

# BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) - Transportation Joint Transportation Plan Questions and Answers

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*The purpose of this Question-and-Answer document is to provide information on frequently asked questions from school districts and First Nations regarding the BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Fund. If you have additional questions, please contact [BCTEA@gov.bc.ca](mailto:BCTEA@gov.bc.ca)*

## ***BCTEA Joint Transportation Plans, Reporting Template and Status Quo Letter***

### **1. Are school districts with First Nation Students living on reserve who do not require transportation expected to develop Joint Transportation Plans?**

- BCTEA parties are looking to make sure all Students' transportation needs are being met. If there are First Nation Students who are ordinarily living on-reserve who do not require transportation to public school, the school district should send an email to [BCTEA@gov.bc.ca](mailto:BCTEA@gov.bc.ca) (copy the First Nation) indicating that there has been a conversation with the First Nation confirming that there are no transportation needs.
- Transportation for Students living off-reserve should be addressed separately and through other funding mechanisms that may be implemented by the school district.

### **2. What training and support is available for school districts and First Nations in completing the Joint Transportation Plans?**

- School districts and First Nations are invited to the Annual Meeting on Transportation (AMT) and to virtual informational drop-in sessions.
- The Policies and Procedures and other materials to support the co-development of the Joint Transportation Plan and Transportation Reporting template is available on both the [Ministry website](#) and [FNESC website](#).
- School districts can send any BCTEA related questions to [BCTEA@gov.bc.ca](mailto:BCTEA@gov.bc.ca).
- First Nations can reach the First Nations Education Steering Committee at [BCTEA@fnesc.ca](mailto:BCTEA@fnesc.ca) or Indigenous Services Canada at [bceducation@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:bceducation@sac-isc.gc.ca).

### **3. Do we need to submit a Joint Transportation Plan if our school district pays for all the transportation and will not request any BCTEA funding?**

- To ensure the transportation needs of First Nation Students ordinarily living on reserve is being met, school districts are asked to jointly develop and submit a Joint Transportation Plan even where all student transportation needs are provided by the school district.
- A Status Quo letter may be used instead of the Joint Transportation Plan in these cases. Please note, the First Nation's signature is still needed (confirmation of agreement by email will be accepted).

### **4. Can I use the Status Quo letter if my request includes both a to/from school request, as well as a bus monitor?**

- A Joint Transportation Plan will need to be submitted because a bus monitor is included. Special supports or parental assistance requests are not eligible for the Status Quo letter.
- Select the "status quo" option when completing the Joint Transportation Plan.

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## **Local Education Agreements (LEA)**

### **5. Does there need to be a LEA in place to apply for BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation funding?**

- A Local Education Agreement is not required to be eligible for BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation funding. Any school district with one or more First Nation Students attending their BC public school who are ordinarily living on-reserve, and requiring transportation should develop and submit a Joint Transportation Plan or Status Quo Letter as applicable (even if all Student transportation needs are being met).

## **Expense Eligibility**

### **6. What kilometer rate should we be using when completing our Joint Transportation Plans?**

- When completing Joint Transportation Plans, school districts and First Nations should refer to the school district's policy on parental assistance. The First Nation Student Transportation Fund may supplement up to the [National Joint Council rates](#) payable per kilometer for British Columbia as of the submission deadline.

### **7. Can BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation funds be used for bus monitor supports to address bullying?**

- No, bus monitor supports and/or strategies to prevent bullying during transportation is a school district responsibility.

### **8. Can BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation funds be used to pay for driver training?**

- BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation funding cannot be used to pay for driver training. Driver training and other driver-related training costs are the responsibility of the school district e.g., cultural awareness, group management, customer service, etc.
- First Nations and school districts are encouraged to recruit First Nation members as bus drivers wherever possible and to seek driver training opportunities in their region (e.g., consult with the Association of School Transportation Services of BC).

### **9. Are there going to be opportunities for capital purchases in the 2025/26 school year?**

- BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation funding is for operational costs only. Requests for buses are processed through the established provincial application-based [Bus Acquisition Program](#).
- There is currently no water vessel acquisition program similar to the Bus Acquisition Program.
- Funding for bus shelters was made available to school districts in 2019 and to First Nations in 2021. The BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Fund currently does not provide funding for shelters. Funding options could include school district Local Capital, the Annual Facility Grant (AFG) and/or the use of other operating funds.

### **10. Is transportation to childcare or before and after school programs eligible for BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Fund (to/from or Extracurricular)?**

- Transportation costs to childcare and before and after school programs are ineligible. School districts are expected to assess student transportation needs and address them equitably.

# BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) - Transportation

## Joint Transportation Plan Questions and Answers

### **BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Funding**

#### **11. What are the funding sources for transportation for on-reserve students?**

- 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 Student Transportation Fund, Student Location Factor, Supplemental Student Location Factor, general operating funding, and Federal funding. School districts are expected to consider these funding sources when co-developing Joint Transportation Plan(s) with First Nations. The Student Location Factor is used to fund various student services and supports for all students including transportation.
- Only students who ordinarily live on-reserve and attend BC public schools are eligible to be on ISC BC Region Nominal Roll. These students should be included in the Joint Transportation Plan and considered for supplementary funding from the BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Fund if needed.

#### **12. Do the transportation requirements under BCTEA apply to Self-Governing or Treaty First Nations?**

- First Nations with treaties or self- government agreements are currently not part of the First Nations Student Transportation Fund approach as they are not covered by BCTEA; however, they may choose to access certain services through a separate negotiation process.

