

Ministry of Education

School Board Advanced Supports
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Ministère de l'Éducation

Direction du soutien amélioré aux
conseils scolaires
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2024: SB22

Date: October 21, 2024

Memorandum to: Senior Business Officials
Transportation Consortia Managers

From: Mehul Mehta
Director
School Board Business Support Branch

Subject: **Routing Simulation data collection to support 2025-26
Student Transportation Allocation**

As in previous years, the ministry requests transportation consortia to develop routing simulation projections based on Common Reference Standards applicable to all school boards and consortia. This routing simulation should identify the estimated number of routes to be established for the 2025-26 school year, as it will be a key input for allocating the Student Transportation Fund for that year.

The attached *Common Reference Standards for 2025-26 Routing Simulation* document outlines a set of Common Reference Standards for student transportation to determine student eligibility, the mode of transportation, and service parameters.

It is important to emphasize that the Common Reference Standards are intended to support a standardized measure of need that is integral to the new funding framework for Student Transportation. However, school boards and consortia may implement transportation policies that diverge from the parameters of these Common Reference Standards.

Additionally, the *2025-26 Routing Simulation Reporting Instructions* will be shared with consortia, providing guidance on report templates. These two report templates—(a) Routes (b)

Students Report—should align with reports generated by the routing software programs used by consortia.

Consortia are requested to submit their completed 2025-26 routing simulation reports by Wednesday, December 11, 2024.

Enhancing Routing Simulation results by implementing Opt-in/Opt-out Policies

To further optimize transportation planning, the ministry expects consortia to develop opt-in/opt-out policies for student transportation services, ensuring that routing simulations reflect the most efficient plans. These processes help identify students who actively use transportation services, which are generally fewer than the total number of eligible students. Implementing opt-in/opt-out policies across consortia will improve alignment between routing simulations and actual ridership.

Many consortia across the province have implemented variations of opt-in and/or opt-out policies to plan for routing simulations and to determine the actual routes and runs needed during the school year.

To promote further efficiencies and improve equity, all consortia are required to establish an effective opt-in/opt-out policy. If such a policy cannot be implemented for the 2025-26 routing simulation, consortia must plan to have an opt-in/opt-out process in place by the start of the 2025-26 school year to support routing simulation projections for 2026-27.

2023-2024 Expenditure Reports

As per [2023: SB07](#) memorandum, school boards and consortia are required to submit the 2023-24 school year reports on **consortium and school bus operator expenditures**. Please note that an updated version of the report template will be available on SharePoint shortly. In addition, the ministry is also requesting 2023-24 **Actual Routes & Runs** and **Students** reports extracted from routing software. The extract should reflect information as of October 31, 2023, March 31, 2024, or a date selected by the consortium within the school year.

Consortia are requested to submit these reports for 2023-24 school year on the Student Transportation SharePoint site **by November 29, 2024**.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Student Transportation Unit at student.transportation@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Mehul Mehta
Director
School Board Business Support Branch

Attachments:

1. Common Reference Standards for 2025-26 Routing Simulation