



Trustee Speaking Notes for School Council Meetings and Stakeholders in General January 5, 2023

Topics: NEW - Inclement Weather, Transportation Change for 23-24, CASA Mental Health Service Classroom Update

Standing Items:

Have you read the Trustee Talk? It always captures the highlights of Board Meetings. It is sent out after each Public Board Meeting.

Division Newsletter - have you subscribed to our monthly newsletter (check your junk/spam mail)? Do you follow us on social media? Do you follow the school sites?

Communication Sturgeon Public School Division values our stakeholders and values the voice of our stakeholders. As Trustee, I will always listen to your concerns and direct you to where you need to go. As Trustees we govern the entire Division, we speak with one voice. We represent the interests of the entire school division - we represent all of our communities and schools. Our goal is to always make decisions that are the best decisions for Sturgeon Public School Division as a whole.

When you have a concern, the quickest and most effective way to resolve a concern regarding your child is to address it at the most direct level.

- Have you talked to the teacher?
- Have you talked to the Principal?
- If you have done both, then next reach out to the Office of the Superintendent. Dial 780-939-4341 ask for the Office of the Superintendent.

[221: Focused and Effective Communication](#)

[APPENDIX A: Flow Chart for Focused and Effective Communication - External Stakeholders](#)

NEW

Inclement Weather/Curriculum - Every year when winter arrives, questions arise regarding the cancellation of bus service; who decides when to cancel and how and the procedures for the interruption to learning, particularly in High School. Having an Inclement Weather Policy ensures that the decision to cancel transportation for cold weather is done objectively. Bad weather - ie snow storms - this is a more subjective decision which requires a great deal of collaboration. When the weather is bad, the Superintendent and the Transportation Services Manager work with Sturgeon County and neighbouring school divisions and also look at Alberta 511 Highway reports and use the knowledge of local towing companies who are active on social media to make the decision. The

Superintendent tries hard to make the decision the night before, however, the weather is not always predictable and can change, so this is not always possible.

[Policy 320 - Inclement Weather](#)

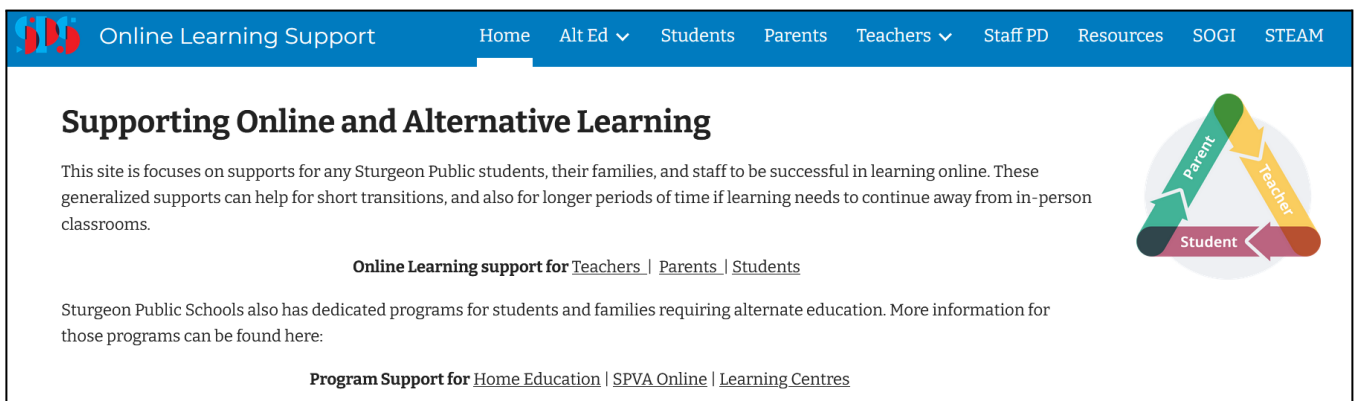
What does **INSTRUCTION** look like on Inclement Weather Days?

