

**Ministry of Education**

School Board Advanced  
Supports Branch

315 Front Street West  
15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Direction du soutien amélioré  
aux conseils scolaires

315, rue Front Ouest  
15<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 0B8

157-2024-2640

May 17, 2024

Beth Mai  
Chair of the Board  
Thames Valley District School Board

Dear Beth Mai,

Thank you for your email dated April 12, 2024, to the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. Your email has been forwarded to me and I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

The Ministry of Education (ministry) recognizes the importance of student transportation services for students and families and is committed to help school boards deliver safe, effective, and efficient transportation services.

While the ministry provides funding to Ontario's 72 district school boards for student transportation under the Student Transportation Fund, all decisions regarding student transportation are made by member school boards at the local transportation consortium level.

The Student Transportation Fund (STF) is projected to be about \$1.3 billion for the 2024-25 school year and recognizes that services can be delivered through a variety of modes such as school buses, contracted special purpose vehicles, public transit, and contracted taxis. For instance, STF includes over \$68 million in funding through the Public Transit component to support the use of public transit in delivery of student transportation.

The STF is based on home-to-school distance eligibility criteria derived from Common Reference Standards (CRS) to encourage consistency and improve equitable access to student

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transportation services across the province. For example, students in grade 9-12 who live 3.2 km or more from their designated schools are eligible for transportation. It is important to note that the CRS is used for funding purposes only. School boards can continue to make local decisions on operational policies that are different from funding criteria and that reflect their local needs and circumstances.

Staff from the Student Transportation Unit in the ministry can reach out to the Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Service (<https://www.mybigyellowbus.ca/>) to discuss these projects and the use of public transit to deliver safe, effective, and efficient transportation services.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your concerns.

Sincerely,

Didem Proulx  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Capital and Business Support Division