



NEWS RELEASE
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SD62 MAKES PROVINCIAL HISTORY WITH ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES

LANGFORD: While it might look like a traditional yellow school bus, it sure doesn't sound like one. An electric school bus is now transporting hundreds of students daily in the Sooke School District and making provincial history. The e-bus is the first of its kind transporting students daily to and from school in British Columbia.

"This is an incredible milestone in our effort to foster innovation and sustainability in the work we do in the Sooke School District," says Ravi Parmar, SD62 Board Chairperson. "We are incredibly thankful for the funding for this e-bus as well as to be able to provide students with transportation that aligns with our goals of reducing our carbon footprint and enhancing environmental learning opportunities."

Other than the "Electric Powered" stickers on the front and rear bumpers, the bus looks like any other yellow school bus. The main difference is in the sound of the bus. Parents and students awaiting the bus won't hear the traditional diesel engine, but instead, a small vacuum-like sound when the bus slows to 10 km/hour.

"We are making history and we're incredibly proud to be piloting electric buses," says Tracey Syrota, SD62 Manager of Transportation. "It's inspiring to see that we are moving towards a direction of transporting students and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's a great example of technology for our students and the general public while making a positive shift towards a sustainable future."

Currently, the electric bus operates three runs each school day for students in elementary and secondary schools on the Westshore. It is expected that the second electric bus for SD62 will become operational by mid-May.

"CUPE is extremely proud of our District's initiative to implement electric busses," says Amber Leonard, SD62 CUPE 459 President. "The savings from fuel costs can be put into classrooms and programs, a benefit for everyone."

With more than 4,000 riders, the Sooke School District has a total of 45 school buses in its fleet.

"Moving our children to a fully electric bus demonstrates that SD62 understands the health benefits of avoiding diesel exhaust for both kids and drivers as well as eliminating emissions in our community neighborhoods," says David Grove, President of the Victoria Electric Car Association. "The added benefits to the school board budget of reduced fuel and maintenance costs also leaves more money in the budget for valuable educational priorities."

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Learn more about the Sooke School District and its Transportation Department [here](#).

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SD62 Transportation Quick Stats

2019/2020 school year (pre COVID):

- 4675 student riders
- 3981 kilometers per day
- 33 bus routes
- 73 hours of driving per day

2020/2021 school year (COVID-19):

- 3897 student riders (decrease of 778)
- 6457 kilometers per day (increase of 2476)
- 46 bus routes (increase of 13)
- 124 hours of driving per day (increase of 51)
- 6 additional drivers hired

In August, with student health and safety in mind, the Sooke School District had to start from scratch and recreate each route so that it limited the number of schools riding on the same route at the same time. More routes were created, drivers hired and buses added full time.