
More wheels on the bus to roll for Fox students

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Terry Fox secondary school students (from left) Robbie Hodge, Colton Heard, Jordan Bischoff and brothers John and Eyal Geliebter will be smiling next time they're at the bus stop because TransLink has agreed that after-school ridership demand requires a regular sized bus, not a community shuttle. The students say they were by passed several times by fully loaded buses for several days after school began last week. They'll be sure to get a seat because the larger buses have 60 seats, 36 more than a community shuttle. Photograph By DIANE STRANDBERG/THE TRI-CITY NEWS

TransLink is likely to get an 'A' for service from Terry Fox secondary students who've struggled to get home from school since classes resumed because the buses were always full.

The students complained they had to wait up to an hour after school ended to catch a ride on a 24-seat community shuttle.

"I couldn't get on the bus, it just didn't stop," said John Geliebter, a Grade 12 student.

But it appears a squeaky wheel - and strong ridership - gets the grease because as of tomorrow, (Wednesday), a 40-foot bus with 60 seats will start the 188 route from Port Coquitlam to Burke Mountain.

Jeff Busby, a TransLink manager for project development, said the transportation authority was caught a little flat-footed by the increase in student ridership after School District 43 announced it would [no longer pay](#) for school buses to save money.

Busby said board's decision wasn't conveyed to TransLink until after scheduling for fall bus service had been made in April. To provide the additional service, a bus had to be pulled from another route. Busby didn't name the route but the change is good news for Fox students.

TransLink is also addressing concerns about overcrowding on the C29 route from Coquitlam Central to Westwood Plateau that serves Coquitlam students.

"Your readers are encouraged to report instances of overcrowding to TransLink customer service online or by phone so we can pinpoint the specific stops, times of day and direction where overcrowding is an issue," Busby said.

Meanwhile, an initiative to provide a private bus service for younger students on Burke Mountain is on hold until a sponsor can be found. Coun. Craig Hodge, a Burke resident who is helping to organize the service, said 38 families have said they're interested in paying \$50 a month for such a service.

"There trying to get it so that it's in the \$50 range because that's what you'd be paying for a [TransLink] concession card any way," Hodge said.

Hodge said he's pleased TransLink has responded to parents' concerns and said he hopes it will result in better bus service for the region.

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