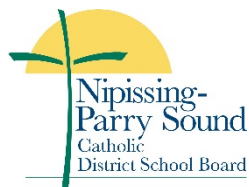




Nipissing - Parry Sound



Annual Report 2021-2022

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To all stakeholders for the resilience displayed in managing COVID-19.

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TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Start up

Similar to the previous year, the 2021-2022 school year kicked off with a Transportation Plan to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Our continued partnerships with our Member Boards and the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit were extremely valuable in ensuring consistent messaging and compliance with mandated measures.

Operating Highlights

This report will touch on key performance indicators outlined in the Business Plan. The analysis in relation to the pandemic, and pre-pandemic years identifies some interesting trends and workload impacts.

Financial Highlights

The Ministry of Education appears to be on the cusp of rolling out a new funding formula for student transportation that is needs based rather than enrollment dependent. We are looking for an equitable system that recognizes our local needs and the unique challenges of our demographics. Our innovative service delivery model is both economical and effective given its unique development to cover extensive distances over vast rural areas with light ridership counts.

Strategic Highlights

The Business Plan developed in 2020 is due for review. The events of the past two years have delayed this process. Notwithstanding the challenges of the past two years, the work in moving forward in meeting the goals and objectives has continued. These targets are always paramount in approaching new issues and incorporating them and their solution into a long-term vision of our organization and its service delivery model.

"If you want to steer your organization down the road to change, you have to keep looking forward, through the windshield. By the time opportunities appear in the rear- view mirror, it's too late to take advantage of them."

Todd Whitaker, Leading School Change

Looking Forward

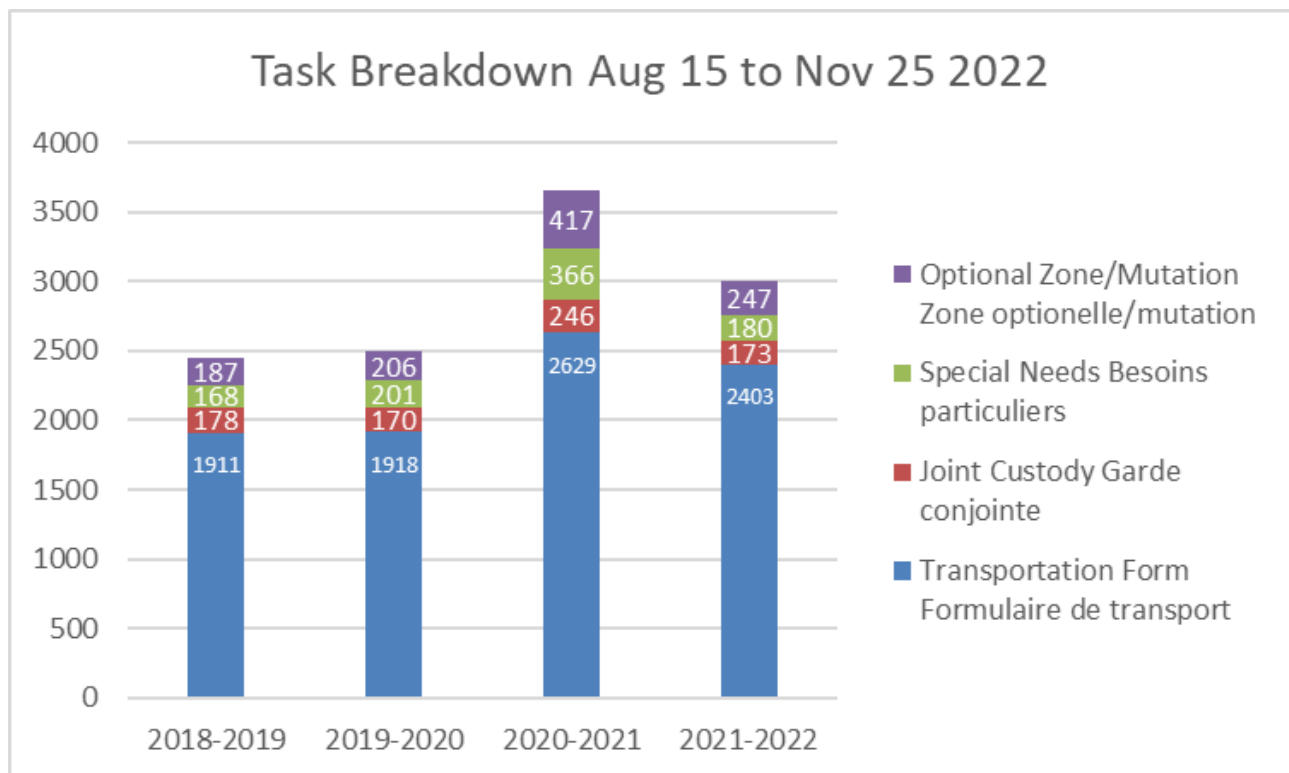
As we come through to the other side of the Pandemic, we will refocus on previously established goals while absorbing the lessons learned and applying our newly acquired knowledge, skills and abilities to the challenges ahead.

