Florida Department of Education
School Business Services and
Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services

Student Transportation General Instructions 2006-2007

Florida
Department
of Education
John L. Winn, Commissioner

Comments regarding this publication should be directed to: Office of Funding and Financial Reporting, School Business Services, Florida Department of Education, 325 West Gaines Street, Room 824, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400, (850) 245-0405 or Suncom 205-0405; or Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services, Florida Department of Education, 325 West Gaines Street, Room 852, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400, (850) 245-0400 or Suncom 205-0400.

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Student Eligibility for Transportation Funding

To be counted for transportation funding, a student must 1) be in membership during survey week, 2) ride the bus one of the days of survey week or one of the six school days prior to survey week and 3) meet one of the eligibility category criteria in Section 1011.68, Florida Statutes (F.S.) (listed below). Please note that school districts should report via the Student Data Base all students who are transported during survey week regardless of whether the student is eligible for transportation funding.

Membership means any PreKindergarten (PreK) to grade 12 student enrolled in school during survey week who is assigned to a bus, passenger car, multipurpose passenger vehicle, general purpose transportation (e.g., city bus or train), or privately owned motor vehicle or boat (for students who are isolated or have disabilities).

Transported means any student who rides the bus (or other approved transportation vehicle) for the purpose of attending school at least once during the five-day survey period or the preceding six scheduled school days.

Students who ride the bus one of the six scheduled days prior to survey week but are not in membership (enrolled in school) during survey week should not be reported. Eligible students who are transported by general purpose transportation (city buses, trains, etc.) or privately-owned motor vehicles or boats (for isolated or disabled students) are reported as are all other transported students.

Eligibility Categories: Eligibility criteria for transportation funding, in accordance with Section 1011.68, F.S. are:

(1) The student lives two or more miles from the school.

(2) The student is classified as a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), regardless of distance (does not apply to gifted students). Note: K-12 students identified with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), Speech Impairment (SI), or Language Impairment (LI) who live less than two miles from their assigned schools are eligible only if transportation services are required by the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). See Appendix A for more information.

(3) The student/parent or infant is enrolled in the Teenage Parent Program.

(4) The student is enrolled in a state funded IDEA or Teenage Parent PreKindergarten program regardless of the distance from the student's home to the school.

(5) The student is a vocational or exceptional student being transported from one school center to another where appropriate programs are provided. Dually enrolled students, as defined by Section 1007.27, F.S., who attend a university, community college, or vocational technical center, are included.

(6) The student meets the criteria for hazardous walking as stated in Section 1006.23, F.S., including enrollment in elementary school.

Hazardous Walking: The district may not claim funding for such students unless it has submitted the report of Hazardous Walking Locations using the Department's Automated Hazardous Walking Reporting System at least by the end of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) survey period.

Students Counted Only Once Per Reporting Period

A student may be reported using the Student Transportation format only once per reporting period and only on one mode of travel, even if more than one mode was used. If the student was transported during survey periods 2 or 3 for both the regular term and an intersession, then two records should be submitted for that survey period – one for the regular term and one for the intersession.

Students who ride on more than one bus or mode of transportation to get to school, or to get home in the afternoon, should only be counted once. Students who are transported in the morning or afternoon and who are transported from center to center should only be counted once.

The district must have a policy to report students who transfer from one bus to another during survey week either on the sending or receiving bus. For example, a student transported from home to school and then to a vocational center should have only one Student Transportation record reported for that year and survey period (excluding an intersession record, if applicable).

PreKindergarten Student Eligibility

The following PreKindergarten students are the only PreKindergarten students eligible for funding under Section 1011.68, F.S.:

- PreKindergarten students with disabilities pursuant to Rule 6A-6.03026, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), regardless of distance, who meet the criteria for receiving specialized transportation services. These students are reported in Membership Category C, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, PreK Weighted.

- PreKindergarten students with disabilities pursuant to Rule 6A-6.03026, F.A.C., regardless of distance, who do **NOT** meet the weighted funding criteria for receiving specialized transportation services. These students are reported in Membership Category E, IDEA, PreK Unweighted.

