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**Home Page News**

***Welcome to our new format***

As part of our continual efforts to help provide treasurers, business managers and superintendents with timely information about school funding, we are introducing today a [new Web-based format for the ODE School Finance newsletter](#) that is hosted on [WordPress.org](#). Also, you may continue to access PDF versions of each edition [here](#) on the ODE website, as well as at <http://odeschoolfinance.wordpress.org>.

If you read the newsletter online, please take a moment to read through the home page posts, as well as content in each of the major sections accessible from the tabs at top. Of special importance in this issue are news about scholarship applications, proposed transportation rule changes and reminders about activities you will need to do on the near horizon.

The new Web-based newsletter offers us a means of presenting information in an easy-to-read format. We also hope that you will benefit from this site's ability to share comments and questions with others in the field. Please let us know what you think by sending us a message on the newsletter site. You also may contact me and my staff, as well as your area coordinator, if you have questions. Our email addresses appear at the end of this newsletter and in the Contacts section online. – *Eric Bode, executive director, Office of Quality School Choice and Funding.*

***Casino distributions are posted; further details announced***

The Department of Taxation posted the casino revenue payments to their website [here](#). In short, \$37.95 million will be distributed on Jan. 31 to all public school districts, which includes traditional districts, JVSs, community schools and STEM schools based on the schools' student enrollment data as uploaded into EMIS on Dec. 26. College preparatory boarding schools also will qualify for this payment, once such schools are open. This is the only distribution for FY 2013. Starting in FY 2014, there will be two distributions per fiscal year. More details are forthcoming, but if you have questions on the counts used for the distribution for your school or district, please contact ODE at [EMIS@education.ohio.gov](mailto:EMIS@education.ohio.gov).

Please note that per Auditor of State bulletin 2012-08, casino revenue should be posted to the general fund using receipt code 3190, "Other Unrestricted Grants in Aid." Casino revenue should be included on line 1.035 of the five-year forecast. At this time, there are no state projections for future casino revenue amounts in total or on a per-pupil basis.

The constitutional amendment setting up the casino payments specifies that the distributions are done by county, and

then divided by each school district with territory within the county. Open enrollment students from a county in which a school district does not have territory are **not** included. This oddity causes the per-pupil amount to differ slightly for each county and each school district. (However, the per-pupil amounts for more than 95 percent of the districts are within \$0.15 of each other.) The average payment is \$20.95 per qualifying student.

### ***Early entrance to kindergarten requirements at community schools reviewed***

One of the many items in Senate Bill 316, enacted in 2012, concerned changes in acceptance into community schools of kindergarten students who are not age 5 by Sept. 30. The law change allows community schools to be paid for students less than age 5, but also requires them to pass a board policy on acceleration of young students, have the policy approved by ODE and follow all required components of the policy for each student, including testing.

ODE became aware last month that many young students seemed to have been enrolled without having the full procedure followed. ODE has worked with sponsors to explain the law change and ensure proper placement of these students. While the resolution of these instances are pending, ODE placed a temporary "withdrawal" date in the School Options Enrollment System, as of Dec. 31, 2012, for each of the affected students, which will affect the payments to the community schools and the amount of the deductions from traditional school districts. As the individual cases are worked out, the "from date" and "to date" of enrollment for each student will be updated accordingly, which will correct the payments and deductions.

### ***Scholarships***

#### ***Scholarship application periods are opening***

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

Deadlines for student applications are: EdChoice – April 19; Cleveland – April 19; Autism – approved applications prior to March 31 can receive prorated funding for that same fiscal year; Jon Peterson – April 15 and Nov. 15.

#### ***EdChoice designated public school list posted***

The list of designated public school buildings for the EdChoice Scholarship program has been posted [here](#). The list contains buildings that have received Local Report Card ratings of Academic Watch or Academic Emergency for the past two of three school years and buildings in the lowest 10 percent by Performance Index Score. As report card data for the 2011-2012 school year has not been finalized, the EdChoice designated list is watermarked as preliminary data.

#### ***EdChoice program annual second application period announced***

House Bill 555, recently passed by the Ohio General Assembly, contains the provision for an annual second application period for the program to be held during July 2013. Public school district staff will be able to review these second-round applications through the middle of August.

