



# Ministry of Education Effectiveness & Efficiency Follow-up Review

## **Niagara Student Transportation Services**

E&E Follow-up Review

January 2013

Final Report

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The English version is the official version of this report. In the situation where there are differences between the English and French versions of this report, the English version prevails.

À noter que la version anglaise est la version officielle du présent rapport. En cas de divergences entre les versions anglaise et française du rapport, la version anglaise l'emporte.

## **Executive Summary**

This report details the findings and recommendations of an Effectiveness and Efficiency Follow-up Review (“E&E Review”) of the Niagara Student Transportation Services Corporation (hereafter “NSTS” or “the Consortium”) conducted by a review team selected by the Ministry of Education (hereafter the “Ministry”).

The first E&E Review report was issued in February 2010 (the original report) and this follow-up report is intended to document changes made by the Consortium to date. This report is designed to provide an overall assessment of the Consortium and outline the incremental findings and recommendations that were particularly noteworthy.

The E&E Review evaluates four areas of performance – Consortium Management, Policies and Practices, Routing and Technology use and Contracting practices – to identify whether the Consortium has implemented any best practices and recommendations from the original report; and to provide incremental recommendations on opportunities for improvement. The evaluation of each area was then utilized to determine an overall rating for the Consortium that will be used by the Ministry to determine any in-year funding adjustments that are to be provided.

### **Original review summary**

The original review of Consortium Management found that the Consortium had exceptionally strong governance, risk management, planning, HR and financial management practices. Indeed, a number of the managerial practices deployed by the Consortium, particularly the close integration of managerial policy and practice, constituted new best practices that can be drawn upon by the sector.

The review of Policies and Practices noted that considerable effort and care had been expended in the development and documentation of policies and procedures for the Consortium. In particular, the Consortium’s Bell Time Management policy and active community involvement spoke to the effectiveness of the Consortium’s data use, planning and safety promotion activities. The noteworthy improvements that occurred from the inception of the Consortium to the original review were made possible through the collaborative work of the Member Boards and NSTS. The primary area for improvement in the original review was the full implementation of policies and procedures that were either recently adopted or were in draft form at the time of the review.

The review of the Consortium’s Routing and Technology found that NSTS had done an excellent job of establishing its route planning software as both a tactical and strategic

planning tool. In particular, the review noted that the Consortium's current system reporting and data analysis program was a model that could be drawn upon by the sector. Given that the Consortium's current bell time structure influences the use of alternative routing strategies, the primary area for improvement was the targeted use of bell time management procedures to improve both seating capacity and asset utilization.

The Consortium's Contracts were complete with all transportation service providers and NSTS was seen to have highly effective contract management policies, frameworks and processes in place. Key recommendations with respect to Contracts included a modification to the bus operator contract to bring it in line with current practices, and the development of an implementation plan for the competitive procurement of operator services.

As a result of the initial review, the Consortium was rated **Moderate-High**

### **E&E Follow-up Review summary**

Even though the original E&E Review found NSTS to be one of the leading Consortia in the Province, this follow up review has found that the Consortium has undergone some significant changes since the original E&E Review including but not limited to:

- The establishment of an operator procurement policy, which articulates the Consortium's objectives with respect to procurement and aligning with the Broader Public Sector (BPS) Procurement Directive to have all student transportation contracts competitively procured and implemented by September 2013;
- The Consortium has successfully competitively procured 30% of home-to-school routes in Niagara, and is set to procure the remaining 70% by September 2013;
- Undertaken a comprehensive review and restructuring of its policies and procedures manual;
- NSTS has transitioned to BusPlanner;
- NSTS has directly influenced the enhancement of the *BusPlanner* software to provide unique reporting capabilities to its staff and the schools it serves; and
- The Consortium continues to embrace the use of data in the analysis of opportunities for improvement as evidenced in the results, including a large reduction in the number of buses required and substantial cost savings while maintaining a high level of service for the students.

The Consortium has implemented all the recommendations made in the original report and has also kept up with best practices in the sector, by adopting appropriate policies and practices. The Consortium’s actions and policies clearly demonstrate the Consortium’s commitment to, and focus on, continuous improvement. NSTS continues to demonstrate its leadership in many operational areas, as the Review team identified several unique best practices that can be replicated across the Province. The team spirit and cooperative and respectful relationships that exist between staff members, between the Consortium and its member Boards as well as between the Boards, provide the foundation on which the Consortium’s success is based and sets them up to continue to achieve significant successes in the future. The Follow- up Review has once again found the Consortium to be one of the leading consortia in the Province and a model to be emulated by others throughout the Province.

**Funding Adjustment**

As a result of this review of current performance, the Consortium has been rated **High**. Based on this evaluation, the Ministry will provide additional transportation funding to narrow the 2012-2013 transportation funding gap for the District School Board of Niagara as determined by the formula in Table

The detailed estimated calculations of disbursements are outlined in section six of this report and summarized below.

District School Board of Niagara	\$1,674,611
Niagara Catholic District School Board	N/A

(Numbers will be finalized once regulatory approval has been obtained.)



# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

### **1.1.1 Transportation Reform**

The Ontario Ministry of Education has introduced significant education reforms over the past six years. One of the focuses of their reforms is in support of school board management processes and systematic review of school board business operations. Student transportation was the first “line of business” to undergo such a reform since 2006-07.

### **1.1.2 Follow-up Review**

The Ministry has established a multi-phase approach to review the performance of consortia (collectively the “E&E Reviews”) across the province. NSTS was reviewed originally in Phase 3 of the E&E Reviews completed in January 2010.

To encourage continuous improvement, the Ministry has decided to provide follow-up reviews. The follow-up review was triggered at the request of the Consortium as they communicated they had made significant progress since the original review. The purpose of the follow-up E&E Review is to assess the extent of the Consortium’s progress and review evidentiary working papers to support that progress. The report therefore focuses on the incremental changes from the original E&E Review conducted in 2010.

From 2006-07 to the end of 2011-12 school year, the Ministry has provided a total of \$32M in additional funding to the reviewed boards.

## **1.2 Scope of Deloitte Engagement**

Deloitte was engaged to lead the E&E Review Team and serve as the management consultants on the E&E Review Team. Deloitte’s overall role is as follows:

- Lead the planning and execution of E&E follow-up reviews for each of the transportation consortia to be reviewed in Phases five, six and seven (currently in phase five);
- At the beginning of each review, convene and moderate E&E Review Team planning meetings to determine data required and availability prior to the review;

- Review Consortium arrangement, governance structures and contracting procedures;
- Incorporate the results of the routing and technology and policies and practices reviews completed by MPS into the final report; and
- Prepare report for each consortium that has been subject to an E&E Follow-up Review in Phases five, six and seven. The target audience for the report will be the Ministry, the Consortium, and its Member Boards. Once finalized, each report will be released to the Consortium and its Member Boards.

### **1.3 Methodology and team used to complete E&E Reviews**

#### **1.3.1 Team & Methodology**

The composition of the team and the methodology used for this follow-up review are the same as in the initial 2010 E&E Review. Please refer to the first report for a detailed description of the team and methodology. The same Evaluation Framework and Assessment Guide were also applied in the follow-up review to ensure consistency in evaluation. For each of the four sections examined in terms of Effectiveness and Efficiency, the existing operations have been analysed based on observations from fact (including interviews) in order to document progress incremental to the 2010 E&E Review. Observations which have been assessed as best practice are documented as accomplishments of the Consortium.

Areas for additional improvement have also been noted. In situations where there has been no incremental progress related to the recommendations from the 2010 E&E Review, those topics remain unaddressed in this report i.e., we have not reported on items that have remained at the same level of effectiveness and efficiency as the original report. The related recommendations from the 2010 report continue to be valid. Incremental accomplishments or areas for improvement are used to revise, as appropriate, the E&E assessment for each of the four sections. The criteria of an effective and efficient Consortium are summarized below:

#### ***Consortium management***

- Distinct entity focused on providing student transportation services for member boards
- Well defined governance and organizational structure with clear roles and responsibilities

- Oversight body exists with the mandate to provide strategic directions to Consortium management on the provision of safe, effective and efficient transportation service to support student learning
- Management has communicated clear goals and objectives of the Consortium and these are reflected in the operational plan
- The Consortium takes a comprehensive approach to managing human resources
- Well established accountability framework reflected in the set up and operation of the Consortium including documentation of terms in a Consortium Agreement
- Operations are regularly monitored and performance continually improved
- Financial processes ensure accountability and transparency to member boards
- A budgeting process is in place ensuring timely preparation and monitoring of expenses
- All of the Consortium's key business relationships are defined and documented in contracts
- Governance committee focuses only on high level decisions
- Organizational structure is efficient and utilizes staff appropriately
- Streamlined financial and business processes
- Cost sharing mechanism is well defined and implemented
- The Consortium has appropriate, documented procedures and confidentiality agreements in place governing the use of student data and ensuring compliance with Freedom of Information and Privacy legislation

### ***Policies and Practices***

- Safety programs are established for all students using age appropriate training tools
- Development of policies is based on well defined parameters dictated by the strategic goals of the governance structure and Consortium Management operating plans

- A mechanism is defined to allow for regular review and consideration of policy and practice changes to address environmental changes
- Established procedures allow for regular feedback on the impact that current and proposed policy and procedural changes would have on costs, safety and service levels
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of policy expectations is conducted to ensure their continued relevancy and service impacts
- Enforcement procedures are well defined and regularly executed with timely follow-up
- Harmonized transportation policies incorporate safety, operational and cost considerations
- Position-appropriate delegation of decisions to ensure the efficiency of decision making
- Operational alternatives to traditional practices are considered and implemented where reasonable and appropriate
- Service levels are well defined, considerate of local conditions, and understood by all participating stakeholders
- Policy and practice modifications for students with special needs are considered in terms of both the exceptionality and its service and cost impacts

### ***Routing and Technology***

- Transportation management software has been implemented and integrated into the operational environment
- Key underlying data sets (e.g., student and map data) are regularly updated:
- Responsibility and accountability for the updates is clearly defined and performance is regularly reviewed
- Coding structures are established to facilitate scenario modeling and operational analysis of designated subgroups of students, runs, schools, etc.
- Procedures are in place to use software functionality to regularly evaluate operational performance and model alternatives to traditional practices

- Disaster recovery plans and back up procedures are established, performed regularly, and tested
- Operational performance is regularly monitored through KPI and reporting tools are used to distribute results to appropriate parties
- Technology tools are used to reduce or eliminate manual production and distribution activities where possible in order to increase productivity
- Training programs are established in order to increase proficiency with existing tools
- Route planning activities utilize system functionality within the defined plan established by Consortium management

### **Contracts**

- Contracts exist for all service providers, including taxi, boat and/or municipal transit services and parent drivers
- Contracts are structured to ensure accountability and transparency between contracted parties
- All operator contracts are complete with respect to recommended clauses
- Compensation formulae are clear
- Operator contracts are in place prior to the start of the school year
- Procurement processes are conducted in line with the Consortium's procurement policies and procurement calendar
- The Consortium has laid the groundwork for, or is actively using, competitive procurement processes
- Proactive efforts are made to ensure operator contract compliance and legal compliance
- The Consortium collects and verifies information required from operators in contracts
- The Consortium actively monitors and follows up on operator on-the- road performance using random, documented route audits or their equivalent

- The Consortium avoids using School Board owned vehicles

### 1.3.2 Funding adjustment

The Ministry will use the results of the E&E Reviews and Follow-up Reviews to inform any future funding adjustments. Only School Boards that have undergone E&E Reviews are eligible for a funding adjustment. Table 1 below illustrates how the Overall Rating will affect a Board’s transportation expenditure-allocation gap.

