SCHOOL DISTRICT 63 (SAANICH)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda

Committee Members:	Trustee VanWell, Chair Trustee Elder Trustee McMurphy
Staff Support:	Dave Eberwein, Superintendent of Schools Jason Reid, Secretary Treasurer
Partner Representatives:	Don Peterson, STA Candice Whitney, CUPE Suzanne Chisholm, SAA COPACS
Other Attendees:	

Tuesday, February 6, 2024
1:00 pm

A. PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No Items.

B. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Policy 16 (Appeals Bylaw)

C. ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. Policy 21 (Student Transportation)

Staff Recommendation:
As the required Notice of Motion has been provided on November 29, 2023, I Trustee VanWell move that revisions to Policy 21 (Student Transportation) be approved.

D. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

No Items.

E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Policy Review – November 2024

Fw: Urgent Alignment with BC Ministry of Education Appeal Guidelines

Teri Vanwell <tvanwell@saanichschools.ca>

Tue 2023-11-28 1:21 PM

To:Dave Eberwein <deberwein@saanichschools.ca>;Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Cc:Trustees <Trustees@Saanichschools.ca>

Hi Dave and Jason,

I am forwarding you an email that the policy committee has received from Mr. Ng.

Teri

Teri Vanwell

Trustee, Saanich Schools

2125 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton, BC V8M 2A5

250-686-8447

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

SAANICH SCHOOLS

From: Gary Ng <garyng@gmail.com>
Sent: 28 November 2023 12:18
To: Teri Vanwell <tvanwell@saanichschools.ca>; Keven Elder <kelder@saanichschools.ca>; Elsie Mcmurphy <emcmurphy@saanichschools.ca>
Cc: Joyce Vandall <jvandall@saanichschools.ca>; Tim Dunford <tdunford@saanichschools.ca>; Susan Hickman <shickman@saanichschools.ca>; Nola Silzer <nsilzer@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: Urgent Alignment with BC Ministry of Education Appeal Guidelines

Dear Saanich School District Policy Development Committee Members,

I am writing to express my concern and to prompt immediate action regarding the Saanich School District's adherence to the BC Ministry of Education's appeal guidelines. It has become increasingly evident that our district lags in providing a supportive and non-adversarial appeals process as mandated by the guidelines updated in November 2022.

Neighbouring districts such as Victoria have set commendable precedents such as offering a one-page PDF on their websites to facilitate easy submissions for appeals, to go with a flow chart of the process. This streamlined approach significantly reduces the burden on parents, who are not required to construct their own responses from scratch.

Unfortunately, Saanich School District's current practices do not afford such convenience or clarity, which is not only an oversight but also a deviation from the Ministry's vision of a parent-friendly process.

Both Victoria and Sooke districts also specifically state that a Notice of Appeal can be submitted by parents or students, at any step of the complaints process, noting that decisions are to be rendered within 45 days upon submission.

Here are the examples below--bold emphasis ours:

Sooke: "If your concerns can't be resolved at the school or District level, you can request in writing to the Superintendent for the Board to hear an appeal. This must be done within 30 school days from when a decision was first made by an employee. **The decision could have been made in Levels 1, 2, 3, 4."**

Victoria: "A student, parent or guardian has the **right to appeal a decision to the Board at any point in this process** as set out in Bylaw 9330.1."

But Saanich requires pre-steps before a Notice of Appeal can be submitted, unlike other districts which have made processes up to date. My question is why has Saanich not kept up with its neighbouring districts and B.C. Ministry of Education guidelines?

Furthermore, the Ministry's guidelines emphasize that the appeals process should be supportive rather than adversarial. Regrettably, this has not been our collective experience with the Saanich District staff thus far. The lack of clear, accessible resources and a supportive approach has unnecessarily complicated what should be a straightforward procedure.

To reiterate, both Victoria and Sooke School Districts have demonstrated best practices by providing clear, accessible, and easy-to-navigate resources for appeal submissions. These resources are in the spirit of the Ministry's directive, which advocates for a non-intimidating process, ensuring that all parties are treated with respect and dignity.

I implore the Saanich School District to take immediate action to meet the standards set by the BC Ministry of Education and our

neighbouring districts. The need for accessible, clear, and supportive guidelines, including a simple one-page PDF for appeal submissions, is imperative. The parents and guardians in our community deserve an appeals process that is aligned with the Ministry's guidelines — one that is constructed with the intent to support rather than to challenge.

Numerous elementary school websites and the district's website are poorly designed and hard to navigate (especially on mobile devices), compared to Victoria and Sooke. Plus they omit crucial information regarding Notice of Appeal steps and procedures (for example, KELSET and Deep Cove websites have no info on the Notice of Appeal process).

This creates an imbalance of power that favours the Saanich School District and ultimately leaves parents and students at a disadvantage, as there are no transparent complaints and procedures steps outlined, as required by B.C. law.

As elected Trustees and members of the Policy Development Committee, you bear the responsibility to ensure our district's compliance with provincial legislation and to uphold the values of our education system. I trust that you will address this matter with the urgency it deserves.

I look forward to a timely revision of the Saanich School District website and its resources to reflect a more supportive approach, in line with the Ministry's latest guidelines and the practices of our neighbouring districts.