- PreKindergarten children of a student parent enrolled in a Teenage Parent Program (TAP), pursuant to Section 1003.54, F.S. These students are reported in Membership Category F, Teenage Parents and Infants, Unweighted.

PreKindergarten children not enrolled in IDEA programs, or whose parent or parents are not enrolled in a TAP program are not eligible for state transportation funding under Section 1011.68, F.S. Students in the following programs are **ineligible** for transportation funding under Section 1011.68, F.S., unless the students are also disabled or in a TAP program. These programs include, but are not limited to, PreKindergarten Title I, federally-funded PreKindergarten Migrant Programs, Head Start, and Readiness Coalition programs.

A student enrolled in the Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program may not be reported under Section 1011.68, F.S. for student transportation funds.

Reporting on the Automated Student Information System

The Department of Education (DOE) receives school district student information at scheduled survey period times during the reporting year. See the Student Transportation Reporting Schedule 2006-07 section of this document. Surveys 1 to 4 are concurrent with the FTE survey weeks specified by the Commissioner of Education.

For each student transported by the school district during survey week (regardless of the student's eligibility for transportation funding), the district must submit a Student Transportation record to the DOE Student Information Data Base located at the Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC). A matching Student Demographic Information record must be sent by the district in which the student is enrolled.

Documentation for this information system is located on the DOE web site at http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/dataweb/database.htm. Included in the documentation are data element definitions, reporting formats for sending the information, edit listings, and an appendix providing detailed explanations of the student transportation categories.

Student Demographic Information Reporting Format

The Student Demographic Information reporting format contains the following elements:

- District Number, Current Instruction/Service
- District Number, Current Enrollment
- School Number, Current Enrollment
- Student Number Identifier, Florida
- Survey Period Code
- Year
- Student Number Identifier – Alias, Florida
- Student Name, Legal
- Gender
- Racial/Ethnic Category
- Grade Level
- Other elements pertinent to various educational programs

This data format provides the basis for identifying each student reported to the Student Information Data Base.

Student Transportation Reporting Format

The Student Transportation reporting format contains the following data elements:

- District Number, Current Instruction/Service
- Student Number Identifier, Florida
- Survey Period Code
- Fiscal Year
- Year-Round/Extended School Year FTE Indicator
- Days In Term (For FTE Purposes)

- Transportation Membership Category
- Vehicle Category
- Bus Number
- Bus Route Number
- Transaction Code
- District Number, Current Enrollment

Data Elements

Bus Number is the unique identifier for the bus to which the student is assigned.

Bus Route Number indicates the school bus route to which the student is assigned.

Days In Term (For FTE Purposes) is the number of school days the student is scheduled to be transported during the reported term.

- For most students in survey periods 2 and 3, the number of days will be 90.
- For students in programs that meet once a week, the number of days will be 18 (90-day term divided by 5).
- For the June and July summer periods and for intersessions, report the scheduled days students are required to attend for each reporting period.

This element equates to Term Length in the online aggregate system previously used for transportation FTE reporting.

District Number, Current Enrollment is the two-digit number for the school district where the student is officially enrolled in school.

District Number, Current Instruction/Service is the two-digit number of the school district providing and reporting the transportation.

Fiscal Year is the year during which the student was transported.

Student Number Identifier, Florida is the ten-digit number used to uniquely identify the student and is reported on all student data base records sent to the Automated Student Information System.

NOTE: In the case of students being transported to another district for instruction, the receiving district should contact the sending district or use the Student Locator at NWRDC to identify an existing ID numbers for these students.

Survey Period Code represents one of the state reporting periods listed below. The survey weeks in which the surveys are held are determined annually by the Commissioner of Education.

1 July - covers from the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1) to the beginning of the defined 180-day school year;

2 October - covers the first 90 days of the 180-day school year;

3 February - covers the second 90 days of the 180-day school year; and

4 June **-** covers the period from the end of the 180-day school year to the end of the fiscal year (June 30).

Transaction Code indicates the appropriate action to be taken with respect to the record being submitted to the Automated Student Information System.

A Add record

C Update/change record

D Delete record

Transported Membership Category signifies the primary transportation category for which the student is eligible. Appendix A provides a listing and definitions of the membership categories. Transported students ineligible for Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding should be reported with code N (Non-eligible Student).

