



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

DATE: October 11, 2023
TO: Business Committee
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer
SUBJECT: Policy 3.8 - Transportation

Recommendation

The Business Committee recommends that the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) receive the Draft Revised Policy 3.8 – Transportation and circulate as a notice of motion for 30 days, utilizing the consultation process as per Board Governance, Section 1, 2.7 – Policy Development.

Background

The 2022-23 and 2023-24 workplan of the Policy Committee included updating Policy 3.8 Transportation as a priority. This Action Sheet outlines proposed changes and includes a recommended motion to consult with the community on the proposed update.

Discussion

The attached draft proposes significant changes to the current policy. The changes fall into five themes:

1. The Scope of the Policy;
2. Outlines types of riders;
3. A clarification of authority (e.g. which decisions the Board makes);
4. Encouragement to work closely with RDN; and
5. Specific definitions to guide the provision of bussing.

Note that the purpose statement is largely imported from the currently existing policy with minor changes.

Scope of the Policy

The scope of the policy is recommended to expand. For instance, the name is change from Transportation to “Transportation to and from School”. This incorporates the Board’s support for active transportation as well as concerns about safety with respect to pick-up and drop-off. Note that separate administrative procedures will be created for bussing, active transportation and pick-up and drop-off.

Types of Riders

The policy also is clear about the 4 types of bus riders the District may support and highlight the restrictions. These include eligible riders due to distance from school, Indigenous students who are supported with specific funding from the BC Tripartite Agreement, Students with Disabilities and Diverse Abilities and students whose way to work may include hazards.

The delineation is intended to remove confusion regarding about prioritization for bussing. For instance, the previous policy did not delineate sufficiently between students outside of walk routes and students within walk routes but with potential hazards. This confusion had led to divergent opinions on whether students were eligible due to a safety hazard and what a hazard may represent. While the clarity will not lead to immediate changes it will guide routing recommendations in future. Further, the Policy continues to recognize bussing is limited by resourcing available (financial, human and physical) but also requires a publicly available process on how decision are to be made.

Clarification of authority

Over the last number of year there has been confusion and concern about who is the decision maker on bussing decisions. The authority for decision making is spelled out in the policy.

Encouragement to work closely with RDN

The District has limited resources available for bussing. However, for a relatively compact District it provides significant bussing at a major cost to the District. As the area continues to grow so will RDN bussing services. Given these realities the District should avoid a duplication of services and encourage the use of public transit where appropriate and the Policy reflects this. For instance, the District has students in a number of areas that outside of walk limits that are not offered District bussing and reply on RDN bussing for school access. Conversely, the District also has students within the walk limits that are provided bussing despite access to RDN bussing. It should be noted that the intention is not to reduce current service levels but ensure as limited overlap as possible as well as information sharing.

Specific Definitions

The Policy also proposes definitions to assist our communicate and inform our Administrative Procedures.

Conclusion

The proposed changes to the Policy are intended to reflect current practices, but also to provide greater clarity on bussing eligibility as well as providing clear decision-making authority.

Appendix A: Draft Revised Policy 3.8 - Transportation