

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 either prorate school district requests so that each receives a proportionate share of the \$13,000,000; or, if timing allows, OSPI can make a request of the legislature to increase the \$13,000,000 in the final supplemental budget to align with the actual amount of total requests.

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

For the 2022-23 school year, districts must track separately the average rider count for fall 2022 and winter 2023, as well as the projected total cost less any costs reimbursed by federal, state, tribal, or local child welfare agencies for each special program student group for the 2022-23 school year. As an example, the per student cost for McKinney Vento students would equal the estimated total cost for McKinney Vento riders for the 2022-23 school year divided by the average count of McKinney Vento riders in fall 2022 and winter 2023.

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

The basic rider cost per student for the 2022-23 school year will be based on projected data from that school year. Total cost for basic riders will be the projected cost for the entire 2022-23 school year, less any costs reimbursed by federal, state, tribal, or local child welfare agencies, less the aggregate projected costs of the three special passenger groups identified in Q7. The basic student count will be the average of the fall 2022 and winter 2023 basic students transported to and from school.

The calculation of projected basic rider per pupil cost for 2022-23 equals projected 2022-23SY costs *less* special passenger costs divided by the average basic student count from fall 2022 and winter 2023.

OSPI may request detailed information from districts regarding these calculations if their results differ significantly from comparable districts.

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 equals the total cost of special program students in a designated category less (projected special student count in a designated category times the basic per student cost).

Q10 When will the application become available to districts?

The application will be available to districts in March 2023.

Note: OSPI will publish a condensed application to which districts can respond in the December time frame. Information gathered from responses may help OSPI determine the need to request additional funds for this purpose in the 2023 legislative session. Districts will be able to provide updated information in their formal application due May 1, 2023

Q11 Is there a list of common/eligible services or activities which generate excess costs?

No such list is available. OSPI will consider making such a list available in late summer/early fall.

Q12 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.

Q13 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.

Q14 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.

Q15 What revenue code will be assigned to these funds?

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

Q16 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.

Q17 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.