

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

Public Session: 5:30 p.m.

AGENDA

A. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

S. Barnett

B. CALL TO ORDER/NOTING OF MEMBERS ABSENT

S. Barnett

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

S. Barnett

D. MULTI YEAR CAPITAL PLAN (MYCP)

S. Veld

E. AWARD OF CONTRACTS SUMMARY REPORT

S. Veld

F. 2025-26 NIAGARA STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES (NSTS) ANNUAL PLAN

S. Veld

G. ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

Multi-Year Capital Plan

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

BACKGROUND

The Multi-Year Capital Plan for schools in the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) identify the projected capital needs for:

- School Renewal and School Condition Improvement Projects;
- Accessibility Improvement projects;
- Additions/Alterations to meet school program needs;
- Major Capital Construction Projects;
- Administrative Capital Projects.

In developing the Multi-Year Capital Plan, needs were identified and prioritized from school condition data in our asset management software, facility renewal requests received from schools, instructional space requirements, education program needs and accessibility improvement requirements.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

The capital plan includes the continuation of renewal projects that were previously approved including security and intrusion system replacements of \$1.5 Million, and the multi-system upgrades at Welland Centennial, Thorold and Eastdale Secondary Schools of \$26 Million.

The plan for 2026-27 includes the commencement of the multi-system upgrades at Port Colborne Secondary School, and Central French Immersion PS. These infrastructure upgrades will continue over many years with St. Catharines Collegiate planned for 2028-2029.

The interior renovations plan includes an allocation for a culinary program expansion at Governor Simcoe and Sir Winston Churchill Secondary Schools to provide a full Hospitality and Tourism curriculum and the opportunity for a student-run cafeteria during lunch hours. Funding has also been included to address any in year needs to support our Special Education program and students, this ensures that the DSBN can be responsive as emerging needs arise in our system.

An allocation of over \$4 Million will address accessibility, concrete and asphalt replacement, electrical, flooring, painting, plumbing and roofing.

The plan approved last year was completed prior to the DSBN receiving an additional funding allocation for Accessibility and Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) of \$30 Million. We commenced the work this year at Glendale, Welland Centennial, Eastdale, Stamford and Westlane.

Page 3 of the report “Summary of Funding/Revenue” identifies the capital funding sources for these projects including approved capital grants from the Province, use of proceeds from the sale of school buildings and sites, use of deferred revenue school renewal, current school renewal and school condition funding.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Overall, DSBN is planning on spending over \$124 Million on capital needs in the 2026-27 school year, the largest capital investment we have ever undertaken.

The summary of expenditures and the details of the types of projects DSBN plans to undertake, are shown on pages 4 through 7.

APPENDED DATA

1. District School Board of Niagara Multi-Year Capital Plan.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

“That the Multi-Year Capital Plan be received, and staff be authorized to proceed with all identified projects up to and including the 2026-27 year, subject to confirmation of necessary Ministry of Education approvals.”

Respectfully submitted by:

Stacy Veld, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services and Treasurer
Bob Dunn, Controller of Facility Services
Carrie Stasiak, Senior Manager Construction

March 10, 2026

For further information, please contact Stacy Veld, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services and Treasurer.

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA
MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN
SUMMARY OF FUNDING / REVENUE

REVENUE	Revised 2025-26	Projected 2026-27	Projected 2027-28	Projected 2028-29	Projected 2029-30	Projected 2030-31	Total 2026-2031
School Renewal Allocation (SRA)							
Major Capital Projects	620,000	-	-	-	-	-	620,000
Deferred	711,540	-	-	-	-	-	711,540
Current Year Allocation	11,968,460	10,000,000	7,000,000	10,500,000	11,000,000	5,000,000	55,468,460
	13,300,000	10,000,000	7,000,000	10,500,000	11,000,000	5,000,000	56,800,000
School Condition Improvement (SCI)							
Regular	20,899,000	18,900,000	21,425,000	23,075,000	21,725,000	17,225,000	123,249,000
Accessibility	3,037,000	-	-	-	-	-	3,037,000
RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete)	3,190,000	28,030,000	-	-	-	-	31,220,000
	27,126,000	46,930,000	21,425,000	23,075,000	21,725,000	17,225,000	157,506,000
Land Priority Funding							
South Welland (Dain City) site	11,077,000	-	-	-	-	-	11,077,000
Thorold East (Rolling Meadows) site	10,009,000	-	-	-	-	-	10,009,000
Welland-Thorold (Fairgrounds) site	9,016,000	-	-	-	-	-	9,016,000
	30,102,000	-	-	-	-	-	30,102,000
Capital Priority Funding							
Fitch Street PS	3,110,500	-	-	-	-	-	3,110,500
Quaker Road PS	100,000	-	-	-	-	-	100,000
Thundering Heights PS	2,500,000	-	-	-	-	-	2,500,000
South Welland (Dain City) elementary	5,000,000	22,250,000	1,464,500	-	-	-	28,714,500
Thorold East (Rolling Meadows) elementary	9,000,000	22,750,000	1,501,300	-	-	-	33,251,300
Welland-Thorold (Fairgrounds) elementary	10,500,000	20,750,000	1,542,000	-	-	-	32,792,000
	30,210,500	65,750,000	4,507,800	-	-	-	100,468,300
TOTAL USE OF MINISTRY FUNDING	\$ 100,738,500	\$ 122,680,000	\$ 32,932,800	\$ 33,575,000	\$ 32,725,000	\$ 22,225,000	\$ 344,876,300
Culinary Programs							
Governor Simcoe SS	-	800,000	-	-	-	-	800,000
Laura Secord SS	800,000	-	-	-	-	-	800,000
Sir Winston Churchill SS	-	800,000	-	-	-	-	800,000
Westlane SS	800,000	-	-	-	-	-	800,000
Major Capital Projects							
Gainsborough Central PS	169,700	-	-	-	-	-	169,700
Marshville PS	50,000	-	-	-	-	-	50,000
TOTAL USE OF PROCEEDS OF DISPOSITION (POD)	\$ 1,819,700	\$ 1,600,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,419,700
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 102,558,200	\$ 124,280,000	\$ 32,932,800	\$ 33,575,000	\$ 32,725,000	\$ 22,225,000	\$ 348,296,000

