

Inside this issue

- Innovation grants and loans available
- Data updates to affect FY2012 payments
- October reporting to be extended
- Please note adjustments in future foundation payments
- New funding simulation coming up for FY2013
- District Profile Report is under way
- Please remember upcoming deadlines related to district-ESC primary service agreements
- Jon Peterson Scholarship providers sought
- Scholarship application periods are opening
- Indirect Cost Recovery Rate Plan information coming soon
- Transportation efficiency target report issued for FY2012
- Does your district have unclaimed funds?
- Please note upcoming fiscal calendar date

Innovation grants and loans available

The Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) has announced that school districts may apply for Local Government Innovation Funds (LGIF). Ohio's FY2012-2013 budget bill established the funds to improve efficiency and effectiveness of government services. The grants and loans may be up to \$100,000 for a single entity or \$500,000 for a collaborative project. The deadline for the first award period is Feb. 15 for a "pre-application" and March 1 for a full submission. More information and the application are available on the [ODOD website](#).

Data updates to affect FY2012 payments

The FY2012 October count ADM data (taken during the first full week of October 2011) was incorporated in the February #1 Bridge funding calculation. Beginning with the February #1 foundation payment, made Feb. 3, school districts have a change in their ADM base for the FY2012 funding calculation. Since the first FY2012 payment in July, the FY2012 Bridge payment calculations all have been based on the FY2011 October count data as proxy for FY2012 ADM. With the February #1 Bridge payment, the FY2012 calculations were based on the appropriate ADM, i.e., the October count for FY2012. Typically, the inclusion of the October count data in the funding calculations would occur earlier in the course of the fiscal year. This year, however, many updates have been delayed as a result of the EMIS redesign project.

ODE also is working on additional EMIS data updates for FY2012, and when completed, future payment files will be adjusted as soon as possible. These updates will take place in the following order:

- Open enrollment data;
- Other adjustments data;
- Preschool unit funding calculation data (district and ESC);
- Gifted unit funding calculation data (ESC);
- General supervisory staff data (ESC); and
- School Options Enrollment System's career-technical education information.

October reporting to be extended

ODE is extending the October reporting period by at least three weeks. As additional pieces of the EMIS-R system come into production, ODE will have the information needed to set a specific date for the end of October reporting, sometime between March 16 and March 28. Once a final date in this range is selected, EMIS coordinators will receive notification through a Newsflash and an updated processing schedule.

Please note adjustments in future foundation payments

Please note that one important component of the Bridge funding calculation in FY2012 and FY2013 is a statewide per-pupil adjustment amount that appears on line 'J' of the [Bridge](#) funding calculation form. This adjustment keeps the statewide total funding within the confines of ODE's appropriations, and has been

calculated to date using a base amount of \$159 per student. With updated information and revised forecasts, ODE expects to decrease the reduction amount (and so increase the total payment) for each school district in a future foundation payment cycle. For more details, see the [Bridge Funding Line-by-Line Calculation](#).

Another item to note in the February #2 payment file is the second round of Public Utility Property Deregulation reimbursement distribution for FY2012. Eligible school districts and joint vocational schools will receive these reimbursements at the same time as that the foundation payment is distributed. The first half of the deregulation reimbursement distribution for FY2012 took place in August 2011.

New funding simulation coming up for FY2013

To better serve school districts with matters of state funding, ODE will provide a new funding simulation for FY2013. ODE has not been offering a simulation model due to uncertainty about the timing of a new education funding formula. Now that it appears the FY2013 funding will continue to be based on provisions of Am. Sub. H. B. 153, a new funding simulation based on most recent projected data for FY2013 soon will be posted on the ODE website. Details and a link to the simulation will be provided in the Foundation Letters. Questions on this topic should be directed to Daria Shams at daria.shams@education.ohio.gov.

District Profile Report is under way

ODE is currently working on the FY2011 updated version of the District Profile Report (the Cupp Report) for release later this month. You will be provided a link to the final report via an upcoming bi-weekly Foundation Letter and the March Treasurers Newsletter.

Please remember upcoming deadlines related to district-ESC primary service agreements

As you will remember, House Bill 153 (the budget bill), made a number of important changes to the primary service agreements between school districts and Educational Service Centers (ESCs). These are the service agreements that involve the \$6.50 per-pupil payments and the supervisory service payments. The budget bill made changes related to how districts can change membership to a new ESC and added new requirements for certain districts to sign ESC service agreements. The subsequent Substitute House Bill 157, passed last fall, made further changes to these provisions.

