

April 25, 2022

Dear Mayor Masters and the Regina City Council,

I am writing to you, as a Regina Public School Board Trustee and parent to ask the City of Regina to please consider offering free public transportation to all children in Regina up to age 18. Not only would free transit help children all over Regina get to school, but it would also help thousands of children in Regina live more equitable lives with accessible transportation.

Most of our high school students are expected to get to school on their own. Some walk, some drive (if they have that luxury of affording gas and having a car available every day), and some take the city bus! But, there are many children who find it difficult to get to school. A 31 day youth bus pass costs \$64 a month. Multiply that x 10 months and that is an extra \$640 a year. This is a cost that many families cannot afford.

Over the last year, I have spoken with many principals in our schools. Free transit would greatly help our students all over the city! It would lessen financial pressure on families living in poverty, reduce stress for children and it would help ensure children living in or near the poverty line more easily get to their jobs, get to their appointments and succeed in life. Free city transit would greatly help families.

I have just completed a research report entitled "Poverty in Regina Public Schools" (attached). In Regina approximately 20% of children live in poverty. That places approximately 4800 of our Regina Public School students living in poverty. One of the key recommendations for the City of Regina in this report to improve the lives of families and children living in poverty is to provide free public transportation for all children up to age 18.

I will include an excerpt from this report: "Accessible transportation is not the only challenge for our students in poverty, since their families face a mountain of crippling expenses. The high cost of rent, high monthly utility bills (power, heat, water, internet, phone), high (skyrocketing) cost of groceries, childcare, transportation and clothing all add financial pressure."

Free public transportation for all children up to age 18 would lift one major barrier for those students living in poverty to succeed in life. These students would have better school attendance and in turn, these students would improve their graduation rates and success in life.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Cummings Truskowski, Regina Public School Board Trustee and Vice-Chair

Cc: Cheryl Stadnichuk – Ward 1
Bob Hawkins – Ward 2
Andrew Stevens – Ward 3
Lori Bresciani – Ward 4
John Findura – Ward 5
Daniel Leblanc – Ward 6
Terina Shaw – Ward 7
Shanon Zachidniak – Ward 8
Jason Mancinelli – Ward 9
Landon Mohl – Ward 10