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA
MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES

PROJECTS	Pg #	Revised 2025-26	Projected 2026-27	Projected 2027-28	Projected 2028-29	Projected 2029-30	Projected 2030-31	Total 2026-2031
School Capital Renovations & Improvement Projects	3-4	41,406,000	58,530,000	28,425,000	33,575,000	32,725,000	22,225,000	216,886,000
Capital Acquisitions & Projects	5	61,152,200	65,750,000	4,507,800	-	-	-	131,410,000
Proposed Capital Requests	6							-
TOTAL		\$ 102,558,200	\$ 124,280,000	\$ 32,932,800	\$ 33,575,000	\$ 32,725,000	\$ 22,225,000	\$ 348,296,000

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA
MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN
SCHOOL CAPITAL RENOVATIONS & IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Projects	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	TOTAL
Accessibility	2,445,000	400,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	4,845,000
Doors & Windows	400,000	100,000	100,000	800,000	500,000	500,000	2,400,000
Electrical	600,000	250,000	250,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	7,100,000
Energy & Lighting	800,000	250,000	250,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	4,300,000
Flooring	200,000	100,000	100,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,300,000
Interior Renovations	2,100,000	2,400,000	500,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	6,950,000
Masonry	500,000	250,000	100,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,350,000
Mechanical	4,800,000	800,000	2,000,000	6,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	23,600,000
Multisystem Upgrades	21,300,000	35,323,000	19,200,000	14,500,000	15,000,000	4,500,000	109,823,000
Painting	100,000	100,000	100,000	300,000	250,000	250,000	1,100,000
Plumbing	303,000	50,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	453,000
Portable Upgrades	-	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000
Roof Replacement	5,098,000	15,757,000	3,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000	41,855,000
Security & Intrusion Systems	2,160,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	-	-	-	5,160,000
Site Work	350,000	900,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	3,650,000
Maintenance / Emergency Repairs	250,000	250,000	100,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,500,000
TOTAL	\$ 41,406,000	\$ 58,530,000	\$ 28,425,000	\$ 33,575,000	\$ 32,725,000	\$ 22,225,000	\$ 216,886,000

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA
MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN
CAPITAL PROJECTS

School	Project	Status	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	TOTAL
Acquisitions									
South Welland (Dain City) site	Land purchase		11,077,000	-	-	-	-	-	11,077,000
Thorold East (Rolling Meadows) site	Land purchase		10,009,000	-	-	-	-	-	10,009,000
Welland-Thorold (Fairgrounds) site	Land purchase		9,016,000	-	-	-	-	-	9,016,000
Construction & School Additions									
Fitch Street PS	School Addition / Child Care / Facility Improvements	NC	3,510,500	-	-	-	-	-	3,510,500
Gainsborough Central PS	Gym Addition / Facility Improvements	C	169,700	-	-	-	-	-	169,700
Marshville PS	New School Construction	C	50,000	-	-	-	-	-	50,000
Quaker Road PS	School Addition / Child Care / Facility Improvements	C	320,000	-	-	-	-	-	320,000
Thundering Heights PS	New School Construction	NC	2,500,000	-	-	-	-	-	2,500,000
South Welland (Dain City) elementary	New School Construction	D	5,000,000	22,250,000	1,464,500	-	-	-	28,714,500
Thorold East (Rolling Meadows) elementary	New School Construction	D	9,000,000	22,750,000	1,501,300	-	-	-	33,251,300
Welland-Thorold (Fairgrounds) elementary	New School Construction	D	10,500,000	20,750,000	1,542,000	-	-	-	32,792,000
TOTAL			\$ 61,152,200	\$ 65,750,000	\$ 4,507,800	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 131,410,000

STATUS LEGEND
D Design
T Tender
IP In Progress
NC Near Completion
C Complete

**DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA
MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN
PROPOSED CAPITAL REQUESTS**

School	Project	Anticipated Purchase & Opening Date
<i>Land Acquisitions</i>		
South Central Fort Erie	Land	2026-27
East Welland	Land	2028-29
South East Niagara Falls (Grassy Brook)	Land	2028-29
South Thorold (Port Robinson West)	Land	2028-29
South West Niagara Falls (Grand Niagara)	Land	2033-34
East Port Colborne (Killaly)	Land	2034-35
<i>New Construction & School Additions</i>		
South Central Fort Erie	New elementary school	Sep 2028
Oakwood PS	School addition	Sep 2028
Glynn A Green PS	School addition	Sep 2029
Greater Fort Erie SS	School addition	Sep 2029
East Welland	New elementary school	Sep 2030
South East Niagara Falls (Grassy Brook)	New elementary school	Sep 2030
South Thorold (Port Robinson West)	New elementary school	Sep 2030
River View PS	School addition	Sep 2030
West Niagara SS	School addition	Sep 2030
Welland Centennial SS	School addition	Sep 2032
South West Niagara Falls (Grand Niagara)	New elementary school	Sep 2035
East Port Colborne (Killaly)	New elementary school	Sep 2036

Award of Contracts Summary Report

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

BACKGROUND

The Award of Contracts Summary Report is presented to Trustees to provide information with respect to contracts awarded that are equal to or greater than \$750,000. The Summary highlights the project name, the value of the contract awarded, who it was awarded to, and the date of award.

