

High Need Fund (HNF) Manual

Division of Financial and Administrative Services Special Education Finance 2017-18

This manual reflects the Office of Special Education state plan for the implementation of a High Need/High Cost Fund meeting the requirements of Section 162.974, RSMo, and IDEA, Section 300.704 (c).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Purpose</u>	Page 3
<u>Current Expenditure per ADA</u>	Page 3
<u>Students who may Trigger the Fund</u>	Page 3
<u>Funding</u>	Page 3
<u>Application Instructions</u>	Page 4
<u>Coding Federal High Need Fund Revenue</u>	Page 8
<u>Fiscal Monitoring</u>	Page 9
<u>Policy and Legislation Information</u>	Page 10
<u>Frequently Asked Questions</u>	Page 12
<u>Public Comment Form</u>	Page 14

PURPOSE

The High Need Fund (HNF) was established pursuant to Section 162.974, RSMo, to provide funding support for a Local Education Agency (LEA) with “High Need Students.” These students are special education students whose educational costs exceed three times the LEA’s current expenditure per Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Reimbursement to LEAs under the HNF for qualifying students is made without regard to disability or placement. **Students should NOT be claimed on the both the HNF and Public Placement Fund applications.**

CURRENT EXPENDITURE PER ADA

The Current Expenditure per ADA can be found on the LEA’s Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR) (the year in which the costs were incurred). The Current Expenditure per ADA is not available to individual LEAs until the most recent ABSR is finalized by School Finance. The Current Expenditure per ADA amounts in the ASBR at the end of August will be loaded into the HNF Application. Following the September 30th HNF Application due date, Current Expenditures per ADA will be pulled again from the ASBR and included in the application for all LEAs to ensure accurate reimbursement amounts.

Reimbursement from the HNF is based on the LEA paying all costs up to the statutory threshold, which is three times the LEA’s Current Expenditure per ADA. The reimbursable amount is calculated by taking the LEA’s total educational costs of students on the application and subtracting three times the Current Expenditure per ADA. See example below for the reimbursement methodology.

Step 1

LEA Current Expenditure per ADA	\$6,500
	<u>X3</u>
3x Current Expenditure per ADA	\$19,500

Step 2

Total Educational Costs for Student	\$32,000
<u>Subtract 3x Current Expenditure per ADA</u>	<u>\$19,500</u>
High Need Fund Reimbursement Amount	\$12,500

STUDENTS WHO MAY TRIGGER THE FUND

Any student with a disability whose educational costs exceed three times the Current Expenditure per ADA triggers the LEA’s eligibility for reimbursement through the HNF. Examples of students with expenditures that may trigger reimbursement include: students with personal aides and/or nurses, tuition and transportation costs for contractual placements, high costs for related services, and/or high costs for one-on-one instruction.

FUNDING

LEAs with qualifying high need students may receive reimbursement from both state and federal sources. Payment receipts to the LEA from the HNF should be coded as follows:

Revenue Code 5381 - Sp Ed High Need Fund - State
Revenue Code 5437 - Sp Ed High Need Fund- Federal

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

LEAs must apply for HNF reimbursement on the electronic application that can be downloaded from the Special Education Finance website at: <http://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/special-education-finance/other-available-funding>. The application must be submitted electronically to spedfunding@dese.mo.gov no later than September 30, 2017 for expenditures incurred from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. A confirmation of receipt will be sent to LEAs submitting applications. Provided funding is available, upon approval of the application, reimbursement is anticipated to be paid in January or February. LEAs may contact Special Education Finance with any questions at (573) 751-0622 or spedfunding@dese.mo.gov.

The application is divided into four worksheets (tabs) as listed below. Data entry is required by the LEA in all areas **except** those shaded in gray. The gray shaded areas contain formulas which automatically calculate specific totals. Therefore, the application must be completed electronically.

- HNF Worksheet
- Student Information Worksheet
- Other Costs Worksheet
- Supporting Documentation Worksheet

HNF WORKSHEET

❖ **Local Education Agency (LEA) Information**

Enter the county district code, LEA contact person, and email address in this section. The current expenditure per ADA and the three times current expenditure fields will automatically populate after the county district code is selected.

