

Year in Review

SBO's TOP 2022



Accomplishments for SBO Members

MESSAGE FROM ROB MURPHY, PRESIDENT, SCHOOL BUS ONTARIO

SBO has been proactively working closely with the Ministry of Education, to achieve many goals we put forth over this school year. The funding formula committee was re-established in the fall as operators submitted costing material over two years ago. I'm pleased to report that the committee's work will be sent to the sector in the coming months, and we are confident in the process.

Emergency Funding is at the top of the list since the Summer of 2022, as SBO has sent many letters to the Minister of Education for consultation. Our sector faces many increases in costs including equipment, parts and driver wages. We are asking members to reach out to their MPP's to continue lobby efforts for funding.

This past summer Nancy and Rob Murphy met with Minister Lecce and MPP Harris to educate the public on the new 8-light system. At the press event, we discussed the current GSN (Grant for Student Needs) with the Minister and immediately got the allocation processed to the school boards/consortia, from the announcement last Spring.

That said, our membership dues are increasing in 2023 by two percent per route. Our successes are truly remarkable, and we couldn't do any of the lobbying, consultation with government without you and your membership and support!

I would like to personally thank the board of directors that meet bi-weekly for their continued guidance and support for our membership.

SOME OTHER SBO SUCCESSES:

School Bus Ontario continues to work hard on your behalf in the last year and we are happy to report some of the following successes:

Driver Retention Program

- SBO lobbied Minister Lecce to renew the Driver Retention Plan for another school year - the \$44 Million.

8-Lamp Amber Red System

- SBO worked with MPP Mike Harris Jr. to get the 8-lamp amber-red system implemented in Ontario. Our advocacy work with Harris and the House Leaders Office ensured the private members bill's passage in the Legislature.
- SBO successfully lobbied Transportation Minister Mulroney's office and Education Minister Lecce's office to reimburse our members for the cost to upgrade buses to the new 8-lamp system.

Funding Formula

- SBO executive also had several private meetings with Minister Lecce to discuss funding formula, procurement, the DRP and more.
- SBO worked with the Ministry of Education to revamp the funding formula - anticipated announcement this spring. We further worked with the Ministry on a non-financial metrics study to update the funding formula.

P.R.I.D.E. Program

- A new updated curriculum is under review by the Ministry of Transportation, adding another day to the program. We are very excited for the new program roll out and the hiring of nine new master trainers.

Media

- Executive Director, Nancy Daigneault proactively sought out media opportunities to drive the SBO message on school bus driver shortage, funding formula changes. She was interviewed by Global News, CTV News Toronto, Kitchener, Sudbury, CP24, Toronto Star, Canadian Press, Post Media.

Lobbying

- Lobby work continues to secure additional funding for operators to deal with inflationary pressures.
- Over the course of the coming year, SBO will be traveling to different jurisdictions to hear concerns/thoughts/suggestions from members about how we can better advocate on your behalf at Queen's Park.

Vulnerable Sector Checks (VSCs)

- More police agencies moved their Vulnerable Sector Checks (VSCs) online, including the OPP. SBO has been working with Ministry of Transportation staff to ensure digital VSCs are accepted for school bus driver licencing purposes and negotiating more digital VSC submission options, including via email.

DriveON

- For the last few years, the Ontario government has been moving towards an integrated emissions and safety inspection program referred to as DriveON. Throughout this time SBO has been promoting the interests of the school bus industry to push towards a flexible and efficient system. We know the general intent of how the program will proceed but are still waiting for the details to be relayed via the upcoming information sessions. SBO will continue to keep members operating an MVIS up to date on the rollout of the program and will be ready to assist them as it is implemented in the coming months.

Heavy Commercial Vehicle Deferred Payment Plan (HCVDPP)

- The Heavy Commercial Vehicle Deferred Payment Plan (HCVDPP), designed to retroactively capture commercial vehicle plate fees, has disproportionately impacted the school bus industry. SBO worked diligently to support members in completing submissions and attempting to minimize challenges when responding via the online application.

Electronic Logging Device (ELD)

- As Electronic Logging Device (ELD) enforcement commences for trucks on January 1, 2023, SBO continued to ensure school buses remained exempt from ELD requirements in Ontario. We continued to monitor ELD enforcement new and assist members with questions/concerns around ELD requirements in the school bus industry. In Ontario, ELD enforcement for non-school buses will be starting July 1, 2023, and SBO will continue to support members as this requirement comes into effect.

Ontario Transportation Expo (OTE)

- OTE finally returned to our first in-person conference since 2019. SBO was excited to put together a session lineup discussing various school bus industry issues and getting together with our members. We look forward to seeing everyone again at OTE 2023 taking place April 16th to 19th

The Driver's Seat Podcast

- This new member podcast is run by SBO President, Rob Murphy and Executive Director, Nancy Daigneault as another way to connect to our members and the bus industry.