

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Annual Report to Stakeholders

2023-2024 Fiscal Year



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www.mybigyellowbus.ca**

To Our Stakeholders

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services (STS) is pleased to present its annual report for the 2023-2024 school year.

At STS, we are dedicated to ensuring that students arrive at their destinations safely and punctually. We pride ourselves on offering a reliable school bus service and facilitating a stress-free transportation experience. All of our routes are operated by professional drivers who prioritize safety. Above all, we are committed to providing excellent customer service, addressing any concerns with promptness and courtesy, and continuously seeking ways to enhance our service to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

This report represents an ongoing commitment to improve communications and information sharing with key stakeholders.

A few highlights from our 2023-2024 school year include:

- Resumed in-person First Rider Day Programming in August with sites in Woodstock, St. Thomas, Strathroy and two in the City of London
- Administration of a Bus Driver Recruitment and Retention Bonus Program as introduced by the Ministry of Education
- Collaboration with school bus contractors to address bus driver shortages in the area – launched a bus driver recognition social media campaign “Bus Driver Spotlight”
- Participated in the re-launch of the Active & Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) website which provides active travel resources and information for stakeholders in the Counties of Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford and City of London
- In partnership with ASRTS, redeveloped the School Travel Planning Program, including a pilot at Algonquin PS

We are committed to providing excellent customer service and communication to all stakeholders as we undertake transportation scheduling for the upcoming school year.



Ryan Readings

Chief Administrative Officer

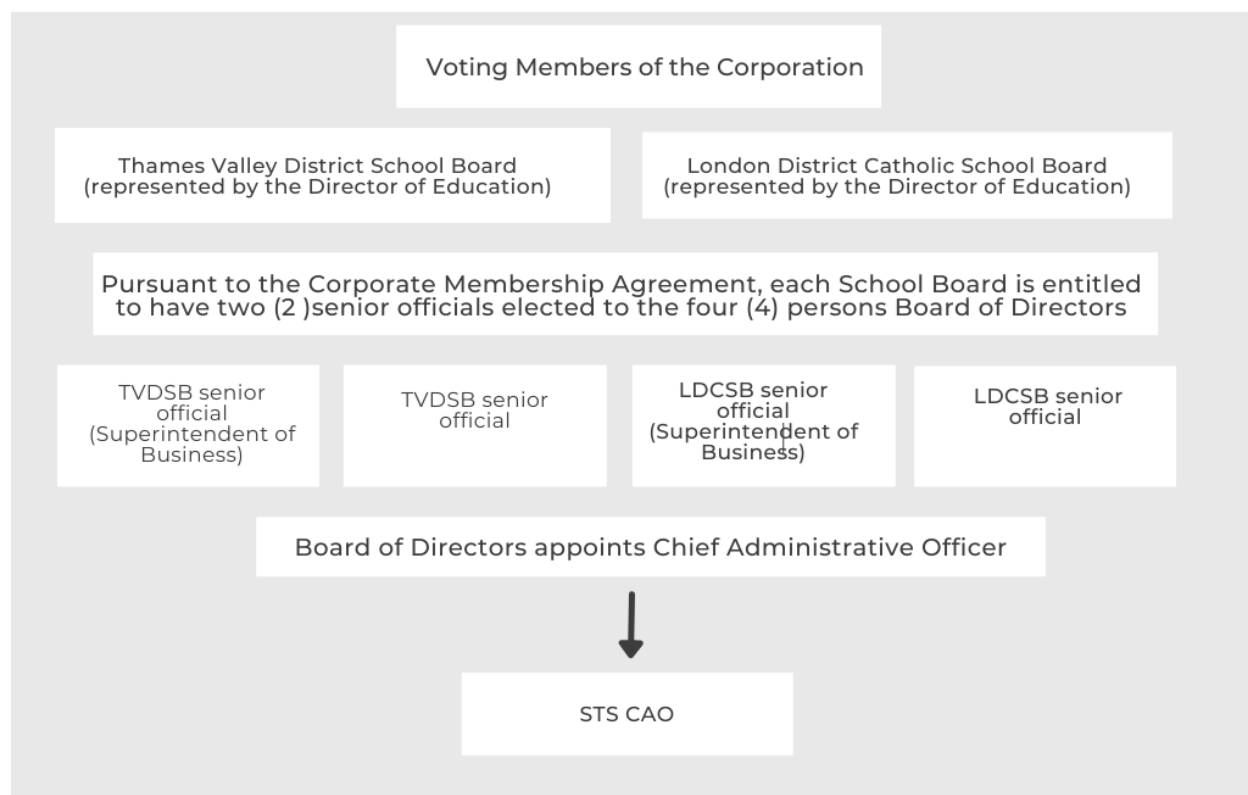
January 27, 2025



Governance Structure

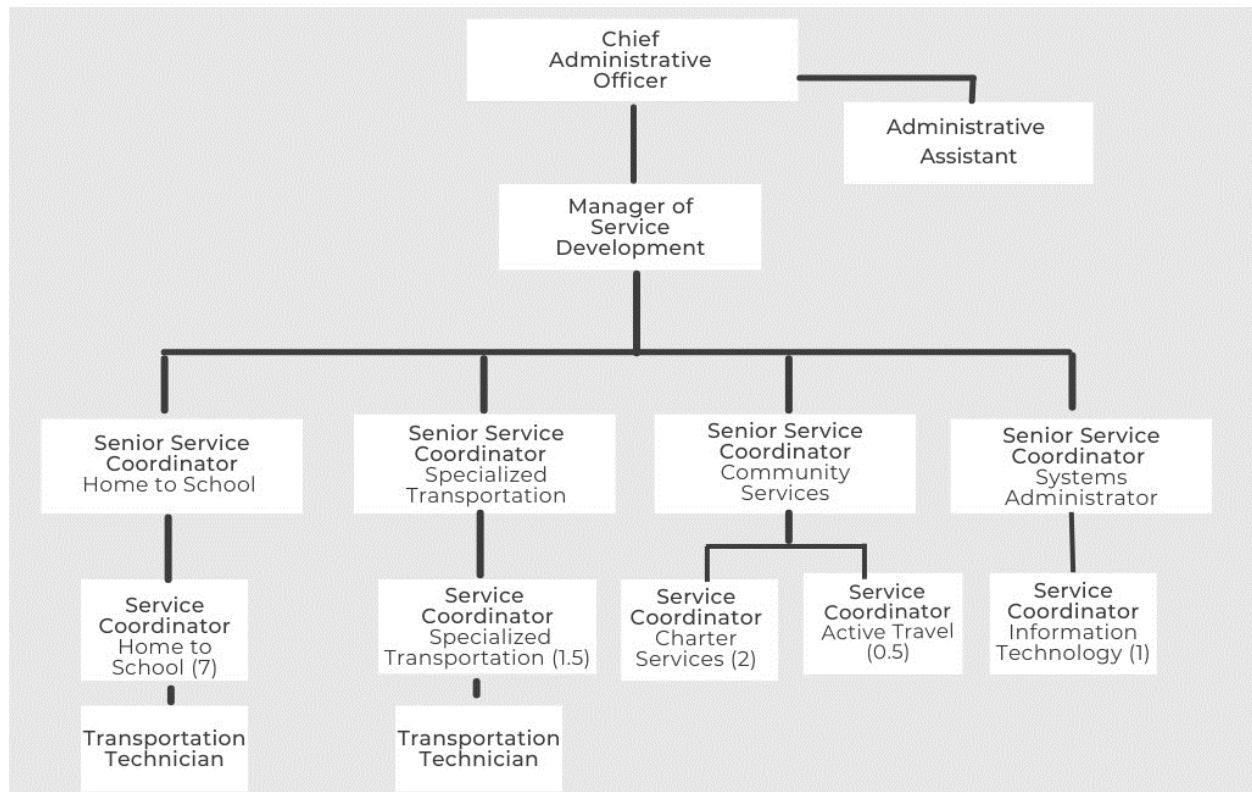
Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services (STS) is the jointly held transportation consortium acting on behalf of its member school boards, the London District Catholic School Board and Thames Valley District School Board. Established in 2008, STS is a separate legal entity which operates at an arm's length from the member boards. STS was incorporated under the Incorporations Act on September 29, 2008.

Each of its member boards set program-based eligibility policy through the Board of Trustees. STS is governed by a four-person Board of Directors comprised of two senior officials from each member school board. The Board of Directors provide governance oversight, approve the policies of STS and provide strategic direction to the corporation.



The daily activities of the corporation are under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer, who reports to the Board of Directors.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Human Resources

STS created its Human Resources Plan in 2012. The framework for the plan sets out the five key items:

- Effective People-Management Strategy
- Leadership and Mentorship
- Performance Feedback Framework
- Learning-Focused Organization
- Flexible and Motivating Work Environment

During the 2023-2024 school year, STS undertook the following activities to support the HR plan:

- Members of Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)
- Staff attended the annual Ontario Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) conference in May 2024
- Staff attended the annual OASBO Fall Safety Conference in October 2023, focused exclusively on student transportation.
- Staff participated in the following courses:
 - Social Media Campaigns and Digital resource kits
 - Strategies for Resilience and Success
 - Tips for Giving and Receiving Feedback
 - How to More Than Manage and Truly Lead
 - Understanding 2FA in BusPlanner
 - Modernizing Transportation Operations with Routing Software
 - CAA Safety Patrol Training
 - Various Cyber Security Sessions

Service Area Profile

STS coordinated home to school transportation services for 211 schools during the 2023-2024 school year.



132 Elementary Schools

27 Secondary Schools



43 Elementary Schools

9 Secondary Schools

Service Area

The service area is expansive, covering a mix of both urban and rural environments. The area covers more than 7,000 square kilometers, making STS one of the largest service areas in southern Ontario. The service area include the City of London as well as Middlesex, Oxford, and Elgin Counties.



Home to School Bus Contract

The 2023-24 school year marked the fifth year of our five year home to school contract with the school bus contractors in our region.