### ***Transportation***

#### ***Comments on transportation rule amendments sought***

ODE has been working with a stakeholder group to amend nine pupil transportation administrative rules that are up for their five-year review. The rules include provisions on authorized passengers, vehicle maintenance, children with disabilities, driver training requirements and non-routine transportation. The proposed rules, a summary of the changes and a business impact analysis are in the final stages of drafting, and will be available soon on the ODE [website](#). Notices will be sent to schools when the documents are posted. Individuals who wish to comment on these proposed amendments may send a message to [schoolbus@education.ohio.gov](mailto:schoolbus@education.ohio.gov). Please include the words *Rules Comments* in the subject line of your email.

#### ***T-1 amendments are due Jan. 31***

A district that has experienced a change in ridership or transportation service levels since its October count should submit an amended T-1 report. This report must be submitted through the School Foundation Payment System online reporting system, and must be completed before the close of business on **Jan. 31**. To open your report, send an email to [schoolbus@education.ohio.gov](mailto:schoolbus@education.ohio.gov).

### ***Race to the Top (RttT)***

#### ***Here's how to lower the FY 2013 budget allocation for the Race to the Top (RttT) grant***

ODE has decided to allow LEAs participating in the RttT grant to lower their FY 2013 budget allocation, if their carry-over

funding would be significant for the final year of the grant. The goal is to reduce the total amount of carry-over statewide heading into FY 2014. Please review your LEA's current adjusted allocation in the CCIP and determine if all the funds will be drawn down during Year 3 (FY 2013). If you are projecting to spend 50 percent or less of the current adjusted allocation this year, then consider lowering the allocation and these funds will be loaded into the allocation for the following year (FY 2014). If you are considering this option, please contact your RttT regional coordinator.

### ***IIS funding no longer needed from RttT LEAs***

In Fall 2010, ODE notified LEAs that received \$250,000 or more in RttT funds that they would be required to assist in funding the state's instructional improvement system (IIS). ODE is now pleased to announce that it will be paying 100 percent of the IIS set-up expenses during the first two years and that LEAs are no longer required to pay any portion of these initial costs. LEAs are encouraged to reallocate this funding in their budgets, to further assist in implementing reforms and initiatives related to RttT.

### ***Please update Excel budget templates***

Now that RttT is in Year 3, you are strongly encouraged to review and update your LEA's Excel budget template in the SharePoint Collaboration Center so that the document reflects the most accurate spending and budget allocation numbers. The budget templates should now contain the "actual" RttT expenses in the columns for FY 2011 and FY 2012 and not the CCIP budget allocations from those first two years. The FY 2013 and FY 2014 columns should represent the budget allocations for the last two remaining years in RttT. These figures are available on the RttT website by clicking on the "Budget info" button and downloading the PDF file. Please direct any questions to Erik Bower at [erik.bower@education.ohio.gov](mailto:erik.bower@education.ohio.gov).

### ***FY 2013 budget allocations need to be approved***

If your FY 2013 budget allocation in the CCIP is not in a "final approved" status, please take steps to get this approved as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in restricted access to the RttT funding and potential withdrawal from the grant.

### ***Reminders***

#### ***Deadlines for certain reports are approaching***

Due to delays in submitting the year-end financial data for period H through the new redesigned EMIS, there are new deadlines for two reports: Excess Costs (SF-6) reports are due Feb. 1 and Catastrophic Special Education Aid reports are due March 15.

#### ***Please submit calamity day waivers as needed***

As you will remember, school districts may have up to five total calamity days for each school year. Please remember that following a calamity day, a waiver must be submitted electronically to the [calamitydaywaiver@education.ohio.gov](mailto:calamitydaywaiver@education.ohio.gov) mailbox. Forms and instructions can be found [here](#) under the *Calamity Day Waiver* heading. For an overview of relevant Ohio Revised Code requirements, please review the *Minimum School Year/School Day Summary*, also [here](#) under the *Calamity Day* heading.

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

#### ***Office of Quality School Choice and Funding***

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