



School Business Alert

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Community Eligibility Provision for Schools

In the 2014-2015 school year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture rolled out a new initiative called Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to enhance the ability of districts to ensure all students have access to good nutrition through the National School Lunch Program. Eligible buildings have the potential for more students to qualify for free/reduced meals through this program. Buildings accepted into the program are also not required to collect completed free/reduced price meal applications from parents.

As the question below discusses, this does require the district to “rethink” how it collects information on low socioeconomic status (SES) students in CEP buildings. The Iowa Department of Education (Department) is **requiring** CEP buildings to use a Household Survey to gather information from parents on income eligibility for things like fee waivers and accountability provisions. See the [Community Eligibility Provision](#) web page for more information.

Top four questions about Community Eligibility Provision:

Do I qualify? Qualification for free/reduced meals by direct certification, food assistance number, migrant, homeless, foster, and Head Start all contribute to the Identified Student Percentage (ISP) minimum of 40 percent.

Is it financially feasible? While 40 percent of students is the minimum ISP allowed for a school or group of schools to participate, a level closer to 62.5 percent, when all meals are reimbursed at the free level, contributes more to sustain the food service operations. The calculator on the [Community Eligibility Provision](#) web page can estimate reimbursement.

If there are no meal eligibility applications, how do I indicate low SES status for a student?

While no meal eligibility applications may be processed by food service for buildings participating in CEP, the list of students directly certified through the Department download may be provided by the food service department. For non-meal use (e.g., Title 1, fee waivers, etc.) information for additional students is provided through the use of Household Surveys. Best practice ideas include:

- Keep the survey simple.
- Tell the parents what services, benefits this information is used for.
- Have the survey be a part of registration materials.
- Include a checkbox that allows a family to decline and not report income information.

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School districts will use multiple data sources to identify students who are low-SES in their Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI) systems. Students identified as low-SES will include 1) students qualified on the direct certification list, 2) students qualified on the Household Survey, and 3) homeless, migrant, and foster care students who are not already qualified in items 1 and 2. The low-SES indicator in SRI is the new proxy for free/reduced price lunch lists in CEP buildings, since those lists are specific to use by the school hot lunch program and are not to be used for any other local purposes. For accountability provisions, the low-SES indicator is still the accountability measure used.

What is the deadline to sign up? August 31 is the deadline; however, earlier decisions are more successful in returning an adequate number of Household Surveys.

For more information including guidance, a calculator, decision tree, and sample Household Surveys, check out the [Community Eligibility Provision](#) web page.

Contact [Jeff Berger](#), 515.281.3968.

Annual Reminder: Billing for Supplementary Weighting Concurrent Enrollment Supplementary Weighting

Districts offering concurrent enrollment courses and eligible Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses may bill resident districts for the supplementary weighting generated on open-enrolled students enrolled in the contracted courses. Bills for the supplementary weighting can be generated using the information provided in the SRI application. Before paying a bill for supplementary weighting, the resident district can verify the information by reviewing the Supplementary Weighting (Non-Fall) application in the Iowa Education Portal. When computing the supplementary weighting, use the student's resident district cost per pupil of the year in which the course was taken. Directions for generating and verifying the bills are located [here](#).

For districts in a whole grade sharing arrangement, supplementary weighting generated on resident students remains with the resident district unless some other arrangement has been articulated in the whole grade sharing agreement. Iowa Code is silent on the subject of billing a whole grade sharing partner for concurrent enrollment supplementary weighting. If not addressed in Iowa Code, then it cannot be done. Options for distributing this supplementary weighting include:

- negotiating a higher per pupil rate for whole grade shared students in grades 9-12
- having the community college contract directly with the sharing partner for concurrent enrollment courses taken by the sharing partner's resident students

Shared Teacher

When two districts agree to share a teacher, only one district holds the contract for the teacher. The district that is buying a portion of the contract can generate supplementary weighting on their resident students enrolled in courses taught by the shared teacher. Eligibility for supplementary weighting is dependent on the district not having a licensed and endorsed teacher available within the school district to teach the course(s) being provided by the shared teacher. There is no provision in Iowa Code for sharing the supplementary weighting between the two districts.

Often Misunderstood Concepts

1. There is no billing of costs incurred for students taking high school, concurrent enrollment, or postsecondary enrollment options (PSEO) courses who are in the public district as:
 - Competent private instruction (CPI) dual enrolled
 - Open enrolled CPI dual enrolled
 - Independent private instruction (IPI) for concurrent enrollment only
 - Nonpublic shared timeThe dollars generated were, or will be, included in the attending district's certified enrollment.
2. No parent or student shall be billed for costs incurred from concurrent enrollment courses, even if the cost to the district exceeds the supplementary weighting.
3. Districts cannot bill students or parents for failed concurrent enrollment courses.

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4. A district can only bill the resident district of an open enrolled student for tuition, supplementary weighting generated from concurrent enrollment, English language learner (ELL or LEP) supplementary weighting, and the teacher leadership district cost per pupil when both the resident and receiving districts are receiving Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) funds.
5. A district can bill a parent (or student if 18 years of age) for the tuition cost of a failed PSEO course, the cost of equipment that becomes the property of the student, and the cost of a school-owned textbook that is not returned.

