

March 2, 2020

RE: BCTEA Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plans – 2019/20 and 2020/21 School Years

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the approved 2019/20 Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plan (Joint Plan) funding transfer and reporting requirements and to outline the submission process for 2020/21 Joint Plans. Joint plans must be aligned with the Guiding Principles for Developing Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plans (*Appendix A*).

2019/20 School Year Joint Plans

In late 2019, school districts that submitted 2019/20 Joint Plans received letters outlining their approved funding for the 2019/20 school year. Funding will be available to school districts in early spring 2020 through the Common Disbursement System (CDS). Additional information regarding funding can be found in *Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions*.

Reporting

As noted in the approval letters, there are specific reporting requirements for the transportation funding. Requirements are outlined below. Please submit completed reports to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca by July 10, 2020.

1. Extracurricular

Please find attached a reporting template (*Appendix C*) that school districts can use to report how the extracurricular transportation funding was used this school year. Please add rows to the table as required. If applicable, please attach anecdotal or qualitative evidence that demonstrates how the funding improved student access to extracurricular activities. As the approval letters explained, funds may be carried forward and used for extracurricular activities in 2020/21. If the funds are not spent by the end of the second school year (2020/21), the funding must be returned to the Ministry of Education for reallocation.

2. To / From Reporting

If applicable, please report how the “to / from” funding allocation assisted in reducing travel times and extended services to students. This information will assist in outlining some of the benefits associated with the additional *BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success (BCTEA)* “to/from” funding and may be helpful for future planning.

NOTE: The above reporting requirements are in addition to the Ministry of Education’s regular financial reporting related to special grants.

3. **New Buses**

As communicated in the approval letters, the Ministry committed one-time capital funding to school districts for bus acquisitions related to the Joint Plans. Due to the Bus Acquisition Program procurement cycle, approved buses will be available for the 2020/21 school year, as will be detailed in the Capital Plan Response Letter from the Capital Management Branch to school districts in March 2020. If operational funding was requested with the acquisition of a new bus within the 2019/20 school year Joint Plans, this funding was removed (for the first year only) to align operational costs associated with the actual bus delivery.

2020/21 School Year Joint Plans

2020/21 Joint Plan Submission Package and Process

The submission package, including templates and other information for 2020/21 Joint Plans is available on the [Ministry of Education School District Reporting Catalogue](#) website. School Districts will need a [valid BCeID](#) and will need to [register](#) it with the Ministry to access the catalogue and reporting site. The submission package, including templates and other information, can be accessed by First Nations on the [FNESC](#) website.

The deadline for submissions is May 1, 2020. When completed please submit Joint Plans, signed by First Nations and school districts, to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca. Please refer to the categories below to determine what type of submission is required:

- **Status Quo**

If, after consultation with respective First Nations, the 2019/20 Joint Plan **is** meeting the needs of the First Nation, and no revisions to services and funding is required for 2020/21, email a letter indicating agreement to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca. The email must include signatures of the Chief of the First Nation (or delegate) and Board Chair.

- **Revisions to 2019/20 Joint Plans**

If, after consultation and agreement that the 2019/20 Joint Plan **is not** meeting the needs of the First Nation, and revisions to services and funding are required for 2020/21, resubmit the original plan clearly noting the changes/updates.

- **New Joint Plans**

For school districts / First Nations that did not submit Joint Plans for the 2019/20 school year, please use the appropriate templates referenced above, to prepare 2020/21 submissions.

A thorough assessment of all revised and new Joint Plan submissions will be conducted by the Joint First Nation Student Transportation Committee (Joint Committee) to determine the approved funding for each submission. It is anticipated that funding approval letters will be sent to School Districts / First Nations by mid-summer 2020.

As was the case in 2019/20, funding for 2020/21 submissions is limited. Funding for new submissions or revisions is not guaranteed to bridge the gap between planned service improvements (those approved by the Joint Committee) and existing service levels in place. School districts should plan to maintain existing service levels and billing arrangements for transportation services that were in place in the 2019/20 school year.

After the second year of reporting (e.g. post 2020/21 school year), the parties to BCTEA (BC, Canada, First Nations Education Steering Committee) will assess whether the strategy has effectively addressed and resolved

transportation issues for First Nation students attending BC public schools and, where necessary, identify and implement improvements and/or further options.

