

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 13, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Student Transportation Fees for 2008-2009

ORIGINATOR: T. Parker, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE
STAFF: Kelly Hehn, Lorne Parker

RECOMMENDATION

That the following schedule of bus pass fees for the 2008-2009 school year be approved, to be effective August 2008.

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2008 – 2009 Fee Schedule Implications

The most significant changes in the recommended fees are to:

- increase the Edmonton Transit subsidy from \$4 to \$6.75
- increase the elementary monthly bus pass fee from \$22 to \$24
- increase the Program of Choice monthly bus pass fee from \$42 to \$43
- increase the Edmonton Transit bus pass fee from \$38 to \$43

During the 2008-2009 school year, the District will be faced with significant increases to transportation services, with ETS bus passes rising by 18 per cent, yellow bus curb-service rising by 4.5 per cent, and yellow bus fixed-routes by 3 per cent. The province has announced a 4.5 per cent increase to the 2008-2009 Transportation Grant; however, the Grant, including the 4.5 per cent will not cover district transportation expenditures, and results in the requirement to increase fees charged to our students.

Student Transportation is carrying forward a projected surplus of \$1,641,445, with an acknowledgement that the surplus is reliant upon revenues and expenditures remaining consistent with current budget projections until the August 31 year-end. In order to minimize the impact of bus pass increases, the recommendation includes the application of \$1,000,000 of the surplus which will be used to mitigate the effects of the bus pass increases. The remaining \$641,445, along with any surplus or deficit generated in the 2008-2009 school year, will be used to mitigate the already published 15 per cent increase in ETS 2009-2010 rates and anticipated increases to yellow bus rates.

Transportation Funding Issues

On April 22, 2008, the Provincial government announced a 4.5 per cent increase to the transportation grant. However, the effects of the increase will be offset by a projected decrease in student enrolment, coupled by a projected increase in ridership and transportation expenditures. As a consequence, it is recommended bus pass fares be increased to a level that will generate sufficient revenue to cover contract and transit increases.

The current provincial funding formula is based on a block grant, with an expectation that student transportation services will be provided to the minimum standards established in the School Act. As per past practice, the District provides students with a higher level of service, resulting in the need to offset the additional costs through the collection of transportation fees.

The new funding framework for transportation in metro boards, to be introduced in the 2008-2009 school year, will require metro boards to report eligible students based on a distance factor of 2.4 km to their designated school. It is unknown at this time, if or when, a new formula will be in effect. Bilingual or immersion language programs will be included for transportation funding to the designated bilingual or immersion school sites in the proposed funding eligibility. Previously, bilingual enrolment was not recognized as enrolment in a designated school, and therefore, not calculated in the Block Grant assumptions. The possible change to the funding formula, based on individual eligibility, will put the District in a position to either continue to increase fees and maintain current services or consider changes to the transportation services provided.

Edmonton Transit rates have increased significantly for the 2007-2008 school year. However, students purchasing Edmonton Transit passes will now realize extra value from these bus passes, with access on weekends under the new unrestricted student bus pass. The subsidy on ETS bus pass purchases has been increased by 69 per cent. Our research suggests that this value-added feature is a first in Canada for yellow bus riders to have access on public transit service, up to six rides per month. This feature will also promote environmental awareness and increased mobility for yellow bus riders, who will eventually move to public transit in Junior High (Appendix II).

Given the current economy, shifting demographics and the unpredictable nature of provincial funding, maintaining stability in transportation rates is an ongoing challenge. Significant increases and decreases can be experienced from one year to the next based on a number of factors (Appendix III). In order to moderate these potential price changes, past surpluses have been used to mitigate price increases, and deficits have been carried-forward to future years with similar benefits.

More specifically, the extent to which student transportation fees increase or decrease annually is dependent on:

1. the level of provincial funding;
2. expenditures related to the district's cost of purchasing Edmonton Transit student bus passes from the city;
3. the number of students purchasing public transit passes;
4. the number of schools serviced;

5. the number of students and type of programs supported by yellow bus service; and
6. the cost of school bus contracts.

KH:mo

APPENDIX I	2008-2009 Bus Pass Fees Schedule
APPENDIX II	Edmonton Transit (ETS) – Planned Increases
APPENDIX III	History of Monthly Student Transportation Fees

2008 - 2009 BUS PASS FEES SCHEDULE

	Current 2007-08	Proposed 2008-09	
	Monthly	Monthly	Annual
Kindergarten, Early Education, Awasis, City Centre	No Charge	No Charge	No Charge
Edmonton Transit Passes			
Elementary (To the designated school from neighbourhoods where schools have been closed or have not been built)	\$22	\$24	\$200
Elementary Special Needs	\$22	\$24	\$200
Elementary – Bilingual or Immersion	\$22	\$24	\$200
Elementary – other Programs of Choice	\$38	\$43	\$390
Elementary (other than to designated school)	\$38	\$43	\$390
Junior High	\$38	\$43	\$390
Senior High	\$38	\$43	\$390
Replacement ETS Pass (any category)	\$42	\$49.75	N/A
Charter Yellow Bus			
Regular:			
Elementary (To the designated school from neighbourhoods where schools have been closed or have not been built)	\$22	\$24	\$200
Elementary Special Needs	\$22	\$24	\$200
Rural Elementary	\$22	\$24	\$200
Family maximum of three or more elementary children (kindergarten not included)	\$60	\$65	\$580
Replacement of Elementary Yellow Bus Pass	\$6	\$6	N/A
Junior High (student attends same school as was attended in elementary)	\$22	\$24	\$200
Junior High	\$38	\$43	\$390
Senior High	\$38	\$43	\$390
Replacement of Jr. or Sr. High Yellow Bus Pass	\$6	\$6	N/A
Alternative Programs:			
Elementary – Bilingual or Immersion	\$22	\$24	\$200
Family maximum of three or more elementary children (kindergarten not included)	\$60	\$65	\$580
Elementary – other Programs of Choice	\$42	\$43	\$390
Family maximum of three or more elementary children (kindergarten not included)	\$120	\$120	\$1,140
Replacement Elementary Alternative Program Yellow Bus Pass	\$6	\$6	N/A
Special Needs Curb Service:			
Elementary	\$22	\$24	\$200
Replacement of Elementary Yellow Bus Pass	\$6	\$6	N/A
Junior High	\$38	\$43	\$390
Senior High	\$38	\$43	\$390
Replacement of Jr. or Sr. High Yellow Bus Pass	\$6	\$6	N/A
Conditional Ridership:			
Kindergarten to Grade 12	\$42	\$43	N/A
Replacement of Elementary Conditional Rider Yellow Bus Pass	\$6	\$6	N/A
Replacement of Jr. or Sr. Conditional Rider Yellow Bus Pass	\$6	\$6	N/A

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EDMONTON TRANSIT (ETS) – PLANNED INCREASES

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

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