Are you able to provide a specific date for when these changes will be implemented by Saanich?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary Ng
778-960-4279

SAANICH SCHOOLS
SCHOOL DISTRICT 63 (SAANICH)
2125 Keating Cross Road, Saanichton, BC Canada V8M 2A5
Phone: (250) 652-7300 Fax: (250) 652-6421 saanichschools.ca

BRIEFING NOTE

To: Policy Committee

Prepared By: Jason Reid

Subject: Request to Review the Appeals Process

Date: February 1, 2024

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this briefing note is to inform the Policy Committee in its consideration of the request by Mr. Gary Ng to review and amend the process for appeals. This request (dated November 28, 2023) is included in the Policy Committee materials as a separate attachment.

The submission from Mr. Ng includes recommendations that would necessitate revisions to both the Appeals ByLaw (Policy 16) and Administrative Procedure 152 (Complaints). The submission also includes recommendations relating to communications and resources.

Policy 16 (Appeals)

The primary recommendation by Mr. Ng is that the appeals process be changed to permit submission of an appeal at any point in the dispute resolution process, including before the completion of the "Pre-Appeal Dispute Resolution Process" as outlined in the Appeals Bylaw and AP 152.

Mr. Ng further states the following:

" Both Victoria and Sooke districts also specifically state that a Notice of Appeal can be submitted by parents or students, at any step of the complaints process, noting that decisions are to be rendered within 45 days upon submission."

"But Saanich requires pre-steps before a Notice of Appeal can be submitted, unlike other districts which have made processes up to date."

The Board's Appeals ByLaw (Policy 16) sets out the expectations for the resolution of disputes including the process for appeals where resolution has not been possible following a good faith effort to resolve the dispute to mutual satisfaction.

Policy 16 (page 2), under the heading "Appeal Procedure (ByLaw)", clearly outlines the expected "Pre-Appeal Dispute Resolution Process", which includes first meeting with the staff member involved in the decision, followed by meeting with the staff member's supervisor, and finally by seeking to resolve the dispute with the Superintendent. This Pre-Appeal Dispute Resolution Process is also clearly outlined in Administrative Procedure 152 (Complaints) (paragraph 10). If the steps in the Pre-Appeal Dispute Resolution Process are not successful, the parent and/or student then begins the Board's appeal process.

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The Appeals Bylaw (policy 16) paragraph 4.5 states that *"The Board may refuse to hear an appeal where:*

1. *The appeal has not been commenced within the time set out under 2.1;*
2. *The student and/or parent or guardian has refused or neglected to discuss the decision under appeal with the person(s) specified in the applicable dispute resolution process or the Superintendent or delegate, or such other person as directed by the Board; or*
3. *The decision does not, in the Board's opinion, significantly affect the education, health or safety of the student."*

This requirement to first participate in a pre-appeal dispute resolution process is consistent with subsection 11(4) of the School Act which states: *"A board may refuse to hear an appeal under this section unless the appellant discusses the decision under appeal with one or more persons as directed by the board."*

The pre-appeal dispute resolution process is also consistent with the following principles documented in the preamble to the Appeals Bylaw (policy 16):

- *"The appeal process should encourage all parties of disputes to understand the concerns of the other parties and make good faith efforts to resolve disputes to mutual satisfaction."*, and
- *"The Board of Education generally encourages complaints and disputes to be dealt with at the point closest to where the dispute first arises.".*

There are several reasons why completing a robust pre-appeal process is important:

1. **Understanding and Context** - The persons closest to the issue and who more fully understand the complexities and context are positioned to achieve the best possible resolution.
2. **Delegation of Authority** - The expectation that a decision is appealed to the Superintendent before it is appealed to the Board aligns with the delegation of operational authority to the Superintendent throughout Board policy. In particular, the Board has delegated the supervision of all other school district staff to the Superintendent.
3. **Support for Complainant -** The pre-appeal complaint resolution process is an opportunity to inform the complainant about the process (for both complaints and appeals) and is an opportunity to provide support. School administrators and educational leaders are trained and experienced supporting students and families with complex issues and disputes through a trauma informed lens. In contrast, the formal Board appeals process, where decisions by a corporate Board are necessarily made by resolution in accordance with legislation and bylaw, is not positioned to provide this important support. If the pre-appeal dispute resolution process were not to occur (or if an appellant chose to not meaningfully engage in the pre-appeal dispute resolution process), it is unlikely an appellant would feel they were provided with the support they needed.

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4. **Informed Appeals Process –** The pre-appeal dispute resolution process provides the Superintendent with an opportunity to attempt resolution, and gain a more fulsome understanding of the issue. This understanding also positions the Superintendent to advise the Board on the subsequent appeal, including if the matter is subject to appeal. Policy 16 (Appeals) requires the Superintendent, or designate, to prepare a report for the Board concerning the matter under appeal.

SD61 (Victoria) Appeals Policy

The SD61 (Victoria) complaints process, outlined in Administrative Regulation 1155 (Complaint Process), documents a robust pre-appeal complaint resolution process. The complaint resolution process includes 4 steps that begins with the complainant raising the concern with the staff member directly involved (step 1) and ends with the Superintendent attempting to resolve the dispute (step 4). The regulation includes the following expectations:

- *"Every effort should be made to resolve the concern at Step 1 of the process.", and*
- *"It is anticipated that the concern(s) will be resolved prior to Step 4, if not, Bylaw 9330.1 "Appeal Process Decisions Regarding Students" should be considered."*

In SD61 (Victoria), the appeals process is documented in ByLaw 9330.1 (Appeal Process), which includes the following statement in the preamble:

"The Greater Victoria School Board encourages students, parents and guardians to pursue a resolution of any questions or concerns through the problem-solving process set up under Policy and Regulation 1155 Complaint Process for a Resolution of Concerns."

