

It is dangerous, however, to assume that this is the way that savings will actually be distributed since some boards will have already realized benefits from computerized routing (e.g. MSSB) or will have changed policies to cut costs (e.g. Etobicoke), or both. As well, it should be noted that part of the savings will directly benefit the Ministry of Education and Training through a reduction in the transportation grants it currently pays to the MSSB.

*"For all of us, this will mean riding a new learning curve. We are used to operating within our own jurisdiction and within its culture. This will change. Our co-operative effort will give an opportunity to control how that change comes about and to direct that change."  
Report of The Five Board Co-operative of the Mid-North Region*

The simulation indicated that, without changing any board policies, the development of an integrated, multi-board, coterminous approach to student transportation in Metro Toronto has the potential to produce cost savings of nearly \$7 million a year. The consultant also reported that, based on experience, implementation of this first step will provide the foundation upon which other positive changes can be based. Efficiencies can continue to be developed as the years go on, thus creating long term savings greater than those identified in this single planning exercise. Of course, a sound planning and administrative program would be a prerequisite to realize these additional savings.

It should be recognized that this approach may have to be phased in over several years since three contracts extend to June, 1996, three to June, 1997 and three to June, 1998. Efforts should be made to make interim arrangements prior to the expiration of the contracts or even to renegotiate some or all of them.



***Recommendation Number Twenty-Two:***

***The Task Force recommends that the nine school boards in Metro work together to implement as soon as possible an integrated, computerized routing system for student transportation like the model that was used in the operating simulation.***

***Potential Savings: \$6.9 million per year***





**Recommendation Number Twenty-Three:**

***The Task Force recommends that the nine school boards in Metro, individually and collectively, review their board policies and practices on student transportation to identify what changes could be made to produce further cost savings.***



**Recommendation Number Twenty Four:**

***The Task Force recommends that the study "Review of Pupil Transportation Activities" be referred to the nine boards in Metro for their consideration.***



## **WHEELCHAIR TRANSPORTATION**

As recommended in the final report of the Task Force on the Funding of Public Education (January, 1993) the Metro Toronto School Board decided in November, 1993 to proceed with a study to Ensure the Effective Use of Transportation Resources for Physically Handicapped and Out-of-Jurisdiction Students . The Metropolitan Separate School Board participated in the study and shared its costs. The work was carried out by the IBI Group during the 1993-94 school year and a report was presented in May, 1994. Comments on the report were received from all nine boards. The report and the comments were forwarded to the Task Force on Cost Savings Through Cooperative Activities with the request that they be considered as part of a comprehensive review of all student transportation.

The Task Force agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of all student transportation as one of its six priority areas for in-depth study. It then determined that it would proceed with a follow-up to the IBI study separately and coordinate it with the general study on



"regular" student transportation carried out by Laidlaw. This follow-up study was conducted by a former superintendent who had been involved with IBI on the original study, assisted by an expert panel composed of the transportation managers of the nine boards. Their assistance and advice was invaluable and greatly appreciated.

**Table 5:  
Number of Students by Board and Program Location**

School Board	Total # Students	Metro Wide P.C. Programs				Local Schools	Hugh MacMillan
		Sunny View	Tor SS	Scar SS	NY SS		
East York	10	4	2				4
Etobicoke	38	16	2		1	19	
CEFCUT	1***						
MTSB	142						
Metro Sep.	125	22	1	4		79	19
North York	79	31	2	11	14	8	13
Scarborough	113	43	12	14	2	32	10
Toronto	43 **(+39)	13 **(+23)	17 **(+15)		1	4	8 **(+1)
York	13	3	5	1		3	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>58</b>

**\*\* the bracketed # includes those who are transported by mini-vans**  
**\*\*\*transported by Metro Toronto School Board**  
**(+15) for Toronto SS includes 9 students attending Metro Health Classes**

The expert panel identified the following principles for the study:

- Maintain personalized transportation for the students with physical disabilities;
- No reduction of service;
- No compromise of safety; and
- No travel time per one way trip greater than 1 hour to the degree possible and under normal circumstances.



The panel also identified the following matters that should be considered in order to maximize the potential cost savings:

1. Metro Student Transportation Managers Committee;
2. Coordinated Accident/Weather Storm Procedures;
3. Central/Regional Contract Tendering/Proposal Call;
4. Central/Regional Routing;
5. Monitoring of Student Placements;
6. Use of Wheel-Trans; and
7. Common School Year, Common P.A. Days.

Items 3, 4, 6 and 7 are potential cost efficiencies and are discussed as part of the recommendations. The other three items along with an additional item called the host board concept are intended to provide improved service.

It was agreed by the expert panel that there was considerable merit in exploring the concept of a "host board". This concept requires the board where the students attend school to be responsible for the students' transportation whereas it is now usual for the host board to be responsible for full educational program and related services but not for transportation. Under this concept, parents' first contact for transportation concerns would be the school principal who in turn would have to deal with only one transportation manager instead of seven as could be the case now (e.g. Sunny View).

Sunny View School also has students attending from outside Metropolitan Toronto on a purchase of service arrangement. There are five from the Durham Board of Education, nine from the York Region Board of Education and six from the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board. It is expected that these boards outside Metro would continue to provide the wheelchair van transportation for those students.



