

## Student Transportation Information Session



### ASBOA New Members Orientation September 13, 2018

Alberta Education, Strategic Services and Governance  
Business Operations and Stakeholder Support Branch



## Student Transportation Funding

- *School Act – Section 51 REVISED*
- *School Transportation Regulation REVISED*
- Transportation eligibility criteria review
- *Funding Manual for School Authorities*
- Funding applications
- Transportation audits

## School Act Revisions

- The following changes have been made to Section 51 of the *School Act*, effective **September 2018**:
  - 51(1) – reference to the distance requirement in the *School Transportation Regulation* is replaced with a more general reference to the criteria, if any, set out in the regulation.
  - 51(2) – requirement to provide transportation on a route that is not more than 2.4 kilometres from the residence of the student is repealed.
  - 51(3.1) – new language is added to allow the Minister the power, where it is reasonable to do so, to direct two or more boards to co-operate with respect to the transportation of students.
  - 51(4) – distance calculation requirements are repealed.

## School Act – Section 51

- (1) Subject to the regulations, a board shall **provide for** the transportation of a student to and from the site of the school in which the board has enrolled the student if the student resides within the attendance area established by the board, within the boundaries of the district or division and **if the criteria, if any, set out in the regulations are met.**
- (2) Repealed.
- (3) Specifies that a board can charge fees **subject to the regulation.**
- (3.1) **Where in the opinion of the Minister it is reasonable to do so, the Minister may direct two or more boards to co-operate with respect to the transportation of students.**
- (4) Repealed.
- (5) Specifies the Minister's power to make regulations without limitations.

## ***School Transportation Regulation*** **Section 3 Revisions**

- The following changes have been made to the *School Transportation Regulation*, effective **September 2018**:
  - 3 – student must reside at least 2.4 kilometres from school.
  - 3.1 – transportation must be provided on a route that is not more than 2.4 kilometres from the residence of the student.
  - 3.2 – distance must be measured along a travelled road or public right-of-way.
  - 16.1 – the regulation expires September 1, 2019.

## ***School Transportation Regulation*** **Key Sections**

### **Section 6 – Transportation fee restrictions**

- Cannot charge a fee for students who attend their designated school for regular or special education programming if they reside 2.4 kilometres or more from their school.
- Cannot charge a fee for students who are transported on a special transportation route – regardless of distance.
- Cannot charge transit riders any more than the difference between the cost of the student transit pass and the funding rate for an eligible student.

## ***School Transportation Regulation*** **Key Sections**

### **Section 7 – Transportation fee amount limitations**

- Transportation fee calculation – Transportation fees for ineligible and school of choice students can not exceed the net cost of providing transportation for those students.
- Surpluses – If a jurisdiction has a transportation surplus and charges transportation fees, the portion of the surplus that is equal to the total fees received is protected and must be reinvested in the jurisdiction's transportation operations within two school years of incurring the surplus. It cannot be used to offset costs in other areas of the jurisdiction.

## ***School Transportation Regulation*** **Key Sections**

### **Section 8 – Transportation policy requirements**

- Demonstrate to parents the need to charge fees.
- Fee waiver or refund criteria and process.
- Process for informing parents and staff about fee waiver or refund process.
- Fee dispute resolution process.

## ***School Transportation Regulation*** **Key Sections**

### **Sections 9 to 14 – fee schedules**

- Must be submitted annually to the Minister for review by May 31.
- New fees or any fee that has increased by more the 5% is subject to approval by the Minister and must be “reasonable and otherwise justified.”
- Must report annually by November 30 on how fees were spent.
- Fee schedule must be clearly communicated to parents.
- Refunds must be provided to parents for the overpayment of proposed fees that were not approved by the Minister.

## **Transportation Eligibility Criteria Review** **Spring 2017**

- Government is currently considering possible changes to the student transportation eligibility criteria in the *School Transportation Regulation*.
- In spring 2017 we completed a three-month engagement process, including a public online survey that was completed by more the 12,000 Albertans, to gather feedback and ideas from parents, stakeholders and school authorities.
- Department officials also conducted information sessions at the spring conferences/meetings for several stakeholder groups.