Under the SD61 ByLaw, the appellant may be required by the Board to meet with the Superintendent or other employees to gather information and/or to attempt resolution.

Consistent with the dispute resolution process in SD63 (Saanich), there is an expectation in SD61 (Victoria) that prior to the Board hearing an appeal, the appellant will first complete the pre-appeal dispute resolution process.

A difference in Victoria is that the Appeals Bylaw appears to facilitate an appeal decision within 45 days of the receipt of a notice of appeal, even when not all pre-appeal steps have been completed. However, the SD61 Board ultimately has the authority to choose to not hear an appeal at all where an appellant has refused to engage in pre-appeal dispute resolution steps. Subsection 11(4) of the School Act states: *"A board may refuse to hear an appeal under this section unless the appellant discusses the decision under appeal with one or more persons as directed by the board."*

The Appeals ByLaw and Complaint Process Regulation make it clear that the appeals process in SD61 (Victoria) is not intended to circumvent the pre-appeal complaint resolution process.

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SD62 (Sooke) Appeals Policy

The appeals process in SD62 (Sooke) is documented in an Appeals bylaw and policy. The policy includes the following statement:

"The Board of Education generally encourages complaints and disputes to be dealt with at the point closest to where the dispute first arises. The Board, by By-law, requires the appellant to have followed the "Levels of Consultation" outlined in By-Law 1-08."

Paragraph 2.2 in the Bylaw states the following:

"The parent/student initiating the appeal must have discussed the decision in question with the following personnel:

2.2.1 The employee(s) who made the decision.
2.2.2 The employee's immediate supervisor (principal, manager of operations).
2.2.3 The executive officer responsible (Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer or designate)."

The SD62 (Sooke) policy and bylaw clearly requires that "pre-appeal" consultations occur prior to an appeal being submitted, and these required steps are consistent with the expected pre-appeal dispute resolution steps in both SD63 (Saanich) and SD61 (Victoria). However, SD62 (Sooke) does not include language to address what happens when an appeal has been submitted and the pre-appeal steps have not been completed.

I contacted senior staff at SD62 (Sooke) who noted that the consultations (as outlined in paragraph 2.2 of the bylaw) "must" be completed before the appeal is accepted. In practice if an appeal was submitted before the pre-appeal consultation steps were completed, the complainant would be redirected to the pre-appeal consultation steps and the appeal process would be paused until these steps were completed. The 45-day time limit for response would not apply until the pre-appeal consultations were completed and the notice of appeal met the requirements of paragraph 2.2.

Communications and Resources

Mr. Ng's submission also asserts that the guidance for the appeals process in SD63 is not clear or accessible.

The SD63 process for complaints is readily accessible by opening the "Resources" tab on the website and selecting "Complaints and Concerns" which links to Administrative Procedure 152. Administrative Procedure 152 clearly and concisely outlines the process for dispute resolution and also provides a link to the Appeals Bylaw for when a complaint cannot be resolved.

As noted by Mr. Ng, SD61 has published a flowchart overview of the process and a fillable pdf form for completing a notice of appeal. Having these resources could be helpful; however, I disagree that the absence of these resources is an impediment to participation in the dispute resolution process. Administrative procedure 152 and Policy 16 (Appeals) clearly and concisely outline the process for dispute resolution and appeals including what information should be included in a notice of appeal.

In my opinion, of the three policies/procedures reviewed in this briefing (SD61, SD62, and SD63), the SD63 (Saanich) policy/procedure was the clearest in communicating expectations regarding the pre-appeal dispute resolution process, and the process when pre-appeal resolution steps have not been completed.

Conclusions

The key assertion in the submission is that an appellant should be able to initiate a Board Appeals process without first completing pre-appeal dispute resolution steps. The submission also asserts an appeal process can be initiated in both SD61 and SD62 without completing pre-appeal dispute resolution steps. Both of these assertions are incorrect.

In this briefing, I outlined the importance of the pre-appeal dispute resolution process for: achieving the best possible resolution; aligning with the delegation of authority to the Superintendent; providing support for the complainant; and informing a subsequent appeal. And it is an expectation in all three school districts (SD61, SD62, and SD63) that pre-appeal dispute resolution steps are completed prior to the Board hearing an appeal.

The other key assertion is that the guidance available for the dispute resolution process is not clear or accessible. I disagree with this assertion. The administrative procedure and policy are readily available on the website and clearly and simply outline the processes for complaint resolution and appeals. While the current guidance is not an impediment to accessing the complaint resolution and appeals processes, I acknowledge there may be opportunities to more effectively communicate the processes visually (ex. flow chart).

With Respect,

Jason Reid
Secretary Treasurer

Proposed Amendments to Policy 21
November 2023

Green bolded text are proposed additions to policy and red strikethrough text represent proposed deletions.

POLICY 21 - ~~BUS AND VAN~~ **STUDENT** TRANSPORTATION

The Superintendent shall establish an efficient and effective student transportation system to provide for the transportation of students to and from their nearest catchment school. **Support for active student travel is an important part of a comprehensive approach to student transportation.** Student safety shall be the highest priority in the provision of student transportation by the district.

