

Pupil Transportation: Grants for Unsafe Routes Budget Review

What is it? Why is the State involved?

The Legislature created the Pupil Transportation - Grants for Unsafe Routes program during the 2016 General Session. School districts may apply for funding to provide busing services to certain students that do not qualify for state funding under the Pupil Transportation - To & From School program but district provided transportation is needed “due to a health or safety concern, [where it is] dangerous for a student to walk” (H.B. 301, 2016 General Session). These routes are shorter than the distance requirements under the To & From School program, namely, 1 1/2 miles for elementary and 2 miles for secondary.

Grants for Unsafe Routes - Appropriation History

	FY 2017	FY 2018
Appropriated	\$500,000	\$500,000
Expended	(62,300)	0
Balance	\$437,700	\$500,000

Note: FY 2018 Grants have not been awarded as of publication date.

Discussion Items

Final expenditures from FY 2017 show that the majority of funding appropriated for the Unsafe Routes program remains unspent. This funding will remain as a nonlapsing balance in the program until it is used to award grants to school districts or re-directed by the Legislature. Legislators may wish to consider the following:

- Board staff reported that school districts expressed concerns about the grant award criteria and their inability to demonstrate need without substantial effort.
- In January 2017, the Board recommended that the Unsafe Routes program be discontinued and the funding moved to the To & From School program.

Funding Distribution

School districts must apply to the State Board of Education (Board) to receive grant funding. Grant applications must include the following:

- Description of the unsafe route.
- A written statement from the school district, local law enforcement, and the municipality or county describing why the route is unsafe.
- Board rules limit the grant amount to the per mile and per minute funding allowances paid to school districts under the To & From School program. This may limit the amount of funding a school district can receive under the program.
- School Districts may not receive more than 85 percent of the cost of the unsafe route.
- No grant may exceed more than 15 percent of the appropriation for the program, which is \$75,000.
- The State Board’s Transportation Advisory Committee reviews grant applications and recommends funding amounts. Only three school districts received grants in FY 2017.
- Charter schools are not eligible to receive state pupil transportation funding (53A-1a-513).

Grants for Unsafe Routes - Distributions to School Districts in FY 2017

LEA	Amount	LEA	Amount	LEA	Amount	LEA	Amount
Alpine	\$55,261	Granite	\$0	Piute	\$0	Wayne	\$0
Beaver	0	Iron	0	Rich	0	Weber	0
Box Elder	0	Jordan	0	San Juan	0	Salt Lake	0
Cache	0	Juab	0	Sevier	0	Ogden	0
Carbon	0	Kane	0	South Sanpete	0	Provo	0
Daggett	0	Millard	0	South Summit	3,171	Logan	0
Davis	0	Morgan	0	Tintic	0	Murray	0
Duchesne	3,829	Nebo	0	Tooele	0	Canyons	0
Emery	0	North Sanpete	0	Uintah	0		
Garfield	0	North Summit	0	Wasatch	0	Unallocated	437,739
Grand	0	Park City	0	Washington	0	Total	\$500,000

Legislative Action

The Legislature may wish to consider the following:

- Determine if the Unsafe Routes program should continue as a categorical program, be moved to the To & From School program, a block-grant program, or funding moved into the WPU Value. The Public Education Appropriations Funding Decision Tree may be useful in this process.