❖ **Submission Instructions**

This section of the application provides general instructions and clarification of the types of costs which may be included in each of the cost categories. Cooperative fiscal agents or member LEAs may apply for HNF reimbursement. The submitting fiscal agent/member LEA must use their respective current expenditure per ADA in the application and a student may only be claimed on one application. LEAs and fiscal agents need to work closely to determine the educational costs for each student as well as necessary agreements to reimburse those costs.

❖ **Cost Totals**

The amounts within the Cost Totals section will automatically populate based on information entered in by the LEA on the remaining worksheets.

❖ **Assurance Statement**

The Assurance Statement must be agreed upon by the LEA superintendent certifying that the superintendent agrees with the following statement.

The Superintendent assures that the expenditures listed herein have been made solely on behalf of these students and that they are accurate to the best of his/her knowledge. Documentation must be maintained in the LEA for 3 years after the reimbursement date. The LEA is subject to fiscal monitoring of all documentation used to support the expenditures reported on the HNF application. The LEA understands that if monitored, and appropriate HNF documentation cannot be provided to the SEA (DESE), HNF reimbursements for which no documentation is available will be returned to

the SEA either by direct repayment from the LEA to the SEA or adjustment to a future HNF payment at the discretion of the SEA.

To agree to the Assurance statement, click on the cell and select “I agree with the Assurance Statement” from the drop down box. In addition, the superintendent must also type his or her name in the “Type Superintendent Name” field and enter in the date.

STUDENT INFORMATION WORKSHEET

❖ MOSIS Student ID Number

The LEA must enter the assigned MOSIS student ID number for each student on the application. Students participating in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs are not eligible for this fund as the ECSE program is reimbursed 100% by DESE.

❖ LEA Billed Medicaid for Student

The LEA must indicate if Medicaid was billed for reimbursement on occupational, speech, and/or physical therapy, private duty nursing, personal care, behavior health or hearing aid services for each HNF student. This will allow DESE to ensure that funds paid under the HNF are drawn from the appropriate funding source as IDEA does not allow federal disbursements under this fund to pay costs that otherwise would be reimbursed under the State Medicaid program under Section XIX of the Social Security Act.

The Costs Associated with Medicaid Students and the Costs Associated with IDEA High Need Risk Pool Students fields will automatically populate and pull over onto the HNF Worksheet.

Expenditure Categories

There are six categories in which a LEA may claim reimbursement for each student listed on the application:

- Instructional Costs
- Related Services Costs
- Transportation Costs
- Tuition/Contractual/Cooperative Costs
- Assistive Technology/Supplies Costs
- Other

All expenditures reported on the application must be directly related to the student’s education and supported by the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). All expenditures not specifically allocated to an individual student, such as general education classroom participation must be prorated based on the number of students served. Salaries of Special Education Directors and Administrators should not be claimed on the application as expenditures unless one-on-one time was spent with the student providing educational services. **IDEA does not allow expenditures for legal fees, court costs, or other costs associated with a course of action brought on behalf of a child with a disability to ensure Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), or for costs that otherwise would be reimbursed under the State Medicaid program.**

Each expenditure category section is discussed in further detail below. All costs must be prorated based on the number of students served. Examples of prorated expenditures are show below under expenditure category sections.

❖ **Instruction**

The LEA will enter instructional costs directly related to the student's education and supported by the student's IEP. This may include teachers (general education and special education), paraprofessionals, interpreters, and others as appropriate. Instructional costs not specifically allocated to an individual student must be prorated.

Example I: Self Contained

Teacher's salary plus benefits divided by the number of students in the class.

$$\$45,000 \text{ salary and benefits} / 8 \text{ students} = \mathbf{\$5,625} \text{ per student}$$

Example II: Itinerant

Teacher's salary plus benefits multiplied by the percentage of time the student spends in classroom during the day, then divide by the number of students present during that percentage of time.

$$\$45,000 * 25\% \text{ of the day} / 3 \text{ students} = \mathbf{\$3,750} \text{ per student}$$

Example III: Elementary Classroom Teacher

Teacher's salary plus benefits divided by the number of students in the class, and then multiplied by the amount of time the student spends in the classroom.

$$\$45,000 / 20 \text{ students} = \$2,250 \text{ per student} * 50\% \text{ of the day} = \mathbf{\$1,125}$$

$$\$45,000 / 20 \text{ students} = \$2,250 \text{ per student} * 1 \text{ out of 6 periods} = \mathbf{\$375}$$

Example IV: Elementary Non-Academic Classes (Art, Music, P.E.)

