

**From:** EDC Minister <[Education.Minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Education.Minister@gov.ab.ca)>

**Sent:** Friday, February 23, 2018 2:23 PM

**Subject:** Review of Student Transportation Eligibility Criteria in the School Transportation Regulation

**To: Board Chairs of Public, Separate, Francophone and Charter School Boards**

Last fall, our government was proud to pass the *School Amendment Act* to further align *The School Act* with our government's education priorities and to ensure that our education legislation continues to meet the needs of Alberta's students, school authorities and communities now and into the future. Included in the amendments passed were changes respecting student transportation. This change was made in anticipation of developing new eligibility criteria within the *School Transportation Regulation*.

Our government is committed to working with our education partners to ensure that updated student transportation regulations address the concerns we've heard from parents and school authorities. I have heard from many of you that there is a need to proceed carefully in the development of new regulations and ensure that school authorities, parents, and students have adequate time to plan for anticipated operational changes. We have also heard from parents and school authorities who would like further opportunities to engage with our government on student transportation to share their perspectives.

Consequently, changes to our current student transportation eligibility criteria will not be implemented in September 2018. The current transportation eligibility distance will remain, and key changes will be deferred until the 2019/20 school year. Minor amendments to the *School Transportation Regulation* will be required this spring to align with the amended *School Act*.

We have already made significant progress to better understand the varied transportation challenges that school authorities face throughout the province and in discussing possible options for new eligibility criteria. Over the next few months, my ministry will seek further feedback and ideas from parents, stakeholders and school authorities. Stakeholder engagements will include working with the Alberta School Boards Association and the College of Alberta School Superintendents. Focus groups will also be held at the Alberta School Councils' Association spring conference in April to seek additional input.

Government also wants to hear from parents and will conduct a province-wide survey to engage directly with parents and stakeholders. Department officials will also conduct information sessions with several stakeholder groups at their spring conference meetings to discuss possible options for consideration.

After this consultation period is completed in June, changes to the eligibility criteria in the *School Transportation Regulation* are tentatively scheduled to be finalized by government in fall 2018. This schedule will give parents and school authorities an appropriate amount of time – approximately 10 months – to adjust to the new requirements.

We are listening to families and school boards to make sure we update student transportation eligibility requirements to make life better for Alberta students. We know school boards will need ample time to implement operational adjustments to support such changes, and parents and families need time to adjust to transportation changes that may impact their schedules. Time is also needed to assess the sustainability of different options and to avoid unintended consequences for both boards and parents.

Further information regarding the spring survey for parents and stakeholders will be provided in the near future.

Sincerely,

David Eggen  
Minister of Education  
MLA, Edmonton-Calder