

Written Submission to the Board of Education
Jean Davidson

Subject: future school bus service in SD 42

It has come to my attention that financial restraints are apparently driving a decision to not provide school buses in rural areas of this school district starting in September 2016. I strongly protest this decision.

Canada has a heritage of almost two centuries of free, accessible, public education. In early days, that meant building elementary schools within a distance that children could travel by foot, horseback or train. When one room schools were centralized several decades ago for what was seen as greater efficiency and effectiveness, buses were provided so all children could still receive free, accessible, public education. I understand the BC government has removed the requirement of school districts to provide bus transportation; that flies in the face of Canada's long tradition of public education.

Even for those students close enough to walk to school, it is no longer safe to do so on rural roads in east Maple Ridge; traffic is too heavy and too fast. The students who will suffer most will be those whose parents cannot afford to make other arrangements; these students are the most vulnerable and likely to be marginalized.

I recognize you have difficult decisions to make in spending your limited funds - but the safety of children getting to school should not be jeopardized by removal of school buses.

I respectfully request you maintain bus service in this school district so that we continue the principle of equally available and accessible education to all regardless of economic circumstances.

Thank you,