Teacher's salary plus benefits divided by the total number of students the teacher sees each week.

$$\$45,000 / 300 \text{ students per week} = \mathbf{\$150} \text{ per student}$$

Example V: High/Middle School Departmentalized for Regular Education

Teacher's salary plus benefits divided by the total number of students the teacher sees per day.

$$\$45,000 / 100 \text{ students per day} = \mathbf{\$450} \text{ per student}$$

❖ **Related Services**

The LEA will enter related services costs directly related to the student's education and supported by the student's IEP. This may include, but is not limited to: occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, orientation and mobility, braille instruction, counseling, ABA consulting, etc. Related services not specifically allocated to an individual student must be prorated.

Example I

A Speech Therapist has a total of 1800 minutes per week of therapy time with students. The salary and benefits total \$60,000. The therapist spends 60 minutes per week with Alex. In order to determine the portion of cost for Alex, use the following calculation:

$$60 \text{ minutes} / 1800 \text{ minutes} = 3 \%$$

$$3 \% * \$60,000 = \mathbf{\$1,800} \text{ for Alex}$$

If seen in a group session, prorate by the number of students.

$$\$1,800 / 3 \text{ students} = \mathbf{\$600} \text{ for Alex}$$

Example II

An Occupational Therapist is paid by an hourly rate of \$35 per hour. The therapist spends 20 minutes per week with one student. There are 36 weeks in the school year. In order to determine the portion of cost for the individual student, use the following calculation:

20 minutes * 36 weeks = 720 minutes per year
720 minutes / 60 minutes = 12 hours
12 hours * \$35 = **\$420** per student

If seen in a group, prorate by the number of students.

$\$420 / 2 \text{ students} = \mathbf{\$210}$ per student

Example III

The LEA contracts with an ABA consultant to provide services for three students. The contracted rate is \$1,800 per month. In order to determine the portion of cost for one student, use the following calculation:

$\$1,800 * 9 \text{ months (or actual \# of months of service)} = \$16,200$ per year

$\$16,200 \text{ per year} / 3 \text{ students} = \mathbf{\$5,400}$ per student per year

❖ **Transportation**

The LEA will enter transportation costs for LEA operated regular bus routes, LEA operated routes for students with disabilities, individualized routes for students with disabilities, cab costs for students with disabilities, contractual transportation costs for students with disabilities, and/or transportation reimbursements paid to parents with students with disabilities.

Example I

Student rides an individualized/special education route. This may include bus, cab, contractual, and/or parent reimbursement. Actual costs for these routes should be reported on the application.

Example II

Student rides a LEA operated route for students with disabilities. Use actual prorated costs or Line 48 - *Cost per ADT for disabled students* from the BU110 School Transportation State Aid Formula Sheet (Cost per ADT for disabled students can be found on the supporting documentation tab on the HNF Application). Report this amount as the cost on the application.

Example III

Student rides a LEA operated regular bus route. Use Line 35 – *Non-disabled cost per ADT* from the BU110 School Transportation State Aid Formula Sheet or actual costs (Non-disabled cost per ADT can be found on the supporting documentation tab on the High Need Fund Application). Enter this amount as the cost on the application.

❖ **Tuition/Contractual/Cooperative**

The LEA will enter tuition/contractual/cooperative costs paid to approved private agencies, other LEAs, or cooperatives for students with disabilities. The LEA should report the actual cost from the invoices received for the student with a disability.

Example I: Private Agency or Other LEA

Cost per day multiplied by the number of days in attendance.

$\$80 \text{ per day} * 162 \text{ days of attendance} = \mathbf{\$12,960}$ per year

Cost per month * number of months enrolled.

$\$2,000 \text{ per month} * 9 \text{ months enrolled} = \mathbf{\$18,000}$ per year

❖ **Assistive Technology/Supplies**

The LEA will enter assistive technology/supply costs directly related to the student’s education and supported by the student’s IEP. This may include, but is not limited to: harnesses, braille writer, speech to text software, computers, etc. The LEA will report the actual cost from the invoices received on the assistive technology/supply for the student with a disability. However, if the assistive technology/supply is shared between students, the cost must be prorated.