AWARD OF CONTRACTS SUMMARY FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2026 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2026

PROJECT NAME	BID AMOUNT AWARDED	VENDOR(S) AWARDED	CONTRACT AWARD DATE	PROCUREMENT TYPE
End-User Computing Devices	\$20,004,519*	Asus Bluum Compugen Incorporated Dell Canada Northern Micro Inc. a Converge Company Staples Professional	January 21, 2026	Supply Ontario Collaborative Vendor of Record
CCTV Upgrades Elementary Schools Phase 2	\$1,986,470	BCR Electric	January 26, 2026	Request for Tender Invitational to Prequalified Bidders
DSBN Academy Cooling Tower, Chiller, Boiler Upgrades	\$1,369,000	Group 92 Mechanical	February 10, 2026	Request for Tender Invitational to Prequalified Bidders
Martha Cullimore HVAC & Electrical	\$2,685,000	Nutemp Mechanical Systems Ltd.	February 18, 2026	Request for Tender Invitational to Prequalified Bidders
Furniture – Classroom and Office	\$5,560,882*	Alpha-Vico Brault & Bouthillier Ltd/ Louise Kool & Galt Limited GPS Products Inc. dba Alumni Educational Solutions Patrick Cassidy Schoolhouse Products Spaces Inc. Staples Professional	February 19, 2026	OECM Collaborative Vendor of Record
Portable Relocations	\$1,450,000	C.L. Martin and Co. Limited Scott Woods Transport Inc.	February 25, 2026	Request for Supplier Qualifications Vendor of Record

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

**Estimate – Contract value estimate based on previous expenditures. Contract award will be adjusted based on actual goods and services rendered.*

RECOMMENDED MOTION

“That the Award of Contracts Summary Report for the period ending February 28, 2026, be received.”

Respectfully submitted by:

Stacy Veld, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services and Treasurer
March 10, 2026

For further information, please contact Stacy Veld, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services and Treasurer.

Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) 2025-26 Annual Plan

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

BACKGROUND

At the annual meeting of the Board of Directors for Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS), the NSTS 2025-26 Annual Plan was presented. Attached is the plan for your information.

APPENDED DATA

NSTS 2025-26 Annual Plan

RECOMMENDED MOTION

“That the Niagara Student Transportation Services 2025-26 Annual Plan be received.”

Respectfully submitted by:

Stacy Veld, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services and Treasurer

March 10, 2026

For further information, please contact Stacy Veld, Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services and Treasurer.



NIAGARA STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

2025-2026 ANNUAL PLAN



NSTS.ca
Driven By Safety

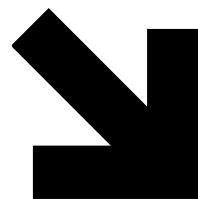


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
1. Executive Director's Message	4
2. Key Consortium Milestones.....	5
3. Inclement Weather Cancellations.....	7
4. Organizational Overview	8
5. 2025-26 Priorities	12
6. Advancing Student Safety	15
7. 26-27 & Beyond Priorities.....	17

INTRODUCTION

Who We Are

Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) is a transportation consortium formed by the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) and the Niagara Catholic District School Board (Niagara Catholic). Established in 2007 and incorporated as a not-for-profit organization, NSTS is responsible for the planning, coordination, and delivery of student transportation services across the Niagara region.

NSTS reports to a Board of Directors comprised of senior leaders from both partner school boards. Funding for student transportation is provided by the Ministry of Education, and the school boards collaborate to establish harmonized transportation policies that define eligibility, service levels, and operational standards. NSTS implements these policies, manages the approved transportation budget, and oversees service delivery in alignment with legislative requirements and industry best practices.

Our Mission

NSTS is committed to student success by providing safe, effective, reliable and efficient transportation services to the learners of Niagara.

What We Do

Each school day, NSTS safely transports approximately 35,631 students to and from 152 schools and 40 specialized education sites using a fleet of more than 566 school buses and 175 specialized vehicles. Collectively, these vehicles travel over ten million kilometres annually, supporting equitable access to education for students across urban, rural, and specialized program environments.

How We Deliver

To achieve our mission, NSTS:

- Apply harmonized transportation policies to determine eligibility and service levels.
- Implements policies, procedures, contracts, and operational practices aligned with legislation, regulations, and industry-leading standards.
- Utilize specialized transportation management software, communication portals, and GPS technology across 100% of service vehicles to ensure safe, reliable, and transparent operations.
- Collaborate with school boards, safety partners, and community organizations to deliver safety education programs that promote responsible student travel and active school transportation.
- Pursue continuous improvement initiatives to enhance safety, efficiency, service reliability, and environmental sustainability.

Our Commitment

At NSTS, safety, service excellence, and accountability guide everything we do. Through strong governance, trusted partnerships, and innovative transportation solutions, NSTS remains dedicated to delivering dependable, high-quality student transportation that supports learning, well-being, and community confidence.

1. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The 2025–2026 school year marks another pivotal chapter for the Consortium as NSTS approaches its 19th year of service and navigates a rapidly evolving student transportation landscape. Our priorities remain focused on workforce onboarding and development, procurement and funding readiness, safety excellence, technology modernization, and system resilience to meet the needs of Niagara's communities.

At the forefront of our work is workforce renewal and capacity building, with effective onboarding, training, and integration of staff into new roles as a key operational priority. Through structured onboarding and targeted professional development, NSTS strengthens organizational capacity, accelerates role readiness, and reinforces long-term resilience, supporting service continuity, regulatory compliance, and operational excellence.

Looking ahead, NSTS will monitor provincial procurement practices, funding frameworks, and policy shifts to inform post-2027 service contracts while integrating emerging best practices to enhance safety, cost efficiency, workforce sustainability, risk mitigation, and service stability. In parallel, we remain committed to advancing a comprehensive driver recruitment and retention framework, supported by safety leadership, technology enablement, and professional development initiatives to strengthen engagement, workplace safety, and service reliability.

NSTS continues to leverage strong partnerships with school boards to enhance administrative support, business continuity planning, cybersecurity resilience, and emergency preparedness, reinforcing organizational readiness and operational excellence.

Reflecting on NSTS's journey, I am filled with pride and gratitude. I extend my heartfelt thanks first to our dedicated NSTS staff. Your professionalism, adaptability, and commitment form the foundation of everything we do. I also recognize our drivers, monitors, dispatchers, safety personnel, maintenance staff, and bus operator leadership. Your dedication ensures Niagara's students travel safely and reliably while strengthening public trust in our system.

Together, we continue to build a safe, resilient, and student-centered transportation network that supports the success of every learner in Niagara and exemplifies excellence in student transportation.

2025-26

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Camillo Cipriano
Chairperson

Kelly Pisek
Vice-Chairperson

Stacy Veld
Treasurer
Vice-Chairperson of the Management Advisory Committee

Giancarlo Vetrone
Director
Chairperson of the Management Advisory Committee

Simon Hancox
Director

Pat Rocca
Director

OFFICER

Sarb Sandhu
Executive Director
Secretary to the Board

S Sandhu

2. KEY CONSORTIUM MILESTONES

Key Accomplishments:

School Year	Milestone Achievement
2006—2007	DSBN and Niagara Catholic signed Consortium Agreement to form NSTS and filed as a corporation under the Corporations Act of Ontario.
2007—2008	Integrated the student database of both school boards for transportation planning purposes to start planning as a single entity.
2008—2009	First school year operating as a single entity with staff serving students of both school boards in specific geographic areas.
2009—2010	Implement harmonized policies and administrative procedures for both school boards and ranked Moderate-High on first Effectiveness & Efficiency Review.
2010—2011	Implemented new planning and routing software by Georef to support enhanced data management, route planning and secure web portals.
2011—2012	Implemented competitive procurement in West Niagara, harmonized all service offerings and implemented major efficiency projects across Niagara.
2012—2013	Achieved High rating on Effectiveness & Efficiency Review.
2013—2014	Achieved full compliance with BPS Procurement Directive, equipped 100% of vehicles with GPS.
2014—2015	Modernized First Ride program for students new to the bus and for students with individualized transportation needs.
2015—2016	Implemented Intertrain in presentations for school bus safety and behaviour management program in schools.
2016—2017	Office moved to St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Elementary School and commenced initiatives to support driver recruitment and retention.
2017—2018	Added two new staff positions to recognize increasing demands on resources from alternative education, special programs and driver shortage challenges.
2018—2019	Hosted first Niagara School Bus Professionals event and negotiated contract solutions to improve driver recruitment and retention.

2019—2020	Implemented extended contracts on 70% of routes, camera program on 25% of routes and experienced service disruption due to COVID-19.
2020—2021	Implemented competitive procurement on 30% of routes, modified services to respond to COVID-19, and business continuity measures, including SaaS, and added new position to support Executive Director.
2021—2022	Seamless transition of the organization to a new leadership team with focus on business results, continuity and building on key stakeholder relationships. Collaborated with Bus Operators to ensure all school buses were compliant with new Eight Lamp Amber-Red Warning System, further enhancing student safety measures.
2022—2023	Developed a new Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP) form that will help ensure we have all the information for successfully transporting students with exceptional needs. Hosted the first Professional Development Event for Local Bus Professionals since 2019. Awarded the 2023 Wheels of Change Award: Organization for institutionalizing Active School Travel within the region and supporting the development of Heart Niagara to encourage more families to cycle to school (Bike Rodeo). Updated NSTS website to ensure compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level A and Level AA. Consortium Agreement and By-laws were updated ensuring legal compliance and incorporated best practices.
2023—2024	Reached an agreement to extend current contracts with our existing school bus operators, securing 70% of the routes through 2027. Applied the new funding framework released by the Ministry of Education for student transportation including the Recruitment and Retention Bonus for drivers.
2024—2025	Commenced transportation services for the Niagara Children's Centre School Authority, starting with 11 dedicated routes and added a new Area Transportation position to recognize increasing demands on resources. Implemented a revised transportation policy that increased the eligibility distance for secondary school students to 3.2 kilometers. Updated NSTS Parent Portal access to offer a more secure, accurate, and user-friendly experience. Portal Access is now based on contact email addresses in the student SIS record
2025-2026	Three new employees were successfully onboarded, bringing the total to five staff members appointed to new positions as part of NSTS's workforce renewal strategy, following natural attrition through retirements.

3. INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

NSTS uses a structured, safety-first framework to assess real-time and forecasted weather, road conditions, and operational readiness to determine transportation service levels. Decisions are made early each morning to support safe, reliable operations and timely communication with school boards, shareholders and families.



* Includes Partial route cancellations impacting student transportation in Fort Erie.

**Includes Partial route cancellations impacting student transportation in Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Wainfleet.

¹ Current school year; data reported through February 2, 2026.

	Schools	Transportation
2014-15	1	2
2015-16	0	2
2016-17	0	0
2017-18	1	1
2018-19	3	9
2019-20	0	1
2020-21	1	1
2021-22	2	5
2022-23	2	3.11*
2023-24	0	0.22**
2024-25	1	2.11*
2025-26¹	1	1.22**

4. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

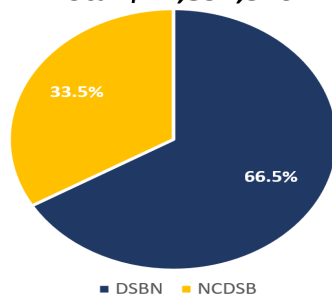
Financial & Student Information:

In the 2025-26 school year, there are 37,254 students eligible for transportation and 35,631 students transported with projected expenditures of \$44.85 million. Not all eligible students are riding the bus, 1,623 are Opted-Out of transportation.

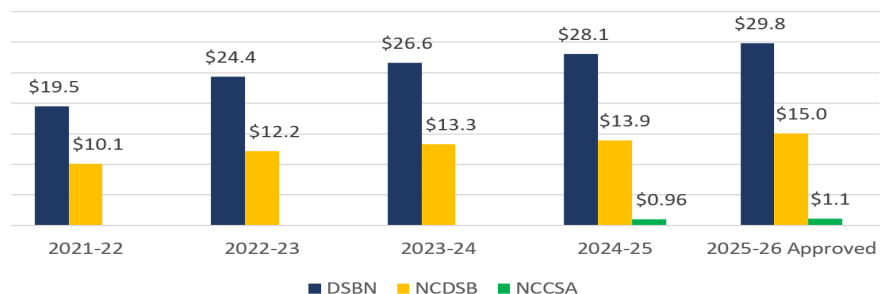
Both school boards are projected to have expenditures greater than the student transportation Grant.

In the 2025-26 school year, the cost per student transported for DSBN is projected to be \$1,379 and for Niagara Catholic \$1,076. For historical context, the following charts represent the previous five years:

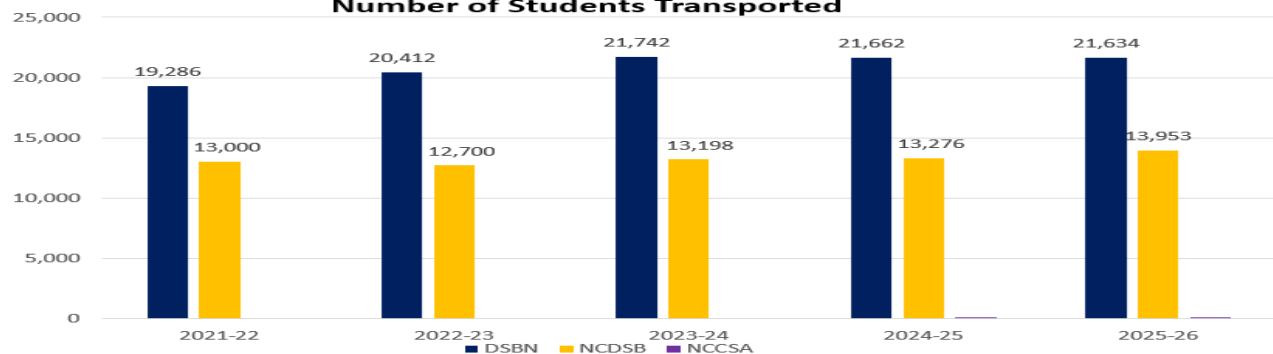
Approved Budget per Board
Total \$44,852,340



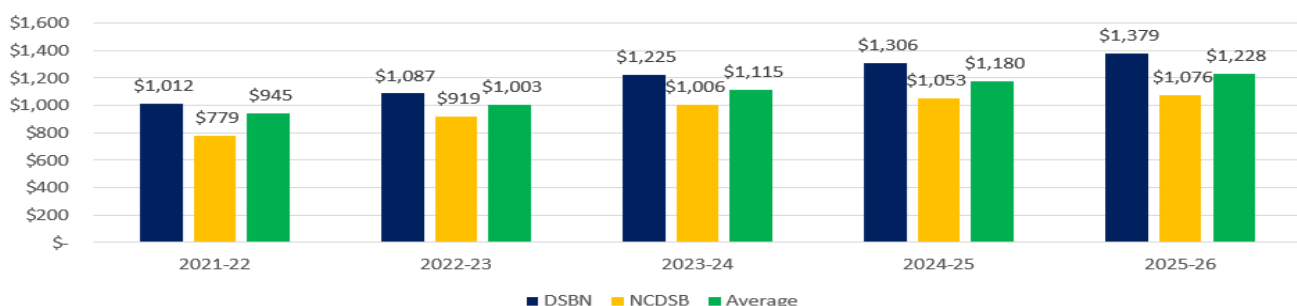
Transportation Expenditure by Board



Number of Students Transported



Cost per Student Transported



Organizational Structure:

The Board of Directors is comprised of three representatives appointed by each member school board, for a total of six (6) Directors. The 2025–26 Directors are listed on Page 3. The Management Advisory Committee (MAC) is comprised of the Associate Director of Education, Corporate Services from each member school board.

