



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Recently, the Ministry of Education introduced standardized transportation criteria across the province. In order to align with these standards and the service levels in other regions of Ontario, Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO) will be implementing transportation changes in the 2026-2027 school year for both elementary and secondary school students.

The updates will ensure a consistent, fiscally responsible and sustainable approach as well as equitable access at reasonable distances for school transportation. This will mean changes to transportation service areas and walk-to-stop distances for students serviced by STEO.

These updates mean that some students who currently have access to bus transportation will be considered within walking distance to school, have a change to their bus stop location, and/or will have a longer bus ride time.

Starting September 2026, this is what the changes will mean in terms of distance:

Service Change	JK/SK	Grade 1-8	Grade 9-12
Distance between student's home address and school	800 metres	1.6kms	3.2km
Maximum walking distance to bus stop	800 metres	0.8km*	1.6kms
Maximum bus ride time	75 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes

*Walking distance between home address and school will be applied consistently to students in grades 7 and 8, regardless of the school setting they attend.

There's no doubt these updated service levels will mean changes for families, students and daily routines. Though these changes may not directly impact every family receiving this communication, we believe it is important to provide broad awareness and information as early as possible to allow time for planning, as well as support understanding across our school communities. Impacted families will receive more information detailing their specific circumstances, resources and supports leading up to the start of the 2026 school year.

Virtual Information Sessions

STEO will be hosting two virtual information sessions to allow community members the opportunity to learn more and ask any questions they may have. Sessions are open to both elementary and secondary school students and families:

- Thursday May 21, 2026, Time TBD
- Thursday May 28, 2026, Time TBD

More information regarding session times and how to attend will be shared soon.

Information, Programming and Resources

STEO will be organizing a number of efforts to ensure a smooth and safe transition for students, including:

- **Summer safety and support programming.** STEO will prepare and provide educational support materials and programming for students and families in the region, to help ensure safety with new routines. We will also be engaging community partners across the region to explore areas of partnership for broader community awareness about road safety. Details of summer sessions and other actions will be provided, including dates, times, location and age group segments.
- A new **centralized online support hub on our website (STEO.ca)**, which will provide a single access point for medical transportation and exceptional circumstances requests, hazard and safety concerns, as well as clear guidance on transportation eligibility, application processes, and more.
- Information about our **Hazard Assessment Tool**, which will evaluate student walking routes, align with industry best practices and local research.

We are also meeting with our community partners across the STEO service area to ensure awareness of the changes and discuss partnership opportunities for increased levels of road safety in advance of September.

As we navigate this adaption in service together, our focus will remain, as always, on ensuring safe and equitable access to school transportation service for eligible students across the region. For more information, including Q&A and accommodation resources, visit STEO's website, www.steo.ca.

Please feel free to contact Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario at 1-855-925-0022 or transportation@steo.ca for any clarification you may require.

With care,

Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario
transportation@steo.ca