



Committee of the Whole (Public)
Report No. 13-093

18 June 2013

Approval of a School Active Transportation Charter

Key Contact: Michael Carson, Chief Financial Officer, 613-596-8211 ext. 8881

PURPOSE:

1. To seek approval of a School Active Transportation Charter that would be adopted by the Ottawa-Carleton School Board (OCDSB), Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) and Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA).

CONTEXT:

2. An active transportation charter is a formal recognition of the value of active transportation. It has no legal status, but serves to define and support a long-term commitment to providing resources that enhance and encourage safe routes to school for students who walk, ride their bicycles, or use other forms of human-powered transportation.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. OSTA and its member school boards recently approved a new budget item in its 2013-2014 budget to support programs for walkers from both member boards. OSTA has struck partnerships with several organizations to create the School Active Transportation Support Network, and has reviewed walking hazards for 180 elementary school sites across the entire system. A new position has been created, a Safety and Accessible Transportation Coordinator, to assist school communities in developing individual active transportation programs that meet the needs of their own students and families.

OSTA and its member school boards are committed to encouraging and assisting students who walk to school as a vital form of exercise that not only contributes to better learning, but also strengthens community ties in an environmentally conscious way.

OSTA staff proposes that its two member school boards adopt a single active transportation charter that reflects a joint strategic direction and commitment, while promoting the principles outlined in Ontario's Foundations for a Healthy School. All three organizations would sign and promote the charter.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

4. Funding for school active transportation from OCDSB includes \$45,000 to support the continuing work that Green Communities Canada is currently doing in OCDSB schools, \$18,000 for OSTA grants to schools who participate in rolling out active transportation programs in their schools and 50% of the cost of one full-time equivalent to manage this program as part of the position's roles and responsibilities. The estimated OCDSB portion would be \$50,000, including benefits. The charter itself has no costs associated with it. Any changes in strategic direction that might impact budget would be reviewed by the Board of Trustees as required.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

5. The charter provides an over-arching mandate under which activities such as policy changes, facility planning and maintenance, hazard zones, etc., would take place. Communication of the School Active Transportation Program is ongoing as part of the District-wide hazard zone review.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

6. Support of this proposal by OSTA and the OCDSB is congruent with our objectives of student wellness and increased parental and community engagement.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board approve the School Active Transportation Charter attached as Appendix A of Report 13-093.

Michael Carson
Chief Financial Officer

Jennifer Adams
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

APPENDICES

Appendix A – School Active Transportation Charter


OSTA

 Ottawa Student
 Transportation
 Authority

School Active Transportation Charter

Walking, cycling, mobility devices, and many other forms of human-powered transportation, are currently used by thousands of students to get to school every day. These students, and their families, experience the benefits of using active modes of transportation in their mental and physical health and well-being, are better prepared to learn, and feel more connected to their communities.

As educators, and service-providers, it is within our power and responsibility to provide programs that support and promote safe, active and sustainable transportation for students today and for years to come. This charter reflects the principles of Ontario's Foundation for a Healthy School.

Physical and Mental Well-Being

Daily exercise leads to a healthier body and mind, and a life-long commitment to taking care of oneself.

Safety and Accessibility

Using a proactive approach to identify and address active transportation barriers and hazards with school and other community partners promotes safety for all travelers.

Enhanced Learning

Physical activity, particularly before school, enhances the student's ability and desire to learn.

Leadership

From School Board representative to student, every individual in the school and the community has the opportunity to "lead by example", and encourage others to participate in active transportation.

Community Cohesion and Appreciation

Walking together, and appreciating the outdoors together, promotes community cohesion and greater care for the environment in which we live.