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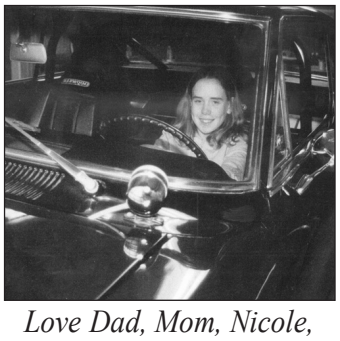
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Catholic board transportation policy change may eliminate busing for some CtK students

LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

Some Christ the King students who are currently bused to school may have to walk next year if the Halton Catholic District School Board approves changes to its transportation policy next week.

Impacted students in Georgetown include the 34 students who live in the Trafalgar Country/Moore Park (Georgetown West) area who are currently able to catch rides on a bus coming from the rural area and the 65 students living in the Arbor Glen and Stewart's Mill developments.

The elimination of bus service to those areas in town for the 2007/2008 school year are to be on the board's agenda at its next meeting, March 6.

In both instances the students have been bused to and from school as exceptions to the Board's transportation policy, as they all live within the board's designated walking area— a 3.2 km radius of the school. Buses were provided temporarily because a walking hazard had been identified.

According to a report authored by Sandy Morgan, the board's Manager of Transportation Services, the affected students in west Georgetown (including Ruddell Cr. and Moore Park Cr.) were provided temporary bus service because there were seats available on a passing bus.

The board now wants to utilize that bus elsewhere in new areas of town.

ROSANNA PALMIERI

"This area is similar to other areas within Georgetown where secondary school students are walking to Christ the King Secondary School utilizing routes along Main St., Maple Ave., and Guelph St.," said Morgan. "It should be noted that numerous parents of students who reside in the subdivision south of the rail line have raised their concerns with transportation and school staff regarding the provision of transportation to the Georgetown West area."

She added that students from this area currently attending Georgetown District High School are not eligible for transportation.

Eliminating busing in that area, Morgan said, could save the board $20,000 a year and reduce the number of vehicles at the high school.

Morgan said the board expects to save another $20,000 annually by eliminating busing for the kids in Arbor Glen and Stewart's Mill.

Morgan said those students also live within the 3.2 km radius of the school and have been bused for safety reasons due to the lack of a suitable walking route to the school.

"The Town of Halton Hills has continued to make improvements in the area and as a result, rural roads, in particular Eighth Line and 15 Sideroad, have now been upgraded to urban standards including sidewalks," said Morgan.

She said there is now a safe walking route to the school.

Halton Hills HCDSB Trustee Rosanna Palmieri said both areas are within the designated walking radius of the school and busing had only been provided there on a temporary basis.

She said she has "mixed feelings" about the elimination of the bus in the Georgetown West area because those students have to cross a rail line.

But she added, in both instances, "there are a lot more critical areas I want to maintain, like Georgetown South."

She said parents of the affected students have been informed of the policy change through a letter sent by the school and she has not yet heard from anyone.

She encourages anyone with a concern to bring it forward at the next board meeting.

Busing will continue to be provided for the 402 Georgetown South students and for some students in the St. Catherine of Alexandria Elementary School area due to the lack of a suitable walking route.

(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

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