

Inside This Issue

Communicating MARSS Reporting Announcements, Issues and Related Information	1
Test WES.....	2
School Calendar for Learning Year and Alternative Programs	2
Direct Certification Data Available Earlier	2
District and School Site Verification for 2012-2013	3
Grad Pre-code Pulls for June-September 2012	3
2012 Legislation	3
Homeless	4
Early Graduation.....	4
Early Graduation Achievement Scholarship and Military Service Award Programs	5
Postsecondary Enrollment Options.....	5
Shared Time.....	6
English Learner	7
Charter-District Collaborative.....	7
Tuition Billing.....	7
Residential Care and Treatment.....	7
Average Daily Membership-EDRS Estimates and MARSS Final	7
Pupil Transportation Reporting-General Overview.....	8
Pupil Transportation Annual Report (paper report).....	9
Transportation to Interdistrict Desegregation or Integration Schools or Programs.....	9
MARSS-Public School Students Transported To and From School.....	9
UFARS Data Submission.....	9
June 30, 2011 Bus Inventories.....	9
Documents on Our Website	10
Questions on Transportation Reporting.....	11
MARSS Deadline Pupil Transportation Annual Report (paper report).....	11

Communicating MARSS Reporting Announcement, Issues and Related Information:

In the era of social media we have more ways to communicate. But yet, effective communication is still a challenge. This became very apparent to us recently when the MARSS error messages were turned on May 1. Despite communicating this change via our regional workshops, MARSS WES e-mail, and the MARSS memo, the errors still caught a lot of districts off-guard.

Therefore, I would like to reiterate our primary methods of communicating MARSS reporting procedures and related issues.

MARSS Memo—This newsletter is posted periodically and provides more detailed discussion on reporting procedures and student-related information that impacts your district’s student data or

funding. Several staff at the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) are invited to provide articles relevant to school staff that maintain or report student data.

MARSS WES E-mail— Used by MDE to communicate to MARSS Coordinators reporting timeline reminders, status of MARSS WES and answers to current/common reporting issues.

MARSS MDE E-mail—Used by districts to communicate to MDE MARSS reporting questions.

Sydney J. Harris, an American journalist, was quoted as saying, “The two words information and communication are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.” With that in mind, I hope that the above communication methods will improve our communication to you.

Test WES

When students are added or updated in Test WES, it overrides any information that was submitted via MARSS. If the student’s record in Test WES was manually changed through Pre-code Student Eligibility, then flags such as Special Education and LEP cannot be saved in Test WES, even though MARSS may be correct. Due to the manual change, Test WES information is currently overriding what MARSS says.

Make sure the student is correctly coded in MARSS, and when the student’s assessment record comes back into Test WES for post-test editing, the MARSS flags will again be picked up and attached to the student’s assessment record.

School Calendar for Learning Year and Alternative Programs

All state-approved learning year programs (LYP), including area learning centers, public alternative programs and contract alternative programs, should report the actual number of required instructional days in the core school year as Instructional Days on the MARSS A School file. Although summer term participation will generate student membership hours, those optional days should not be included in the number of Instructional Days reported. The number of Instructional Days in conjunction with the Length of Day comprise the divisor used for computing each student’s average daily membership (ADM). For learning year programs, ADM equals: (the student’s membership hours) divided by the greater of

- (a) the actual instructional hours from the MARSS A School file [Instructional Days X Length of Day / 60] or
- (b) the minimum annual instructional hours [425 for kindergarten; 935 for grades 1 – 6; or 1,020 for grades 7 – 12]

By including the optional days in the number of Instructional Days on the MARSS A School file the ADM divisor is inflated which reduces each student’s ADM. State approved alternative programs (SAAPs) should refer to MARSS Reporting Procedure 8 for more information.

Take care to verify that each MARSS submission has the correct number of Instructional Days reported and the Length of Day (in terms of minutes) for all learning year programs so that the ADM is accurate. For all schools, if the length of day varies during the core school year, report the average length of day. Schools can use the Flexible Scheduling worksheet to compute the average length of day to report on the MARSS A School file. For more information refer to the MARSS Manual’s definition of Instructional Days and Length of Day, Procedure 8 (for SAAPs) and/or Appendix M (ADM formulas).

Contact: marss@state.mn.us

Direct Certification Data Available Earlier

The initial direct certification data for each school year, showing students who are approved for free school meals based on receipt of public assistance benefits, will now be available on about July 1 each year instead of late July. This change will provide more time before the beginning of the school year for schools to certify students for school meal benefits and provide data for the MARSS economic indicator. After the initial direct certification for the school year, MDE Food and Nutrition Service will continue to send monthly updates showing newly certified students.