Route Familiarization

The contract provides for a designated route familiarization process to be carried out by the permanent driver assigned to the route, both in the morning and afternoon at bus times in advance of the new school year. Drivers are required to provide feedback on the route through their employer and to STS prior to the routes going into service. This allows an opportunity to collect on the ground insight and for the driver to become familiar with times, bus stop locations and overall operation of the route before students are on board.



Home to School Transportation Service Design

STS is responsible for designing school transportation service which is in keeping with policy to ensure that students receive similar service throughout the area regardless of school board affiliation. Transportation eligibility is established by policy. Program eligibility is established at the school boards. The remaining policies are established at STS as approved by its Board of Directors.

Transportation Eligibility

The distance to qualify for transportation is harmonized, or the same, at both school boards. This is a critical component of equitable and efficient transportation planning.

The distance-based policy applies to all families and students enrolled in a school belonging to the member school boards. Students attending their board-designated school are eligible for transportation based on the following distances:

- Elementary aged students that reside greater than 1.6 kms from the school site
- Secondary aged students that reside greater than 3.2 kms from the school site

While there is no provincial standard for distance-based transportation eligibility, the above distances are consistent with the normative distance across the province.

Determination of Transportation Eligibility

The technical determination of whether an address is eligible for transportation is made by STS and is based on a distance computation done by a planning software system to ensure consistency throughout the district. The software uses Geographic Information System (GIS) data provided by the municipalities, including the road and walkway network. The computation determines if an address is eligible based on the location of the perimeter property edges of the address relative to the school address using the shortest travel route.

If a residence does not qualify for transportation based on distance as solely determined by STS, STS can provide a suggested walking route, but it is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to determine how the student will arrive at and depart from school.

Primary Address of Student

STS will coordinate home to school transportation based on the student's primary address to their board-designated school based on the address registered with the school board. A student can only have one primary address.

Transportation eligibility is determined based on the primary address of the student as registered in the school board's Student Information System. This data is securely transferred electronically to STS through the agreed-upon transfer process and confidentiality protections.

Secondary Address for Caregiving Purposes

Students who are eligible for transportation may have one (1) additional secondary address for caregiving reasons, typically used for the purpose of receiving childcare/babysitting at the elementary level. Secondary level requests are less common but are approved in keeping with the policy.

Both the primary address and the alternate address must be within the transportation boundary. A student can have a bus stop based on the primary address and another based on a secondary address within the same travel day, however the schedule must remain consistent Monday through Friday. Under normal circumstances, secondary address transportation must be accommodated on existing bus runs and bus stops.

Joint Custody Transportation

Transportation may be provided to a secondary address based on joint custody arrangements. Because of the safety issues with varying bus schedules, particularly at the elementary level, the policies governing this type of transportation are different based on the student's grade.

Use of a Vacant Seat

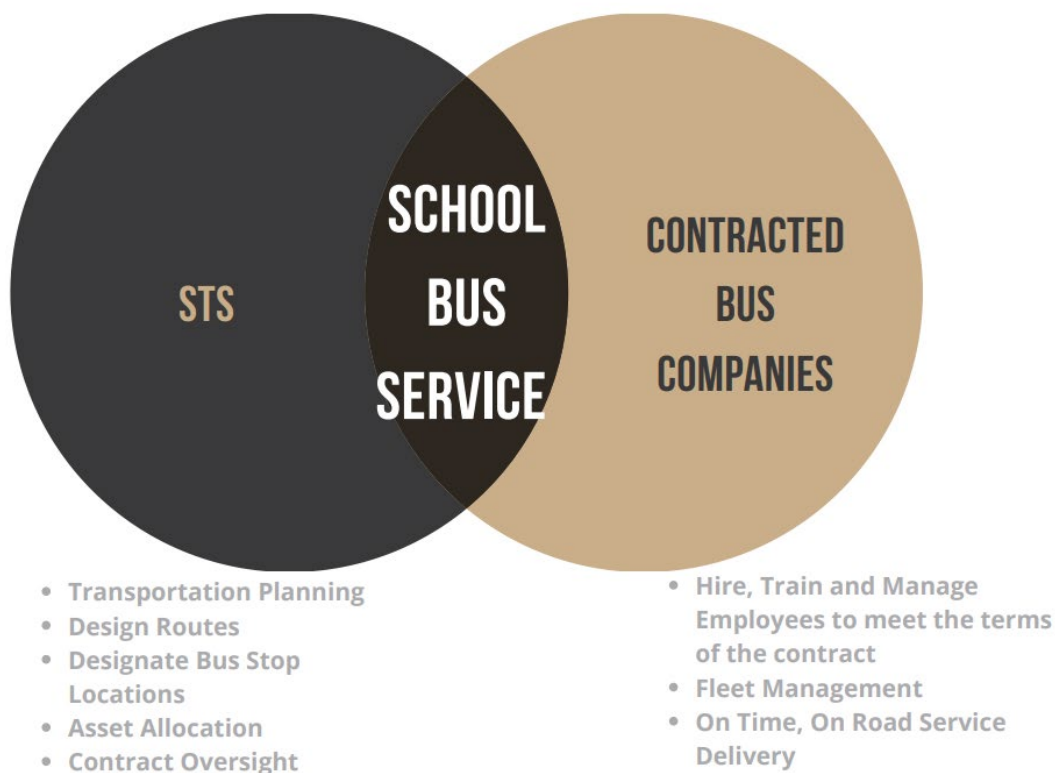
Transportation may be provided to elementary aged students who are ineligible for transportation but who attend a daycare facility or home daycare where the daycare address is eligible for transportation.

Choice of School

Students who choose to attend a school other than their board-designated may apply for choice of school transportation. This type of transportation is approved on an exception basis and is not guaranteed; it requires an annual application and there must be an available seat on an existing bus run. Additionally, the student must attend the closest existing bus stop, irrespective of distance from the residence. The service can be revoked from the choice of school student if a student eligible under policy requires the seat. These seats are approved only after all other eligible students have been assigned.

Service Delivery Roles

The on-road service delivered to students is planned by STS and delivered daily by the contracted school bus companies.



Student Transportation Services

Student Transportation Services manages the contracts with the bus companies who are responsible for delivering the daily service which encompasses all operational matters including employee and fleet management.

Contracted Bus Companies

For the 2023-2024 school year, a total of six (6) bus companies provided service under the home to school contract with STS.

- First Student Canada
- Langs Bus Lines
- Murphy Bus Lines
- Sharp Bus Lines
- STC o/a Elgie Bus Lines
- Transdev o/a Voyago

School Bus Routes

For the 2023-2024 school year, a total of 1,117 school bus routes operated throughout the service area.

	Regular Bus Routes	Specialized Bus Routes	TOTAL
2022-2023	764	339	1106
2023-2024	780	337	1117
Elgin County	181	65	246
Middlesex County	217	84	301
Oxford County	162	71	233
City of London	220	117	337

For greater clarity, a school bus run is the loop picking up students for a school (noting more than one school may be served on the same run). A school bus route is the total number of school bus runs serviced by a vehicle. Typically, the first bus run serves a secondary school and the second bus run serves the elementary school. These two runs combined (both morning and afternoon) equal the total route serviced by one vehicle. STS uses single, double and triple runs where practical to do so.



Kilometers Travelled

A key component of transportation planning is the distance that each bus travels as kilometers are a significant part of route planning and budget forecasting. Bus contracts are paid based on a formula which includes a per kilometer component.

Transportation has two key types of kilometers: planned and actual. Actual kilometers can vary widely from planned kilometers due to service cancellations such as inclement weather events or school closures.



School Purpose Vehicles

Types of Vehicles Used

STS uses a variety of vehicle types to provide effective and efficient student transport while recognizing unique transportation solutions for students with special needs. Vehicle mix can vary from one year to the next based on geographic distribution of students and student needs. Changes in the vehicle mix throughout the school year are also necessary to meet student needs.

Vehicle Type	2022-2023	2022-2023	2023-2024	2023-2024
	September	June	September	June
Full Size Passenger Bus	642	644	653	662
Mid Size Passenger Bus	30	31	30	29
Mini Size Passenger Bus	105	105	103	101
Mini Size Passenger Bus - Accessible	102	103	99	99
Minivan	193	192	192	191

Public Transit

The use of public transit tickets is largely restricted to limited special programs.

Transported Students

Students who are eligible for transportation under policy are assigned to a seat on a vehicle in the morning and/or afternoon based on the student's registration request. The majority of students are eligible to their board-designated schools based on distance. Under limited circumstances, bus service may be provided based on Distance Based Exemptions. STS periodically reviews legacy hazard designations in the service area, many of which have existed for many years.

Transportation Eligibility Type	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Eligible (Distance)			
• Regular Track	38,347	41,187	45,123
• French Immersion	5,104	5,631	6,099
• Specialized Education	1,950	2,095	2,162
Eligible (Distance Based Exemption)			
• Elementary Panel	2,131	2,659	4,374
• Secondary Panel	388	421	496

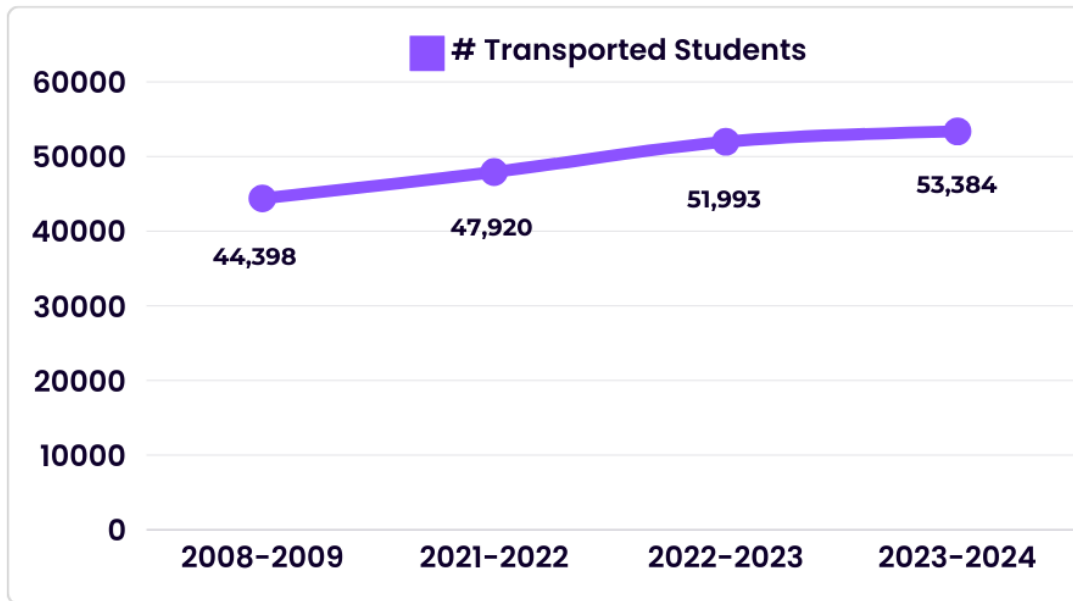
Ridership

Overall ridership continues to increase year over year. 2022-2023 saw an increase of 8% from previous year totals while 2023-2024 saw an additional 9% increase from the previous year.

