

Ministry of Education

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2023: B06

Date: April 17, 2023

Memorandum to: Directors of Education
Senior Business Officials

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

Subject: **Student Transportation Grant – Grants for Student Needs
2023-24**

As part of the announcement of the 2023-24 Grants for Student Needs (GSN), I am writing to provide details on changes to the Student Transportation Grant.

The ministry recognizes the importance of student transportation services for students and families and is committed to helping school boards deliver safe, effective, and efficient transportation services.

Starting with the 2023-24 school year, the ministry is implementing a new funding framework for Student Transportation Grant that is transparent, equitable, and focused on reliability.

This new funding framework has been informed by several engagements with the sector including:

- Student Transportation Advisory Group launched in 2020
- Technical Committee on Reference Standards established in 2021
- Consultation sessions conducted in Fall of 2022

The ministry would like to acknowledge and thank the hard work of representatives that participated in these engagements, including:

- Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
- Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)

- Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
- Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
- Council of Senior Business Officials (COSBO)
- School Bus Ontario (SBO) and representatives from Bus Operators
- Transportation Committee of the Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) and representatives from Student Transportation Consortia

The feedback and advice from these engagements was critical in informing the development of the new funding framework for Student Transportation which:

- Establishes a needs-based Common Reference Standards (i.e., home-to-school distance criteria) for funding to encourage consistency and improve equitable access to student transportation services across Ontario;
- Establishes evidence-based funding benchmarks that reflect the cost of providing services; and
- Provides transition support so that no school board receives less funding as a result of the new model – to allow school boards and their transportation consortia and service providers to align policies and costs with the funding framework.

Student Transportation Grant for 2023-24

The Student Transportation Grant is projected to total \$1,233.2 million and is made up of the following three allocations:

- Transportation Services Allocation - \$1,225.8 million
- School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation - \$1.7 million
- Transportation to Provincial or Demonstration Schools Allocation - \$5.7 million

The Student Transportation Grant's projected allocation for each school board is presented in the Appendix.

Transportation Services Allocation

This is a new allocation, projected to total \$1,225.8 million, being introduced for 2023-24 school year and reflects the following:

- Number of students deemed eligible based on common home-to-school distance thresholds applied to all school boards;
- Determining the optimal number of school-bus routes needed as well as leveraging use of public transit where services are available;
- Establishing transparent benchmarks that are intended to represent the cost of services such as:
 - Annual cost of purchasing and operating school buses;

- continuing to reflect changes in market prices of fuel including a mechanism for fuel price adjustment (fuel escalator / de-escalator);
- setting compensation benchmarks for school bus drivers (such as an average hourly wage benchmark of \$23 and 13% for statutory benefits); and
- including a provision for spare capacity.

This allocation also includes over \$160 million to support Local Priorities and Operations that can allow school boards to address unique circumstances, needs and operations of their transportation services.

As this is the first year of a new funding formula, the Transportation Services Allocation includes about \$89 million in transition support to ensure that no school board experiences a decline in funding compared to their allocation from the 2022-23 school year.

The transition support is expected to be in place through the 2026-27 school year and the funding impacts will be updated annually to reflect changes in enrolment, new routing results, and changes to benchmarks.

Additional details on the Transportation Services Allocation can be found in the 2023-24 GSN Technical Paper.

School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation

The total Student Transportation Grant includes about \$1.7 million for School Bus Rider Safety Training. The standardized training for elementary students continues to be available in English and French through a contract established by the Ontario Education Collaborative Marketplace (OECM) with Intertrain. It is important to note that only training programs delivered by Intertrain through this OECM contract are eligible for this safety training funding support.

Funding allocation for this training component is based on the following:

- Projected number of funded in-person sessions, based on 250 students per session, to cover at least 50 per cent of each boards' elementary students in 2023-24.
- Reimbursement rate of \$370 and \$244 for each in-person and online training session respectively.
- Column B of the Appendix lists the number of projected in-person sessions for each board.
- Actual funding will be based on the number of on-site and/or online sessions delivered. Boards will be required to report the number of on-site and online training sessions conducted through 2023-24 financial statements.
- If rider safety training sessions are conducted virtually for 2023-24 as has been the case in the recent years, boards will be able to train more than 50 per cent of their elementary students.

