



2024-2025

# Transportation Accountability Report



Report to the Board of Education  
School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay)  
Reviewed January 14, 2025



# School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) Transportation Accountability Report 2024-2025

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# School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) Transportation Accountability Report 2024-2025

## District Information

School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) respectfully honours and acknowledges that we live, work, and learn on the unceded traditional territories of the Ktunaxa peoples and the chosen home of the Rocky Mountain Métis. The footprint of our School District is fully contained within the Ktunaxa Nation, including the communities of ʔaq'am and Yaq'it ʔa·knuq'i'it.

School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) (the “District”) is located in the southeast corner of the province of British Columbia. Our region features spectacular mountain scenery, clean lakes, forested hillsides, and an abundance of wildlife. With an approximate population of 36,000, most people live in the communities of Cranbrook, South Country (Baynes Lake, Grasmere, Elko, Galloway and Jaffray), Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford.

The District serves approximately 5,900 students in 16 neighbourhood schools (10 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 4 secondary schools); Kootenay Discovery School (KDS); Kootenay Education Services (KES); and the Kootenay Learning Campus (KLC), the Continuing Education program. Approximately 2,577 students are transported on 25 bus routes in and around Cranbrook and the Elk Valley.

Supporting Educational Priority Two, students will feel welcome, safe and connected to their school and community, the Transportation Department provides financial transportation assistance to parents, whose children are eligible to receive transportation, where bussing is not available. This enhances the connection to these families' schools and to the District. The District also strives to create a welcoming and safe inclusive environment and currently has two accessible bus routes in Cranbrook and one accessible route in the Elk Valley.

A transportation agreement has been developed in collaboration with both of our Indigenous communities to adjust our school bus routes to enhance the service level for our Indigenous students. The Transportation Department is active in the creation and implementation of the transportation plan with respect to the BC Tripartite Education Agreement (BCTEA), providing extracurricular access to our on-reserve Indigenous students.





As part of the District's commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, the District operated two electric buses during the 2023/24 school year. An additional two electric buses have been added to the District fleet for the 2024/25 school year.

The Transportation Department's priorities are student safety, fiscal responsibility, ridership, school viability and parent satisfaction.

The Transportation Department is guided by the District's Mission Statement which is to empower every student to graduate with dignity, purpose and options and is also specifically guided by the [Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures](#).



## Transportation Highlights

-  All bus drivers have Level One (1) first aid certification (renewed every three years);
-  The District has purchased [Transfinder](#) software and will implement this program in the 2025/2026 school year. Transfinder is a leader in logistics software. The platform is built on mapping and geographic information system (GIS) technology to deliver superior location intelligence and logistics management solutions. The Transportation Department did not have any specialized software until now and this is the first critical step in modernizing the District's transportation operations.
-  The District operates 25 bus routes (12 in the Cranbrook Area, 13 in the Elk Valley) that carry 2,577 students (2023/24 – 2,425) safely over 2,652 kilometers each day with an average one-way rider time of 56.5 minutes. The District also carries 29 Students from School District 93;
-  Communication regarding bus route changes, delays or cancellations is done through School Messenger. School Messenger is an effective communication tool that allows the District to send emails and SMS messages directly to parents for real-time transportation updates.

## Transportation Data

The following tables provide valuable information on the District's overall transportation operations:

<b>Transportation Fact Summary</b>	<b>Elk Valley</b>	<b>Cranbrook</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of students transported	1,490	1,087	2,577
Number of transportation routes	13	12	25
Number of buses	20	15	35
Route kilometres traveled each day	1,307	1,345	2,652
Number of field trips per year (2022/23)	786	1,125	1,911
Number of field trips per year (2023/24)	704	1,156	1,860
Fuel costs per kilometre (\$/km)	0.75	0.75	0.75
Bus Field Trip Charge Back	\$34.00/Hr	\$34.00/Hr	\$34.00/Hr

Table 1-Fact Summary

<b>Transportation Department Staff</b>	<b>Elk Valley</b>	<b>Cranbrook</b>	<b>Total</b>
Director of Operations	-	-	1
Assistant Managers of Operations	1	1	2
CUPE Support Staff (10 hours/week)	1	1	2
CUPE Mechanics	1	2	3
Mechanic Apprentice	1	-	1
CUPE Regular Bus Drivers	13	12	25
CUPE Spare Bus Drivers	6	6	12

Table 2-Staffing



## Fleet Management and Operations

The Board of Education of School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay) continues to apply for provincial grants for new buses each year. The current fleet is comprised of 31 diesel buses and 4 electric buses. The electric buses are being utilized on longer routes in the District to reduce fuel costs.

