



"Together We Learn"
CENTRAL OKANAGAN
SCHOOL DISTRICT

News and Information

October 5, 2016

Student Transportation Grant - Update

Kelowna, B.C. –

The Central Okanagan School District spends almost \$4.0 million per year transporting students to and from school. After freezing the funding for transportation in 2002, the Ministry of Education subsequently eliminated direct funding for transportation services. School Districts now set service levels locally. Therefore, to help offset rising costs, and to continue to provide a comprehensive bus service, the School District introduced a transportation fee in 2009.

In the past, when providing transportation funding, the Ministry of Education used guidelines to determine which students were eligible for bus transportation. The historical Ministry of Education guidelines used to determine eligible riders were students living beyond 4.0kms (primary) and 4.8kms (grades 4-12) from their catchment school. For the 2016-2017 school year, the Ministry of Education offered the School District a \$600,000 transportation grant which can only be used for the purpose of alleviating the transportation fee for students who in the past would have been considered eligible riders.

The Board of Education submitted a plan to the Ministry of Education that will introduce a subsidy of 100% of the fee schedule for those 'eligible' students. The Ministry has now approved that plan and confirmed that the grant is forthcoming.

The School District will begin the process of applying the subsidy and refunding parents the fees (for eligible riders) already paid for the 2016-2017 school year. The School District is targeting early November to complete the process of issuing the refunds.

The Ministry of Education has indicated that the grant will be ongoing funding. In preparation for next year's transportation registration, the School District is planning to adjust the registration system so that the subsidy can be applied when that student's eligibility and placement on a bus is confirmed. Making this change will result in parents not having to pay the fee first and then receive a refund later. The School District is expecting to continue this new subsidy process as long as the annual grant remains available.

For comments, please contact:

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