



**June 15, 2016**

**Public Board Meeting**

Additional Handout

Item 1

Correspondence

- Beryl Eales
- Pascale Shaw, Save the Maple Ridge School Buses
- Terry Lake, Minister of Health and Mike Bernier, Minister of Education
- Tony Cable, Chair, School District No. 57 (Prince George)

Dear Trustees of School District 42,

Understanding that budget restraints, priorities and the desire to serve our community, makes your work difficult. Thank you for all you do

Aside from the many issues confronting you, please reinstate school buses in rural Maple Ridge where public transit is non-existent

The 'State' demands that parents must get their children to school. Governance in Maple Ridge have successfully, for 90 yrs, provided school buses.

This is your responsibility to get our children to school. Moreover parents are expected to get their children to the school bus and ensure that they get home safely after the bus driver drops off their children

Public Transit is non-existent Solution is school buses. In the Thornhill area (100<sup>th</sup> Ave) the C48 bus has low ridership because; the 1<sup>st</sup> bus, every morning leaves Rosley Crescent @ 6:30 - subsequent buses don't get with SRT for instance

All levels of govt must ~~ensure that they~~ <sup>work together</sup> Having school bus availability discussed every year is simply "canon fodder", passing the buck. The Ministry of Education must provide school bus funding. Where public transit is non-existent, school trustees should not be burdened with this responsibility

Parents trying to get to work themselves worry about children's safety (wildlife, child molester) weather, lack of street lighting & sidewalks & having someone there at the school bus stop. Parents depend on the school bus in rural areas. They cannot utilize public transit. Surely the Provincial govt & <sup>the</sup> City of Maple Ridge must solve the dilemma of rural school buses, ensuring that School Trustees receive the necessary funding in perpetuity

Y over

Recently, I heard about a seven year old crying alone, trembling sitting at the side of a rural road adjacent to where the school bus dropped him off at the bottom of his street. He was very scared to walk to his house because he was scared of bears. A neighbour fortunately noticed him & he got home safely. The little boy did not know the kind neighbour and got into his vehicle. Although the outcome was that the child got home safely & did not encounter a child molester.

My point is that parents do their best to get home in time or delegate their obligation to someone they know to be at the bus stop. Keep<sup>ing</sup> a child safe & getting them to school is dependent on the community, who in turn expect all involved to provide school bus funding in rural areas where there's no public transit ensuring that parents fulfill their obligation to get their children to school.

Sincerely BZales

ps. Hoping to be at your meeting June 6<sup>th</sup> all dependent on transportation as I cannot drive (back injury with two compression fractures)

We are excited to hear the news that a possible solution for transportation for the desperate families in North Pitt Meadows, North Maple Ridge and East Maple Ridge is being discussed and voted on at tonight's school board meeting. It has been a very long year of writing letters, attending meetings, holding a rally, a public meeting and many many late nights.

As this news comes to us just yesterday afternoon we believe it came out in the agenda on Monday but did not read down far enough to see it and therefore only found out via the paper) we have not had much time to discuss what is being proposed.

With only a few short hours to digest this news, we have come up with a number of questions we would like to have the opportunity to ask however do not know how to go about doing this. It is our understanding that there may not be sufficient time at the school board meeting this evening to ask all of our questions and also. It is important that our questions be considered prior to this idea being voted on.

We recognise that both the board and school board trustees had previously voted to eliminate all the school buses for the typical children in our district, all 300 who qualify and the 70 courtesy riders. We also very much appreciate the difficult position you were put in when the announcement of a one time \$6312,000.00 was announced. With the additional announcement of a continuation of the \$631,000.00 being offered two days later, your options became more open and that "school bus box" that you believed to be closed, had to be opened again.

If the school board and school board trustees truly believe that there are families in this community that need transportation as it is not offered via transit and the distance to school and condition on the road to school are not safer for our children, they will be open to listening to our questions and considering what we have to say before they vote on this proposal. If they truly want this school bus trial to succeed they will want to listen to our comments and suggestions and consider some changes as we have noted below.

How can we go about having the opportunity to share our questions and suggestions prior to the decision being made?