The continued use of the mandatory school bus registration system provides more accurate information about ridership needs across the district. By planning routes and service levels for those who have registered, STS has been able to ensure service levels match demand and Operators are able to plan driver recruitment to reflect specific needs of the families who use transportation.



Ridership by Entity (all categories)



Some transported students require additional service to/from additional addresses or access to a vacant seat for childcare purposes. The figures below represent transported students who benefit from the additional services offered by STS.

Additional Services	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Alternate Address	962	1,056	1,006
Joint Custody - Elementary	212	266	314
Joint Custody - Secondary	353	351	418
Vacant Seat	238	289	260
Choice of School	446	429	376
Out of District	51	35	41
Total Transported Students Using Additional Services	2,262	2,426	2,415

Travelling to the Bus Stop

Parents/caregivers are responsible for their student's safety to, from and at the school bus stop location. This practice is consistent with parent/caregiver responsibility for student safety to and from school sites for those who do not qualify for transportation.

Students are required to meet transportation at community-based bus stop locations. The travel distances are up to 800 meters (0.8 kilometers) for elementary students and up to 1600 meters (1.6 kilometers) for secondary students. The travel distances represent half of the distance travelled by students who do not qualify for transportation.

Community bus stop locations are designed to be accessible for multiple students. Typically located at community mailboxes, greenspaces and corners, these stops often remain in the same location year after year. However, bus stops are reviewed annually and may be relocated based on routing changes and student locations.

While the permissible policy distance provides for much greater travel to stop distances, the figures below illustrate the average distance students travel to meet transportation.

Elementary Students

Geographic Area	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Elgin County	140 m	130 m	130 m
Middlesex County	110 m	110 m	120 m
Oxford County	150 m	160 m	160 m
City of London	200 m	200 m	200 m

Secondary Students

Geographic Area	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Elgin County	270 m	240 m	300 m
Middlesex County	280 m	280 m	260 m
Oxford County	330 m	350 m	320 m
City of London	440 m	420 m	420 m

Kindergarten Students and Bus Stops

JK/SK students must be accompanied to and met at a bus stop location by a responsible person. JK/SK students not met at the bus stop in the afternoons will be returned to the school by the bus driver at the end of the route.

Active Travel and School Bus Stops

Students who ride the bus lose the opportunity for crucial daily physical exercise compared to their peers who actively travel (walk, bike, scooter) to and from school. School bus service is a fixed-route, shared ride mode of transport and is not designed as a door-to-door service model. By using community stops centrally located for multiple students and by placing stops on collector and secondary roads and off local streets, we encourage daily physical activity for bus riders as they travel to and from their bus stop locations consistent with STS Service Design Standards.

Walking to a bus stop is an important way to promote active travel for students who receive bus transportation to complete their journey to school. In addition to the many known health benefits of physical activity before heading into the classroom, walking to a community bus stop decreases the length of ride time on the bus for the student.

Ride Time on the Vehicle

Students may spend a maximum of 70 minutes one way on the bus. Under certain limited circumstances, based on geography or program choice, this travel time may be exceeded.

Factors that influence ride time include:

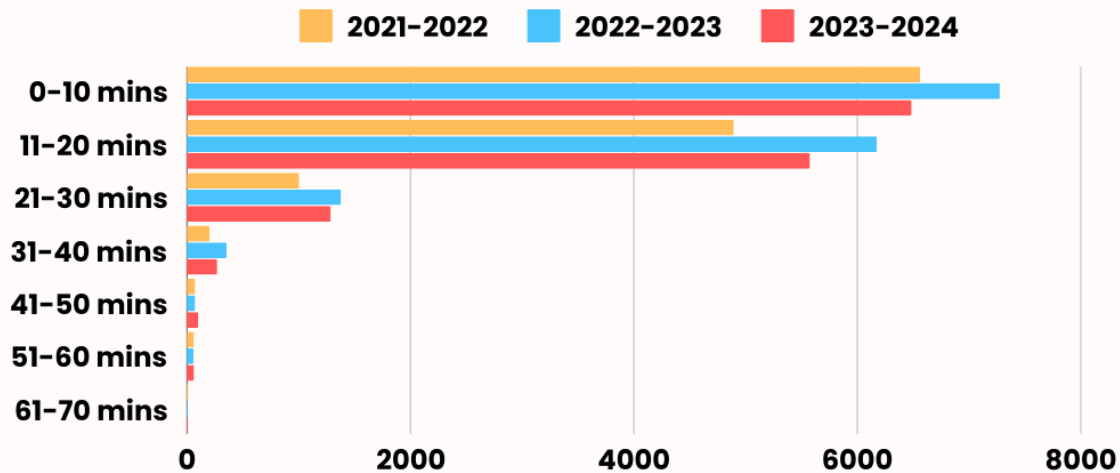
- Geographical location of school
- School boundary
- Student-selected specialty program offerings
- Student location related to geographic location of school
- Number of students assigned to the bus run
- Number of bus stops assigned to the bus run
- Traffic conditions, congestion, and construction
- Distance between the house and bus stop location the student is assigned to.

Ride times are reviewed annually as part of the planning cycle and periodically throughout the year. Ride times are also addressed, where possible, in response to inquiries.

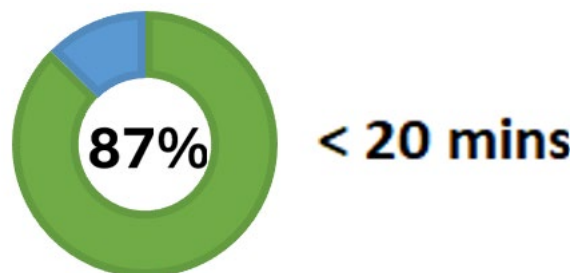


CITY OF LONDON

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



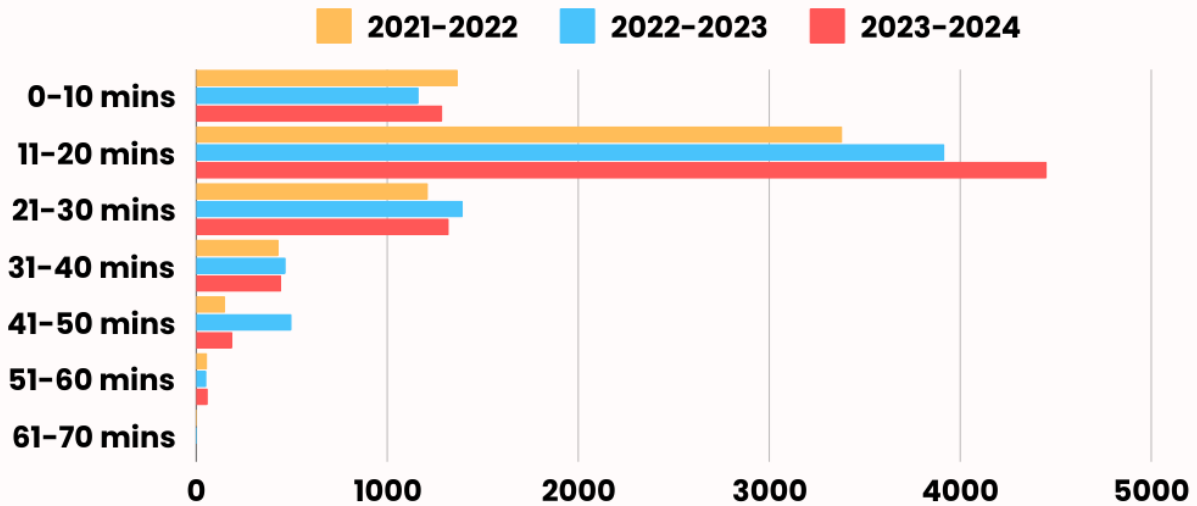
	0-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-40 mins	41-50 mins	51-60 mins	61-70 mins
2021-2022	6561	4894	1004	204	73	62	11
2022-2023	7275	6175	1379	354	73	59	10
2023-2024	6486	5576	1287	270	101	63	10



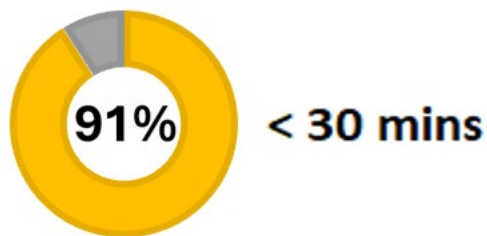
87% of Elementary Students in the City of London ride less than 20 mins one way to school.

