



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
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To: School District Personnel
Date: September 2016
Subject: Obtaining Payments for State-Paid Tuition

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) makes tuition and transportation payments for eligible students. The OPI's School Finance Division makes these payments using the MAEFAIRS system. This document will address student eligibility, allowable tuition and transportation costs, and outline the steps required by districts to obtain payment.

STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR STATE-PAID TUITION

Circumstances under which the OPI will pay tuition and transportation costs are identified in [20-5-321 \(d\) and \(e\), MCA](#). The OPI bears these costs for non-resident students if:

- The child is under the protective care of a state agency or has been adjudicated to be a youth in need of intervention or a delinquent youth, as defined in [41-5-103 \(11\) and \(51\), MCA](#); or
- The child is required to attend school outside of the district of residence as the result of a placement in foster care or a group home licensed by the state

Students placed into foster care or a group home by parents are eligible for state paid tuition. [ARM 10.10.301B \(12\)](#)

ALLOWABLE TUITION AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS

The OPI pays up to 20% of the first ANB for the year of enrollment for the budget unit in which the student is enrolled, plus allowable special add-on rates. As described in [ARM 10.7.106A](#), the OPI will also pay the student's over-schedule transportation costs. Tuition and transportation payments are prorated based on the number of days the student was enrolled in the district.

Tuition and transportation payments are paid in the fiscal year following the year of attendance. A district may accrue the amount generated, but not received, during a given fiscal year. However, doing so may adversely affect the ensuing year's General Fund budget. As a result, the OPI encourages districts to consider budgeting consequences when deciding whether or not to accrue tuition payments.

OBTAINING PAYMENT

As mentioned above, MAEFAIRS generates payments for students with state-paid tuition. Districts will not receive payment until they enter days enrolled for each eligible student and submit their tuition claim. Districts must complete these steps to obtain payment:

1. Complete an FP-14 Student Attendance Agreement and FP-14A Special Tuition Rate form, if applicable. These forms document the reason for the out-of-district attendance and specify the annual tuition, transportation and special tuition add on rates. The district of attendance should initiate the application for payment. A new form must be completed for each student and for each school year.
2. Submit the forms to the OPI immediately upon enrollment of an eligible student, but no later than December 31 following the year of attendance. The OPI will review the forms for legal compliance and return them to the district of attendance. If approved, the OPI will also enter the student's information into MAEFAIRS. Districts cannot change the OPI entered information. Districts must contact the OPI with any changes or corrections to a student's record.
3. When MAEFAIRS is released for the ensuing year's Budget and TFS reporting, enter each student's days enrolled. Districts must log into MAEFAIRS at: <https://apps.opi.mt.gov/Maefairs/frmLogin.aspx>
 - a. From the **Data Entry** menu, select **State Paid Tuition**.
 - b. Choose an LE from the drop-down menu.
 - c. Select each student's record. Verify the student's information and enter the number of days enrolled. Click **Save**.
 - d. When all days enrolled have been entered, click **Submit to OPI**.
 - e. From the **Reports** menu, expand **State Paid Tuition** and select **State Paid Tuition (FP-15)**. Select the district(s) to be printed and click **Print to PDF**. The report may be printed or saved for the district's records.
4. MAEFAIRS will automatically generate a payment for tuition and transportation. Districts will receive the payment with their next regularly scheduled state entitlement payment. The payment schedule is posted on the OPI School Finance Webpage [HERE](#):
5. Tuition payments are credited to the General Fund and transportation payments to the Transportation Fund. Districts may deposit tuition proceeds into the Miscellaneous Programs Fund if the conditions of [20-5-324, MCA](#) are met. Contact the county treasurer to redirect funds.

Additional information--including all forms, a summary of Montana tuition laws, and rate limitations are posted online [HERE](#):

Please contact Nicole Thuotte at (406) 444-4524 or nthuotte@mt.gov for additional information regarding tuition or the approval process for state-paid tuition.

Please contact Kathleen Wanner at (406) 444-9852 or kwanner@mt.gov for questions regarding payment.