

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.46 (SUNSHINE COAST)

STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT: TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

Submitted by Secretary-Treasurer Weswick
September 9, 2020

3f Our district will ensure safe and efficient **transportation strategies** for our students.

Background:

Although the provision of transportation services is not technically required of school districts in this province, public expectation and some supplemental funding ensure that the District will continue to be able to provide the service. Availability and quality of transportation can have an impact on student attendance and learning.

Highlights:

At the Operation Committee meeting in June, 2020, Lianne Carley, Vancouver Coastal Health, provided a report on active transportation strategies and shared the many benefits of **active travel**, including:

- Walking, biking and scooting to school, may help to improve success rates for emotional maturity and social competence.
- Independent mobility not only improves their fitness, but also aids in increasing sociability, improving spatial skills, and increasing alertness.

Several sites are offering guidance on the best routes to schools and selected schools will develop **maps that highlight the safest routes to school** that indicate road crossing points and optimal paths and trails, among other features. This pilot project may be rolled out to additional sites depending on the success of the initiative to increase active travel.



The board will engage in a **transportation review** in the coming year. Prior to engaging in this process, the Operations Committee will review a consultant report that outlines findings for a comprehensive bell schedule analysis, bus route efficiencies, and a review of impacts of cross boundary student riders.

Key questions to consider during a transportation review will be:

- Efficiency: Are current school transportation systems efficiently, cost-effectively, and safely serving schools' needs?
- Education: Are those systems meeting the needs of students and families as well as supporting their ability to access schools equitably?
- Environment: Are student transportation systems minimizing their environmental impact?

(Source: <https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/miles-go-bringing-school-transportation-21st-century>)

Covid Impacts:

The district will enforce walk limits for the 2020-21 school year in our efforts to enhance COVID safety protocols by reducing capacity on our buses, with a focus of providing assigned seating to eligible riders. Eligible and cross-boundary riders are also requested to make alternative arrangements, wherever possible. The district will further enhance safety for riders during the pandemic in the following ways:

- Additional cleaning required of school bus contractor to adhere to provincial guidelines
- Bus drivers will wear masks and, in some cases, face shields
- Families will be asked to make alternative travel arrangements wherever possible, in order to reduce the number of riders and allow for greater spacing between students.
- Bus routes will be reviewed to limit the number of riders from different sites at one time, wherever possible
- Wherever possible, students will be loaded back-to-front and unloaded front-to-back
- Attendance will be taken of registered riders in mid-September, with the intent to de-register registered riders who do not require the service and assign consistent seats as soon as possible.
- Schools will organize riders waiting for pickup to promote adequate physical distancing, wherever possible.
- Active transportation options will be promoted and supported by schools, in collaboration with PACs.

Next Steps:

- Promoting active travel options at the school level, supporting the development of “Best Routes to Schools” maps and other materials.
- Reviewing the Route Optimization Report with Operations Committee in greater detail.
- Consulting widely with school communities, students and families to determine what changes, if any, are optimal to provide better service to students.
- Review the Transportation Regulation to ensure consistency with actual practice.
- Determine impact on CSF transportation and cross-boundary riders.
- Consider future increases in enrollment & impact on bussing