CITY OF LONDON

SECONDARY STUDENTS



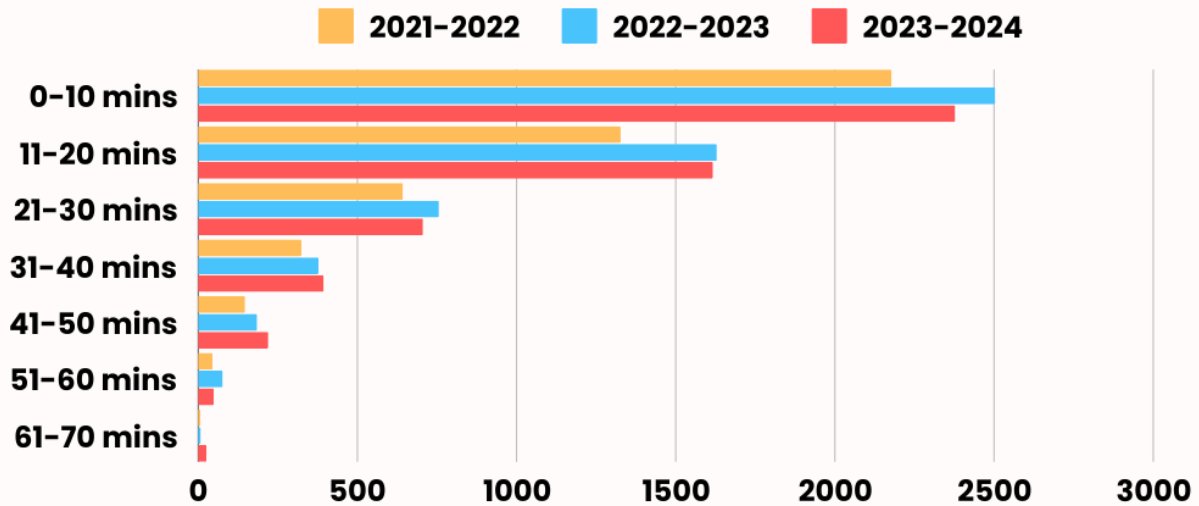
	0-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-40 mins	41-50 mins	51-60 mins	61-70 mins
2021-2022	1370	3383	1214	432	152	58	4
2022-2023	1165	3918	1396	469	200	54	4
2023-2024	1289	4454	1323	445	190	61	0



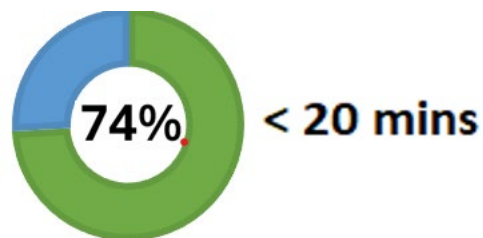
91% of Secondary Students in the City of London ride less than 30 mins one way to school.

ELGIN COUNTY

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



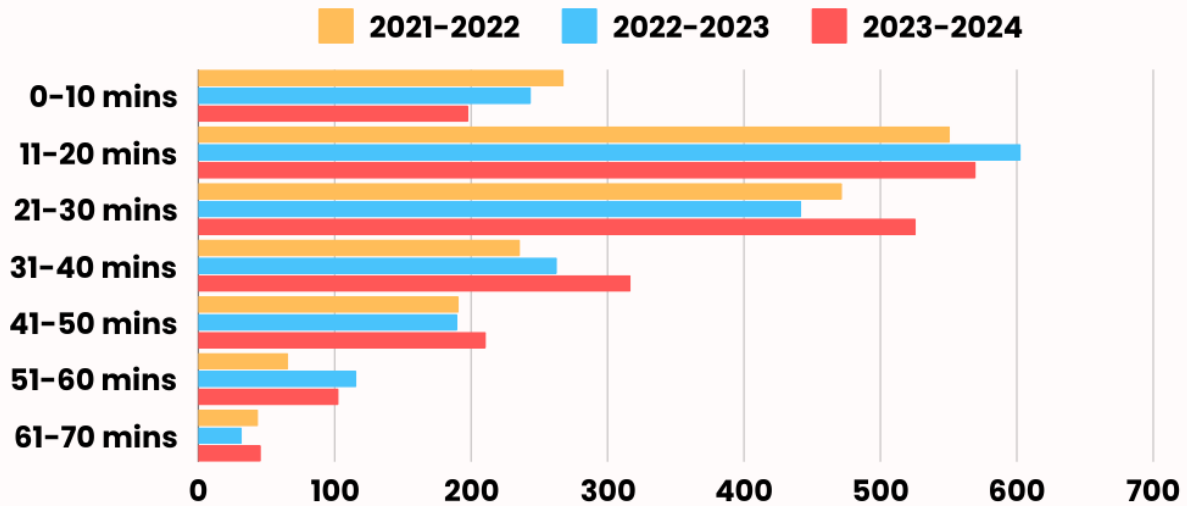
	0-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-40 mins	41-50 mins	51-60 mins	61-70 mins
2021-2022	2178	1327	643	324	147	45	7
2022-2023	2504	1629	756	378	185	77	8
2023-2024	2378	1617	706	394	220	49	26



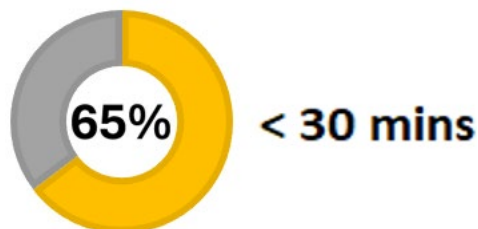
74% of Elementary Students in Elgin County ride less than 20 mins one way to school.

ELGIN COUNTY

SECONDARY STUDENTS



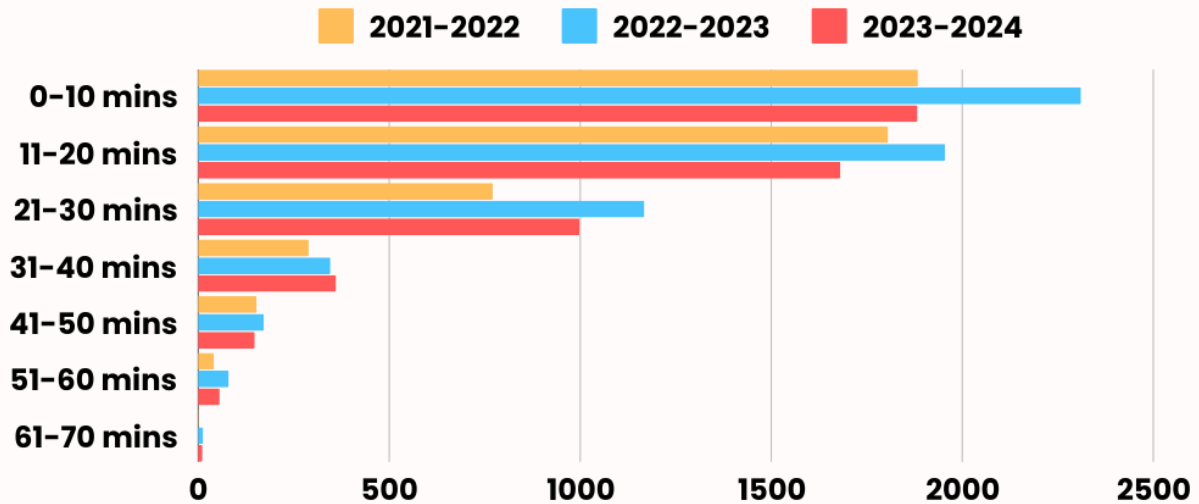
	0-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-40 mins	41-50 mins	51-60 mins	61-70 mins
2021-2022	268	551	472	236	191	66	44
2022-2023	244	603	442	263	190	116	32
2023-2024	198	570	526	317	211	103	46



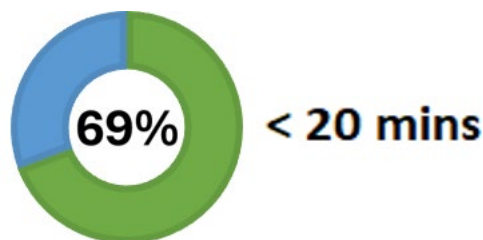
65% of Secondary Students in Elgin County ride less than 30 mins one way to school.

OXFORD COUNTY

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



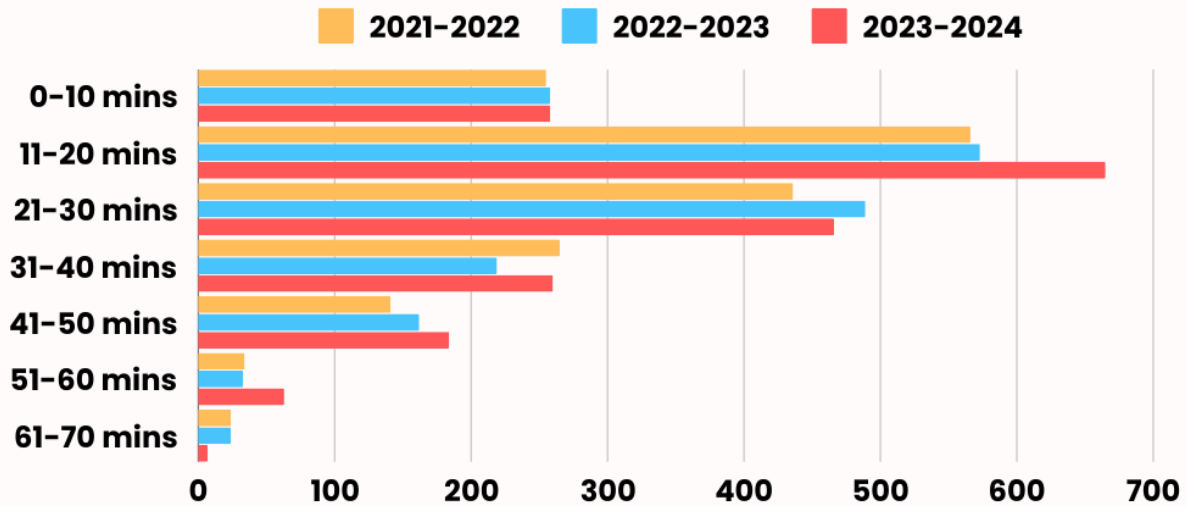
	0-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-40 mins	41-50 mins	51-60 mins	61-70 mins
2021-2022	1884	1806	771	289	153	41	1
2022-2023	2311	1955	1168	346	172	80	13
2023-2024	1883	1681	998	361	148	56	11



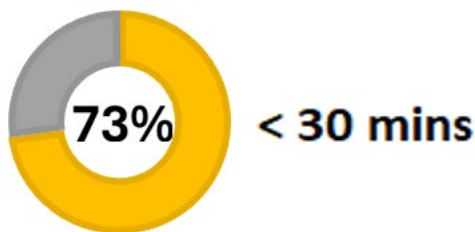
69% of Elementary Students in Oxford County ride less than 20 mins one way to school.

