all respond with possible solutions. If a solution cannot be found, Bayside and Stelly’s will undoubtedly lose a considerable number of students and therefore receive less dedicated Provincial French immersion funding as a result. In fact, many parents may choose not to enrol in École Deep Cove knowing that their children will not reasonably be able to progress in French immersion beyond elementary school. There is also the potential for enrolment to surge at English only schools, which will also have significant negative impacts. Additionally, even IF all parents can drive their children to Bayside, all of the extra cars on the road will have a negative impact on the environment. The outcomes do not serve the District, the students, bilingualism, or the environment.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your response and learning how we can continue to support the process for a favourable outcome for the children in our home and the community.

Regards,

Robin and Matt Thomsen

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2024 8:40 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: Transportation Policy feedback

transportation policy review feedback

From: Kristen H <hkristen33@gmail.com>
Sent: January 24, 2024 8:15 PM
To: Dave Eberwein <deberwein@saanichschools.ca>; Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>; Tim Dunford <tdunford@saanichschools.ca>
Cc: Transportation <transportation@Saanichschools.ca>
Subject: Transportation Policy feedback

[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.

Good evening,

I am writing in regards to the proposed changes to the transportation policy. I attended the feedback sessions in the fall and at the session there was an overwhelming agreement by parents that the revised transportation policy creates inequity for French Immersion students. This was well communicated by parents at the meeting and parents were dismissed by the presenter and told that the school district will not change the wording in the Administrative Procedure to correct this oversight. In your outdated Administrative Procedure, French Immersion students are considered as attending a program of choice/district program. This is wrong. Canada is a bilingual country and French is recognized as an official language. Your school district offers school in both French and English languages. You are not offering both languages at every school, but have chosen select schools within geographical areas to offer French Immersion, depending on the catchment school there is a related French Immersion school. (I.e, Brentwood and Keating). It is unreasonable to expect that people will swap homes or spend thousands trying to move to ensure their catchment French Immersion school is their immediate catchment school to align with your procedure and ensure their child is able to access transportation.

I have previously written in, communicated verbally, and I urge you again to reconsider the wording in your policy and procedure to be inclusive of students attending school in French Immersion. It is not a nicety, it's a right for Canadian students to be taught in our official language.

At the meeting in the fall, the presenter communicated that there was an overwhelming need for transportation and the district had so many applications to process that timelines for service were delayed and there were 100's of students that were not able to access transportation. Your recent revised policy does not address this unmet need, in fact, it puts further restrictions in place to allow the district to reduce services provided, therefore creating a larger unmet need. It is quite obvious that the district is putting language in to limit service to align with budget (sections 21.1 and 21.4). I understand the district has an operating budget, however, you have a huge responsibility to address unmet needs and this might look like revising your budget or doing the work to work with the Ministry for additional funding. Do the work. The proposed policy will put families that can't obtain transportation in a difficult position. Most families have 2 parents that work full time in order to afford to house and feed their families. There are not opportunities for parents to reduce their work hours to 9-2:30 to allow them to drop off and pick up their children from school. Public transportation in our district is sub-par, infrequent, and not accessible by all in Saanich. In more dense districts, like Vancouver, public transport can be a great supplement to school transportation, this is not the case for Saanich.

I support the inclusion of a fee for registration and a fee for late registrants. I asked about the fee at the meeting and was told these funds would not go towards additional transportation to meet the current unmet need, as the bus yard is full. Get creative, fence in another area, there is a lot of land with district owned properties to expand your fleet and add another yard. Please do the work.

If you are going to collect a fee, there needs to be a provision in the policy to ensure there is no financial burden to families that are unable to afford the fee (just like all school programs).

If the fee is not able to be used to expand the fleet, then it needs to be used with municipalities to create sidewalks and safe walking routes for students. We have an underwhelming amount of sidewalks in our district and getting to some schools, like Keating, can be treacherous.

Overall, I appreciate the work and requests for feedback that has gone into your revisions. This latest draft needs to be reworked with a lens that looks at the bigger picture to ensure the district is able to move forward to meet today's unmet needs, resolve the inequity for French Immersion students, and support the changes to come in the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback. I truly hope you receive this message with the intent to understand, and that you consider the larger picture and the needs of students, not just today but in the future.

Leigh Glancie

From: COPACS PRESIDENT <copacsd63@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 9:45 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fwd: Transportation policy

[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.

Please see letter below re: transportation policy.

