Minnesota Department of Education

# Open Enrollment and Charter School Mileage Reimbursement Program Instructions

If requested by the parents or guardians, school districts must reimburse low-income families for certain transportation costs in the open enrollment and charter school enrollment options programs. This program only reimburses low-income families who are attending a school district or charter school located in a district other than the district in which they live and only for the mileage from their home to the district or attendance area border. This program is also available to districts or charter schools that choose to provide out-of-district transportation on a fee basis. The district or charter school can be reimbursed for only the transportation costs of those students who qualify as members of low-income families. This program is **only** available for students enrolled in a district under the Open Enrollment Program, Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.03, or in a charter school under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10. The income levels used to determine eligibility for these programs have changed for the 2012-13 school year.

## In order for reimbursement to be claimed, the following procedures must be followed.

**When the Family Provides the Transportation**

1. A family must complete the Application for Student Transportation Reimbursement at the beginning of the school year or during the school year if there is a change in their financial status. A family must submit the application to the school district or charter school that provides the transportation.

2. The district or charter school reviews the form for completeness and determines if the family's income qualifies them for eligibility. If the family's income qualifies them for this program, the family submits the Student Transportation Reimbursement Report to the district or charter school on a monthly basis. The district or charter school reviews the form, verifies attendance and pays the family based on the claim.

   - Both forms, the Application for Student Transportation Reimbursement and the Student Transportation Reimbursement Report, are retained in the district or charter school office.
   - If a family is transporting more than one child, the family is only eligible for reimbursement at the 15 cents per mile rate per trip.
   - The family may only claim the miles incurred while the child is being transported in the vehicle.
   - The mileage reimbursement is from the home to the district or attendance area border. The portion of the trip from the district or attendance area border to the school is part of the district's or charter school's in-district authorized transportation costs and cannot be claimed on this form.

3. The information submitted by the family on Student Transportation Reimbursement Report is summarized and is used to complete the Monthly Transportation Reimbursement Request ED-01876-24. Form ED-01876-24 is the only form submitted to the Division of School Finance/Transportation Unit. The state will reimburse the district or charter school for the payments made to the parents based on this form.

   - Please submit your claims on a monthly basis. Additional information and instructions appear on the reverse side of each form. **Do not wait** until the end of the school year.

**When a District or Charter School Provides the Transportation**

1. When a district or charter school provides out-of-district transportation, either by district, charter school, or contractor-owned vehicles, the district or charter school must have a policy in place in which the district or charter school charges a fee for out-of-district transportation for all students according to Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.36, subdivision 1 (b) 11. If the district or charter school does not charge a fee for this service, the district or charter school is not eligible to receive transportation reimbursement from this program.

2. A family must complete the Application for Student Transportation Reimbursement at the beginning of the school year (or during the school year if there is a change in their financial status). A family must submit the application to the school district or charter school that provides the transportation.

3. The district or charter school reviews the form for completeness and determines if the family's income qualifies for eligibility. If the family's income qualifies them for this program, the family submits the Student Transportation Reimbursement Report to the district or charter school on a monthly basis. The district or charter school reviews the form and verifies attendance.

   - Both forms, the Application for Student Transportation Reimbursement and the Student Transportation Reimbursement Report, are retained in the district or charter school office.
   - The mileage reimbursement is from the home to the district or attendance area border. The portion of the trip from the district or attendance area border to the school is part of the district or charter school's in-district authorized transportation costs and cannot be claimed on this form.

4. Districts or charter schools must submit on a monthly basis the reimbursement claim to the Minnesota Department of Education on the Monthly Transportation Reimbursement Request ED-01876-24. Form ED-01876-24 is the only form submitted to the Division of School Finance/Transportation Unit.

   - Please submit your claims on a monthly basis. Additional information and instructions appear on the reverse side of each form. **Do not wait** until the end of the school year.
   - The state will reimburse the district or charter school for the out-of-district costs of transporting students of low-income families only. Districts or charter schools are eligible for reimbursement at the rate of 15 cents per mile, per student or the actual costs, whichever is less.
   - If the district or charter school chooses to use this program for reimbursement, the district or charter school must determine what portion of the total cost of transporting students outside the district boundaries/attendance areas (UFARS Finance Code 713, Open Enrollment, Transportation – Outside the District) pertains to low-income families at year-end. The actual costs of transporting students of low-income families will need to be compared to the amount of claims that were submitted during the year. If the actual costs of transporting low-income family students is less than the claims, the district or charter school must pay back the over payment to the state.
   - The amount that was reimbursed for transporting low-income students that was expended in UFARS Finance Code 713, Open Enrollment Transportation – Outside the District, should be transferred to Finance Code 739, Low-Income Families Enrollment Options Transportation Reimbursement via a journal entry.

**When a Parent Transports Children Other Than Their Own**

When parents transport their own children, the vehicle does not have to comply with school bus regulations. However, if parents transport children other than their own and are being reimbursed for their transportation by the district, they are subject to state safety regulations for both driver and vehicles. The driver is subject to drug and alcohol testing, a background check, physical examination and must have a valid driver's license, insurance and receive training on Type III vehicles. Also they are required to have their vehicles inspected by the State Patrol. The State Patrol will be looking for equipment such as a fire extinguisher, first-aid kit, body fluids clean up kit and other specifications described in Minnesota Statutes, section 169.454 – Type III Vehicle Standards.

In addition, federal and state requirements regulate vehicles that carry 11 or more persons (including the driver) that are used to transport students to or from school or on school-related events. These vehicles must conform to federal and state requirements on design and construction for school buses. The Minnesota State Patrol must inspect any of these vehicles used to transport students.

School districts and charter schools should take steps to ensure that no parents transport students other than their own in vehicles that do not comply with federal and state regulations. In addition to the civil penalties, districts or charter schools may be assigned a greater level of liability if a lawsuit results from a parent transporting students in a vehicle that does not meet these regulations.

If you have any questions regarding the Application for Student Transportation Reimbursement, the Student Transportation Reimbursement Report, the Monthly Transportation Reimbursement Request or the Open Enrollment and Charter School Mileage Reimbursement Program, contact Kelly Wosika at 651-582-8855 or kelly.wosika@state.mn.us.