Enclosures:

Appendix A – Guiding Principles when Developing Joint Plans

Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix C – Extracurricular Reporting Template

Appendix A – Guiding Principles when Developing Joint Plans



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING JOINT FIRST NATION STUDENT TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The following guiding principles apply to the development of Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plans by Boards of Education and First Nations:

1. The Board of Education and First Nation will identify transportation needs and services to get all First Nation students enrolled in BC public schools to and from those schools, respecting parental choice of where to enroll their child to attend school.
2. Safety is paramount in all planning and decisions:
 - a) there will be a safety protocol in place to address safety issues for the First Nations (e.g. weather conditions; wildlife), and b) shelters will be made available where needed.
3. Transportation will be available for extracurricular activities and sports/sporting events.
4. There will be no walk limits (i.e. drivers need to go into the community or catchment area to pick up and drop off children).
5. The shortest ride possible will be implemented.
6. Wherever possible, there will be no highway pickups or drop offs.
7. A communications protocol will be established and agreed upon to ensure effective and timely communications to address issues that arise (e.g. travel disruption due to inclement weather) and method of preferred communication (e.g. radio/satellite communication).
8. Drivers will receive adequate professional development related to customer service, student management, etc. as required.
9. Criminal record checks will be required for bus/water taxi employees (including school district staff and non-school district staff).
10. Changes to the joint plan may only be made by written agreement, with timely notice to parents.

There will be an annual joint review and assessment of the joint plan for effectiveness and to identify any improvements.

Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions

The following FAQs are informed by a combination of questions received from school districts and First Nations in response to the approved Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plans and anticipated questions for new submissions. If you have additional questions, please contact Denise Evdokimoff, Project Director, Ministry of Education, at denise.evdokimoff@gov.bc.ca.

Approved 2019/20 Submissions

- 1. Question** – Is the funding approved in the 2019/20 submission additional funding to the existing funding available in 2018/19?
Answer – Yes, the funding approved in the Joint Transportation plans was supplemental to any existing funding or baseline that school districts were spending on transporting First Nation students. Please note that the funding is supplemental to existing student transportation funding and not meant to replace existing funding.
- 2. Question** – If operational funding was approved in the 2019/20 plan, will it be automatically made available for 2020/21? For example, if a School District implemented additional or improved bus routes in 2019/20 will the funding continue to support these new routes?
Answer – Yes, 2019/20 operational funding for to/from expenditures will continue to 2020/21. However, like all funding, the amount is subject to change in future years.
- 3. Question** – Will the school bus driver’s compensation / wages and/or other operating costs that were removed from our 2019/20 submission be reinstated when we receive our bus for the 2020/21 school year?
Answer – Yes, if costs associated with operating a bus were removed from the 2019/20 submission, the identified costs will be reinstated to correspond with the delivery of buses to those applicable School Districts.

2020/2021 Submissions

- 1. Question** – How do we update or correct our 2019/20 submission?
Answer – Please use your original submission as a base and outline corrections or updates and resubmit. Please note, additional funding is not guaranteed.
- 2. Question** – Will there be additional BCTEA funding for buses?
Answer – Requests for buses will be through the established BC Ministry of Education application-based Bus Acquisition Program. Please note that the Bus Acquisition Program is for School District assets only and are restricted to “yellow fleet” buses.

Appendix C – Extracurricular Reporting Template

Please add rows as required:

	Number of First Nation Students participating	Gender Identity of First Nation Student(s)	Total Number of All Students Participating in Activity (incl. non-Indigenous students)	Duration of Activity (i.e., # of weeks)	Frequency of First Nation Student Participation (i.e., once, # times per week)	Transportation Cost of First Nations Student Participation (i.e., # students x # KMs x KM rate = total cost)
Extra-curricular Activity Type (i.e., cultural, basketball, tutoring)						
Extra-curricular Activity Type (i.e., cultural, basketball, tutoring)						
Extra-curricular Activity Type (i.e., cultural, basketball, tutoring)						
Extra-curricular Activity Type (i.e., cultural, basketball, tutoring)						
	Total		Total			Total

Example of completed Table:

	Number of FN students	Gender	Total Number of Students in Activity	Duration of Activity (i.e., weeks, months)	Frequency of Participation	Cost for Participating
soccer	3 students	2 females / 1 other	15	one week	twice a week	20km @ .55 / km = \$11
field hockey	2 students	2 males	15	3 weeks	once a week	3 x 30km @ .55/km = \$49.50
drumming	10 students	5 males / 5 females	15	one time	once	\$55
storytelling	5 students	2 male / 2 female / 1 other	15	2 weeks	once a week	2 x 30km @ .55/km = \$16.50
TOTAL	10 students		15			\$148.50