R.C.J. (Chuck) Seguin
Executive Director

START UP AND ANNUAL WORKLOAD

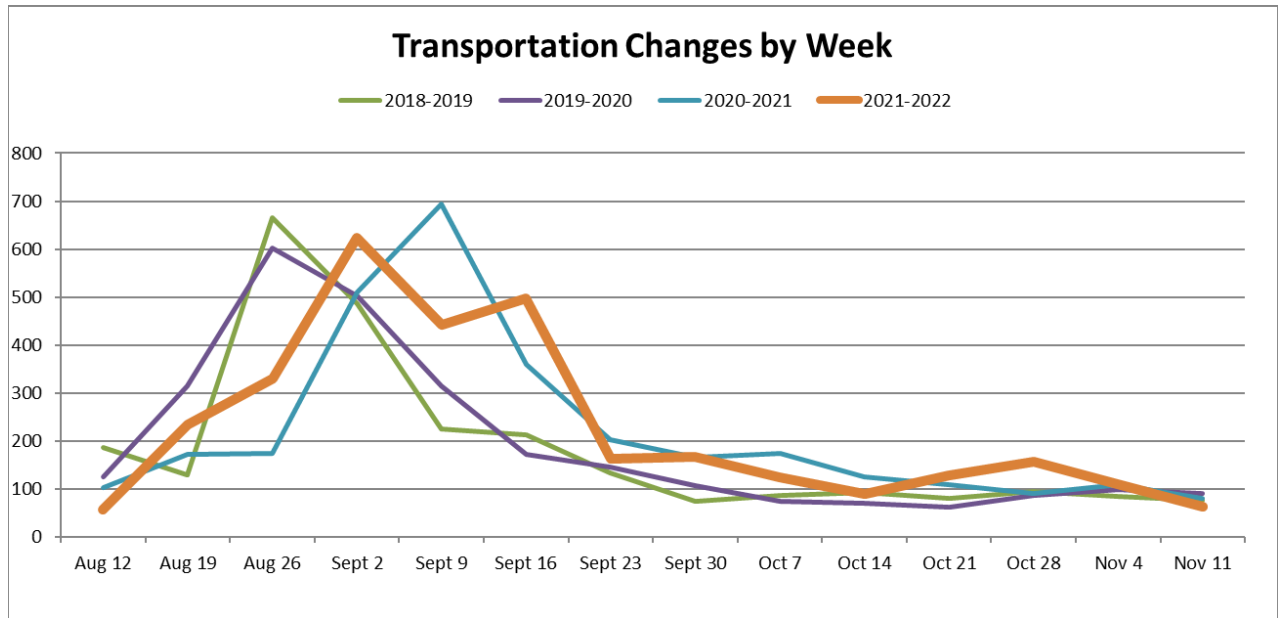
A critical time of year for everyone is the period immediately prior to and first few weeks of school. As shown in the charts below, the spike in activity at the NPSSTS during that time represents a large volume of the work for staff. In fact, the 2021-2022 received 3,000 requests from August 15 to November 25. This represents 43.6% of the annual workload for staff.

In comparison to previous years, there was a decrease from the previous school year but a continued upward trend in workload from 2018-2019. Categorized by type of request, out of zone, special needs transportation and joint custody requests returned to pre COVID-19 numbers. Transportation Form requests however did increase despite a dip in the level from the previous year. This increase may be attributable to fewer students opting for virtual schooling while those who had were returning to in class education, with the exception of Grade 12 students who had graduated.