OXFORD COUNTY

SECONDARY STUDENTS



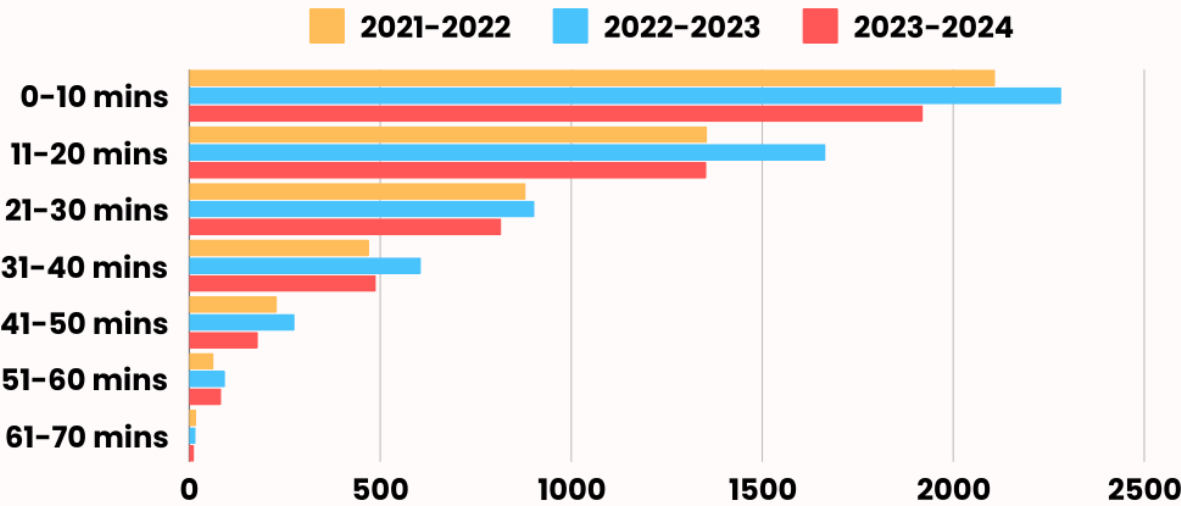
	0-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-40 mins	41-50 mins	51-60 mins	61-70 mins
2021-2022	255	566	436	265	141	34	24
2022-2023	258	573	489	219	162	33	24
2023-2024	258	665	466	260	184	63	7



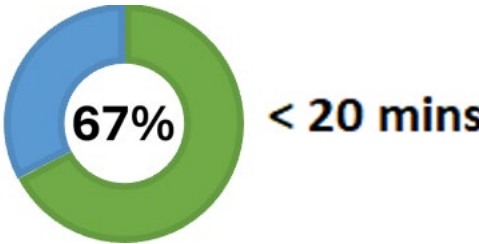
73% of Secondary Students in Oxford County ride less than 30 mins one way to school.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



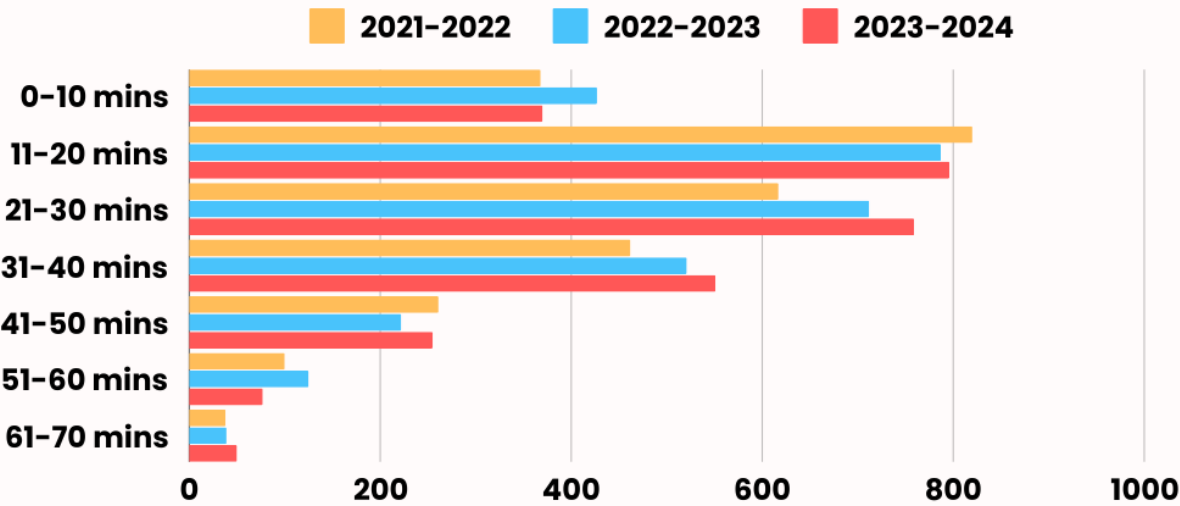
	0-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-40 mins	41-50 mins	51-60 mins	61-70 mins
2021-2022	2110	1356	881	471	230	64	18
2022-2023	2283	1666	904	607	276	94	17
2023-2024	1921	1354	817	489	180	84	13



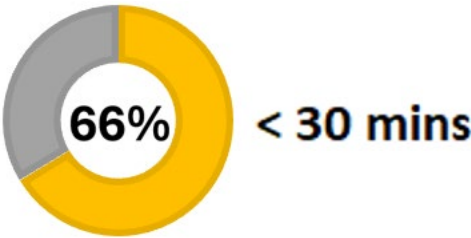
67% of Elementary Students in Middlesex County ride less than 20 mins one way to school.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

SECONDARY STUDENTS



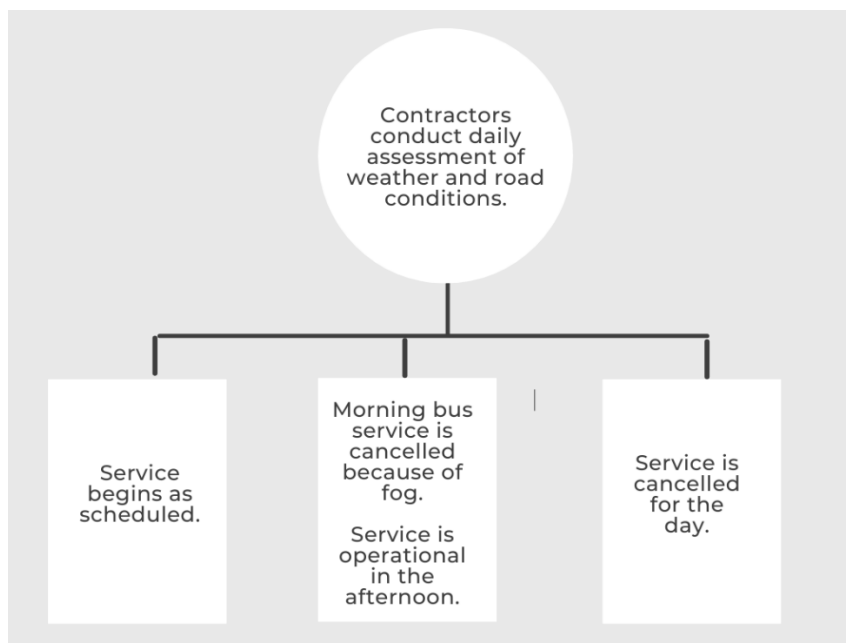
	0-10 mins	11-20 mins	21-30 mins	31-40 mins	41-50 mins	51-60 mins	61-70 mins
2021-2022	368	820	617	462	261	100	38
2022-2023	427	787	712	521	222	125	39
2023-2024	370	796	759	551	255	77	50



66% of Secondary Students in Middlesex County ride less than 30 mins one way to school.

Inclement Weather

During inclement weather, the bus companies determine whether school purpose vehicles operate. When area-wide inclement weather events occur, the following processes occur:



Inclement weather is a disruptive part of the business and has significant impact on family routines. School bus routes are planned to avoid unnecessary disruptions whenever possible. Given the size of the service area and the distance some routes travel for program locations some bus routes maybe impacted by cancellations where other locations are not impacted. While the bus companies are responsible for determining if the service operates, during times of inclement weather, parents/caregivers are ultimately responsible for deciding if their student will use the service.

The following chart illustrates the inclement weather cancellation events during 2023-2024:

Date	Affected Areas	Reason	CANCEL (AM Only)	CANCEL (All Day)
23-Jan-24	Elgin, Oxford, Middlesex, Red Zone	Freezing Rain		CANCEL (All Day)
24-Jan-24	Elgin, Oxford, Middlesex, Red Zone	Icy Rural Roads, Fog		CANCEL (All Day)
25-Jan-24	Middlesex, Oxford	Fog	CANCEL (AM Only)	
4-Mar-24	Oxford	Fog	CANCEL (AM Only)	

The 2023-2024 school year had zero system-wide cancellation days, compared to three in 2022-23 and one in 2021-22. There was a total of 2 partial cancellation events in 2023-24, compared to 12 partial cancellation events in 2022-23 and 7 in 2021-22.

Inclement weather cancellations are posted publicly on the website by 6:30 AM on the morning of the weather event. There are multiple channels used to notify stakeholders of cancellations resulting from inclement weather:

- STS's website, mybigyellowbus.ca is updated by 6:30 AM at the latest;
- Notification posted to X account;
- Notification posted to Facebook page;
- Notifications issued via email to subscribers;
- Notifications pushed to BusPlanner Delays app for subscribers.



The BusPlanner Delays app was introduced in 2017 and is free to use. More information can be found on the website in the policy document entitled Public Notice of School Bus Delays and Cancellations

Inclement weather cancellations can create significant challenges for families. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to have plans in place in the event of service cancellations caused by inclement weather.

