



Memorandum

Date: May 22, 2020
To: Board of Education
From: Ryan Stierman, Secretary-Treasurer

Action Item: **Cancellation of Regular Transportation Services – 2019/20 School Year**

1.0 ISSUE STATEMENT

The Government of British Columbia has released its BC K-12 Education Restart Plan. As part of the Plan, the Province announced five potential stages that school districts can be under during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Stage 5 - Suspend all in-class instruction for all grades and students. Remote and online learning for all students;
- Stage 4 - Current stage - In-class learning for children of essential service workers and vulnerable students. Remote and online learning continues for most students;
- Stage 3 - In-class learning for students in kindergarten to Grade 5 on a part-time basis. Access to in-class learning as needed for grades 6 to 12 on a part-time basis. Remote and online learning continues to be available for students;
- Stage 2 - In-class learning for all students in elementary school (K to 7) on a full-time basis. In-class learning for secondary students (grades 8 to 12) on a part-time basis. Remote and online learning continues to be available for secondary students, and;
- Stage 1 - return to full in-class instruction.

The Provincial Government has set June 1, 2020 to be the date that school districts move to Stage 3, leaving sixteen days of instruction under this stage. Parents of elementary students will be provided with the option to attend class two days a week, which would equal eight days of in class instruction per student. Middle and Secondary students would be provided the opportunity to attend class one day per week, or four days of instruction.

In light of numerous operational and safety factors as well as the part-time nature of in school programming for the remainder of the school year under Stage 3, staff is recommending the cancellation of regular busing service for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. The District would continue special needs transportation.

Staff is also recommending that the Board of Education reduce the transportation fee paid by parents for 2019/20 by 30% to reflect that transportation will only have been provided for seven out of the ten months of the school year.

2.0 POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Per Provincial guidelines on student transportation, *buses used for transporting students should be cleaned and disinfected according the guidance provided in the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document. Additional measures should be taken, including:*

- *Encouraging private (e.g. parents or caregivers) vehicle use where possible to decrease transportation density,*
- *Consider installing a physical barrier between the driver and passengers (e.g. plexiglass),*
- *Have students sit in their own seat. - Students should be separated side-to-side and front to back. - Students from the same household can share seats if space is limited.*

The District is unable in such a short time to restructure its routes and service levels to a new schedule prior to June 1, 2020. Due to the interdependence of routes, in order to provide transportation to all students for the sixteen days, the District will be required to run all of its routes, which would remove all drivers from their current cleaning duties.

Currently, bus drivers are providing cleaning services to schools, which under Provincial guidelines require more frequent cleaning of touch points. With a heightened need for even more cleaning services at schools with additional students being present, the reduction of manpower would pose significant challenges. The District could attempt to recruit replacements for the cleaning duties that the drivers are performing from its casual CUPE workforce, but it is unlikely that it will be able to hire the level of additional staff required.

47 out of the District's 87 regular drivers are 60 years or older and thirty are between 50 and 59 years old. Many drivers who are immune-compromised are currently performing duties where they are able to isolate and reduce contacts with others and may not be available for driving duties. It is unknown if the District will have sufficient drivers to cover all routes.

Significantly reducing physical contact on the school bus pose a significant challenge for the bus driver to supervise this requirement for young students. We are currently transporting grounds summer workers on a school bus and the driver has been instructed to remain outside the bus when the summer students load or unload the bus, which is currently being done in a parking lot or in the bus lane at the school. This procedure will not work on a regular bus route as the driver is required to remain in the seat and in control of the bus, students and traffic, at all times during the loading or unloading process.

Federal D250 Regulations for school bus manufacturing in Canada and the Commercial Vehicle Regulation does not permit any modification of the school bus to allow for plexiglass shields as recommended, however, discussions are progressing at a Provincial and Federal level with a possible retro-fit of a safety shield for the driver, which is anticipated to be in place for September 2020.

Current numbers of registered riders are as follows:

	2019-20		
	Eligible	Courtesy	Total
Elementary	819	698	1,517
Middle	1,093	687	1,780
Secondary	1,643	614	2,257
Total	3,555	1,999	5,554

On a survey to elementary students, 550 students were specified as requiring transportation or 36.2% of riders. To serve these elementary students, 42 routes would be required to run. To serve all students, all 72 routes would be required to run.

School District No. 22 (Vernon) cancelled regular transportation for the same reasons being presented in this memo.

3.0 SECRETARY –TREASURER/CFO COMMENTS

The recommendation to cancel transportation services for the month of June provides the District with the additional resources required to ensure the safety of our schools. For those routes that will resume in June, the District has developed safety protocols as shown in Appendix A.

School Principals will be empowered to develop solutions to handle those situations where vulnerable students require transportation to attend school.

Should there be a decision to refund fees, the District will begin to process refunds back to families. As there will be over 5,000 refunds to process, families can expect to receive a refund by the end of June.

4.0 STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT: The Board of Education cancels regular Transportation Services for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year;

AND THAT: The Board of Education reduces the Transportation Fee for the 2019-20 school year by 30% and refunds parents.

5.0 APPENDIX

A. COVID-19 Transportation Safety Procedures

COVID-19 Transportation Safety Procedures

- Employees are required to review the Central Okanagan Public Schools Staff and Student Safety Plan and follow all instructions and signage posted in District schools and buildings.
- The following information is in addition to the District's COVID Safety plan and drivers are required to practice the procedures as set out below, whenever operating a bus.
- Wash stations and restroom facilities are available at each school.

The Bus Driver:

1. Will enforce physical distancing rules.
2. Must put on face shield when passengers are loading or unloading the bus.
3. Will provide instruction to passengers as to proper loading and unloading procedures.
4. Will supervise the loading and unloading process.
5. Drivers will be assigned a bus and will not switch buses or passengers.
6. PPE – Although there is no requirement for the District to provide non-medical (cloth or home-made) masks, employees may bring their own non-medical mask to the worksite.

The Passenger:

1. Must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver to confirm that neither the child nor someone in the household currently has symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease.
2. Will use hand sanitizer upon entering the bus.
3. Will load one passenger loading at a time – once past the first seat, the next passenger can board.
4. Will sit one passenger per seat and will remain seated until instructed to unload.
5. When loading, first passenger to board the bus goes directly to the back seat and the next passenger on goes to the next available seat and so on.
6. When unloading, the last passenger to board the bus will leave the bus from the front seat first and the next passenger and so on.

The School Bus

1. Hand sanitizer available on the bus and should be used as passengers and the driver load the bus.
2. Drivers will be required to disinfect touch points and wipe windows and seats inside the bus, between each run.
3. At the end of the shift the bus shall be fueled, garbage removed and floors are swept.
4. Please remove all personal items at the end of each day.