Distribution of Student Information: From School through to Bus Driver
Ontario consortia share a responsibility in preparing bus drivers to succeed everyday though the use of accurate and effective data.

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Today’s Presentation

The panel will cover some of the program’s in place at their local site and other consortia in Ontario including:

- Overview of consortia in Ontario
- Student Information to Consortia
- Application of Policy
- Specialized Transportation Needs
- Production of Route Copy
- Communication to Stakeholders
- How Consortia Support Drivers
Consortia in Ontario

About Student Transportation Reforms

Student Transportation Reforms introduced in 2006 were one of the first sector-wide initiatives designed to support and strengthen the management capacity of boards. The reforms included:

- The development of transportation consortia and;
- Effectiveness & Efficiency (E&E) Reviews of consortia to ensure that boards are implementing and adopting best practices.
Consortia in Ontario

Transportation Consortia

- One of the most significant shared service initiatives in North America
- Jointly manage and plan student transportation services
- 33 student transportation consortia
- Majority of student transportation services are delivered by school bus operators, under contract with school boards and consortia.
Consortia in Ontario

Effectiveness and Efficiency ("E&E") Review

Positive outcomes of the reviews include:

• Greater clarity on roles and responsibilities provided through consortium governance and policy manuals,
• Transportation consortia taking the lead in developing leading practices,
• More effective use of data and routing technology to optimize solutions and achieve efficiencies; and
• Improved contract and performance management.
Consortia in Ontario

- Over 800,000 transported students
- Represents 40% of all enrolled students

- Approx. 19,000 vehicles (school buses, vans, mini-vans and sedans)
  - 50% of are full-size vehicles

- School purpose vehicles travel approx. 1.8 million kms daily (45x around earth)
Consortia Leading Practices Group

Organically started with consortia technicians sharing best practices.

• The group meets 2-3 times a year and agendas are derived from topics of interest identified in previous meetings.

• All consortia are welcome to participate and are expected to prepare their best practices to present/discuss at the meeting.
Route Copy: How Consortia Receive Info

Consortia work to ensure the driver’s have the most up to date student information on their route copy. There are two main ways consortia receive student information:

1. Digital Transfer of Student Data
2. Application Process
Route Copy: How Consortia Receive Info

Digital Transfer of Student Data

• The member school boards enter in a sharing agreement where student information is securely transferred or downloaded to the consortia’s planning software.
• Ownership of the student information is with the school and school board, meaning that the school and board are responsible for ensuring accuracy in the student data, i.e., Address, grades, contact information.
• Semi-live set of student data.
• Student address/Contact information accurate and common amongst all stakeholders.
• Runs automatically allowing correct data no matter who is “in the office”.
• Transportation information available in secure online portals for Operators, Schools, Parents is up to date, the same and consistent all stakeholders.
Digital Transfer of Student Data

1. School Enters Data in Student Data System
2. School Board Runs a Student Data Extract
3. Data is securely transferred to Consortia
4. Consortia uploads the student data into transportation planning software
5. Student data is processed by transportation software and consortia staff
Application for Transportation

Application Process

- Families provide their information directly to the consortia
- Temporary ownership of student information
- Actual ridership vs eligible – safety.
- Better route utilization and efficiency.
- Additional student information/contacts.
- Not reliant on schools to input data.
- Alternate address information.
- Ability to process student information during summer months (eligible & enrolled).
Now you have a set of student data...what’s next?

The student data will be reviewed and considered for inclusion in a set of eligibility policies.

**General Eligibility Policy**

- Distance
- Distance Based Exemptions (Hazards)

**Exceptional Eligibility Policy**

- Medical
- Joint Custody
Policy Responsibilities

Who owns the policy?
• The Education Act permits School Boards to set their own policies and transportation policies vary across the Province.

School Board
• The policy is a mechanism to control the level of service provided to families which has a direct impact on the cost of transportation.

Consortium
• If School Board sets the policy, the Consortium's role is to simply apply the policy in an effective and efficient manner and to encourage policy harmonization between member School Boards.
• If a consortium owns the policy, they can manage the financial implications of the policy, i.e. route reductions. It also guarantees policy harmonization between member School Boards.
General Eligibility Policy

Distance Based Eligibility

• Transportation may be arranged to/from school; based on the student’s primary address and application of the eligibility policy of the Board or Consortia they are registered with.

• Students may access transportation services if their primary address is within the school’s attendance boundary and outside the non-transportation (walk) boundary.

Example:
JK – Gr 8 1.60 km
Gr 9 to Gr 12 3.20 km
General Eligibility Policy

Distance Based Exemption (Hazard) Eligibility

STS and other consortia have engaged a traffic engineering firm to assist in developing guidelines to determine if an exemption from distance based criteria will be provided.

These guidelines
- Reflect engineering principles recognized by transportation agencies and authorities;
- Contemplate the use of readily available data from applicable municipalities and, in certain circumstances, site visits;
- Are predominantly data-driven.

