

J. Transportation

School districts are required to complete the Transportation Route Report and the Vehicle Inventory Report annually. The reporting process is essential in identifying transportation miles that qualify for state funding. This document provides a comprehensive guide for record maintenance and compliance clarification as established by statute and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE).

The Transportation Support Level (TSL) is a component of Arizona's school finance system that provides funding for school districts to support transportation services. [A.R.S. § 15-945](#) outlines the calculation of TSL, which includes:

Approved Daily Route Mileage: The total number of miles driven daily by all district school buses while transporting eligible students.

Eligible Students Transported: The number of students who qualify for transportation services.

Bus Passes or Tokens: School districts may purchase bus tokens or passes for students and claim reimbursement for the costs incurred. Students who received a bus token or pass must not be included in the number of reported eligible students. (See [Section 1: Transportation Daily Routes](#) for more information)

State Support Level per Route Mile: The state determines a set amount, which is multiplied by the approved daily route mileage to calculate the TSL. The TSL is then added to the district's base support level to determine the total funding available for transportation services.

School districts must accurately report their transportation data to receive the appropriate funding. This includes certifying their daily route mileage and the number of eligible students transported. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the withholding of state aid.

J-1. Reporting Timeline

Reports are submitted electronically through the Transportation and Vehicle Inventory portal in [ADEConnect](#). School districts are required to complete and submit two (2) transportation reports:

- **Transportation Route Report -TRAN55-1:**
 - Due 12 instructional days following the 100th day of instruction
 - See section [J-3 Transportation Route Report](#)
- **Vehicle Inventory Report-TRAN03-1:**
 - Due on or before July 15 after the fiscal year's closing on June 30
 - See section [J-4. Vehicle Inventory](#)

J-2. Defining Eligible Students

Each school district must report the average number of eligible students transported daily, with each student reported only once by a single district. Eligible students are residents within the district and meet the following criteria:

- Grades K-8 students who live over one (1) mile from the student's school of attendance, and
- High school students who live over 1.5 miles from their school of attendance.

Exceptions for what is considered an eligible student may apply. Examples of students who may be counted as eligible riders due to exceptions include the following:

Safety Concerns: Grades K-8 or high school students living closer than the specified distances but face safety risks during transit from their home to their school of attendance. Risks may include, but are not limited to, crossing a highway or railroad tracks. If an exception is determined due to student safety concerns, the school must notify the governing board so that they can formally adopt the changes to the route.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who reside in the school district or the adjacent school district, and their Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifies that transportation to and from the school of attendance is necessary to fulfill the program. [A.R.S. § 15-816.01](#).

Open Enrollment: The student is enrolled through the district's open enrollment policy and can be transported a maximum of 30 miles each way to the school or a pickup point. [A.R.S. § 15-816.01](#) and [A.R.S. § 15-901](#).

Open Enrollment and Economic Eligibility: Students from adjacent school districts who qualify under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Act for free and reduced-price lunch can be counted for actual miles transported.

Homeless Students: Students lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence who remain enrolled in their "school of origin" can be transported for actual miles transported.

J-2a. Calculating Eligible Students

Calculate the number of eligible students transported each day using the following method:

1. Identify at least 25 school days (they do not need to be consecutive) in the first 100 days of school. Each district must document and maintain the selected days for audit purposes.
2. Count the eligible students transported from a morning pickup point. Then, count those transported in the afternoon after the school day to a drop-off point.
3. Divide the sum of the morning and afternoon counts by two (2) to determine your average daily riders.

- To determine the daily average of eligible students transported for the 100-day transportation report, sum up the daily results for the selected days (from step 1), then divide by the number of days chosen.

Calculating Eligible Students Example:

In this example, the transportation team uses student counts every Monday and Wednesday within the first 100 instructional days.

Day Selected	Riders on Morning Run (Pickup point to School)	Riders on Afternoon Run (School to Dropoff point)	Average Riders Per Day (Morning + Afternoon) / 2
Day 1 - Monday, July 29	61	47	54
Day 2 - Wednesday, July 31	50	50	50
Day 3 - Monday, Aug 5	40	30	35
Day 4 - Wednesday, Aug 7	62	62	62
Day 5 - Monday, Aug 26	41	55	48
Day 6 - Wednesday, Aug 28	53	55	54
This school chose to count riders every Monday and Wednesday for 25-days			
Day 25 - Monday, Jan 25			50
Average Riders For 25 Days			50.16*

*Sum of "Average Riders Per Day" divided by 25 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.