## Transportation Eligibility Criteria Review Next Steps

- The Minister is currently reviewing the feedback and survey data we received from parents, boards and stakeholders as he considers possible changes to the current eligibility criteria.
- We expect a decision this fall regarding possible criteria changes that could be implemented as early as the 2019/20 school year.

## Funding Manual – 2018/19

- Transportation funding information is provided in the following sections:
  - Rural Transportation – 1.20
  - Urban Transportation – 1.21
  - Special Transportation – 1.23
  - ECS Special Transportation – 1.25
  - Funding Rates for Transportation – 8.1
  - Reporting Requirements: Transportation – 9.1
  - Glossary of Terms

## Funding Application Deadline – November 30

- Transportation funding applications are due for rural, urban and Francophone jurisdictions.
- Most school boards use transportation routing software to provide accurate student eligibility data for their transportation funding applications and also to assist with routing and boundary planning.
- Completed the applications are submitted to Alberta Education via SharePoint.

## Rural Funding Application

**Funding amount for each eligible passenger/eligible transported ECS child**  

$$= (\text{rural transportation rate} + \text{distance funding}) \times \text{weighting factor}$$

- **Rural Transportation Rate** – determined by a jurisdiction's density factor (number of transported students and effective transportation service area).
- **Distance Funding** – determined according to whether a student is attending his/her designated school, a school of choice, a school in another jurisdiction, or a funded alternative program.
- **Weighting Factor** – Kindergarten to Grade 6 = **1.0**, Grades 7 to 12 = **1.5**
- **Other funding provided on this application** – Special transportation, Cooperative transportation, Interschool transportation, Boarding, Weekend transportation.

## 2018/19 Rural Transportation Rates

Density of Effective Transportation Service Area										
Weighted Passengers	0-0.29	0.30-0.35	.36-.57	.58-.76	.77-.95	.96-1.14	1.15-1.30	1.31-1.45	1.46-3.01	3.02+
0 - 700	\$709	\$810	\$881	\$898	\$907	\$978	\$1,129	\$1,309	\$1,838	\$2,111
701 - 1400	\$709	\$782	\$870	\$887	\$894	\$967	\$1,107	\$1,180	\$1,475	\$1,961
1401 - 2100	\$709	\$773	\$864	\$881	\$890	\$907	\$1,098	\$1,165	\$1,426	\$1,897
2107 - 2800	\$709	\$733	\$852	\$868	\$885	\$904	\$1,012	\$1,160	\$1,269	\$1,807
2801 - 3500	\$709	\$729	\$836	\$855	\$870	\$897	\$947	\$1,066	\$1,225	\$1,438
3501 - 4200	\$709	\$721	\$770	\$842	\$857	\$893	\$939	\$1,040	\$1,124	\$1,321
4201 - 4900	\$702	\$709	\$754	\$774	\$842	\$887	\$932	\$979	\$1,044	\$1,210
4901 - 5600	\$702	\$702	\$710	\$754	\$785	\$863	\$890	\$942	\$1,004	\$1,105
5601 - 6300	\$702	\$702	\$702	\$721	\$765	\$796	\$878	\$911	\$968	\$1,040
6301+	\$702	\$702	\$702	\$702	\$721	\$776	\$799	\$891	\$929	\$990

Distance (km)	2.4 - 6	6.01 - 10	10.01 - 14	14.01 - 18	18.01 - 26	26.01 - 38	> 38
Rate per Km	\$10.58	\$15.48	\$18.52	\$21.30	\$26.12	\$28.56	\$31.45

## Urban Funding Application

**Funding amount for each eligible passenger/eligible transported ECS child = (applicable urban transportation rate + distance) x weighting factor**  
**NOTE – Distance and weighting factors only apply to students riding a yellow bus.**

- **Urban Transportation Rate** – applies to urban centres with a population over 10,000. Three rates based on population ranges: 10,000 to 30,000 - \$507 per student; 30,000 to 50,000 - \$487 per student; 50,000 plus - \$466 per student.
- **Distance** – determined according to whether a student is attending his/her designated school, a school of choice, a school in another jurisdiction, or a funded alternative program.
- **Weighting Factor** – Kindergarten to Grade 6 = **1.0**, Grades 7 to 12 = **1.5**  
(Distance and weighting does not apply to students transported by public transit)
- **Other funding provided on this application** – Special transportation, Cooperative transportation, Interschol transportation, Weekend transportation.