For more information on the standardized school bus rider safety training, please visit the [OECM website](#). Questions about accessing this program and establishing an agreement should be directed to OECM through Mie Okawa at mie.okawa@oecm.ca or 647-289-3717.

Transportation to Provincial or Demonstration Schools Allocation

As in prior years, funding to cover expenditures for transportation to Provincial and Demonstration schools will be based on expenditures reported by school boards, as approved by the ministry. School boards may report these expenses through financial reports and receive direct reimbursement with expenditure approval.

Enhanced Reporting

With the new funding model, the ministry is continuing to modernize the student transportation system and support access to in-person schooling to enable the success of our students. The new funding model contains components – such as the support for drivers and the allocations for spare vehicles and drivers – that the ministry expects will reduce cancellations and improve reliability of service on the ground.

To ensure the success of the new funding model, the ministry will be introducing new accountability and reporting requirements related to school bus driver compensation, availability of spare capacities, and use of public transit. The ministry will work with the sector on these measures and requirements and provide further details at a later time.

Concluding Remarks

Please note that some of the elements and proposals set out in this memo can only take effect if certain regulations are made by the Minister of Education or Lieutenant Governor in Council under the *Education Act* or other legislation as required. Such regulations have not yet been made. Therefore, the content of this memo should be considered subject to such regulations, if and when made.

In closing, the ministry would like to thank you and acknowledge the need for ongoing collaboration with the sector to modernize student transportation funding in Ontario.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Mehul Mehta, Director, School Board Advanced Support Branch, at (647) 448-3862 or mehul.mehta@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Didem Proulx
Assistant Deputy Minister
Capital and Business Support Division

cc: Transportation Consortia Managers

APPENDIX: PROJECTED STUDENT TRANSPORTATION GRANT FOR 2023-24

		A	B	C	D	E = A + C + D
DSB NO	DSB Name	Transportation Services Allocation	Maximum Safety Training Sessions ⁱ	School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation	Provincial and Demonstration Schools Allocation ⁱⁱ	PROJECTED 2023-24 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION GRANT ⁱⁱⁱ
1	District School Board Ontario North East	\$ 9,853,592.93	24	\$ 8,880	-	\$ 9,862,472.93
2	Algoma District School Board	\$ 10,764,352.84	32	\$ 11,840	-	\$ 10,776,192.84
3	Rainbow District School Board	\$ 16,071,165.35	36	\$ 13,320	-	\$ 16,084,485.35
4	Near North District School Board	\$ 13,336,564.26	32	\$ 11,840	-	\$ 13,348,404.26
5.1	Keewatin-Patricia District School Board	\$ 5,605,661.32	17	\$ 6,290	-	\$ 5,611,951.32
5.2	Rainy River District School Board	\$ 3,404,487.44	11	\$ 4,070	-	\$ 3,408,557.44
6.1	Lakehead District School Board	\$ 7,617,706.80	25	\$ 9,250	-	\$ 7,626,956.80
6.2	Superior-Greenstone District School Board	\$ 1,925,299.65	10	\$ 3,700	-	\$ 1,928,999.65
7	Bluewater District School Board	\$ 17,301,888.08	45	\$ 16,650	-	\$ 17,318,538.08
8	Avon Maitland District School Board	\$ 14,527,698.18	39	\$ 14,430	\$ 198,716	\$ 14,740,844.18
9	Greater Essex County District School Board	\$ 16,142,294.36	75	\$ 27,750	-	\$ 16,170,044.36
10	Lambton Kent District School Board	\$ 15,135,201.89	56	\$ 20,720	\$ 187,214	\$ 15,343,135.89
11	Thames Valley District School Board	\$ 52,724,624.81	181	\$ 66,970	\$ 583,302	\$ 53,374,896.81
12	Toronto District School Board	\$ 77,835,495.28	532	\$ 196,840	\$ 144,545	\$ 78,176,880.28
13	Durham District School Board	\$ 27,997,347.72	162	\$ 59,940	-	\$ 28,057,287.72
14	Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board	\$ 25,505,828.22	89	\$ 32,930	\$ 140,023	\$ 25,678,781.22
15	Trillium Lakelands District School Board	\$ 17,967,981.07	42	\$ 15,540	-	\$ 17,983,521.07
16	York Region District School Board	\$ 46,040,608.68	258	\$ 95,460	\$ 71,000	\$ 46,207,068.68
17	Simcoe County District School Board	\$ 24,474,161.64	124	\$ 45,880	\$ 60,000	\$ 24,580,041.64
18	Upper Grand District School Board	\$ 24,817,555.95	83	\$ 30,710	\$ 185,000	\$ 25,033,265.95
19	Peel District School Board	\$ 55,164,615.45	308	\$ 113,960	\$ 496,900	\$ 55,775,475.45

