

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 15, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees  
FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools  
SUBJECT: Unrestricted Bus Pass Initiative  
ORIGINATOR: T. Parker, Assistant Superintendent  
RESOURCE  
STAFF: Kelly Hehn, Lorne Parker

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Trustees approve the provision of a seven-day per week Unrestricted Student ETS Bus Pass, in replacement of the current five-day per week Restricted Student ETS Bus Pass, effective for the 2008-2009 school year.

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Currently, Edmonton Public Schools provide transportation services to approximately 25,400 students, 16,000 on Edmonton Transit (ETS) and 9,400 on yellow bus. The current ETS student bus pass is restricted to weekdays, which meets the requirements set out in the School Act which stipulates that transportation services are only required to be provided to and from school. The 2007-2008 fare structure for ETS bus passes is \$22 for elementary students and \$38 for junior and senior high students. The District purchases the monthly passes for \$42 and provides a subsidy to all riders. The current cost for an adult (non-student) cash fare is \$2.50 a ride or \$66.50 a month.

In April 2007, the school districts were advised by Edmonton Transit that Council had approved a \$7.75 fare increase for the 2008-2009 school year, and a longer term fare strategy for further increases. This will bring the monthly cost to the district for a restricted bus pass to \$49.75 from \$42 for the 2008-2009 school year. Subsequent years will result in the following planned increases by Edmonton Transit:

SCHOOL YEAR	DISTRICT COST
2007-2008	\$42.00
2008-2009	\$49.75
2009-2010	\$57.50
2010-2011	\$63.25
2011-2012	\$63.25
2012-2013	\$63.25
2013-2014	\$69.00

Edmonton Public and Edmonton Catholic Schools Planning Directors and Transportation Managers have met with Edmonton Transit administration to discuss the following four issues and explore mitigation possibilities:

1. Should we move to an unrestricted pass, the District would prefer to be the sole proprietor of the passes;
2. Guaranteed rates by Edmonton Transit as per the above six year schedule;
3. Edmonton Transit provides the school districts with an administration fee on every pass sold; and
4. Address the issue of equity as it relates to students transported by yellow bus.

Subsequent discussions involving Edmonton Transit, Edmonton Catholic Schools and Edmonton Public Schools have resulted in an agreement that the school districts will remain the sole proprietor of the bus pass until at least June 2009, with discussions to determine any future changes occurring during 2008 and 2009. While no guarantees can be made regarding future City Council decisions on the prices, Edmonton Transit has indicated that changes to these planned increases is unlikely. An administration fee will be considered in the event that the district maintains the role of sole proprietor beyond the 2008-2009 school year, with recognition that this item is considered unbudgeted within the current City of Edmonton budget.

Edmonton Transit has agreed to a change which will allow yellow bus riders to access Edmonton Transit, before 8 pm, at least six times per month using the yellow bus pass. Yellow bus passes will also continue to be accepted for use on ETS in emergency situations.

Edmonton Transit will present a report to City Council in the near future recommending that the student fare not change for an unrestricted pass. Edmonton Transit and both the Edmonton Public and Catholic School Boards have agreed to developing a joint communication plan. Based on the foregoing, administration is recommending the District support the Unrestricted Bus Pass Initiative.

KH:mo