J-2b. Non-Eligible Students

The district can choose to transport students who are not eligible for transportation funding, but they must be reported as non-eligible students in the Transportation Route Report. Students who are not eligible for funding include:

- Grades K-8 students with residence within the district and less than one mile to the school of attendance, unless a safety risk has been identified and documented by the school district.
- High school students who reside within the district and are less than 1.5 miles from the school of attendance, unless a safety risk has been identified and documented by the school district.
- Students with disabilities whose IEP specify that transportation is necessary to fulfill the program, who reside in a non-adjacent school district. [A.R.S. § 15-816.01\(C\)](#)
- Transportation is paid for by another school district or the county school superintendent if transportation services are provided. [A.R.S. § 15-824](#) and [15-923](#)
- Students attending a charter school. [A.R.S. § 15-185](#)
- Students who reside outside of Arizona, except for homeless students.
- Students who have received a bus pass or bus token cannot be counted in eligible riders.

J-3. Defining a Route

Daily route mileage is defined in A.R.S. § 15-901 as the total miles driven each day by all school district buses while transporting eligible students from their homes to school and back on scheduled routes. School districts must report actual and estimated total route miles for daily routes, contracted miles, and other route details.

The Route report is due 12 instructional days after the district reports its 100th instructional day. As a result, the district must estimate the number of miles to be driven for the remainder of the school year. Every district has a different 100th day and calendar reported to ADE. The best practice for determining the estimated miles is to report a percentage of the remaining days on the school district's calendar. Refer to the chart below to help determine the percentage of miles that should be reported. [A.R.S. § 15-945](#)

Calendar	Percentage of Actual Miles Reported	Percentage of Estimated Miles Reported
180 Days	100%	80% of the first 100 days
200 Days	100%	100% of the first 100 days
146 Days	100%	46% of the first 100 days

J-4. AzEDS Portal - Transportation and Vehicle Inventory Application

The Transportation and Vehicle Inventory application is in ADEConnect and comprises three categories within the Transportation Routes section. This document will outline the necessary content for each category in the application. The sections are presented in the order in which they appear in the application.

Transportation Routes

2025-2026 Route Summary (Actual+Contract+Other)

Fiscal Year

2025

See Instructions

Saved Data Summary

Route Miles (Actual+Estimated)	Route Contracted Miles	Eligible Students Transported
1,234	4,567	789

Transportation Daily Routes

Contracted Miles(Contractors Info)

Other Route Information

Section 1: Transportation Daily Routes

The district must report the total daily miles driven by all school district buses while transporting eligible students from their residence to the school of attendance and from the school of attendance to their residence on scheduled routes.

Daily Routes include students in non-special education (regular education), special education, and homeless students who are part of a regular or contracted route. [A.R.S. § 15-901](#)

In addition to reporting Daily Routes, the district must report eligible students with an IEP who require attendance for an Extended School Year for services beyond the school district's reported calendar, as per A.R.S. §§ [15-881](#) and [15-945\(C\)](#). Please note that this is not the same as summer school miles for "regular education" routes. Summer school miles for regular education should be reported as Other Route Miles.

Section 2: Contracted Miles

School districts may transport eligible students to other school districts through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). Additionally, school districts may contract with other public or private entities to provide transportation services for transporting students to and from school. Reported contracted route miles cannot exceed the actual miles transported. The miles must be reported by one school district or split in proportion, not to exceed the actual total miles transported. If another school district claims the school district's contracted mileage, the mileage is not fundable and must be reported as other, non-route miles. Additionally, all transportation contractors must be identified in the Transportation Route Report. See the section on [Contractors](#) for more information.

Section 3: Other Route Information

The section in Other Route Information is used for miles that are not part of the Transportation Daily Routes. Still, it must be reported to avoid a variance in miles recorded at the end of the school year when odometer readings are entered. Not all miles reported here are eligible for funding. The fundable values will appear in the Student Counts Financial reports, the Basic State Aid 55 (BSA55) report, and the transportation reports.