Example I

A Lifting Harness is utilized by 2 students. The cost of the harness was \$6,300.
 $\$6,300 / 2 \text{ students} = \mathbf{\$3,150}$ per student

❖ **Other**

The LEA will enter other educational costs that are associated with implementing the student’s IEP. The LEA must include a description in the lines provided on the Other Costs Worksheet for any costs reported under this category. These costs are subject to DESE approval. Legal fees, court costs, or other costs associated with a course of action on a student with a disability are unallowable expenditures under IDEA.

❖ **Department Use Columns**

The Department Use Only Total Education Costs and the Department Use Only Reimbursement Amount columns are shaded in grey and will be automatically populated.

OTHER COSTS WORKSHEET

If the LEA reports costs on the Student Information worksheet, the LEA must provide a description on the Other Costs worksheet to indicate what the other costs included.

❖ **Student MOSIS Number**

The LEA must provide the Student MOSIS Number for the student with a disability on which other educational costs were expended.

❖ **Description of Costs**

If the LEA reports other costs on the Student Information worksheet, the LEA must provide a description on the Other Costs worksheet to indicate what other costs are included. These costs are subject to DESE approval. Legal fees, court costs, or other costs associated with a course of action on a student with a disability are unallowable expenditures under the IDEA requirements.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION WORKSHEET

The Supporting Document worksheet is an informational tab only which lists the Current Expenditure per ADA as well as the Non-Disabled Cost per ADT and the Disabled Cost per ADA for each LEA obtained from the ASBR.

CODING FEDERAL HIGH NEED FUND REVENUE

The Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) requires LEAs to demonstrate when receiving federal funds that the LEA has “tied” the federal funds to an expenditure on the date the federal funds are received. Therefore, LEAs that receive federal funds through the HNF payments must code the total amount of federal funds received to current year special education expenditures originally paid with state and/or local funds. It

is not necessary to code HNF federal funds to high need costs. Because the funds are IDEA funds, they can be coded to any allowable special education expenditure.

It is up to the LEA to determine on which special education expenditures the HNF federal funds are coded to and ensure that federal expenditure requirements are followed for those expenditures. For payroll transactions, to consider the funds “spent” the payroll transactions should be recorded on the books **and** the funds delivered to the employees. The LEA must ensure employees paid with HNF federal funds sign a semi-annual certification form or personnel activity report (PAR). For equipment purchased with HNF federal funds, the LEA must ensure the equipment is added to an inventory log. For contracted services paid with HNF federal funds, the LEA must ensure the contract process followed LEA procurement requirements. For more information on federal fiscal guidance, please visit <http://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/special-education-finance/fiscal-monitoring>.

Recoding Expenditures Example:

Step 1:

Incur Expenditure and Code to General Account/State Funds in General Ledger
1221-6300-03 \$1200.00 9/10/17

Step 2:

Receive Federal Funds in Monthly School Payment Transmittal
Federal amount \$1200.00 1/22/18

Step 3:

Journal Entry to Recode the Expenditure to Federal (“37”) Account Upon Receipt
1221-6300 -03 -\$1200.00
1221-6300-37 \$1200.00 1/22/18

FISCAL MONITORING

DESE will randomly monitor selected LEAs on an annual basis to ensure compliance with State and Federal fiscal requirements. This monitoring will include the review of HNF related documentation. LEAs must maintain and be able to provide documentation relating to the expenditures claimed on the HNF application. If documentation to support all costs claimed on the application can’t be provided to DESE during a fiscal monitoring review, the HNF reimbursement amount will be adjusted based on the actual documentation available.

POLICY AND LEGISLATION INFORMATION

Section 162.974, RSMo, and IDEA 300.704 (c)

The Missouri HNF was established pursuant to Section 162.974, RSMo, to provide funding support for LEAs with “High Need Students.” These students are special education students whose educational costs exceed three times the LEA’s Current Expenditure per Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Reimbursement to LEAs under the HNF for qualifying students is made without regard to disability or placement.

Prior to the implementation of the HNF, the Extraordinary Cost Fund (ECF) was implemented (in 1998) for the purpose of assisting LEAs in addressing the needs of high needs children with disabilities. Individual

LEAs could access the ECF when serving children with disabilities whose educational costs exceeded five times the LEA's Current Expenditure per Pupil.