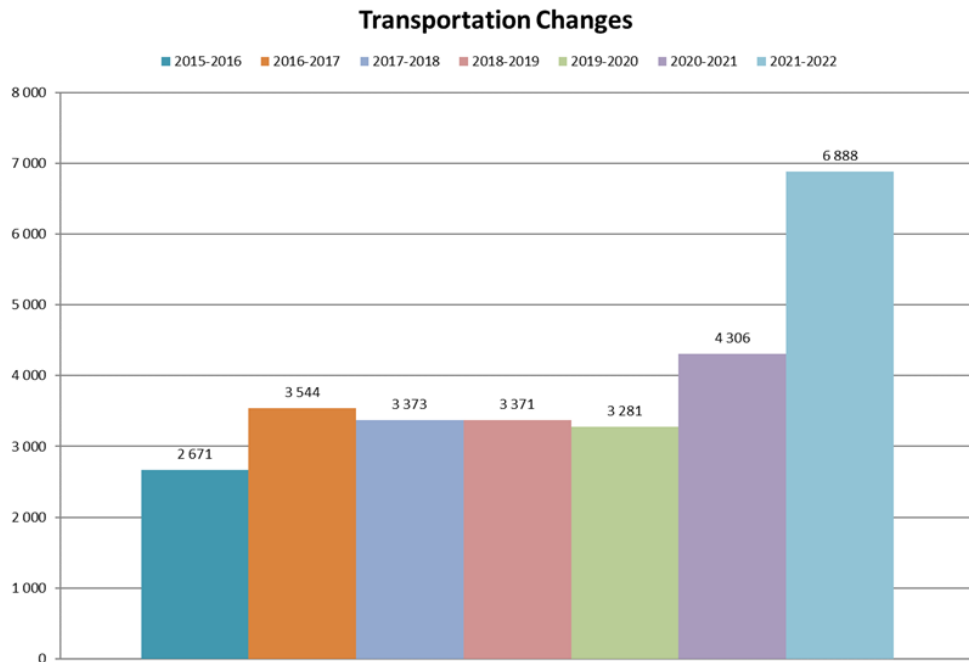


In August 2022, the NPSSTS release preliminary transportation information to parents and guardians two weeks sooner than in previous years. The impact on the start of the spike is evident. There was longer but sustained upward curve, marked by approximately 100 fewer requests at its apex than in the previous year. The return to a level below 200 requests per week occurred at approximately the same time as the previous year. The end result is

earlier feedback from parents and guardians, an quicker response to the issues, and a more manageable workload.



The overall annual workload saw a considerable increase in 2021-2022. Again, this may be due to a number of factors including students returning to in class learning along with increases in enrollment in some Member Boards.