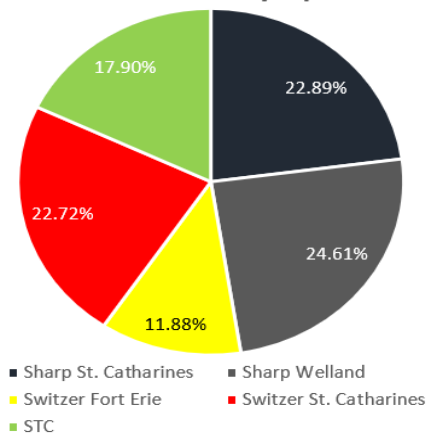
NSTS maintains a staffing complement of fourteen (14) positions. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors through the Management Advisory Committee and serves as Secretary to the Board. All NSTS staff report directly to the Executive Director. The organizational chart below outlines the 2025–26 staffing structure and assigned positions.



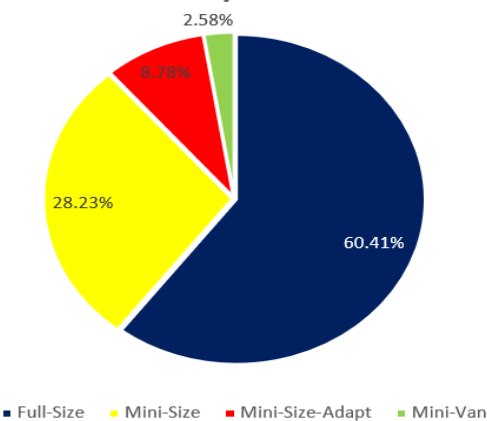
Service Providers:

NSTS holds transportation service contracts directly with service providers on behalf of the member school boards. Approximately 70% of bus routes are under contract until August 2027, with three optional one-year extensions through August 2030, while the remaining 30% of routes are contracted through August 2030. In the 2024–25 school year, NSTS managed a total of 581 school bus routes, providing a high degree of contractual stability to support service continuity and operational planning.

Bus Route Share by Operator



Bus Routes by Size of Vehicle



Driver Demographic & Years of Services

Year-over-year analysis of school bus driver experience and workforce demographics indicates a system undergoing significant structural transition, influenced by competitive procurement cycles since 2019–20 and persistent post-pandemic labour market pressures. The data reflects a growing proportion of newly recruited drivers and a strengthening mid-tenure cohort, alongside a continued decline in long-tenured bus drivers, resulting in a reduced average length of service. In response, NSTS is proactively partnering with transportation service providers to strengthen recruitment pipelines, enhance onboarding supports, and implement early-tenure retention strategies, supporting workforce stability, service reliability, and the long-term sustainability of student transportation operations.

Years of Driving Experience

Less than one year	24.48%
1-2 years	18.23%
3-9 years	42.71%
10-14 years	11.28%
15-19 years	1.91%
20-24 years	1.39%



Driver Demographic

Age 20 – 29	4.17%
Age 30 – 39	14.24%
Age 40 – 49	16.67%
Age 50 – 59	19.44%
> Age 60	45.48%

Technology Deployed

- BusPlanner suite of products is deployed for routing, managing and scheduling student transportation, including secure web portals and Software as a Service (SaaS) hosting and technical support.
- All school buses are equipped with GPS (Synovia).
- Twenty-five (25%) of vehicles are equipped with internal-facing and external-facing cameras (Gatekeeper).

Administrative Support

- Both school boards provide financial services and procurement support, and other fee for service support, under the Service Level Agreement (SLA). Specific to DSBN SLA also includes human resources, payroll and benefit administration, and IT services and Niagara Catholic's SLA includes office lease, custodial services and phone service.
- DSBN Casual Secretary List, AnswerPlus and Interlock Issue Tracker provide support during back-to-school or other times of staff resource constraint.
- Insurance is purchased through OSBIE.

Community Partners

- Niagara Region Public Health is the primary partner for Active School Travel (AST) programs, and the AST network includes all twelve (12) municipalities, Niagara's crossing guard committee, Safety Village, Heart Niagara and Niagara Regional Police Services.
- Niagara Regional Police Services is the primary partner in the external-facing video camera program.
- NSTS is a member of Niagara's geospatial group with reciprocal data sharing for local GIS-related data.
- Intertrain provides school bus student safety training in schools featuring Buster the Bus for Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grades 4 to 8, including videos that are available on the NSTS website. These contracted services are through OECM, and in addition Intertrain has developed videos that are available on the NSTS website to support the First Ride program featuring Buzzy the Bee and a pedestrian safety program featuring Blue the Butterfly.

5. 2025-26 PRIORITIES

The 2025–2026 school year marks another pivotal chapter for the Consortium as NSTS approaches its 19th anniversary and navigates the challenges ahead. Our priorities will center on training and onboarding NSTS staff, monitoring procurement and funding framework, retaining skilled bus drivers and staff to support ridership demands and improve continuity while maintaining rigorous safety standards, adopting best practices, and leveraging technology to enhance efficiency and adapt to evolving demands.