The District has joined the Association of School Transportation Services of British Columbia (ASTSBC) group to help sell generated Carbon Tax credits. The District generated 17 carbon credits in 2023, with an approximate value of \$400 each. ASTSBC has been able to function as an aggregator on behalf of all BC schools and school districts operating electric buses. This has allowed ASTSBC to manage the data input, collection and selling of credits. The District has saved approximately \$28,883 in diesel, and 54,370 kg in CO2 emissions with our 2 electric buses (compared to 2 diesel buses). With the additional electric buses purchases, this amount is expected to increase in 2025.

## Fleet Maintenance

District CUPE Mechanics perform the bus fleet maintenance. Scheduled maintenance includes lube and inspection every 1,500 kilometers and oil changes every 10,000 kilometers.

## Transportation Budget

The total Transportation Department budget is \$2,396,599 (2023/24 - \$2,336,782). The breakdown of budget expenditures is shown in the chart below:

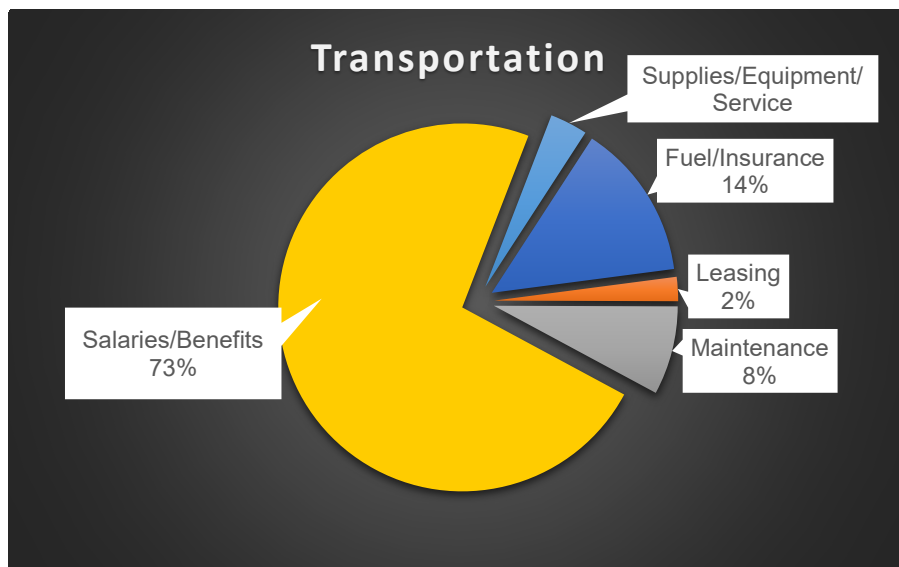


Chart 1-Transportation Budget

## District Transportation Challenges

The disruption to Amy Woodland Elementary School after the fire on June 30, 2024, had an immediate and significant impact on students and staff in Cranbrook. There were over 240 students in the Amy Woodland Elementary catchment area that were displaced due to the fire in



addition to a total of 40 teaching, exempt, and CUPE staff. This created increased barriers for these students now requiring transportation to school and after-school child care.

The full impact of this fire is uncertain at this time and the District is working closely with the Ministry on possible solutions and next steps to ensure the future needs of Cranbrook students are met. The Transportation department remains committed to providing transportation to the impacted students in this area, where required.

The District is facing financial challenges in managing transportation expenses (capital, fuel, and maintenance costs). For example, a standard diesel bus tailored to our needs in our geographic region, has an average cost of approximately \$335,000 whereas electric buses cost approximately \$520,000 (\$381,000 after ZETF grants) that were significantly in excess of amounts received to purchase buses. Starting in 2024/25, the Ministry has started providing full funding for our new bus purchases which has alleviated significant capital cost pressures the District was facing with purchasing new buses.

The Transportation Department is contemplating a shift in the school charge cost for transportation requests. Currently, fuel and driver's time is being accounted for but maintenance costs are not. The impacts of this change are being considered at a District level to avoid any unintended consequences, such as reducing a school's ability to provide transportation for field trips.

Accommodating student accessibility is a priority for the Transportation Department, however this is challenging in the Elk Valley. Therefore, as part of the 2023/24 minor capital plan, the District applied for funding for an Accessible Bus in the Elk Valley. This accessible bus is now operating in Elkford.

The driver recruitment plan launched in 2023, has been notably successful, resulting in an adequate number of available drivers (full time and casual).

## Summary

The Transportation Department of the District continue to support the Priorities identified in the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning through the transparent allocation of resources for instruction, efficient and effective communication, and understanding that all employees of the District are responsible for the success of students.