For reference, see Iowa Code 282.18(7), 284.13, and Iowa Administrative Rule, 281-17.10(8). Contact: [Carla Schimelfenig](#), 515.242.5612.

Purchasing School Busses on State Contract and the National Joint Powers Alliance Purchasing Process

Last year the state of Iowa maintained a state contract with two school bus vendors that allowed all school districts to purchase busses directly off that contract without having to bid locally. That specific state contract will not be in effect for 2016-2017. Instead, the state of Iowa will be coordinating with an existing purchasing group, the National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA), to continue to provide access to purchasing busses from two vendors directly without having to bid locally.

Several school bus purchasing contracts are accessible to Iowa schools via NJPA. NJPA is a national purchasing alliance that in many instances can reduce the amount that a school district will pay for a product or service. BlueBird Corporation from Fort Valley, Georgia and Hoglund Bus & Truck from Monticello, Minnesota have prepared contracts to serve as vendors for the sale of school busses in Iowa through NJPA. The Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS) will allow these NJPA contract prices to serve as formal bids for school busses in Iowa. To access these contracts, click on [NJPA](#). For more information, please contact [Max Christensen](#), 515.281.4749.

Ideas for a Successful End of Year and CAR Process

- Bank reconciliations should be done monthly throughout the year, but if these are not to date, get them caught up. Look at the major sources of income (property taxes and state aid) and make sure they've been coded properly.
- Look at state and federal grants and get those reconciliations started. If the money hasn't all been spent, talk to the superintendent or project managers, and let them know a balance is remaining, and find out what the plans are for this balance.
- In the nutrition fund, make sure state and federal, breakfast, and lunch revenues have been coded properly. Make sure student accounts are in good order.
- Look at fund balances and determine how they should be cleaned up or redefined. Committed and assigned funds should be adjusted if funds were used. Make sure the board has taken formal action on any new funds that should be committed by June 30.
- Take a look at general ledger balances to date. Is there anything that shouldn't be there? Are there negative balances? Do the balances look reasonable? Start researching early.
- Upload early! Test the account codes. A district should be able to get through Stage 1 and Stage 2 edits before the end of the year. Research any incorrect coding and negative balances and get those cleaned up early. Many Stage 3 and Stage 4 edits will appear since we are not at year-end yet.

More ideas can be found in the document "Best Practices for a Successful and Timely CAR" located on the [Certified Annual Financial Report](#) page of the Department's website. Also on this webpage is a PowerPoint, "How to Use the CAR-COA Upload," which walks a user through the upload process, and the CAR Instructions.

Contact [Denise Ragias](#), 515.281.4741 or [Janice Evans](#), 515.281.4740.

Teacher Leadership and Compensation Grants Coding

Congratulations on receiving the Teacher Leadership and Compensation (TLC) grant for next year. Districts in their first year of the grant should code the source and project for these grants to 3387, Teacher Leadership Grants until expended. The expenditure functions will depend on how the district uses the grant. It is anticipated that at least part of it would be Instructional Staff Support Services and possibly some Instruction, but there may be others. Review the district's application, including the estimated budget, to see how the grant will be used, and that will help determine which functions are affected.

Districts entering the second and third years of TLC in FY17 will receive funding through the state aid formula. These funds should be coded to Source/Project 3116.

Open enrollment for TLC in FY17 is \$312.16 for those in the first year of the program and \$312.68 for those in the second and third years of the program.

If you have further questions, please contact [Janice Evans](#), 515.281.4740 or [Denise Ragias](#), 515.281.4741.

Local Source Codes

On the CAR, most state project codes (3xxx) go through a reconciliation process to verify that beginning balances plus revenues minus expenditures equal the reported ending restricted fund balance (for state projects). Local source codes (1112, 1113, 1116, 1118 and 1119) also go through this reconciliation process; however, it is not required that districts record revenue separately for these funds which are built into the state aid formula. To assist districts in this reconciliation, a table has been posted on the web with the amounts considered as revenue, either through state aid, modified supplemental amount from the School Budget Review Committee, or local match as required by law. The 2015-2016 Sources for Local Projects table can be found on the [Certified Annual Financial Reports \(CAR\) webpage](#).

Contact [Denise Ragias](#), 515.281.4741 or [Janice Evans](#), 515.281.4740.

FY16 Chart of Accounts Test Records

The CAR 2016 Chart of Accounts (COA) Test Records is now available through the Iowa Education Portal. The COA Test Records mirror the CAR Upload and Reports. The COA Test Records allows for both individual account testing (use only Stages 1 and 2 to determine success) and full file account testing. Districts and AEAs are encouraged to begin testing now and fix as many problems as possible so that only matching sources and reconciliation edits are left to deal with over the summer. Messages for districts will be updated on the home screen as information is known.

Contact [Denise Ragias](#), 515.281.4741 for assistance with the uploads, edits, and reports. Contact [Janice Evans](#), 515.281.4740 for assistance with account codes and journal entries.

