

Student Transportation Survey: Guided Questionnaire

This guided questionnaire presents the questions asked online, with instructions to respondents in [blue](#) and notations on question skipping in

gradient text boxes.

Options for respondents are presented in *italics*.

[Some Helpful Definitions](#) and the [Freedom of Information and Privacy Statement](#) are presented on the opening page, before the respondent begins the survey.

Some Helpful Definitions

Designated School: *All students have a designated school that is determined by the attendance area set by the resident school board. Designated schools offer regular programming and are not “schools of choice”. Designated schools are usually, but not always, the closest school that offers regular programming to the residence of the student.*

School of Choice: *Public schools or programs of choice are schools that are chosen because of a particular program being offered. Some examples include: language or cultural immersion programs, sports or club academies, faith-based schools (offered by a non-Catholic jurisdiction), art or science schools, traditional learning centres, international baccalaureate programs and alternative programs.*

Source: *Alberta Education Site*

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Statement:

The personal information is collected pursuant to section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RSA 2000, C. F-25). This information will be used to inform potential policy and program changes. Questions or inquiries regarding the collection and use of your personal information may be directed by email to EDC.FOIP@gov.ab.ca

Introduction

After the Alberta government acted to reduce school fees in 2017, many Alberta families have been talking about how students get to and from school and which students are eligible to receive student transportation services such as bussing (sometimes referred to as student eligibility). Some popular topics include:

- how far away students must live from their “designated school” to receive bus services to and from school without paying additional fees. The current criteria is 2.4 kilometres
- whether school authorities should be required to provide bus services to students who attend a school of choice such as a Spanish bilingual program; and
- safety concerns related to whether the student receives those services

The department of Education with the Alberta government would like to get your views on some of these issues in this short survey. These responses will help the government determine if changes are needed to the student transportation system, and if so, what changes to make.

This information will not be used to identify you, and will help the government understand the different voices in the conversation and improve student transportation.

Question 1:

To start, please tell us a bit about yourself. This information will not be used to identify you.

Are you responding in an official capacity on behalf of a stakeholder organization? *[Required question]*

Respondents must select one of the following options:

- Yes: Go to Question 2
- No: Go to Question 3

Question 2:

Please enter the name of the organization you represent. *[Optional question]*.

Respondents are presented with a text box, which they can leave blank if they choose.

Text Box: _____

Only respondents who indicate they are responding on behalf of an organization receive question 2, and they do not receive questions 3 to 7. After answering question 2, those responding on behalf of an organization proceed directly to question 8.

Question 3:

Please tell us a bit about what perspective you bring on the education system. Please check all that apply. *[Required question, multiple responses accepted]*

I am a...

Respondents may select any of the following options, and must select one:

- *Current or former school system administrator (e.g., principal, superintendent)*
- *Current or former elected official (e.g., school board trustee, MLA, municipal councillor)*
- *Current or former teacher*
- *Current or former student of the Alberta Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system*
- *Parent or caregiver of a child or children, who were attending or enrolled in the Alberta Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system as of September 2017*
- *Parent or caregiver of a preschool child or children*
- *Parent or caregiver of a child or children who in the past attended the Alberta Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system*
- *Concerned citizen / interested member of the public*
- *Other*
- *Prefer not to say*

Question 4:

Do you have any dependent children who were attending school in Alberta as of September 2017? By dependent, we mean children for whom you make decisions about their education. *[Required question]*

Respondents must select one of the following options:

- *Yes: Go to question 5*
- *No: Go to question 8*

Respondents who indicate they do not have dependent children do not receive questions 5 to 7. They proceed directly to question 8.