**Table 1: Funding Adjustment Formula**

Overall Rating	Effect on deficit Boards <sup>1</sup>	Effect on surplus Boards <sup>1</sup>
High	Reduce the gap by 100% (i.e. eliminate the gap)	No in-year funding impact; out-year changes are to be determined
Moderate-High	Reduce the gap by 90%	Same as above
Moderate	Reduce the gap by 60%	Same as above
Moderate-Low	Reduce the gap by 0%	Same as above
Low	Reduce the gap by 0%	Same as above

The Ministry has announced, through memorandum 2009:B2 dated March 27, 2009, that effective from the 2009-2010 school year, in addition to the funding adjustments made based on the overall E&E rating, for any consortium not achieving a high rating in Routing and Technology, a negative adjustment of one percent to a Board’s transportation allocation will be made to recognize potential efficiencies through ongoing routing optimization and technology use. To acknowledge sites whose systems are already operating in an efficient manner, the adjustment will only apply to School Boards that have not achieved a “high” rating in Routing and Technology from the Effectiveness and Efficiency reviews. School Boards that achieve a “high” rating in the Routing and Technology area in future reviews will be exempt from the reduction in the subsequent year.

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to Boards that have a deficit/surplus on student transportation (see Section 6 – Funding Adjustments)

### **1.3.3 Purpose of report**

This Report serves as the deliverable for the E&E Review conducted on the Consortium by the E&E Review Team during the week of November 14, 2012.

### **1.3.4 Material relied upon**

Refer to Appendix 3 for a list of documents that the E&E Review Team relied upon for their review. These documents were used in conjunction with interviews with key Consortium staff, outside stakeholders, and key policy makers to arrive at the assessment and rating of the Consortium.

### **1.3.5 Limitations on the use of this report**

The purpose of this Report is to document the results of the E&E Review of the consortium. The E&E Review is not of the nature or scope so as to constitute an audit made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Therefore, as part of this E&E Review, Deloitte has not expressed an opinion on any financial statements, elements, or accounts to be referred to when reporting any findings to the Ministry. Additionally, procedures used by the E&E Review Team are not intended to disclose defalcations, system deficiencies, or other irregularities.

## **2 Consortium Management**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Consortium Management encompasses the management of the entire organization providing student transportation services. The analysis stems from a review of the four key components of Consortium Management:

- Governance;
- Organizational Structure;
- Consortium Management; and
- Financial Management.

Each component has been analyzed based on information provided by the Consortium and from information collected during interviews. The analysis included an assessment of areas requiring improvement that were informed by a set of known best practices identified during previous E&E Reviews. These results are then used to develop an E&E assessment for each component. The E&E assessment of Consortium Management for the Consortium is as follows:

**Consortium Management – Original E&E Rating: High**

**Consortium Management – New E&E rating: High**

### **2.2 Governance**

Governance refers to the way in which an organization is directed and controlled. Establishing administrative structures and processes that facilitate, monitor, measure and improve effective business management are primary responsibilities of a governance structure. Three key principles for an effective governance structure are: accountability, transparency, and the recognition of stakeholders. In order to respect these three principles, it is important that the governance body of the organization be independent of the team responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization.

#### **2.2.1 Original recommendations**

The Consortium did not have any recommendations in this area in the original E&E Review completed in January 2010.



### **2.2.2 Incremental progress**

The Consortium Governance structure is similar to that which was in place during the original E&E Review, and remains consistent with best practices.

## **2.3 Organizational structure**

An optimized organizational structure can promote effective communication and coordination which will enable operations to run more efficiently. The roles and responsibilities within the organization should be well defined. This will lead to operational efficiencies by ensuring tasks are not being duplicated and issues raised can be addressed effectively by Consortium management. Ideally, the organization is divided functionally (by department and/or area); all core business functions are identified; and there is an appropriate allocation of general management and operational responsibility.

### **2.3.1 Original recommendations**

The Consortium did not have any recommendations in this area in the original E&E Review completed in January 2010.

### **2.3.2 Incremental progress**

The Consortium's organizational structure is similar to that which was in place during the original E&E Review, and remains consistent with best practices.

## **2.4 Consortium Management**

Consortium Management focuses on the operational aspects of the organization. This includes ensuring accountability of staff, focusing on continual improvement through operational planning, and risk management by having appropriate contracts and agreements in place to clearly define business relationships.

### **2.4.1 Original recommendations**

#### ***Make all efforts necessary to comply with the procurement policies***

The Consortium's procurement policies state that the Consortium is to follow the procurement policies of its Member Boards. Discussions with Consortium management and members of the Board of Directors indicated that, since the Consortium does not use a competitive process to procure bus operator services, it is currently in violation of its (and its Member Boards') procurement policies. It is therefore recommended that the

Consortium make all efforts necessary to ensure that it is in compliance with its own procurement policies.

## **2.4.2 Incremental progress**

### ***Procurement Policies***

The Consortium has a governance approved policy on operator procurement. This policy articulates the Consortium's objectives with respect to procurement and was updated to reflect the Broader Public Sector (BPS) Procurement Directive to have all student transportation contracts competitively procured and implemented by September 2013.

The Consortium has undertaken a number of competitive procurements since the original E&E Review:

- As a result of a competitive procurement in 2010, Georef Systems Limited was selected as the Consortium's new software vendor.
- NSTS completed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for thirty (30%) percent of the home to school routes in Niagara. These competitively procured contracts were implemented in September 2012. A Fairness Commissioner for this procurement was engaged via a single source process to ensure the integrity of the procurement process.
- The Consortium completed a Request for Tender (RFT) for Charter Transportation Services to support schools and board-sponsored charter services within Niagara to achieve the best value.
- An RFT for Taxi Services was also completed by the Consortium, to support NSTS, schools and boards.
- In addition, the Consortium completed an RFP for Fairness Commissioner Services to support the competitive procurement of the remaining 70% of home to school routes in Niagara, for implementation in September 2013.

According to the NSTS operator procurement policy, NSTS will have all contracts for student transportation services competitively procured by September 2013. At the time of the review, the Consortium was in the process of achieving this goal with a draft RFP to competitively procure transportation services on the remaining 70% of routes and a fairness commissioner engaged to oversee the process.

### ***Purchase of service agreements/support services***

NSTS purchases software from Georef Systems Ltd. Georef was engaged by NSTS following a competitive procurement process. The Consortium has executed a standard software licensing agreement with Georef Systems Ltd.

### ***Insurance***

An audit was conducted on the Consortium's policies and actual practices relative to the OSBIE (Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange) Best practices program for school board transportation Consortia. NSTS achieved a perfect score in this audit.

In addition, a new Consortium OSBIE insurance policy took effect with a two percent increase in liability, effective January 1, 2012.

### ***Long Term and short term planning***

The Consortium's annual strategic and operational planning process continues to follow the Integrated Business Planning Cycle (IBPC) identified in the policy on business planning and reporting. The strategic plan identifies objectives to be achieved each month of the school year.

The Consortium's strategic goals for 2012-13 include:

- The renewal of the Consortium Agreement;
- Harmonized Board Policies and Procedures prior to August 31, 2013; and
- Continuing the implementation of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) regulations and preparing for the January 2014 deadline to implement student travel plans for students who have specialized student transportation needs.

NSTS also has an updated governance approved strategy (short term and long term), for dealing with the future funding impacts resulting from declining enrolment projections. In addition, the Consortium has created a 10 year numerical forecast of enrolment projections, and the adjusted funding projections in each year - for District School Board of Niagara (DSBN), Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) and NSTS.

### ***Key performance indicators (KPIs)***

The policy on KPIs has been reviewed and identifies the KPIs that are to be monitored by Consortium management and staff and also identifies the frequency with which they are to be reported. Listed in Table 2 below are the KPIs identified in the policy.

**Table 2: KPIs tracked by the Consortium and frequency of reporting**

<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Management Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Board of Directors</b>
Budget Control Schedule – Actual to Budget	Monthly	Monthly	Annually
Total Number of Students Transported	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Total Number of Students Transported Hazard and Exceptions	Twice/Year	Monthly	Annually
Annual Cost Per Student Transported	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Students with Ride Times Less than 15 Minutes	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Students with Ride Times Between 16 - 30 Minutes	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Students with Ride Times Between 31 – 45 Minutes	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Students with Ride Times Between 46 – 60 Minutes	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Students with Ride Times Greater than 61 Minutes	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Number of Shared Routes Between Boards	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Number of Shared Runs Between Boards	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Number of Single Tiered Runs	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Number of Double Tiered Runs	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Number of Triple Tiered Runs	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Number of Routes that Service Multiple Schools	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Students with Ride Times Less than 15 Minutes	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually
Total Contracted Routes by operator	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually

Key Performance Indicator	Staff	Management Advisory Committee	Board of Directors
Total Contracted Routes by Vehicle Type	Twice/Year	Annually	Annually

**2.4.3 Accomplishments**

It is recognized that the Consortium now demonstrates the following best practices in addition to the best practices outlined in the original report:

***Procurement policies***

The Consortium has clear procurement policies in place and is in compliance with those policies. The availability of these policies ensures that procurement methods are fair and transparent. On the transportation services procurement, this transparency and fairness is also ensured by their use of a Fairness Commissioner to oversee the procurement processes. The success of the various competitive procurement processes run by the Consortium since the original E&E review is a testament to the quality of its procurement policies.

***Purchase of service agreement/support services***

The Consortium has executed a standard software licensing agreement with Georef Systems Ltd, its new software vendor. All other purchase of service agreements remain in effect and in line with best practices.

***Insurance***

The Consortium has reviewed its insurance requirements and increased its liability effective from January 2012. Insurance coverage is essential to ensure the Consortium and school Boards are each suitably protected from potential liabilities.

***Long term and short term planning***

The strategic planning process is repeated regularly, outlines the Consortium’s strategic initiatives for the upcoming year, and is frequently reported to the Consortium’s stakeholders. This process drives continuous improvement within Consortium operations, gives staff a broader view of the organization’s contributions to stakeholders, and contributes to a corporate culture of continuous self-assessment and improvement.

### ***Key Performance Indicators***

The Consortium continues to track a suite of relevant KPIs and uses these performance indicators in its communication with stakeholders. The Consortium's tracking of KPIs allows it to monitor and track its own operational performance, to communicate Consortium success with stakeholders and to identify areas of operations that need attention or improvement.

