

# Transportation Fund

The Transportation Fund is guided by MCA 20-10-101 and was established to finance the maintenance and operations of district owned school buses; contracts with private carriers for school bus service; individual transportation contracts; and for the purchase, rental or insurance of school buses or operation of the transportation program.

## What is the purpose of the Transportation Fund?

The Transportation Fund is used to pay for the costs of getting students from home to school and back. This can include the purchase of buses, building a bus barn, bus maintenance, bus driver salaries and benefits, hiring a private contractor to run the transportation program, and transportation reimbursement contracts. The state and county share in funding “on-schedule costs” based on bus routes and mileage contracts with parents. Additional funding is provided through fund balance reappropriated, non-levy revenues and a nonvoted (permissive) district transportation fund levy.

## Valid Expenditures:

- Administrative salaries and benefits (% of time spent)
  - Bus Driver wages and benefits
  - Driver Training
  - Fuel
  - Repairs and maintenance to buses
  - Insurance for buses
  - Drug Testing
  - Purchase of new or replacement yellow bus (not extra curricular)
  - Individual transportation payments
  - Isolation payments
- Two way radios and base stations
  - Supplies and equipment necessary for transportation administration
  - Constructing and maintaining bus storage facilities
  - Utilities for bus storage facility
  - Any equipment necessary for safely transporting students
  - Contracted bus fees
  - Crossing guards
  - Any other costs related to transporting students from home to school

*\*\*Transportation Funds shall NOT be used for field trips or extra-curricular activities.*

## Common Coding:

Fund: 110 Elementary Transportation  
210 High School Transportation

Program: 100 Regular Programs  
200 Special Programs

Function: 2700 Student Transportation

Object Codes: All Object Codes  
514 Individual Transportation Contracts

Revenue Source: 2220 County Transportation Reimbursement  
3210 State On-Schedule Transportation Reimbursement

## Reserve Limit:

- 20% of Current Year Budget (MCA 20-10-144(3))

## History of the Transportation Fund at Gallatin Gateway School:

| Year  | Reserves    | Other Revenue | District Mill Levy | Adopted Budget | District Mills |
|-------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 15-16 | \$21,076.20 | \$30,515.81   | \$65,566.67        | \$105,381.00   | 13.21          |
| 14-15 | \$23,897.58 | \$28,711.06   | \$90,059.04        | \$90,059.04    | 18.95          |
| 13-14 | \$23,500.00 | \$27,049.83   | \$69,642.35        | \$117,500.00   | 15.10          |
| 12-13 | \$23,700.00 | \$32,898.15   | \$70,335.97        | \$118,500.00   | 15.39          |
| 11-12 | \$23,900.00 | \$28,733.72   | \$79,314.80        | \$119,500.00   | 17.07          |
| 10-11 | \$16,097.62 | \$27,733.70   | \$90,588.30        | \$119,322.00   | 19.52          |
| 09-10 | \$11,414.23 | \$28,371.79   | \$78,828.21        | \$107,200.00   | 17.40          |

### **Developing the Budget:**

Bus Miles Reimbursed (*see below*)

+ Nonbus Miles Reimbursed

+ Individual Transportation Contracts Reimbursed (*see below*)

+ 10% Contingency

= *On Schedule* Reimbursement

50% County Levy

50% State Reimbursement

- When expenditure budget exceeds the reimbursement for *On Schedule*
- Remainder is funded by non-levy revenues and a local levy

### **Reimbursement Rates:**

- School Bus Miles Reimbursed
  - First 3 miles is not reimbursed/6 miles per day
    - .95 per mile/rated capacity – not more than 49 passenger
    - 1.15 per mile/rated capacity – 50 to 59 passenger
    - 1.36 per mile/rated capacity – 60 to 69 passenger
    - **1.57 per mile/rated capacity – 70 to 79 passenger**
    - 1.80 per mile/rated capacity – 80 or more passenger

### **Individual Transportation Contracts:**

- Parent transports student(s) between residence and school OR between residence and bus stop
- Minimum of 35 cents per day
- Maximum of \$12.95 per day for first student, \$8.40/9.60 for each additional student
- Isolated rate is 1 and ½ times the regular rate
- Room and Board per diem is the same as maximum
- *Calculation:* miles per day X 2 – 6 miles X .35 cents per mile

