

Board clarifies transportation policy

This letter is in response to the article published Sept. 25, "Schomberg mothers stage march on YCDSB transportation."

I would like to clarify that there have been no policy changes with respect to transportation. The transportation policy is the same for both the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) and the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and has been in effect for over a decade.

The policy states that YCDSB and YRDSB students in JK-Grade 3 who live within 1.2 km of school are not eligible for transportation, and students in grades 4-8 who live within 1.6 km of school are not eligible for transportation.

Routes in Schomberg were reviewed by the Student Transportation Services of York Region in the fall of 2013, and it was determined that a significant number of students who were ineligible were riding the bus to school. A notice was sent home to St. Patrick CES parents in April 2014 advising that the policy would be enforced in September 2014. This gave more than 4 months notice for families to make adjustments to their daily routines.

A walking route along Main Street and Church Street is available and has sidewalks all the way to the school. While the distance may be slightly longer, it is still within the policy distance criteria. Further information about the transportation policy and how distance is measured can be found at www.schoolbuscity.com.

Many parents have commented about an empty bus driving before them. This is not the case. In fact 54 St. Patrick CES students from JK to Grade 3 are eligible to ride the bus that services the Laurier subdivision. Although students who are eligible may not ride the bus daily, the bus seats are accounted for.

Through a partnership with the Region of York, the municipality and the local schools, both school boards are trying to develop alternatives for families to encourage active transportation to and from school. We are thankful to the Township of King for implementing the Walking School Bus pilot project.

Transportation procedures and rules are the same for both Schomberg PS and St Patrick CES. As stated in a previous letter to the editor on Aug. 5, entitled, "Where's Pedestrian Accessibility," a parent in the community regularly walks his daughter to and from Schomberg Public School along Main Street "safely using sidewalks on both sides."

School boards, municipalities, public health and most importantly parents, all play an integrative role in our children's safety and well-being.

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York Catholic District School Board