## **2.5 Financial Management**

Sound financial management ensures the optimal use of public funds and also ensures the integrity and accuracy of financial information. This includes appropriate internal controls and a robust budgeting process that has a clearly defined planning and review calendar that promotes accountability and sound decision making.

Financial management policies capture roles and responsibilities, authorization levels, and reporting requirements to ensure that a proper internal financial control system is in place for the Consortium. These policies should also clearly define the financial processes of the Consortium in a way that ensures appropriate oversight without impinging on efficiency.

### **2.5.1 Original recommendations**

The Consortium did not have any recommendations in this area in the original E&E Review completed in January 2010.

### **2.5.2 Incremental progress**

#### ***Audit***

Each of the Consortium's Member Boards is audited on an annual basis. The Consortium has now contracted an external auditor to audit its financials annually.

## **2.6 Results of E&E Review**

This Consortium has been assessed as **High**. The Consortium has exceptionally strong governance, risk management, planning, HR and financial management practices. The Consortium exhibits continuous improvement and continues to set an example against which Consortium Management across the sector can be compared. The team work in this Consortium is especially noticeable and plays a strong part in their success to date.

## **3 Policies and Practices**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Policies and practices examine and evaluate the established policies, operational procedures, and the documented daily practices that determine the standards of student transportation services. The analysis for this area focused on the following three key areas:

- General Transportation Policies & Practices;
- Special Needs and Specialized Programs; and
- Safety and Training Programs.

The observations, findings, and recommendations found in this section of the report are based on onsite interviews with the Superintendent of Business and Area Transportation Officers, and on an analysis of presented documents, extracted data, and information available on the Consortium's website. Best practices, as established by the E&E process, provided the source of comparison for each of these key areas. The results were used to develop an E&E assessment for each of the key components and to determine the overall effectiveness of the Consortium's Policies and Practices as shown below:

**Policies and Practices – Original E&E Rating: Moderate-High**

**Policies and Practices – New E&E Rating: High**

### **3.2 Transportation Policies & Practices**

The development of clear, concise, and enforceable policies, practices, and procedures are essential elements of an effective and efficient transportation system. Well defined and enforced policies establish the level of services that are to be provided while practices and procedures determine *how* services will be delivered with the constraints of each policy. The harmonization of policies and consistent application of all policies, procedures, and practices ensures that service will be delivered safely and equitably to each of the Member Boards.

This section evaluated the established policies and practices and their impact on the effective and efficient operation of the Consortium.

### **3.2.1 Original recommendations**

#### ***Refine the student coding and boundary posting for hazard transportation***

While interviews with Consortium staff indicate that there is appropriate understanding of why an area is considered to be a hazard, the refinement of the coding structure (for long-term hazard conditions) will help to facilitate data analysis and reporting.

#### ***Review the appeal process***

Although an appeal process has been developed, it does not include specific timelines that must be followed by either the originator of the appeal or the parties charged with reviewing and responding to the original concern. While the Consortium has indicated that it has self-imposed its own timeline in support of good customer service, establishing clear timelines for each step of the process will help to ensure that each appeal is considered in a similar manner and that each party fully understands their responsibilities

#### ***Review dual custody procedures***

As the Consortium continues to review and refine its policies and procedures, it should consider the level of variability in a student's pick-up and drop-off schedule that will be allowed. This will help to support both safety and continued efficient planning.

### **3.2.2 Incremental progress**

#### ***Hazard boundary posting and coding***

The transition to *BusPlanner* route planning software (see discussion in the Routing and Technology section) enabled and supported accomplishment of the original recommendation.

Eligibility areas (based on the presence of hazardous conditions) are now posted within the routing software eliminating the need for a secondary method of recording and tracking. The rationale for all hazard exceptions is recorded in the comment section supporting the retrieval of rider information for reporting and analysis. This also ensures that all staff has a consistent understanding of why an exception was granted.

The conditions for hazard eligibility are clearly established in Eligibility Policy 003. Examples of the conditions that are considered in determining the eligibility for transportation include:

- Volume of traffic;



- Number of traffic lanes students are required to cross;
- Posted road speeds;
- The availability of signalized intersections or crosswalks;
- The availability of crossing guards;
- The presence of physical barriers;
- The age of the student; and
- Historical designations.

The policy also establishes the responsibility for NSTS to review hazard designations. This is supported by settings within the routing software that default hazard area eligibility to walk or other codes without the intervention of the routing coordinators. A review is conducted on an annual basis to ensure that hazard area designations are current. The use of a Hazard Review Form ensures that all areas are evaluated in a consistent manner across the Consortium's service area.

These refinements support the analysis of data and the subsequent understanding and reporting of students receiving the hazard-based service by school, age group, or Board. These enhancements to the documentation and operating practice fully meet the intentions of the original recommendation.

### ***Appeal process***

In addition to the original policy for the handling of concerns, NSTS has developed an internal process to ensure that responses are both timely and comprehensive. A sample was provided to demonstrate how the process has been implemented both internally and at the Superintendent's level.

Once a concern is received, NSTS staff is expected to acknowledge the receipt of the concern within a 24 hour period. Based on the nature of the concern, NSTS communicates a probable timeline for an answer or resolution to the originator of the concern. Each step in the process is fully documented for future reference in the event that a similar appeal is submitted. The process for the investigation of the concern is comprehensive and considers the following:

- The reason for the appeal including ineligibility and concerns regarding hazards, stop location or distance, bus capacity, or ride time;
- The verification of information within the student's record;

- A review of policies, procedures and guidelines;
- Exceptional circumstances;
- The length of time for which an exception is requested, and
- A protocol for the development of a response that includes all the pertinent information and data and the potential cost or service impacts if an appeal is granted.

This process fully meets the expectation of the original recommendation ensuring that responses are not only timely, but that outcomes are policy based resulting in fair and equitable decisions.

### ***Dual custody arrangements***

A comprehensive Joint Custody policy has been developed that provides the guidelines for consideration and approval. To limit the variability in a student's pickup or drop-off schedule, the policy clearly states that a consistent alternating schedule must be presented for review prior to the service being scheduled and approved. Additional constraints or considerations include:

- Requiring that both addresses are in the home school boundary;
- That each of the home addresses are within eligibility distances for transportation;
- Confirming there is available capacity on each of the buses; and
- That the safety of the student is considered both while being transported but also at each of the drop off addresses.

To meet the safety concerns, parents must meet with NSTS and the school to discuss the student's ability to manage an alternating schedule. This also includes the implementation of a safety plan for each address in the event that student arrives to a home where a parent is not present. If this occurs, the parents must agree to accept all responsibility for the transportation of their student to the correct address. This process clearly places the onus for obtaining and maintaining alternate address service on the parents and meets the intentions of the original recommendation.

### **3.2.3 Accomplishments**

It is recognized that the Consortium now demonstrates the following best practices in addition to the best practices outlined in the original report:

#### ***Policy refinement***

The original E&E recognized NSTS and its Member Boards for the development of comprehensive policies and procedures clearly designed to support their goals. The review of new or updated policies and procedures for this follow-up review once again indicates that NSTS and its Member Boards fully understand the need for, and support the creation and enforcement of robust and comprehensive operating policies and procedures. The thoroughness evident in the development and implementation of these important documents continues to represent a best practice.

### **3.3 Special Needs Transportation**

#### **3.3.1 Original recommendations**

Clarify and document all special needs parameters and training requirements:

The Consortium should work with operators to establish a training curriculum for the most common and most challenging exceptions that must be planned for. This document would provide all stakeholders with a single point of reference on how special needs services will be planned, expectations regarding service delivery, and the knowledge and skills that will be transferred to bus drivers to effectively manage the transportation challenges for these students.

#### **3.3.2 Incremental progress**

Planning transportation for special needs students can present additional challenges and must consider a multitude of factors including the unique physical and corresponding equipment needs of the students such as wheelchair lifts, special restraints, and harnesses. Additional factors include providing support for students with emotional needs or medically fragile students who require assistance or medical intervention. Training specific to serving these students and their unique needs is paramount to support a transportation plan for each student that is effective, efficient, and safe.

#### ***Special needs parameters and training requirements***

NSTS has incorporated this recommendation into its process for compliance to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Under the terms of the AODA,

all students with disabilities as defined under the AODA must have an individual School Transportation Plan in place by January 2014. This plan details student assistance needs for each student with a disability, includes plans for individual student boarding, securement and deboarding, and identify and communicate to the appropriate parties the roles and responsibilities of the transportation provider, the parents or guardians of the student with the disability, the operator of the vehicle used to transport the student, appropriate school staff and the student with the disability NSTS has proactively crafted draft travel plans for a number of students pending approval of the corresponding policy, procedures, and forms by the Member Boards.

To meet both the terms of the AODA and this recommendation, NSTS has provided both Consortium and Operator staff with training specific to special needs students including:

- Training specific to the different types of disabilities;
- Safe Boarding, securement and de-boarding procedures;
- Inclusion in specialized training programs for school staff; and
- Offering the First Ride program to students with specialized transportation needs at any grade level to promote transportation safety.

To ensure that bus operators have ready access to the special requirements for each student, information is readily available to the operators from BusPlanner's web portal. This ready access to information in conjunction with the individualized travel plans and specific training programs for drivers fully meets the expectations of this recommendation.

### **3.3.3 Accomplishments**

It is recognized that the Consortium now demonstrates the following best practices in addition to the best practices outlined in the original report:

#### ***Proactive culture of NSTS***

While a review of activities to ensure compliance to the AODA was not an integral part of this E&E review, it is indicative of the positive culture of continuous improvement that NSTS has fostered. To meet the intent of the E&E recommendation on training and to prepare for compliance to the AODA, NSTS combined and coordinated processes to ensure that both requirements were met. This is a prime example of a planning and implementation process that is effective, efficient, and forward-looking. This is in-keeping with the intent of the E&E process, and represents a new best practice.

## **3.4 Safety policy**

### **3.4.1 Original recommendations**

#### ***Finalize and approve the draft camera policy***

The Consortium has developed an excellent video camera use policy that (at the time of the review) was in draft form. The approval of this policy (and the other pending drafts) will help to ensure full clarity and understanding of how cameras are to be used and how the video data is to be managed.

#### ***Continue to monitor fleet age***

While the analysis of fleet data indicates compliance to contractual agreements pertaining to the age of the fleet; the high number of 2004 and 2009 model year buses will require careful future monitoring to ensure that an aging fleet does not present future contractual, safety, or reliability issues

### **3.4.2 Incremental progress**

The foremost goal of any transportation operation is to provide safe student transportation. This goal is supported by safety related policies, practices, and procedures that are comprehensive and enforced. Equally important is that regular training is provided to drivers and attendants to ensure that onboard personnel have and maintain a high level of operational skill. The communication of responsibilities shared by students, parents, drivers, school staff, and the general community helps to promote a culture of safety across the community for all students.