Kind regards,

Megan

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jenn Noullette <jcnoullette@gmail.com>
Date: January 24, 2024 at 9:10:47 PM PST
To: COPACS SD63 <copacsd63@gmail.com>, Transportation <transportation@saanichschools.ca>, deberwein@saanichschools.ca, gbridges@saanichschools.ca, jreid@saanichschools.ca, tdunford@saanichschools.ca
Subject: **Transportation policy**

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing in regards to the proposed changes to the transportation policy. I attended the feedback sessions in the fall and at the session there was an overwhelming agreement by parents that the revised transportation policy creates inequity for French Immersion students. This was well communicated by parents at the meeting and parents were dismissed by the presenter and told that the school district will not change the wording in the Administrative Procedure to correct this oversight. In your outdated Administrative Procedure, French Immersion students are considered as attending a program of choice/district program. This is wrong. Canada is a bilingual country and French is recognized as an official language. Your school district offers school in both French and English languages. You are not offering both languages at every school, but have chosen select schools within geographical areas to offer French Immersion, depending on the catchment school there is a related French Immersion school. (I.e, Brentwood and Keating). It is unreasonable to expect that people will swap homes or spend thousands trying to move to ensure their catchment French Immersion school is their immediate catchment school to align with your procedure and ensure their child is able to access transportation. I urge you again to reconsider the wording in your policy and procedure to be inclusive of students attending school in French Immersion. It is not a nicety, it's a right for Canadian students to be taught in our official language. At the meeting in the fall, the presenter communicated that there was an overwhelming need for transportation and the district had so many applications to process that timelines for service were delayed and there were 100's of students that were not able to access transportation. Your recent revised policy does not address this unmet need, in fact, it puts further restrictions in place to allow the district to reduce services provided, therefore creating a larger unmet need. It is quite obvious that the district is putting language in to limit service to align with budget

(sections 21.1 and 21.4). I understand the district has an operating budget, however, you have a huge responsibility to address unmet needs and this might look like revising your budget or doing the work to work with the Ministry for additional funding. Do the work. The proposed policy will put families that can't obtain transportation in a difficult position. Most families have 2 parents that work full time in order to afford to house and feed their families. There are not opportunities for parents to reduce their work hours to 9-2:30 to allow them to drop off and pick up their children from school. Public transportation in our district is sub-par, infrequent, and not accessible by all in Saanich. In more dense districts, like Vancouver, public transport can be a great supplement to school transportation, this is not the case for Saanich. I support the inclusion of a fee for registration and a fee for late registrants. I asked about the fee at the meeting and was told these funds would not go towards additional transportation to meet the current unmet need, as the bus yard is full. Get creative, fence in another area, there is a lot of land with district owned properties to expand your fleet and add another yard. Please do the work. If you are going to collect a fee, there needs to be a provision in the policy to ensure there is no financial burden to families that are unable to afford the fee (just like all school programs). If the fee is not able to be used to expand the fleet, then it needs to be used with municipalities to create sidewalks and safe walking routes for students. We have an underwhelming amount of sidewalks in our district and getting to some schools, like Keating, can be treacherous. Overall, I appreciate the work and requests for feedback that has gone into your revisions. This latest draft needs to be reworked with a lens that looks at the bigger picture to ensure the district is able to move forward to meet today's unmet needs, resolve the inequity for French Immersion students, and support the changes to come in the future. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback. I truly hope you receive this message with the intent to understand, and that you consider the larger picture and the needs of students, not just today but in the future.

I have kids in French Immersion school in the Saanich school district and this policy creates inequity for French immersion students and does not address the overall needs for transportation in our district. According to this it even potentially creates inequity within the French system as well if you happen to live close enough to the chosen French schools and have it be in your catchment possibly. We don't get to choose which schools have French immersion but in order to continue a successful French immersion program within the district real funding must be put in place to meet the needs. Even a cost sharing program would be something many parents voiced interest in. I don't feel that real consideration was taken into account from the many open houses or online discussions that took place.

On top of that It's not just French Immersion, it's all kids going to a school of "choice", be it language, sports or another specific program. It's basically trying to punish kids for pursuing a academic/athletic/second language program or interest instead of just staying at the catchment schools and taking what's provided. It's a ridiculous policy that's going to create a bigger class divide since only certain kids whose parents are stay at home or have the time to transport their kids will be able to pursue these programs if this happens. Bussing should be for all kids regardless of the program they are in. The response should be to either add more bus routes or add more programs to the schools located throughout the district so kids don't have to switch schools and create a bigger class divide. If you won't transport children to their French schools then maybe French immersion should be brought to the other elementary , middle and high schools etc.

Thank you for your time

Jenn Noullette

Tara Keeping
108 -1950 John Road
North Saanich, BC V8L 2P9

January 19, 2024

Board of Education – School District 63
2125 Keating Cross Road
Saanichton, BC
V8M 2A5

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

I write this letter in response to the November 2023 Proposed Amendments to Policy 21 Student Transportation. I recognize that this draft is similar to other school district transportation policies and follows a standard protocol across the province. It has been a challenge to secure transportation for a choice program such as the French Immersion (FI), but it remains a relevant concern that has yet to be forgotten.

I understand the FI rider holds priority status as a courtesy rider, albeit not guaranteed, but a priority – where the FI rider will be accommodated if there is availability and with the addition in point 6 of the draft to prioritize district program students as courtesy riders would be a welcome addition.

