



August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021

Dear Trustees,

The Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) would like to take this opportunity to update you on the status of student transportation for September 2021.

### Driver Status

TSTG has been meeting with the student transportation carriers throughout the summer and they have been providing weekly driver status updates. Currently, on a system-wide basis, bus carriers have stated that there are sufficient drivers to cover all routes and the required number of dedicated spare drivers to ensure safe and timely service for all eligible students. However, as you know, the driver situation can change significantly as we approach the first day of school.

### Mandatory Vaccines

The Ministry requires that all education sector employees (including bus drivers) provide an attestation of their vaccination status. Most bus companies are reporting that more than 80% of their drivers are fully vaccinated (similar to Toronto averages). Any drivers that remain unvaccinated would be required to participate in an education session about COVID-19 vaccines, as well as perform rapid testing on a schedule set by the Ministry and/or Toronto Public Health.

Each bus company has been asked to prepare a vaccination policy that mimics the intent of the school boards' policies. Bus companies have also been asked to speak with their legal and privacy staff regarding the collection of personal data. Unvaccinated drivers provide an unknown as it pertains to the confirmation of drivers for September. Should this group not want to get vaccinated or fulfil the obligations around rapid testing and education, there is a possibility of a driver shortage.

### Phased-in Start

As you know, to start the 2021-22 school year, the TSTG will once again be implementing a phased-in start for student transportation to provide a more consistent service for families and to ensure that students with special education needs are prioritized and receive bus service beginning the first week of school.

**From September 9 to September 14, 2021 – only students with special education needs (excluding those in the gifted program) who travel to school on mini buses, mini vans, taxis and Wheelchair accessible vehicles will be provided with student transportation.**



**Starting September 15, 2021 – all other eligible students will be provided with student transportation, unless there is a significant driver shortage or other unforeseen issues related to COVID-19.**

Both the TDSB and TCDSB will be following this phased-in start. Should there be a significant driver shortage that would impact our ability to deliver safe and timely service, a decision may be made to delay the start of transportation for all other eligible students beyond September 15<sup>th</sup>. Should this be required, parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible, and given adequate notice, so that they can make alternate arrangements for getting their children to and from school.

As always, we are working with our partners to ensure a successful start to the school year. Should there be any questions or concerns, please reach out at any time.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hodgkinson  
General Manager - TSTG