Vehicle Category indicates the type of vehicle used to transport the student. These include the following categories:

B School buses meeting Florida specifications.

E Passenger car or allowable multipurpose passenger vehicle owned, operated, or contracted by the school board, transporting fewer than ten students.

P Privately owned motor vehicle or boat (for disabled or isolated students).

G General purpose transportation (city buses, trains, etc.).

Year-Round/Extended School Year FTE Indicator identifies the FTE being reported as being either part of the regular school year (Code Z) or an intersession (Code A). (Code B – Extended School Year FTE is not applicable to the Student Transportation format.)

This element equates to Term Type in the online aggregate system previously used for transportation FTE reporting.

Summer School Scheduled Outside Survey Week

If the July or June summer school period is scheduled so that it takes place outside the regularly scheduled survey week window, then a separate survey week will be established to count these students. The middle day or middle week of the summer period should be used as the basis for establishment of the survey week. This effort

should be coordinated with the district FTE administrator so that the same survey week is established for both FTE and Transportation reporting.

Year-Round Schools Reporting

Regular School Year - All year-round schools should report the first 90 days of their 180-day regular school year in the October survey. The second 90 days of the regular 180-day school year should be reported in the February survey, regardless of when the tracks are in session.

Intersession - Beyond-180-day school year instruction (intersessions) may be scheduled at intervals between sessions of the year-round school year. Typically, these intersessions are scheduled as the 10- to 15-day terms following either the 45 or 60 days of the regularly scheduled year-round instructional period.

To report students for intersession funding, conduct a survey for those students during intersession. The intersession period survey week is determined in a manner similar to the survey week designation used for "Summer School Scheduled Outside Survey Week" discussed above. The middle day or middle week of the intersession period should be used as the basis for establishment of the survey week. This effort should be coordinated with the district FTE administrator.

Data Entry and Preparation

During the data preparation and submission process, it is essential that district Management Information Systems staff and School Transportation staff work closely together to ensure that data are accurately entered and submitted.

Basic to the data preparation step is a process instituted by the district for making certain that the appropriate data have been entered in the local data base. Each of the data elements should be maintained as accurately as possible throughout the year. Each district will determine who has responsibility for obtaining, entering, and maintaining these data.

Each district also selects the software to be used in this process. If the school district has separate software systems for entering, storing, and maintaining student academic and student transportation data, then the district must have processes in place to synchronize the items that provide the link between these systems, particularly the student identification number.

Once the data have been entered into the local automated student information system, the district extracts the required information and produces transportation records for those students who meet the eligibility criteria.

Once the records for a survey period have been produced from the district data base, and prior to the transmission of the records to the Student Database located at NWRDC the district should run edit programs against the data to detect errors such as incorrect

codes in a field, days in term greater than 90, or an incorrect survey period code. These errors should be investigated and corrected prior to submission of the data to the Student Database located at NWRDC.

Data Submission and State Processing

When the district has resolved errors locally the records are sent to the Student Database located at NWRDC for processing. See the Student Transportation Reporting Schedule 2006-07 section of this document for specific due dates and state processing windows. NOTE: All districts must submit their initial full data submission by the designated due date.

During the state processing window, the following occurs:

(1) Computer programs and automated procedures at NWRDC detect the presence of the district datasets of records in the state reporting formats.

(2) Appropriate programs are run to process the records and edit the data. Descriptions of edits for the transportation format are available at the following web site address: http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/dataweb/student_0607.htm. Click on Edits and then click on Student Transportation.

(3) Error reports and error files are created including a file of records rejected due to improper coding, records with no matching Student Demographic Information format and duplicate records.

(4) The district downloads and uses the error reports and files to correct any errors in the records. Please note that action on the part of the district is required to download the reports; they are not automatically sent.

(5) The district creates datasets for batch updates, or makes corrections through the online programs to records already loaded to the data base.

(6) Batch updates are transmitted to the Student Database located at NWRDC.

(7) The process begins again until all records are corrected or the state processing window closes.

