

March 1, 2024

Transportation Fees Being Considered for 2024/25 School Year

As our school district navigates the challenges posed by inflation and rapid growth, the Board of Education must explore cost-saving measures to offset budgetary pressures. Currently, the District allocates \$ 3.942M in operating funding to transportation that could be allocated to other priorities in the classroom.

With inflation and increased student enrolment in our region, transportation costs are climbing at an unsustainable rate. The Board of Education is faced with the incredibly difficult task of either reallocating more funds from the classroom to sustain transportation services or implementing a transportation fee model to safeguard classroom funding.

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. Several school districts across the province offer a fee-based approach for transportation services. A fee-based approach is not new to the District as it has been historically used for transportation services.

With the spirit of the School Act in mind, funding in the classroom will be prioritized over complementary transportation services (the only fee that has been in place for several years is a \$25.00 safety fee). At the public board meeting on February 27, 2024, the Board of Education passed a motion to explore a fee-based model for transportation services for the 2024/25 school year. This measure aims to ensure that essential resources remain within classrooms, while still providing families with access to transportation services, albeit at a reasonable cost.

District staff will diligently work through fee model scenarios and present them to the Board of Education for review and approval for the 2024/25 school year.

If you are eligible for transportation services, please register as you normally would when the window opens from March 4 to April 30, 2024. You will have the option to opt out of transportation services at a later date. Those experiencing financial hardship will also have options.

If the Board of Education passes a fee model, those details will be communicated to you as soon as possible.