As a result, local, city or exempted village districts that wish to switch their primary services from one ESC to another for next school year have until **March 1** to notify their current ESC of their intent to do so. Although not all local districts have formal service agreements with ESCs, please note that these districts also must adhere to the **March 1** notification date if changing to another ESC. If a school district does notify an ESC of a service agreement termination, ODE requires that notification is sent at the same time to Prabir Sarkar at prabir.sarkar@education.ohio.gov.

As a reminder, the legislation requires all school districts with an enrollment under 16,000 to sign service agreements. Districts with more than 16,000 students may elect to enter into such service agreements. When any district establishes a new ESC service agreement, a copy of the document also should be sent to Sarkar accompanied by a cover sheet, which is available [here](#). These agreements are due to ODE by **July 1**, or before **June 1** if the parties want the state to start payments with the first foundation payment in July.

Jon Peterson Scholarship providers sought

The FY2012-2013 budget established the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program for students identified as having a disability and who are eligible to enter grades Kindergarten through 12th grade for the 2012-2013 school year. Public school districts and buildings may choose to become providers for scholarship students who reside outside of their district. To sign up to be a provider in this program, superintendents or building principals should sign into their SAFE account and click the link in the top right corner titled *Request Access to GED/SES/Scholarship*. Information about the program can be found by visiting the [ODE Web page](#) and searching for keyword *Peterson*, or by emailing peterson.scholarship@education.ohio.gov.

Scholarship application periods are opening

On Feb. 1, the applications for students applying for EdChoice Scholarships and Cleveland Scholarships opened and became accessible to the participating private schools for each program. Public school designated personnel have access to the application information through their SAFE accounts, as applications are electronically submitted.

The Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship (JPSN) will be available to Ohio students who have an individualized education program from their resident public school district. Scholarship award amounts will range from \$7,196 to \$20,000, depending on the disability category. Each eligible student will apply for the scholarship through a provider registered with ODE, who will submit an electronic student application to the resident public

district for review of data through SAFE Scholarship accounts. District personnel also will have access through their SAFE accounts to JPSN applications. In the spring, the Autism Scholarship student applications will be available within the same Scholarship SAFE account.

Deadlines for student applications are: EdChoice – April 13; Cleveland – May 31; Autism – approved applications prior to March 31 can receive prorated funding for that same fiscal year; Jon Peterson – April 15 and Nov. 15.

Indirect Cost Recovery Plan information coming soon

ODE has just received the FY2013 Indirect Cost Recovery Plan from the U.S. Department of Education. As in the past, districts may apply to ODE to recover a restricted indirect cost rate through a district federal grant program. Please remember that indirect cost recovery does not represent additional grant funds; it is an amount removed from an approved program.

Districts that wish to complete a Cost Recovery Plan submission for FY2013 will be able to download the information from the [ODE website](#) on Monday, Feb. 27. There are some changes in this year's plan as outlined below.

- Reminder – the FY2013 plan includes an unrestricted cost rate to be used only with the future Medicaid In Schools Program (MSP).
- Diskettes or CDs with plan submission documents will not be distributed as in the past. Please download the information from the ODE website as noted.
- The due date for district submissions is **April 15**.

Transportation efficiency target report issued for FY2012

The 2012 efficiency target report has been posted [here](#) on the pupil transportation finance page. This is a benchmarking tool for districts to evaluate the ridership of their school buses in comparison with other districts in the state. This report uses data submitted on the current year T1 report to compare each district in the state to a target ridership value. This year, ODE used total ridership for the calculation – including students who live less than one mile from their school of attendance. The final column of the report shows the ratio of actual ridership to target ridership. Any value greater than one indicates that you have exceeded your target ridership.

Does your district have unclaimed funds?

The Ohio Department of Commerce (ODOC) identifies unclaimed fund accounts for public agencies and is committed to returning as much money as possible to Ohio's schools. Some common examples of unclaimed funds include dormant saving accounts, credit balances, cashier's checks and refunds from utility and insurance companies.

When the ODOC's Division of Unclaimed Funds finds apparent school accounts, its staff will mail a claim form to the treasurer and he or she will be encouraged to claim the funds on the school's behalf. In addition, the Division encourages Ohio's schools to regularly search its list of open unclaimed funds accounts [here](#) and to file claims for accounts that are found. For more information on the Division of Unclaimed Funds, please call (877) 644-6823 or visit [its website](#).

Please note upcoming fiscal calendar date

- **March 1** – Tuition Certification and Report of Students with Disabilities

For more information, contact your [area coordinator](#) or the ODE staff member below.

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