Key objectives for the school year:

1. As NSTS advances its workforce strategy, the effective onboarding, training, and integration of staff into new roles remains the organization’s top operational priority. During the current school year, three new employees are being successfully onboarded, bringing the total to five staff members appointed to new positions following natural attrition and planned retirements. To ensure operational continuity, regulatory compliance, and service excellence, NSTS continues to invest in structured onboarding and targeted professional development. This includes participation in School Bus Ontario (SBO) safety and Ministry of Transportation regulatory training, role-specific BusPlanner system training, and formal education through the University of Guelph’s Certificate in Pupil Transportation Management and Diploma in School Board Administration programs. This comprehensive approach strengthens organizational capacity, accelerates role readiness, and reinforces long-term operational resilience.
2. Proactively monitor provincial procurement practices, funding frameworks, and policy shifts to inform the development of post-2027 service contracts. Integrate emerging best practices across Ontario to enhance safety, cost efficiency, workforce sustainability, risk mitigation, and long-term service stability, while ensuring alignment with evolving regulatory and funding requirements.
3. Continue to advance a comprehensive recruitment and retention framework that integrates safety leadership, technology enablement, and professional development opportunities, including conflict management and de-escalation training. These initiatives are designed to strengthen driver engagement, enhance workplace safety, improve service reliability, and support long-term workforce sustainability.
4. Leverage strong Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with partner school boards to enhance administrative and operational support functions. Build upon these frameworks to strengthen business continuity planning, cybersecurity resilience, service continuity protocols, and emergency response preparedness, ensuring organizational readiness across a range of operational risk scenarios.

Aug to December Priorities:

- NSTS's priority for school start-up is the safe, reliable, and on-time delivery of transportation for all eligible students, with particular emphasis on ensuring that specialized and exceptional student transportation requirements are fully implemented, continuously reviewed, and adjusted as needed to support student safety and success.
- Complete August 31 year-end financials.
- Submit Operator Report and School Report at the beginning of September to the Ministry.
- Complete Student Transportation School Year Start-up Survey.
- Submit daily route cancellation and delays report to the Ministry.
- Prepare and complete year-end financial audit, aim for week prior to or after Thanksgiving to have draft financial statements to school boards by October 31.
- Submit Ministry Student Transportation Routing Simulation
- Complete Annual Report and Annual Plan for Annual General Meeting.

January to March Priorities:

- Period 1 Recruitment and Retention bonus payments for eligible bus drivers, ensuring accuracy and compliance with established criteria.
- Ensure second semester Secondary program information is clear and that all corresponding transportation requirements are in place.
- Commence planning for following school year focused on capacity planning for increasing enrolment and transportation eligibility, and forecast new vehicles and drivers by March 31 to service providers.
- While planning for the following school year, determine if bell time efficiencies can offset new vehicle and driver requirements, to reduce strain on limited resources and engage the Management Advisory Committee in plans and preliminary budget.
- Submit actual annual expenditures for previous school year for (i) NSTS (ii) Bus Operators - bus driver's compensation, hours and Recruitment and Retention bonus payments.
- Reconcile year-to-date fuel escalation contractual requirement and funding provision.
- Engage staff in annual appraisal and development plan process.
- Project impact of CPI increases for equivalent contractual terms increase and Ontario minimum wage potential impact on driver recruitment and retention to engage Management Advisory Committee in planning for financial and contractual decisions.
- Plan Active School Travel "Spring in to Spring" campaign for pedestrian safety training.
- Align staff areas to alleviate capacity pressures of growth areas on specific Area Transportation Coordinators.
- Opt-In process for those eligible for transportation.
- Develop communication plans to more effectively communicate with schools and families for back-to-school for the following school year.
- Submit daily route cancellation and delays report to the Ministry.

April to July Priorities:

- Complete March 31 year-end financial process and project total expenditures to financial year-end August 31 to report to Management Advisory Committee.
- Complete consultation on the new bell time changes and finalize budget submission to each school board.
- Hold meetings with planning departments on enrolment projections and special education consultants of both school boards to validate planning assumptions.
- Active School Travel (AST) Spring into Spring campaign for pedestrian safety training.
- Plan following school year Consortium driver engagement activities with newsletters, PD Event and additional learnings to support recruitment and retention.
- Review school board process and timelines for the following school year pre-registration and registration process and align resources accordingly.
- Assess allocated funding for student transportation to determine how formula updates may impact local school boards and present findings to Management Advisory Committee.
- Review and redesign processes and communication tools for schools and families to reduce demands on staff during back to school.
- Develop school secretary and administrator information, and establish training and/or meeting attendance, to ensure schools are prepared to be the first line of communication with families.
- Review alternate programs and sites with Management Advisory Committee for future student transportation delivery options including aligning resources and budget.
- Review leading practices for hazard designation procedures, adopt and apply leading practices to all schools to reset eligibility by hazard designation.
- Meet with all Operators' management teams and conduct Annual Compliance Audits, ensuring all key contract terms are met by each bus company.
- Reconcile year-to-date fuel escalation contractual requirement and funding provision.
- Complete documentation on contract compliance and performance management, and key performance and achievement reporting, to prepare for Annual Report once financials are complete.
- Reconcile other grant expenditures for reporting to school boards, including student rider safety programs.
- Negotiate any new or relevant contract addenda for service providers related to new/changed expectations for the following school year.
- Period 2 Recruitment and Retention bonus payments for eligible bus drivers, ensuring accuracy and compliance with established criteria.

