

PURPOSE

This funding provides for the efficient transportation of **eligible passengers** in rural **school jurisdictions**.

CONDITIONS

1. A **board** of a **rural district** or **division** which is providing transportation services may receive the following rural transportation funding for each transportation year:

a) Block Funding Support:

The support per **eligible passenger** and per **eligible transported ECS child** is the sum of the amounts calculated in i) and ii) following:

- (i) The **density** support is the applicable **density** rate per **eligible passenger** multiplied by the **weighting factor** for each **eligible passenger**. The **density** rate is an annual rate.
- (ii) The **distance** support is calculated on the basis of the **eligible transportation distance** in kilometres for each **eligible passenger** multiplied by the applicable **distance** support rate. The **distance** rate is an annual rate.

Total Block Funding Support is the aggregate of the amounts calculated for each **eligible passenger** in i) and ii) above.

b) Inter-school Transportation Support:

Support to a **board** for a bus providing inter-school transportation to each group, or portions thereof, of 66 weighted **eligible passengers**, is calculated by multiplying the daily kilometres of inter-school transportation which the bus travels times the number of days of inter-school transportation times the support rate.

c) Bus Modification or Purchase Allowance to Accommodate Wheelchair Passengers:

Please refer to Section 1.20, Special Transportation.

2. Where a **board** of a **rural district** or **division** has under its jurisdiction or transports an **eligible passenger** or **eligible transported ECS child** of a city, town, village or hamlet with a population greater than 10,000, the **board** may be funded for each **eligible passenger** and for each **eligible transported ECS child** residing within those boundaries. The rate applicable is the rate for Urban Transportation. These students cannot be included as **eligible passengers** under the Rural Transportation formula. A **board** of a **rural district** or **division** claiming both urban and rural transportation must have received prior approval from the **Minister**. Applications for approval should be submitted to the School Reporting Branch.

Where a **board** of a **rural district** or **division** has under its jurisdiction a city, town, village or hamlet with a population less than 10,000 and transports an **eligible passenger** or **eligible transported ECS child** residing within those boundaries to a school of a program listed under Consideration # 3 of this Section outside those boundaries, the **board** may be reimbursed for each **eligible passenger** and for each **transported ECS child** under the Rural Transportation formula. These students may not be included as **eligible passengers** under the Urban Transportation formula.

Where the net support for student transportation of a board increases or decreases in excess of 3% as a result of a community population reaching 10,000, the adjustment will be determined for that jurisdiction.

Where the net support for student transportation of a rural board decreases in excess of 3% as a result of movement between density grid columns, an adjustment may be determined for that jurisdiction.

3. Block Funding:

- a) If a student who is not a **resident student** of the **board** accesses that **board's** transportation system in accordance with the Student Transportation Regulation, section 4, at a point 2.4 kilometres or more from the school attended, and where there is not a **transportation agreement** or an **education services agreement** between the **resident board** and the **board** providing transportation, the **board** providing transportation service may claim only the **density** support for that student.
- b) If a **board** extends its transportation service outside its jurisdiction boundaries to provide service to a non-resident student not covered by a **transportation agreement** or an **education services agreement** between the **resident board** and the **board** providing transportation, the **board** providing transportation service is not eligible for transportation funding for that student.
- c) If a **resident student** of a **board** is transported by the **board** to a **school** of the **parent's** choice outside the attendance area or transportation service area of the **designated school** for that student, only **density** support and **distance** support to the nearest **school** may be claimed for that student if he or she is an **eligible passenger**. Where a board has adopted over-lapping **school** attendance or transportation service areas, **density** support and **distance** support to the **school** nearest the student's residence may be claimed.
- d) In the case of a **school jurisdiction** which is providing transportation in only a portion of its area, for those **eligible passengers** residing in the jurisdiction but beyond the transportation service area and are transported through co-operative bussing arrangements with other **school authorities**, area and **density** for the **school jurisdiction** shall be calculated on the basis of the area directly served by the **school jurisdiction** and the **eligible passengers** residing in that area.