[AP 255: Inclement Weather Decisions for Schools](#) (LINKED)

During instructional days **when the Superintendent or designate suspends school bus transportation services**, the following procedures will apply:

- 4.1 Teachers will not conduct examinations, nor introduce new learning outcomes.
- 4.2 Student absences shall be deemed excusable and shall not affect the granting of credit in High School courses.
- 4.3 Principals may change the school schedule and delegate duties to staff according to the number of students that arrive at school.

HOWEVER, if it is the bus contractor(s) who cancels their route, then this administrative procedure **does not apply**. That being said, teachers are responsible for teaching the curriculum and ensuring students learn the outcomes, however, parents, as outlined in the Education Act (Section 32), are partners in Education and are responsible to take an active role in their child's educational success. Our schools/teachers work hard to ensure that parents/students have access to digital tools to support their child's learning - [Online Learning Support \(Link to Division Website\)](#). Here is what the landing page looks like:



The screenshot shows the 'Online Learning Support' website. The navigation bar includes links for Home, Alt Ed, Students, Parents, Teachers, Staff PD, Resources, SOGI, and STEAM. The main heading is 'Supporting Online and Alternative Learning'. Below this, there is a paragraph explaining the site's focus on supporting Sturgeon Public students, families, and staff in learning online. A circular diagram on the right shows 'Parent', 'Teacher', and 'Student' connected by arrows in a clockwise cycle. Below the diagram, there are links for 'Online Learning support for Teachers | Parents | Students' and 'Program Support for Home Education | SPVA Online | Learning Centres'.

For High School students, our teachers work hard to ensure that there are resources available on Google Classroom and students are also responsible for catching up on missed assignments. Open two-way communication is important. If parents are wanting more information, they should reach out to their child's teacher or the Principal.

[Change in Transportation Services for the upcoming 2023-2024 School Year](#) - A letter from the Superintendent was sent to all SPS families on Wednesday, December 21, 2022 regarding the implementation of **an application process** for transportation services for the 2023-2024 school year **and** further potential changes to come as part of the budget process (potential changes would be changes in fees as part of the 23-24 budget process).

Over the course of the 22-23 school year, administration has been doing a deep dive into Transportation Services to ensure the Division is providing the best possible service to our students with a focus to run transportation within its budget portfolio. Transportation is funded through Alberta Education's Transportation Grant and Division transportation user fees (the fees collected from families are only a fraction of what is needed to run transportation services within the transportation funding portfolio).

Key facts:

- **Deficit in the Audited Financial Statement for 2021-2022: \$142,596.00** (The anticipated deficit previously reported prior to the final AFS for 21-22 was \$94,000.00). **The anticipated deficit for this school year is \$300,555.**
 - Additional dollars to support Transportation come out of instructional dollars, meaning it comes out of classrooms. The higher this amount, the less staff we have in schools.
- The Division currently transports 516 students who reside inside the 2.4km boundary. Any student who lives inside the 2.4km boundary does not receive transportation funding from the government, therefore, we are transporting 516 students we do not get funding for. However, the safety of our students is our priority and many of these students do not have safe walking routes to school. This past spring the Board Chair shared this information with MLAs and the Board also brought it to the attention of the Minister of Education to advocate for a change to the current 2.4km boundary funding model.
- **Alberta Education Current Funding Model for Transportation Services - wording directly from the Government's Transportation Funding Guide:**
 - **Ineligible for funding** - any student being transported that lives within 2.4 km of their designated school.
 - **School of Choice** - Eligible passenger (2.4km or farther) resident to the board who is enrolled at a school of the board other than their designated school (a student attending a school of choice outside the attendance area in which the student resides)
 - **Division Programs** (programs offered at specific locations) - If the student is directed by the board to attend another school for any of the following program considerations and the school board, at its discretion, transports the student to that school, transportation support shall be paid based on the distance from the students residence to the school to which the student was directed. The following is a list of program considerations:
 - French Immersion
 - Special Education Programs to meet the needs of students with severe disabilities
 - Special Education Programs to meet the needs of students with mild/moderate disabilities and gifted and talented students when board criteria have been met
 - High school CTS programs offered to an advanced level in a specialized classroom facility where the course curriculum requires the instructor to have the technical trade qualification

If parents ask why LOGOS has been charged the Choice Rider Fee historically and currently, it is because even though it is a Division program, LOGOS does NOT meet Alberta Education requirements for the transportation funding (as outlined above).