6. ADVANCING STUDENT SAFETY



BUZZY THE BEE

Teaches the First Ride Program to Kindergarten students and their families.



BUSTER THE BUS

Teaches Kindergarten to Grade 3 students school bus safety and behaviour expectations.



BLUE THE BUTTERFLY

Teaches Kindergarten to Grade 3 students pedestrian safety skills.



Current Program:

NSTS delivers a comprehensive suite of student safety programs designed to promote safe travel behaviours, reduce risk, and support age-appropriate learning across all grades.

In-School Bus Safety & Student Behaviour Training (Intertrain):

Age-appropriate presentations delivered to Kindergarten–Grade 3 and Grades 4–8, focused on school bus safety, respectful conduct, and emergency preparedness.

First-Time Rider Safety Program:

Targeted education for JK–Grade 1 students and families, outlining expectations, procedures, and responsibilities related to safe bus travel. This program is also delivered throughout the school year for students with specialized transportation needs.

Online Learning Resources:

- First Ride Video for new Kindergarten riders
- School Bus Safety Videos for Grades 1–3 and Grades 4–8
- Pedestrian Safety Video for Kindergarten–Grade 3
- Pedestrian Safety Pilot in Niagara Falls and Fort Erie

Grade 2 Safety Village Transportation Support:

NSTS provides transportation to support curriculum-based safety programming delivered by police officers, including school bus safety, pedestrian safety, and cycling safety.

Opportunity to Improve Programs:

To further strengthen student safety outcomes, NSTS will advance a coordinated, scalable, and region-wide program model grounded in operational efficiency, equity of access, and best practices in student transportation safety, including hands-on bus evacuation drills delivered collaboratively with service providers and bus drivers, for elementary and secondary schools, resulting in improved emergency preparedness, increased student confidence, and enhanced compliance with recognized safety standards.

Advancing Active School Travel

Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS), in partnership with Niagara Region Public Health, school boards, municipalities, and community organizations, will continue to advance Active School Travel (AST) programming to improve student safety, increase physical activity, and reduce traffic congestion around schools. Building on years of successful collaboration, a refined, scalable AST model will be implemented to support diverse school and community contexts, reduce barriers to walking, wheeling, and rolling, and embed active travel into everyday school culture.

Program Goals (2026 and beyond)

- Increase student participation in active travel to and from school
- Improve safety and reduce congestion in school zones
- Support student well-being, equity, and community connection
- Establish sustainable AST practices that can grow region-wide



Program Approach

AST will be delivered through two tailored implementation models:

- High-Capacity School Model
- Neighbourhood-Level School Model

A small number of pilot schools in each category will be identified based on school leadership, infrastructure readiness, municipal support, and community partnerships. These pilots will enable early success, practical learning, and strong evidence to support broader expansion.

Key Strategies

- School administration engagement and capacity-building
- Walkability reviews with municipal and community partners
- Integration of AST into daily routines
- Student leadership through clubs and school-wide initiatives
- Family and community involvement through events and communication
- Ongoing collaboration with Public Health, municipalities, and local organizations

Measurement, Sustainability, and Funding Context

Progress will be monitored using student travel data and participation tools aligned with OPHEA's Healthy Schools Certification framework to support accountability and sustainability. Program goals and rollout capacity will be influenced by the conclusion of Vision Zero funding following provincial changes to automated speed enforcement. As funding evolves, alternative government grants and municipal safety-based funding opportunities will be evaluated to support continued delivery and expansion. Through this focused, equity-driven, partnership-based approach, the Active School Travel (AST) program will strengthen school communities, enhance safety, and support long-term regional growth.

7. 26-27 & BEYOND PRIORITIES

Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) plays a critical role in supporting student safety, well-being, and access to learning across Niagara. NSTS remains committed to responsible stewardship, strong governance, and continuous improvement in service delivery.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, NSTS will update its strategic path to support shared Board and stakeholder priorities while strengthening funding optimization, technology-driven efficiency, workforce sustainability, proactive contract renewal planning, organizational knowledge transfer, and partnerships. These priorities will enhance system resilience, improve safety outcomes, and support the sustainable delivery of high-quality student transportation services across the region.

Student Safety, Well-Being, and Success

Student safety remains the foundation of all NSTS decision-making. Emphasis will continue to ensure specialized and exceptional transportation requirements are implemented, monitored, and adjusted to support equitable access, student well-being, and success.

Funding Alignment, Data Systems, and Financial Accountability

NSTS will align data systems, reporting processes, and eligibility frameworks with Ministry of Education funding guidelines to ensure accurate access to transportation funding. Strong data integrity and audit readiness will support transparency and responsible use of public resources.

Operational Efficiency and Technology Enablement

NSTS will leverage technology and process improvements to optimize routing, improve service reliability, and manage growth while reducing pressure on fleet and driver availability.

Workforce Sustainability and Governance Readiness

NSTS will support operator recruitment, retention, training, and knowledge transfer to maintain service continuity and safety standards, while preparing for contract renewals in 2027 and beyond through proactive governance planning.

Partnerships and System Collaboration

NSTS will strengthen partnerships to promote Active School Travel, enhance school zone safety, and support broader student and community well-being.

Through these priorities, NSTS reaffirms its commitment to collaboration, strong governance, and responsible stewardship in delivering a safe, efficient, inclusive, and sustainable student transportation system.



Driven By Safety



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