District and School Site Verification for 2012-2013:

Just a reminder that a notice went out to Superintendents in the May 3, 2012, superintendent's mailing that the District and School Site Verification website is open and ready for updates for the 2012-2013 school year. The Site Verification Coordinator at each district (appointed by the Superintendent) should now go in and update contact information such as address, principal, phone number, etc. for the district and each school site by August 31, 2012, in order to ensure that data, reporting and payments are correctly processed. If a site is closing or new for FY 2013, please use the MDE Site Change Form available at the following website: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/DataSubLogin/SiteVerif/index.html>

If you have any questions, please e-mail mde.school-verify@state.mn.us or contact Mary Pat Olsen at 651-582-8624. Thank you.

Grad Pre-code Pulls for June-September 2012

MDE will use the 2011-12 enrollment data to determine which students need to retest for July, August and September. Districts can submit 2011-12 End-Of-Year (EOY) MARSS data throughout the summer. The 2011-12 EOY submissions occur continually so districts can make corrections to their 2011-12 enrollment data. Although the files will not be used for *financial* statewide edits and reports until each of the reporting deadlines, for pre-code purposes MDE will use whatever MARSS data it has when the pre-code pulls are done.

[If you have students who have moved to another school within your district, you can submit updates to MARSS. If students are testing at a different location than where they are enrolled, you are able to move these students through Test WES Precode Student Eligibility.]

The 2012-2013 Fall MARSS submission cycle is scheduled to open in late August 2012. At that time, districts can begin submitting 2012-13 enrollments. MDE will use the 2012-13 enrollment data for the September 2012 GRAD retests. In order for students to retest in September, a district must submit 2012-2013 enrollment data.

GRAD retests for students no longer enrolled (in MARSS): If you have high school students who have completed their coursework but still need to pass a Reading or Mathematics GRAD, they will not appear as eligible to take the GRAD retest because they no longer appear in MARSS as enrolled in your district. To add these students for testing, using Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES. A user guide is available on the [Test WES page](#) of the MDE website.

Questions: marss@state.mn.us

2012 Legislation

Following is a summary of legislation passed during the 2012 session that impacts MARSS reporting and/or student accounting.

Homeless

Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.20, subdivision 2 was amended:

The district where the parent or legal guardian resides is the district of residence for all homeless situations. Specifically, homeless students are residents of where their parent lives unless (1) parental rights have been terminated, (2) parent/guardian left the state or (3) the parent/guardian is an inmate of a Minnesota correctional facility or resident of a halfway house under the supervision of the commissioner of corrections. In these three exceptions the resident district is the school district in which the student resided when the qualifying event occurred. If no other resident district can be determined, the student is a resident of where the student is currently living. The commissioner of education has authority to make a determination in case of a dispute.

The enrolling district is responsible to provide transportation to and from the homeless student's resident district. If the homeless student is enrolled in a charter school, the district providing transportation for the charter school is responsible for transportation. If the homeless student is enrolled in other than a school district or charter school, the resident district is responsible for transportation.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.08 was amended by adding subdivision 2a:

Allows a homeless student, who has been enrolled in a district but whose parent moves to another Minnesota school district, to remain enrolled in the original district. The enrollment does not require approval by either the enrolling district or the new resident district. The student would be reported with MARSS State Aid Category (SAC) 11 through the remainder of the school year in which the student became homeless. On MARSS, the homeless flag is an indication that there may not be signed agreement paperwork on file. (This subdivision would not apply to charter schools.)

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.92, subdivision 3 was amended:

Allows a homeless student as described in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.08, subdivision 2a, to receive transportation from the student's residence to the enrolling school.

Minnesota Statutes, section 127A.47, subdivision 1 was amended:

Specifies that general education revenue must be paid to the resident district for a homeless student enrolled in other than an independent school district or charter school.

Effective July 1, 2012.

Contact: Carol Hokenson at 651-582-8840 or carol.hokenson@state.mn.us.

Early Graduation

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.07 was amended to no longer allow students who graduate early to generate funding as if they were enrolled through the remainder of the school year. Therefore, MARSS State Aid Category (SAC) 24 will no longer be valid. To remedy this, delete the enrollment record with a SAC 24 and change the Status End code on the just prior enrollment record to 08 so that the student is reported as a graduate. If you leave the SAC 24 record on the MARSS file the student will not be counted as a graduate because the record with the graduate Status End will have a local error and will be ignored.

Effective 2011-12 school year and later.

Contact: Sharon Peck at 651-582-8811 or sharon.peck@state.mn.us.

Early Graduation Achievement Scholarship and Military Service Award Programs

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.08 and 120B.09 were amended to clarify several program criteria.

A student cannot participate in both the Achievement Scholarship and the Military Service Award programs.

To be eligible for either program, a student must have been enrolled in a Minnesota public school and generating general education revenue at the time of graduation. The student must graduate prior to the end of the fourth year after first enrolling in ninth grade.

In calculating eligibility and the amount of the scholarship or award, each school year during which a student participates in the optional portion of a learning year program is considered an additional quarter of enrollment (one half of a semester). For example, if a student participates in one summer term of an area learning center (ALC), the student must graduate no later than the end of the first quarter of the traditional/required school year to be eligible for the scholarship or the military service award. Learning year programs includes area learning centers (ALCs), public alternative programs, contract alternatives and other state-approved learning year programs (LYPs).

The scholarship may be used at any institution of higher education accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Applications for the scholarship or military service award must be received at MDE within two calendar years of the date of graduation. Neither can be renewed.

The scholarship payment must be requested within six years from the date of the student's graduation.

The military service award payment must be requested by the end of the second fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the student graduated. For example, if the student graduated January 2012, the military service award must be requested no later than June 30, 2014.

The scholarship must be paid to the postsecondary institution within 45 days of verification of the student's request for payment.

Effective 2011-12 school year and later.

Contacts: Jessica Espinosa at 651-582-8512 or jessica.espinosa@state.mn.us and Sharon Peck at 651-582-8811 or sharon.peck@state.mn.us.

Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09 was amended by adding subdivision 5a. It expands PSEO by allowing 10th grade students to enroll in a career or technical education course offered by a Minnesota state college or university. A 10th grade student must have received a passing score on the 8th grade MCA in reading to be eligible for PSEO. A student who is refused PSEO enrollment by a Minnesota state college or university may apply to an eligible institution offering a career or technical education course. A student receiving at least a grade of a "C" in the career or technical education course must be allowed to take additional PSEO courses for secondary credit. A career and technical education course is defined as that "part of a career and technical education program that provides individuals with coherent, rigorous content aligned with academic standards and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for further education and careers in current and emerging professions and provide technical skill proficiency, an industry recognized credential, and a certificate, diploma, or an associate degree."

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, subdivision 7 is amended to require students to notify the enrolling high school by May 30 of the intent to participate in PSEO. Notification or lack thereof is binding on the student's part.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, subdivision 9 and Minnesota Statutes, section 1235A.101, subdivision 1 are amended to allow postsecondary institutions to advertise or recruit PSEO students based on educational and programmatic grounds only.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, subdivision 12 is amended by removing the language that allows secondary students to take PSEO classes for either postsecondary or high school credit. It clarifies that a student receives dual credit. Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, subdivision 22 is amended to allow MDE to pay mileage reimbursements for PSEO alternative (nonpublic school) students from families with income below the poverty level directly to postsecondary institutions, instead of requiring those students to seek reimbursement from the district of residence.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.09, subdivision 23 is repealed which limited the participation of residents of a district that is a member of an intermediate district to participate in Career and Technical Courses through PSEO.

Effective 2012-13 school year and later.

Contact: Jessica Espinosa at 651-582-8512 or jessica.espinosa@state.mn.us.

Shared Time

Minnesota Statutes, section 126C.19, subdivision 2 was amended to require that, upon request, the resident district of a nonpublic/home school student who takes shared time classes in other than the resident district or in a charter school grant permission for the district or charter school providing shared time instruction to generate the shared time aid. The student would be reported with MARSS State Aid Category (SAC) 17.

If requested, the resident district may also agree to pay unreimbursed educational costs. The resident district and enrolling district/charter school may negotiate an agreement for the resident district to pay transportation costs.

Shared time aid cannot be paid to an intermediate district/cooperative; therefore, the amendment does not apply. However, the resident district could place a nonpublic/home school student in an intermediate district/cooperative for shared time instruction and the shared time aid would be generated by the resident district. The resident district is responsible for the agreed upon tuition to the intermediate district/cooperative. The intermediate district/cooperative reports the shared time student with SAC 16 so that the resident district generates the shared time aid.

The responsibility to provide special education instruction to nonpublic/home school students remains with the district in which the nonpublic school is located per federal law.

Effective 2013-14 school year and later.

Contact: Sharon Peck at 651-582-8811 or sharon.peck@state.mn.us.