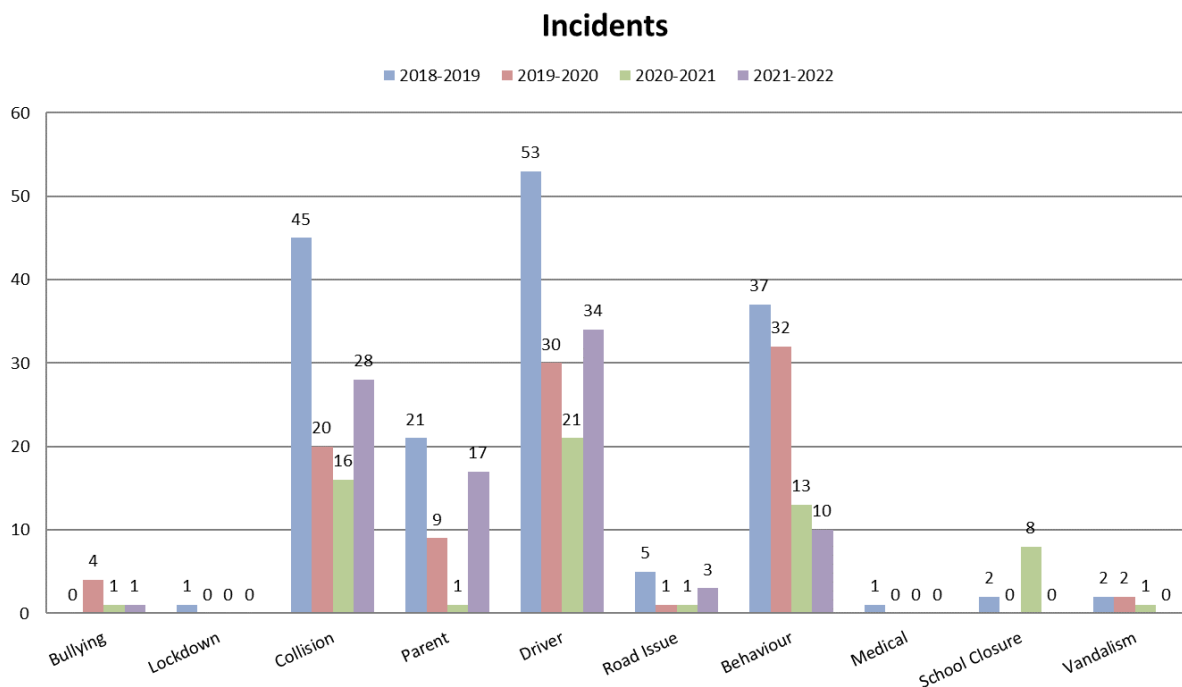
OPERATOR AUDIT

The 2021-2022 Operator Audit was conducted with two focuses: compliance with the Transportation Agreement, and compliance with the Pandemic Addendum to the contract. The audit consisted of a site visit to each bus company where needed and a thorough review of their respective operations and documentation. The audit mirrors the Transportation Agreement, in that (5) areas of the company's operation are reviewed and analyzed in light of the transportation company's contractual obligations to the NPSSTS.

Areas assessed in the Operator Audit are Operational Management, Communication, Training, Document Control and Safety. All (13) of the operators under contract with the NPSSTS met the requirements outlined in the Transportation Agreement with very few (and minor) cited deficiencies. In general, the operators under contract with the NPSSTS are aware of and in compliance with the transportation agreement. All operators have developed safety and training programs that meet the above requirements. With respect to the Addendum, all operators were in compliance including the allocation of special payments for pandemic response.

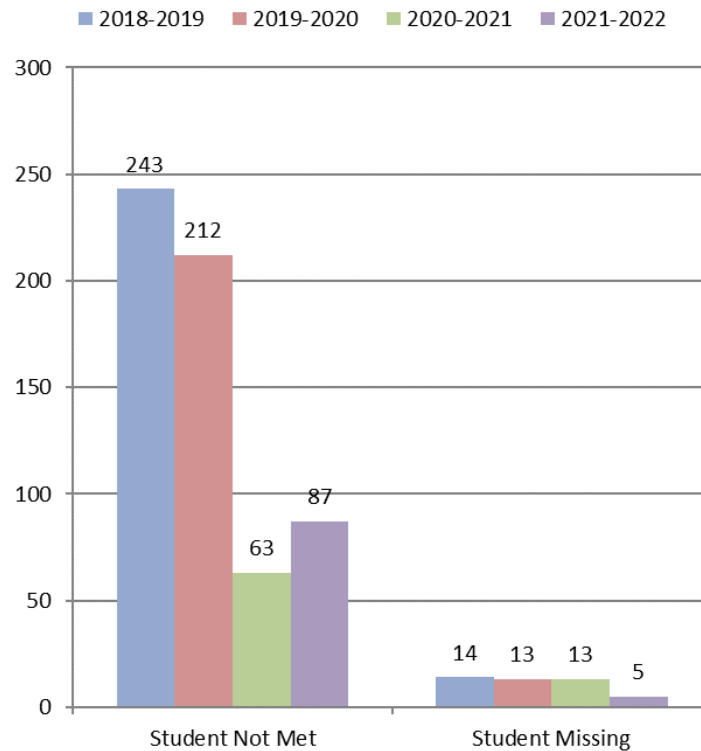
SAFETY AND OTHER INCIDENTS

For comparison purposes, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 data is incomplete due to the COVID-19 school closures in the spring. The data is presented for information purposes only at this time. As such, the illustrations below suggest a trend of declination but no conclusions should be drawn with respect to levels for the past year.