### **Important Deadlines and State Reports related to Transportation:**

- By **July 1** a district must send copies of all signed and completed school bus contracts to the county superintendent.
- By **July 1** a district must submit individual transportation contracts electronically to the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- By the **fourth Monday of July** a county transportation committee (CTC) must act to approve or not approve all bus routes established by the districts. The CTC must also act on all applications for increased payments due to isolation. Approval of board of trustees for increased payments is required prior to CTC action
- By **October 1** the county superintendent must electronically acknowledge receipt of all individual transportation contracts (**TR-4**) and electronically authorize individual transportation contracts for which the CTC has approved for increased payments due to isolation.
- **At least 30 days prior to the beginning of the first semester**, the Montana Highway Patrol (HWP) must inspect all school buses used to transport students. If necessary the buses must be re-inspected before the beginning of the semester. (**TR-13**)
- By the **second Monday in September** the county superintendent must send the final budgets for the ensuing year to the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- By **November 1** a district must send the county superintendent one copy of the **TR-1** for each bus route and submit a **TR-1** for each bus route electronically to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- By **November 10** the county superintendent must electronically approve each **TR-1** submitted by the district.
- By **January 31** buses must have passed inspection for second semester by the Highway Patrol (HWP) for all school buses used to transport students. (**TR-13**)
- By **February 15** a district must send the county superintendent one copy of transportation claims **TR-5** and **TR-6** and submit the claims electronically to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- By **February 22** the county superintendent must electronically authorize each district **TR-5** and **TR-6** claim for first semester.

- By ***May 24*** a district must send the county superintendent one copy of signed and completed transportation claims **TR-5** and **TR-6** and submit the claims electronically to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- By ***June 1*** the county superintendent must electronically authorize each district **TR-5** and **TR-6** claim for the second semester.
- ***Whenever required***, the board of trustees issues Montana school bus driver certification (**TR-35**) to bus drivers and transmits the required copies to the county superintendent. The district will submit new and amended driver certifications electronically, as they are updated, to the Superintendent of Public Instruction

### ***Qualification of Bus Drivers***

School bus drivers must be fully qualified in order for a district to receive state transportation reimbursement. Drivers are required to have the following credentials:

- Five years of licensed driving experience ;
- Is not less than 18 years of age;
- Of good moral character;
- Holds a driver's license with the proper commercial vehicle operator's endorsement (Passenger (P) and School Bus (S));
- Filed with the board of trustees a satisfactory report of a physical examination, signed by a licensed physician in the state of Montana, on a federal Department of Transportation (DOT) form;
- No record of criminal offenses indicating they may be dangerous to children, as evidenced by a criminal background check provided to and approved by the school district prior to initial employment;
- Holds a valid basic first-aid certificate or certificate from an equivalent or more advanced first-aid course (The first aid certificate required by ARM 10.64.201 must include instruction in adult and pediatric CPR, be signed by a certified instructor, and be received after an initial in-person training of at least four hours. The certificate must be renewed every two years. The renewal course may be in-person or online);
- A safe driving record, which may not have evidence of any of the following: (i) more than one moving traffic violation within any 12-month period of the preceding 36 months; (ii) any conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs within the preceding 36 months; or (iii) a conviction resulting in mandatory revocation or suspension of a driver's license in the previous five years; and
- Holds a valid certificate (form **TR-35**) as evidence of meeting the above qualifications.
- 10 hours of annual training

The State Superintendent will not reimburse for routes driven by drivers without a current certificate on file with the Office of Public Instruction. If any license, certificate or examination was expired for any period of time, the Office of Public Instruction will withhold transportation reimbursement funding for the number of days the driver was not qualified.

### ***Other things to know about the Transportation Fund and reimbursement:***

- Transportation is the conveyance of a pupil by a school bus which is driven by a certified driver between the pupil's legal residence or designated bus stop and the school of the pupil's attendance.
- Reimbursement is given based on the miles traveled to transport eligible transportees on routes approved by the County Transportation Committee.
- An eligible transportee is a student between the ages of 5 and 21 who is a resident of the state regardless of District or County boundaries, who resides at least 3 miles from the nearest school.
- The student must be considered to reside with his/her parents who maintain legal residence within the boundaries of the district providing transportation.
- Only buses that pass inspection may be used to transport students, and only school buses that pass inspection will receive state and county transportation reimbursement. A school bus that fails to pass inspection will not be eligible to receive state transportation reimbursement. The school district is responsible for contacting the Highway Patrol for performing bus inspections