

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 60

PARENT INFORMATION

**DATE:** April 19, 2013  
**FROM:** BOARD OF EDUCATION (OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY TREASURER)  
**SUBJECT:** **Transportation Issue (Notice of pending ridership fee)**

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**Background:**

Effective this school year (2012/13), the Ministry of Education removed the funding line item for transportation and replaced it with what is now referred to as the "Student Location Factor". This new allocation process resulted in a change for all districts with some receiving an increase and others a reduction of funding. In our case the result was a loss of approximately \$541,000 which is to be phased in over a three-year period as follows:

2012/13	180,333
2013/14	360,666
2014/15	541,000

Additionally, typically we spend in the neighbourhood of \$185,000 over what we previously received in funding, which means we must find approximately \$726,000 to match expenditures to revenues.

**Actions to Date:**

The Board has repeatedly raised this issue with the Ministry and MLA both directly and through provincial organizations. Additionally, the Secretary/Treasurers from SD #59 and #60 made a presentation in Vancouver to the Provincial Technical Review Committee about district concerns and lack of information regarding the calculation of the new allocations. Staff and an ad hoc committee of the Board have met, in an attempt to identify potential strategies to address the financial position the district has been placed in. Recently, administrators and school PAC representatives were invited to a meeting to discuss the issue and identify possible solutions.

**Board Direction:**

Although the Board of Education is not required to provide transportation, trustees are committed to providing access to educational facilities in the most effective means possible. In light of the reduction in funding for transportation, the Board is facing some very tough decisions regarding this matter, none of which will be popular, that may mean consolidating, eliminating, shortening runs; extending walking distances; modifying boarding and transportation allowances; generating revenue through fees, or a combination of these or other ideas. Whatever is decided will need to begin for the September 2013 school year

As a result, at the regular meeting of the Board of Education, on April 15, 2013 the following recommendations received approval:

- a) The Transportation Supervisor to continue pursuing efficiencies in routes to maximize ridership while keeping riding time reasonable

- b) Issue notice of a pending ridership fee structure per year, beginning September 2013. SD #60 student fees based on # of children in the family:

1 child	\$200
2 children	\$400
3 children	\$500
3+ children	\$500

*NOTE: maximum family charge of \$500 per year*

These yearly fees are based on the attempt to minimize any hardship. In so doing, the fee basically represents approximately \$1.10 per day for each of the first two children in the family, \$.55 per day for the third child and no extra fee for any additional children.

(Note: a Fort St. John student transit bus pass is currently \$35 per month which equates to \$350 for a school year)

- c) Provide opportunity for input regarding alternative funding solutions to be submitted in writing by May 8, 2013. (to the Secretary Treasurer at the Board Office or your school Principal). Note: We are also developing a frequently asked question section on our website [www.prn.bc.ca/transportation/](http://www.prn.bc.ca/transportation/).

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- d) Board members, staff, and administrators discuss the issue with individuals, with groups, and organizations
- e) Develop a potential process of fee collection and bus pass implementation
- f) Look into current practice regarding transportation assistance and boarding allowance
- g) Continue discussion with Ministry regarding student location factor funding

**Summary:**

The potential funds generated by a fee for service structure will address the shortfall by approximately \$400,000. Staff will continue to develop and implement efficiency strategies over the next year to balance expenditures to revenue. This will require the understanding that the district will not be able to meet all of the traditional transportation expectations we have taken for so long as the norm. By working together it is hoped that we may mitigate many of the difficulties and hardship that these actions may cause. The Board will take the opportunity to review input regarding other sources of funding prior to a decision regarding the implementation of a fee, at the May 21, 2013 Board meeting

Doug Boyd  
Secretary Treasurer  
School District #60