It is in all of our best interests to come up with a school bus plan that will be successful. A few more minutes of discussing and the opportunity for us to share our reasoning with the board and trustees will mean a better chance that this trial school bus run has a chance of making it.

The following are our questions and suggestions. Please keep in mind that some members are not even aware of this proposal as we have not been able to meet with them on such short notice to discuss any comments they may have.

1... Courtesy riders? Courtesy riders are full price riders who help to offset the cost to operate the buses. 95% full will be a hard number to reach and having courtesy riders as an option to top up the buses would be a wise financial decision. It would also be a way to supplement the money collected for the bus and reduce the cost to run. SD 42 uses funds from international students to supplement our budget. We also allow students from other districts, specifically the Stave Falls area of mission to attend school in Whonnock and then some high schools in Maple Ridge. We the per student funding we collected from the government to supplement our budget. We recommend we therefore allow courtesy rides to supplement our transit budget. The regulations can be as they are with high school

registration, in catchments, out of catchments with sibling, out of catchments then out of district.

2. What if you have a student in grade 3 and one is grade 7 that live at the same address 4 klm from school. As the distance to school to qualify to ride are different for these grades, will they only pick up the grade 4 student and leave the one in grade 7 to walk? Will there be some flexibility with this and can it be written in to the requirements?

3. Can they implement a monthly pay option so we can pay per month? \$415.00 is a lot of money to pay in one chunk. Some other district provide a flex pay or monthly pay system. It has been mentioned that some flexibility exists however it is in "special" cases and not advertised as an option that exists. It is important to have this monthly pay or perhaps a quarterly pay system offered. Few of us are flush with cash that we can afford to pay \$415.00 in one shot. and more if we have multiple children.

4. What will the "family" rate be? There is no mention of a family rate. Will these be a maximum rate that each family will pay for those with multiple members in the family that use the bus? We have not had time to research this however one member mentioned that Abbotsford has a \$600.00 family cap. A family rate existed in out district however the details have been removed.

4. Can they allow all year round registration if there is space on the bus. Closing registration July 31st will limit the number of families who register. It does not allow for families moving into the district over summer or for those moving at other times of the year. It is of course wise to ensure the bus is full, so it would be a first come first serve with a wait list idea with registration available all year long.

5. Can both a paper memo and a district email, not a parent portal message, be distributed to each member of the school community in the Whonnock, Webster's Corners, Garibaldi, Yennadon and Highland Park Elementary schools to ensure the families are learning about this proposal? We are well aware that the parent portal message at this time does not always get looked at and the message does not always get through to the reach the intended recipient.

5. Is there a zero room for error here? All conditions must be met no wiggle room?

6. After the one year, what kind of contract time frame are they prepared to secure with a bus company.

8. Can you inquire if school bus transportation can be written off as transit passes are? This has been the biggest question from our members after the initial hit of the doubling in fees. What if anything can the school board do to initial some kind of conversation with the "powers that be" to find out if school bus fees can be included as a write off for parents, just like the transit fees are?

9. What will become of the \$100,000.00 that was budgeted for the transittion from school bus to no bus? Is this included in the money in this proposal or is that money left over?

10. What schools are these proposed buses going to run to?

11. Will there be any cathchment changes as a result of this trial school bus proposal. Catchment changes such as the ones we outlined in our list of recommendation. The newly

changed SRT to GSS changes and the North Whonnock from Websters to Whonnock Changes?

In closing we would like to thank you for this opportunity. We have fought long and hard to try to express just how important access to education is for our children. We will continue to fight this with the provincial government as we believe a provincial policy needs to be implemented. Every other province in Canada has transportation in the School Act except Ontario, who provides it anyway, to 825,000 students per day. They need to establish reasonable walk limits so that all districts are the same and constant with the rest of Canada. We have contacted every DPAC in the province and will continue to fight. As we promised in our letters and meetings, we understand that this is not simply an access to education fight, rather an underfunding of education fight and as we promised, we will continue this fight.

Kindly advise how best to ask out questions and share our concerns prior to this vote taking place.