#### ***Draft camera policy***

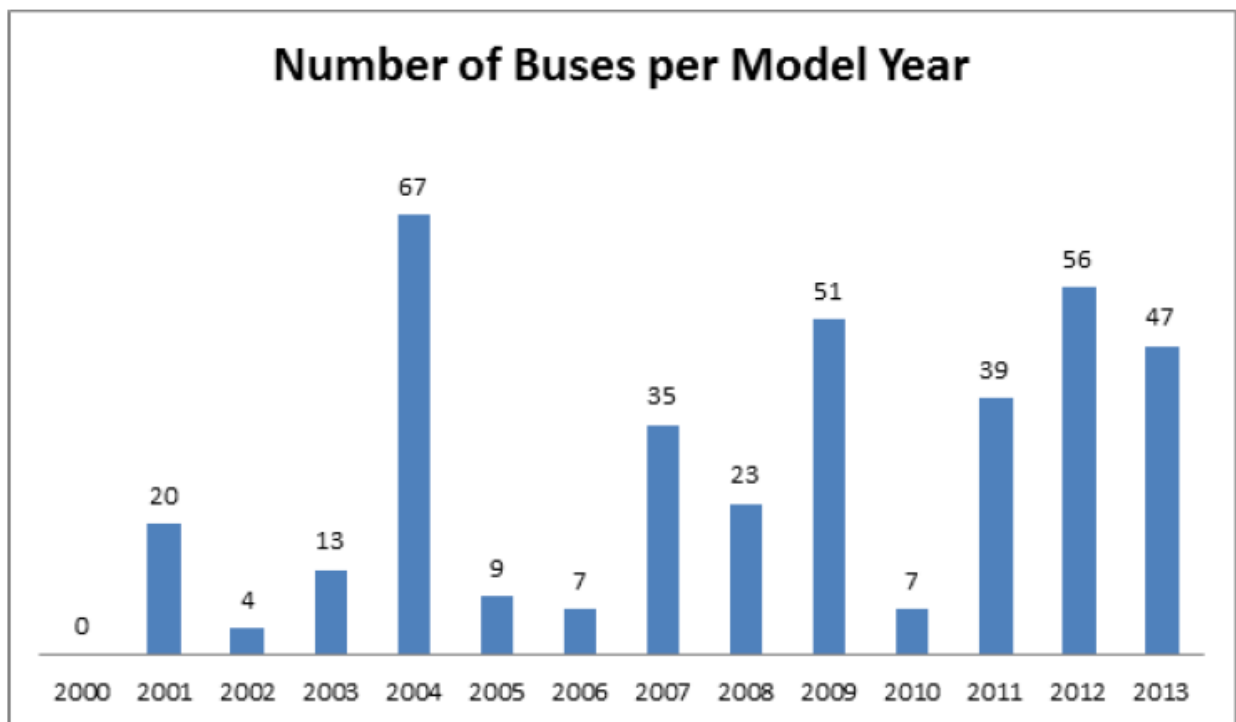
The video camera use policy has been fully approved as recommend during the original E & E. In a practical sense, however, and in lieu of using video cameras consistently, NSTS and its operators have implemented a rather unique issue resolution process. On buses reporting behavioral issues, a monitor (typically a driver/trainer) is assigned to the bus to observe both driver interactions with the students and behaviors. The monitor is trained to facilitate problem resolution and works with the principals to reinforce bus rules and the adherence to a seating plan. Interviews with staff indicate that this process has been effective and has precluded most of the need for video cameras. This process for intervention is consistent and compliant with the policy. This policy now states that video cameras will be used as a last resort. To ensure that cameras will be available if needed, all operator contracts issued beginning in September, 2012 require that operators have cameras available at a ratio of one percent of their total fleet. The

Consortium intends to enforce this requirement as part of the operator contract compliance audit.

### ***Fleet age monitoring***

Interviews with staff and provided documents indicate that NSTS is keenly aware of the importance of the monitoring of the age of the fleet. Service related issues are monitored closely by staff and fleet procurement strategies are discussed with operators during the procurement and award process. An analysis of the current combined fleet of the 72 passenger vehicles finds full compliance with the age restriction of 12 years. The analysis also indicates that the peaks observed in the 2004 and 2009 model years have been reduced and that overall the number of vehicles requiring replacement is more in balance and smooth among model years. The distribution of vehicles by model year is illustrated in the following chart.

**Figure 1: Model Year Distribution of 72 Passenger Buses**



### **3.5 Results of E&E Review**

Policies and Practices for NSTS has been rated as **High**. It is evident from the results of this follow-up review that NSTS carefully considered each of the Policy and Practice recommendations from the original E&E and was determined to meet or exceed the recommendations or suggestions for improvement. Also very evident is the culture of

continuous improvement that has been established. This, together with the level of detail and refinement in the policies and procedures developed by NSTS provides an excellent example for other Consortia to follow.

## **4 Routing and Technology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Routing and Technology encompasses the management, administration, and use of technology for the purpose of student transportation management. The following analysis stems from a review of the four key components of:

- Software and Technology Setup and Use;
- Digital Map and Student Database Management;
- System Reporting; and
- Regular and Special Needs Transportation Planning and Routing.

Each component has been analysed based on observations from fact (including interviews) together with an assessment of best practices leading to a set of recommendations. These results are then used to develop an E&E assessment for each component, which is then summarized to determine an E&E assessment of Routing and Technical efficiency as shown below: Moderate-High

**Routing and Technology – Original E&E Rating:**

**Routing and Technology – New E&E Rating: High**

### **4.2 Software and technology setup and use**

Large and complex transportation organization requires the use of a modern routing and student data management system to support effective and efficient route planning. Effective route planning not only ensures that services are delivered within established parameters but also helps to predict and control operational costs. Modern software systems have the ability to integrate and synchronize with student accounting, communications, and productivity software. The integration of these software systems allow for more effective use of staff time and supports timely communications, data analysis and reporting.

Web-based communication tools in particular can provide stakeholders with real time and current information regarding their student's transportation including service or weather delays, the cancellation of transportation, or school closings. To derive the greatest benefit from these systems, it is imperative that the implementation includes an examination of the desired expectations and outputs of the system to support



comprehensive analysis and reporting. This section evaluates the acquisition, setup, installation, and management of transportation related software.

#### **4.2.1 Original recommendations**

##### ***Enhance the website's live information abilities***

While the Consortium benefits from its own unique website and the use of MapNet Web, the Consortium recognizes that the addition of a module that supports alerts and the dissemination of new or changed information is necessary. The Consortium's planned implementation in early 2010 should be evaluated and, if feasible, followed through upon.

#### **4.2.2 Incremental progress**

##### ***Live information***

This recommendation has been fully implemented as a component of the conversion to the *BusPlanner* route planner software. *BusPlanner Web* provides real-time information on new or changed routes, delays, cancellations, and general information. In addition to the live information, the website provides access to static system information for schools, operators, and parents/students. This includes eligibility and other policies, route and run information, and general information regarding the Consortium and its services. The system is reported to be well utilized, receiving well over sixty thousand views during the start of school period.

NSTS has worked directly with GeoRef, the producers of *BusPlanner* to create enhancements to the web portals that provide additional reporting resources to support operators, schools, and internal staff.

Examples of these include:

- Home Room Report: Supports teachers in afternoon loading process by providing accurate bus assignment lists.
- Cost Analyzer: Provides Area Coordinators with the ability to readily analyze costs of routing solutions.
- Data transfer: Supports the integration of *BusPlanner* and the student information systems of the member boards allowing the transfer of student information including photos between the databases.

### **4.2.3 Accomplishments**

It is recognized that the Consortium has demonstrated best practices in the following areas:

#### ***Customization of software***

NSTS has directly influenced the enhancement of the *BusPlanner* software to provide unique reporting capabilities to its staff and the schools it serves. This is an excellent example that further documents NSTS's desire to provide a high level of support to its operators and the schools it serves as it seeks continuous improvement in its own operations.

#### ***Software conversion***

The observations and recommendations for the original E&E were based on NSTS's use of *MapNet* routing software from *Trapeze Solutions, Inc.* Through the competitive procurement process, NSTS began the process of transitioning from *MapNet* to *BusPlanner* in late 2010 and early 2011. Interviews with all level of NSTS staff indicate that the conversion process was well managed both by NSTS and the vendor. The implementation of any routing software solution can be, and most often is, a monumental undertaking for any transportation operation. The potential negative consequences of an implementation that is not well thought out, planned, and implemented can be significant including:

- Service disruptions i.e., late buses, overcrowded buses, missed stops or students;
- Increased costs due to poorly designed runs and routes resulting in the need for additional fleet assets; and
- The loss of confidence in the management of the system by parents, Boards of Education, school communities, and the operators.

NSTS not only effectively and efficiently managed the conversion but was also able to use the new system to reduce the number of buses and corresponding costs. Both of these major initiatives were accomplished in a relatively short timeframe and without service disruptions.

This accomplishment can be directly attributable to multiple factors including:

- The management and oversight of the conversion project by Consortium management and technical staff;

- Task planning by both NSTS and vendor;
- Involvement of NSTS routing and administrative staff;
- Extensive and targeted training programs;
- Ongoing vendor support; and
- Well documented procedures to reinforce the use of system.

An analysis of the system effectiveness is presented in the Section 4.5 Regular and special needs transportation planning and routing.

### **4.3 Digital map and student database management**

For any electronic routing system to be fully effective, it must be supported not only by an accurate underlying map, but also by accurate student data. As noted during the original E&E, while NSTS had processes in place for the effective management of the map, the shared responsibility between the Transportation Manager (Systems) and the Routing Coordinators presented concerns that changes in one area might negatively impact the accuracy and integrity of the base map across the entire service area.

#### **4.3.1 Original recommendations**

##### ***Map management***

The Consortium has adopted a relatively unique bifurcated approach to map management where the Mapping Coordinator is responsible for higher order maintenance and Transportation Coordinators can alter underlying characteristics in their individual areas. While the key to the success of this strategy is the relative independence of the planning areas as established, it is imperative that a process to monitor changes is established. This process should ensure that changes made in any one area do not negatively influence the planning of routes in adjacent areas. Additionally, this process should establish guidelines that assist current and future Transportation Coordinators with determining when it is appropriate to alter critical underlying map data such as road speeds and travel characteristics.

#### **4.3.2 Incremental progress**

##### ***Map management***

With the conversion to *BusPlanner*, the responsibility for the maintenance of the map has been assigned to the Transportation Manager for Systems. Training was provided

by GeoRef to ensure that the Systems Manager and Coordinator have the necessary skills to proficiently and accurately manage changes to the system's base map. NSTS uses all available resources including aerial photography and address points provided by the Regional Municipality of Niagara to ensure the accuracy of the base map. This practice is safeguarded by permissions set in the software preventing casual access to the underlying map data. Appropriate back-up procedures have also been established. An appropriate "customer" relationship has been established between the Systems staff and the Routing Coordinators that supports timely resolution of issues or changes and encourages feedback. These changes are in keeping with the intent of the original recommendation.

