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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

August 13, 2020

Dear Superintendents:

We have completed our legal review of transportation statutes, and we have met with many of you, legislative budget writers, and other education stakeholders.

Consistent with current law (RCW 28A.160.190), we will provide school districts their full transportation allocations for the months of September 2020 through January 2021. Our legal staff, in consultation with legislators and their staff, agree that, short of a statute change, we will have to make payments in February and beyond based, in part, on fall and winter ridership counts. For many districts that will deliver instruction fully remote this fall, that would result in substantially lower payments or even no payments beginning in February.

The Office of Financial Management and legislative budget writers are fully aware of this and they understand they would need to take action during a special session or during the regular 2021 Legislative Session to address this problem.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) understands that many districts will continue to incur transportation costs this fall by transporting some students, even if they are not full buses, as well as resources such as meals, mobile hotspots, and learning packets.

We also know you are working hard to scale up in-person learning opportunities when it is safe to do so. This means for many districts, you will need to run complete bus routes at precisely the time funding may be at risk in February and beyond.

We look forward to working with you, the Legislature, and our other stakeholders to ensure you have adequate transportation funds throughout the entire year to deliver the highest quality results you can for student achievement – including transporting students, meals, and other necessities facilitated by an amply funded and predictable transportation system.

OSPI will be collecting additional data from you this fall that describes how you have used your transportation funds from September through January to help legislative budget writers in their deliberations for February and beyond.

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Thank you for your tireless work to transform the system around this moment to deliver the best possible learning outcomes you can as you keep the safety of students, staff, and your community foremost in your work.

Sincerely,



Chris Reykdal
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

cc: Washington State Legislators
Maddy Thompson, Governor's Office
David Schumaker, Office of Financial Management
Washington Association of School Administrators
Washington State School Directors' Association
Association of Washington School Principals
Washington Education Association
Public School Employees of Washington
Joint Council of Teamsters
Teamsters Local 763
AFT Washington, AFL-CIO