

Resolution 5A

SCHOOL BUS USE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (PASSED)

- ⇒ County of Antigonish
- ⇒ Town of Antigonish

WHEREAS the benefits of public transportation are widely acknowledged, and there is insufficient access to public transportation to the residents of small, rural towns and municipalities across Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS the feasibility of pooling existing and underutilized resources, such as school buses, has been studied in various locations across Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS the utilization of school buses has been successful in providing access and meeting the need for public transportation in communities in Quebec and South Carolina; and

WHEREAS school buses have the potential to provide a low-cost, convenient method of connecting residential communities and popular service points across large geographical areas, based on their existing geographical coverage; and

WHEREAS the coordination of services would require cooperative effort on behalf of municipalities, local school board and the Province;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM write the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Members of the Legislative Assembly requesting that the Province work with municipalities and regional school boards in exploring the integration of school buses into community public transportation.

Response from:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

RESPONSE:

The Province agrees to explore the potential for integration of school buses into community public transportation, along with representatives from the province's Regional School Boards and Municipalities.

Several concerns exist regarding such integration of use, the most important of these being student safety. The responsibility for student safety rests with the school boards from the time a student boards a school bus. This responsibility is the same as when a student is present on school property, where the general public does not have unrestricted access.

The discussions on use of school buses for municipal transportation will be limited to times where they are not being used to transport public school students.

We look forward to discussing options that may benefit all stakeholders.