

High Cost Pupil Transportation Aid

Program Description

High Cost Pupil Transportation Aid is a categorical aid provided by state of Wisconsin. This aid program providing additional funding to school districts in Wisconsin that have higher per pupil transportation costs when compared to the statewide average per pupil transportation cost. Click the appropriate links below for more information.

- [Funding](#)
- [Aid Calculation Process](#)
- [Other Resources](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Aid Eligibility by School Year](#)

NEW: 2017 Wisconsin Act 59 (signed into law on September 21, 2017)

This Act modifies the High Cost Pupil Transportation Aid in a couple of ways and will impact the aid payment dispersed starting with the 2017-2018 school year:

1. The State of Wisconsin has increased the High Cost Pupil Transportation aid allocation by \$5,200,000 resulting in a total allocation of \$12,700,000/year and will be paid out in the 2017-2018 school year to cover the modifications listed.
2. Starting in the 2017-2018 school year, \$200,000 of the increase will be used to create a stop-gap measure that would provide any district that qualified for high cost transportation aid in one year but did not qualify the following year with aid equal to 50 percent of its prior year award in the year in which it became ineligible. It will be the responsibility of the School Financial Services team to prorate these payments if necessary.
3. Modify the current law program criteria so that districts would receive aid if, on a per member basis, the district's transportation cost are above 145 percent, rather than 150 percent, of the statewide average.

Funding

Established in 2013 Wisconsin Act 20 ([§. 121.59](#)) and modified in the 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, with an increased appropriation from \$5,000,000 to \$7,500,000 and the addition of a qualifier to the High Cost Pupil Transportation calculation process based on membership per square mile within the school district.

The appropriation was increased by the 2017 Wisconsin Act 59 from \$7,500,000 to \$12,700,000. Starting in 2017-2018 school year a stop-gap measure will use \$200,000 of the increase. This measure will provide any district that qualified for high cost transportation aid in the immediately preceding school year but is ineligible to receive aid in the current year with an aid payment equal to 50 percent of its prior year award in the year in which it became ineligible. It will be the responsibility of the School Financial Services team to prorate these payments if necessary.

[Section 121.59 \(1\)\(a\)](#) “eligible school district” means a school district the membership of which was in the previous school year when divided by the school district’s area in square miles, is 50 or less.

Eligibility

A modification from the 2017 Wisconsin Act 59 resulted in each qualifying district with a per pupil transportation cost exceeding 145 percent of the statewide average per pupil transportation cost will receive a share of this categorical aid. The appropriation is dispersed in June of each year and the aid payment will be based on audited information from the previous fiscal year.

The Department of Public Instruction will not receive complete audited data until later in the school year and due to the range of cost data from the participating school districts and 2R Charter schools we are not able to provide any estimated payments. The High Cost Transportation Aid payment is calculated with new data each year and making budgeting difficult.

Determination of School District Payments

Two pieces of information from the prior school year will be used to determine the school district payments:

- Audited transportation cost (Fund 10 only) that's available in early April.
- Audited membership for the previous school year.

“Membership” is defined as the average of the resident FTE students enrolled on the third Friday of September and second Friday of January (including part-time attendance by home-based or private school students), plus summer school and foster group home FTE. (source: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/statistical/longitudinal-data/membership> (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/statistical/longitudinal-data/membership>))

Aid Calculation Process

Phase I - Determine if the school district qualifies to receive an aid payment.





1. Total the previous school year’s Audited Transportation Cost (Fund 10) for each school district.
2. Verify the “eligible school districts” based on the previous school year’s audited membership for each school district.
3. First, determine the statewide transportation cost per member by dividing the step #1 total by the step #2 total. Then, multiply the quotient by 1.5 to determine the threshold to receive High Cost Transportation Aid.
4. Determine the district’s transportation cost per member by dividing the Audited Transportation Cost (Fund 10) by the Audited Membership.
5. Subtract the district’s transportation cost per member (step #4) from 150% of statewide transportation cost per member (step #3b). If the remainder calculated is a positive value, the school district is eligible to receive a portion of the allocated funds.


Phase II - Determine the qualifying school district’s High Cost Transportation aid amount.

1. Multiply the eligible district’s previous year membership by the positive remainder calculated in step #5 of phase 1.
2. Total the values produced in step #6 for all of the qualifying school districts.
3. Divide the total in step #7 by the appropriation to determine the percentage share (product) that will be paid to each LEA.
4. For each eligible school district, multiply the step #8 product times the school district’s value under “FY—District’s Tran. Cost over State Avg. Cost” calculated in step #6 to determine the district’s High Cost Transportation Aid payment.


5. Determine the members/square mile by school district by previous school year's Audited Membership for each school district by square miles per school district. Any school district that exceeds 50 students per square mile will be deemed to be ineligible.
6. Recalculate steps #8 and #9 to reflect the adjustments.

Aid Eligibility by School Year


- [2016-17 High Cost Transportation Aid Amounts \(May 23, 2017\)](#) 
- [2015-16 High Cost Transportation Aid Amounts](#)  (May 2, 2016)
- [2014-15 High Cost Transportation Aid Amounts](#)  (May 1, 2015)
- [2013-14 High Cost Transportation Aid Amounts](#) 

Please note that a district needs to use caution before assuming what the potential High Cost Transportation Aid amount will be in a future school year, due to the large amount of data that impacts the actual dispersed amounts ([s. 121.59\(1\)](#) )

Other Resources

Wisconsin Statutes [Section 121.59](#)  High Cost Transportation Aid.



1. In this section:

- a. a. "Eligible school district" means a school district the membership of which in the previous school year, when divided by the school district's area in square miles, is 50 or less.
- b. b. "Transportation costs" means costs that are eligible for reimbursement under [s. 121.58](#) .

2. Annually, the department shall pay to each eligible school district the amount determined as follows:

- a. a. Divide the statewide school district transportation costs in the previous school year by the statewide membership in the previous school year and multiply the quotient by

1.5.

- b. b. Divide the school district's transportation costs in the previous school year by the school district's membership in the previous school year.
 - c. c. Subtract the product under par. (a) from the quotient under par. (b).
 - d. d. If the remainder under par. (c) is a positive number, multiply it by the school district's membership.
 - e. e. Divide the product under par. (d) for the school district by the product under par. (d) for all eligible school districts.
 - f. f. Multiply the quotient under par. (e) by the amount appropriated under s. 20.255(2).
(cq). .
3. Aid under this section shall be paid from the appropriation under s. 20.255(2).
(cq). .

*For questions about this information, contact Bruce Anderson
(<https://dpi.wi.gov/user/1162/contact>) (608) 267-9707, dpifin@dpi.wi.gov
(<https://dpi.wi.gov/user/641/contact>) (608) 267-9114*