

Transportation Safety Net Questions and Answers Guidance

The purpose of this document is to provide districts with our best thoughts regarding the implementation of language in section 507 of the 2023 supplemental budget

(12)(a) \$13,000,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for the superintendent to provide transportation safety net funding to school districts with a demonstrated need for additional transportation funding for special passengers. Transportation safety net awards shall only be provided when a school district's allowable transportation expenditures attributable to serving special passengers exceeds the amount allocated under subsection 2(a) of this section and any excess transportation costs reimbursed by federal, state, tribal, or local child welfare agencies.

(b) To be eligible for additional transportation safety net award funding, the school district must report, in accordance with statewide accounting guidance, the amount of the excess costs and the specific activities or services provided to special passengers that created the excess costs. The office of the superintendent of public instruction must request from school districts an application for transportation safety net funding no later than May 1st. The application must contain the school district's anticipated excess costs through the end of the current school year.

Q1 What is the definition of special passengers?

Special passengers or "transported special program students" are defined as students with disabilities with a valid IEP, McKinney Vento students, and foster care students.

Q2 What is the definition of demonstrated need?

Demonstrated need for additional funding is defined as the fiscal impact of providing to/from transportation to special program students above the STARS funding allocation, as well as reimbursements by federal, state, tribal, or local child welfare agencies are considered.

Q3 What data will districts have to track separately for the 2022–23SY?

Districts will have to track the number of transported special program students and the total cost of transporting special program students separately for each of the three special passenger groups identified in Q1 above. This information will not be collected in the F-196 but may be requested by OSPI through a survey tool for verification purposes.



Q4 What is the definition of allowable transportation expenditures?

The School District Accounting Manual defines allowable transportation expenditures as those incurred by transporting pupils to and from school, including between locations in the district, during the school year.

Q5 If the district includes in its request reimbursement for students with disabilities, can it also include those costs in the district's special education safety net request?

No. Districts should only pursue reimbursement under one of the two potential pathways. Districts cannot receive reimbursement for the same costs through two different sources.

Q6 What happens if the request for funds exceeds the \$13,000,000 provided in the state budget for this purpose?

OSPI will prorate school district requests so that each receives a proportionate share of the \$13,000,000.

Q7 How will per student cost for special program students be calculated?

The template provided will calculate the per student costs for each of the special passenger groups based on the information provided by the district within the tool.

Q8 How will per student cost for basic riders be calculated?

The basic rider cost per student for the 2022–23 school year will not be used in the final calculations determining a district's allowable claim on the transportation safety net funds. Therefore, the calculation of this number is irrelevant.

Q9 Is there a mathematical expression of how to identify excess costs?

Total excess cost is calculated separately for each special student group. Excess costs equal the total cost of special program students in a designated category less the per student state allocation calculated as the funding provided on the 1026-A divided by annual average passengers.

Q10 Is there a list of common/eligible services or activities which generate excess costs?

No such list is available.

Q11 When will OSPI notify districts if their application is approved, as well as how much funding they will receive?

OSPI will post an excel spreadsheet no later than May 20, 2023, showing how much will be paid to each district that applied for transportation safety net funding.

Q12 When will funds be paid to school districts?

Funds will be paid to school districts in the May 2023 apportionment payment. If necessary, adjustments will be made in June 2023 prior to the end of state fiscal year 2023.

Q13 Are summer excess costs eligible for reimbursement with these funds?

No. The budget language says that costs in the application must include estimates through the end of the current school year. OSPI interprets that to mean the 180-day regular school year.

Q14 What revenue code will be assigned to these funds?

These funds are State General Funds and will be paid in full in Revenue 419902.

Q15 How will the expenditures of these funds be reported to OSPI?

Since these funds are reimbursement for expenditures reported in the May 1 application, there will be no additional expenditure reporting specific to these funds required.

Q16 Will carryover/recovery rules apply to these funds?

This revenue will not be subject to recovery and can't be carried over since it is provided specifically for the reimbursement of prior expenditures. The purpose of recovery is to collect unspent revenue from districts. This rationale does not apply in this situation.

Questions

If you have questions that were not addressed in this document, please email T. J. Kelly at thomas.kelly@k12.wa.us.