- e) If a **board** is providing transportation services under an agreement with another **board** and the two **boards** are not sharing a co-terminus area, the area of the **board** receiving transportation services may be added to the transporting board's area for determining the **density** rating for the transporting **board**.
- f) Block funding under this section is available only to **boards** operating student transportation systems. A **board** accessing transportation services for its **resident students** through **education service agreements** or **transportation agreements** is not eligible for block funding under this section.
- g) Notwithstanding subsection (f), a **board** transporting an **eligible passenger** of another **board** under a transportation agreement to the **designated school** of that **resident board**, who resides outside the transportation service area of the resident board and accesses the bus route of the **board**, may claim the density and the distance support from the **designated school** to the point where the student accesses the bus route for that **school**. The **resident board** may claim only the distance support from the residence of the student to the point where the student accesses the bus route for the **designated school**, at the distance rate received by the transporting **board**.
- h) **Funded students with disabilities** transported by a **school bus** on a special route for **funded students with disabilities** may be claimed under this Section using a weight factor of 3 or under Section 1.20, whichever is most advantageous to the **board**.

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4. ECS Transportation:

- a) A **school jurisdiction** that claims ECS Regular Transportation funding must transport, or make arrangements for the transport of **children** attending **ECS programs** at a service level that is consistent with the transportation of students under Section 51 (1) of the *School Act*.
- b) A **school jurisdiction** providing transportation to and from an **ECS program** may charge the **parent** of a **child** a fee for the transportation service. The total amount of fees charged to ECS **parents** for transportation services shall not exceed the total cost of the provision of ECS transportation services less the ECS transportation funding received from Alberta Learning.
- c) Each **eligible transported ECS child** transported will be counted as 1.0 weighted passenger in determining block funding support.
- d) A **school jurisdiction** may claim **eligible transported ECS children** it transports to programs operated by another **board**, a **private school**, or a **private ECS operator** as **eligible passengers** if the **board** has an agreement with the other **board**, **private school**, or **private ECS operator**.

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5. Inter-school Transportation

- a) Inter-school transportation for students whose courses of study require a special facility or equipment not available in the **school** they attend, may be claimed for support provided that:
- The course of study is prescribed or approved by the **Minister** under the *School Act*, Section 39;
 - The course of study requires a special facility or equipment not available at the **school** of daily attendance for those students; and
 - The course of study requires the use of the special facility or equipment for at least 18 consecutive weeks.
- b) Work Experience programs and intermittent bussing to such activities as swimming programs are **not** eligible for inter-school transportation support.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Rural **school jurisdictions** are required to submit Rural Transportation information electronically to the School Reporting Branch by November 30. Payment is made on the basis of the submitted information and the rural transportation funding rates.
2. The **count date** for Rural Transportation funding is September 30. Special consideration for the **count date** may be given to **school jurisdictions** experiencing exceptional growth in transportation needs.
3. The **effective transportation area** of a **school jurisdiction** for purposes of calculating **density** support is the **effective transportation area** of the **jurisdiction** as of September 30 in a given year.
4. **School jurisdictions** are required to retain the following information on file for a minimum of three years and make it available for review by Alberta Learning upon request:
 - a) Maps of overall attendance areas and transportation service areas;
 - b) Location of each student's residence (street addresses in towns, villages and hamlets, and where available in rural areas, and legal land descriptions in all other rural areas);
 - c) Maps of individual bus routes;

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- d) Records of **route distance** verified by an official(s) of the **school jurisdiction**;
- e) A list of names of **eligible transported ECS children** transported by bus and the names and grades of **eligible passengers**;
- f) Copies of **education service agreements**;
- g) Copies of **transportation agreements** with **school boards, private schools, charter schools** and **private ECS operators**;
- h) Copies of current vehicle inspection certificates issued under the *Highway Traffic Act*, and
- i) Copies of contracts with:
 - (i) Operators of contracted busses for regular transportation;
 - (ii) **Parents** providing transportation indicating the amount to be paid; and
 - (iii) Agents providing special transportation for **funded students with disabilities**.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. **First Nations students** as defined in the Glossary of Terms shall not be counted as **eligible passengers**.
2. Funding shall not be paid under this section for a **funded student** or an **ECS child** who is counted under the Special Transportation funding (Section 1.20).
3. Transportation support shall be paid from the student's residence to the **school** in the attendance area or transportation service area in which the student resides unless the student is directed by the **board** to attend another **school** for the following:
 - **Alternative Language Programs** (including French Immersion and bilingual programs)
 - Integrated Occupational Program (IOP);
 - Special Education programs to meet the needs of students with severe disabilities;
 - High school CTS programs offered to an advanced level in a specialized classroom facility where the course curriculum requires the instructor to have the technical trade qualification (Courses include Mechanics, Fabrication Studies, Cosmetology and Construction Technology);
 - **Year Round Education**.
4. Students transported by a **board** to an **on-line program** or an **outreach program** accessing 50 percent or more of their educational program at a **school** of the **board** or to a **blended program** at a **school** of the **board** may be claimed as **eligible passengers** under Rural Transportation.

