



# Memorandum

**Date:** April 26, 2024  
**To:** Planning and Facilities Committee  
**From:** Rob Drew, Director of Operations  
**Prepared By:** Gail Prokopchuk, Transportation Manager

**Information:** 2023/2024 Transportation Services Update

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## 1.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

None.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

The Transportation Services Department (the Department) has implemented several significant processes and procedures which support the vision, purpose and goals of the Board of Education and provide direction and continuity for managing the long term and day to day operations of the Department.

## 3.0 INFORMATION STATEMENT

Each year, the Department manages the opening and closing date for school bus transportation applications. Although the Department accepts transportation applications throughout the year, school bus routes are designed based on eligible riders, so priority for the next school year is given to applications received between January 31<sup>st</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

Changing student demographics requires the Transportation Manager to continually review bus routes and apply adjustments where required, which can include the addition or removal of bus routes and services. Planning school bus routes has its challenges as there are multiple changing factors throughout the school year. These include increased enrollment, family movement around the District, courtesy waitlists, educational programming, geographic accessibility, road upgrades, and the occasional capping of schools.

## Transported Students – as of April 10, 2024

Description	#
Inclusive Education Routes	13
Inclusive Education Students	182
School Bus Routes	73
Eligible Riders	4,119
Courtesy Riders	781
Transported Students	5,082

## Transportation Projects and Initiatives

During the 2023/2024 school year, the Department implemented a telematics system named "Tyler Drive™". The new program is a feature of the Traversa routing software and provides for a tablet being mounted in the school bus that provides the driver with bus route information including bus stop locations, route directions, start and end times of the bus route, students assigned to the route, employee timekeeping and vehicle inspections.

The project began in October, 2023 with a pilot of 20 routes. In February, 2024 the remaining 53 routes were equipped with the tablet. The Department is currently implementing Phase 2 of the project by assigning a bus pass card for all students assigned to routes.

The new technology is fully integrated in real time with the Department's routing software and offers enhanced student safety, optimized routing, improved fleet efficiency and improved communication with parents, drivers, and schools. Phase 3 of the project will be implemented in the 2024/2025 school year. "My Ride" is a mobile app which allows parents to track the location of their child's school bus and receive real-time updates, enhancing communication and providing peace of mind for parents.

Each month, the Department completes approximately 350 field study and sports field study requests. The cost of providing this service for our schools has increased due to increased costs for fuel, repairs and maintenance, and bus driver salaries. Some of these increased costs will be offset by the recent Board of Education motion to set the transportation fee to \$450/year (increased from \$400/year) for each bus rider, for the period effective July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

In discussions with School Administrators, a recommendation to establish a "flat rate" to common destinations for field studies was requested so that schools could budget more effectively for these events. Field studies are currently charged to schools using actual trip times and can vary from day to day based on traffic, wait times or other unforeseen factors. This has resulted in the costs potentially being different for the same trip, to the same location, from the same school.

Based on feedback, the Department has restructured the fee and processing system to support schools with pre-determined rates based on the distance and time of a field study. The new fee model, scheduled for implementation in September, 2024 will provide schools with consistency and a final cost prior to confirming the trip; which will support schools with future planning of field studies for budgeting purposes.

The Department continues to collaborate with schools and other departments such as Inclusive Education and International Education to ensure students, regardless of their specific needs or circumstances, have access to transportation services.

Our Department's goal is to create an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported in their educational journey. This collaborative effort allows the students who require inclusive supports in transportation or, ensuring our visiting students can fully participate in the educational experience.

#### **4.0 DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

The Department has been working to modify, streamline and apply procedures and policies to support a sustainable level of transportation service that can be managed effectively today and into the future. The Department has defined protocols, messages, and timelines to ensure stakeholders and parents are receiving communication in a timely manner and the Department is operating in an inclusive and equitable manner, providing students with the safest level of transportation service.

#### **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

N/A

#### **6.0 APPENDICES**

None.