#### **4.4 System reporting**

A key benefit of modern routing software is the ability to quickly gather, collate and analyze large data sets. These data sets can then be used to communicate a wide variety of operational and administrative performance indicators to all stakeholders. Actively using transportation data to identify trends that may negatively impact either costs or service and communicate both expectations and performance is a key component of a continuous improvement model.

##### **4.4.1 Original recommendations**

The Consortium did not have any recommendations in this area in the original E&E Review completed in January 2010.

##### **4.4.2 Incremental progress**

The Consortium's System reporting is similar to that which was in place during the original E&E Review, and remains consistent with best practices.

#### **4.5 Regular and special needs transportation planning and routing**

Effective and efficient route planning is the key element of any high performing transportation operation. This portion of the review discusses the recommendation from the original E&E and the resulting incremental progress. Also discussed are the current findings regarding the overall effectiveness of the system.

#### **4.5.1 Original recommendations**

##### ***Evaluate alternative bell time options***

The current bell time scheme constrains NSTS' ability to use the key efficiency technique of route tiering. The clustering in current bell times has caused a significant imbalance in the number of buses used in the two major morning and afternoon time blocks. To the extent that the established bell time management policy can be used to evaluate alternative times it would be possible to reduce the number of buses required and the cost of transportation. Any analysis of bell times must also consider the impact on instructional and other building staff in order to fully consider the total possible costs or savings associated with bell time changes.

#### **4.5.2 Incremental progress**

##### ***Bell time initiatives***

As a training element within the implementation of the *BusPlanner* software, all Area Route Coordinators have been afforded the opportunity to receive training on routing optimization. Within each of their areas of responsibility the Coordinators are encouraged and supported to examine their routing network to identify efficiencies for consideration. For the 2012/13 FY school year, such examples included changes in bell times, capacity use, and run path improvements. These changes have resulted in savings of over \$1,000,000. This approach, particularly with the emphasis on continuous analysis and improvement, is consistent with the intent of the original recommendation.

##### ***Analysis of system effectiveness***

An overall analysis of system data was performed to obtain an understanding of the effectiveness of the routing network. One primary measure of system effectiveness, as measured by service quality are student ride times. The key performance indicators for efficiency are Capacity Utilization and the number of buses required per 100 students. Capacity Utilization is an indicator of how well buses are loaded while the number of buses per 100 students indicates how many buses are required and the ability for each bus to perform multiple runs. While these are by no means the only measures of performance that should be considered, taken together they provide a valuable overall understanding of system efficiency and effectiveness.

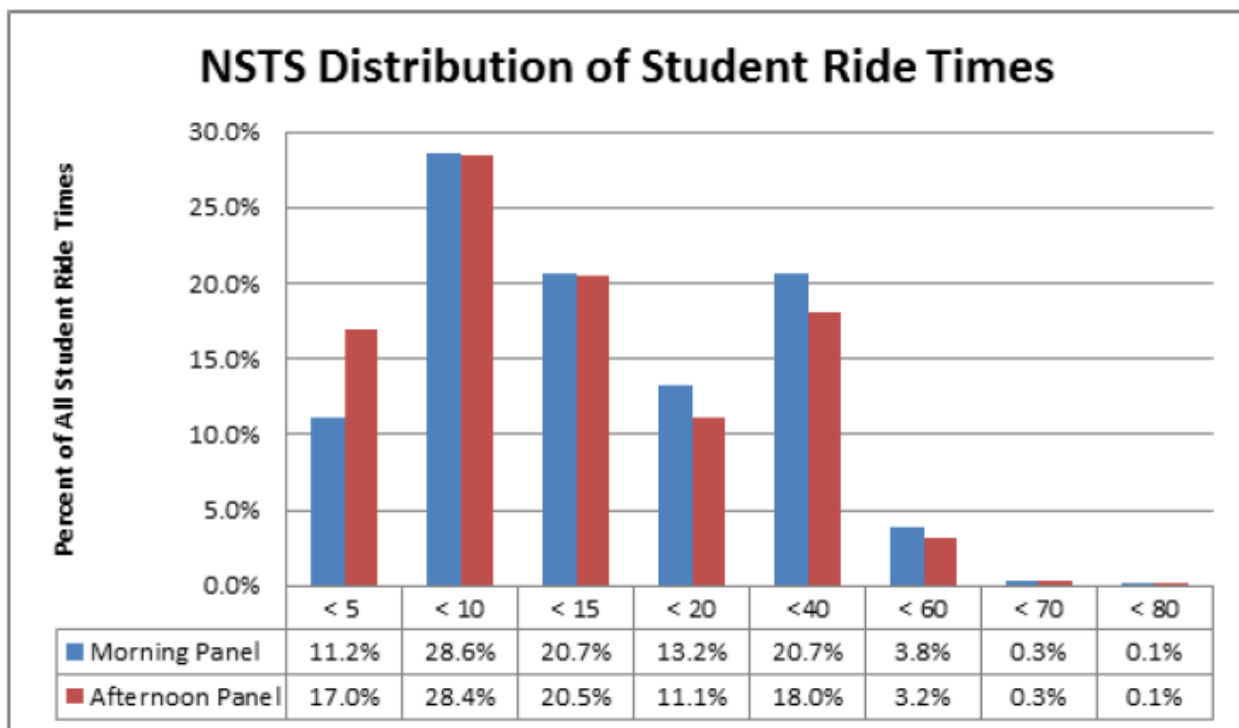
##### ***Student ride times***

The amount of time that students spend being transported to or from school is a key indicator of the overall level of service provided by any transportation organization. An

analysis of ride times for all NSTS students finds that the Consortium has planned runs that provide a high level of service across the system. The average morning ride time is approximately 15 minutes with almost 96 percent of all student ride times at 40 minutes or less. Similar results have been achieved in the afternoon with average ride times of approximately 13 minutes with just over 96 percent at 40 minutes or less. Current ride times compare very favourably with the ride times noted in the original E&E with 97 percent of students with ride times of 60 minutes or less.

The distribution of ride times is shown in the following chart.

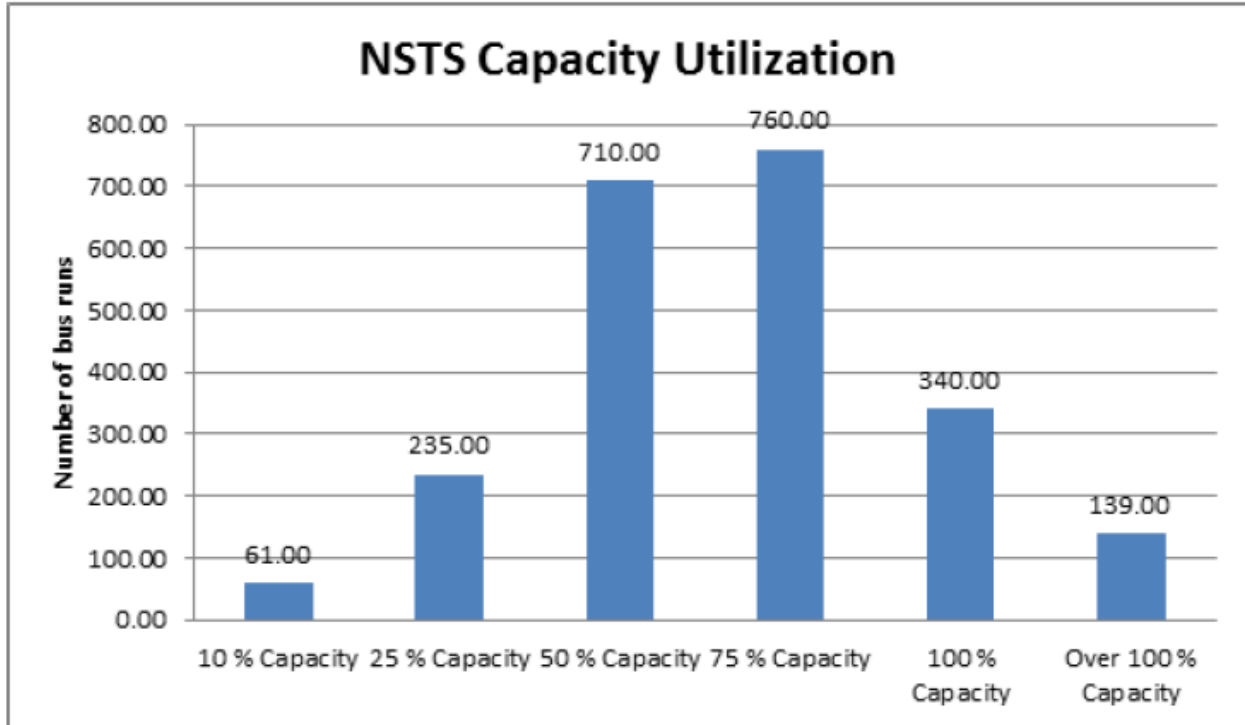
**Figure 2: Student ride times**



**Capacity utilization**

The analysis of data finds an average of 67 percent utilization across the system for all vehicles, not including taxis. This is within the expected range of 60 to 70 percent and is indicative of a system that is effectively planned. This also compares favorably with the capacity utilization of approximately 53 percent across the system during the original E&E. Capacity utilization is illustrated in the following chart.

**Figure 3: Capacity utilization**



***Buses per 100 students***

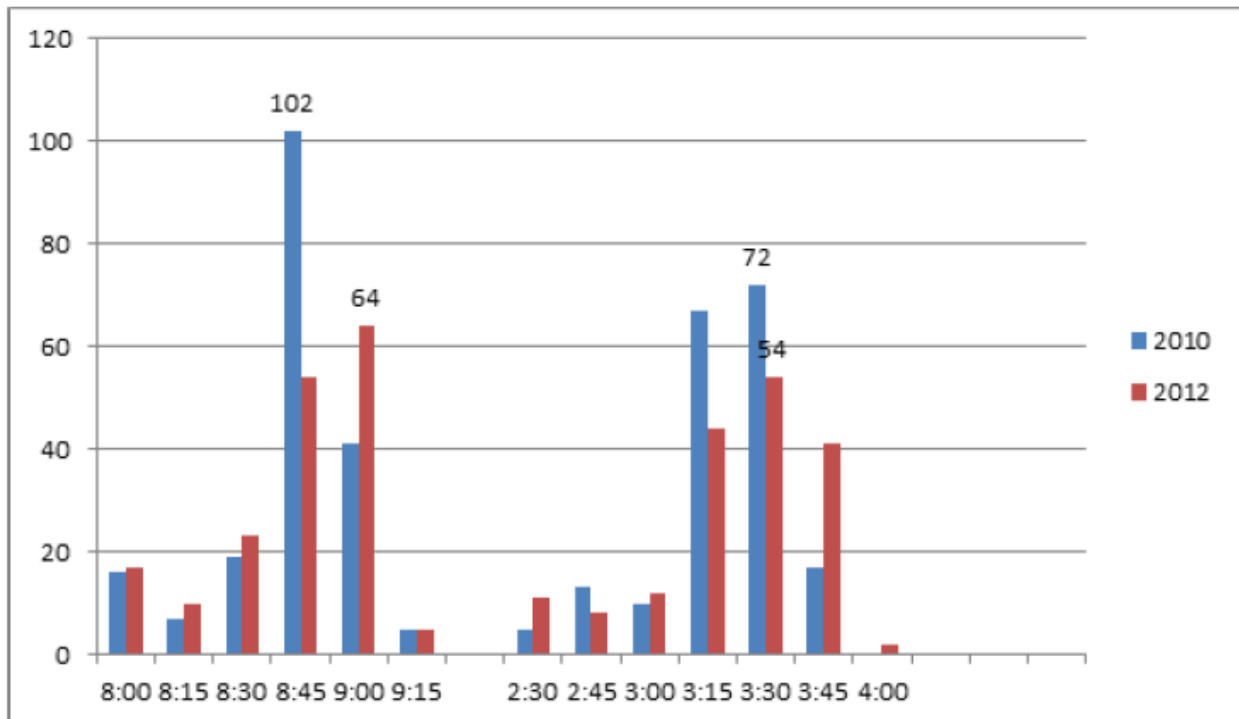
The number of buses per 100 students is approximately 1.25 for 72 passenger buses and 1.99 across the system. While both regular and special needs buses (on average) are able to perform 3.56 runs per day, the lower capacity utilization of special needs buses results in a higher number of buses per 100 students. It should be noted that the analyses were based on active or actual ridership and not on the number of students planned for each run. This is an important distinction and further demonstrates the overall effectiveness of the systems as planned utilization most likely would be higher.

