

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

Student Transportation General Instructions 2015-16



Comments and questions regarding this publication should be directed to: Office of Funding and Financial Reporting, Bureau of School Business Services, Florida Department of Education, 325 West Gaines Street, Room 824, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400, 850-245-0405 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.

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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.). Please note that school districts should report via the Student Data Base each student who is transported during survey week regardless of whether the student is eligible for transportation funding.

Membership includes all prekindergarten through grade 12 students enrolled in school during survey week who are 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 certain students who are isolated or have disabilities).

Transported refers to 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 students or students with disabilities) are reported in the same manner as all other transported students. For purposes of transportation, pursuant to rule 6A-1.0451(5), Florida Administrative Code (FAC), students with disabilities under section 1011.68(5), F.S., shall be those students with disabilities for whom school bus transportation is impracticable or unavailable for reasons related to the student's individual needs and circumstances. Such needs and circumstances shall be documented on the student's individual educational plan. See section 1006.22, F.S., for the additional requirements that must be met before reporting students with disabilities who are transported in privately owned motor vehicles.

Districts may not provide incentives to students to ride in buses during the survey period or the preceding six scheduled school days and may not deny students privileges if they do not ride buses during survey week. In order to ensure accurate reporting, districts may not change their policies for school bus ridership during funding survey periods for the purpose of affecting the student bus ridership count.

Students enrolled in the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind are not eligible for transportation funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).

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). K-12 students identified with Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech Impairment or Language Impairment who

live fewer than two miles from their assigned schools are eligible only if transportation services are required by the student's 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 career and technical education or exceptional education student, enrolled in grades 6 through 12, who is being transported from one school center to another where career and technical education programs are provided. Dually enrolled students, as defined by section 1007.271, F.S., who attend a university, 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

In order to claim hazardous walking funding, districts must submit a report of hazardous walking locations using the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Automated Hazardous Walking Reporting System (<http://data.fldoe.org/walking>) no later than the end of the full-time equivalent (FTE) student survey period. School districts are required to report a hazardous walking location code for all students claimed in Membership Category G (Hazardous Walking, Elementary, Unweighted). School districts are required to have in writing, and on file, documentation identifying the hazardous locations; the date each location was inspected; the agency representatives of the school district, roadway jurisdiction, law enforcement jurisdiction and metropolitan planning organization (if applicable) who participated in the inspection of each hazardous walking location, and the specific conditions verifying that each location meets the qualifying statutory criteria (for example, traffic counts during the time students would walk and the speed limit). Documentation must also be maintained to verify that the representatives of the entities with jurisdiction have mutually agreed that each location meets the qualifying criteria specified in section 1006.23, F.S.

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 during the school day may 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.

Students who ride home from school on a special bus route serving only those students attending after-school activities, and who are not eligible and reported in the morning or at any other time, may not be reported for funding.

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 transportation funding under section 1011.68, F.S.:

- Prekindergarten students with disabilities pursuant to rule 6A-6.03026, FAC, regardless of distance, who meet the criteria for receiving specialized transportation services. These students are reported in Membership Category L, IDEA – Prekindergarten through Grade 12, Weighted.
- Prekindergarten students with disabilities pursuant to rule 6A-6.03026, FAC, regardless of distance, who do **NOT** meet the weighted funding criteria for receiving specialized transportation services. These students are reported in Membership Category M, All Other Transportation Funding-Eligible Students, 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 also have disabilities or are in a TAP program: Prekindergarten Title I, federally funded Prekindergarten Migrant Programs, Head Start and Readiness Coalition programs.

A student enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program may not be reported under section 1011.68, F.S., for student transportation funds.

Reporting on the Automated Student Information System

The FDOE receives school district student information at scheduled survey times during the reporting year. See the Student Transportation Reporting Schedule 2015-16 on page 10 of this document. Surveys 1 through 4 are concurrent with the FTE student 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 FDOE Student Information Data Base located at Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC). A matching Student Demographic Information record must be sent by the district in which the student is enrolled.

NOTE: For students transported to another district to receive instruction, submit a student transportation record only (matching Student Demographic Information record not required).

Documentation for this information system is located on the FDOE website at <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/database-manuals-updates/2015-16-student-info-system/index.shtml> (please select "2015-16 Student Information System"). 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 data elements:

- District Number, Current Instruction/Service
- District Number, Current Enrollment
- School Number, Current Enrollment
- Student Number Identifier, Florida
- Survey Period Code
- Fiscal Year
- Student Number Identifier – Alias, Florida
- Student Name, Legal
- District Number, Zoned School
- School Number, Zoned School
- Gender
- Student Number Identifier, Local
- Resident Status, State/County
- Grade Level
- Residence County
- 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 Student Reporting Purposes)
- Transportation Membership Category
- Vehicle Category
- Bus Number
- Bus Route Number
- Transaction Code
- District Number, Current Enrollment
- Hazardous Walking
- Student Number Identifier, Local

Data Elements

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

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

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

- For most students in surveys 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 five).
- For the June and July (surveys 4 and 1) 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 reporting transported FTE students.