The transportation system shall be provided in accordance with the following Guiding Principles:

1 Routes, **subject to being economically viable**, will be established to ensure**:**

- 1.1 transportation **to their regular program catchment school** for those students living outside the following walk limits by traveled road or walkway from ~~the~~ **their regular program catchment school** ~~nearest school in their catchment area~~:
  - i. Kindergarten – Grade 5 Students: **2.5** ~~4.0~~ kilomet~~er~~**res**
  - ii. Students of Grades 6 – 12 inclusive: 4.8 kilomet~~ers~~**res**
- 1.2 **students entitled to transportation in paragraph 1.1 will not have to travel further than 2.5 kilometres by traveled road or walkway to the nearest bus stop.**
- 1.3 **travel times are optimized for students being transported to their regular program catchment school from outside the walk limits established in paragraph 1.1.**

2 **The district will endeavor to establish routes that serve as many students eligible for service under guiding principle 1 as possible. A minimum of 15 students eligible for transportation services under guiding principle 1 are required for a route to be considered economically viable.**

3 ~~When it is necessary to address a concern of safety or to serve a district program catchment area, a~~**A**dditional 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.**

4 The transportation routes shall be established to operate within the operating budget established by the Board. Bus routes shall be published in August of each school year.

5 Consideration shall be given to providing service when a student is directed to attend a school other than the nearest school in their catchment area.

Proposed Amendments to Policy 21
November 2023

6 Courtesy riders are district students not otherwise addressed in guiding principles 1 to ~~4~~5, 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.**

7 **As transportation routes are established to provide optimal service in accordance with paragraphs 1 to 5, transportation routes and bus stops will not be altered to enhance service for courtesy riders.**

8 **Active transportation will be promoted through a variety of means including, but not limited to:**

- **8.1 Working with local governments to address road safety concerns as well as identify opportunities to create active transportation routes to school;**
- **8.2 Providing communication to students, parents/guardians and the community on road safety issues; and**
- **8.3 Building student awareness on various active transportation options for arriving to school.**

9 **Riders will be charged a registration fee and an additional fee for late registrations. Late fees are intended to encourage timely registration and improve the effectiveness of route planning prior to school start-up. The establishment of fees and any required revisions will be approved by the Board.**

10 The Superintendent will establish and keep current, safety procedures for the district's transportation system and for the rental of commercial buses or vans for student transportation. Passenger vans shall be limited to a maximum of 10 passengers.

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 4:00 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: Transportation Policy Concerns

From: Avril Berben <avril8tor@hotmail.com>
Sent: January 31, 2024 3:42 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: Transportation Policy Concerns

Dear Jason Reid,

We are parents of two young children, one currently enrolled in the French Immersion program at Deep Cove Elementary and one who has been accepted into the French Immersion program for this coming fall at Deep Cove Elementary.
We live in Sidney which is considered out of catchment even though we are attending our catchment French Immersion School. Similar to most families in our area, we both work fulltime to support our family.
As we look ahead to our children's next 10 to 13 years with the French Immersion program through the School District of Saanich (SD63), we have concerns about the potential changes to the School Board's transportation policy that will list French Immersion students as Courtesy Riders and prioritise seating will be given to in district students. There is very minimal bus service to Deep Cove even if elementary students were old enough to utilize BC Transit and when they attend Bayside Middle School and Stelly's Secondary, they would be required to take multiple busses through BC Transit including through the dark winter months.
We both attended French Immersion with SD63 and the program has grown amazingly since our school days. We often see former classmates who attended the English program that now have their children going through the French Immersion program in SD63.
We urge that the School board does not approve these changes that will negatively impact how we can get our kids to and from school safely and on time. Furthermore you are indicating to children that their choice of learning Canada's official second language can be penalized and have their family in a difficult position to potentially have to switch to a closer school that is considered in district resulting in a loss of learning.
Thank you,

Avril & Matthew Berben

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 12:55 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: Concerns about proposed amendments to policy 21 (Student Transportation)
Attachments: Letter about Bus Transportation.pdf

From: Scott Borstad <scottborstad@gmail.com>
Sent: January 31, 2024 12:53 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Cc: president@deepcovepac.ca <president@deepcovepac.ca>; cpf.saanich@gmail.com <cpf.saanich@gmail.com>
Subject: Concerns about proposed amendments to policy 21 (Student Transportation)

Dear Mr. Reid,

Please find the attached letter expressing my concern about the proposed changes to policy 21. The proposed changes are not in the best interest of French Immersion families, and don't address the real challenge of increased demand for French Immersion within our district. While the changes will help the district deny bus transportation to French Immersion families, I think we should be looking for much better solutions.

Regards,
Scott Borstad

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

Jason Reid SD63 Secretary/Treasurer
Secretary/Treasurer
Saanich School District 63

Dear Jason Reid SD63 Secretary/Treasurer:

I am a mother of three French immersion students at Deep Cove Elementary. Like most families in the area both myself and my husband work. I am a registered nurse and my husband a police officer with the RCMP, we both work odd shift work hours and having our children take the school bus is essential to getting them to school safely and on time. As we look ahead to the next school year our oldest son will be attending Bayside, being able to take the bus to school becomes even more important. Having him take the city bus would have him changing buses twice and walking in the dark.

It is my understanding that proposed amendments to the School Board's Transportation Policy will list French Immersion students as Courtesy Riders and priority seating will be given to in district students. Listening to feedback from parents whose students started at Bayside this year, busing was clearly an issue. With most parents both working, cutting funding to transportation to school creates more barriers for these students. I urge you to reconsider amending this policy.

I understand that French Immersion students are attending a 'school of choice' but removing transportation for these students would create another barrier. Students who are trying to become fluent in Canada's second official language should not be punished or treated as a 2nd class student. Section 2.2 of the Canadian Constitution guarantees that the official languages of Canada are French and English. I am simply wanting to give my children their constitutional right to speak French. Enrollment in both Deep Cove and Keating Elementary having been steadily increasing over the past decade. There are additional funds being provided to school districts when they have French Immersion schools to provide French as a constitutional right to Canadian Citizens across Canada.