STS created a video to explain the behind-the-scenes look at the decision-making process to help guide stakeholders understand the complexity of the task. The video remains featured on the website and is the core tool for informing and educating the public on the process. The video can be viewed using the following link: [STS Bus Delays & Cancellations](#).

Safety Programs

STS is pleased to offer a variety of safety programs to students, their families and schools.

First Rider Day August

STS typically hosts a First Rider Day at five locations each year in August, with two London locations and a location in each of the three counties. Approximately 1,000 students and their families attend this event each year at no cost to attendees. Both full sized yellow and wheelchair accessible vehicles are on site to ensure inclusivity and promote integrated accessibility.



Students and their parents/caregivers receive a safety lesson, learn how to properly board and de-board and evacuate the bus and be a safe school bus rider. The program session lasts approximately 30 minutes.

Kindergarten Bus Tag Program

STS continues to use a bus tag program to assist school staff and bus drivers with the management of kindergarten students. 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.

The tags are brightly colored for visibility and match the bus number sign in the side of the vehicle. The tags are distributed to the schools by STS who then provide them to the registered kindergarten students.



School Bus Safety Programs

During the 2023-24 school year, 446 online school bus rider safety training sessions were offered at all of our member School Board's elementary schools. These 30 minute programs are funded by the Ministry of Education and are designed to provide Primary (JK-Grade 3) and Junior/Intermediate (Grade 4-Grade 8) students with training on how to be safe in and around the school bus. This training is designed to actively promote and support appropriate behaviour on the bus which also contributes to a positive school climate.



School Bus Safety Week

School Bus Safety Week is held annually during the third week of October. Supported by news releases and social media campaigns, Wednesday of School Bus Safety Week is School Bus Driver Appreciation Day. Parents/caregivers and schools alike are encouraged to recognize the valuable contributions of school bus drivers and bus monitors on this day.



Transportation consortia across the province use a series of coordinated messages and social media graphics to promote School Bus Safety Week.

School Bus Registration Form

STS continued the use of the online school bus registration form for the 2023-2024 school year. All eligible students wishing to ride the bus must complete a registration form indicating service requirements. Students may register for morning and/or afternoon transportation as well as specify which days of the week transportation is required.

The information collected on the registration form is recorded on the manifest for the bus driver and the school. This creates accurate bus lists for school loading procedures, seating plan development, and helps the driver know when to expect each student on board.



Communication Tools

To promote safety messaging and on-going information for stakeholders, STS has an active presence on social media channels, including Facebook, X (formally known as Twitter) and Instagram. Additionally, STS News Updates are published on the website on an as-needed basis.



STS NEWS UPDATE

Charter Services

During the 2023-2024 school year STS completed 8,352 Charter trips. There were 5,047 Secondary trips, 3,254 Elementary trips and an additional 51 trips requested directly from the school boards. 95% of all requested trips were scheduled.

The standard school bus remains the most popular mode of transportation consisting of 94% of all trips. 4% of all trips were completed with a Coach/Activity Bus while the remaining 2% were completed using special purpose vehicles.

STS Charter staff have developed a close working relationship with School Board staff from each board to ensure system-wide events are not conflicting. This has enabled Boards to enjoy successful events during this time including:

London Airshow	Secondary Track & Field
Fall Elementary Cross Country	Elementary Track & Field
Golden Puck	LDCSB SCPP Secondary Track & Field
Jet Aircraft Museum	Swim to Survive
Watershed + STEM	Water Fest
Dancefest	GREEN Leaders Summit
Variety Id	Girls in Aviation
Race Against Drugs (RAD)	Special Olympics
Fanshawe Innovation	Stern Boat Launch

Elgin London Middlesex Oxford Active and Safe Routes to School

As co-chair of the Elgin London Middlesex Oxford Active and Safe Routes to School Steering Committee (ELMO ASRTS), STS continues to support active travel programming by developing programming and resources. The ELMO ASRTS (est. 2012) mission is to work in partnership for the improvement of children's health, well-being, and environment by encouraging the safe use of active school travel and working to remove barriers to active school travel through comprehensive health promotion strategies. Active members include STS (co-chair), Fanshawe College (co-chair), MLHU, Southwestern PH, City of London, TVDSB, LDCSB, MTO, and London Cycle Link.

During the 2023-24 school year, STS lead the redevelopment of the School Travel Planning (STP) program. STP was originally designed by MLHU and is ELMO ASRTS' flagship program. The redesigned model no longer requires any data collection or program evaluation phases and initial involvement from school staff only requires the completion of a set-up form and assessment survey, approximately 20 minutes. The new STP program is a streamlined process that provides schools with a customized Action Plan with resources based on each concern/barrier identified in the assessment survey. The resource suggestions are grouped by level of involvement required; School, School Community and Neighbourhood Community to accommodate each school's varying capacity levels and needs.

In partnership with Southwest Public Health the new STP program began piloting at Algonquin PS in April 2024. Lord Nelson PS also completed the set-up form and assessment survey in June 2024 and will receive support from ELMO ASRTS and MLHU on an as needed basis. The new STP program documents are found on the www.activesaferoutes.ca website and ELMO ASRTS continues to work with school board and public health partners to advertise and encourage use of the program.

London Middlesex Road Safety Committee (LMRSC)

STS joined the London Middlesex Road Safety Committee (LMRSC) to connect with a wider range of organizations and municipalities involved in making a safer road environment for all users. The LMRSC mission is to promote and increase safety for all including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorist through leadership, innovation, coordination and advocacy for zero injuries and fatalities on our roadways. As a resource member, STS will act as a consultant and/or contributor on projects that require our experience with or involve elementary school students.

Traffic Management Support

Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, STS was contacted by schools struggling with traffic changes, congestion, and management concerns. To assist schools, STS attended site visits to identify problem areas and potential solutions. Schools were provided with follow-up educational and encouragement resources to help address the specific needs and struggles of their school community.

STS provided support to the following schools:

- Byron Northview
- Northridge PS
- St Jude, London
- Algonquin PS
- Lord Nelson PS

ELMO ASRTS & London Cycle Link

During the 2023-24 school year ELMO ASRTS active member London Cycle Link delivered Ride to Thrive programming at Sir Arthur Currie PS, Louise Arbour FI PS, and Lord Nelson PS and a Bike Rodeo at Holy Family CES.

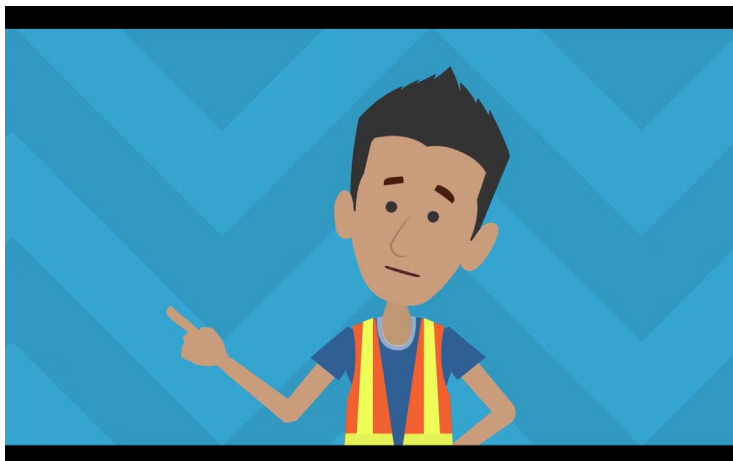
Ride to Thrive focuses on teaching grade 5 and 6 students in a fair, equitable and accepting environment, that cycling is for everyone. At the end of their 2-day training, participants will have the skills to ride their bikes in neighborhoods and on two-lane roads, to get around town, socialize with their friends, and get back and forth from school.

Bike Rodeo teaches bicycle safety to groups of children in an organized and FUN manner. Typically conducted over an afternoon, Bike Rodeos are hosted for an entire community and involve riders of all ages practicing their cycling skills, bike repairs, and neighbour engagement.



School Bus Safety and Active Travel Videos

STS developed a series of safety videos for students, their families and schools covering a range of school bus safety and active travel topics. All videos are available on the STS website and are periodically posted on social media.



School Bus Safety Videos

<https://www.mybigyellowbus.ca/bus-safety-videos/>

Your School Bus Stop	Information on how to arrive at your school bus stop, the importance of being on time, waiting at the bus stop safely and etiquette tips.
School Bus Danger Zone	The Danger Zone is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver.
Boarding the School Bus	Information on how to properly board the school bus and find your seat.
Kindergarten Students at the Bus Stop	For JK and SK students using school bus transportation and their families, an explanation on how to read the school bus sign, the bus tag program and accompaniment policy.
Onboard Bus Behaviour	Follow the rules of ride and all onboard school bus rules as outlined in this video.