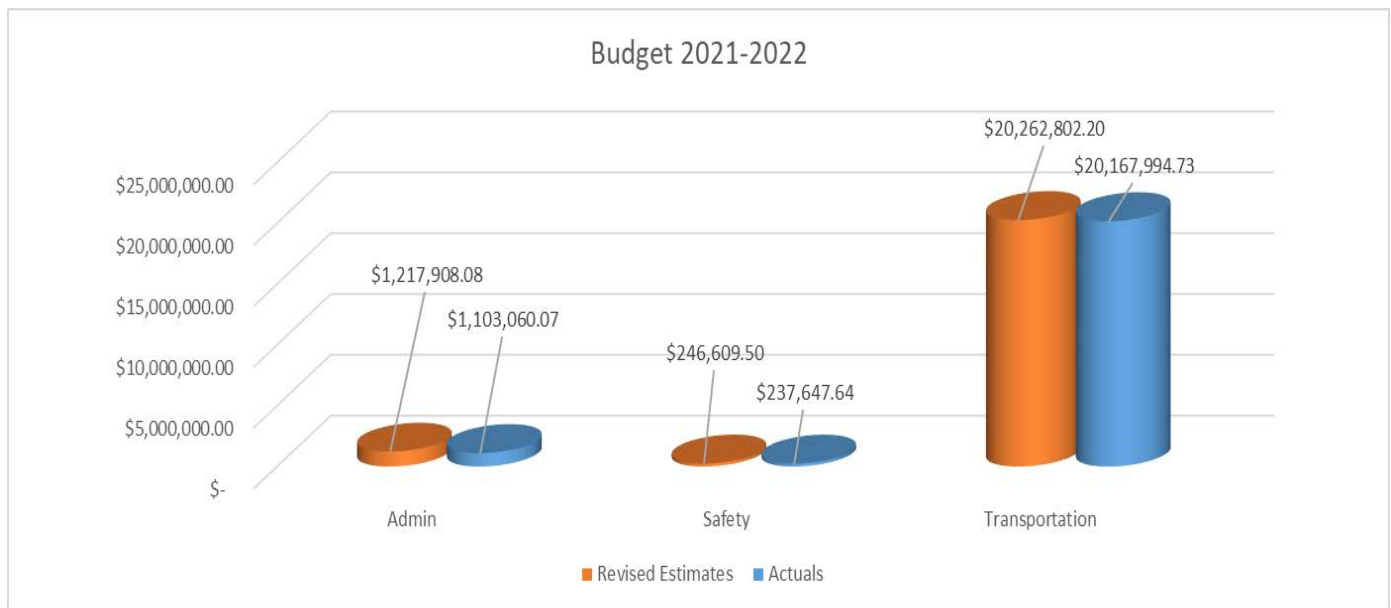
Particular attention is always given to the most vulnerable students. Guideline and contractual changes beginning in 2018-2019 with respect to vulnerable students being met at their stop and the Tag the Bag program have proven effective in raising the diligence on the part of drivers and school staff, when considered against data from previous years.

