



Ensuring School District Access to Regional Transportation Coordinators

2023 Supplemental Operating Budget Decision Package

Recommendation Summary

The Legislature currently provides \$939,000 in a proviso to pay for the salaries, benefits, and operating supplies (e.g., office rent, technology, and phone services) of regional transportation coordinators (RTCs). RTCs are employees of their respective regional educational service district (ESD) whose primary role is to ensure local school districts have access to the knowledge, training, and oversight necessary to run a complete and effective student transportation program. Since these funds are provided in a proviso, they do not automatically adjust along with the salary allocations in the prototypical school funding formula, and over time, they have lost buying power. This request is for \$67,000 in fiscal year 2023 as a one-time adjustment to the allocation, plus \$195,000 in the 2023–25 biennium to fund the addition of an inflation factor (IPD) tied to the one provided in the prototypical school funding model.

Fiscal Details (Funding, FTEs, Revenue, Objects)

Operating Expenditures	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
General Fund State - 01	\$0	\$67,000	\$87,000	\$108,000
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$67,000	\$87,000	\$108,000
Biennial Totals	\$67,000		\$195,000	
Staffing	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
FTEs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Average Annual	0.0		0.0	
Revenue	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
General Fund State -01	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$0		\$0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Obj. N	\$0	\$67,000	\$87,000	\$108,000

Package Description

What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

Funding for the salary and benefits of regional transportation coordinators (RTCs) has not adjusted since 2019, and year after year, the dollars lose buying power as they are not adjusted for inflation. Without an adjustment to the funding level for RTCs, the ability for the coordinators to travel to districts and provide the same level of service as they have historically is declining.

What is your proposed solution?

This proposed solution is a one-time increase to the current level proviso funding (\$67,000) and an inflationary factor to be added so the funds do not become stagnant again in the future.

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

These funds will ensure that the full salary and benefits of the regional transportation coordinators are paid for by the state. In addition, this request will provide for sufficient funding for the coordinators to be able travel to the school districts in their region when needed for an on-the-ground view of operations.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

These proviso funds are the sole source of funding from the state for these critical positions, and no other options could be linked to current state funding mechanisms. If this request goes unfunded, the state will further deplete the buying power of these funds, which would very likely have a negative impact on services provided to school districts by the regional coordinators.

Performance Measures

Performance outcomes:

With these additional funds, regional transportation coordinators will have the capacity to continue to provide high-quality service to and oversight of local school districts' student transportation programs. Without these additional dollars, districts may not receive the level of service or oversight they need to maintain their current level of safety and operations. This is especially true as many programs are experiencing operational challenges such as staff turnover, which has been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service:

These funds will ensure districts will receive a consistent level of service from regional transportation coordinators as programs face several fiscal and operational challenges related to providing student transportation services.

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

OSPI compared the current fiscal year (FY) 2023 proviso of \$939,000 to the actual cost of employing regional transportation coordinators of \$1,006,000. Based on these numbers, the

request for FY 2023 is \$67,000. Adjusting this new value by 2% in each of the remaining fiscal years yields an overall cost of \$67,000 for FY2023 and \$195,000 for the 2023–25 biennium.

Workforce assumptions:

None.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

Transportation coordinators work with the school districts in their region to provide support and oversight of districts' transportation services. Because the funding level for these positions has not been adjusted for the last three years, educational service districts (ESDs) are filling in the gap. ESDs each manage their own budget and they do not have the same levels of flexibility to be able to backfill funding so the coordinators can travel and provide on-site support to school districts. Ensuring all districts can access services from regional transportation coordinators at a consistent level of service allows all students in the state to benefit from consistent transportation services.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework:

Transportation services are a critical component of ensuring all students have access to their learning. Efficient programs reduce absenteeism and creates opportunities for students to learn and grow.

Other Collateral Connections

Intergovernmental:

None.

Stakeholder response:

School districts and regional ESDs are likely to support this effort to maintain a consistent level of service from these regional staff.

Legal or administrative mandates:

None.

Changes from current law:

This request would change a proviso amount only. No statutory changes necessary.

State workforce impacts:

None.

State facilities impacts:

None.

Puget Sound recovery:

N/A

Other Documents

Reference documents:

N/A