



Illinois State Board of Education

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TRANSPORTATION FAQ

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1. Is every school district required to provide free transportation services to its students?

No. Per Section 29-3 of the School Code, only certain types of school districts are required by law to provide free transportation services. Specifically, community consolidated districts, community unit districts, consolidated districts and consolidated high school districts, and combined school districts (if the combined school district includes any district that was previously required to provide transportation) shall provide free transportation for students residing one and one-half miles or more from any school to which they are assigned for attendance maintained within the district. See [Illinois State Board of Education \(ISBE\) District Transportation Requirements](#) for a detailed list regarding which districts are required or not required to provide transportation for free.

2. Is the district required to transport students who live less than one and one-half miles from their assigned attendance center?

No. School boards **may** provide transportation for students living less than one and one-half miles as measured by the customary route of travel from the school attended and may make a charge for such transportation in an amount not to exceed the cost thereof, which shall include a reasonable allowance for depreciation of the vehicles so used.

3. If a parent or guardian has health concerns for their children to ride the bus and elects to transport them to school, is the district required to reimburse the parent for their mileage?

No. The district is not required to reimburse parents if free transportation is offered for all eligible students; however, districts may determine locally to offer such reimbursement.

Contractual agreements between districts and the student's parent or guardian is permitted per the Part 120 Transportation rules [23 Il Admin 120.50(b)(1)(B)].

The decision to enter into contractual agreements with parents or guardians is a local decision; however, districts must have a written policy to outline the basic requirements of the agreement, such as:

- Parent or guardian address and round-trip mileage verification to school each day.
- Utilize uniform federal mileage rate. The 2020 rate is 57.5 cents per mile.

- Consider a maximum reimbursement amount per parent or guardian. As a guide, the General Assembly last funded the parent guardian transportation program in fiscal year 2009. The maximum transportation reimbursement amount paid by ISBE for a parent or guardian at that time was \$102. Adjusting for inflation to FY 2020, the rate would be \$122.
- Payment process and frequency to the parent or guardian.

Contractual payments made to parents or guardians during the year may be claimed on the 2020-21 Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claim on Line 14(d) - Contractual Transportation Services.

4. **Can districts claim full costs for a blended learning model, where one or more days of the week are remote learning and no or limited transportation is provided (i.e., pay transportation contractor for full routes even if not fully utilized on remote learning days)?**

Should the need arise for schools to provide full remote learning where transportation is not provided due to potential spikes in COVID-19 transmission, will the same claimable rules apply as in 2019-20 school year?

Yes to both questions. Per the emergency amendment to Section 120.30(e) of the Part 120 Transportation rules [23 Il Admin 120.30(e)], “Due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), beginning on March 17, 2020, and through the end of the 2019-20 school year, to ensure the continuity of education, including the provision of any direct or related service for the health and well-being of all public school students in prekindergarten through Grade 12, all transportation costs incurred that are beyond transporting students, such as costs paid by a Local Education Agency for all employees related to the provision of transportation or a transportation provider under a written agreement, regardless of any service that may be provided, or costs related to the distribution of food, distribution and pickup of student assignments and work, and use of vehicles to provide Wi-Fi and other similar costs, shall be allowable and reimbursed by the formula under Section 29-5 of the School Code.” ISBE has proposed a rulemaking that would make this provision applicable any time the Governor declares a disaster due to a public health emergency under Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act. The proposed rules are currently awaiting adoption.

ISBE will base transportation reimbursement on expenditures. All allowable transportation expenditures incurred during limited or full closure will be claimable for transportation reimbursement. Districts should work with their bus contractors to make payments to ensure that all personnel, including bus monitors and bus drivers, can continue to be paid. If school districts choose to negotiate and execute a contract amendment with their bus contractors to make payments to ensure transportation personnel will be paid in full, those expenditures will be reimbursed for state transportation reimbursement. Consultation with the district’s legal representation is advised.

- 5. If a district elects to provide remote learning at a community location (such as a YMCA, park district facility, child care center, etc.) and it is staffed by an employee (or employees) of the district in which the students are engaged in remote learning with a virtual teacher, can the location be considered an educational site? Is it possible to have transportation reimbursed under those circumstances? Is there anything else that needs to be considered?**

Yes. Any alternate location can be considered an educational site, whether a district formally assigns students to it or voluntarily offers it for remote learning to parents who may have child care issues; however, each district must ensure that all facilities comport with health, life, and safety requirements. District staff must be present to supervise the students who are remote learning at these locations.

Regular transportation can be provided for students to alternate school sites. The miles and expenditures are claimable for transportation reimbursement for the 2020-21 school year. A student who lives more than 1.5 miles from their normally assigned school but now lives less than 1.5 miles from the alternate school site may still be transported and reported on the Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claim as living more than 1.5 miles for reimbursement. Conversely, a student who previously lived less than 1.5 miles from their normally assigned school but now lives more than 1.5 miles from the alternate school site must be transported to the alternate site and reported on the Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Claim as living more than 1.5 miles for reimbursement.