JK/SK Incidents

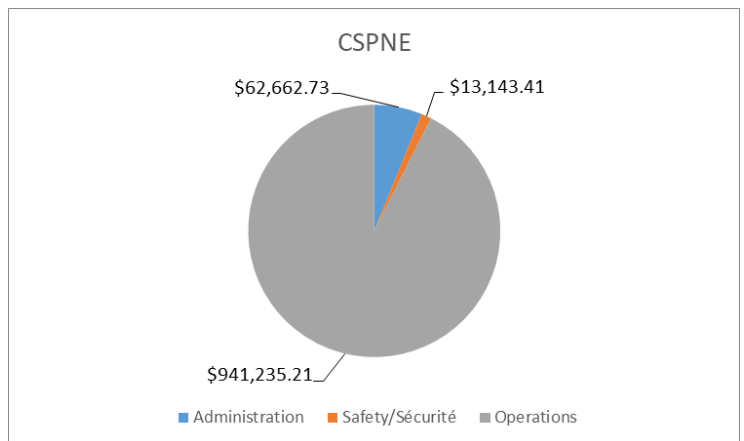
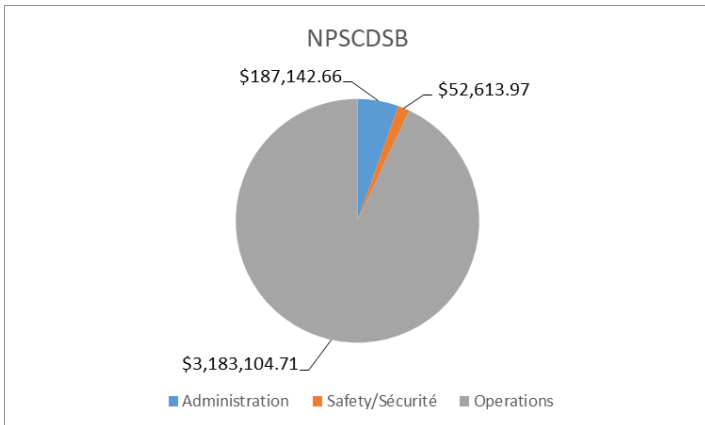
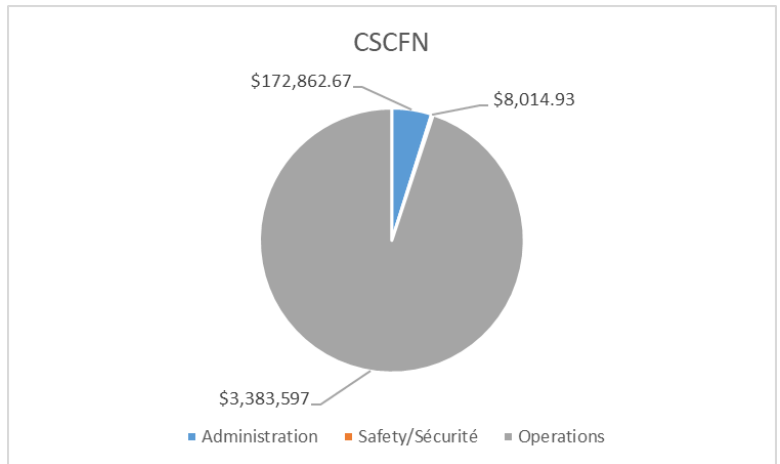
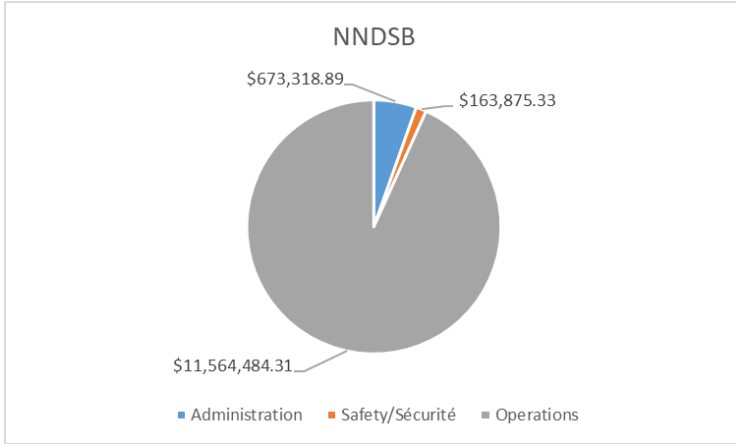


FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The NPSSTS budget is comprised of three distinct categories: Administration, Safety, and Operations. Administration is comprised of salaries, benefits and all other necessary expenditures required for the basic function of the NPSSTS office and systems. Such expenditures includes annual and capital purchases of equipment and services. Safety includes some administrative expenses but is based primarily on expenses linked to commissionaires at transfer sites and bus monitors. The bulk of the budget is Operations, which includes all transportation costs paid to the 13 contracted operators in the Nipissing-Parry Sound Districts. The chart below provides the breakdown of expenditures in each category.



Administrative costs are divided amongst the member Boards based on the ridership percentage of each Board, and are established on October 31st of each school year. Some safety expenditures are specific to individual Boards while others are shared, again based on ridership of a specific bus or use of a transfer site. The transportation expenses are at times Board specific or are shared based on the ridership on any specific route. The following charts provide a breakdown by Member Board.



The table below provides year-end figures with respect to expenditures versus Ministry Funding, including HST.

