



## NEWS RELEASE

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### Saskatoon school divisions change transportation guidelines to help tackle budget constraints

Saskatoon Public Schools (SPS) and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) are announcing several changes to elementary student busing to address reductions in provincial operating grants.

Each school division in the province receives a certain amount of funding for transportation based on a provincial funding model. “With a new provincial funding model in place, we need to bring expenditures on transportation in line with funding,” said Diane Boyko, board chair for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. “We can no longer afford to maintain our current level of service without affecting student learning in the classroom, so we need to make some tough decisions around transportation for next year.”

Changes to busing that will take effect in September 2017 for both divisions are:

- Shared busing will be implemented where economically viable;
- Noon transportation will cease for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten; half-day kindergarten classes may shift to full-day, every-other-day (a model that already exists in many schools in the city);
- Where applicable, walking distance to be eligible for busing will increase to 1.2 km from the current 0.8 km;
- Buses will not travel down crescents; students living on crescents will need to walk to and from a main artery where the walking distance to a stop is 450 metres or less.
- Where applicable, pre-kindergarten students will use group bus stops with K-8 students

“We know this will be a challenge for some families,” said Ray Morrison, board chair for Saskatoon Public Schools. “However, our focus is on best maintaining our classrooms. The savings found from eliminating two bus routes can pay for another teacher in the classroom. This has a direct impact on student engagement and achievement, which is our priority.”

Changes are expected to save approximately \$1 million for each school division. For 2017-18, the divisions face a funding shortfall of \$9.7 million for GSCS and \$11.5 million for SPS.

All school divisions must submit their 2017-18 budgets to the Ministry of Education by June 30, 2017.

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