

Ministry of Education

Deputy Minister

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Sous-ministre

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Date: September 9, 2020

Memorandum to: Directors of Education
Secretaries/Treasurers of School Authorities

From: Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister of Education

Subject **School Bus Driver Retention Pilot Program (DRP) in the 2020-21 School Year**

I am writing to provide you with information about the School Bus Driver Retention Pilot Program (DRP), which was announced on August 26, 2020 as one of the priority provincial initiatives receiving funding support from the Government of Canada to support the return to class in the fall.

The Ministry of Education recognizes that the student transportation sector may be facing a greater driver shortage this year as a result of COVID-19. As such, the Ontario government is continuing the DRP to support ongoing efforts in school bus driver recruitment and retention for one additional year, for the 2020-21 school year.

The DRP rewards school bus drivers who stay on the job throughout the school year. This program is intended to reduce driver turnover and make student transportation services more reliable for students and families. The retention bonus provided through this program is not intended to replace or substitute any existing school bus driver compensation offered by school bus operators.

The DRP is being continued for an additional school year based on the current parameters of the program. The Ontario government intends to partner with the Ontario School Bus Association (OSBA) on behalf of School Bus Ontario (SBO) and a service provider to facilitate the administration of bonus payments to eligible school bus drivers.

Eligible school bus drivers could receive up to two separate retention bonuses of up to \$1,000 (less applicable taxes) each, based on continuous employment over two periods between

September to December 2020 and January to June 2021. Eligibility criteria for bonus payments to school bus drivers will remain the same as with previous periods.

Additional details on the DRP including timing for bonus claim submissions will be communicated to the student transportation sector by OSBA, on behalf of SBO, in the near future.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Didem Proulx, Assistant Deputy Minister, Capital and Business Support Division, at didem.proulx@ontario.ca, or Nathania Ho, Manager (A), Transportation Unit, School Board Business Support Branch at nathania.ho@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

Cc: Senior Business Officials
Transportation consortia managers
School Bus Ontario