		A	B	C	D	E = A + C + D
DSB NO	DSB Name	Transportation Services Allocation	Maximum Safety Training Sessions ⁱ	School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation	Provincial and Demonstration Schools Allocation ⁱⁱ	PROJECTED 2023-24 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION GRANT ⁱⁱⁱ
20	Halton District School Board	\$ 18,972,395.65	135	\$ 49,950	\$ 272,940	\$ 19,295,285.65
21	Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board	\$ 19,762,359.86	111	\$ 41,070	\$ 510,000	\$ 20,313,429.86
22	District School Board of Niagara	\$ 23,358,848.49	91	\$ 33,670	-	\$ 23,392,518.49
23	Grand Erie District School Board	\$ 16,205,393.85	64	\$ 23,680	\$ 361,844	\$ 16,590,917.85
24	Waterloo Region District School Board	\$ 19,711,463.95	138	\$ 51,060	\$ 383,409	\$ 20,145,932.95
25	Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	\$ 46,999,931.78	162	\$ 59,940	-	\$ 47,059,871.78
26	Upper Canada District School Board	\$ 36,815,959.45	72	\$ 26,640	-	\$ 36,842,599.45
27	Limestone District School Board	\$ 18,118,685.18	54	\$ 19,980	\$ 220,000	\$ 18,358,665.18
28	Renfrew County District School Board	\$ 9,933,553.63	24	\$ 8,880	-	\$ 9,942,433.63
29	Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board	\$ 16,738,698.66	40	\$ 14,800	\$ 307,800	\$ 17,061,298.66
30.1	Northeastern Catholic District School Board	\$ 3,767,147.36	11	\$ 4,070	-	\$ 3,771,217.36
30.2	Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board	\$ 4,189,475.80	11	\$ 4,070	-	\$ 4,193,545.80
31	Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board	\$ 4,959,886.72	15	\$ 5,550	-	\$ 4,965,436.72
32	Sudbury Catholic District School Board	\$ 7,204,245.55	15	\$ 5,550	-	\$ 7,209,795.55
33.1	Northwest Catholic District School Board	\$ 1,676,435.69	5	\$ 1,850	-	\$ 1,678,285.69
33.2	Kenora Catholic District School Board	\$ 1,497,132.30	4	\$ 1,480	-	\$ 1,498,612.30
34.1	Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board	\$ 6,028,045.39	19	\$ 7,030	-	\$ 6,035,075.39

		A	B	C	D	E = A + C + D
DSB NO	DSB Name	Transportation Services Allocation	Maximum Safety Training Sessions ⁱ	School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation	Provincial and Demonstration Schools Allocation ⁱⁱ	PROJECTED 2023-24 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION GRANT ⁱⁱⁱ
34.2	Superior North Catholic District School Board	\$ 959,295.48	7	\$ 2,590	-	\$ 961,885.48
35	Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board	\$ 6,582,736.31	12	\$ 4,440	-	\$ 6,587,176.31
36	Huron Perth Catholic District School Board	\$ 7,284,586.22	16	\$ 5,920	-	\$ 7,290,506.22
37	Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board	\$ 10,431,877.45	43	\$ 15,910	-	\$ 10,447,787.45
38	London District Catholic School Board	\$ 20,119,385.50	52	\$ 19,240	\$ 8,200	\$ 20,146,825.50
39	St. Clair Catholic District School Board	\$ 7,782,794.98	25	\$ 9,250	\$ 124,530	\$ 7,916,574.98
40	Toronto Catholic District School Board	\$ 49,303,700.74	197	\$ 72,890	\$ 239,633	\$ 49,616,223.74
41	Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board	\$ 13,283,632.50	36	\$ 13,320	-	\$ 13,296,952.50
42	York Catholic District School Board	\$ 20,486,218.09	99	\$ 36,630	-	\$ 20,522,848.09
43	Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board	\$ 22,270,616.87	136	\$ 50,320	\$ 148,235	\$ 22,469,171.87
44	Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board	\$ 14,870,842.77	54	\$ 19,980	-	\$ 14,890,822.77
45	Durham Catholic District School Board	\$ 10,444,213.22	50	\$ 18,500	-	\$ 10,462,713.22
46	Halton Catholic District School Board	\$ 10,286,871.40	64	\$ 23,680	\$ 75,460	\$ 10,386,011.40
47	Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board	\$ 11,506,961.70	59	\$ 21,830	\$ 130,000	\$ 11,658,791.70
48	Wellington Catholic District School Board	\$ 6,488,375.61	20	\$ 7,400	-	\$ 6,495,775.61

