



Policies & Procedures Manual

| | |
|--|--|
| Policy Number: SF-0002 | Issued / Revised: 7 / 1 / 14 |
| Policy Section: General | Policy Owner: ADE School Finance Unit |
| Subject: Transportation Guideline | |

Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to provide guidance to school districts for completing the Transportation Route Report and Vehicle Inventory Report, to assist school districts in determining the types of transportation miles that are eligible for funding according to statute and Arizona Department of Education (ADE) policy, to provide records maintenance guidelines and to provide compliance requirements as authorized by statute and ADE policy.

A. Reporting

School districts are required to complete and submit two transportation reports to ADE:

1. **Transportation Route Report**—A.R.S. § 15-922 requires school districts to submit transportation route reports within 12 days of the 100th day of instruction. This report must be submitted via the Common Logon. Details for completing this report are found in Section B below.
2. **Vehicle Inventory Report**—Each school district shall, on or before July 15 immediately following the fiscal year, report to the Superintendent of Public :
 - a. The actual odometer reading for each school bus operated by the school district as of June 30th; and
 - b. The total mileage for the year ending June 30th.

B. Transportation Route Report

School districts must report three categories of miles in the Transportation Route Report: daily route miles, other route miles, and miles for extended school year services. Additionally, school districts must report the eligible students actually transported.

To determine the miles, school districts must report the actual daily route mileage, other route miles and summer school miles for the first 100 days. In addition, the school district must include estimated mileage for days 101 through 180, or 200 if the school district is operating on an approved 200 day calendar. A good rule of thumb for the estimated mileage is 80% of the actual mileage for the first 100 days for school districts operating on a 180 day calendar and 100% for school districts operating on an approved 200 day calendar. To report miles in the report, school districts must report as follows:

1. **Daily route mileage**, as defined in A.R.S. § 15-901, includes the total number of miles necessary to transport on a school bus eligible students from and to their residence. The distance traveled on public transportation by eligible students, including those who have been given bus tokens or passes, may not be included as route mileage. “Dead head mileage” for the purpose of leaving or returning to a bus storage facility as part of a regular daily route, may be included in route miles. “Dead head mileage” for the purpose of training, storage, maintenance, or any other purpose which is not a part of a regular daily route shall not be included in route miles but shall be accounted for as

other non-route miles, which are not eligible for funding from ADE. Additionally, no mile may be reported as a route mile by more than one school district. For example, a school district shall not report the same contracted route miles for eligible students as the transporting school district reports.

Daily route miles includes contracted route miles as defined in A.R.S. § 15-923, and must be reported as contracted route miles. All transportation contractors must be identified in the Transportation Route Report. Miles driven solely to transport charter school or non-eligible students shall be reported as other, non-route miles. A school district shall not report miles that it did not actually transport eligible students, except for contracted miles. Contracted route miles cannot be reported by both the transporting school district and the contracting school district.

2. **Other route miles** is defined as:
 - a. Miles students are transported to and from their home school to other schools or facilities for athletic events, special academic, vocational or technical classes.
 - b. Miles traveled for field trips.
 - c. Miles regular route buses are used to transport students in summer school and non-regular school session.
 - d. Miles of buses that are used exclusively for extracurricular activities and athletic events should not be included in this report.
 - e. Other purpose miles which include all other miles not categorized as daily route miles, summer school miles or activity trip miles as defined in (a) through (d) above.
3. **Extended school year miles** include only the mileage for the transportation of eligible students for an extended school year services in accordance with A.R.S. § 15-881 and A.R.S. § 15-945 (C).