English Learner (EL)

The accepted term to describe students qualifying for additional English language instruction is English Learner (EL) replacing Limited English Proficient (LEP) and English Language Learning (ELL).

Charter-District Collaborative

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10 is amended by adding subdivision 27 which allows charter schools to develop two-year collaborative agreements with the public school district in which the charter school is located for the purpose of enhancing student achievement. A participating student must be reported on MARSS in the enrolling district/charter school only. The student is eligible to generate state aid in only one school at a time.

Effective July 1, 2012.

Contact: Cindy Murphy at 651-582-8217 or cindy.murphy@state.mn.us.

Tuition Billing

Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.19 is amended to require that nonresident tuition billing for students without IEPS who are placed in a care and treatment facility must be on uniform, commissioner-provided forms for students served in other than the resident district. A copy of the billing is not required to be sent to the commissioner.

Effective July 1, 2012.

Contacts: George Holt at 651-582-8889 or george.holt@state.mn.us and Lochlan Stuart at 651-582-8348 or lochlan.stuart@state.mn.us.

Residential Care and Treatment

Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.515, subdivision 1 is amended by defining “on-site education program” to mean only those at which instruction is provided directly on the grounds of the care and treatment facility. MDE must only approve these educational programs.

Effective July 1, 2012

Contact: Lochlan Stuart at 651-582-8348 or lochlan.stuart@state.mn.us.

Average Daily Membership – EDRS Estimates and MARSS Final – When are they used to revise entitlement calculations?

Many state aid and levy revenues use average daily membership (ADM), or a derivative, as a formula component in determining revenue on an estimated basis and after the year is closed, in a final calculation. To assure that the school district state aid entitlements and levy limits, and charter school state aid entitlements are being calculated on the most accurate estimates, the business office and MARSS coordinator need to work together so that MDE has accurate ADM estimates available at key points throughout the year.

Two tables on the MDE website provide EDRS and MARSS reporting timelines and the use of the district-reported ADM by MDE. These timelines will help district staff to identify how, and approximately when, MDE will use estimated, preliminary final and final ADM to calculate:

- preliminary final and final annual state aid entitlements for the closed year,
- estimated annual state aid entitlements for the current year, and
- projected annual state aid entitlements used for state forecasting and determination of state appropriations required to fund aid programs.

EDRS ADM/LEP ESTIMATE TIMELINES – Document name is “Timelines for Student Data for Calendar Year 2012” at:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/SchFin/MARSSStuAcc/AvgDailyMemb/index.html>

MARSS END-OF-YEAR TIMELINES – Document name is “Timelines FY 2012 – End-of-Year” at:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/SchFin/MARSSStuAcc/index.html>

If you have questions, regarding EDRS ADM/LEP timelines or MARSS End-of-Year timelines, contact Jeanne Krile (Jeanne.krile@state.mn.us) or Barb Mattson (barb.m.mattson@state.mn.us), respectively.

If you have questions regarding state aid or levy programs using ADM estimates or MARSS end-of-year data, please contact the MDE School Finance staff responsible for the calculation.

Pupil Transportation Reporting – General Overview

School districts report the number of nonpublic school students transported to and from school, and bus ownership. Districts will report on mileage by category as hours and routes cost methods have been eliminated per 2011 legislation.

Districts that transported students to Interdistrict Desegregation and Integration Programs must complete the report titled, *Transportation to Interdistrict Desegregation or Integration Schools or Programs* (ED-02370-08). This report is only being sent to districts that have been identified as racially isolated. Instructions have been developed to aid districts in completing this report.

Districts report the number of public school students transported to and from school on the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS). The MARSS student record has fields in which districts must enter the student's to-and-from school transportation code and the "Transporting District Number and Type."

Expenditure data are reported on the Uniform Financial Accounting and Report Standards (UFARS) data submission.

As in the past, the Pupil Transportation Data Verification Report (DVR) will be posted to the Minnesota Funding Reports section of the department's website by mid-October. It will be titled, FY 2011-12 Transportation Data Verification Report. The department plans to update the posting periodically throughout the fall. The DVR summarizes data from the Annual Report, MARSS and the UFARS data submissions. If there are any discrepancies among the data reported on these reports, districts will be asked to explain or correct them.

Pupil Transportation Annual Report (paper report)

If districts had mileage for other types of programs and those miles are not included in any category on page two, please complete the supplemental report that appears on page 16 if the instructions and submit the supplemental report with the annual report. This would include the miles for federal programs.