#### **13. Will implementing the First Nation Student Joint Transportation Plans create different levels of services for different students?**

- The BCTEA Parties are committed to developing and implementing effective measures to address existing and future issues arising from the transportation of First Nation Students to BC Public Schools.
- First Nation Students often face unique transportation challenges - true equity means acknowledging and accommodating these different needs.
- First Nation Students who live on-reserve are often required to travel significantly longer than average distances to and from BC Public Schools. In some cases, these commutes are unsafe and require First Nation Students to navigate wildlife and adverse weather conditions. The remoteness of First Nations communities must be accommodated in the interest of equity and in recognition of the Parties' commitment to improving outcomes for First Nation Students.
- Transportation for students living off-reserve should be addressed separately and through other funding mechanisms that may be implemented by the Board.

#### **14. When are BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation funds transferred? What if the timelines are not in sync with a First Nations' fiscal year?**

- BCTEA Parties recognize school districts, First Nations and the Ministry may follow different fiscal years. BCTEA Parties want to ensure that Joint Transportation Plan approvals by the Joint Transportation Committee are communicated through funding letters as soon as possible so that funding is available for new and existing transportation services.
- Based on feedback to allow for school district and First Nation planning, agreement and to implement any new transportation services in time for school start, plans are due by the deadline indicated in the Policy and Procedures Guide.
- BCTEA parties expect that funding to First Nations for transportation services should not be delayed; school districts are encouraged to cash manage funding to ensure undue hardship is not experienced by First Nations.

## **BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA) - Transportation Joint Transportation Plan Questions and Answers**

### **15. Why is funding flowed to school districts and not directly to First Nations?**

- The BCTEA agreement outlines how the funding is flowed as a Special Purpose Grant to school districts, with restrictions on spending and reporting.
- This funding is supplementary to other sources of funding available to school districts.
- The Ministry of Education and Child Care (the Ministry) transfers all transportation funds to school districts by way of a Special Purpose Grant pursuant to section 115(a) of the *School Act* as per the intended purpose outlined in Schedule G of the BCTEA. These funds must be used for the purpose outlined in the Joint Transportation Plans and must be reported as a Special Purpose Grant on Schedule 3A of the school district's budgets and financial statements. As per standard accounting principles, funds not spent on June 30, may be 'subject to' repurposing.
- There are a number of accountability mechanisms to ensure First Nations are in agreement and their concerns are addressed. The Joint Transportation Plan requires the Chief of the First Nation (or delegate) to confirm the agreement of the Joint Transportation Plan by signing before submission.

### **16. How are school districts accountable to First Nations for unused BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation funding?**

- An estimate of BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation fund spending to June 30 is reported by the school districts on the Revenue and Spending Report and confirmed through the annual audited financial statements.
- Unspent BCTEA funding can only be used for its intended purpose. Funds that are not spent by the end of the school year may be carried forward for use in the following school year; however, they may also be subject to repurposing.

### ***BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Funding for Extracurricular Activities***

### **17. Do all extracurricular activities need to be school-based or is there an opportunity to fund transportation to community-based activities?**

- Extracurricular activities should be school-organized activities (e.g., basketball, homework club, arts and culture) not falling within the scope of a regular curriculum and carrying no academic credit in order to be eligible for the BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Funding for Extracurricular Activities. They improve student engagement and connection with the school including benefiting the social, cultural, and physical health and well-being of students. These activities may be located off school property e.g., a different school gym or soccer field and/or delivered by a private organization in cases where the school district works with an organization to deliver extracurricular activities.

### **18. How do I access BCTEA Extracurricular Funding?**

- Extracurricular transportation funding will no longer be allocated to each district automatically. Extracurricular funding may be requested for up to the allocation received in 2024/25 as indicated on the 2025/26 Joint Plan. This funding is not meant to cover full costs but rather to serve as a subsidy for extracurricular transportation.

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### ***First Nation Schools of Choice***

#### **19. Is there additional funding to support transportation to First Nation Schools of Choice?**

- There is no additional funding. School districts should consider the use of existing funding sources (e.g., Operating Grants, Student Transportation Fund, Transportation Proxy<sup>1</sup>, Student Location Factor, Supplemental Student Location Factor, BCTEA First Nation Student Transportation Fund) when implementing First Nation Schools of Choice.

### ***Parental Assistance***

#### **20. When is it appropriate to request funding for parental assistance?**

- Funding for parental assistance has only been allocated in extraordinary/unique circumstances.
- Parental school of choice is not considered an extraordinary/unique circumstance eligible for BCTEA parental assistance funding. Parent/caregiver(s) may follow school district policies to enroll First Nation Students in non-designated schools and consider what the school district's policy is for transportation and parental assistance.
- Previous approvals for parental assistance are subject to review and may not be approved in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> First Nation Student Rate (FNSR) Funding and Transportation "Proxy":

TRANSPORTATION PROXY: Under BCTEA, there is a portion of the First Nation Student Rate (FNSR) derived from the Student Location Factor (SLF), Supplementary Student Location Factor (SSLF) and Provincial Student Transportation Fund (STF) that is considered a "proxy" for funding First Nation Student transportation. This amount is the minimum of the FNSR that should be applied to the transportation of First Nations Students living on reserve. This proxy amount can be supplemented by other funding from the FNSR and/or from provincial operating funding and special grants. As per BCTEA Schedule G, this amount was meant to be removed from the FNSR and it has not been removed.