Question 5:

You indicated you have dependent children who were attending school in Alberta as of September 2017. Please indicate the following for your dependent children who were attending school as of September 2017. *[Optional question]*

Respondents are presented with the following table and options:

Grade Range	Number of dependent children attending school as of September 2017	How they most frequently get to school / preschool
Respondents are presented with school age ranges: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Pre-school or younger</i>• <i>Kindergarten to Grade 4</i>• <i>Grades 5 to 9</i>• <i>Grades 10 to 12</i>	For each range, respondents must select one of the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Zero</i>• <i>One</i>• <i>Two</i>• <i>Three</i>• <i>Four</i>• <i>Five or more</i>	For each range, respondents must select one of the following options: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>School Bus</i>• <i>Walk</i>• <i>Bike</i>• <i>Public transit</i>• <i>I or a caregiver drives them</i>• <i>Grade ten to twelve only: Drive themselves / with others</i>• <i>Other</i>

Question 6:

Which school authorities do your dependent children attend. Check all that apply. *[Required question, multiple responses selected]*

Respondents must select any of the following options:

- *Charter*
- *Francophone*
- *Private*
- *Public*
- *Separate*

Question 7:

Do any of your children currently use student transportation services provided by your local school authority? That is, they take a bus or public transit arranged by the school? *[Required question]*

Respondents must select one of the following options:

- *Yes, and I pay fees for at least one child*
- *Yes, and I do not pay fees for this service*
- *No*
- *Prefer not to say*

All respondents receive questions 8 through 14.

Question 8:

How well do you understand how student transportation works where you live? Please use a scale from one to seven, where one means you don't understand it at all, four means understand it somewhat, and seven means you understand it very well. *[Required question]*

Respondents are presented with a grid, and must select a number between one and seven to self-rate their understanding.

Question 9:

What do you think is the most important issue currently facing student transportation in the school system? *[Required question, open-ended]*

Respondents are presented with a text box with a character limit of 2000, and they must enter a response to continue.

Text Box: _____

Question 10:

There are a number of ways the school transportation system can serve students, parents and caregivers. Please rank the following five options from most to least desirable. Rank the most desirable option as "one" and the least desirable option as "five." *[Required Question]*

Respondents are presented with a list of the following options. Next to each option, they must enter a rank for each. They must rank each option to continue, and cannot rank two items the same. These options are randomized.

- *A transportation system that is available to all, regardless of circumstances, with no user fees or eligibility criteria. All students would have access to student transportation services no matter where they live, how old they are, or what school they attend. Transportation would be paid for by taxpayers and no additional fees would be charged.*
- *A transportation system that is available to some students based entirely on the distance they live from their designated school. Students who don't meet the eligibility criteria may need to find alternative means to get to school or pay additional fees.*
- *A transportation system that is available to some students based on eligibility criteria such as how far the student lives from their designated school, the age of the student, student safety, whether they live in an urban or rural area. Students who don't meet the eligibility criteria may need to find alternative means to get to school or pay additional fees.*
- *A transportation system with eligibility criteria determined entirely by local school authorities. Students who don't meet the eligibility criteria of their local board may need to find alternative means to get to school or pay additional fees.*
- *No student transportation system at all. Parents or caregivers would be responsible for getting students to school, at their own cost*

Question 11:

Who should be the most responsible for arranging student transportation services, and covering the costs of that transportation? [Required question]

Respondents must select one of the following options. These options are randomized:

- Parents and caregivers
- Local school authorities
- The provincial government

Preamble and background information

Respondents are presented with some further information, including an explanation of the 2.4 km walk limit and some practical examples. There are no questions to answer on this page.

Preamble: Currently, most students who live 2.4 km or more from their designated school for regular or special education programming receive student transportation services without additional fees. Students who live closer than 2.4 kilometres (roughly a 30 minute walk), or attend a school of choice such as Spanish bilingual programming, may be required to pay additional fees for transportation, or may need to find a different way to get to school. The distance a student lives from their designated school determines whether they receive student transportation services.

