

February 1, 2023

RE: BCTEA Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plans – 2022/23 and 2023/24 School Years

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the approved 2022/23 Joint First Nation Student Transportation Plan (Joint Plan) reporting requirements and to outline the submission process for 2023/24 Joint Plans.

As noted in Schedule G of the *BC Tripartite Education Agreement: Supporting First Nation Student Success* (BCTEA), the cost of transportation for on-reserve students attending public schools is typically funded from a number of funding allocation sources including the Provincial Student Transportation Fund (STF), Student Location Factor (SLF), Supplemental Student Location Factor (SSLF), general operating funding, and Federal funding.

School districts are expected to consider these funding sources when co-developing Joint Plans with First Nations e.g., the Student Location Factor is used to fund various student services and supports for all students including transportation.

The Joint Plan submission documents, including templates and other information, can be accessed on both the Ministry of Education and Child Care's website (see links below) and the [FNESC](#) website. Documents include:

2022/23 BCTEA Transportation Reporting Template (Reporting Template) with the following Tabs:

- Report Signature Page;
- (1) Revenue - Spending Report;
- (1.2) Funding Assumptions;
- (2) Extracurricular Report.

2023/24 Joint Plan submission documents:

- Guiding Principles for Developing Joint First Nations Student Transportation Plans;
- First Nations Student Transportation Fund Planning, Policy and Procedures Guide;
- BCTEA 2023/24 Joint Plan Transportation Worksheet.

A comprehensive Questions and Answers document will be made available after the February 7, 2023, Annual Meeting on Transportation.

Reporting for the 2022/23 School Year Joint Plans – due May 24, 2023

As noted in the 2022/23 Transportation Funding Approval letters, there are specific reporting requirements for the transportation funding included in the 2022/23 BCTEA Reporting Template. The Reporting Template can be found on the [Ministry of Education and Child Care's BCTEA Transportation website](#) and on [FNESC's website](#). Requirements are outlined below. Please submit completed reports along with the 2023/24 Joint Plans to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca by **May 24, 2023**.

Reporting Template highlights:

- **(Tab 1) Revenue - Spending Report**

Data collected through the BCTEA Reporting Template (introduced for the 2021/22 reporting period) that included Board spending, description of transportation services and student count information is being used to understand school baseline spending on First Nation Students transportation, to inform the BCTEA Transportation Research initiative underway and to inform Joint Committee decision-making related to Joint Plans.

Sharing the completed Reporting Template will demonstrate to First Nations that school districts are using available funding sources to transport First Nation Students living on reserve to public schools.

Under BCTEA, a portion of the Federal First Nation Student Rate (FNSR) that is derived from the STF, SLF, and SSLF is considered to be the proxy for transportation funding. As such, this amount is the minimum of the FNSR that should be applied to the transportation of First Nations Students living on reserve. This amount can be supplemented by other funding from the FNSR along with provincial operating funding and special grants like the provincial Student Transportation Fund. As per BCTEA Schedule G, this amount was meant to be removed from the First Nation Student Rate and it has not been removed.

If applicable, within the Reporting Template, please include anecdotal or qualitative information that demonstrates how the funding reduced travel and wait times, improved services by adding additional or extending bus routes and/or improved access to extracurricular activities.

Reporting carry over/deferred revenue:

Various factors have impacted the ability of Boards to fully invest the transportation funds previously received to carry out the Joint Plans, resulting in carry over (deferred revenue), in some cases over 3 years. Moving forward, funds issued in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 for “To/From School”, “Special Supports”, “Bus Shelters” and “Extracurricular Transportation” that have not been spent by the end of the 2022/23 school year may be subject to recovery.

If needed, funds issued in 2022/23 may be carried forward for use in the 2023/24 school year.

- **(Tab 1.2) Funding Assumptions**

BCTEA Parties continue to collect information about the methodology to calculate transportation costs on the Funding Assumptions form.

- **(Tab 2) Extracurricular Report Form**

Reporting requirements regarding the use of funding for transportation to extracurricular activities this year are the same as previous years. Information may be entered into the Extracurricular Report Tab form.

As noted above, funds not spent in 2022/23 may be carried forward and used for transportation to extracurricular activities in 2023/24.

2023/24 School Year Joint Plan Submission Package and Process – due May 24, 2023

All reference documents, including the Joint Plan Transportation Worksheet, can be found in the [Ministry's website](#) and on [FNESC's website](#).

The deadline for submissions is **May 24, 2023**, however, early submissions are welcome. When completed Boards may 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 Joint Plans**

If, after consultation and agreement with respective First Nations, the Joint Plan submitted in 2022/23 is meeting the needs of the First Nation, use the BCTEA 2023/24 Joint Transportation Plan Worksheet and resubmit your Joint Plan. Please note, any carry-over funding from 2022/23 will automatically be deducted from the 2023/24 funding.

- **Revisions to Joint Plans**

If, after consultation and agreement with the respective First Nation, the 2022/23 Joint Plan is not meeting the needs of the First Nation, and revisions to services and/or funding are required for 2023/24, use the BCTEA 2023/24 Joint Transportation Plan Worksheet to detail the changes.

- **New Joint Plans**

For school districts and First Nations that did not submit Joint Plans for previous years (i.e., this is your first submission), please complete and submit the BCTEA 2023/24 Joint Transportation Plan Worksheet. Districts and First Nations may refer to the Instructions tab in the worksheet for more details on how to complete the template.

Continuing this year in the BCTEA 2023/24 Joint Plan Transportation Worksheet is a request to provide values for funding sources. Similar to the 2022/23 Report Template, including these funding sources values will demonstrate to First Nations that school districts are using all available funding sources to transport First Nation Students living on reserve, to public schools. BCTEA Joint Plan transportation funding is intended to be supplemental to already available funding sources and to meet the additional services that have been identified by First Nations through co-development of the Joint Plan.

Boards are asked to return both the Final 2023/24 BCTEA Joint Transportation Plan Worksheet.xls and the 2022/23 Reporting Template to the Ministry in Excel format along with any other formats that best supports the Board and First Nation sign-off processes e.g., Excel as well as a signed Adobe PDF (or email of agreement from First Nation).

A thorough assessment of all revised and new Joint Plan submissions will be conducted by the BCTEA Joint Transportation Committee (Joint Committee) to determine the approved funding for each submission. Subject to timely submission of Joint Plans, it is anticipated that funding approval letters will be sent to School Districts and First Nations by September 2023.

As in previous years, funding for 2023/24 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 previous school years.

If you have any questions, please submit to BCTEA@gov.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

Ministry of Education and Child Care
First Nations Education Steering Committee
Indigenous Services Canada