The CPF (Canadian Parents for French) Saanich Chapter has reached out to the CPF BC & Yukon Branch, and collectively, we are curious about the details of the new fee. We would like to know the new fee amount, whether some families facing hardships will receive accommodations, and if proof of accommodations is required for waived fees.

Another question and concern are if the FI rider has been denied transportation. It would be helpful to know how many students from French Immersion were denied transportation in recent years (as well as those who were granted a courtesy rider designation) to understand better how the policy affects access to French Immersion.

The communications and concerns I have received from FI parents regarding the draft policy revisions are that the school board has revised their policy to address current challenges rather than seek to enhance services for the future. The school board officials cited the need for more provincial funding, the lack of drivers (willing to work a split shift), and the lack of yard space to house additional buses as reasons why bus service cannot be enhanced.

During the North Saanich Middle School meeting held last year to discuss the transportation policy, the district responded to a question about whether the collection of fees would permit the district to enhance and improve school bus service, and the response was that the fees would go towards maintaining the existing service.

While there is a provision in the BC Public Schools French Immersion Program Policy for a district to offer additional transportation services to French Immersion students, this option is not considered in the draft.

The language in Administrative Procedure 560 is preferable, which differentiates between students attending District programs (i.e. French Immersion) vs students attending a school of choice:

2. Registered Bus Riders

2.1 The Transportation Manager will determine whether or not bus service will be provided for any applicant. Once an application for bus service has been approved, the student is considered to be a registered rider. Applications for bus service will be considered in the following order:

2.1.1 Students attending their home school and living outside walk limits.

2.1.2 Students attending District programs.

2.1.3 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.

An area of concern that FI parents have raised is the complete rewording of point 3 of the policy draft. What is particularly problematic is that this change removes the historical reference to district programs from the policy and groups French Immersion students who may have spent half of their public school studies at their regular catchment (and majority French Immersion) school along with any other courtesy rider as per point 6 of the draft. The change in wording from “to address a concern of safety” and “provided” with “significant safety concerns, such as a major highway crossing” and “considered” is too prescriptive. By deeming a major highway crossing the benchmark for a significant safety concern, will other safety concerns be given the same scrutiny as now? We also wonder if there are any examples of when that clause, as it has existed, led to the creation of a route.

3 ~~When it is necessary to address a concern of safety or to serve a district program catchment area,~~
Additional transportation may be ~~provided~~ considered if there are significant safety concerns, such as a major highway crossing, or in support of students with exceptional transportation needs.

As part of our mandate to advocate for parents, it was imperative to forward concerns from FI parents regarding the draft of the transportation policy. Thank you for your time in reading and considering our concerns regarding this draft.

With best regards,

Tara Keeping, Canadian Parents for French – Saanich Chapter



CANADIAN
PARENTS
FOR FRENCH
BRITISH COLUMBIA
& YUKON

January 19, 2024

Dear SD63,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on behalf of the BC & Yukon branch of Canadian Parents for French during the school district's review of its transportation policy. I trust that others will provide specific feedback on the proposed changes to Policy 21, and so I will focus our organization's remarks more broadly.

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) is a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization that furthers bilingualism by promoting opportunities to learn and use French for all those who call Canada home.

We believe:

- In Canada, every student should have the opportunity to learn French and access the French as a second language (FSL) program that meets their needs and aspirations.
- All students should have access to a wide variety of effective, evidence-based French as a second official language programs from kindergarten to post-secondary.
- Proficiency levels and goals should be in place, so language learners, parents, teachers, post-secondary institutions, and potential employers have a common understanding of each learner's French-language abilities and the expectations of respective programs.
- Governments are accountable for reporting on achievement of students and French as a second official language programs. Parents and community stakeholders are actively engaged and involved in decision-making with school boards.

Our organization is fortunate to have an active volunteer chapter in Saanich that continues to work collaboratively with the school district to strengthen FSL programs in our schools. We are grateful to the school district for providing French immersion education to close to 1,000 students annually.

Demand for FSL programs remains strong in British Columbia. Over the last ten years, enrolment in French immersion education has increased by 7% in the province. However, many other families would like to enrol their children in French immersion but face challenges accessing a program. This includes

families in your school district that have shared with CPF their unfortunate situations in recent months.

On behalf of our volunteers and members who reside in your school district, I would encourage you to consider how you can reduce barriers such as transportation that prevent students from enrolling in French immersion. I would ask you to consider the following questions as you continue this review:

- How many students have not been able to enrol in French immersion despite an interest in doing so?
- What barriers have prevented those students from enrolling?
- What can the school district do to remove those barriers?

There are many advantages for students who learn a second language, including opportunities educationally, culturally, socially, and professionally. It is important that the option of enrolling in French immersion be available to those who would like to do so. During this policy review, I thank you for considering ways to allow more students the opportunity to enrol in French immersion by addressing the barriers that are preventing them from doing so.

Regards,



Jason Howe

Executive Director, Canadian Parents for French BC & Yukon branch