Active Travel Videos

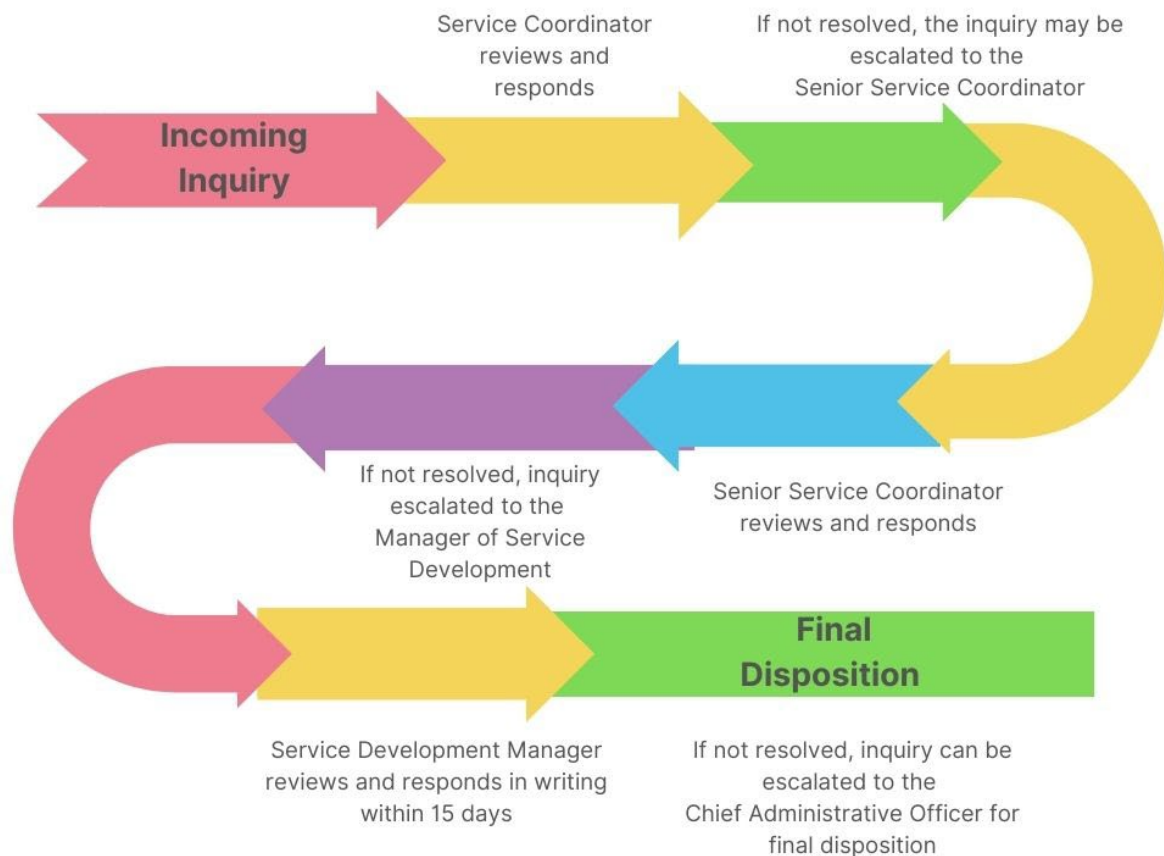
<https://www.mybigyellowbus.ca/safety-video/>

Pedestrian Crossovers (PXOs)	How to identify and navigate Pedestrian Crossovers (PXOs) as both a pedestrian and vehicle driver.
Navigating Lighted Intersections	Information on how to use a lighted intersection as a pedestrian to safely cross the street.
Roundabouts	How both pedestrians and vehicle drivers are to correctly use roundabouts, most importantly direction of travel.
Crossing Guards	Information on how Crossing Guards assist students to cross a street with busy traffic.
Sidewalks and Stop Signs	Tips on how pedestrians can be aware of their surroundings when using sidewalks and how to walk on streets when no sidewalk is present.
School Zone Safety	Look. Listen. Be Seen. Tips for students traveling on foot through school zones.
School Drop Off	Information for parents driving students to schools. Be prepared, drive slowly and cautiously, and always obey all the rules of the road.
School Zone Traffic Signs	The Dos and Don'ts of driving by the most common school zone traffic signs; School Zone, Speed Limit, School Bus Loading Zone, Bicycle Lane, No Stopping & No Parking.
Drive to Five	Information on what a drive to five location is, how to identify one and how to travel from that location to school.
Distracted Walking	Advice on how to reduce distracted walking practices to avoid potential pedestrian dangers.
Before the Ride - Helmets	Information on the 2 V 1 rule and how to properly fit a helmet to your head before riding a bicycle.
Before the Ride – Your Bicycle	Working equipment is important. Information on how to set up your bicycle to be ready to ride.
Biking in your Neighbourhood	Tips on how to navigate your neighbourhood while riding a bicycle including stop signs, crossing the street, and paying attention to the road.

Stakeholder Inquiries

Problem Resolution

STS has a robust process for addressing inquiries. Parents/caregivers can contact STS by phone or can complete an online form on the website. STS response times are typically within 2 business days. During start-up (mid-August to the end of September) responses are provided within 5 business days due to the volume of inquiries.

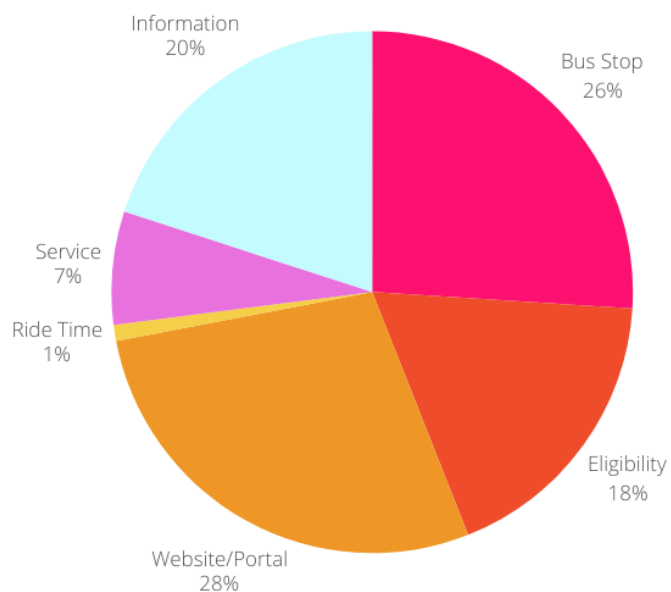


STS uses a tracking system to log contacts received either by telephone or web submission. Generally, most inquiries fall into five broad categories. The most common inquiry received surrounds bus stop locations as most contacts would prefer a closer bus stop as a matter of preference. Other typical inquiries relate to eligibility, use of the online parent portal, address inquiries (alternate address, moving) and ride time.

Most contacts are informational in nature. To provide faster service, the website has been designed to provide answers to the most common inquiries. A tool is available on

the website to determine if the address qualifies for bus service. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section addresses the other most common topics.

Common Inquiries



BUS STOP

Location, time, request a different stop, request a new stop, homeowner concern

ELIGIBILITY

Bus service based on distance or program

WEBSITE/PORTAL

Technical problems logging in, unknown student ID

RIDE TIME

Bus ride time is longer than preferable

SERVICE

Service disruptions related to driver shortages

INFORMATION

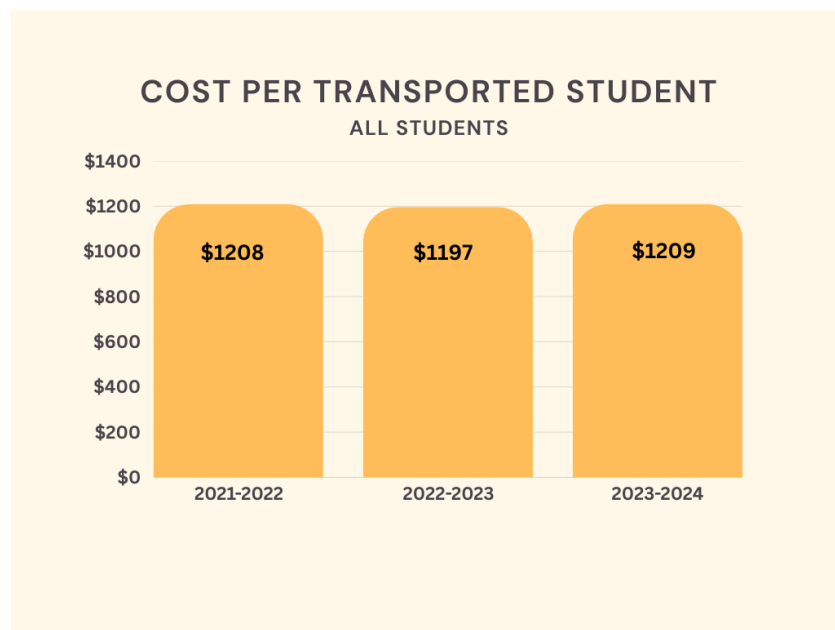
Inclement weather inquiries, bus tag program, moving/change of address

Financial Performance

Cost per Transported Student

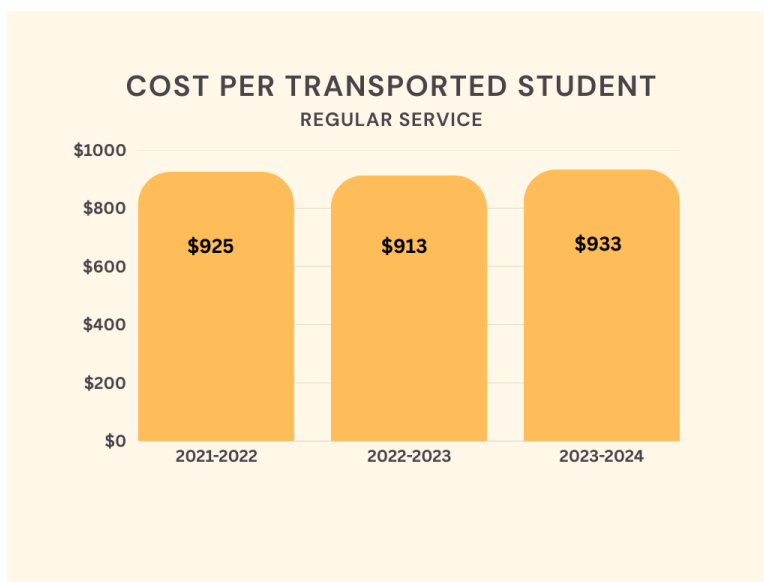
During the 3 year period between the 2021-2022 and 2023-2024 school years the cost per transported student has remained constant. In 2023-2024 the cost increased by approximately 1% while the overall number of transported students increased at each school board by 2.7%.

Cost per transported student is calculated based on actual payments and reflects all transported students on any classification of vehicle.