Sincerely,

Olivia Fleming
985 Towner Park Rd
North Saanich, BC
V8L 5L6

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

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: 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

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:

> 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 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. 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: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:48 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: Policy 21 Student Transportation

From: Sibylla & Chris <sibylla.chris@gmail.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 10:16 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: Policy 21 Student Transportation

Hello Mr. Reid,

I am writing with some feedback and questions regarding Policy 21 for student transportation that I would like to be considered in the feedback process. I also have a question about some of the discussions in your virtual open house:

1) When we bought our house in Deep Cove in 2017, there was no concern that our kids would have bus transportation to middle and high schools when they would need it to get to schools offering French Immersion programs. Since then there has seemingly been a large increase in young families in the region. In your presentation you mentioned you used to be at 70% and now you are at near 100% capacity on the buses. This makes me concerned that the school board is not keeping up with some sort of growth plan to increase those services they have decided to provide like bus transportation. Is there a growth strategy you can share?

2) You also mentioned that the increased ridership may be due to the fact that there is no longer a cost for the bus to the riders. I would be more than happy to pay for this service and to have some sort of system that enables lower income families to afford it so we all have equal chance when registration time comes (similar to how the school covers school supplies for lower income families).

3) I find it a little confusing when you talk about all the amazing infrastructure and thousands of dollars you are using to convert your fleet to electric when some of this could remain to support more buses and drivers potentially. If climate change is your priority over getting kids to school with buses, then I think this may not be served when parents of French Immersion students or other "courtesy riders" will need to drive from farther locations there and back every day to take kids to school and retrieve them every day....followed by all their friends in their cars creating all sorts of congestion at the schools and polluting the air.

4) #3 in the policy - please define "exceptional transportation needs"

5) Can I please see a copy of Admin Procedures 560?

6) How do you prioritize within district program courtesy riders e.g. you have 100 extra French Immersion students, who gets priority within that group?

7) You mentioned that you have challenges with ghost riders and late registrations. Why wouldn't you amend admin procedures 560 to include stronger wording around that e.g. priority will be given to those who register on time and late registrations will be last priority in Admin 560 or those registered students who miss x number of days on the bus will be replaced by someone on the waitlist or something that might address that.

8) There was mention about a difference in catchment for French Immersion students and I am curious to get more information about that if you are able to provide that please?

I appreciate al the work you and your colleagues are putting into considering all our feedback and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best regards,
Sibylla Helms (mother of 2 kids in French Immersion)

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

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:

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 . 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 8:08 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>
Subject: French Immersion School Bus usage policy change - Feedback to SD63

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:

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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: Jason Reid
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:03 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: French Immersion Students at Deep Cove

From: CHLOE CROSS <chloeanncross@outlook.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 9:06 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: French Immersion Students at Deep Cove

Good evening

As a family who work and live local we are disappointed to learn that a school bus will not be available for our two children once they attend middle school.

They were enrolled in their local catchment and embraced the French immersion program with intentions of following this education path, along with the friendships formed, through to high school.

This will certainly present a challenge for us to maintain our work schedules and we appreciate if you could please forward our concern to those who may be able to help.

Thank you

Chloe and Jordan Cross

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:02 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: "Courtesy Riders" designation

From: Beau Barry <beaumbarry@gmail.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 6:59 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: "Courtesy Riders" designation

To: Jason Reid

I am a concerned parent who resides in Sidney, with a Daughter who will be attending Bayside Middle School's French Immersion program starting next year (2024/2025). I am concerned due to the exclusionary "Courtesy Riders" initiative that is being considered by Saanich Schools, which will directly affect my Daughter along with many of the French Immersion children at Deep Cove Elementary currently, as well as those who will attend in the future. The added fuel consumption travelling that distance twice a day for parents and young families alone, should deem this whole exercise worthy of deeper consideration, not to mention the added carbon footprint being directly attributable to Saanich Schools.

I cannot help but think that this is strictly a budget minded decision, while the concern should start and end with what is best for the children. These children, who have no other option to continue with their French studies in the Sidney catchment area, deserve a safe commute to and from School. This kind of initiative will not only increase traffic during both drop off and pick up times, adding between 40 & 50 vehicles to already busy routes between Sidney and Brentwood Bay, but it will also cause unforeseen absences and complications due to logistics between home and Bayside Middle School. The alternative options are grim, with BC Transits complicated routes in the area, and often at capacity buses being the only other option for many families. I refuse to believe that Saanich Schools would knowingly allow students to potentially become stranded far from home, due to the fact that a School District could not continue a service that has been offered for years.

If, "The district does not establish routes for programs of choice including French Immersion." Then perhaps, The District Boards policy requires revision, to avoid problems like this now and in the future. Last time I checked, Canada has two official languages and this feels like priority is heavily swayed to one.

I look forward to hearing the feedback submitted by the public with regards to this matter, if that's indeed possible.

Yours,
Beau Barry

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

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:

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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.

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

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 4:29 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: Bus transportation - french immersion

transportation policy feedback

From: J. Edwards <yo_jojo@yahoo.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 4:15 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: Bus transportation - french immersion

Hello,

I would like to voice my outrage and concern that the french immersion program is being referred to by SD63 as a program of choice and that french immersion students are not being given equal priority for school bus transportation. My daughter attend Deep Cover our catchment french immersion school. The French immersion program is an academic program offered by the school district that our taxes help fund the SD63 school district to run, just like the other programs offered. This is Canada, a bi-lingual country which is why we have french immersion as a program across the country. Policy 24 is wrong and discriminatory against families who are enrolled the French immersion.