With the passage of IDEA 2004, DESE's ability to access the full Part B federal grant was tied to the use of 10% of the amount of funds reserved for "other State-level activities" dedicated to LEAs serving high need children.

Two options are available to DESE in use of these federal Part B funds: (1) To finance and make disbursements to LEAs for expenditures related to high cost children, and/or (2) Support innovative and effective ways of cost sharing utilizing no more than 5% of the funds by the State, by an LEA or among a consortium of LEAs. Missouri has elected to participate in the high need program (option 1) and annually commits a minimum of 10% of the amount of funds reserved for "other State-level activities" for this purpose. Option 2 is not utilized.

DESE Federal requirements relating to the HNF include:

No later than 90 days after the state reserves funds for the high need program, develop a state plan for the operation of the high cost fund (referred to as the High Need Fund [HNF] in Missouri). The basic state plan was implemented in 1998 prior to the requirement for a plan and was reviewed annually and amended/modified as necessary over the years. In 2005, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 287 which included a provision requiring the state to fund and operate a state funded "high need fund" to address the needs of LEAs educating children with disabilities whose educational costs exceed three times (3x) the LEA's Current Expenditure per ADA. IDEA 2004 provided a definition of a high need child but also allowed states with a high need program created no later than January 1, 2004 (and current in operation) to utilize that existing criteria in place of the definition found in 300.704 (c) (3)(i)(A)(2). Missouri has elected to utilize the criteria in the existing ECF fund for the federal portion (above 5x the CEPP) of the state's HNF.

1. The state plan for the high need program was developed during the legislative process leading up to the passage of SB 287 in consultation and coordination with a selected group of LEAs and advocates during a series of meetings to gain LEA support for the passage of the HNF legislation. Currently state statute defines the operation of the state's HNF, of which a portion is funded with federal IDEA Part B funds.
2. The HNF (Section 162.974, RSMo.) addresses the financial impact a high need child with a disability has on the budget of an LEA by mandating reimbursement to all LEAs including special school districts for the educational costs of high need children with an IEP.
3. The HNF (Section 162.974, RSMo.) requires that the cost of the high need child to exceed three times the average per pupil expenditure before a LEA may access the fund.
4. The HNF (section 162.974, RSMo.) establishes eligibility criteria for the participation of an LEA. The Missouri HNF does not look at percentage or number of high need children as 34 CFR 300.704 states, but rather requires the fund to reimburse a LEA for the costs exceeding the statutory threshold for all children with IEP related educational costs.

5. DESE ensures that that placements supported by the fund are consistent with the requirements established by IDEA 2004 through ongoing required monitoring of special education programs across the state.
6. The HNF (Section 162.974, RSMo.) establishes a funding mechanism that provides distributions each fiscal year to LEAs that meet the criteria developed by the state. The funding mechanism is tied to the identification of eligible costs by eligible child reaching a statutory threshold. An annual state appropriation is provided specifically for this purpose. Slightly more than 90% of the HNF is state funded.
7. The HNF (Section 162.974, RSMo.) establishes an annual schedule by which DESE must make program distributions. The state statute requires the annual reimbursement of appropriate expenditures based on a timely application by the LEA on a schedule as determined by DESE. The application due date is September 30 for expenditures incurred in the prior school year.
8. DESE does not reserve any portion of the high need funds for supporting innovative and effective ways of cost sharing as described in IDEA 2004. All funds in the state's HNF are used to reimburse expenditures for high cost students at the LEA level.
9. DESE will make all annual payments under the HNF in accordance with this plan.
10. Reimbursable Costs: All costs associated with educating a high need child with a disability as defined in IDEA 2004, to provide direct and related services to a child as defined in the child's IEP, including the cost of room and board for a residential placement are eligible under the HNF.
11. Non-Reimbursable Costs: Expenditures supporting legal fees, court costs or other costs associated with a cause of action brought on behalf of a child with a disability to ensure FAPE for the child. Students over the age of 21 are not eligible for the HNF, as FAPE is only required for student until the age of 21.
12. DESE does not establish a limit on the amount of expenditures used to educate a child with a disability.
13. DESE declares that the Extraordinary Cost Fund (in existence since 1998 to meet the high cost needs of LEAs providing a placement neutral cost sharing and reimbursement program of high need, low incidence, catastrophic, or extraordinary aid to LEAs based on a state established eligibility criteria) meets the federal definition of a high need fund created no later than January 1, 2004. DESE utilizes the criteria found in this pre-existing program instead of the eligibility criteria found in 300.704(c) of IDEA 2004.
14. Federal funds reserved for the HNF but not expended for this purpose before the beginning of their last year of availability for obligation will be allocated to the LEAs in the same manner as other flow-through funds are allocated to the LEAs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. This application does not require a lot of detailed expenditure documentation. Does the LEA have to keep documentation of the expenditures reported on the application?

