

April 24, 2024

To Parent(s) or Caregiver(s)

Re: School District # 27 Transportation Services

You are receiving this letter as the parent or caregiver of a registered school bus rider. SD#27 wishes to advise families that we are conducting an in-depth review of our school catchment areas and current transportation routes.

The district's goal is to create, and have in effect, a more efficient transportation services that ensures resources are better utilized across transportation and facilities, **by September 2024**. SD 27 bus routes and catchments have not been reviewed in more than 10 years. There are no changes being contemplated for the transportation of students with disabilities and diverse abilities or to arrangements made under a Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plan.

The BC School Act does not require school districts to provide school bus transportation services and therefore it is the responsibility of each family to determine the best transportation option, to and from school, to meet their needs. SD27 works hard to support families and students where possible. Several school districts across the province offer a fee-based approach to transportation services.

In the 2023/24 School Year, we are projected to spend \$5,430,290 or 9% of our total operating expenses on Transportation. Northern districts with similar geographical areas spend an average of 5%. The District has finite resources, and we must be fiscally responsible in all areas of our budget allocations to ensure maximum resources are directed toward improving education outcomes.

The District has also been reviewing our existing routes compared with our transportation policies and administrative procedures. We have identified that there are inconsistencies between our policies and our practices, specifically in the following three areas:

1. Stated walk limits and distance between bus stops
 - a. Fewer stops and central stops students walk to
2. School of Choice and Courtesy riders.
 - a. This would be followed consistently **with no ridership privileges** unless space is deemed available on existing runs.
 - i. School of Choice letters clearly state, as a condition of requesting enrolment at a school other than their local catchment school: *"Please be advised that parents/caregivers will assume responsibility for transportation"*.
 - ii. Courtesy riders, those students going places other than between home and school, would no longer be accommodated,
3. Registered bus users who then don't use the reserved bus seat.

The District is undertaking a transportation review for multiple reasons: safety of staff and students, consistent service, and effective and efficient bus routes. Our inconsistent practice is a result of trying to accommodate diverse requests which, ironically, cause frustrations from users due to complex runs, length of runs and combination of runs when short drivers (often a result of trying to accommodate too many runs).

The timeline is to identify any changes to policy and routes by early May 2024, with those changes effective September 2024. This will allow for information to be distributed to families and for feedback around proposed changes to be received before any recommendations being adopted by the Board.

For additional information, see, School Act [RSBC 1996, Part 6, Division 2, Section 83 and Section 85(2.c)]

Please refer to the District website for updates at www.sd27.bc.ca.

Any feedback or concerns can be forwarded to info@sd27.bc.ca and will be brought forward to the Finance, Facilities and Transportation Committee. Alternatively, Parents, Caregivers, and community members can also attend, virtually or in-person, the next Finance, Facilities and Transportation meeting on May 14, 2024, at 4:15 pm at the School Board office.

Information can be found on the District website.

Links to Further Information:

[Finance & Facilities Committee – February 27, 2024](#)

[Finance & Facilities Committee – April 9, 2024](#)

[Draft - School District Route Efficiency Report](#)

[Policy 770 Transportation of Students](#)

[AP 770 Transportation of Students - **draft**](#)



Brenda Hooker
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School District 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin)