

From: [Valene Johnson](#)
To: [Amie Smid](#)
Cc: [Lise Bradshaw](#)
Subject: Re: Concern Regarding Rising School Bus Fees in School District 23
Date: Thursday, October 22, 2026 9:20:07 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[Transportation Memo 2026.pdf](#)

Hi Amie,

Firstly, my apologies on the delay in responding to you. Your questions and concerns are important, and I hope that I can provide some clarity.

I'm attaching a Transportation Memo that was included in the Public Board Meeting Agenda from February 18th 2026.

In this memo you can see the history of Transportation Fees starting in the 2010/2011 school year along with information on the fee per school day.

The Provincial Government provides our district \$600,000 per year in transportation funding. Transportation costs for our district are approximately \$6 million per year. We receive close to \$2 million in rider fees and we subsidize the transportation budget with approximately \$4 million in operating funds.

On the SD23 website, the fees for families with multiple students are outlined. [Transportation Fees & Payments - Central Okanagan Public Schools](#)

As a Board, when we review transportation costs and fees, we often look at the costs of public transportation and so far, we've been able to ensure that the fees we set are in line with public transportation costs. The decision to raise transportation fees is a difficult decision for the Board of Education, and the discussion at the Board table is often centered on the impact for families.

It's important to note that the Ministry of Education and Child Care does not require school districts to provide transportation. With saying that, our district understands the importance of safe and reliable transportation to and from school, and the Board of Education has continually supported the commitment to continue to provide transportation.

I'm unsure if the Ministry of Education and Child Care has plans to review their position on Transportation to and from school. It is a choice for each school district to provide or not provide transportation.

Through the BC School Trustees Association, we use a provincial voice to advocate to the Ministry and when I look through the motion archives, I can see regular provincial advocacy on Transportation. We (our Board) continues to advocate to Government on behalf of our community, and we deeply understand the impact that transportation fees have on the families

in our district.

Please reach out with any additional questions or if I haven't answered something for you, please let me know.

Best Regards,

Valene Johnson | School Board Trustee - Board Chair

(she/her)

Central Okanagan Public Schools, SD23

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I acknowledge that I live, work, learn, unlearn, and play within the ancestral, traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

From: Amie Smid

Sent: 02 October 2026 12:14

To: Valene Johnson <Valene.Johnson@sd23.bc.ca>; macklin.mccall.mla@leg.bc.ca <macklin.mccall.mla@leg.bc.ca>; EDUC.Minister@gov.bc.ca <EDUC.Minister@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Concern Regarding Rising School Bus Fees in School District 23

WARNING: This email originated from outside Central Okanagan Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Valene Johnson, Macklin McCall, and the BCMinister of Education and Child Care,
I am writing to express my concern regarding the continued increase in school bus fees for families in School District 23.

I understand that providing student transportation comes with significant costs, including fuel, maintenance, insurance, staffing, and other operating expenses. I also recognize that the district offers hardship assistance and payment plans for families who have difficulty paying the fees. However, these measures do not address my broader concern: **the underlying cost of school transportation has become unreasonably high for families.**

I am currently expected to pay approximately **\$1,100 per year for my children to ride the school bus to and from school.** While a payment plan can spread that cost throughout the year, it does not reduce the cost. For families with multiple children, the financial burden can become substantial. What concerns me particularly is how much these fees have increased since they were introduced in 2010. My understanding is that school bus fees have **nearly tripled over that period.** I appreciate that inflation, wages, fuel prices, insurance, and other operating costs have increased as well. However, I believe families deserve a clear explanation of why transportation fees have increased to their current level and whether the increases are proportionate to the actual cost of providing the service.

I also believe there is an important question about the purpose of public education. **Access to school should not become increasingly dependent on a family's ability to absorb substantial transportation**

costs, particularly for families who live in areas where driving children to school every day is not a practical alternative.

I would therefore respectfully ask:

- What has been the year-by-year increase in school bus fees in SD23 since fees were introduced?
- What is the actual per-student cost of providing transportation, and how much of that cost is being recovered through bus fees?
- How are the current fees calculated?
- What portion of the transportation budget is funded by the provincial government versus fees paid directly by families?
- Has SD23 assessed the impact that these fees have on families with multiple children?
- What steps are being taken to prevent transportation fees from continuing to increase at this rate?
- Does the Ministry of Education and Child Care have any plans to review provincial funding for student transportation and the resulting financial burden on families?

I am not suggesting that school transportation has no cost, nor am I asking that the district ignore legitimate increases in operating expenses. Rather, I am asking that the district and provincial government recognize that **\$1,100 or more per year is a significant expense for a family simply to ensure that their children can get to school.**

Hardship programs are important for families who qualify, but **families should not have to be in financial hardship before the affordability of basic access to education becomes a legitimate concern.**

I would appreciate a meaningful response explaining how these fees are determined, why they have risen so substantially over time, and what consideration is being given to making student transportation more affordable for families—particularly those with multiple children.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns. I hope this issue can be reviewed not only from the perspective of transportation costs, but also from the perspective of **accessibility, affordability, and the financial pressures being placed on families.**

Sincerely,

Amie Smid

West Kelowna, BC