## Metro Transportation Funding

- Funding is calculated by Alberta Education using the jurisdiction's total funded student enrolment. No application to submit.
- Funding is based on "**expected eligible passengers**" x metro transportation rate.
- **Expected Eligible Passengers** = (# of funded students x .73) minus a non-ridership % factor for students attending elementary (75%), junior high (40%) and senior high (25%) based on average school enrolment for either the jurisdiction or the four metro boards, whichever is less.
- Special transportation funding is provided for 80% of severe students, as per the jurisdiction's severe disability profile.

## Cooperative Transportation Funding

- Rural Cooperative Transportation
  - In addition to regular rural transportation funding, **boards** that are transporting non-resident students who are **eligible passengers/eligible transported ECS children** (through a cooperative bussing arrangement) to a **school** of the **board**, or to another **school jurisdiction**, are eligible for the following funding incentive:

$$\begin{array}{c} \# \text{ of non-resident } \mathbf{eligible \text{ passenger/eligible transported ECS children}} \\ \text{transported under a cooperative bussing arrangement} \\ \times \\ 50\% \text{ of the transporting } \mathbf{board's Density Rate} \end{array}$$

- The primary intent of this additional funding is to offset the lower per-student Density rate that the transporting jurisdiction will usually experience as a result of transporting additional students from another school jurisdiction.

## Cooperative Transportation Funding

- Urban Cooperative Transportation (except the metro jurisdictions)
  - In addition to regular urban transportation funding, **eligible passengers/eligible transported ECS children** who are transported by yellow school bus as part of an urban cooperative bussing arrangement to a **school** of the **board** or to another **school jurisdiction**, are eligible for the following funding incentive:

$$\begin{array}{c} \# \text{ of eligible passenger/eligible transported ECS children transported} \\ \text{by yellow school bus under an urban cooperative bussing arrangement} \\ \times \\ 15\% \text{ of the applicable Urban Transportation Base Rate} \end{array}$$

- If the majority of the riders on a cooperative route are residents of one board, a minimum of 10 per cent of the **eligible passengers/eligible transported ECS children** on this route must from the other board in order for it to be considered a cooperative route.

## Other Funding Scenarios

- **Francophone Boards** – 3.5 factor applied to urban student funding.
- **Charter Schools** – Urban student funding is based on the metro urban transportation rate; rural student funding is based on the applicable rural funding rate only. This base rate funding is provided for eligible transported students only. No weighting or distance funding.
- **Private Schools** – Grade 1 to 12 students are not eligible for transportation funding.
- **First Nations Students** – Are not eligible for transportation funding if they reside on a reserve.
- **Wheelchair Lifts** – Funding is provided to reimburse jurisdictions for the cost of purchasing and installing a wheelchair lift on a bus.

## Transportation Audits

- A selection of jurisdictions are audited yearly to ensure adherence to current legislation, regulations and funding policies.
- Audits are conducted on site by department staff, primarily with the Transportation Manager / Director.
- Upon notification of an audit, jurisdictions are required to submit their transportation software student database for pre-audit analysis.
- The goal is to ensure that funding policy is being applied consistently and that eligible students are funded correctly.
- The standardized audit process looks for exceptions to student data on the funding application and in the transportation software database as well as adherence to funding policy.

## Audit Results and Appeal Process

- Department staff will also provide advice to improve grant information gathering processes where necessary.
- Jurisdictions are also required to provide copies of parent-provided agreements, transportation agreements, education service agreements and bus operator contracts / pay schedules. Bus routes may also be reviewed.
- A preliminary verbal report will be provided at end of the audit visit and a completed audit report will be sent to the Secretary Treasurer within 1 to 2 weeks.
- The jurisdiction has 2 weeks to appeal the results of the audit report to the Director of Business Operations and Stakeholder Support.

# Questions



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