***Impact of bell time changes and routing efficiencies***

The single recommendation to be considered for evaluation under the follow-up E&E was for NSTS to consider the evaluation of its then current bell times. It was noted that routing strategies at that time were constrained by a bell time structure with the majority of schools with a start or end time that was highly clustered around a 30-minute operating window in the morning between 8:31 to 9:00 AM and in the afternoon between 3:01 to 3:30 PM. This type of clustering generally limits the opportunities to use the routing strategy of tiering where a single bus will service multiple schools independent of each other.

As a result, route planners faced with this type of bell structure have to rely on extensive use of combination runs (where the same bus serves more than one school at the same time) and high seating capacity rates to operate efficiently. While this was and continues to be a strategy effectively used by NSTS, the analysis of current bell times finds an improvement in the spread of start and end times that generally supports the more efficient use of vehicles. As seen in the following graph, starting and ending bell times have been adjusted resulting in a more balanced bell time structure. This supports the tiering of bus runs enabling a vehicle to be used multiple times on separate tiers.

**Figure 4: School arrival and departure distribution**



The expected outcome was an improved balance in the number of buses between the morning and afternoon panels and the potential for a reduction in the number of buses required to operate the system. This, in turn, would produce a reduction in the cost of transportation. The analysis conducted for the original E&E indicated a 50 vehicle difference between the peak morning and afternoon time frame or 475 and 425 vehicles respectively.

The analysis of the current data indicates both an improvement to the imbalance of vehicles between the morning and afternoon panels and a reduction in the total number of buses required. Currently, 414 vehicles are required during the peak morning demand time with 409 vehicles required during the peak demand time in the afternoon.



This is a substantial improvement over the required number of buses observed during the original E&E.

#### **4.5.3 Accomplishments**

It is recognized that the Consortium now demonstrates the following best practices in addition to the best practices outlined in the original report:

##### ***Bell time analysis***

It was noted during the original E&E that the reporting and data analysis capability of NSTS was a model for other Consortia to follow and a Best Practice. It is evident that NSTS continues to embrace the use of data in the analysis of opportunities for improvement. This is evident in the results, including a large reduction in the number of buses required and substantial cost savings while maintaining a high level of service for the students. Also evident is the strong partnership that NSTS has forged with its Member Boards and the support received in the consideration of strategies that support effective and efficient services. The overall approach to bell time management and data analysis continues to represent a best practice for other consortia to emulate.

#### **4.6 Results of E&E Review**

The Niagara Student Transportation Services Consortium has been rated as **High** in Routing and Technology for the follow-up review. It is evident that NSTS was determined to meet or exceed the recommendations as discussed in the original E&E. Also evident is the impact of the culture of continuous improvement that has been established. Examples of these include the willingness to undertake a complex and inherently risky software conversion to gain additional operational and live reporting capabilities, and the ongoing commitment to system performance analysis and improvement that is evident throughout the organization.

## 5 Contracts

### 5.1 Introduction

The Contracts section refers to the processes and practices by which the Consortium enters into and manages its transportation and other service contracts. The analysis stems from a review of the following three key components of Contracting Practices:

- Contract structure;
- Contract negotiations; and
- Contract management.

Each component has been analyzed based on observations from information provided by the Consortium, including information provided during interviews. The analysis included an assessment of areas requiring improvement that were informed by a set of known best practices identified during previous E&E Reviews. These results are then used to develop an E&E assessment for each component. The E&E assessment of contracting practices for the Consortium is as follows:

**Contracts – Original E&E Rating: Moderate-High**

**Contracts – New E&E Rating: High**

### 5.2 Contract Structure

An effective contract<sup>2</sup> establishes a clear point of reference that defines the roles, requirements, and expectations of each party involved and details the compensation for providing the designated service. Effective contracts also provide penalties for failure to meet established service parameters and may provide incentives for exceeding service requirements. Contract analysis includes a review of the clauses contained in the contract to ensure that the terms are clearly articulated, and a review of the fee structure is conducted to enable comparison of its components to best practice.

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<sup>2</sup> The word Contract in this context refers to detailed documents outlining the scope of services, rates and expected service levels. The phrase Purchase of Service agreement is used in this report to describe a less detailed document that only outlines the services to be provided and the rates at which they are to be provided.

### **5.2.1 Original recommendations**

#### ***Mandate that EpiPen training be provided prior to the start of the school year***

It recognized that the Consortium requires bus operators to provide First Aid/CPR and EpiPen to its drivers. Discussions with Consortium management and operators also indicated that, in practice; drivers receive this training prior to the first day they are to drive a bus. However, in order to bring contract clauses in line with current practices, it is recommended that the Consortium modify its operator contract to require operators to provide EpiPen training prior to the first day they are to drive a bus. This will provide added assurance that all drivers will be appropriately trained to deal with this type of emergency should it occur.

### **5.2.2 Incremental progress**

#### ***Bus operator contract clauses***

The Consortium has standardized contracts with all of its bus operators for 30% of the home to school routes in Niagara after a competitive procurement process. The current contracts cover a period of five years (2012 – 2017). Also included is a clause that extends contracts for three additional one year terms at the sole discretion of the Consortium.

Noteworthy clauses in the contract outline: contract term and early termination rights; rights to determine and communicate routes and schedules; safety programs; operator requirements; insurance provisions; routing requirements; vehicle requirements; driver requirements; administration provisions; consideration and accounting provisions; accidents; notices; standards of performance; and confidentiality agreements, amongst others.

In addition, all operators are now required to have video cameras available for one-percent of routes to deploy at the request of the Consortium.

The contract contains detailed clauses for contract performance, safety and legal requirements. The Consortium reserves the right to re-allocate routes among operators in the contract. The contract outlines basic first-aid and safety training that operators must provide to their drivers. Drivers must be trained in First Aid, CPR and EpiPen prior to transporting students. The operators are also required to keep accurate records of all employees' training and make them available to the Consortium when requested.

For the remaining 70% of contracts, NSTS has renewed the existing contract for a one year term. The contract clause pertaining to First Aid/CPR and EpiPen training has been updated to reflect that drivers need to have EpiPen training prior to the first day

they are to drive a bus for the Consortium. NSTS plans to competitively procure the remaining 70% of the contracts in 2013.

### ***Bus operator compensation***

The compensation rate calculations have been revised for the bus operators representing 30% of home to school routes in Niagara, which were contracted through the competitive procurement process. The payment calculation includes, among other adjustments, the Total Daily Rate, Adjusted Overtime Costs, Adjusted Minimum Kilometres Costs, reductions for inclement weather and labour disputes. The following relate to the components of the payment calculation:

- The base rate (fixed rate) will be applied to each route, and routes greater than 180 minutes per day will be compensated at the Overtime rate. Adjustments will be made in 15 minute intervals.
- The variable rate is applied per kilometre travelled and routes less than 25 kilometres per day are adjusted to reflect a 25km minimum mileage per day per route.
- Fuel Adjustments will be invoiced by the operator on a semi-annual basis, based on the fuel adjustments set out in the yearly Grants for Student Needs (“GSN”) issued by the Ministry of Education.
- Other compensation adjustments include:
  - Inclement weather days, which is 100% of the Base rate;
  - Trial runs, monitor costs and safety training;
  - Number of Consortium or Member School Board strike/labour disturbance days; and
  - Number of operator strike/labour disturbance days agreed to by the Consortium.

### **5.2.3 Accomplishments**

It is recognized that the Consortium now demonstrates the following best practices in addition to the best practices outlined in the original report:

### ***Bus operator contract clauses***

The Consortium has contracts in place with all bus operators which detail appropriate legal, safety and other non-monetary terms. This ensures the contractual relationship between bus operators and the Consortium is defined and enforceable. New clauses relating to EpiPen and First Aid training prior to driving a bus are consistent with best practices.

## **5.3 Goods and Services Procurement**

Procurement processes are intended to provide an avenue by which the Consortium, as a purchaser of services, can ultimately obtain the best value for money. The goal of the Consortium is to obtain high quality service at fair market prices.

### **5.3.1 Original recommendations**

#### ***Develop plans for the implementation of competitive procurement processes***

Contracts for school bus transportation services are currently not competitively procured. By not engaging in a competitive process, the Consortium is in violation of its own procurement policies. The Consortium will also not know whether it is paying best rates for services provided. If a competitive process is used to procure contracted services, the Consortium can clearly state all service requirements in the procurement document. In addition, the Consortium can be sure that it will obtain the best value for its money as operators will compete to provide the required service levels. The use of competitive procurement may not mean that rates will decline; however, the concern for the Consortium should be to obtain best value for money expended.

A competitive process can be used with certain safeguards in place to protect the standards of service. The Consortium should continue to enforce limits placed on the amount of business any one operator can hold to avoid a monopoly situation. Additionally, in evaluating the successful proponents, cost should not be the overriding factor as that will encourage low cost proponents to enter the market while not necessarily ensuring that the same or improved levels of service are being provided. Local market conditions should be considered at all points in the development and evaluation of any service proposal. For example, local operators can be encouraged to participate in this process by placing a value on having local experience as part of the evaluation criteria; however, this specific criterion for local experience should also not be an overriding factor in the proposal evaluation process.

As the Contracting Practices Resource Package has been released, the Consortium should start developing an implementation plan for competitive procurement. A plan should include a review of existing procurement policies, an analysis of the local

supplier market, strategies to help determine the RFP scope and processes and a criteria and timeline to phase-in competitive procurement. The plan should also utilize the best practices and lessons learned that are available from the pilot Consortia.