ANSWER: Yes, the LEA must keep all supporting documentation and calculations used to determine costs for the High Need Fund for a period of three (3) school years from the date of reimbursement of High Need Funds. DESE reserves the right to review this documentation at any time and make adjustments to the HNF calculation/reimbursement.

2. What will happen if the LEA fails to keep copies of documentation used to support HNF calculations?

ANSWER: If the documentation is not available for review during the three year period as outlined above, the assumption will be made that the costs cannot be supported for that year. An adjustment may be made to reduce a current year reimbursement equal to an amount that cannot be supported by documentation.

3. Should support and related services expenditures be claimed under related services or instructional costs?

ANSWER: It doesn't matter where the expenditure is reported on the application as long as the LEA can document/justify the cost.

4. Can LEAs claim warranties on assistive technology equipment?

ANSWER: Warranty and required maintenance costs for IEP specified assistive technology is allowable.

5. Many of the LEA's special education students do not generate enough costs on an expenditure per ADA basis to allow the LEA to access the HNF. Should the LEA still submit a HNF application?

ANSWER: The HNF was never intended to provide reimbursement to a LEA for all special education students. This fund was designed to be a "safety net" for LEAs with extremely high cost students. LEAs are responsible for all costs up to 3 times the current expenditure per ADA using federal, state and local revenues. If special education student costs do not exceed 3 times the current expenditure per ADA, the LEA should not submit a HNF application.

6. Can the LEA claim the purchase or lease-purchase amount of a bus/vehicle if it is required to transport a special needs student?

ANSWER: No, bus and vehicle purchase and lease-purchase costs are unallowable costs for the HNF application.

7. Can the LEA apply for reimbursement through both the Excess Cost for Public Placement and High Need Fund if they have a student qualifying for both funds?

ANSWER: No, the LEA may access only one fund per student.

8. Can the LEA claim a portion of facility costs (lease/utilities/insurance/maintenance and upkeep, etc) through the HNF?

ANSWER: No, facility costs including lease costs and lease-purchase costs are unallowable costs for the HNF application.

9. Can costs for Renovation/Construction be claimed?

ANSWER: No, renovation and construction costs are unallowable costs for the HNF application.

10. Can the 3x the Current Expenditure per ADA amount be prorated if the student only attended a partial year?

ANSWER: No. The statute does not allow for prorating the threshold the LEA must meet.

11. How does the LEA know which students to target for the fund?

ANSWER: Students whose educational costs may exceed three times the Current Expenditure per ADA may include, but are not limited to those students who meet the following criteria:

- *Students in contractual placements*
- *Students with a Personal Aide/Interpreters*
- *Students with a large amount of Related Services*
- *Students with private nurses*

12. Who is responsible for completing the HNF application; the member LEA or the cooperative fiscal agent?

ANSWER: Cooperative fiscal agents or member LEAs may apply for HNF reimbursement. The submitting fiscal agent/member LEA must use their respective current expenditure per ADA in the application and a student may only be claimed on one application. LEAs and fiscal agents need to work closely to determine the educational costs for each student as well as necessary agreements to reimburse those costs.

13. How does Medicaid affect the HNF reimbursable amount?

ANSWER: The amount billed for Medicaid does not affect the amount of reimbursement to a LEA. It only affects which funds are used to reimburse the LEA.

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

The Office of Special Education allows public input on the structure and operation of the HNF. Please complete the form below with any comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding the fund, and return to:

DESE – Division of Financial and Administrative Services
Attn: Special Education Finance
PO Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Name (Optional):

Phone Number (Optional):

Residing Local Education Agency:

Comments/ Concerns/ Suggestions: