

# FISCAL REPORT

PUBLIC EDUCATION'S POINT OF REFERENCE FOR MAKING EDUCATED DECISIONS

## Ask SSC . . . Home-to-School Transportation Plan and Reimbursements



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**Q.** The newly created 2022-23 State Budget transportation reimbursement process uses the term “home-to-school transportation” multiple times. Does the reimbursement noted include special education-related transportation costs?

Also, the language states that there cannot be a charge for unduplicated pupils—can districts still charge for transportation for students who are not considered unduplicated?

Finally, what will happen if the reimbursement requests exceed the budget authority—will everyone be reduced equally, or will priority be given to certain districts?

**A.** Under current law, home-to-school (HTS) transportation includes transportation for any pupil from a school district or a county office of education, including students with disabilities (SWDs). There is no separate funding for special education transportation based on changes to the Education Code in previous Budget Acts, with prior sections referencing special education transportation repealed.

For the HTS transportation funding included in the 2022-23 State Budget, there is a requirement to plan for providing HTS transportation and to report data about the impact of the HTS transportation plan. Education Code states that the data shall include information about ridership, miles driven, expenditure details, the number of pupils transported, the demographic characteristics of pupils transported, and other data facilitating comparisons among local educational agencies (LEAs). The department shall determine the specific data elements but including the number of SWDs is a likely data point.

For the 2022-23 Budget Act, Education Code Sections 39800.1 and 41850.1 are added, which specify that eligible LEA transportation allowances will be “equal to 60% of the home-to-school transportation expenditures reported by the school district or county superintendent of schools as determined by its Function 3600 entry in the Standardized Account Code Structure (SACS) report for the prior year, excluding capital outlay and nonagency expenditures.” Note that this allowance will be reduced by the amount of the LEA’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) transportation add-on. Tracking transportation expenditures using Function 3600 is not a new procedure, and neither is the transfer of these cost into appropriate

Function or Goal codes to indicate whether the services are for special education (Goal 5000s) or other transportation purposes (Goal 1000s–7000s). LEAs should confirm that appropriate documentation procedures are being utilized per the existing California School Accounting Manual guidance.

Given that the HTS transportation allowance is based on prior-year reporting, limited to 60% of reported expenditures, and reduced by the amount of LCFF transportation add-ons, the state has all the data needed to calculate the amount to fully reimburse LEAs in 2022–23, which is set at \$637 million. The law is silent on what happens if state funding is insufficient to fully fund the allowance calculated for each eligible LEA. These expenses are likely to increase over time as LEAs increase transportation services.

To ensure eligibility for reimbursement, LEAs must develop an HTS transportation plan by April 1, 2023, describe the services offered, and how services to specific pupils will be prioritized. There are additional criteria for development of the HTS transportation plan, including:

- A description of the transportation services made accessible to SWDs and pupils experiencing homelessness pursuant to the federal McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- A description of how unduplicated pupils would access HTS transportation at no cost
- Consultation with required educational and community partners, which may include a municipally owned transit system for services to middle and high school pupils as appropriate
- Presentation and adoption of the plan by the governing board of the LEA in a meeting with in-person and remote public comment

Education Code indicates that nothing in an LEA’s plan shall preclude an LEA from providing no-cost transit passes to pupils, and there is no prohibition on charging for transportation for students who are not considered unduplicated. Section 39807.5 includes language regarding allowable costs and restrictions relevant to charging a portion of transportation costs.

Those interested in reading the exact language of the HTS transportation changes can find the K–12 Education Omnibus trailer bill Assembly Bill 181 [here](#).