



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees
From: Tracy Barill, Director of Education
Date: February 26, 2024
Subject: **Ad Hoc Committee for Enhancing the Use of Public Transit**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of Trustees regarding:

- a violation of Board By-Laws pertaining to the establishment of an adhoc committee which was approved by motion of the Board at the regular Board meeting of January 22, 2024; and
- a potential conflict with the Durham Student Transportation Services Consortium Agreement.

Background

At the Regular Board meeting of January 22, 2024, the Board of Trustees passed the following motion:

“Whereas, since the 1960s until 2014, the bussing of the majority of high school students to and from Durham schools was handled efficiently by the municipal transit agencies through the use of bus tickets/passes; the municipal operators were Ajax-Pickering Transit, Whitby Transit, Oshawa Transit and Clarington Transit, later amalgamated into Durham Region Transit (DRT) in 2006;

Whereas, in 2014, Durham Region Transit raised the cost of the monthly bus pass significantly and the school boards assumed responsibility for transporting eligible high school students on yellow school buses through its consortium Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS);

Whereas, for the last few years, pre- and post-pandemic, school bus operators across Ontario have had difficulty finding and retaining a sufficient number of school bus drivers;

Whereas many transit agencies in the province (Toronto, York Region, Ottawa, Kingston) have a high percentage of high school students using public transit to travel to and from school, and more boards and transit agencies are considering similar arrangements;

<https://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/school-bus-routes/oc-transpo-public-transit-information/#:~:text=OC%20Transpo%20is%20a%20convenient,be%20issued%20to%20eligible%20students.>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/tvdsb-to-consider-free-transit-passes-for-high-school-students-1.7018273>

Whereas DSTS continues to maximize the efficiency of its system using the resources it has, in the fall of 2021, Durham District School Board (DDSB) and Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) sought an expanded relationship between DRT and DSTS. A public delegation was made to the Transit Executive Committee of Durham Region on December 8, 2021, with the intention of explaining the benefits of transit passes for high school students; negotiating a lower rate for DRT passes currently purchased by DSTS; and a strategy to have more high school students given monthly DRT transit passes;

Appendix A. DCDSB presentation at a Virtual Public Meeting by Morgan Ste. Marie, Chair (pages 1-6 focused on current DRT passes) and Declan Amaral, Student Trustee (pages 7-13, benefits of public transit, student perspective).

Appendix B. DDSB presentation transcript by Carolyn Morton, Chair, (focused on expanded use of public transit for high school students);

Whereas, in the months after this delegation, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Region, the Boards and DSTS that “establishes shared principles to guide on-going collaboration” and this MOU was made public on June 8, 2022;

Page 38: <https://calendar.durham.ca/default/Detail/2022-06-08-1330-Transit-Executive-Committee-Meeting/fe6254eb-dde9-4e6b-9d5b-aea90122854e>

Whereas, the Durham Region Transit Service Strategy 2022-2025 references identified opportunities to increase the percent of high school students using transit from 9% to 42%;

Page 13: <https://www.durhamregiontransit.com/en/about-us/resources/The-Route-Ahead-ACCESSIBLE.pdf>

Be it resolved that an ad hoc committee of Staff and no less than 3 Trustees be created to lay out an engagement strategy that advances the shared principles of

the Memorandum of Understanding, including “enhancing the use of public transit by youth, including secondary school students, within a fiscally responsible framework” with our transportation partners, transit agencies and other levels of government.

Information/Analysis/Research

1. Board By-Laws

The General Working By-Law Number 2021 (Revised: May 23, 2023) of the Durham Catholic District School Board outlines provisions for the establishment of Special *Ad Hoc* Committees as follows:

4.5 Special *Ad Hoc* Committees

The Board may from time to time approve by resolution the formation of an *ad hoc* committee to provide a recommendation to the Board on a specific matter.

A resolution of to approve the formation of an *ad hoc* committee must state:

- a) the purpose of the committee;
- b) the maximum number of members;
- c) the date by which the committee will report to the Board;
- d) the date of dissolution.

Which shall collectively form the committee’s terms of reference.

Any recommendations for a deferral of the dissolution date shall be accompanied by a rationale and projected date of completion of the committee’s report or recommendation to the Board.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board may resolve to dissolve an *ad hoc* committee at any time.

At the request of the Board, the Director of Education may appoint staff to provide resource or administrative support, information and expertise to an *ad hoc* committee.

2. Durham Student Transportation Services Consortium Agreement

Since December 2005, the Durham Catholic District School Board and the Durham District School Board have been in contractual agreement to collectively provide a common administration for transportation service for students registered in their respective jurisdictions through the consortium known as Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS). The agreement clearly states that “DSTS will manage and administer all home to school transportation, school to school transportation and

special needs transportation.” It further states that “The Durham Student Transportation Services shall negotiate common contracts with transportation service providers.”

The consortium agreement stipulates the following regarding governance:

2.5 DSTS Governance Committee

2.5.1 The Boards agree and acknowledge that each Board shall appoint two members to the Governance Committee of the DSTS. Membership of the Committee will be the Chair or Trustee designate from each Board and the Director or Designate from each Board.

Next Steps

1. It is noted that the resolution passed at the regular Board meeting of January 22, 2024 did not include the components mandated by the Board By-laws and thus needs to be rectified prior to establishment of an *ad hoc* committee.
2. Trustees are advised that in consideration of the pre-existing signed agreement with the Durham District School Board that formed the DSTS Consortium with a separate governance body, the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee pertaining to the delivery of transportation services may fall outside of the jurisdiction of the DCDSB Board of Trustees. Further investigation is recommended.

TB/eb