

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

[Part of the School Trustee Handbook](#)

Decarbonizing transportation offers great opportunities to reduce GHG emissions. To foster active, safe and sustainable travel, school districts have developed transportation plans and initiatives to electrify school buses and encourage active transportation.



Stay tuned for the up-to-date
version of this resource!

This document is undergoing fact checks and updates...
you will be able to access the new version in September 2025.

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Electrify School Buses

Electric school buses have zero tailpipe emissions, meaning they would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect children and other community members from diesel pollution. Other benefits of electrifying school buses include demonstrating climate action and reducing the operational cost for the school districts in the long term.

[Click here for more on electrifying school buses](#)

Encourage Active Transportation

School districts play an important role in supporting and promoting active modes of transportation. Active transportation plans and initiatives, such as developing educational resources and investing in infrastructure, can encourage students' engagement in active transportation for health and environmental benefits.

[Click here for more on active transportation](#)

Promote Anti-idling

Passenger vehicles emit air pollutants responsible for [7,700 premature deaths in Canada](#) yearly and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. This pollution is especially hard on children with asthma.

Idling is a significant and unnecessary component of this air pollution: One [study by NRCAN](#) found that idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel and produces more CO₂ than restarting your car. School districts need to do everything they can to prevent idling around schools:

School boards can:

- ☐ encourage anti-idling (check out this [Guide](#) for steps and resources) and,
- ☐ ask your local government to implement and enforce anti-idling bylaws (check out our [Anti-Idling Handbook](#) for more)

Examples:

- ☐ [City of Windsor Anti-Idling By-Law](#)
 - ☐ Includes “Work with school boards and individual schools to educate students, staff and parents about the effects of idling at schools.”
- ☐ No-idling zone outside- [Ecole Gron Morgan and Corpus Christi schools](#)

Resources:

- ☐ [Turn It Off: It's Your Turn](#)
- ☐ [Idle-Free Schools Toolkit for a Healthy School Environment](#)

Encourage carpooling

The main idea of carpooling is the sharing of car journeys so that each person does not need to drive their own vehicle. Carpooling is a sustainable option for traveling to and from school while reducing the number of cars on the road and producing fewer pollutants.

Examples

- Toronto District School Board Climate Change Plan ([p. 52](#))
 - Encourage carpooling and participation in “25 or less campaign”, reducing the number of private vehicles at school drop-off and pick-up times to under 25.
 - Incentivize carpooling for staff
- [Carpool Week Challenge](#)- Hamilton Wentworth Catholic School Board District

Join “Get on the Bus” to support free transit for youth

Youth transit can help address issues of accessibility, social equity, and climate change and support young people

The Get on the Bus supports communities by providing free transit to youth - [check out the website to learn more and get in contact](#)

Example:

- [Kingston’s High School Transit Pass Program](#)
 - Provides free transit passes for all high school students along with on-bus orientation, fostering their ability to use public transit.
 - The program has a significant impact on ridership: ridership from youth increased from 28,000 in 2012 to 60,000 annually in 2016. Moreover, the program succeeded in increasing the travel independence of youth and let them access more activities such as recreational programs, volunteer opportunities, work and sports.

Tips from Dan Hendry, Co-founder [Get on the Bus](#):

- Look at the value propositions of different groups in the community, try to rationalize the return on investment because the communities are under pressure of funds. But there are so many spillover benefits

if we get a return on this investment that the community can actually see it, far beyond what we are paying for.

- Use the resources (i.e. story, council reports) to show the community the value. Find the points that people can enter in or relevant to them.

Provide EV charging stations

EV charging stations are intended to support teachers, students, staff and community members to commute to and from school. The standardized charging infrastructure at school supports the community in making environmentally sustainable transportation choices.

Example:

- [Electric vehicle charging stations across the Waterloo Region District School Board](#) (WRDSB)
 - Funding from the Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program (ZEVIP)- covered up to 50% of the installation costs.
- [Electric car charging stations](#) -Ottawa Catholic School Board(OCSB)
 - The first station was installed at the Board office last August, and there are plans to install stations at seven OCSB high schools in 2022.
 - More stations will be installed if budget permits at the two new elementary schools opening in the Fernbank and South Nepean areas.