



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Rod Blagojevich
Governor

Jesse H. Ruiz
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

MEMORANDUM

Date: October, 2008

TO: Public School Superintendents
Public and Nonpublic School Administrators
Regional Superintendents
Catholic Dioceses

FROM: Tim Imler, Division Administrator, Funding and Disbursement Services

SUBJECT: Parent or Guardian State Pupil Transportation Reimbursement information for the 2008-09 School Year

During the 2008-09 school year, parents and/or guardians of pupils that qualify may be eligible for pupil transportation reimbursement. Illinois Revised Statutes, Chapter 122, par. 29-5.2(h) requires the chief administrative officer of each school to notify the parents/guardians of eligible pupils attending that school of this transportation reimbursement program by the first Monday in November of the school year for which reimbursement is available. This year that date is November 3, 2008. We have enclosed both English and a Spanish version of a "NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS" for schools to duplicate and distribute to all parents. Please distribute this information by November 3, 2008, so that parents living less than 1 1/2 miles will have sufficient time to request a serious safety hazard verification and the school will be in compliance with the law.

Eligibility criteria for transportation reimbursement are as follows:

- 1) The pupil must be under the age of 21 years at the close of the school year.
- 2) The pupil must be a full-time student in grades kindergarten through 12.
- 3) The pupil must either live 1 1/2 miles or more from the school attended or live within 1 1/2 miles from the school attended with the parent/guardian having received verification from the Illinois Department of Transportation that a serious safety hazard exists for the 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 or 2008-09 school year.
- 4) The parent/guardian resided within Illinois during the time period expenses were incurred.
- 5) The school the pupil attended is located within Illinois and satisfies the Illinois compulsory attendance law (Section 26-1 of the School Code).
- 6) The pupil did not have access to transportation to and from school provided entirely at public expense.
- 7) The parent/guardian incurred expenses for transporting the pupil to and from school.

To qualify for transportation reimbursement, parents/guardians with pupils who live less than 1 1/2 miles from the school attended must acquire verification that a serious safety hazard exists. Parents/guardians must obtain the *Application for Determination of Serious Safety Hazard* form from the appropriate Regional Superintendent of Schools in the county they reside or it can be downloaded at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/safe_hazard_app_instruct.pdf. **Such form must be completed and returned to the respective Regional Superintendent by February 1, 2009.** Parents/guardians residing within the **City of Chicago** must receive and submit a serious safety hazard application to the Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001.

Parents/guardians who received serious safety hazard approval notification for the 2005-06, 2006-07 and/or 2007-08 school years must reapply if conditions affecting the approval change, such as their address, the school their child attends or where any other qualifying conditions have changed since making application. If all these conditions remain unchanged for the aforementioned school years, parents **do not** have to reapply for the safety hazard verification. Serious safety hazard applications that were approved in the 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and/or 2008-09 school year(s) are approved for four years. Parents/guardians who received safety hazard approval in these years, for whom conditions have not changed, and those parents/guardians who receive approval for safety hazards for the 2008-09 school year, must submit claim information at each school(s) their child/children attend(s).

Parents who live 1 1/2 miles or more from the school(s) their child/children attend do not have to verify their eligibility through a separate verification process. However, they must submit claim information at each school(s) their child/children attend(s).

Parent/Guardian Transportation claims for the 2008-09 school year are required to be filed electronically by the School Administrator or authorized designee via the Parent/Guardian Transportation Reimbursement System in IWAS. Schools should notify parents regarding the eligibility criteria and the availability of claim submission at the attendance center. Electronic transmission via the Internet will be available at all public and non-public schools/attendance centers from February 2009 through July 2009. **Parents/guardians may provide claim information to school personnel for transmission until June 30, 2009 per statute.** It is recommended that school administrators distribute frequent reminders to parents that they need to come to the school and provide the claim information needed to transmit to ISBE. **Attendance center administrators must verify claim information provided by the parent/guardian for accuracy before transmitting to ISBE.**

Parents/guardians meeting eligibility criteria and submitting claim information within the statutory timelines will receive the lesser of the cost of transportation or the average per-pupil reimbursement given to public schools for transportation of regular education students. If insufficient funds are appropriated by the General Assembly, all claims will be prorated.

If you have any questions regarding this reimbursement program, please contact Larry Wilson or Leslie Clay in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at (217) 782-5256.

NOTICE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who must provide transportation to and from school **because free transportation is not available for their children** may be eligible to receive money from the state to help offset some of the cost, for example, bus fares or mileage reimbursement for private automobiles at \$0.505 per mile.

If you can answer yes to the following questions for the 2008-09 school year, you may be eligible to receive reimbursement for providing such transportation.

- 1) Will the pupil be under the age of 21 at the close of the school year?
- 2) Is the pupil a full-time student in grades kindergarten through 12?
- 3) Does the pupil either live 1 1/2 miles or more from school or live less than 1 1/2 miles from school but **must be transported** due to a serious safety hazard approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation? (See following paragraphs.)
- 4) Does the pupil attend a school within Illinois which meets Illinois compulsory attendance laws?
- 5) Did the parent/guardian incur transportation expenses resulting from transporting the pupil to and from school?
- 6) Did the pupil not have access to transportation to and from school provided entirely at public expense?
- 7) Did the parent/guardian reside within Illinois during the time period expenses were incurred?

If you answered yes to the above questions, lived in Illinois and wish to file a claim, you must go to the school where each of your children is enrolled by June 30, 2009, to submit claim information. You may provide claim information to appropriate school personnel at your child's attendance center until June 30, 2009.

In addition, parent(s)/guardian(s) who have pupils living **less than 1 1/2 miles** from the school attended must verify that a safety hazard due to vehicular traffic exists by completing an Application for Determination of Serious Safety Hazards. Parents can obtain a copy of the Application for Determination of Serious Safety Hazards from the Office of the Regional Superintendent of Schools for the county in which they reside **except** parents residing within the City of Chicago. Chicago residents can receive a copy of the Application for Determination of Serious Safety Hazards from the Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777. All applications for Determination of Serious Safety Hazards must be received no later than February 1, 2009, at the office from which the application was requested. Example: ISBE (Chicago residents), ROE (Illinois residents other than those residing in Chicago). The Regional Superintendent of Schools is required to send the Application to the Illinois Department of Transportation within 15 days. The Illinois Department of Transportation reviews and approves or denies the application and returns it to the Regional Superintendent of Schools within 30 days. Upon receipt of the reviewed application, the Regional Superintendent of Schools will mail it to the parent/guardian who requested the safety hazard be verified. **If the safety hazard is approved, the parent/guardian must go to the school the pupil attends to submit claim information.** Parents who received verification of a safety hazard during and after the 2005-2006 school year, whose children attend the same school and live at the same address do not have to reapply for safety hazard verification.

Once all claim information is submitted at the school, it will be transmitted electronically to the Illinois State Board of Education. If your claim information is approved, you should receive a check directly from the state for the lesser of the cost of transporting your child/children or the average per pupil reimbursement paid to public schools for transporting regular education pupils. If insufficient funds are appropriated by the General Assembly, all claims will be prorated.

If you have any questions, please call or come to the school as soon as possible.