Joanne Edwards

Leigh Glancie

From: Leigh Glancie
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 2:38 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: FW: Feedback on Transportation Policy related to French Immersion students from Deep Cove Elementary

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From: Laura Judson <lauraejudson@gmail.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 11:25 AM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: Fwd: Feedback on Transportation Policy related to French Immersion students from Deep Cove Elementary

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. It is important to recognize that when children are not adequately supported by an education system (ex. School closures, lack of transportation), it is the careers of women who usually experience setbacks as a result.

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

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 2:20 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: SD63 Transportation Feb 6th Meeting Input

more feedback

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 W̱SÁNEĆ people on whose traditional territory we live, learn, and teach. The W̱SÁNEĆ people have lived and worked on this land since time immemorial.

SAANICH SCHOOLS

From: Amanda Neal <amandaneal250@gmail.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 1:04 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: SD63 Transportation Feb 6th Meeting Input

Hi Jason,

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 is concerning and ignores some pretty basic fundamentals:

1. Apart from the facility and teachers themselves, at the very top of any education or school board budget should be transportation. Ensuring that as a basic right to education students are provided access by way of a bus. This is a safety and accessibility issue and should be prioritized as such.

2. By defining and differentiating French Immersion as a program of choice you fail to acknowledge the significance of French in Canada and the fact that we are a bilingual country. The Official Languages Act was adopted in 1969, this is not new. It made English AND French Canada's official languages. It's important to our history, identity and should be a part of everyday life in communities across Canada. Your definition of French Immersion would imply that French education is secondary to English and is not prioritized in the same manner. I went to French immersion elementary school in the 1980's and my parents had this discussion at that time concerning bus transportation - and were successful - it's shocking to me that 35+ years later it remains an issue here.

3. This is not a difficult issue to resolve. It's a function of planning, resources and funding. It simply needs to be prioritized as it should be within the budget or even establishing a user fee (across the board English and French) for those who require transportation to and from school by bus. If there are 50 or 100 kids who miss out on bus transportation, the cost associated for those parents (if it's even feasible based on their work, access to vehicle and responsibilities with getting other children to different schools eg. Deep Cove), is considerable. Gas for 30 minutes of driving twice a day, time away from work, environmental pollution, and added traffic and congestion to school parking lots and associated neighbourhoods. All of it is unnecessary and runs contrary to core values of our community and education system around sustainability, safety, accessibility etc. I really don't expect even a nominal fee would be required after appropriate assessment and review of the budget, but even if needed, it would be more affordable to spread across everyone as opposed to having it fall entirely on those unfortunate enough to be defined as "courtesy riders." Their students, they are all students....and their parents pay taxes towards education and services the same as everyone else.

4. By not providing bus transportation you are promoting bias and inequitable access to French Immersion for those students whose families have the privilege of a stay at home parent, self-employed parent or flexible work schedule. One might also suggest that those statistics favour higher income families, meaning that you are limiting this education option for those students who are privileged enough to benefit from such circumstances. Whether you realize that's what you are doing or not, I think we can agree there's something inherently very wrong with that. There should be no barriers to entry, the deciding factor between which of my childrens' friends carry-on with their french education and which do not, should not be a bus!

5. Beyond the points above, there's a genuine safety concern as the alternative for my child would be public transit. Public transit invites access to my eleven year old daughter by much older men and women daily with absolutely no supervision or oversight. Public transit buses can be full and drive past leaving my child stranded. Public transit buses are also subject to delays, transfers, and other unknowns that again can result in my child being put in a vulnerable position. Public transit buses do not have the safety stop signs that require other cars to stop and provide my child an opportunity to cross the street safely - instead she would be required to run across West Saanich Road (where there are no cross walks nearby and limited lighting particularly during the winter months). I have seen Bayside students (children) attempting to do the same and it's incredibly concerning and absolutely unnecessary. That's on you. Please prioritize my child's safety, no matter the type of education she is receiving. It should be irrelevant.

Simply put - I'm disappointed this is even a question or an issue. I expect an appropriate solution (bus and driver) be provided. Please share this note as part of the February 6th board committee meeting when amendments to the Transportation Policy are being considered.

Thank you,

Amanda

Leigh Glancie

From: Jason Reid
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2024 2:20 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fw: French Immersion Transportation Policy Concerns at Bayside

more feedback

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 W̱SÁNEĆ people on whose traditional territory we live, learn, and teach. The W̱SÁNEĆ people have lived and worked on this land since time immemorial.

SAANICH SCHOOLS

From: Chris Neal <cmneal83@gmail.com>
Sent: January 30, 2024 12:57 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: French Immersion Transportation Policy Concerns at Bayside

Attn: Jason Reid

I am writing to express my deep concern with the School District's policy on Transportation.

Specifically, I am extremely concerned that the current policy:

1) Unintentionally, but knowingly segments students into different classes of attendees (those who are afforded access to transportation & those who are not), based on their chosen and protected right to learn in the French language. Although proximity to the school has been provided as the rationale, the underlying cause and demographic are those children who are French speaking. I believe this to be a significant concern and risk to SD63.

2) Inappropriately operates from a flawed Core Purpose or Objective. The policy and the District's rationale for its current structure, appear to have been built around wording that has been crafted to provide reasons "Why We Do Not Have To..." provide certain services, as opposed to focussing on what the Transportation Policy should be focussed on, which is "How do we transport as many school children as possible, safely, to and from school".