The MSSB presently provides wheelchair van transportation to 27 students with physical disabilities attending programs in the public schools and 19 students attending Hugh MacMillan Centre. The host public school board(s) would become responsible for the transportation of the 27 students with physical disabilities and the transportation costs would be included in the purchase of service fee paid by MSSB to the respective public school board. The MSSB staff expressed some concern about whether the cost of purchasing transportation would be consistent with their present costs due to differences in daily per student cost among the boards.

The Metro Toronto School Board presently transports 142 students with physical disabilities in wheelchair vans to 18 different school settings throughout Metro. While programs and locations were transferred as of January 1, 1995 to the local school board in which they are located, transportation and some ancillary services continue to be Metro Toronto School Board central responsibilities. This arrangement is to be reviewed in the Fall of 1995. However, the host board concept appears equally applicable to these students and it will be recommended that they be included in this concept as soon as practicable.

### **Hugh MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre**

During this study, the expert panel raised the question of the wheelchair van transportation of students to the Hugh MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre, since the boards were paying the entire cost of this transportation. This centre is a board of education established under Section 68 of the Education Act. It receives funding directly from the Ministry of Education and Training under Section 50 of the General Legislative Grants which makes provision for funding at the rate of:

- (a) of teachers' salaries
- (b) of excess costs



The boards in Metro pay the centre for the education of their students on a per pupil basis of approximately \$55.00 a day. In addition, the boards provide wheelchair van transportation for these 57 students.

It should be noted that the other comparable Section 68 Boards elsewhere in the province (Kitchener and Windsor) do not charge school boards for transportation, but include all, or most of the cost in the budget for the centres. If the boards in Metro were treated in the same way, there would be a reduction of costs in excess of \$400,000 per year to those boards.

This matter should be rectified quickly because of the recent report dealing with the possible amalgamation of the Hugh MacMillan Centre and Bloorview Children’s Hospital. The educational program at Bloorview is currently provided by the Toronto Board of Education under Section 27 and there is no transportation involved. The report from the study committee does not mention transportation but does recommend the continuation of a specialized school under Section 68.

**Summary of Findings and Recommendations:**

The study identified five specific areas for potential cost savings and suggested a number of other areas where policy changes by the boards could produce further savings.

**Table 6: Areas Identified for Potential Cost Savings**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
1. Central/Regional Tendering	\$ 225,000
2. Central/Regional Routing	\$ 420,000
3. Use of Wheel-Trans	\$ 150,000
4. Common School Calendar	\$ 110,000
5. Hugh MacMillan Centre	\$ 420,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,325,000</b>



The first two, Central/Regional Tendering and Routing likely would have to be phased in over several years since a number of the contracts extend to June of 1998 and one to June of 1999. However, it may be possible to make interim arrangements prior to the expiration of the contracts or even to renegotiate some, or all of them.



**Recommendation Number Twenty-Five:**

*The Task Force recommends that the nine school boards in Metro utilize Central/Regional Tendering and Routing as part of a more cost effective approach to the provision of wheelchair van transportation for students with physical disabilities.*

*Potential Savings: \$645,000 per year*

The use of Wheel-Trans, for a limited number of senior secondary students (approximately 20) would be an important transitional learning experience for these students. They will soon become part of the adult world outside of school and will have to utilize Wheel-Trans as their regular mode of transportation. While recognizing that this would transfer costs from one public body to another, the evident value of such a transitional learning experience provides both rationale and justification.



**Recommendation Number Twenty-Six:**

*The Task Force recommends that the nine school boards in Metro request the TTC to provide regular home to school to home transportation by Wheel-Trans for a limited number of senior secondary school students in wheelchairs.*

*Potential Savings: \$150,000 a year*

It is recognized that the development of a common school calendar is complex, emotional and politically sensitive. Historically, the eight public boards have had almost identical school year calendars (with the exception of P.A. Days) and annual efforts have been made to coordinate with the MSSB and boards in the



rest of the GTA. The *Social Contract Act* has hampered these efforts with boards shutting down schools at widely varying times in order to provide unpaid leave days. Hopefully, this disruption will stop when the legislation expires early in 1996. The boards should renew their efforts to develop a school year calendar that is as congruent as possible.



***Recommendation Number Twenty-Seven:***

***The Task Force recommends that in order to reduce the costs of student transportation, the nine school boards in Metro make every possible effort to develop a common school year calendar.***

***Potential Savings: \$110,000 per year for wheelchair van transportation, more for general transportation***

The Task Force believes that the costs of transporting students to the Hugh MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre should be borne by the Centre, as is done in the two comparable centres in Kitchener and Windsor and not by the boards.



***Recommendation Number Twenty-Eight:***

***The Task Force recommends that, effective January 1, 1996, the Hugh MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre assume responsibility for the transportation of its students as is currently done by the other two comparable centres in the province (Kitchener & Windsor).***

***Potential Savings: \$420,000 per year***

There are many other matters raised in the Giljoy Study (e.g. host school concept, transportation managers committee, monitoring of student placements) which are worthy of consideration by the boards. Most of these are intended to further enhance the present high levels of service and save staff time while doing so.

