

## BCSTA OKANAGAN BRANCH

School District No. 19 (Revelstoke)

School District No. 22 (Vernon)

School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)

School District No. 53 (Okanagan Similkameen)

School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)

School District No. 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)

School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha)

School District No. 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)

School District No. 74 (Gold Trail)

February 11, 2009

The Honourable Shirley Bond  
Minister of Education  
PO Box 9045, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Bond:

### Re Transportation Funding

At the BCSTA Okanagan Branch meeting, held in Kamloops on February 7, 2009, the following motion was passed:

THAT: The Branch president, on behalf of the nine member school districts, direct a letter to the Minister of Education expressing concern about the lack on Ministry action to increase Transportation Funding levels, which were "frozen" in 2002/2003, to more reasonably reflect the current Transportation service level costs.

AND FURTHER THAT: The minister be urged to immediately review the current Ministry transportation level grants to make them more compatible with the actual cost of providing student transportation services.

As you are aware, transportation funding had remained at the 2002/2003 level, or less, despite the rising cost of fuel, maintenance and repairs. As a result, Boards have been forced to utilize "classroom" dollars to subsidize transportation services. These dollars would be better directed to supporting and enhancing student learning but, due to student safety concerns, are being used to offset the lack of sustainable transportation funding that should be more indicative of the current cost and service levels, not those established in 2002/2003. A review of the yearly consumer price indexes for the period since the present transportation funding was established, suggests that districts are currently under funded by 13% to 15% and a further 12% due to a reduction in buying power.

Many of our bused students live in areas that have no pedestrian walkways, sidewalks or cycle paths and their only route to school would be along busy, dangerous roads and highways. Due to the travel distances and to the potentially hazardous pedestrian/cycling travel routes, extending "walk limits" and /or reducing bus services, are not viable options to our Boards. Thus, the alternatives to gaining more reasonable transportation funding, would likely have to

c/o School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan)  
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Kelowna, B.C. V1X 5X7

include establishing student fees for bus service or continuing to reduce student resources elsewhere in the instructional block of funding.

Honourable Minister Bond, this is an urgent issue and we urge you to immediately conduct a review of the current transportation funding levels with a view to accessing additional funding beyond the current block (ie Carbon Taxes) to increase transportation grants to be more compatible with the actual cost of providing transportation services to our students.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Moyra Baxter".

Moyra Baxter  
President – Okanagan Branch

pc: BCSTA  
All BC MLAs