

November 22, 2023

**The Honourable Devin Dreeshen**  
Minister of Transportation and  
Economic Corridors  
Twin Atria Building  
4999 98 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T6B 2X3

**The Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides**  
Minister of Education  
228 Legislature Building  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

Dear Ministers Dreesen and Nicolaides:

**Re: Access to Bus Driver Road Tests**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Grande Yellowhead Public School Division, I am reaching out to advocate for a review and revamp of how prospective school bus drivers can access a timely and proximal road test, particularly for those jurisdictions who reside in rural locations.

As you know, there is a significant shortage of school bus drivers across North America. Particularly in rural areas, school divisions and bus driver contracting organizations are challenged to recruit individuals interested in part-time, split-shift work. Once a candidate has been hired and trained, they must successfully complete their road test before they can drive a school bus. From recruitment and training to successful testing, prospective bus drivers are not earning a wage. The longer the delay to beginning employment, the more difficult it is to inspire interest in the job.

The road tests are managed by the Ministry of Transportation and Economic Corridors, and currently, there is a significant shortage of testing times available. While GYPSD has been very successful in the recruitment and training arena (27 new hires within the past 18 months), the shortage of testing times has hindered the number of spare drivers available to support daily route operations, charters, or overall route expansion in preparation for the eligibility criteria change for September 2024.

More Class 2 testing spots need to be made available in public testing locations. Edson, where our transportation facility is located, does not have the required road infrastructure for commercial road tests. Therefore, GYPSD trainees must travel to a public testing *site*. As of the time of writing this letter, there are no upcoming openings in Hinton, Whitecourt, or Edmonton for a road test.

Large urban school bus contractors, who can test from their yards, usually have several test appointments for their drivers each week. These are not accessible to the public.

Commercial Road Tests (under TEC) have made it more difficult to have school bus drivers tested for licensing under the current model. Previously, when the examiners were independent contractors, it was not difficult to book a road test promptly including some evenings and weekends.

We hope that your two ministries can work together to expedite a solution that will address the constraints the current testing system imposes on school jurisdiction transportation departments.

Sincerely,

*Dale Karpluk*

Dale Karpluk (Nov 23, 2023 08:48 MST)

Dale Karpluk, Board Chair (Jasper)

Cc: Board of Trustees  
C. Lewis, Superintendent of Schools  
MLA Long  
MLA Getson  
Alberta School Boards Association  
Public School Boards' Association of Alberta