### **5.3.2 Incremental progress**

#### ***Competitive procurement***

The Consortium's commitment to a competitive procurement process for school bus transportation is outlined in governance approved policy on operator procurement.

The Consortium has completed the competitive procurement process for 30% of its transportation needs. A Fairness monitor was engaged to ensure the integrity of this procurement. A detailed RFP was formulated which stipulated terms and conditions for safety, operational performance and KPIs and clear payment terms. The Consortium indicated that resulting contracts are robust and have led to cost savings and improved value.

In addition, NSTS completed an RFT (Request for Tender) for Charter Transportation Services, an RFT for Taxi Services to support the Consortium and an RFP for Fairness Commissioner Services to support the competitive procurement of the remaining 70% of home to school routes in Niagara for implementation in September 2013.

NSTS took an active role in supporting the successful Proponents in the transition to providing services to NSTS including:

- Awarding specific routes with the Notification of Award;
- Clearly communicating route award information to existing and new operators to enable drivers who wanted to stay with their current routes to orient to the new company;
- Following an implementation plan with monthly update reports between the Consortium and new Operators;
- Cross-checking employee lists for new Operators to identify people who were slated for employment with multiple companies; and
- Holding a team building event in August with all Operators to foster new relationships and to enhance existing ones.

### **5.3.3 Accomplishments**

It is recognized that the Consortium now demonstrates the following best practices in addition to the best practices outlined in the original report:

#### ***Competitive procurement***

The Consortium's consistent use of a competitive procurement method that is open, transparent and accountable ensures it continues to receive the best rates for the services it is provided. The Consortium continues to introduce business opportunities to a competitive market, in order to ensure that the Consortium is receiving services that are of the highest quality at rates that reflect current market price. The establishment of a vendor of records for charter operations is also a positive development that helps the Consortium receive safe, reliable and cost-effective charter transportation.

#### ***Transition Assistance***

The Consortium took an active role in helping to assist with the transitioning process for new and existing service providers. This ensures there are no service interruptions, new and enhanced relationships are built, and a consistent quality of service is maintained.

## **5.4 Contract Management**

Contracting practices do not end after a contract is signed. Ongoing monitoring of compliance and performance of contracted service is an important and valuable practice to enhance service levels and ensure that contractors are providing the level of service that was previously agreed upon. Effective contract management practices focus on four key areas:

- Administrative contract compliance to ensure that operators meet the requirements set out in the contract;
- Operator facility and maintenance audits to ensure that operators keep their facilities and vehicles in line with the standards outlined in the contract;
- Service and safety monitoring to ensure that the on the road performance of drivers and operators reflects the expectations set out in the contract; and
- Performance monitoring to track the overall performance of operators over time.

### **5.4.1 Original recommendations**

The Consortium did not have any recommendations in this area in the original E&E Review completed in January 2010.

#### **5.4.2 Incremental progress**

The Consortium's contract management processes are documented in a governance approved policy on operator and route audits. In addition, the Consortium has developed a Standards of Performance document that outlines the items and behaviours to be reviewed and presents a scoring framework for bus operators.

##### ***Operator compliance and performance management***

The Consortium has a governance approved policy, framework and documentation in place that outlines the process to verify that operators are meeting performance standards through various audit processes including: Contract compliance reviews, performance management reviews, route audits, operator internal audits and invoice reconciliations.

An annual contract compliance audit was successfully completed in June 2012, and performance feedback was provided to the operators. All operators were fully compliant in accordance with the audit framework.

NSTS also reconciles invoices for each Board based on the terms in the Operator Agreement, including the various components of the payment calculation. The transportation planning software system is able to calculate the contract payment rates for the operators. A separate MS Excel sheet is also used to track actual expenditures to ensure that the payment rates calculated by the software are accurate. (The Consortium is using this as a redundant process until such time as they are comfortable with the new software's financial performance.)

The Consortium has also installed GPS technology on some of their buses, which has enabled better tracking. The transportation planning software system, also allows for daily tracking and trend tracking. The Executive Director is notified of any negative trends, and the issue is addressed immediately.

It is the Consortium's intention to continue performing five percent route audits annually. With the introduction of GPS technology staff has been trained in how to use the GPS information to perform route audits to support transitioning from in-person audits to using a combination of GPS technology and in- person audit strategies.

The Consortium is in the processes of developing procedures around the documentation of GPS tracking i.e. records to reflect how and when staff monitor GPS results and respond to concerns.

Operator internal audits involves reporting any deviations from the transportation schedule, i.e. timing concerns, or routing concerns for safety needs to be reported to the



Consortium in order to adjust the routes and schedules accordingly. The introduction of GPS on more routes supports operator internal audits and Consortium route audits.

The new and improved performance management process continues to reflect Consortium best practices.

## **5.5 Results of E&E Review**

The process by which the Consortium negotiates, structures, and manages its contracts for transportation services has been assessed as **High**. Positive elements include the execution of detailed, long-term operator contracts; the expansion of a competitive procurement process to cover 30% of the regular routes, special needs routes, taxi operations, and charter transportation; and its efforts at making continuous improvements to procuring, structuring and managing its contracts in order to remain consistent with best practices.

## 6 Funding Adjustment

The Ministry has asked the E&E Review Team to apply their Funding Adjustment Formula to each Board that was subject to an E&E Review. Note that where Boards are incurring transportation expenses in multiple Consortium sites, the Board's adjustment will be prorated for the portion attributed to the Consortium under review. For example, if 90% of Board A's expenditures are attributed to Consortium A, and 10% of expenditures are attributed to Consortium B, the funding adjustment resulting from Consortium A's review will be applied to 90% of Board A's deficit or surplus position.

The Ministry's funding formula is as follows:

**Table 3: Funding Adjustment Formula**

<b>Overall Rating</b>	<b>Effect on deficit Board<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Effect on surplus Board<sup>3</sup></b>
High	Reduce the gap by 100% (i.e. eliminate the gap)	No in-year funding impact; out-year changes are to be determined
Moderate-High	Reduce the gap by 90%	Same as above
Moderate	Reduce the gap by 60%	Same as above
Moderate-Low	Reduce the gap by 0%	Same as above
Low	Reduce the gap by 0%	Same as above

Based on the Ministry's funding formula, in conjunction with our E&E assessment of the Consortium, it is anticipated that the following funding adjustments will be made for each Board:

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<sup>3</sup> This refers to Boards that have a deficit/surplus on student transportation

## District School Board of Niagara

Item	Values
2011-2012 Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	(\$1,674,611)
% of Surplus (Deficit) attributed to the Consortium	100%
Revised amount to be assessed under the Consortium	(\$1,674,611)
E&E Rating	High
Funding Adjustment based on Ministry's Funding Adjustment Formula	100%
2012-2013 Total Funding adjustment	\$1,674,611

## Niagara Catholic District School Board

Item	Values
2011-2012 Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	\$575,212
% of Surplus (Deficit) attributed to the Consortium	100%
Revised amount to be assessed under the Consortium	\$575,212
E&E Rating	High
Funding Adjustment based on Ministry's Funding Adjustment Formula	N/A
2012-2013 Total Funding adjustment	N/A

(Numbers will be finalized once regulatory approval has been obtained.)

## 7 Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Terms	Definitions
Act	Education Act
Assessment Guide	The guide prepared by the E&E Review Team and the Ministry of Education which will be used as the basis for determining the overall effectiveness and efficiency of each Consortium
Common Practice	Refers to a set of planning parameters that have been reported by Ontario school boards as the most commonly adopted planning policies and practices. These are used as references in the assessment of the relative level of service and efficiency.
Consortium, the; or NSTS	The Niagara Student Transportation Services Consortium
Deloitte	Deloitte & Touche LLP (Canada)
Driver	Refers to bus Drivers, see also operators
DSBN	District School Board of Niagara
E&E	Effectiveness and Efficiency
E&E Review Team	As defined in Section 1.3.1.
E&E Reviews	As defined in Section 1.3
Effective	Having an intended or expected effect; the ability to deliver intended service
Efficient	Performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort; the ability to achieve cost savings without compromising safety
Evaluation Framework	The document, titled “Evaluation Framework for the Renfrew County Joint Transportation Consortium” which supports the E&E Review Team’s Assessment; this document is not a public document
Funding Adjustment Formula	As described in Section 1.3.2
HR	Human Resources

<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
IT	Information Technology
JK/SK	Junior Kindergarten/Senior Kindergarten
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
Management Consultants	As defined in Section 1.2.
Memo	Memorandum 2006: SB13, dated July 11 issued by the Ministry
Ministry	The Ministry of Education of Ontario
MPS	Management Partnership Services Inc., the routing consultant, as defined in Section 1.2 and 1.3
MTO	The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario
NCDSB	Niagara Catholic District School Board
NSTS	Niagara Student Transportation Services
Operators	Refers to companies that operate school buses, boats or taxis and the individuals who run those companies. In some instances, an operator may also be a Driver.
Overall Rating	As Defined in Section 3.2 of the Evaluation Framework
Partner Boards, Member Boards, School Boards or Boards	The School Boards that have participated as full partners or members in the Consortium; the DSBN and the NCDSB
Rating	The E&E Assessment score on a scale of High to Low, see Section 1.3
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFT	Request for Tender
Report	The report prepared by the E&E Review Team for each Consortium that has undergone an E&E Review (i.e. this document)
Separate Legal Entity	Incorporation

## 8 Appendix 2: Financial Review – by School Board

### District School Board of Niagara

Item	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013 <sup>4</sup>
Allocation <sup>5</sup>	\$15,711,958	\$16,034,448	\$16,195,477	\$16,261,567	\$15,647,727
Expenditure <sup>6</sup>	\$15,909,611	\$15,994,445	\$16,365,905	\$17,936,178	\$16,680,145
Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	\$(197,653)	\$40,003	\$(170,428)	\$(1,674,611)	\$(1,032,418)
Total Expenditures paid to the Consortium	\$15,909,611	\$15,994,445	\$16,365,905	\$17,936,178	\$16,680,145
As % of total Expenditures of Board	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### Niagara Catholic District School Board

Item	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Allocation	\$9,666,443	\$11,102,893	\$11,049,430	\$10,964,393	\$10,586,789
Expenditure	\$11,164,802	\$10,610,318	\$10,369,883	\$10,389,181	\$9,662,208
Transportation Surplus (Deficit)	\$(1,498,359)	\$492,575	\$679,547	\$575,212	\$924,581
Total Expenditures paid to the Consortium	\$11,164,802	\$10,610,318	\$10,369,883	\$10,389,181	\$9,662,208
As % of total Expenditures of Board	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

<sup>4</sup> 2012-2013 allocations and expenditures based on Ministry data – Estimates for 2012-2013

<sup>5</sup> Allocation based on Ministry data – includes all grant allocations for transportation (Section 9 00008C, Section 13 00006C, Section 13 00012C)