		A	B	C	D	E = A + C + D
DSB NO	DSB Name	Transportation Services Allocation	Maximum Safety Training Sessions ⁱ	School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation	Provincial and Demonstration Schools Allocation ⁱⁱ	PROJECTED 2023-24 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION GRANT ⁱⁱⁱ
49	Waterloo Catholic District School Board	\$ 8,991,292.11	54	\$ 19,980	\$ 146,641	\$ 9,157,913.11
50	Niagara Catholic District School Board	\$ 11,810,118.29	53	\$ 19,610	\$ 46,800	\$ 11,876,528.29
51	Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board	\$ 8,874,748.72	31	\$ 11,470	-	\$ 8,886,218.72
52	Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario	\$ 21,093,906.86	35	\$ 12,950	-	\$ 21,106,856.86
53	Ottawa Catholic District School Board	\$ 27,964,249.11	100	\$ 37,000	-	\$ 28,001,249.11
54	Renfrew County Catholic District School Board	\$ 6,149,821.27	20	\$ 7,400	-	\$ 6,157,221.27
55	Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board	\$ 14,342,723.26	35	\$ 12,950	\$ 73,440	\$ 14,429,113.26
56	Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario	\$ 3,403,890.31	9	\$ 3,330	-	\$ 3,407,220.31
57	Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario	\$ 3,765,878.32	14	\$ 5,180	-	\$ 3,771,058.32
58	Conseil scolaire Viamonde	\$ 22,038,651.25	49	\$ 18,130	-	\$ 22,056,781.25
59	Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario	\$ 17,578,552.71	42	\$ 15,540	-	\$ 17,594,092.71
60.1	Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Grandes Rivières	\$ 8,804,307.70	24	\$ 8,880	-	\$ 8,813,187.70
60.2	Conseil scolaire de district catholique Franco-Nord	\$ 4,029,982.42	11	\$ 4,070	-	\$ 4,034,052.42
61	Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Nouvel-Ontario	\$ 7,433,278.45	24	\$ 8,880	-	\$ 7,442,158.45

		A	B	C	D	E = A + C + D
DSB NO	DSB Name	Transportation Services Allocation	Maximum Safety Training Sessions ⁱ	School Bus Rider Safety Training Allocation	Provincial and Demonstration Schools Allocation ⁱⁱ	PROJECTED 2023-24 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION GRANT ⁱⁱⁱ
62	Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales	\$ 1,324,525.88	6	\$ 2,220	-	\$ 1,326,745.88
63	Conseil scolaire catholique Providence	\$ 11,263,538.26	26	\$ 9,620	-	\$ 11,273,158.26
64	Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir	\$ 30,952,445.72	54	\$ 19,980	-	\$ 30,972,425.72
65	Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien	\$ 12,609,468.59	31	\$ 11,470	-	\$ 12,620,938.59
66	Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Centre-Est de l'Ontario	\$ 21,083,653.81	61	\$ 22,570	\$ 605,891	\$ 21,712,114.81

Notes

ⁱ Reflects number of in-person sessions for School Bus Rider Safety Training.

ⁱⁱ Provincial and Demonstration Schools Allocation includes an estimated expenditure amount for the board Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Centre-Est de l'Ontario; and the other school boards that have the responsibilities to plan and deliver provincial school transportation. Figures are as of 2022-23 Revised Estimates and subject to change pending receipt of 2022-23 Financial Statements.

ⁱⁱⁱ The 2022-23 Revised Estimates transportation allocation and the projected 2023-24 Average Daily Enrolment are being referenced in the calculation of the 2023-24 Student Transportation Grant. They are subject to change pending receipt of 2022-23 Financial Statement and the actual 2023-24 Average Daily Enrolment.