Bus Tokens and Passes: (not to be included in Routes)

Serial Number	Bus Tokens and Passes	Eligible Students	Annual Expenses
1	Bus Tokens	0.00	0.00
2	Bus Passes	0.00	0.00

School districts may purchase bus tokens or passes for students to use for transportation services on public transit. Per A.R.S. §15-945, a district can report the cost incurred for bus passes or tokens, as well as the number of eligible students. Students who receive a bus pass cannot be included in the Routes section and should not be counted as eligible. The total number of students and the annual expense should be reported for the school year, which will be reflected in the BSA55 Student Count Report.

Paved Road Miles:

	Paved Road Miles	Actual first 100 days	
3	Enter the total number of route miles travelled on paved roads during the first 100 days	0.00	

The miles traveled in the first 100 days minus any traveled on unpaved (dirt) roads. If all routes are on paved roads, this number will match the actual 100-day miles in Daily Route Miles. This section is for reporting purposes only and does not have an impact on TSL.

Non-Route Miles (Dead Head Mileage):

	Non Route Miles ①	Actual first 100 days	Estimated 101 to 144 days
4	Academic vocational education and athletic trips		
5	Other purposes (maintenance storage etc.)		
6	Summer School		

- Include miles for academic education, career and technical education, vocational education, and athletic trips
- Other purpose miles include those not categorized as daily route miles, such as bus maintenance, training, and storage.
- Summer school or other non-instructional sessions, such as winter break.

Open Enrollment:

	Open Enrollment	Miles	Students
7	Of the 62221.63 route miles reported, enter the number that are for Open Enrollment		
8	Of the 76.9 students transported, enter the number transported for Open Enrollment		

Report the students who are enrolled within the district, as considered through the district's Open Enrollment policy. Only include miles driven to transport students who are enrolled in your district and who live in an adjacent district. See more information about Open Enrollment at [Reporting Student Membership](#).

Unorganized Territory:

	Unorganized Territory Miles	Students	Actual first 100 days	Estimated 101 to 144 days
9	Unorganized Territory	0.00	0.00	0.00
10	Contracted Unorganized Territory	0.00	0.00	0.00

Report route miles and the number of students who reside on land that is not within the boundaries of any defined school district.

J-5. Vehicle Inventory

School districts must report the total bus mileage driven by all school district buses during the school year to transport eligible students from their homes to school transportation pickup points or the school they attend, and from the school or the school transportation scheduled return point back to their homes.

[A.R.S. § 15-901](#)

At the end of the school year, and before July 15th of each fiscal year, the district must report the odometer readings for beginning and ending miles for each bus listed within the Vehicle Inventory.

J-5ai. Defining Vehicles to Report

According to A.R.S. § 15-901, school districts are required to report their annual bus mileage to the ADE. A.R.S. § 15-922(C) states that the passenger capacity defining a standard bus in A.R.S. § 28-101 does not apply for funding purposes. It is essential to acknowledge that additional state and federal regulations, as well as insurance requirements, may limit the use of vehicles used to transport students on a daily route. Each school district is responsible for ensuring compliance with these regulations.

The district Transportation Support Level (TSL) is calculated based on the average daily route miles per eligible student transported. This figure is then multiplied by a statutorily set support level per mile and adjusted for factors such as bus passes, field trips, and additional expenses.

The district and any contractors providing transportation services must adhere to all relevant state and federal vehicle standards. This includes purchasing compliant equipment and conducting regular inspections and maintenance. The school district must ensure that the buses used for daily transportation comply with the regulations outlined by the Student Transportation Advisory Council, as per [A.R.S. § 28-3053](#).

J-6. Contractors

A school district can manage its transportation program or partner with another government entity, a carrier, or a private company to provide transportation services. They can contract with private parties, including parents, for these services.

"Type 03" elementary school districts, not within a high school district boundary, can contract with parents or third-party companies to transport students to a high school district, provided they adhere to the 30-mile limit for open-enrollment students.

Students transported partly by contract and partly by school district services are counted as one eligible student. Miles driven for eligible students cannot be reported by more than one school district.

Each school district must submit detailed contracted routes, contractor information, and the number of eligible students in the Transportation and Vehicle Inventory portal in ADEConnect. [A.R.S § 15-923](#)

Miles should be recorded for the actual miles driven for the first 100 days of instruction and the estimated mileage for days 101 through the end of the school year.