<sup>6</sup> Expenditure based on Ministry data – taken from Data Form D: 730C (Adjusted expenditures for compliance) – 212C (Other Revenues)

## **9 Appendix 3: Document List**

1. AA1a – AODA Student Travel Plan Influence Software Vendor
2. AA1b - SEAC Presentation 2012 - DSBN
3. AA1c – SEAC Presentation 2012 - NCDSB
4. AA1d – AODA Transportation Update August 2013
5. AA1e – NSTS Accessibility Update - June 2011
6. AA2 - 1st Annual NSTS Bus Operator Appreciation
7. AA3 - RFP Presentation Regarding Collaboration with Other Consortia
8. AA4 - NSTS STP Presentation to Hamilton STP Committee
9. AA5a - Kindergarten Met at Stop Tag
10. AA5b - Kindergarten Met at Stop Memo NCDSB
11. AA5c - Kindergarten Met at Stop Memo DSBN
12. AA6a – Memo to Schools for Charter Quotes DSBN
13. AA6b - Memo to Schools for Charter Quotes NCDSB
14. AA7a - AODA Training Guide to Bus Companies
15. AA7b - Procedure Student Transportation Accessibility Plan
16. AA8 - 2012-13 Budget Development Initiatives
17. AA9 – Review of RFP NSTS 2012-01 in relation to Task Force Report
18. AA10 - NSTS Progress to Leading Practices Guide
19. AA11 – NSTS Fairness Report
20. AA12 – NSTS Team Model Defined
21. AA13a and b – Student Travel Plan Pilot Meeting Minutes June 2012
22. AA14a – NSTS Financial Responsibility Graphic

23. AA14b - Work Process - Staff Back to School Feedback
24. AA15 – Optimization Training Exercise November 2011
25. AA17 - SYC 2012-13 Transportation Costs Revised Jan 11
26. AA18a - S St. C Secondary ARC Tables June 27 2011
27. AA18b - DSBN ARC Report S St C Sec Transportation June 27 2011
28. AA18c – FE Elementary ARC
29. AA18d - NSTS Report for DSBN ARC\_Elementary - Sept 2011 BASELINE FINAL
30. AA18e - NCDSB Boundary Review Port Robinson Dec 16 2011
31. AA19 - NPCC NSTS Service Proposal
32. AA20 - DanNel Updated Insurance
33. AA21 - DSBN Memo RE Bell Time Changes
34. AA22 - E &E NSTS Kick-Off November 2012
35. AA23a - Staff Unedited Survey Results Back to School
36. AA23b - To Do List RE 2012-13 BTS Staff Survey
37. AA23c - 2012-13 Staff Back to School Survey Copy
38. AA23d - OASBO Back to School Best Practices September 2010
39. AA23e - OASBO Back to School Survey Results
40. AA24 - 2012-13 Signed SLA
41. AA26 - 2011-12 School Survey for Student Transportation
42. AA27 - Signed Consortium Agreement
43. AA28a - Georef Transition Reports
44. AA28b - Georef Transition Supporting Documents
45. AA29 - OASBO Public Transit Use Survey 2010



46. AA30a - RFP Communication Pre and Post Award
47. AA30b - RFP NSTS 2012-01 Implementation Plan
48. AA31 - GPS Route Audit Form
49. AA32 - OSBIE Audit Results
50. C 1a, 1c, 3b, 7a Contract 1.pdf – Agreement for the Provision of Student Transportation Services for the 2011 – 2012 School Year
51. C 1a, 1c, 3b, 7a Contract 2.pdf - Agreement for the Provision of Student Transportation Services between Niagara Student Transportation Services and XXX School Years 2012-2017
52. C 1b.pdf - Agreement for the Provision of Student Transportation Services for the 2011 – 2012 School Year (Signed)
53. C 2.pdf – Special Transportation
54. C 3a.pdf – NSTS 2012 – 2013 School Year Approved Transportation Provider List
55. C 3b.pdf – Parent –Student Transportation Agreement
56. C 3c.pdf - Parent –Student Transportation Agreement
57. C 4.pdf – Schedule A –First Aid, CPR and EPIPEN Training
58. C 5.pdf – NSTS 2011-12 School Bus Fleet with Bus Ages
59. C 6a.pdf – Public Transit Use
60. C 6b.pdf – Board Student Transportation Administrative Procedure/Guideline
61. C 7b, 7c.pdf – Certificate of Insurance
62. C 8a.pdf – Operator Procurement
63. C 8b.pdf – Request for Proposal; RFP # NSTS 2012-01
64. C 8c.pdf – Notification of Award
65. C 9a.pdf – Operator Compliance and Performance Management

66. C 9b, 9c, 9d, 9f.pdf – Annual Contract Compliance Audit Checklist
67. C 9e.pdf – List of Route Numbers, Daily KM Carrier and Comments
68. C 9g.pdf – Performance of Route #1157
69. CM 1a.pdf – Student Transportation Agreement between NSTS, NCDSB and DSBN
70. CM 1b.pdf – Letters patent
71. CM 1c.pdf – Dispute Resolution
72. CM 2a.pdf – NSTS Organizational Chart
73. CM 2b.pdf -MAC Meeting Minutes December 14, 2011
74. CM 2c.pdf –Governance Structure
75. CM 3a.pdf – Organizational Chart
76. CM 3b.pdf – NSTS Approved Organization Structure
77. CM 4, 13a, 13b, 14a, 14c, 14d.pdf – Financial Management
78. CM 5.pdf – Service Level Agreement between DSBN and NSTS
79. CM 6.pdf - Service Level Agreement between NSTS and DSBN
80. CM 7a.pdf - Insurance
81. CM 7b.pdf – Confirmation of Insurance
82. CM 8.pdf - Procurement
83. CM 9a.pdf – Human Resources
84. CM 9b.pdf – Individual Performance and Development Plan
85. CM 9c.pdf – Training Requirements for New and Existing Staff
86. CM 9d.pdf – NSTS Training Matrix 2010 - 13
87. CM 9e.pdf – NSTS 2012-13 Out of Office Position Coverage
88. CM 9f.pdf – Notice board Picture

89. CM 9f 2.pdf – NSTS Staff Meeting Minutes – October 2, 2012
90. CM 10.pdf – 2011-12 Strategy Report
91. CM 10a.pdf – Business Planning and Reporting
92. CM 10b.pdf – 2012-13 Strategy Report
93. CM 10b 2.pdf – Schedule of Events
94. CM 11a.pdf – Key Performance Indicators
95. CM 11b.pdf – Key Performance Indicators
96. CM 11c.pdf – Agenda for Meeting of the Board of Directors – Jan. 10, 2012
97. CM 11d, 13e.pdf – NSTS Optimization, 2011-12 Cost Savings
98. CM 12a.pdf – NCDSB Records and Information Management
99. CM 12b.pdf – Confidentiality of Personal Information
100. CM 12d, 12e.pdf – Confidentiality Agreement
101. CM 12f.pdf – Confidentiality Agreement
102. CM 13c.pdf – 2011 – 12 Budget Control Schedule
103. CM 13d.pdf – MAC Meeting Agenda – February 22, 2012
104. CM 14b.pdf – Financial statements of NSTS Corporation
105. CM 14d.pdf – 2012-13 Declining Enrolment Projections – Impact to Student Transportation Funding
106. CM 14e.pdf – Schedule “A” Definition of Services
107. CM 14f.pdf – DanNel Coach Lines Ltd.
108. CM Obs 1.3.2.1 - PPI Single Source RFP NSTS 2012-01
109. CM Obs 1.3.2.2 - Georef Contract
110. C Obs 2.2.2.1 - RFP Implementation Checklist Template
111. Niagara Financial Info

112. NSTS EE Review Data
113. PP 1.pdf – Board Student Transportation Policy
114. PP 2.pdf –Schedule of Evenets
115. PP 3.pdf – Route Design
116. PP 4.pdf – 2011-12 Strategy report
117. PP 5.pdf – Student Safety Programs
118. PP 6.pdf – Schedule A – First Aid, CPR and EPIPen Traning
119. PP 7,8.pdf – Specialized Programs
120. PP Obs 4.4.3.2 2012-13 Fleet Age Analysis
121. PP Obs 4.4.3.2 Delay History for Vehicle Age and Reliability
122. RT 1 -1.pdf – Planning Values
123. RT 1 -2.pdf – Mapping and Boundaries
124. RT 2.pdf – Student Information Changes
125. RT 3.pdf – Service Level Agreement between NSTS and DSBN
126. RT 4.pdf – BusPlanner Quick Start Guide
127. RT 5.pdf – NSTS Technology Matrix
128. RT obs 4.2.3.1 Internal Appeal Review Process by NSTS
129. RT obs 4.2.3.1 Sample Appeal Executive Director via Email

## 10 Appendix 4: Common Practices

### Home to School Distance

Activity	JK/SK	Gr. 1 - 8	GR. 9 - 12
Common Practice	0.8 km	1.2 km	3.2 km
Policy - DSBN	0.8 km	1.6 km	2.5 km
Policy - NCDSB	0.8 km	1.6 km	2.5 km

### Home to Bus Stop Distance

Activity	JK/SK	Gr. 1 - 8	GR. 9 - 12
Common Practice	0.5 km	0.8 km	0.8 km
Policy - DSBN	0.8 km	1.6 km	2.5 km
Policy - NCDSB	0.8 km	1.6 km	2.5 km
Practice	800 m	800m	1000m

### Arrival Window

Activity	JK/SK	Gr. 1 - 8	GR. 9 - 12
Common Practice	18	18	25
Policy - DSBN	10	10	10
Policy - NCDSB	10	10	10

### Departure Window

Activity	JK/SK	Gr. 1 - 8	GR. 9 - 12
Common Practice	16	16	18
Policy - DSBN	10	10	10
Policy - NCDSB	10	10	10

### Earliest Pick up Time

Activity	JK/SK	Gr. 1 - 8	GR. 9 - 12
Common Practice	6:30	6:30	6:00
Policy - DSBN	6:24 AM	6:24 AM	6:24 AM
Policy - NCDSB	6:24 AM	6:24 AM	6:24 AM

### Latest Drop off Time

Activity	JK/SK	Gr. 1 - 8	GR. 9 - 12
Common Practice	5:30	5:30	6:00
Policy - DSBN	5:12 PM	5:12 PM	5:12 PM
Policy - NCDSB	5:12 PM	5:12 PM	5:12 PM

### Maximum Ride Time

Activity	JK/SK	Gr. 1 - 8	GR. 9 - 12
Common Practice	75	75	90
Policy - DSBN	60	60	60
Policy - NCDSB	60	60	60

**Note:** 96 percent of all students have ride times < 40 minutes with 99.5 percent < 60 minutes

### Seated Students per Vehicle

Activity	JK/SK	Gr. 1 - 6	GR. 9 - 12
Common Practice	69	69	52
Policy - DSBN	60	60	48
Policy - NCDSB	60	60	48

**Note:** Guidelines for a combined load of K-12 students is 55

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