	NPSCDSB	CSCFN	CSPNE	NNDSB	Total-Member Brds
Ministry Funding per Revised Sec 9	\$3,751,212	\$3,793,684	\$1,001,894	\$12,497,191	\$21,043,981
Surplus / Deficit from Funding	\$63,232	-\$24,380	-\$101,131	-\$860,226	-\$922,505
% Difference from Funding	1.59%	-0.60%	-9.51%	-6.49%	-4.13%

Special funding for COVID-19 related costs was received. These expenditures included additional wages to drivers for enhanced cleaning of buses, the purchase of cleaning materials, supplies and Personal Protective Equipment, and other pressures on the budget related to our response to the pandemic. The Member Boards submitted reports in compliance with the specific funding agreement.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

The financial statements have been audited by Baker Tilly SNT LLP, independent external auditor appointed by the Consortium. The Audit Report can be found on the NPSSTS website along with other key documents, in accordance with the *Broader Public Sector Accountability Act*.

PROGRESS REPORT – BUSINESS PLAN

The 2020-2022 Business Plan has been the roadmap to some key areas in our service delivery. However, there have been a few roadblocks and detours along the way. The pandemic has impeded our work in many of these areas and they remain works in progress. However, we continue to take steps toward completing the objectives.

As we move forward from the pandemic, the task of revising the Business Plan will accelerate. There are some key elements in student transportation that will require attention as part of the planning process. Changes to the student transportation funding formula are on the horizon.

Added to that is a series of reports that have been developed in partnership with Consortia and the software providers. Believed to be replacing the previous Ministry Survey, these reports are the tools to be used for the collection and sharing of data from Ministry for administrative purposes and mandated transportation simulations. They will also serve consortia in day-to-day analysis and local simulation exercises. The full impact of this work and related accountability are yet to be known at this time, but the direction being taken is clear. Organizational goals and objectives must be designed to reflect these upcoming changes. Business practices, timelines and the related systems between Member Boards and the NPSSTS will be impacted, emphasizing the need for strong partnerships and sound data exchange processes.

The vision, mission and values that adopted in 2019 may still be appropriate:

MISSION

All eligible students will have safe, reliable, equitable and responsive transportation to/from school at a cost that demonstrates good stewardship of resources.

VISION

The NPSSTS will deliver on its Mission with a student/parent focus, in partnership with its member boards, bus company operators, and all other stakeholders in a manner that reflects our organizational values.

VALUES

SAFE

RELIABLE

EQUITABLE

RESPONSIVE

Improvements have been made in many areas. The earlier release of transportation information to parents/guardians has improved and leads to earlier resolution of issues and the improved timeliness of service delivery. From an organizational standpoint, a less stressful start-up period improves the work environment.

During the course of 2021-2022, the NPSSTS increased its presence on social media. Staff have developed and are maintaining an organizational Facebook page as well as an Instagram presence, taking every opportunity to provide critical information to followers. This includes cancellations and delays of routes.

The BusPlanner© Notifications module will further allow parents, guardians and other subscribers to receive e-mail and/or text message notifications with respect to the routes specified in their profile. The consortium has been testing the system and anticipates its release and implementation in the upcoming months. Comments received from current subscribers during the test were overwhelmingly positive and we look forward to implementing this tool to better inform our stakeholders.

Our goal is to update the current Business Plan for the 2023-2024 school year. The destination may not have changed, but course corrections are always necessary. The key is to keep moving forward toward the target.

"In business, the idea of measuring what you are doing... picking the measurements that count... like Customer Satisfaction ...and Performance. You thrive on that."

-Bill Gates

CONCLUSION

The past school year can best be described as a continued effort to remain flexible and adjust to the environment. Working with our Member Boards and health officials ensured compliance with safety measures, while safeguarding everyone involved in student transportation. They all met the changes with a level of understanding and cooperation that facilitated smooth transitions.

Notwithstanding, the NPSSTS kept pace with the work required for today and into tomorrow. Planning for change is a constant, allowing us to be equipped to deal with them as they are implemented.

NPSSTS staff and its many stakeholders and partners have consistently adapted to the evolving environment, particularly evident over the past two years. We remain committed to continuing this work and pursuing other targeted changes to achieve the most effective service delivery.