Eligible students, definition of school bus and contracting with parents

In addition to the three mileage categories described above, school districts must also report the number of eligible students transported during the school year. Eligible students may only be counted one time by any one school district. No student may be counted as an eligible student by more than one school district. Charter school and school district-sponsored charter school students may not be reported as eligible students for transportation funding purposes. **Eligible students** are those:

- a. Whose place of actual residence is within the district, except students for whom a transportation fee is charged.
 - i. For common school students, whose place of residence is more than one mile from the school of attendance.
 - ii. For high school students, whose place of residence is more than one and one-half miles from the school of attendance.
- b. Who are actually transported by the school district on a school bus. A **school bus** is defined as:
 - i. A motor vehicle owned by a public school or governmental agency or other institution and operated for the transportation of eligible students from their residence or pickup point to school and from school to their residence or return point on a regularly scheduled basis. Passenger capacity limits do not apply. (A.R.S. §§ 15-922, 28-101);
 - ii. A vehicle designated by the school district as a student transportation vehicle;
 - iii. Is owned or leased by the school district;
 - iv. Is reported to ADE with beginning and ending odometer readings in the vehicle inventory report; and,

- v. At least 75% of the miles driven during the current fiscal year are for student transportation purposes.
- c. Notwithstanding the requirements of a school bus as defined above, school districts may additionally contract with parents of students attending the school district under the following conditions:
 - i. A student for whom transportation is required within an Individualized Education Program or other identified 504 disability that either requires a specialty vehicle for transportation or a school district has determined that it is difficult to provide reasonable transportation to and from school for the student.
 - ii. For up to 15 miles in each direction if road conditions and terrain make driving a school bus slow or hazardous.

Calculating eligible students

To determine the number of eligible students, a school district shall:

1. Identify at least 25 consecutive or nonconsecutive scheduled school days in the first 100 days in session. Each school district must document and maintain the selected days for audit purposes.
2. Determine the number of eligible students transported each day for the days determined in paragraph 1 of this section using the following formula:
 - a. Count the eligible students actually transported on routes from a regular pickup point to school before the start of the school day and the total eligible students transported on a route from school to a regular drop-off point after the completion of the scheduled instruction for the school day.
 - b. Divide the result of (a) by 2.
3. To determine the eligible students transported for the 100 day transportation report, sum the daily result of (2) for the identified days, then divide by the number of identified days. For the remaining 80 days on a 180 day calendar or 100 days on an approved 200 day calendar, use the eligible students reported for the first 100 days.

Please refer to the table on pages 5 through 6 for further information regarding when to count students as eligible students for transportation funding purposes.

C. Documentation to Maintain

School districts must identify and maintain a record of the designated purpose for each mile or trip conducted. School districts must maintain this documentation for a minimum of four years pursuant to the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records General Records Retention Schedule for School Districts and Charter Schools (Schedule Number 000-11-53). A school district must identify the reason for the trip, document the beginning and ending mileage and designate the trip mileage as:

1. Route miles authorized under A.R.S. § 945 (A);
2. An academic education, career and technical education, vocational education, athletic trip and summer school miles authorized under A.R.S. § 945 (B);
3. An extended school year services for pupils with disabilities miles authorized under A.R.S. § 15- 945 (C);
4. Other non-route miles or miles to transport non-eligible students; OR other miles that do not qualify as miles to be categorized under A.R.S. § 15- 945 (A), (B) or (C).

D. Compliance

A school district shall meet the transportation requirements to receive state aid. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-921, the Superintendent of Public Instruction may withhold a school district's apportionment of state aid if it is determined that the school district is not in compliance with the reporting requirements. In addition, if the Superintendent of Public Instruction determines that the information provided by school districts was not accurate according to this guideline or state law, the Superintendent of Public Instruction may make any appropriate adjustments to return the school district to compliance.

CONTACT:

If you have any questions related to this guideline, please contact the ADE School Finance Unit.

