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Bureau of Special Education FY'09 Memo #38

Date: April 16, 2009

To: Superintendents of Schools
Special Education Directors
Cc: SPEDIS e-mail and NHSEIS e-mail

From: Office of the Commissioner of Education

Division of Instruction
Bureau of Special Education

RE: Catastrophic Aid Cost-School Year 2008-2009
(July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009)

The following procedures and timelines for application for the catastrophic aid for the 2008-2009 school year will require a minimum of paperwork while maintaining necessary fiscal accountability to distribute the catastrophic aid in accordance with RSA 186-C:18.

ELIGIBILITY FOR CATASTROPHIC AID

1. Students must have been placed in special education programs for their disability that are approved by the Department of Education.

2. School districts must have reported student evaluation and placement data to the Department of Education through the New Hampshire Special Education Information System (NHSEIS). The data must be in compliance with the requirements of the New Hampshire Rules for the Education of Students with Disabilities (effective June 30, 2008).

3. The cost to the district for implementing the student's Individualized Education Program during the 2008-2009 school year must exceed 3-1/2 times the Estimated State Average Tuition. The student may have been placed in more than one (1) program during this period, in which case costs are accumulative. This includes approved Extended School Year programs (July 1, 2008 to August 31, 2008).

4. For any student eligible for reimbursement under catastrophic aid the district obligation of 3-1/2 times state average tuition will be paid only once, even if that student transferred to one or more school district(s) during the school year. This means that the 3-1/2 times the Estimated State Average Tuition liability will be prorated among the districts in which the student resided.

Please note that the Estimated State Average Tuition for Fiscal Year 2009 has been established at $11,731.67. Use the figure of **$41,060.85** for 3-1/2 times.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

1. For private special education programs, rates have been established by the Department of Education. The rates are the maximum costs which will be allowed when figuring the final catastrophic aid calculations.
2. For district-operated programs, only direct costs attributable to each student's program may be claimed. No indirect cost such as pro-ration of regular staff salaries, building maintenance and operations, regular transportation or standard textbooks and school supplies will be allowed. If the program serves students from other districts on a tuition basis, the funds received must be subtracted from the operational costs of the program to accurately calculate the host district's real or net cost.
3. Districts may not submit catastrophic aid costs for students who received Court-Ordered Placement Aid for the same placement(s) during the 2008-2009 school year.

APPLICATION FOR CATASTROPHIC AID

1. Districts must enter all invoices, by line item, for each student whose cost exceeds 3-1/2 times the Estimated State Average Tuition, of $41,060.85.
2. Costs for students whose data is found in non-compliance with the NH Rules will not be computed in the district's share of the catastrophic aid.
3. Districts will be required to keep accurate fiscal records of invoices and vouchers for audit purposes.
4. Costs which exceed established rates for tuition, instruction, room and board and related services will not be allowed in the district's share of the catastrophic aid.
5. For Fiscal Year 2009, all Exceptional Costs of $1,000.00 or more and all Transportation Costs of $5,000.00 or more should be entered into NHSEIS, and districts are required to submit documents supporting these costs to the Department of Education.
6. For Fiscal Year 2009, all instructional costs entered for public school programs (SAU and LEA) and all out-of-state programs will require districts to submit documents supporting these costs to the Department of Education.
7. For Fiscal Year 2009, all services that do not have rates set by the New Hampshire Department of Education will require districts to submit documents supporting these costs to the Department of Education.
8. Costs will be considered allowable only if they represent services listed in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Costs incurred for services that are not listed in the student's IEP will be considered unallowable.

TIMELINES FOR CATASTROPHIC AID

The NH Department of Education must provide to the Division of Revenue Administration the estimated amount of catastrophic aid reimbursement to be received by each school district. This information must be provided by the end of August so that tax rates can be set in a timely fashion. Your cooperation in meeting the following deadlines is critical.

Deadlines:

June 30, 2009	Begin inputting all cost data into NHSEIS, if not already started.
July 31, 2009	Deadline for districts to have entered catastrophic aid data into NHSEIS. Submit transportation, exceptional costs and all other documentation mentioned above to the DOE, along with a screen print of the NHSEIS Financial Summary page.
August 7, 2009	Districts will create a list of all students for which they are applying for Catastrophic Aid for the superintendent's signature, and submit to the DOE.

To assist us in documentation we would appreciate you notifying Lisa Morrissette, at 271-3738, if you had a student eligible for catastrophic aid who moved to or from your district during the 2008-2009 school year.

If you need further information or clarification please contact Lisa Morrissette at (603) 271-3738 or e-mail lmorrissette@ed.state.nh.us.