



REPORT TO

SPECIAL BOARD

## REVISED DISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

*Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them., Isaiah 30:20*

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M. Loberto, Superintendent, Planning and Development

### INFORMATION REPORT

**Vision:**

*At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.*

**Mission:**

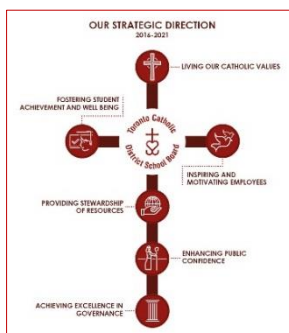
*The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.*

*We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.*

Rory McGuckin  
Director of Education

D. Koenig  
Associate Director  
of Academic Affairs

L. Noronha  
Associate Director of Facilities,  
Business and Community  
Development, and  
Chief Financial Officer



## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides information regarding the distance eligibility requirement for student transportation, which was modified from 1.5km to 1.6km as part of the approval of the 2019-2020 TCDSB budget on June 13, 2019. The revised distance criteria results in a cost savings of \$200,000.

With the change to the distance requirement, students residing less than 1.6km from their school will no longer qualify to receive school bus service in September 2019 unless they reside in a transportation hazard or Board approved transportation area.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 4 hours*

## **B. BACKGROUND**

1. *The approved 2019-2020 TCDSB budget included efficiencies in student transportation services.* The 2019-2020 TCDSB Budget, approved by the Board on June 13, 2019, included the following efficiencies related to Student Transportation Services:

- Revising the Distance Eligibility for School Bus Transportation from 1.5 km to 1.6km; and
- Discontinuing the current provision of courtesy seats for students accessing empty seats on school buses.

The changes to Transportation services will come into effect for the 2019-2020 school year.

2. *Revising the distance criteria from 1.5km to 1.6km impacts the transportation eligibility of approximately 1,000 students in September 2019.* With the change to the distance requirement, students residing less than 1.6km from their school will no longer qualify to receive school bus service in September 2019 unless they reside in a transportation hazard or Board approved transportation area.

Students who are no longer eligible for school bus service may apply for an empty seat on an existing school bus route at the beginning of the school year, however there is no guarantee of service, as it is depending on the availability of space on the bus.

3. ***Several parents have voiced concerns regarding the impacts of the revised distance eligibility.*** Following parents receiving notice of the change to the distance criteria, both Trustees and the Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) have received several communications expressing concern with both the impacts and timing of the service modification (September 2019). The majority of the inquiries received by the TSTG are concerning how the distance is calculated, and questions related to parents measuring the distance to their home address using resources such as Google Maps.
  - In preparing the communication to impacted parents, the TSTG calculates distance using the shortest path. Walkways are used in the calculation, and will generate a shorter distance than if solely the road network is used. When the boundaries to determine student eligibility for transportation are created, the road networks will also be used as part of the distance calculation. The communication to parents included the reminder to check back in mid-August to confirm the information, as some students may be eligible following the creation of the boundaries.
  - There is also a discrepancy in the distance calculation used by the TSTG and the measurements provided by software such as Google Maps. The TSTG software calculates the distance to the closest access point at the school, which is often the driveway or a walkway to a school property. Commercial mapping software simply measures to the address, which is central to the property. The TSTG software can shorten the distance considerably.
4. ***A transition measure for the revised distance eligibility could be accommodated through the operating contingency.*** The cost savings associated with the changes in transportation eligibility from 1.5 km to 1.6 km is \$200,000. Should the Board wish to delay this change in order to address concerns raised, a one-year transition period for the implementation of the revised distance criteria could be accommodated using the operating contingency. This does not require the re-opening of the 2019-20 Budget Estimates. The Budget Estimates have already been submitted to the Ministry as the deadline was June 28, 2019. Should the Board wish to provide this

transition it would be considered an “in-year” change subsequent to the setting of the budget. As such, any fiscal impact would be covered by the Operating Contingency at the end of the fiscal year on August 31, 2020. Should a Trustee wish to motion this transition measure, the following motion could be used:

*That the TCDSB provide a one-year transition period whereby, notwithstanding the transportation policy change approved to be implemented in September 2019, the transportation distance eligibility criteria remain as 1.5Km for the 2019-20 school year and that any associated overages be funded by the Operating Contingency at year-end.*

## **C. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the consideration of the Board.