POLICY HISTORY (SUPERCEDES):

Not applicable.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINE RUBRIC

| Scenario | Eligible For Transportation Funding? / Cite |
|---|---|
| K-8 students with actual residence within the district and more than one mile to school facility of attendance | Yes / A.R.S. § 15-901(A)(8)(a)(i) |
| K-8 students with actual residence within the district and less than one mile to school facility of attendance | No / A.R.S § 15-901(A)(8)(a)(i) |
| K-8 students with actual residence within the district and less than one mile to school facility of attendance whose safety is at risk due to a specific danger if they walk to school (i.e highway between child's home and school. must cross major surface street) | Yes / ADE Policy |
| High school students with actual residence within the district and more than 1.5 miles to school facility of attendance | Yes / A.R.S. § 15-901 (A)(8)(a)(ii) |
| High school students with actual residence within the district and less than 1.5 miles to school facility of attendance | No / A.R.S § 15-901(A)(8)(a)(ii) |
| High school students with actual residence within the district and less than 1.5 miles to school facility of attendance whose safety is at risk due to a specific danger if they walk to school (i.e highway between child's home and school. must cross major surface street) | Yes / A.R.S §15-901(A)(8)(a)(ii) |
| Student whose residence is outside the school district, who is admitted through open enrollment to a school within the school district | Yes, limited to no more than 20 miles each way to and from the school of attendance or to and from a pickup point on a regular transportation route / A.R.S. § 15-816.01(B) and A.R.S. § 15-901(A)(8)(a)(i) |
| Students with residence outside the school district, who are admitted through open enrollment from an adjacent school district, and who meet the economic eligibility requirements established under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition acts for free or reduced price lunches | Yes, for the actual total miles transported / A.R.S. § 15-816.01(B) and A.R.S. § 15-901(A)(8)(a)(i) |
| Children with actual residence within the school district, with disabilities whose IEP specifies that transportation to and from the school of attendance is necessary for fulfillment of the program who attends a school within the school district | Yes, for total miles transported / A.R.S. § 15-816.01(C) |
| Children with disabilities whose IEP specifies that transportation is necessary for fulfillment of the program who resides in an adjacent school district | Yes, for the total miles traveled each day / A.R.S. § 15-816.01(C) |
| Children with disabilities whose IEP specifies that transportation is necessary for fulfillment of the program who resides in a non-adjacent school district | No / A.R.S. § 15-816.01(C) |
| Transportation paid by another school district or by the county school superintendent if transportation services are provided | No / A.R.S. § 15-824(E)(2) A.R.S. § 15-923 |

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINE RUBRIC

| Scenario | Eligible For Transportation Funding? / Cite |
|---|---|
| Students attending a charter school or a district-sponsored charter school. | No / A.R.S. § 15-185 |
| Homeless students, defined as children and youth who are lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and remaining enrolled in their “school of origin” | Yes / ADE Policy |
| Students who reside outside of Arizona, except for homeless students | No / ADE Policy |

Contracted route miles and eligible student reporting:

Contracted route miles cannot be reported by both the transporting school district and any other school district. For example, if District A transports eligible students for District B through a contract authorized by statute, District A OR District B, but not both, may report and be funded for these miles. District A may report a portion of the miles and District B may report a portion of the miles. However, the total miles reported by District A and District B may not exceed the actual miles transported.

If the actual miles transported by District A is 100 miles:

1. District A may report and be funded for 100 route miles and District B may not report or be funded for any of these miles. District A may only count and report the eligible students who attend schools within District A. Since District B has no route miles to report, no eligible students are reported.
2. District B may report and be funded for 100 contracted miles and District A would report these miles as other, non-route miles and shall not be funded for any of these miles by ADE. District B may only count and report the eligible students who attend schools within District B. Since District A has no route miles to report, no eligible students may be reported.
3. District A and District B each report a portion of the 100 miles, to the total of which shall not exceed 100 miles. District A would report and be funded for its portion of these miles as route miles and the remaining miles that are reported by District B as other, non-route miles. These miles shall not be funded to District A by ADE. District B would report its portion of these miles as contracted miles and receive funding for these miles. District A may only count and report the eligible students who attend schools within District A. District B may only count and report the eligible students who attend schools within District B.