

Ministry of Education

Capital and Business Support
Division

315 Front Street West
15th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

Ministère de l'Éducation

Division du soutien aux
immobilisations et aux affaires

315, rue Front Ouest
15e étage
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 0B8

2022: B10

Date: April 14, 2022

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

From: Didem Proulx
Assistant Deputy Minister
Capital and Business Support Division

Subject **Student Transportation – Support for School Bus Operators in the Adoption of Updated Lighting Requirements**

I am writing to provide you with information about changes to school bus lighting systems and efforts underway to support school bus operators in the adoption of these updated lighting requirements.

On May 12, 2021, the [Safer School Buses Act \(2021\)](#) received Royal Assent and amended the [Highway Traffic Act](#) to mandate all school buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2005, to operate an eight lamp amber-red warning system in Ontario effective July 1, 2022.

The adoption of this system will make it easier for drivers and other road users to recognize when school buses are slowing and stopping at the roadside, improving road safety for school bus passengers. The adoption of this system also responds to longstanding safety priorities of school bus operators and transportation consortia across the province and will align Ontario with school bus lighting requirements followed by other Canadian jurisdictions.

It is acknowledged that school bus operators will incur costs related to the transition to the eight lamp amber-red warning system accounting for the retrofitting of equipment manufactured on or after January 1, 2005.

To limit the financial impact on industry and contractual rates between school bus operators and school boards/transportation consortia, the Ministry of Education will provide one-time funding to assist school bus operators in the forthcoming transition to this system.

This time-limited measure will enable school bus operators to register and apply for funding through Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON). Transfer Payment Ontario is a web-based funding management system and will provide school bus operators with self-service access to register and apply for funding.

For vehicles that will be mandated and require retrofitting to operate an eight lamp amber-red warning system, it is expected that one-time funding assistance will:

- Provide school bus operators with self-service access to grant amounts through an application process determined in partnership with School Bus Ontario.
- Grant amounts are expected to range from \$110 to \$1,630 per vehicle to reflect the complexity of retrofits required (e.g., it is acknowledged that retrofitting for certain vehicles will be more complex depending on the manufacturer of the vehicle – resulting in higher costs).
- Support operators in completing retrofits in time for the start of the 2022-23 school year as updated lighting requirements for school buses come into force on July 1, 2022.

It is anticipated that applications for this funding will open in Spring 2022 and provide access to more than \$4 million.

Additional details concerning eligibility criteria, timing and application process for this grant program are being finalized and will be communicated in the near future.

I would kindly request that school boards and student transportation consortia share this information with school-bus operators that are currently under contract to raise awareness of this forthcoming initiative that will provide time-limited financial assistance to support school bus operators in the transition to the eight lamp amber-red warning system.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Mehul Mehta, Director, School Board Advanced Supports Branch, at mehul.mehta@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Didem Proulx
Assistant Deputy Minister
Capital and Business Support Division

cc: Senior Business Officials

Transportation consortia managers

School Bus Ontario