

Walking School Bus Pilot Project – Fact Sheet

Section 1: General Information about the WSB Pilot

1. What is a Walking School Bus (WSB)?

A Walking School Bus (WSB) is a new and innovative way for students to get to and from school as a group. Children will be walking to school with an adult supervisor, a WSB leader is screened, trained and managed by the Service de transport de Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services (STWDSTS). This program is being made possible through the support of Green Communities Canada and the Government of Ontario.

2. What are the benefits of a WSB?

A WSB is an opportunity for children to learn important pedestrian safety skills. WSBs can decrease the number of parents driving children to school, which means reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality around the school. Students who participate in this initiative, will increase their levels of in physical activity, supporting their physical and mental health, and ensuring they are ready to learn each day.

3. Who is leading this project?

Walking School Busses are going to be tested in a few neighbourhoods as part of a pilot program. The project is led by the School Travel Coordinator at Service de transport de Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services. The project is part of the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Active and Safe Routes to School (WDGASRTS) Committee, which includes staff from the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB), Wellington Catholic District School Board (WCDSB), Service de transport de Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services (STWDSTS), the City of Guelph and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health.

4. When will this project occur?

There will be a few phases for this pilot study:

| PHASE | LAUNCH DATE | DETAILS |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Feasibility Study Phase | Currently in Effect | The feasibility study will be conducted to better understand which schools in this region will be participating in the pilot project with a goal of determining two hubs (a hub is a community with both a public and a catholic school that share similar walking boundaries) |

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| | | locations for the pilot study moving forward. |
| Phase 1 Pilot | April 2019- June 2019 | Two routes at each school, for a total of four routes will be successfully implemented for Phase 1. |
| Phase 2 Pilot | September 2019 - June 2020 | Four routes at each school, for a total of eight routes will be successfully implemented for Phase 2. |

5. What does it cost?

The program is free for the students that are interested in participating.

6. Who is responsible for the safety of the students?

Each WSB leader is employed by STWDSTS. Leaders will have to undergo training, and each leader will have to supply a criminal reference check (including Vulnerable Sector screening), their Level C First Aid/CPR (including Epinephrine Auto-Injector) certification, and further references.

Section 2: Feasibility Study Phase

7. What will happen during the feasibility study phase?

Surveys will be distributed to the three selected hubs to better understand the barriers that students face when commuting to and from schools. The data will be used by the WDGASRTS Committee to select the two communities to participate in this project. The candidate schools will then be approached to secure their commitment to pilot project.

Section 3: Phase 1 & 2 Pilot Project

8. Is registration required for students to participate in this initiative?

Yes, for students to participate, their parents/guardians must register them with STWDSTS. Registering will allow the WSB leader to gain required information about the students such as their age, name and any critical medical information.

9. What route will the WSB follow?

The route at your school will be established by STWDSTS and will be designed to assist students from residential areas within the existing walk zone for each school (1.6 km for students in JK- Grade 6 for the UGDSB & WCDSB). The WSB will be scheduled to arrive no later than 10 minutes before the bell, so that the students will not be late for attendance.

10. Where will students meet the WSB?

There will be designated routes created for students and that information will be provided to the families and the staff at the school. Students will be expected to join at their designated pick-up locations. The WSB cannot wait for late arrivals, and special stops (such as door-to-door pick-ups) will not be accommodated.

11. Can students bring their bikes, roller blades, or skate boards on the WSB?

Unfortunately, this is prohibited, as this will cause a higher risk of injuries.

12. Can parents walk with the WSB?

This is discouraged, as there is a paid leader in charge of the students during their walk to school.

13. What will happen if there is inclement weather?

In severe weather events, STWDSTS may cancel the operation of the walking school bus. Cancellation of the walking school bus will be communicated to the leaders, and parents / families of those assigned to the bus, as well as the school.

Section 4: If school is not selected for the Pilot after the Feasibility Study

14. What happens if a school is not chosen for the WSB Pilot Project after the Feasibility Study?

If a school is not chosen for the WSB pilot after undergoing the feasibility study, then the WDGASRTS Committee will seek other opportunities to collaborate in support of active school travel.

Section 5: Further information

Further information will be released in the next couple of months on the Service de transport de Wellington – Dufferin Student Transportation Services' website.