To help you understand this better, here are some examples:

Example	Transportation	Fees
Mona lives 2.4 kilometres or more from her designated school, which she attends	Mona takes the school bus every day	Mona or her parent/caregiver do not pay fees because Mona meets the eligibility criteria for student transportation services
Jean lives less than 2.4 kilometres from his designated school, which he attends	Jean walks to school every day	Jean or his parent/caregiver do not pay fees because Jean does not use student transportation services
Amin attends a Spanish bilingual program, and not his designated school	Amin takes the school bus every day	Amin or his parent/caregiver pay a fee because Amin attends a Spanish bilingual program, which is a “school of choice”
Sophia lives less than 2.4 kilometres away from the school she attends	Sophia takes the school bus every day	Sophia or her parent/caregiver pay a fee because Sophia does not meet the student transportation services eligibility requirement, but she chooses to use student transportation services offered by her local school authority

Respondents proceed to the next page of questions.

Question 12:

Thinking about the issues facing student transportation, please rank the following six options from most important to least important. Rank the most important option as “one” and the least important option as “six.” *[Required question]*

Respondents are presented with a list of the following priorities. Next to each priority, they must enter a rank for each. They must rank each priority to continue, and cannot rank two items the same. These priorities are randomized.

- *Minimizing the cost of school transportation paid for by Alberta taxpayers*
- *Introducing additional eligibility criteria for student transportation services to address safety hazards, like crossing railway tracks, walking on rural roads or crossing busy highways*
- *Introducing additional eligibility criteria for student transportation services to include students who attend a program of choice (such as French immersion, a bilingual language program or sports academy) or a charter school*
- *Maximizing parent or caregiver choice by allowing those who wish to pay more for better student transportation services to do so*
- *Offering everyone the same level of student transportation services, regardless of circumstances or cost*
- *Leaving student transportation services, the way they are*

Question 13:

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following ten statements. *[Required question]*.

Respondents are presented with the following table and statements. They must rate each statement on the degree with which they agree or disagree with it. These statements are randomized:

Statement	Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Parents or caregivers should be allowed to pay additional fees to get improved student transportation services such as shorter bus times or a bus stop closer to their home</i>• <i>It is important to change the current criteria so more students can be transported to school, even if it costs Alberta taxpayers more</i>• <i>Expanding the system to allow more students access to student transportation services is too expensive.</i>• <i>Transportation to school is a public service that parents or caregivers should be able to access without paying any additional fees, regardless of where they live or how close they live to their child's school.</i>• <i>Parents and caregivers are the ones responsible for making sure their children get to and from school each day. Student transportation services are nice to have but not necessary.</i>• <i>A fee-based system for all students is the fairest way to ensure parents have choice when it comes to getting their kids to school.</i>• <i>Older students can get themselves to and from school – if we are going to provide additional student transportation services, they should be for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6.</i>• <i>Eligibility for student transportation services should be determined by local school boards, not by the provincial government.</i>• <i>Eligibility for student transportation services should be determined primarily based on ensuring students can get safely to school.</i>• <i>The eligibility criteria for student transportation is fine the way it is, and does not need to be changed.</i>	<p>For each statement, respondents must select one of the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Strongly disagree</i>• <i>Somewhat disagree</i>• <i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>• <i>Somewhat agree</i>• <i>Strongly agree</i>

Question 14:

Some people say that we should change the current eligibility requirement to account for the age of the student, while other people say we should not take age into account. Which is closer to your point of view? *[Required question]*

Respondents must select one of the following options:

- We should change it to account for the age of the student: Go to question 15
- We should not take age into account: Go to question 16

Respondents who indicate we should take age into account proceed to question 15. Those who do not believe we should take age into account proceed to directly to question 16.

Question 15:

You indicated we should take age into account. Using the table below, indicate your preferred eligibility distance for each grade group. *[Required question]*

Respondents are presented with the following table and options. They must select an option for each:

Eligibility distance criteria for students	Kindergarten to Grade 3	Grade 4 to Grade 6	Grade 7 to Grade 9	Grade 10 to Grade 12
<i>More than 1.2 km/15 minutes</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>More than 1.6 km/20 minutes</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>More than 2.0 km/25 minutes</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>More than 2.4 km/30 minutes</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>More than 3.0 km/36 minutes</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 16:

A number of factors can contribute to whether students are eligible for student transportation services. Please rank the following six factors from most to least important in terms of determining whether or not a student is eligible for student transportation services. Please rate the most important factor “one” and the least important factor “six.” *[Required question]*

Respondents are presented with a list of the following factors. Next to each factor, they must enter a rank for each. They must rank each factor to continue, and cannot rank two factors the same. These factors are randomized.