Transportation to Interdistrict Desegregation or Integration Schools or Programs (paper report)

This report is being sent to metropolitan school districts and only those districts in greater Minnesota that have been identified as racially isolated, and to the districts immediately surrounding the racially isolated districts. Instructions have also been developed. If you did not receive the form, and believe you should have, contact the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Student Transportation Office.

MARSS – Public School Students Transported To and From School

Districts are required to enter the appropriate transportation code on each MARSS student record. See the section at the end of this memorandum for the website location for further instructions on reporting students on MARSS.

Districts are required to enter the "Transporting District Number and Type". District staff may have to contact other district staff to obtain information on which district is transporting the student. Do not assume that it is either the resident district or serving district. Sometimes students live in foster or group homes in a third district. The third district where the foster or group home is located is responsible for the transportation and should be listed as the "Transporting District Number and Type".

UFARS Data Submission

All transportation costs are obtained from the UFARS data submission. If a district reports students and/or miles in any category on MARSS or the annual report, then a cost must be reported in the corresponding finance number on the UFARS data submission. Sample cost allocation methods are available on our website.

Districts must allocate transportation expenditures among categories based on a cost per mile or cost per student regardless of whether districts own their buses or whether they contract for bus service. Information on this cost allocation method is available on the department's website. In addition, districts are limited on which district employees' salaries and fringe benefits can be included in transportation.

Districts will be required to submit the worksheets on how they determined their cost for each category of transportation service. The worksheets are due to MDE on September 15 each year. Districts will not have to re-submit updated worksheets after that date unless there is a substantial change between the costs reported on UFARS and the worksheets submitted on September 15.

Districts are reminded that the deadline for submitting audited financial data is November 30. School districts must submit their state reports early enough so that any financial errors discovered during the editing process can be corrected by the deadline.

June 30, 2011, Bus Inventories

If your district owns any school buses, an inventory listing was mailed out. If your district has purchased or disposed of a school bus between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012, and the transaction does not appear on this listing, please complete a District-Owned Transaction form and mail it to our office as soon as possible.

Please use form ED-00186-11 for the purchase or disposal of a Type A, B, C or D school bus (yellow school buses). Use form ED-01658-09 for the purchase or disposal of a Type III school bus (car, station wagon or van). A Type III school bus can only be added to the inventory if it is used the majority of time for pupil transportation purposes. Additional copies of the bus transaction forms can be found on our website.

Do not complete a transaction form for vehicles that the district is leasing. The Certificate of Title of the vehicle must be in the name of the lease company during the lease period. Having title to a vehicle denotes ownership.

Districts will receive a separate inventory for school buses used primarily for special education purposes. The inventory will have the universal handicapped symbol at the top to differentiate it from the other inventory. Special forms have been developed to report these purchases. These forms also have the universal handicapped symbol on the forms. The value of these inventories will be used in calculating the district's special education funding. However, vehicles purchased with federal funds are not eligible for bus depreciation per Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.92, subdivision (1) (a) (ii) and (iii) as the costs have already been covered 100 percent.

The Special Education School Bus Transaction Forms, both Regular and Type III have been modified so that districts must indicate whether or not the vehicle was purchased with federal special education funds. The district's Special Education Bus Inventory Reports will show the selected indicator. The buses purchased with federal special education funds will not be included in the bus depreciation calculation in determining state program aid.

Do not submit a transaction form for Multi-Function School Activity Buses (MFSAB) as they are not used for to-and-from transportation. However, they are reported on the paper Annual Report under school bus type and ownership.

Documents on Our Website

Districts may obtain information on reporting students on MARSS, allocating transportation expenditures and the forms necessary to report purchases or disposals of school buses by visiting our website at:

. <http://education.state.mn.us>, select School Support > School Finance > Transportation > Resources.

Questions on Transportation Reporting

If you have any questions about pupil transportation reporting, contact Kelly Wosika, Student Transportation Specialist, at 651-582-8855 or kelly.wosika@state.mn.us.

MARSS Deadlines

MARSS files are due to the department on the following dates. Refer to the posted timelines for more detail:

- June 12, 2012 – Used for Special Education tuition billing and AYP enrollment.
- July 10, 2012 – Used for Direct Certification.
- August 7, 2012 – Used for September 30 clean-up payment.
- September 11, 2012 – Used for October 30 clean-up payment.
- October 23, 2012 – Final data due.

This publication is produced by:

Minnesota Department of Education
Division of School Finance
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266
Phone: 651-582-8779
Fax: 651-582-8878
<http://education.state.mn.us>
E-Mail: marss@state.mn.us