Other consortia will determine if a zone meets conditions that would warrant an exemption and may consider:
- Volume of traffic
- Number of lanes of a road
- Posted speed limit
- Sidewalks
- Signalized intersection or crossing
- Physical barriers
- Age of student
- Historical Designations
Exceptional Eligibility Policies

- **Joint Custody Transportation**
  - Policies and procedures may require consideration if the flexibility to accommodate are not inherent in how they are written.

- **Each school board and consortium province-wide are obliged to the Ontario Human Rights Code.**
  - Safety must remain our focus and must also be balanced carefully against the family’s needs.

- **Consortia are obliged to offer a service in a manner that does not discriminate based on family or marital status.**
Exceptional Eligibility Policy

Joint Custody - Secondary Panel (STS)

Introduced in 2008 at the Secondary Panel.
In order for the application to be approved the family must meet all of the conditions in the policy including both addresses must be within the school's attendance boundary and within the school's transportation zone.
It is the responsibility of students to self-manage their schedule.

Joint Custody - Elementary Panel (STS)

Policy came into effect for start of the 2012-2013 school year.
Similar to the Secondary Policy both addresses must be inside of the school’s attendance boundary and eligible for transportation.
A calendar is provided with the application which must be completed for the entire school year.
Principal comments regarding supervision and afternoon boarding plans are collected and included as part of the application. The application must be supported by the Principal prior to approval by STS.
Exceptional Eligibility Policy

Application of Joint Custody Policy

- Secondary and Elementary Joint Custody student’s are listed in the routing software twice at two different stops at the same time.
- Elementary student calendar’s are provided to the school, parent and bus company (for the driver) so that all parties are aware of the bus and the stop(s) that the student should be accessing.
Exceptional Eligibility Policy

Medical Exceptionality—Who this may apply to:
Students may require transportation for medical exceptionalities this could include:
• mobility issues,
• mental, emotional or cognitive disabilities,
• recovering from surgery or a broken bone,
• weather related (asthma, allergies),
• vision impairments,
• illness

Transportation requirements could be permanent or for a short duration of time.
Consortia may assign the student to the transportation mode that is the best fit for the students needs.
Request Form - Medical
Exceptional Eligibility Policy

**Student Medical Information and Data may be provided to the consortia by**
- Schools (Individual Medical Plans and ISTP)
- Board staff (Special needs coordinators)
- Parents who have provided the school or consortia with medical notes
- Transportation applications
- Student extracts from Board student databases
Request Form – Specialized Transportation
Exceptional Eligibility Policy

Application of Policy

• Data captured via student application and student download is identified and flagged in the route planning software by the consortia.

• Key information such as wheelchairs, safety seats, medical needs, behavioural needs that is flagged in the planning software can be viewable by the bus operator and bus driver in their operator portals, in alert reports, and on the driver run copy sheets.

• ISTPs developed by Consortia come in many forms; primarily it is attached to the student file and is viewable through the transportation portal by schools, parents and bus companies. Drivers must be provided ISTP information in addition to route copy
Specialized Transportation Needs

Intelligence Gathering

• Students with life threatening medical conditions or with disabilities are required by AODA regulations to have an Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP)
• The ISTP is required for students using both special transportation and conventional bus services.
• Students requiring an ISTP are identified:
  • By the School and School Board in student downloads
  • Through the Consortium Application Form
  • By School Board Special Education Consultants
Route Copy: Sample Student Support Plan
Route Copy: Data Driven

Now you have all the student data and know who needs a bus...what’s next?

Once an eligible student is identified the consortia staff will make transportation arrangements for the student. This includes:

- Ensuring that the student record is accurate and reflects any of the student’s needs so that the driver has the most accurate information.
- Assigning the student to a pre-existing community bus stop.
- Creating a new stop for a student that resides further than the consortia’s travel to stop policy.
- Creating a new rural home stop for a student.
- Creating a new home stop for a student with special needs.
- Determine the best route to assign the stop to; including modification to an existing route or creating a new route.
Route Copy: Timeline Expectations

From School/Application to Bus Route:
• Existing Stops: Generally one to two school days
• New Stops: Generally three school days
• May take longer for special requests/needs
• During back to school, it has been a best practice to slow down for safety and communication and freeze routes for a week or two.
Flow of Information to Operators

Information is provided to the operators through a secure online portal. Online portals allow the consortia, operator, school and parent to have access to the same information.

Operators can access:

- Student and Run/Route Changes reports
- Up to date Route Copy, Maps and Manifests
- Emergency Call Lists
- Student Alerts
- School Bell Times
- GPS and Vehicle Information

Security of driver run sheets:

- Operators are required to have a process in place for drivers returning and destroying run sheets
- Operators and Drivers are responsible for keeping the run copy in a safe and secure location which could include a lock box on the bus
- Drivers complete confidentiality agreements and have vulnerable sector police checks
Route Copy: Driver Manifest

**Route Manifest**
- Start time, end time, distance, descriptions
- Operators, vehicle, driver
- Schools serviced
- Students
- Student needs
- Student grade
- Student schools
- Stop order
- Stop descriptions
- Stop times
- Start and end dates
- Student load and counts
- School stop info (loading zones)

