

**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BUSINESS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
INFORMATION SHEET**

DATE: December 7, 2022
TO: Business Committee
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer
Pete Sabo, Executive Director of Planning & Operations
Tracy Mowat, Transportation Manager
SUBJECT: Emergent Bussing Concerns - Update

Background

This Information Sheet intends to bring the Board up to date (since June 8, 2022) on emergent bussing concerns that may have a service impact on our students in the 2022-23 school year. At this time no changes are being proposed. However, that could change if the strategies laid out below are unsuccessful.

Discussion

Similar to many other areas of the District and wider community, our bussing service has faced difficulty in recruiting staff. Since the last update staff are pleased to report that the district has had some success with its strategies for recruiting bus drivers, however continued work is required due to attrition (retirements, etc.).

Staffing issues have recently affected the mechanic services. To address the issue, Facilities and HR have worked together to increase recruitment and visibility of opportunities in the District. Recently staff secured short-term assistance for vacation coverage and a bus driver/mechanic-helper position been approved and posted. This position will assist the mechanics with some non-trades work within the shop and help relieve mechanics of their driving duties.

Further, staff have looked to augment in house capacity by increasing work requested from local repair firms. This however has been less successful than hoped due to scheduling and timing issues causing busses to remain out of the fleet longer than if attended to by in-house mechanics.

The lack of repair can manifest itself with CVSE inspection failures, which takes busses off the road until they can be repaired. It also jeopardizes future approval of our in-house preventative maintenance program with CVSE.

If this trend continues staff are unsure if current service levels will be maintained. Service gaps could result in the same effect as having driver shortages with students waiting significant times to be picked up (as one bus could do double duty) or if current ridership is maintained potential cancellation of a route/trip.

As noted, no current changes are being proposed. However, staff are currently reviewing the following options:

1. Outsourcing white fleet and bus maintenance whenever possible to ensure incomplete maintenance and repairs do not affect bus availability.
2. Continue considerations for solutions to shortage of mechanic staff.
3. Continuing our recruitment drive – for both drivers and mechanic/drivers.
4. Reviewing routes to determine whether any merger of routes is feasible, which would reduce the number of drivers required.
5. Prioritizing for potential route/trip cancellations which would minimize impacts on students

There is no Board action required at this time, but it is important for the Board and the community to be aware of the risk associated with the ongoing human resource gaps in our transportation system.

Appendix A: June 8, 2022 Information Sheet