Additionally, a school district may contract with parents of students under these conditions:

- If a student requires specialized transportation due to an IEP or a 504 Plan.
- In situations where roads are hazardous, or the bus cannot effectively and safely pick up students due to narrow roads or inadequate road conditions. For distances of up to 30 miles in each direction.

J-7. Reconciling the Reports

School districts should review the Comparative Miles Report - TRAN40-2 after completing the Vehicle Inventory Report to identify the differences between the estimated and actual miles reported in the Transportation Route Report (TRANS55-1). The variance may impact the TSL generated if the odometer miles noted in the Vehicle Inventory Report (TRANS03-1) are less than the total Routes reported. Upon completing the Vehicle Inventory Report, the school district may reconcile its reported estimates to have a more accurate mile count. If you need to update the Routes information, you may need to reach out to a School Finance Account Analyst to open a data submission window for you to make revisions. This request can be submitted via a Help Desk ticket.

J-8. Compliance and Maintenance

School districts must identify and maintain a record of the designated purpose for each mile or trip conducted. School districts must keep this documentation for at least four years ([Schedule Number GS-1074: 21206](#)). A school district must identify the reason for the trip, document the beginning and ending mileage, and designate the trip mileage as outlined [in A.R.S. § 15-945](#).

A school district must comply with transportation reporting requirements to qualify for state aid. The Superintendent of Public Instruction can withhold state aid if a school district fails to adhere to the reporting rules. Additionally, if the Superintendent determines that the information provided by a school district is inaccurate, ADE may make necessary adjustments to ensure accurate transportation support levels for the relevant budget year. [A.R.S. § 15-921](#)

For more information on using the ADEConnect Transportation application, please refer to the online manual. The [posted manual](#) guides the district on how to submit data in the Transportation and Vehicle Inventory application in ADEConnect.

J-9. Rubric

Students Eligible for Transportation Funding			
	Scenario	Eligible	Citation
K-8	K-8 Students who reside within the district and are more than one mile from the school facility of attendance	YES	A.R.S. § 15-901
	K-8 Students with actual residence within the district and less than one mile to the school facility of attendance, whose safety is at risk due to a specific danger if they walk to school (i.e., highway between the student's home and school, must cross a major surface street). Must be adopted by the school board.	YES	ADE Policy
	K-8 Students with actual residence within the district and more than one mile from the school facility of attendance	NO	A.R.S. § 15-901
Highschool	High school students who reside within the district and are more than 1.5 miles from the school facility of attendance	YES	A.R.S. § 15-901
	High school students with actual residence within the district and less than 1.5 miles to the school facility of attendance, whose safety is at risk due to a specific danger if they walk to school (i.e., highway between the student's home and school, or must cross a major surface street). Must be adopted by the school board.	YES	ADE Policy
	High school students with actual residence within the district and less than 1.5 miles to the school facility of attendance	NO	A.R.S. § 15-901
All Grades	A student whose residence is outside the school district, who is admitted through open enrollment to a school within the school district	YES	A.R.S. § 15-816.01 and A.R.S. § 15-901- limited to no more than 30 miles each way
	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	A.R.S. § 15-816.01 and A.R.S. § 15-901 - for the total miles transported

Transportation

	Students 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 attend a school within the school district	YES	A.R.S. § 15-816.01- for total miles transported
	Scenario	Eligible	Citation
All Grades	Students with disabilities whose IEP specifies that transportation is necessary for the fulfillment of the program who reside in an adjacent school district	YES	A.R.S. § 15-816.01 - for total miles transported
	Students with disabilities whose IEP specifies that transportation is necessary for fulfillment of the program who reside in a non-adjacent school district	NO	A.R.S. § 15-816.01
	Transportation is paid by another school district or by the county school superintendent if transportation services are provided	NO	A.R.S. § 15-824 & A.R.S. § 15-923
	Homeless students, defined as Students and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and remain enrolled in their “school of origin”	YES	ADE Policy
	Students who reside outside of Arizona, except for homeless students	NO	ADE Policy

J-1. Contact

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the School Finance Account Analyst via a [HelpDesk](#) ticket.