For student surveys 1 to 4, after the close of the state processing window there is a moratorium for one to four weeks on accepting updates to records. This moratorium allows the Office of Funding and Financial Reporting time to calculate FTE while the database does not change. After this moratorium, districts may continue to update records through the batch update process until a date nine months from the survey due date.

Student Transportation Reporting Schedule 2006-07

Survey 1
Survey Week: July 10-14, 2006
Due Date: July 28, 2006
State Processing: July 24-September 15, 2006
Final Update/Amendment Date: April 27, 2007

Survey 2
Survey Week: October 9-13, 2006
Due Date: October 27, 2006
State Processing: October 16-November 10, 2006
Final Update/Amendment Date: July 27, 2007

Survey 3
Survey Week: February 5-9, 2007
Due Date: February 23, 2007
State Processing: February 12-March 9, 2007
Final Update/Amendment Date: November 16, 2007

Survey 4
Survey Week: June 11-15, 2007
Due Date: June 29, 2007
State Processing: June 25-July 13, 2007
Final Update/Amendment Date: March 28, 2008

Reports Available

The following reports are available for districts to download through the established process that district Management Information Systems staff use for all Student Data Base reports.

FEFP Transportation (F70092)
This district level report provides a count of the transported membership for the fiscal year by survey period, vehicle category, regular/intersession term, term length and transportation membership category. This report is similar to the FEFP Transportation report (Browse Screen - EDAC) in the online data system previously in use for aggregate transportation reporting.

For each line, the adjusted base FTE and Adjusted ESE FTE is calculated. The report is in two parts: eligible and non-eligible students. Totals are provided for the counts and calculated FTE fields in each part. Also included is a count of buses for the entire year and for the intersessions.

FEFP Transportation Fiscal Year (F63499)
This district level report provides a summary of transportation membership and FTE for each of the four survey periods.

Comparison of Current and Previous Transportation Calculations (F70740)
This district level report is available during surveys 2, 3, and 4. It compares current annualized transportation data with that from the most recent prior transportation calculation. The data compared includes Total Adjusted Base Students, Total Adjusted ESE Students, Total Number of Buses, and Total Average Bus Occupancy Students.

Certification Letter

Following each of the four submission and processing survey periods, eligible membership totals must be submitted on the certification letter provided by the Department of Education.

This form letter certifies the adjusted membership and the number of buses reported on the database. It must be signed by the District School Superintendent or Designee and is due to the Office of Funding and Financial Reporting by the Thursday after the end of the state processing date for the survey period. All database input for inclusion in the current transportation funding calculation must be completed by the last day of the specified state processing period. The student transportation information provided in this letter must match that reported in the database as of the system cut-off date. Districts may utilize transportation reports F63499 and F70092 to verify adjusted membership and bus information recorded in the database. The information in this letter is compared with the Department's report to ensure that accurate information is used in the transportation funding formula.

The certification letter should be submitted to:

Keith Neel
Florida Department of Education
Office of Funding and Financial Reporting
325 W. Gaines Street, Room 824
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Attention: Jennifer Seifert
Fax Number: (850) 245-9135, Suncom 205-9135

Contact Persons

For assistance with questions regarding student eligibility requirements for transportation funding and other related transportation concerns, please contact:

Jennifer Seifert
Office of Funding and Financial Reporting
(850) 245-0405, Suncom 205-0405
Jennifer.Seifert@fldoe.org

or

Herman Carter
School Transportation Management
(850) 245-9795, Suncom 205-9795
Herman.Carter@fldoe.org

For technical assistance regarding the Department of Education's Automated Student Information System, please contact:

Nada Scott
Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services
(850) 245-0400, Suncom 205-0400
Nada.Stauffer@fldoe.org

Appendix A

FEFP TRANSPORTATION MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

TRANSPORTATION MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY signifies one of the student transportation membership categories listed below. **Students may be counted only one time**. Students who ride on more than one bus or mode of transportation to get to school, or to get home in the afternoon, can only be counted once. Students who are transported in the morning or afternoon and who are transported from center to center may only be counted once.

