



May 26, 2004

Overview of the School Foundation Payment System (SFPS):

The web-based reporting and payment system for school finance is being implemented during the FY04 and FY05 school years. This update and revision of the funding program is one of the approved priorities of the state board, and is a major initiative of ODE. Benefits of the program include more effective data management, more timely payment processing and a less cumbersome reporting process for schools.

The new payment system will allow most reports and data to be submitted directly by each school district through a web-based data link, and also allow digital signatures by the same individuals who previously had to affix handwritten signatures. In most cases, the same data will be reported as on past paper forms, however the district will now be able to enter that data directly into the payment system through a web portal. This is a secure system and requires those using it to have accounts set up to allow access.

The introduction of this program has been designed in modules, each impacting specific subject areas related to school finance. As each module is released, training will be provided for district staff. Prior to that training, districts will need to complete several steps to enable access for the individuals who will be working with the program.

Training is being arranged by each ODE area coordinator's office. Attendees at these sessions should include the primary administrator for the specific module, as well as a data entry specialist for support.

Because this is a secure system with controlled access to protect each district's data, individuals who access the system must take steps in advance of the implementation. Individuals must have what is called a SAFE account, which is a password and user name, and also have an appropriate role in the Ohio Education Directory System (OEDS), which defines what programs they should have access to.

Steps to enable access:

- 1. Request a SAFE account as follows:**

Note: Many superintendents and treasurers already have SAFE accounts. These accounts are the same for all web-based programs. If so, no further action is required.

To establish a new SAFE account, go to the following web address:
<https://webapp2.ode.state.oh.us/portal/signup/> Users should follow the instructions provided for this on-line based registration process.

2. **Update the district OEDS directory.** These are maintained by a coordinator in your district. Some of your administrators may already be in the OEDS directory, but will need to have a role added. Others will need to be added (specifically transportation administrators and data entry staff).

Although many individuals are already in the OEDS directory, no one can access the SFPS system without a role defined in OEDS. Consequently, your district coordinator needs to verify the inclusion of each individual's role in the directory. (Individuals can have multiple roles in OEDS).

Please include email addresses in your directory update. Doing so will enable ODE to use this directory listing to contact individuals at the email address as registered in that directory.

The time frame for implementing the total web-based conversion is from October of 2003 through September of 2005. A rough schedule for all the components is as follows:

Module	Approximate Dates
Transportation	October 2003 – June 2004
SF-3	May 2004 – January 2005
Payment Conversion	May 2004 – January 2005
Statement of Settlement	May 2004 – January 2005
Appropriation Control	May 2004 – January 2005
Nonpublic Payments	May 2004 – June 2005
MRDD Funding	February 2005 – June 2005
Contract management	February 2005 – June 2005
Simulation and Estimation	July 2004 – June 2005
Post Secondary Payments	May 2005 – August 2005
Tuition and Excess Cost calculation	July 2005 – September 2005
Rollback/Homestead payments	July 2005 – September 2005

Most of these modules will involve field-based validation and testing, and some of them will require field based training. Some of the modules are entirely internal to ODE and will be used to more effectively manage the data and payment flow.

Thank you for your support and cooperation as we work together to streamline the school finance payment system for Ohio's schools.