

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 15, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Response to Board Request for Information

ORIGINATOR: T. Parker, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE
STAFF: Chris Wright

INFORMATION

BOARD REQUEST #303, APRIL 27, 2010, PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE APPROXIMATE COST AND BENEFIT OF PROVIDING FREE TRANSPORTATION TO CHILDREN IN CARE WHO ARE CHALLENGED WITH MULTIPLE MOVES IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES: Children's Services advised that approximately 100 children and youth with Permanent Guardianship Orders (PGO) move each year. These numbers do not include children and youth in care with Temporary Guardianship status. The District does not track the exact number of students in care or document the school that each student in care attends. As a result, no accurate estimate of potential costs associated with transportation is possible.

The costs of transportation to maintain stability of school placement has been identified as a significant challenge by the six schools participating in the Provincial Protocol Framework to enhance School Success for Children and Youth in Care. In a few individual cases where creative solutions to transportation have been implemented to maintain the stability of school placements, school and Children's Services staff have indicated positive impacts on behaviour, attendance and achievement. Systemically, there are increased costs associated with maintaining school placements that have not been resolved at regional or provincial levels.

Looking forward, on an individual request basis, after consultation with the Guardian, determines it would be in the best interest of the student to remain at a school following a change in residence. Student Transportation could work with school principals to determine an appropriate provision of service and determine an associated cost.

Providing transportation services at no cost for specific groups of students leads to increased bus pass prices for families paying fees. The result is an increase in the number of families that find bus passes unaffordable, thereby broadening the need for subsidies.

TP:ja