Membership Category A: Individuals With Disabilities Education Act - K-12, Weighted

Kindergarten through twelfth grade students who are classified as disabled. Each student's IEP documentation must contain information which specifies that he or she meets one of the following criteria for specialized transportation services:

(1) Medical equipment required. Medical equipment is defined as wheelchair, crutches, walker, cane, tracheotomy equipment, positioning or unique seating devices.

(2) Medical condition that requires a special transportation environment as per physician's prescription (for instance, tinted windows, dust-controlled atmosphere, temperature control).

(3) Aide or monitor required due to disability and specific need of student.

(4) Shortened day required due to disability and specific need of student.

(5) School assigned is located in an out-of-district school system.

Membership Category B: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - K-12, Unweighted

Kindergarten through twelfth grade students who are classified as disabled, who live less than two miles from school, and who do not meet the criteria listed in Membership Category A above. Note that SLD, SI, and LI students who live less than two miles from school and who are required by the student's Individual Education Plan documentation to receive transportation services are reported here. **Note: All of the "two miles or more" unweighted IDEA students will be reported in Membership Category H, "All Other Students Living Two Miles or More, Unweighted".** If a student is SLD, SI, or LI and transportation is not required by the IEP documentation, and the student lives less than two miles from school, the student is not eligible for state transportation funding and is reported in Membership Category N, "Non-eligible K-12 Students Living Less Than Two Miles and all Non-eligible PreK Students."

Membership Category C: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, PreKindergarten, Weighted

PreKindergarten students who are disabled pursuant to Rule 6A-6.03026, F.A.C., regardless of distance, and who meet one of the criteria listed in Membership Category A above.

Membership Category E: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, PreKindergarten, Unweighted

PreKindergarten students with disabilities pursuant to Rule 6A-6.03026, F.A.C., regardless of distance, and who do not meet one of the criteria listed in Membership Category A above.

Membership Category F: Teenage Parents and Infants, Unweighted

Students enrolled in the Teenage Parent Program and their eligible children, pursuant to Section 1003.54, F.S., regardless of distance.

Membership Category G: Hazardous Walking, Elementary, Unweighted

Kindergarten through sixth grade students enrolled in elementary school who meet the criteria for hazardous walking pursuant to Section 1006.23, F.S.. Sixth grade students attending middle or junior high school may not be counted.

Membership Category H: All Other Students Living Two Miles or More, Unweighted

Kindergarten through twelfth grade students living two miles or more from school if not reported in Membership Categories A and F.

Membership Category I: Center To Center or Non-center Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Weighted

PreKindergarten and Kindergarten through twelfth grade students with disabilities who are transported from center to center during the day and who are not counted from home to school in Membership Categories A through H. Included in Membership Category I are students with disabilities who are transported from one designation to another in the state (center to non-center), provided one designation is a school center and the student's IEP documentation identifies the need for the instructional programs or services, and specifies that transportation is to be provided by the school district. In order to be claimed in this membership category, a student must meet one or more of the criteria listed in Membership Category A above.

Membership Category J: Center to Center or Non-center Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Unweighted

PreKindergarten and Kindergarten through twelfth grade students with disabilities who are transported from one school center to another, or from one school center to a non-center, if specified in the IEP as described in Membership Category I above, but who do not meet one of the criteria listed in Membership Category A above. These students must not have been counted from home to school in Membership Categories A through H.

Membership Category K: Center to Center Vocational and Dual Enrollment Students, Unweighted

PreKindergarten and Kindergarten through twelfth grade vocational and dual enrollment students who are transported from center to center during the day and who are not counted from home to school in Membership Categories A through H.

Note: If a student is reported in Membership Categories I, J, or K, the student may not be reported in any other membership category. A student may only be counted once. The definition of school center is provided in Section 1011.68, F.S.

Non-FEFP Fundable Membership Category

Membership Category N: Non-Eligible K-12 Students Living Less Than Two Miles and all Non-eligible PreK Students

Transported students living less than two miles from home to school and who are not eligible for funding in the FEFP transportation categorical program. This record may only be entered with Vehicle Category B, school buses. Report all transported students whose homes are less than two miles from school and who do not qualify under one of the other membership categories. Also report all transported PreKindergarten students who are not eligible to be reported in any other Membership Category.