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 four-digit year during which the student was transported.

Hazardous Walking is the six-digit code from the Florida Department of Education School Transportation Management automated system that corresponds to the hazardous walking location that qualifies the student for Transportation Membership Category G (Hazardous Walking). A code of “000000” signifies that the student is not eligible.

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 find an existing identification number for the students.

Student Number Identifier, Local is an optional ten-character code used by the school district locally to identify a student and is generally different from the “Student Number Identifier, Florida” and the “Student Number Identifier – Alias, Florida.”

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

- 1 July - covers the period 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
- 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

Transportation 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-FEFP Fundable Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Students).

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

- B School buses meeting Florida School Bus Specifications adopted pursuant to rule 6A-3.0291, FAC

Note: The number of school buses reported will be used to calculate the district’s average bus occupancy (ABO), pursuant to section 1011.68, F.S.

- E Passenger car or allowable multipurpose passenger vehicle owned, operated or contracted by the school board or charter school, transporting fewer than ten students
- P Privately owned motor vehicle or boat (for certain students with disabilities or isolated students)
- G General-purpose transportation (city buses, trains, etc.)

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

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

Summer School Eligibility and Schedules Outside Survey Week

Most students transported to educational programs that are not funded under the FEFP may not be claimed for summer transportation funding. Students with disabilities whose IEPs specify the need for extended school year education and transportation as a related service may be claimed for summer transportation funding. Students attending non-residential Florida Department of Juvenile Justice educational programs may also be claimed for summer transportation funding. Students attending any other non-FEFP funded program may not be claimed for summer transportation funding.

If the July or June summer school period is scheduled so that it takes place outside the regularly scheduled survey week period, 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 establishing the survey week. This effort should be coordinated with the district FTE administrator so that the same survey week is established for reporting both FTE students and transported FTE students.

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 - School year instruction beyond 180 days (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 survey week is determined in a manner similar to that used for “Summer School Scheduled Outside Survey Week” previously discussed. The middle day or

middle week of the intersession period should be used as the basis for establishing the survey week. This effort should be coordinated with the district FTE administrator.

Data Entry and Preparation

During data preparation and submission, 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.

In preparing data, districts must ensure 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 for data preparation and submission. If the school district has separate software systems for entering, storing and maintaining student academic and student transportation data, then the district must synchronize the items that link 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 2015-16 on page 10 of this document for due dates and state processing periods.

During the state processing period, the following occurs:

- (1) Computer programs and automated procedures at NWRDC detect the presence of the district records in the state reporting formats.
- (2) Appropriate programs are run to process the records and edit the data. Edits for the transportation format are available at <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/database-manuals-updates/2015-16-student-info-system/index.shtml> selecting “Edits”, then “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; reports are not automatically sent.

(5) The district creates datasets for batch updates to records already loaded to the database.

(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 period ends.

For student surveys 1 through 4, after the close of the state processing period there is a moratorium of one to four weeks on accepting updates to records. This moratorium allows the Office of Funding and Financial Reporting time to calculate FTE students while the database does not change. After this moratorium, districts may continue to update records through the batch update process until the final update deadline specified in the following schedule.

Student Transportation Reporting Schedule 2015-16

Survey 1

Survey Week: July 6-10, 2015

Due Date: July 24, 2015

State Processing: July 20-September 11, 2015

Final Update/Amendment Date: September 30, 2015

Survey 2

Survey Week: October 12-16, 2015

Due Date: October 30, 2015

State Processing: October 19-November 13, 2015

Final Update/Amendment Date: March 31, 2016

Survey 3

Survey Week: February 8-12, 2016

Due Date: February 26, 2016

State Processing: February 15-March 11, 2016

Final Update/Amendment Date: July 31, 2016

Survey 4

Survey Week: June 13-17, 2016

Due Date: July 5, 2016

State Processing: June 27-July 15, 2016

Final Update/Amendment Date: August 31, 2016

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.

For each line, the adjusted base FTE students and adjusted Exceptional Student Education (ESE) FTE students are calculated. The report is in two parts: eligible and non-eligible students. Totals are provided for the counts and calculated FTE student 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 students for each of the four survey periods.

Students Transported Less Than Two Miles (F60533)

This district-level report is a count of students by survey who are transported less than two miles.

Counts of Hazardous Walking Students by Survey (F63504)

This district-level report is a count of students by survey who are transported because they are coded "hazardous walking students."

Transportation Calculation Comparison (F70755)

This district-level report is a comparison of average bus occupancy and ESE student counts from the current and previous survey.