**Route: 101**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stop</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description (Crossing)</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>End Time</th>
<th>School(s)</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7:51 AM</td>
<td>163 GlenGarry Rd (C)</td>
<td>7:51 AM</td>
<td>8:21 AM</td>
<td>Bayridge SS, Bayridge SS</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7:56 AM</td>
<td>Van Order Dr &amp; Bath Rd Apts Walkway</td>
<td>7:56 AM</td>
<td>8:09 AM</td>
<td>Frontenac SS</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8:02 AM</td>
<td>Frontenac SS</td>
<td>8:02 AM</td>
<td>8:21 AM</td>
<td>Frontenac SS</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8:08 AM</td>
<td>965 Mayfair Cres</td>
<td>8:08 AM</td>
<td>8:28 AM</td>
<td>Mayfair SS</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8:16 AM</td>
<td>1106 Caitlin Cres (C)</td>
<td>8:16 AM</td>
<td>8:38 AM</td>
<td>Caitlin SS</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8:20 AM</td>
<td>Bayridge SS Bus Loading Zone</td>
<td>8:20 AM</td>
<td>8:42 AM</td>
<td>Bayridge SS</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Route Copy: Driver Map

Route Map
- Start time, end time, distance, descriptions
- Operators, vehicle, driver
- Schools serviced
- Stops
- Route direction of travel
- Can be viewed in a large overview map or available in smaller detailed maps
Driver’s Tool Kit

- Designed for Bus Company’s to include as part of their driver orientation package and to be reviewed at Start Up meetings with their drivers.
- Provided to Operators on a annual basis.
- The Tools rely on the data that has been processed and available in the operator portal.
Driver’s Tool Kit

Driver Tool kit contains information to assist drivers in 5 key areas to help support them in their duties:

1. JK/SK Tag Program
2. Seating Plans
3. STS Contact Information
4. Student Conduct Reports
5. Understanding Route Copy
Driver’s Tool Kit

JK/SK Tag Program

• STS introduced a bus tag program to assist school staff and bus drivers with the management of JK/SK students

• According to policy all JK and SK students must be met at the bus stop

• The tags are brightly coloured for visibility and match the bus number sign in the side of the vehicle
Driver’s Tool Kit

JK/SK Tag Program

• The bus tag is a visual cue for school staff who load the buses at dismissal time and for the bus driver to be on the lookout for a responsible person to meet the student at the bus stop.

• STS mails bus tags in late August to all registered kindergarten students.
Driver’s Tool Kit

**Seating Plans**

- Seating plans are ultimately the responsibility of the school principal but we encourage the driver to work collaboratively with the Principal where necessary.
- Provided with a seating plan document that includes a graphic of the inside of the school bus.
- Illustrates the number of rows and seats on the bus.
- Provides a section on each seat to record the students' name assigned to it.
- Seating plan is to be based on the afternoon bus stop locations. There is a detailed bus route report that the bus company can retrieve from their school portal.
Driver’s Tool Kit

Seating Plans

We recommend:

• Keep all JK/SK students in the first couple of seats along with a responsible senior student in the front seat to assist

• Any students identified as needing epi pens should be included in the first few rows of the bus.

• Drivers/Schools are encouraged to consider evacuation training when developing a seating plan to ensure there is a mix of student ages and abilities located throughout the bus.
Driver’s Tool Kit

STS Contact Information

• Developed Contact Cards that drivers are able to provide parents should a parent request something at the bus stop other than what is approved and appearing on the driver’s route copy

• An excellent way for the driver to exit an awkward conversation with a parent

• We ask that the driver let their dispatcher/supervisor know if a parent makes a request so they in turn can follow up with our office so we can:
  • proactively start working on a solution or
  • be prepared to provide an explanation to the parent as to why we could not accommodate.
Driver’s Tool Kit

STS Contact Information

• Size of a business card and kept in the bus

• Provide operators with bundles of these prior to the start of every school year

Please visit www.mybigyellowbus.ca for policies & procedures governing student transportation in Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford counties and within the City of London.

To contact us please use the “Contact” link at www.mybigyellowbus.ca
Driver’s Tool Kit

Student Conduct Reports

• We ask that all drivers and bus company staff are familiar with both Student Conduct Reports and Safe School reporting

• Had feedback from bus companies that drivers do not know the process as to what happens after they submit a student conduct report

• We developed a graphic to explain the process to drivers
Driver’s Tool Kit

Student Conduct Reports

- STS will provide any updates to the bus supervisor.
- Driver submits Student Conduct Report to Supervisor.
- The School will respond to STS with any outcomes of the report.
- Supervisor will provide support to the driver and provide a copy of the report to STS.
- STS will forward the report to the school principal or vice principal.

MYBIG YELLOW BUS.ca
Driver’s Tool Kit

Understanding Route Copy

Provided a detailed explanation of all of the information contained on route copy:

• How to read bus pickup/drop off times
• How to read bus stop location descriptions
• Where to find student needs (such as epi pens, inhalers, wheelchairs, etc.)
• School arrival and departure times
• Bus stop effective and retire dates
Thank you!

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