Annual Report on the Allocation Basis for Student Transportation

Summary
The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.160.180 (4) requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to submit annually “a report outlining the methodology and rationale used in determining the statistical coefficients for each site characteristic used to determine the (transportation) allocation for the following year.”

Background
The Student Transportation Allocation Reporting System (STARS) uses a regression analysis to determine each school district’s student transportation operations allocation. The regression analysis process determines coefficients by comparing particular characteristics to statewide reported transportation expenditures. The allocation for each school district is then calculated using the statewide coefficients and the individual school district data.

For the 2012–13 school year, the first step in determining the final allocation will be to take the lesser of the 2011–12 transportation allocation or the 2011–12 allowable transportation expenditures plus indirects calculated at the federal restricted rate. Both the allocation and expenditure values will be adjusted to reflect any changes to the supported wage and benefit levels included in the state operating budget (3ESHB 2127). The total of these calculated allocations will be compared to the funding provided and any additional funding will be distributed to districts exhibiting underfunding on a pro-rated basis, as provided by the transition language in RCW 28A.160.192.

For the transportation allocation process for the 2012–13 school year, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will use the data collected in the fall, winter and spring student transportation reports and transportation expenditure data for the 2011–12 school year. The expenditure data for the 2011–12 school year will not be available until December 2012. At that time, OSPI will perform the regression analysis to determine the coefficients used to calculate the student transportation allocations for 2012–13. The adjustment in
allocation will occur at the end of February and will use the data collected in the 2011–12 spring report and the 2012–13 fall and winter reports. Until the February adjustment, districts will receive their allocation based on the 2011–12 school year amounts.

The student transportation data elements required to be reported by school districts are:

1. Basic program student count:
   a. Students riding basic program school buses;
   b. Students riding school buses from stops within the designated walk area; and
   c. Students riding public transit.

2. Special program student count:
   a. Students riding special education school buses;
   b. Students riding gifted program school buses;
   c. Students riding bilingual program school buses;
   d. Students riding early education school buses (e.g., district-operated Head Start, district-operated Early Childhood Education Assistance Program and other district operation early education programs); and
   e. Students provided with transportation in compliance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act.

3. The location of school bus stops for home-to-school transportation is reported and used to determine the average distance between each school bus stop and the corresponding destination school or learning center.

4. The number of kindergarten routes operated.

5. The number of destinations (schools or learning centers) served.

6. For non-high school districts, if the districts provide transportation service for resident high school students.

In addition, OSPI will provide the following data elements:

1. The total number of roadway miles within the district (forest service roads not used for transportation service are excluded).

2. The total land area of the district (land area such as national parks and forest areas not provided with transportation services are excluded).

The regression analysis performed during the 2011–12 school year resulted in the determination that the number of kindergarten routes and the number of roadway miles were not significant and were not used in the determination of the allocation in accordance with RCW 28A.160.192 (1)(b). However, since the initial funding model development process found these factors to be statistically significant, OSPI will require
the collection of the kindergarten route data and reevaluate for significance in the 2012–13 school year.

Reimbursement for mileage used in providing home-to-school transportation in district motor pool vehicles will be reimbursed at the private vehicle rate in effect on September 1, 2012. During each reporting period, school districts are required to provide a current estimate for the total district car mileage for the school year. The actual district car mileage is required to be reported prior to July 15 of each year. RCW 28A.160.191 requires the superintendent to ensure that low enrollment districts, non-high districts, districts involved in transportation cooperatives, and educational service districts providing specialized transportation service are allocated adequate funding for transportation. For the 2012–13 school year, these categories of districts will be included in the transition and hold harmless process. Therefore, any district that is underfunded will be increased by the percentage available based on prorating the available funds, regardless of their inclusion in these special categories.

For more information about the allocation basis for student transportation, please contact Allan J. Jones, Director, Student Transportation at 360-725-6120, or at allan.jones@k12.wa.us.