Transportation Membership in Category "L" (F70806)

This district-level report is a list of students with a transportation membership code of L, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Prekindergarten through Grade 12, Weighted.

Counts of Students Transported on Each Bus (F70808)

This district-level report is a count of students on each bus.

Names of Students Transported on Each Bus (F70810)

This district-level report lists the names of students on each bus.

Prior Year Amendment Comparison (F63498)

This district-level report is a comparison of the amended and final counts for each survey period and the total count for the school year.

Transport: Base, Weighted ESE, Buses (AGGR YR) (F71265)

This district-level report is a comparison of the aggregated data from the current and prior school year for each survey period.

Students Assigned to Bus with No Demographic (F71026)

This district-level report is a list of student transportation records that do not have a matching student demographic record.

Certification Letter

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

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 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 cutoff date. Districts may use transportation reports F63499, F70092 and F71265 to verify adjusted membership and bus information recorded in the database. The information in this letter is compared with the FDOE's report to ensure that accurate information is used in the transportation funding formula.

The certification letter should be submitted to:

Suzanne Tart
Florida Department of Education
Office of Funding and Financial Reporting
Bureau of School Business Services
325 W. Gaines Street, Room 814
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Attention: Andrew Morrell
Fax Number: 850-245-9135

Contact Persons

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

Suzanne Trat
Bureau of School Business Services
850-245-0405
Suzanne.Tart@fldoe.org

or

Director
School Transportation Management
850-245-9795
schtrans@fldoe.org

For technical assistance regarding the FDOE's Automated Student Information System, please contact:

Todd Clark
Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services
850-245-0400
askeias@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 and only in one membership category.** Students who ride in more than one bus or mode of transportation during the school day may 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.

Students enrolled in the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind are not eligible for transportation funding through the FEFP. Florida School for the Deaf and Blind students being transported on district buses should be claimed in Membership Category N: Non-FEFP Fundable Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Students.

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 grade 6 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 L: Individuals With Disabilities Education Act - Prekindergarten through Grade 12, Weighted

Note: Weighted ESE student transportation funds may not be claimed for transportation in school district passenger cars or parent-reimbursed private passenger cars.

Includes prekindergarten through grade 12 students with disabilities who qualify for weighted transportation funding as described herein.

Includes prekindergarten students with disabilities pursuant to rule 6A-6.03026, FAC, regardless of distance, if qualified for weighted funding as described below.

Also includes prekindergarten through grade 12 students with disabilities who are transported from center to center and center to non-center during the day if qualified for weighted funding as described herein, provided at least 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.

Each student's IEP documentation must contain information that 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, and positioning or unique seating devices.

- (2) Medical condition that requires a special transportation environment in accordance with a physician's prescription (i.e., tinted windows, dust-controlled atmosphere, temperature control).
- (3) Attendant (aide) or monitor required due to disability and specific need of student.
- (4) Shortened school day required due to disability and specific need of student.
- (5) School assigned is located in an out-of-district school system.

Membership Category M: All Other FEFP Transportation Funding-Eligible Students, Unweighted

Kindergarten through grade 12 students living two miles or more from school or otherwise eligible for FEFP transportation funding, if not reported in Membership Categories F, G or L.

Includes prekindergarten students with disabilities pursuant to rule 6A-6.03026, FAC, regardless of distance, who do not meet one of the weighted funding criteria listed in Membership Category L.

Includes prekindergarten through grade 12 students with disabilities who are transported from one school center to another, or from one school center to a non-center, and who do not qualify for weighted funding as described in Membership Category L. Requires that at least one designation is a school center and that 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.

Includes kindergarten through grade 12 students with disabilities who live less than two miles from school and who do not meet the weighted funding criteria listed in Membership Category L when transportation is required by the student's IEP. If a student's 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, if transported, in Membership Category N, "Non-FEFP Fundable Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Students."

Includes kindergarten through grade 12 students with disabilities under section 1011.68(5), F.S., and rule 6A-1.0451, FAC, who are transported in vehicles other than a school bus, when school bus transportation is impractical or unavailable for reasons related to the student's individual needs and circumstances. For such students to be eligible for FEFP transportation funding, documentation of the need for the non-school bus service is required to be included within the student's IEP.

Includes grades 6-12 career and technical education and dual enrollment students who are transported from center to center during the day and who do not qualify for weighted funding as described in Membership Category L.

Note: The definition of school center is provided in section 1011.68, F.S.

Membership Category N: Non-FEFP Fundable Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Students

Transported students 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, when measured in accordance with rule 6A-3.001, FAC, 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 (e.g., Voluntary Prekindergarten, if transported in school buses). Report students transported in school buses to programs funded by non-FEFP sources such as grants (e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Federal Migrant Programs) and private endowments in this category.