

**For Immediate Release**

## **Local School Boards Confronted with Unexpected Costs for Student Transportation**

**November 15, 2018 (Brockville)** - The [Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario](#) (CDSBEO) and the [Upper Canada District School Board](#) (UCDSB) have recently presented to their trustees the annual year-end financial statements for 2017-2018. The main focus and area of concern for both English language school boards was the significant increase in costs related to the provision of local and rural student transportation, which resulted in both boards reporting deficits for 2017-2018.

The unexpected increases to student transportation is the result of a recent imposed arbitration order. The order follows a review of the business contract between bus owners and the organization that coordinates transportation for both school boards, which is the service consortium known as the [Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario](#) (STEO).

The CDSBEO has posted its year-end financial statements that included an overspending in transportation for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2018 amounting to \$5.8 million. Trustees with the UCDSB also received a report about finances for the 2017-2018 budget year, presenting an overspending in transportation of \$9.5 million related to unexpected increases in the cost to provide busing for students.

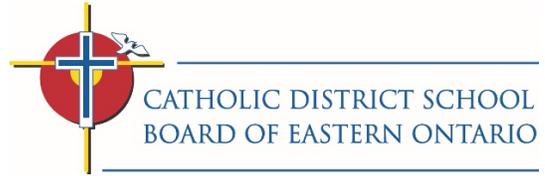
Both school boards are very concerned about the cost increase for what is regarded as an essential service for students who qualify for daily transportation to and from school.

“Trustees in the Upper Canada District School Board are quite concerned about the higher unexpected costs of transporting our students to school,” stated Jeff McMillan, Chair of the UCDSB.

Todd Lalonde, Chair of the CDSBEO, added, “Both school boards have taken steps to manage transportation costs this year. We are hearing from the public that we have gone as far as we can to cut costs in this area.”

“Given these sudden and troubling financial developments, both school boards are working collaboratively in seeking the guidance and support of the Ontario Ministry of Education. These are unexpected circumstances,” commented McMillan. “It has never been more important for us to work closely with the Minister of Education, her office, and our local members of provincial parliament, since these costs will impact programs and services offered by both boards of education.”

Both Chairs of the Boards spoke about their positive working relationship with the current provincial government, especially knowing that there is a genuine understanding about rural realities among provincial cabinet ministers.



“We are relying upon their deep understanding about the needs of families in rural Ontario to assist us with issues like this,” said Lalonde. “Our ongoing dialogue is essential and concrete support from the province is necessary for both school boards to continue to offer quality education programs in Eastern Ontario.”

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