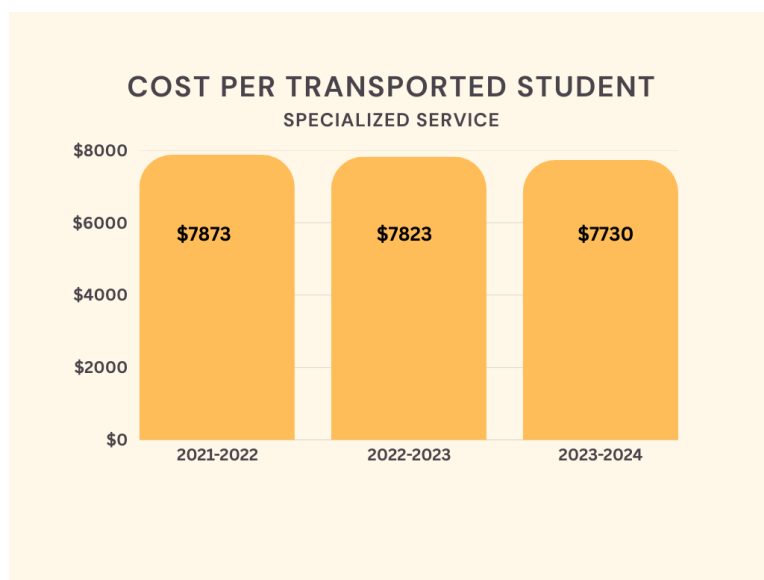
Cost per Transported Student – Regular Service

Regular service reflects students who are transported on chrome yellow bus service of any size.



Cost per Transported Student – Specialized Service

Specialized service reflects service provided to students on chrome yellow wheelchair equipped vehicles or white minivan service.



Financial Statements

Attached are the audited Financial Statements for the 2023-2024 school year as prepared by KPMG. These were approved by the Board of Directors of STS in November 2024 and presented to the Directors of Education as voting members of the corporation in January of 2025.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Financial Statements
And Independent Auditor's Report thereon
August 31, 2024



KPMG LLP

140 Fullarton Street, Suite 1400
London, ON N6A 5P2
Canada
Telephone 519 672 4880
Fax 519 672 5684

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors of Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services (the Entity), which comprise:

- the statement of financial position as at end of August 31, 2024
- the statement of operations for the year then ended
- the statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies

(Hereinafter referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Entity as at August 31, 2024, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the "***Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***" section of our auditor's report.

We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these ethical requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

London, Canada

November 13, 2024

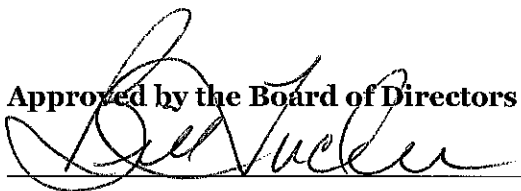
Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Statement of Financial Position

As at August 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Assets		
Current assets		
Petty cash	1,000	1,000
Due from related parties (note 3)	162,532	383,556
	163,532	384,556
Non-financial assets		
Prepaid expenses	7,833	7,833
Tangible capital assets (note 4)	20,141	24,616
	191,506	417,005
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (note 5)	171,365	392,389
Deferred capital contributions (note 6)	20,141	24,616
	191,506	417,005
Contractual obligations and contingencies (note 7)		
Contractual rights (note 8)		

Approved by the Board of Directors



Director



Director

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Statement of Operations

For the year ended August 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue		
Thames Valley District School Board	52,758,850	49,050,754
London District Catholic School Board	20,777,798	18,545,136
Amortization of deferred capital contributions (note 6)	4,475	4,474
	<hr/> 73,541,123	<hr/> 67,600,364
Expenses		
Transportation services	70,994,675	65,236,455
Administrative		
Salaries and benefits	2,031,712	1,784,091
Contract services	170,198	190,547
Software fees and licenses	132,307	147,923
Occupancy costs (note 7)	83,673	84,403
Office supplies and services	54,964	56,758
Safety program materials	15,797	34,623
Telephone	15,380	14,044
Professional development	13,305	18,484
Furniture and equipment	10,819	7,863
Professional fee	6,677	15,323
Printing	6,109	4,680
Amortization	4,475	4,474
Travel and meetings	1,032	696
	<hr/> 73,541,123	<hr/> 67,600,364
Annual surplus	<hr/> -	<hr/> -

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended August 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Cash provided by (used in)		
Operating activities		
Annual surplus	-	-
Non-cash items		
Amortization expense of tangible capital assets	4,475	4,474
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	(4,475)	(4,474)
Changes in non-cash working capital components		
(Increase) decrease in due to/from related parties	221,024	(270,727)
Increase (decrease) in accounts payable	(221,024)	270,727
Net change in cash	-	-
Cash – Beginning of year	1,000	1,000
Cash – End of year	1,000	1,000

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Notes to Financial Statements

August 31, 2024

1 Significant accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with Canadian public-sector accounting standards plus *PS 4200 Standards for Government Not-for-Profit Organizations*, and reflect the following policies:

Reporting entity

The Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services (the Consortium) is an incorporated Not-for-Profit organization established in 2008 by London and area school boards to provide transportation services.

The current member school boards are Thames Valley District School Board and London District Catholic School Board. Under the formal agreement, decisions related to the financial and operating activities are shared. No Board is in a position to exercise unilateral control.

Basis of accounting

Revenues and expenditures are reported on an accrual basis of accounting. The accrual basis of accounting recognizes revenues when transportation services have been provided in accordance with the cost sharing agreement and when collection is reasonably assured; expenditures are the cost of goods and services acquired in the period whether payment has been made or invoices received.

Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian public-sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenditures during the year. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

Tangible capital assets

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost, less accumulated amortization. During the current and previous years, purchases of furniture and equipment are considered immaterial and have not been capitalized. Amortization is provided on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of the assets as follows:

Computer software	5 years
Leasehold improvements	10 years

Amortization is charged at half the annual rate in the year of acquisition.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Notes to Financial Statements

August 31, 2024

1 Significant accounting policies (continued)

Deferred capital contributions

Contributions received or receivable for the purpose of acquiring or developing a depreciable tangible capital asset for use in providing services, or any contributions in the form of depreciable tangible assets received, or receivable for use in providing services, shall be recognized as deferred capital contribution. These amounts are recognized as revenue at the same rate as the related tangible capital asset is amortized.

Deferred revenue

Certain revenue amounts are received pursuant to legislation, regulation or agreement and may only be used in the conduct of certain programs or in the delivery of specific services and transactions. These amounts are recognized as revenue in the fiscal year that the related expenditures are incurred, or services performed.

Financial instruments

Financial instruments are classified in one of the following categories: (i) fair value; (ii) cost or amortized cost. The Entity determines the classification of its financial instruments at initial recognition.

Petty cash, due from related parties, and accounts payable are initially recorded at their fair value and are subsequently measured at cost, net of any provisions for impairment.

The fair value of a financial instrument is the amount of consideration that would be agreed upon in an arm's length transaction between knowledgeable, willing parties who are under no compulsion to act. The fair value of a financial instrument on initial recognition is the transaction price at the trade date, which is the fair value of the consideration given or received. After initial recognition, the fair values of financial instruments that are quoted in active markets are based on bid prices for financial assets held and offer prices for financial liabilities. When independent prices are not available, fair values are determined by using valuation techniques that refer to observable market data. These include comparisons with similar instruments where market observable prices exist, discounted cash flow analysis, option pricing models and other valuation techniques commonly used by market participants.

Transaction costs incurred on the acquisition of financial instruments measured subsequently at fair value are expensed as incurred. All other financial instruments are adjusted by transaction costs incurred on acquisition and financing costs, which are amortized using the straight-line method.

All financial assets are assessed for impairment on an annual basis. When a decline is determined to be other than temporary, the amount of the loss is reported in the statement of operations and any unrealized gain is adjusted through the statement of remeasurement gains and losses.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Notes to Financial Statements

August 31, 2024

1 Significant accounting policies (continued)

Change in accounting policy

Effective September 1, 2023 the Consortium adopted Canadian public sector accounting standard PS 3400 – *Revenue*. The new accounting standard establishes a single framework to categorize revenue to enhance the consistency of revenue recognized and its measurement. As at August 31, 2024, the Consortium determined that the adoption of this new standard did not have an impact on the amounts presented in the financial statements.

2 Economic dependence

The Consortium's operations consist exclusively of supplying services to school boards located in the same geographic area.

3 Due from related parties

The amounts are due from members of the Consortium. They are non-interest bearing and will be repaid within the year.

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Due from related parties		
Thames Valley District School Board	149,210	173,887
Due from related parties		
London District Catholic School Board	13,322	209,669
	<u>162,532</u>	<u>383,556</u>

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Notes to Financial Statements

August 31, 2024

4 Tangible capital assets

	Balance at August 31, 2023 \$	Additions \$	Disposals \$	Transfers \$	Cost Balance at August 31, 2024 \$
Computer software	319,880	-	-	-	319,880
Leasehold improvements	44,753	-	-	-	44,753
	364,633	-	-	-	364,633

	Balance at August 31, 2023 \$	Amortization \$	Disposals, write offs and adjustments \$	Accumulated amortization Balance at August 31, 2024 \$
Computer software	319,880	-	-	319,880
Leasehold improvements	20,137	4,475	-	24,612
	340,017	4,475	-	344,492

	August 31, 2024 \$	Net book value August 31, 2023 \$
Computer software	-	-
Leasehold improvements	20,141	24,616
	20,141	24,616

5 Government remittances payable

In respect of government remittances payable, \$37,132 (2023 – \$40,043) is included within accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

Southwestern Ontario Student Transportation Services

Notes to Financial Statements

August 31, 2024

6 Deferred capital contributions

Deferred capital contributions represent the unamortized amount of contributions received for the purchase of tangible capital assets. The amortization of capital contributions is recorded as revenue in the statement of operations. The changes in the balance of deferred capital contribution are as follows:

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Opening balance	24,616	29,090
Revenue recognized in the period	(4,475)	(4,474)
Closing balance	20,141	24,616

7 Contractual obligations and contingencies

The Consortium leases its head office under an operating lease which runs from March 1, 2019 to February 28, 2029.

The sum of \$350,443 is payable with respect to property lease during the next five years.

	\$
2024 – 25	77,876
2025 – 26	77,876
2026 – 27	77,876
2027 – 28	77,876
2028 – 29	38,938

8 Contractual rights

The Consortium's current membership agreement is from September 2012 to August 2025. The agreement determines amounts receivable from each board based on a cost sharing formula. Transportation expenditures vary from year to year and therefore no estimated future receivables have been disclosed, as they are unknown at this time.