Change to Sturgeon Public Transportation Services for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year:

1. Application Process - effective this spring an application process will be implemented for:
 - a. Students who are ineligible for transportation funding (reside inside 2.4km boundary of their designated school)
 - b. Students attending a School of Choice - any student who is choosing to attend a school other than their designated school for regular programming. (Exempt from this list: French Immersion, LOGOS, Specialized Programming for complex needs (formerly GOALS), CTS programming - (RWS students attending SCHS for CTS courses not offered at RWS))

Further potential changes in transportation services for the 23-24 school year: Administration is currently looking at transportation fees as part of the 23-24 budget process:

- The goal is to align the Division's transportation fee structure with the funding model - Administration has been comparing the Division's current funding structure to the structure of other School Divisions around the province. Administration will be bringing options to the Board of Trustees to consider as part of the budget process this spring.

Board policies that govern these operational decisions:

Policy 200 - Attendance Areas

- 2.4 *When a student attends a school outside a designated attendance area, transportation may become the parent(s)/guardian(s)/independent student's responsibility.*

Policy 500 - Transportation

- 3.1 *Subject to the regulations, a Division shall provide for the transportation of a student on regular morning and afternoon school bus routes, to and from the site of the school in which the Division has enrolled the student if:*
- 3.1.1 *the student resides within the boundaries of the district or division, and*
 - 3.1.2 *the student resides within the attendance area established by the Policy 200*
 - 3.1.3 *the criteria, if any, set out in the regulations are met.*

Education Act Legislation that guides the Board's work - *Section 10 - Enrolment in a School Operated by the Board* - outlines the responsibility of the Board to establish school attendance boundaries/areas - wording is very similar to our policies.

CASA Mental Health Service Classrooms Update - Update provided at the December 21, 2022 Public Board meeting. CASA letter and additional information sent to SCHS and Gibbons School families December 21, 2022 via SchoolMessenger. The Superintendent, the Director of Learning Services and the two Principals (Gibbons and SCHS) now meet weekly with CASA to prepare for the launch.

At the August 24, 2022 Public Board Meeting, the Superintendent shared information about Mental Health Service Classrooms coming to Sturgeon this February 2023.

Background - July 28, 2022, the Government of Alberta announced an additional investment of \$87 million over three years to enhance child and youth addiction and mental health supports and pediatric rehabilitation services. This new funding will enhance the wide variety of supports and services already available in schools.

An investment of \$14 million per year for three years will integrate and expand child and youth recovery-oriented addiction and mental health supports in schools and communities. Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health (CASA), along with other partners, is supporting the development of a school-based services model to integrate and expand access to addiction and mental health services for children and youth from elementary to high school. The integrated services model will offer clear connections to existing community resources to make it easier for Alberta's families and children to access the services they need.

Sturgeon Public School Division and Edmonton Public School Division were selected to participate in the mental health in schools pilot, which will see \$10 million per year for 2022/23 and 2023/24 to pilot the delivery of new and innovative supports and services through collaboration between community mental health providers and school authorities.

Originally, CASA had chosen Sturgeon Composite High School and Four Winds Public School as the sites to pilot Mental Health Services Classrooms beginning February 2023, however, due to increased enrolment at Four Winds and lack of space, the program is now going to be moved to Gibbons School. Gibbons School was the alternate choice in the original proposal.

CASA's plan for mental health services in classrooms will include:

- Embedded classroom teams with a mental health therapist, classroom behavioural therapist, and psychiatrist. Support teams with a social worker, nurse, assessment psychologist, occupational therapist, and speech and language therapist.
- Ongoing services will include: evaluation and assessments to inform care plans; individual and group therapy; medication trials and management; family therapy and parenting support; and consultation, education, observation, and recommendations for transitions.

Sturgeon Public Schools is honoured to be selected to partner with CASA in this pilot to bring mental health services closer to Sturgeon Public students and families.