Special Education Finance

The Tuition In Billing (TIB) program is now available for districts to complete their FY16 final year billings. Please remember that all school districts will need to submit their final year billings by July 15.

For FY16, enter student information by number of **'DAYS' only**. This is a change from FY15 where you were to enter student information by "days" or "hours" based on your district's designation. As in past years, the Certified Annual Financial Report (CAR) upload must be completed to activate the TIB program.

As a reminder, between June 1-22, districts should ensure all students have been entered into their TIB program, including all special education foster care, termination of rights, nonpublic, and high cost claims. Also to be entered, are students who are educated in day programs, residential programs, and hospitals.

Between June 20-July 1, all school districts should review and verify the accuracy of the Tuition Out information through the special education supplement (SES). If it is determined that a student has been omitted, contact the district that provided educational services to ensure they add the student in their TIB program.

As you work to complete the TIB, if you have questions, submit them to TIB@iowa.gov. If you have questions on other special education finance issues, contact [Bill Roederer](#), 515.281.7972.

Annual Transportation Report

In an effort to reduce reporting work for districts, the Annual Transportation Report (ATR) will be pre-populated with depreciation information from the Vehicle Information System (VIS) and financial information from the CAR. This financial information will first be pulled together on a Transportation Report in the CAR for a quick review by the district. The VIS must be updated with complete vehicle purchase information by September 1. The ATR is due September 15.

In FY16, the ATR will continue to use source number 1981 for Fuel Tax Refund, when the refund is not in the same fiscal year as the expenditure. When the refund is received in the same year, it will be shown as net against the expenditures. Contact [Janice Evans](#) or [Denise Ragias](#) for questions regarding refund coding.

Nonpublic Transportation

Districts must have their nonpublic transportation reimbursement claims filed with the Department by June 15. The application to file the claim can be found on the [Iowa Education Portal](#), titled, "Transportation Nonpublic Claim" within the Transportation Applications group. More information is available on the web page [Nonpublic Reimbursement](#). Contact [Max Christensen](#), 515.281.4749.

Title II, Part A – End of the Year Reimbursements

Please submit your final 2015-2016 requests for reimbursement for Title II, Part A via [IowaGrants.gov](#) by Friday, July 8. Make sure to upload a cover letter including the total amount requested, and a copy of the ledger including finance codes for Title II, Part A.

Here are the steps to upload your request via [IowaGrants.gov](#):

1. Go to <https://www.iowagrants.gov/index.do>
2. "My Grants"
3. "Title II A Application FY 16"
4. "Claims"
5. "Add"
6. Type: Reimbursement
7. Enter Reporting Period
8. "Save"
9. "Return to Components"
10. Reimbursement
 - a. Enter info
 - b. "Save"
 - c. "Mark as Complete"
11. Reimbursement Signature
 - a. Enter Info
 - b. "Save"
 - c. "Mark as Complete"
12. Reimbursement Documentation
 - a. "Add"
 - b. Attach general ledger (you will need to attach the general ledger showing finance codes and a cover letter requesting reimbursement for the specific amount)
 - c. "Save"
 - d. "Mark as Complete"
 - e. "Preview"
 - f. Double check info
 - g. "Submit"

Garage Star Nominations Needed

School Transportation News (STN) Magazine is seeking nominations for “Garage Stars” to be featured in the August issue of STN. These can be fleet managers, technicians, foremen, etc., who are highly knowledgeable and doing great things at their local district. Ryan Gray, editor-in-chief for STN, would greatly appreciate any nominations you send to him for this recognition. Submission of the online [Nominate Your Garage Star](#) form is requested by June 24.

Local Auditor Access to Prior Year Local Education Agency Financial Information

To view information on a local school district’s prior year revenues from the state, go to [Edinfo](#) and click on the Auditor button in the bottom left-hand corner. You will then enter FY16 in the “Login ID” and click “Submit.” You will see the “Payments to Department of Education Subrecipients” screen. Enter the district’s headquarter number or district name and hit the go button.

School Board Officers

The Department of Education sends financial communications to the CFO/Business Manager(s) and Additional Financial Officer contacts from the information provided in the School Board Officer Application. If your district has a change in personnel, be sure to update the information on the Iowa Education Portal. Questions may be addressed to [Marcia Krieger](#), 515.281.5293.

District Communication

Much of the communication to superintendents from the Department is done via e-mail. This allows the Department to provide timely communication. If you are not planning on being with the district next year, please reply to [Marcia Krieger](#) and let her know. If you know your replacement and the replacement’s email address, we would appreciate that information as well.

Upcoming Deadlines	
Nonpublic Transportation Reimbursement Claim Due	6-15-16
Last Day to Pay PSEO Tuition Due to Eligible Postsecondary Institutions	6-30-16
Joint Employment Whole Grade Share Applications Due	7-1-16
Last Day to Bill for Second Semester Special Education Tuition	7-15-16
Last Day to Bill for Second Semester Tuition	7-15-16