



## **GTHA, Durham, London, Barrie, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa face high risk for school bus service disruptions in January 2018**

**November 1, 2017 – Toronto, Ontario** – Ontario school bus operators are cautioning several communities across the province that are at the highest risk to face serious school bus service interruptions in January if government action is not taken. The Ontario School Bus Association has identified the GTHA, Durham, London, Barrie, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa as the communities where there will be the greatest impact on service.

“Nearly one million Ontario families rely on school buses to get kids to school and home safely and on-time each day. Our operators’ ultimate priority is to ensure that service is not disrupted,” said Mark Begg, President of the Ontario School Bus Association (OSBA). “After talking to our members and reviewing the state of operations as they stand now, we’ve identified seven communities with a high risk of service interruptions. If the government doesn’t fill the minimum wage funding gap by January, the communities we’ve identified will see operators forced to idle buses as the current funding provided is inadequate to run the service.”

Unlike other service providers, who can manage the new minimum wage by raising prices, school bus operators are bound by long term contracts that never contemplated the 22 percent wage increase now planned by the Wynne government for January 1, 2018, and a further increase in January 2019.

“As operators we support the move to increase minimum wage, but as an industry solely funded by government and experiencing driver recruitment and retention issues, we can’t guarantee that service delivery will be possible without the government ensuring there is money to address the funding gap. We feel that we have a duty as service providers to warn parents, teachers and students as far in advance as possible about potential disruptions so that they can make alternate arrangements if necessary.”

Begg noted: “While the issue is systemic, we have identified the GTHA, Durham, London, Barrie, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa as communities that are at the highest risk for service disruptions. We want to work collaboratively with the government to find a solution that will ensure that families in these communities do not experience service interruptions in the New Year.”

The Ontario School Bus Association launched a public awareness campaign encouraging parents to contact Premier Kathleen Wynne via the website [www.getourkidstoschool.ca](http://www.getourkidstoschool.ca).

### **About the Ontario School Bus Association**

The Ontario School Bus Association (OSBA), founded in 1951, is the premier association providing advocacy, education, legislative and regulatory services to the provincial school bus industry. Our school bus operator members own and operate 75% of all school purpose vehicles in Ontario. OSBA member partners include school bus operator service providers, school boards/transportation consortia and supplier/manufacturers. Together, the school bus industry maintains the highest safety record of all commercial vehicles on the road, according to Transport Canada.



Website: [www.getourkidstoschool.ca](http://www.getourkidstoschool.ca)

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