- *The age of the student*
- *Safety concerns along the route to school, such railway crossings or crossing busy roads*
- *The geographic location of the school (urban, rural, etc.)*
- *The cost of student transportation services to Alberta taxpayer*
- *The availability of other modes of transportation, like public transit*
- *The distance the student lives from the school attend*

Questions 17-28:

Please indicate whether or not you believe the following types of students should be eligible for student transportation services. *[Required questions].*

Respondents are presented with the following table and options. They must select an option for column two; if they select “yes,” they are presented with column three. If not, they proceed to the next question.

Student types (question 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27)	Should they be eligible?	Who should pay? [only those who say the student should be eligible receive questions 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28]
<p>Respondents are presented with the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Students who attend their designated school</i> • <i>Students who attend charter schools</i> • <i>Students who attend private schools</i> • <i>Students who attend French Immersion</i> • <i>Students who attend bilingual programs (such as Spanish or Mandarin)</i> • <i>Students who attend other programs of choice, like programs with a specific focus on art, science or sports</i> 	<p>For each option, respondents must select one of the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yes</i> • <i>No</i> 	<p>If they select yes, respondents must select one of the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The taxpayer</i> • <i>The parent or caregiver</i> • <i>Shared</i>

Demographics

Finally, we have some questions for statistical purposes. All questions are optional and your answers will remain completely anonymous.

Question 29:

How do you identify your gender? (Choose all that apply. This list is intended to be representative rather than comprehensive. If you identify with other terms, you are welcome to include them in the additional box below). *[Required question].*

Respondents may select any of the following options, and must select one:

- *Male*
- *Female*
- *Transgender*
- *Two-spirit*
- *I do not identify with a gender*
- *Prefer not say*
- *Enter your own gender identities*

Respondents who choose “enter your own gender identities” are presented with a text box, where they can enter whatever they wish.

Text Box: _____

Question 30:

In what year were you born? Please answer with four digits (example 1992]. If you prefer not to say, please leave it blank. *[Optional question]*.

Respondents are presented with a four-digit text box. If they prefer not to say, they can leave it blank.

Text Box: _____

Question 31:

What is the highest level of education you have completed? *[Required question]*

Respondents must select one of the following options:

- *Less than high school*
- *High school*
- *Some college or university*
- *College diploma*
- *University degree*
- *Post-graduate degree*
- *Prefer not to say*

Question 32:

What is the first language that you learned as a child, which you still read and understand? *[Optional question]*.

Respondents are presented with a text box. If they prefer not to say, they can leave it blank.

Text Box: _____

Question 33:

Which of the following statement best describes how long you have lived in Alberta? *[Required question]*

Respondents must select one of the following options:

- *Less than five years*
- *More than five years*
- *I was born here and I never left*
- *I do not live in Alberta*
- *Prefer not to say*

Question 34:

Do you identify as a First Nations, Métis or Indigenous person? *[Required question]*

Respondents must select one of the following options:

- *Yes*
- *No*
- *Prefer not to say*

Question 35:

What are the first three characters of your postal code? If you prefer not to say, please leave it blank.
[Optional question]

Respondents are presented with a text box. If they prefer not to say, they can leave it blank.

Text Box: _____

Question 36:

D7. Finally, which of the following best describes your household income before taxes or other deductions (your “gross” household income)? *[Required question]*

Respondents must select one of the following options:

- *Less than \$50,000*
- *\$50,000 to \$100,000*
- *\$100,000 to \$150,000*
- *Greater than \$150,000*
- *Prefer not to say*