

Anglophone South School District
DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL - BRIEFING NOTE

DEC MEETING: February 10, 2021

TOPIC: DEC Request For Analysis on Reducing Transportation Walking Zone to 750 m

BACKGROUND:

The District Education Council requested the District to provide feedback on what it would require to reduce the walking distance from the current guidelines to 750 m. The current Provincial Guidelines and the District guidelines as per our web-site states:

As per [New Brunswick Education Act](#), the following are eligible for school bus transportation:

- for those public school students who live **farther than 2.4 km from their zone school**; and
- for those public school students who live **1.5 km down a side road from the closest bus stop** location.

When operationally possible, Anglophone South School District provides an enhanced level of service than prescribed by Regulation within existing resources.

The guideline for the number of school bus stops along a route is **two stops per kilometer**. School bus drivers may group near-by stops together to improve efficiency. School bus drivers also have the right to determine in inclement weather or poor road conditions whether to travel on a particular road.

Parents are responsible for the safety of their children to and from the school bus stop.

The District's internal guideline is to provide service to students further than 1.5 kms from the school. We do make exceptions in some cases and were providing service to some students below the 1.5 km. However, with the Covid requirements, we had to enforce the greater than 1.5 kms based on the resources we had at our disposal including the 12 additional busses provided by the Dept. However, it is important to note that even under Covid, the average distance for a student to walk to/from a bus stop is between 260 to 270 m.

For this analysis, we looked at five schools as noted on the analysis. For the most part, reducing the distance to 750m would affect those students living within the 750 m – 1.5 km zone around a school. Majority of rural students live outside the 1.5 km zone of a school and many of those would live on a side-road, so they would fall under the 1.5 km side-road guideline. Side roads would be a different issue as many side roads are not safe enough for our busses to travel on due to road conditions (i.e. poorly maintained roads, roads are narrow, no turning spots for busses, some roads are private, etc.).

For this analysis, we looked at students between the 750 m – 1.5 km zone by school. We then assumed all these students would use our busses, as the norm would be to assign a seat to all students entitled to the service. We then used an average cost per seat (i.e. per student) based on the average operating cost of the bus. Bus driver salaries and the purchase cost of the additional busses (\$95,000 - \$110,000) required was then added to this number for a total cost. On average, our busses (pre-Covid) do 4 runs per day, 2 in the morning and 2 after dismissal, so we would require one additional bus for each increase of 4 runs per day.

Other considerations not noted in this analysis:

- 1) This would require the addition of new busses. All busses are purchased by EECD through Vehicle Mgmt. Any new busses provided to Districts are to replace older busses in our fleet that are then removed from service and sent to DTI to be stripped of any usable parts. Under Covid, we did receive 12 new busses but that was to address the Covid restrictions with the reduced number of students per bus seat.
- 2) This type of a change would require multiple additional runs in the mornings and afternoons, similar to what has happened under Covid only to a greater degree. That would also mean additional supervision time for school staff earlier in the morning and later in the day. Could also lead to changes in the schools start and dismissal times.
- 3) Additional kms would be required to accommodate shorter stops for students (i.e. going into sub-divisions, more side roads, etc.) which will mean additional stops and longer average time on bus for students.
- 4) Pre-Covid, we were dealing with staff resource issues with drivers. That has since improved under Covid at least for Transportation (i.e. seeing increase in people losing their jobs under Covid applying for the training).

Under pre-Covid conditions, we transport on our 252-bus fleet (across the three Education Centres) between 80-85% of our total student population on any particular day (over 33,000 kms a day). Overall, unless we are making major changes in transportation, we get very few calls in relation to our level of service besides the normal higher volume we see at start up in September.