



Frequently Asked Questions

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Transportation of Homeless Students on Special Education Exclusive Buses FAQ

Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education
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Question 1: Can special education transportation bus routes allow homeless student(s) on the special education bus to be transported and not have it impact funding?

Answer 1: Special education transportation bus routes can allow non-disabled homeless students on buses that are exclusively used for students with disabilities without having an impact on special education funding if it would be considered an “incidental benefit.” An example of this would be the bus picking up a non-disabled homeless student at the same location that it is picking up a student with disabilities that requires specialized transportation or a location along the usual bus route of the special education exclusive bus. Additionally, there must be available seating for the non-disabled homeless student and no additional costs can be expended to transport the non-disabled student.

Question 2: Two phrases stood out that need clarification. The first is the idea of “*incidental benefit.*” The assumption is, if there is room on a special education school bus, a non-disabled homeless student may ride without changing the bus’s special education exclusive status. The second is picking up non-disabled homeless student “*along the usual bus routes.*” The question is how is the phrase “*along the usual bus routes*” defined? How far off the existing bus route constitutes unusual or unacceptable bus routing? Can this be a function of distance off existing route or unacceptable time added to the route?

Answer 2: “Incidental benefit” means there will be no additional cost or time added when picking up a non-disabled homeless student. It will not change the bus’s special education exclusive status, if there is enough seating to accommodate the students with disabilities currently riding the bus and there is no additional cost or time added when picking up the non-disabled homeless student(s).

As far as the question regarding picking up a non-disabled homeless student “along the usual bus routes,” it means the bus does not leave its currently scheduled bus route. This assumes there is a specific bus route and designed bus stops along that route. It means the non-disabled homeless student will need to be picked up at one of those designed bus stops. The only exception to that will be adding a stop to the existing bus route that does not add any distance to the existing route nor add any unacceptable time to the route other than the time it takes for the bus to stop and pick up the non-disabled homeless student.

Question 3: How many districts are lucky enough to have students that live along the route the bus is already traveling? If the bus deviates from the route – which is likely to happen, would it then effect their special ed reimbursement?

Answer 3: The MDE Office of Special Education understands it is very likely the non-disabled homeless student will not live along the route the bus is already traveling. In those instances, the non-disabled homeless student will need to find a way to get to one of the existing stops or a new stop directly on the current bus route. If the bus deviates from the route, it will affect the special education reimbursement as there will be additional costs associated with the special education exclusive bus that are not directly related to the transportation of students with disabilities.

Question 4: On the SE-4107, School Bus Inventory Report, would a special education exclusive bus used to transport a non-disabled homeless student need to be labeled as a combination bus? Taking a school bus from a special education exclusive bus status to a combination bus status on the SE-4107 will impact reporting on the SE 4094, Transportation Cost Report.

Answer 4: The special education exclusive bus used to transport a non-disabled homeless student will not be labeled a combination bus. As stated above in response to Question 2, it would not change the bus’s special education exclusive status. Therefore, there should not be any impact on reporting on the SE-4094 school bus expenditure report since there are no additional transportation related costs associated with the non-disabled homeless student. The school district will only report the students requiring specialized transportation on its SE-4094.