



REPORT TO

CORPORATE SERVICES, STRATEGIC  
PLANNING AND PROPERTY  
COMMITTEE

**TORONTO STUDENT TRANSPORTATION GROUP  
ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024**

*“And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.” Luke 13:29*

Drafted	Meeting Date
February 26, 2025	April 10, 2025

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**INFORMATION REPORT**

**Vision:** *IN GOD’S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope.*

**Mission:** *Nurturing the faith development and academic excellence of our Catholic learning community through the love of God, neighbour, and self.*



MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN  
2022 - 2025

IN GOD’S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope



Brendan Browne  
 Director of Education

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 Associate Director of Academic  
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 Associate Director of Corporate  
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## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the major activities and challenges faced by the Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) during the 2023-2024 school year, as required by *Policy S.T. 01 Transportation*. The attached TSTG Annual Report (*Appendix A*) provides a more detailed review of activities over that same period.

## B. PURPOSE

1. To provide the Board of Trustees with a summary of data, Key Performance Indicators (KPI), activities, challenges, and successes of the Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) during the 2023-2024 school year.
2. This report addresses the requirement for an annual report, as outlined in TCDSB *Policy S.T.01 Transportation*.

## C. BACKGROUND

1. *The 2023-2024 Toronto Student Transportation Group Annual Report summarizes the activity of the consortium over the school year and provides information on what is anticipated in the following year. The annual report was received and approved at the February 14, 2025, meeting of the TSTG Governance Committee.*
2. *The 2023-2024 school year brought its share of challenges, notably a province-wide, persistent school bus driver shortage. This shortage initially impacted service delivery, prompting a collaborative effort between the TSTG and school bus operators to mitigate disruptions and ensure student access to schools.*

### **Carrier Onboarding:**

3. *To prepare for the 2024-2025 school year, TSTG implemented an onboarding process for new school bus carriers. The onboarding spanned over eight months, and included sessions on daily operations, contract requirements, transportation software, invoicing, safety expectations, and more. GPS-equipped buses and dry runs were conducted to ensure operational readiness and identify any issues before the school year began.*

### **Retention and Recruitment:**

4. The Ministry of Education (MoE) had previously introduced a Driver Retention Program to address school bus driver shortages and ensure consistent service. ***The program aimed to offer financial incentives to retain drivers who stayed with their companies for a set period.*** In 2023-2024, the MoE downloaded this program to the School Boards and Transportation Consortiums, with monies to be flowed through the Transportation Grant, requiring them to create contracts with bus operators to ensure funds reached eligible drivers.

### **Technology and Improvements:**

5. ***Recent carrier contracts continued GPS tracking and introduced tablets on buses for better communication and driver route assignment confirmation. The TSTG plans to investigate Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology*** in the coming years to determine whether it provides sufficient value in efficiency and safety to the student transportation system. This technology involves issuing student tags, that can be scanned by an RFID reader, to confirm their presence. On the bus, students tap their tags on the reader when boarding and exiting, providing confirmation of their location. ***This technology would be implemented to address:***
  - Students falling asleep on the bus and missing their stops
  - Better tracking and managing student loads on school buses
  - To ensure that students are getting on and off the bus at the correct location
6. The TSTG has been working with its software vendor to enhance the ***electronic workflow*** of the student transportation application process as a means of ***ensuring greater accuracy and improving processing timelines.***
  - **Stage 1** - schools continue to process the applications at their end sending the information to the transportation unit.
  - **Stage 2** - applications will be open to the parents who will be able to autofill their own child information into the application then the application automatically moves to the school and then the transportation team.

***With these new and existing virtual tools, the transportation consortium will be setting up live virtual interactive training sessions with school staff.*** Sessions will also be available for viewing at any time through the TSTG website. Having this material readily available will allow school administration to facilitate transportation at the local level.

## Financial:

7. ***The TCDSB received a 2023-2024 transportation grant of approximately \$50 million.*** The TDSB received \$78 million. The TSTG had budgeted \$128 million to supply transportation services for both the TCDSB and TDSB in 2023-2024. The school boards benefited from the new transportation funding formula, which provided dollar amounts closer to real expenditures. New contracts added approximately 13.8% increase to transportation costs for 2024-2025, equating to just over \$5M being added to the TCDSB transportation budget due to the new contracts and new rates.
  - ***Significant transportation funding is allocated to accommodate identified special education needs,*** with transportation in this area steadily increasing each year. Unique needs, geography and modified program hours are some of the factors impacting transportation for the student population.
  - ***The cost of fuel remains the most volatile and unpredictable element to funding transportation services.*** Both gas and diesel type vehicles using various engines with different fuel economy travelling varying distances generate different costs to be funded.

## Active Transportation

8. ***The TSTG has expanded its active travel initiatives, supported by City of Toronto funding, to strengthen school travel planning in collaboration with external partners.*** Aligned with the City's Vision Zero project, these initiatives aim to address parental concerns and enhance student safety during school commutes. By monitoring pick-up and drop-off routines, active travel teams are identifying opportunities to improve safety and accessibility for all students. To date, over 20 schools have begun implementing plans that promote active and healthy transportation options.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. ***The TSTG collects statistics to identify trends with respect to service level as part of their annual review of routes.*** Technology, including GIS mapping and Google Analytics, is integral to the collection of this data.
2. ***Driver turnover remains a concern*** as it has risen year over year, resulting in bus companies having to recruit and train more drivers at an accelerated pace.
3. ***Traffic was the leading source of school bus delays.*** Absent drivers were the second leading cause of delays.

4. ***Statistics collected by the consortium reveal that accidents involving school buses were up in 2023-2024. These statistics fluctuate greatly year over year.*** TSTG reviews accident statistics with the aim of reducing these occurrences and improving the safety of students in and around the school bus. Additionally, the TSTG hired a second safety officer to be more proactive in monitoring and addressing carrier safety practices and driver safety programs. TSTG is also actively looking into technologies to improve student safety on the bus. Sensors, cameras, and performance monitoring devices are some of the technologies being investigated by TSTG staff.
5. **Please refer to the 2023-2024 Toronto Student Transportation Group's Annual Report, attached as *Appendix 'A'*, for further details on Key Performance Indicators and other pertinent information.**

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

TCDSB will continue to work closely with the Toronto Student Transportation Group to address areas of concern.

## **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the information of the Board.