March 21, 2019

Dear Applicant:

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Our File #: EECD/017/2019)

On March 4, 2019, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development received your request for access to the following records/information:

"January 2019 Decision/Direction Note titled GPS Technology for Student Transportation"

I am pleased to inform you that your request for access to this information has been granted in part and the responsive records are attached. Access to the remaining records, and/or information contained within the records, has been refused in accordance with the following exceptions to disclosure, as specified in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 (the Act):

Section 27: Cabinet Confidences

27. (2) The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose to an applicant

(b) information in a record other than a cabinet record that would reveal the substance of deliberations of Cabinet.

Section 29: Policy, Advice and Recommendation

29. (1) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant information that would reveal

(a) advice, proposals, recommendations, analyses or policy options developed by or for a public body or minister.

Section 35: Disclosure harmful to the financial or economic interests of a public body

35. (1) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant information which could reasonably be expected to disclose

(g) information, the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to prejudice the financial or economic interest of the government of the province or a public body;

As required by 8(2) of the Act, we have severed information that is unable to be disclosed and have provided you with as much information as possible. In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copies have been enclosed.
You may appeal this decision and ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the decision to provide partial access to the requested information, as set out in section 42 of the Act. A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner. Your appeal should identify your concerns with the request and why you are submitting the appeal.

The appeal may be addressed to the Information and Privacy Commissioner as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
2 Canada Drive
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John’s, NL, A1B 3V8
Telephone: (709) 729-6309; Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500

You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 52 of the Act.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Completed Access to Information Requests website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the undersigned by telephone at 709-729-7180 or by e-mail at garynoftall@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gary Noftall
ATIPP Coordinator

Attachment
Title: GPS Technology for Student Transportation

Decision/Direction Required:

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Background and Current Status:

- In August 2013, Deloitte released their report “GNL Student transportation considerations” which recommended giving long-term consideration to installing GPS on buses citing they provide transportation planners with critical information on actual route travelled, route metrics such as speed and allows for on-the-road performance monitoring from a desktop. GPS units provide details such as when the bus was started, how fast it travelled, where it travelled, when it stopped, when the doors opened, when the crossing arm and sign were deployed and allows parents to track their children’s bus online in real time.

- In March 2014, EECD provided NLES $1 million for the development and implementation of school transportation management system software. A committee was subsequently formed consisting of representatives of EECD and NLES with some guidance from the Economics and Statistics Agency to produce and evaluate a Request for Proposals (RFP) for this system, which included routing software, fleet maintenance software, a field trip planner, and GPS technology.

- No award was made on the RFP as all prices exceeded the $1 million budget allocation.

- NLES has a board-owned fleet of 349 buses and 16 service vehicles.

- NLES conducted two simultaneous GPS pilot projects from May 28, 2018 to June 29, 2018. Six units from Zonar Systems were piloted on school buses from their Gander Depot and six units from GPS To Go were piloted on buses from their Baie Verte Depot. The results were positive.

Analysis:

- It is projected that the upfront cost of the acquisition (supply and install) would range between [redacted]; however, the overall cost of the supply, installation and ongoing service/support over a five-year timeframe has the potential to be cost neutral due to the estimated annual savings it could yield in reducing idling and preventative maintenance.

- New Brunswick has been using GPS technology for a few years and is realizing savings; Nova Scotia is in the process of implementing GPS and early indications about its use and the potential for savings have been positive. GPS technology is becoming more prevalent across North America, not only in school transportation but for all industries where there is a lot of transportation.
GPS technology will increase accountability for school bus drivers, as NLES will have the ability to monitor speeds, idling, duration and location of stops. NLES will be able to monitor to ensure school bus drivers are not making non-authorized school bus stops. This information will benefit the district when addressing complaints as they will be able to check the data for factual information, versus a “he-said/she-said” situation.

GPS will allow parents to track their children’s bus on line.

Alternatives:  
1.  

Advantages:  

Disadvantages:  

2.  

Advantages:  

Disadvantages:  

Prepared/Approved by: D. Ross/ T. Stamp/ B. Evans/ B. Gardiner
Ministerial Approval: Hon. Al Hawkins

January 21, 2019
BN/19/1