

## Board cites lack of crossing guards, safe walking routes Busing exemptions for students to remain

Halton Catholic District School Board has approved transportation policies for the 2005-2006 school year that will see busing continue for many Halton Hills students, who are actually within walking distance of their schools.

Board policy states that busing would not be provided for high school students living within a 3.2 km radius and for elementary students living within a 1.6 km radius. But at last week's meeting, Catholic board trustees approved exceptions to the policy for next year. The total cost of these exceptions is between \$125,000 and \$150,000.

Busing to St. Catherine of Alexandria will be provided to students who move into proposed Four Corners subdivision, west of Mountainview Rd., south of Argyll Rd. Busing in this neighbourhood would be provided only until suitable walking routes are established.

The board also plans to make a request to the Town of Halton Hills for an adult crossing guard to be positioned at the Mountainview and Argyll Rds. intersection.

Busing for approximately 32 students attending Holy Cross School will continue next year. While these students (living Stewart MacLaren/Corey Circle area) fall within the walking distance to the school, transportation is being provided because, as pedestrians, they would have to cross Mountainview Rd. N. at Maple Ave. without the assistance of an adult crossing guard. A request to the Town of Halton Hills for a guard was denied.

If the Town provides a guard at this location, busing would be discontinued.

Similarly in Acton, 28 St. Joseph School students living east of Main St. are being bused due to the lack of an adult crossing guard at Main St. and Mill St. Once again, the Town

denied the request for an additional guard.

More than 400 Christ the King School students are being provided busing despite living within the 3.2 km transportation radius. About 71 living in Glen Williams or in the Stewarttown/Stewart's Mill areas do not have suitable safe walking routes. The rural roads, the board notes, serve high traffic volumes, but are not built to urban standards. This policy would be reviewed once suitable sidewalk improvements are completed. About 28 students living in the Georgetown West subdivision (Trafalgar Country) will get busing only if there is a bus available and it would not cost the board any money—that cannot be confirmed at this time.

Another 300 CTK students living in the Georgetown South area will also continue to be bused. According to the board report, "With respect to Georgetown South, if the board is adhering to the Transportation Policy to ensure consistent interpretation of the policies, then students within walking distance from Georgetown South should have transportation eliminated for September 2005 ... Although, it is staff's opinion that the policy exception should be discontinued it is apparent based on concerns and issues raised by parents over the last two years that the board may wish to continue to provide transportation to this area for another year."

Staff said eliminating busing for these students would save the board over \$100,000 that could be directed to transport students in new growth areas in Milton, Oakville and Burlington.

However, board trustees approved the continued busing for the Georgetown South students.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

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