Part of the frustration is that clearly we as parents understand that the current policy speaks to courtesy riders as being secondary. That doesn't mean it is correct or right. Students, regardless of where they live, have been designated to

attend this school. Why is the Transportation policy second guessing and re-evaluating this decision? If you are a student, you are a student. You are no better, worse, lesser or greater than any other student in any way. Nor should the transportation policy treat these students as such. This IS our catchment school for French immersion. Perhaps your definition of catchment should be updated.

The question you should ask is, **how do you transport as many kids as possible, in a safe manner, to and from the school.**

That should be your guiding purpose. After that Purpose has been defined, we should evaluate supply and demand.

You have, from what I understand, dozens of children on the Saanich Peninsula who are on waitlists to have access to school transportation. If this were 5 or 6 students, well then certainly a pickup from Deep Cove or Ardmore would not make sense. But we are talking about full bus loads of students that you will not consider, because of an incorrect policy that is not focussed on trying to transport as many children to school as possible.

As a result, this creates congested roadways, school parking lots, and more dangerous pickups and dropoffs as a result of a significant and material increase in traffic.

The SD63 Strategic Plan states under Global Citizenship that it wants to:
1) **develop socially responsible citizens**. Let's start by removing Thousands of vehicle trips per year off the roads by providing transportation to this large number of students.
2) **innovate(ing) to meet diverse learning needs for students while continually promoting equitable opportunities for student success.** Let's stop saying "nothing can change" and innovate here! Clearly this is a problem. Address it. Solve it. Find a better solution than simply saying "No" over and over again. Do something.

As a parent, this process has felt non-genuine and somewhat deceitful in its claims that it has solicited feedback. The only purpose of soliciting feedback, is under the assumption that the feedback was being considered and that change was possible. There is nothing more frustrating for the public than hearing policy administrators state that "this is how it is, and that's how it's always been, and it is impossible to change it". The word "impossible" is literally what we were told from a Transportation representative at a public consultation meeting online, several months back. I pushed back on the word impossible to no avail at that time but clearly that is an unacceptable stance or opinion for the Transportation representative to have (as they were asking for feedback). As a side note, it's also incredibly possible to change and the department should be constantly striving to do so.

I hope change does take place, and trust that the District will put a higher priority on finding ways they CAN do things better, rather than simply providing us parents with reasons why they Can Not.

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

Sincerely,

Chris Neal
Parent of 3 French Immersion Children at Deep Cove Elementary who will transition to Bayside.

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 W̱SÁNEĆ people on whose traditional territory we live, learn, and teach. The W̱SÁNEĆ people have lived and worked on this land since time immemorial.

SAANICH SCHOOLS

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>
Subject: SD63 Transportation Concerns

To all,
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.
Our son is currently in French immersion at Bayside Middle School and takes the #9/5 bus from École Deep Cove 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. 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: Friday, January 26, 2024 3:03 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fwd: Feedback to Draft Changes of Transportation Policy

More feedback

From: Tara Hammer <tara.hammer@lordco.com>
Sent: Friday, January 26, 2024 2:33:00 PM
To: Jason Reid <jreid@saanichschools.ca>
Subject: Feedback to Draft Changes of Transportation Policy

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a parent of two children who attend French Immersion programs on the Peninsula. We reside on Curties Point and my eldest daughter attends Bayside Middle School, my youngest is at Deep Cove Elementary. Both of my children are flourishing in the French program and have enjoyed the challenges and rewards of learning Canada's second official language. Were it not for bus transportation my children would not be able to enjoy the continued benefit of the French immersion program beyond elementary school due to both mine and my husband's work schedules and the very limited, if non-existent, public bus accessibility to Bayside.

It was very disappointing to see that the proposed changes further restrict "courtesy" riders to use the bus. French immersion students should not be considered "courtesy" riders when over half of the classes in the elementary schools are French. I know many families that made the difficult decision to transfer their children to the English program due to the distance of Bayside Middle School. We are over a 20 minutes drive away from Bayside and there are no other options available beyond using a taxi or an uber which are not suitable options for an 11 year old child. The school district should embrace the continued development of the French immersion program by supporting these students to continue their education and guarantee those that want to continue a seat on the bus.

On another note, I believe adding a registration fee is an excellent idea as many riders only use the bus a handful of times a month which is unfair for those children that rely on it.

Please reconsider the changes being made and consider supporting the continued education of students wishing to pursue French immersion education.

Sincerely,

Tara Hammer

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

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 todays 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: Leigh Glancie
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 8:06 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: FW: New and drafted transportation policy

From: savanna.schildroth@pensionsbc.ca <savanna.schildroth@pensionsbc.ca> on behalf of Savanna Schildroth <savanna.schildroth@pensionsbc.ca>
Sent: January 23, 2024 1:11 PM
To: General Inquiries <inquiries@Saanichschools.ca>
Subject: New and drafted transportation policy