Pascale Shaw

Save the Maple Ridge School Buses



JUN 07 2016

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Ms. Teresa Rezanoff  
President  
BC School Trustees Association  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 1580 W. Broadway  
Vancouver BC V6J 5K9

Dear Ms. Rezanoff:

Thank you for your letter of March 9, 2016, outlining the motion that was passed at the recent BC School Trustees Association Provincial Council proposing that additional mental health supports be in place for all K-12 refugee students arriving in British Columbia, and that a process be in place to coordinate public education services with refugee services. I apologize for the delayed response.

Since December 2015, 2,267 refugees have arrived in BC and it is estimated that 39 percent are of school age (5-18). As you may be aware, all refugees who come to Canada arrive as permanent residents and are eligible for school enrolment. The federal government has primary responsibility for settlement services for newcomers, including needs assessment and referrals. The provincial \$1 million Refugee Readiness Fund has provided \$500,000 to the Immigrant Services Society of BC to deliver a range of supports, including funding for clinicians caring for traumatized refugees, a 1-800 consultation line and a trauma needs assessment tool.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is working closely with Immigrant Services Society of BC and the Inter-Cultural Association to support the arrival of children into Vancouver and Victoria school districts. The MoE is also collaborating with other ministries, including the Ministry of Health, to review existing mental health programs and services and develop a cross-system response to this challenging issue.


Included in this work are a number of programs and initiatives currently delivered by the MoE aimed at promoting student mental health, including early learning programs such as Strong Start BC, Roots of Empathy, and Ready, Set, Learn, and K-12 programs such as ERASE (Expect Respect and Safe Education) and the Bullying Strategy. Funding is also provided for students with special needs, including those with mental health and behavioural challenges, as well as Community LINK funding and supplementary school district funding for vulnerable students.

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Child and youth mental health services are offered throughout BC by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. These services provide a wide range of community-based specialized mental health services to mentally ill children and their families. Honourable Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Children and Family Development, is best suited to provide further information about what mental health services will be available to refugee children and youth arriving in the province.

Your advocacy on behalf of refugee students is commendable. Again, thank you for taking the time to share your comments on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Terry Lake  
Minister of Health



Mike Bernier  
Minister of Education

pc: Honourable Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Children and Family Development  
Mr. Stephen Brown, Deputy Minister of Health  
Mr. Dave Byng, Deputy Minister of Education  
BCSTA Member Boards of Education





## SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 57 (PRINCE GEORGE)

2100 Ferry Avenue, Prince George, B.C. V2L 4R5

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June 13, 2016

The Hon. Mike Bernier  
Minister of Education  
PO Box 9045, STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Bernier:

The Board of Education acknowledges and appreciates your announcement on May 31, 2016 that proposed 2016-2017 administrative savings are being directed back to students. We also acknowledge and appreciate the June 2, 2016 letter from your Deputy Minister in which our Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer were advised "that government has confirmed this level of funding as a permanent commitment for K-12 education; it is not only for the 2016/17 school year." That amount for this school district is \$622,655.

At the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on May 31, 2016 a motion was passed that I write to you acknowledging that the requirement of new administrative savings was rescinded and asking that the remaining \$727,135 of required administrative savings for the 2016-2017 budget be returned.

You may recall that we last wrote to you related to Administrative Savings on March 29, 2016 and that that letter was jointly signed by our education partners. This Board of Education remains concerned about many of the unfunded cost pressures identified in that letter. It also remains concerned that the March 15, 2016 funding announcement for all school districts was net of the \$29 million provincial total of the 2015-2016 required administrative savings.

We are requesting that you also rescind the 2015-2016 administrative savings requirement which is \$727,135 for School District No. 57 (Prince George). It is time to put the entire administrative savings requirement, and the ill-will that it created behind all of us working hard to support student learning and achievement in this province.

Sincerely,

Tony Cable  
Chair, Board of Education

cc: Hon. Shirley Bond, MLA, Prince George-Valemount  
Hon. Mike Morris, MLA, Prince George-Mackenzie  
Rob Fleming, MLA, Victoria-Swan Lake  
Boards of Education

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