This policy (even the amended one) is not going to solve the transportation problem, its going to create a multitude of other problems. Both environmental (increased driving and cars), social economical (only those with means to not work or to drive will be able to use these programs), more congestion around the already busy schools, as well as more pressure on the already overloaded out of school programs. What it is going to do is create a bigger inequality divide then already exists among the children. It's going to punish the children of parents who work and can't drive them to school every day by limiting their academic options. French is Canada's second language, we teach it at all schools regardless of if they are in English or French Immersion. If a parent or even child wants the option to advance their future by taking the FI route they should be allowed to. By continuing to make them courtesy riders and even lowering them you are telling them they do not deserve the same options as the wealthy kids, or you are telling their parents they should limit their own careers to ensure they can drive their kids to school and pick them up every single day. That or try and get into the limited before and afterschool care programs, which are already at capacity and not meeting the needs. Do you plan to work on increasing these programs spaces to accommodate the children who you deem not worthy of riding the bus? The option should never be to create a bigger inequality gap, it should be to reduce it. You have more then enough spaces to increase the bus system, while your one lot maybe full you own multiple lots and have more then enough space to park a few extra buses - lots of schools the province over park buses at the school and while this may not be ideal it could be a short term solution while you work with the city to get a second lot if truly needed. Do not punish children for trying to improve their future by taking a second language, or even a athletic program. In doing so you are only going to punish the children of lower income households and create even more congestion on the roads, which leads to more pollution and traffic accidents near schools. As well as putting even more pressure on the already strained before and afterschool programs. You can't try and "fix" one problem without first acknowledging and fixing all the current/future problems the "fix" will create.

Leigh Glancie

From: Leigh Glancie
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 8:46 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: FW: Bus Transportation Policy

From: Tonja Matthews <tonja.matthews7@gmail.com>
Sent: January 23, 2024 9:23 PM
To: Transportation <transportation@Saanichschools.ca>
Cc: gbridges@saanichschools.c <gbridges@saanichschools.c>
Subject: Bus 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.

Hello,

As a concerned parent, I am writing regarding the latest bus transportation policy.

I would like to let the district know that this policy creates inequity for French immersion students and does not address the overall needs for transportation in our district.

It seems to me that instead of adding more routes, restrictions are being put in place thereby limiting the transportation provided.

At the transportation meeting we were told you had around 700 students asking for transportation which you're unable to provide. Instead of putting in the work to seek a budget increase, it appears the decision was made to restrict offered services instead of addressing the need.

This decision not only harms French immersion students but it harms all children going to a school of "choice", be it language, sports or another specific program. It's basically trying to punish kids for pursuing an 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 will be able to pursue these programs if this happens. Transportation should be for ALL students regardless of the program they are in. The response should be to either add more bus routes or add more programs to the schools so students don't have to switch schools and create a bigger class divide.

Our kids deserve better.

Sincerely,

Tonja Matthews

Leigh Glancie

From: COPACS PRESIDENT <copacssd63@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 9:45 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Fwd: Transportation policy

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 <copacssd63@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 todays 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,~~ aAdditional 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

CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH – BC & YUKON BRANCH
227c-1555 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver BC, V6J 1S1
Tel: 778.329.9115 **Toll Free:** 1.800.665.1222 **Email:** info@cpf.bc.ca **Web:** cpf.bc.ca

Leigh Glancie

From: Wendy Bird <wendy_bird@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2024 9:43 AM
To: Leigh Glancie
Subject: Policy 21 Feedback

Hello Leigh,

I would like to provide my thoughts on Policy 21.

1. Would be possible the list the number of passengers permitted on the buses in the document?

1.

- The final line in the document states the seating limit for passenger vans: ***10 The Superintendent will establish and keep current, safety procedures for the district's transportation system and for the rental of commercial buses or vans for student transportation. Passenger vans shall be limited to a maximum of 10 passengers.***

- As the buses seem to be full most of the time, it might benefit parents to know the allotted legal limit of passengers permitted on the specific sized buses used in the District. This has come up numerous times at our PAC meetings; wondering how many students are permitted and the concern that they are being overloaded to accommodate more students - safety is a concern.

3.

2. Will there be a procedure in place regarding students that are signed up for bus ridership but do not use their seat?

- I have overheard this being mentioned by parents in the past; they sign up their child for a seat just in case they ever need one and their child either never uses it or rarely uses it.

- As students registered to ride the bus are provided with bus passes, the swiping of the pass would help document which students use the bus and the regularity of their use. This could then help document those riders that either do not, or do not use the bus as outlined in their registration - ex. signed up for am and pm usage but only uses the bus in the am / pm. This could then help some of the families on the waiting lists.

3. Would the District be willing to hire additional drivers for the same bus number and route?

- For example, Bus 21 that leaves Prospect Lake Elementary School in the afternoon is full, 3 students to a seat. I don't know if there are any families on the waiting list. If there were however, would the District be willing to employ further drivers, even if it is a smaller bus, to help alleviate the need / waiting list?

Thank you for your time,

Wendy

Leigh Glancie

From: Leanne McKeachie <lmckeachie@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 12:42 PM
To: Leigh Glancie
Cc: copacssd63@gmail.com
Subject: Parent feedback on Policy 21 (Student Transportation)

Hi,

We have children who are currently in the regular program catchment school of Prospect Lake Elementary and Royal Oak Middle School. For the 2024/25 school year we will have a child attending Claremeont.

Our house is located 3.7km walking distance from Claremont. While there is also a major highway crossing required, this is below the current 4.8km walking limit, and the journey would take about an hour (each way) to complete.

While I believe that most Students grade 6-12 should be capable of walking for an hour straight, I question whether it's reasonable to require it 5 days a week, twice a day, rain or shine. This is what would be required of students who are denied bus access because they live approx 4km (give or take) away from their catchment school.

A 30 minute walk to school seems reasonable, and 45 minutes seems a bit much, however a 60 minute walk to school feels overly excessive.

I noticed that the walking limit for elementary aged children has been reduced significantly, yet not for Students grade 6-12.

I would like to request the walking limit for students of Grades 6-12 be lowered as well.

Regards,
Leanne & Alex McKeachie