Charter School Subsidy Redirection Request Process Overview and Common Issues

December 2018
Overview of State Law

• Charter School (CS) redirection process based in state law
  – School Code Section 1725-A(a)(5)
  – Includes both current-year invoices and prior-year reconciliations
  – CS must first send invoice (payment request) to resident school district
Overview of State Law

• Charter School (CS) redirection process based in state law
  – If no SD payment by the 5th, CS may send to PDE for redirection and payment
  – Request must be received by PDE between the 15th and 25th of the month
  – Payment will be made on the last Thursday of the next month, pending available SD subsidies
Overview of Redirection Process

• PDE posted both Instructions (rev. 8/2018) and Checklist
  – Found at www.education.pa.gov/CSFunding
  – Instructions must be explicitly followed
  – PDE will return requests that do not comply with Instructions
Overview of Redirection Process

• Review PDE Instructions and Checklist
  – Print Checklist and use every time a redirection request is prepared
  – Use PDE-provided reporting templates or mirror layout if designing from own system
  – Submit request only within window (15th-25th)
• What tuition rates should be used?
  – Three options
    1. Use rates from PDE-posted Excel spreadsheets (based on SD-created PDE-363)
    2. Use rates from SD-created PDE-363 (not on website)
    3. Use CS-created PDE-363 (that includes deductions for both federal expenditures and Ready to Learn Block Grant)
Common Questions

• What tuition rates should be used? (cont’d)
  – Review PDE’s Instructions under Documentation, on page 3, number 5
  – For each SD, describe source of rates used
  – If the rates used in the request have been posted on PDE’s website, only reference website:
    • Do not attach PDE-363 and
    • Do not attach PDE’s list of posted rates
Common Questions

• What tuition rates should be used? (cont’d)
  – Review PDE’s Instructions under Documentation, on page 3, number 5
  – For an SD-created PDE-363 not on website, attach form to redirection request e-mail
  – For a CS-created PDE-363, attach form to redirection request e-mail and specify source of data used in calculation
Common Questions

• What months should be listed in the header of the Summary documents with a redirection request?
  – Review PDE’s Instructions under Formatting, page 4, number 5 (example included there)
  – Beginning month (July) is pre-populated on the templates
  – Ending month is the last month of the enrollment that is being reported in the current submission
Common Questions

• How do I correctly include all PDE Subsidy Deductions on the Summary documents?
  – Review PDE’s Instructions under Data, on page 4, number 3 and the Checklist, Data Requirements, on page 2, item 3
  – PDE deductions include all PDE payments received to date for the payable year
  – PDE deductions must also include payments showing in FAI as “In Process”
Common Questions

• What dates should I use on the Summary Information Sheet?
  – Review PDE’s Instructions under Data, on page 4, number 6
  – Dates provide verification that the request was appropriately sent to the SD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Prepared</th>
<th>Date the CS completed the Summary Information Sheet that will be sent to a SD or PDE.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Sent to SD</td>
<td>The date the request was sent to the SD before sending to PDE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Sent to PDE</td>
<td>The date the request is e-mailed to PDE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common Questions

• What Unipay month should be referenced in the submission?
  – Refer to the Timeline, Payment Date column
  – The Unipay month corresponds with the month the CS will receive payment from PDE, not the month the CS submitted its redirection request to PDE
Common Questions

• Can a request be submitted to PDE to receive a pre-review, then make necessary changes and resubmit?
  – Refer to PDE’s Instructions under PDE Review Process – first sentence
  – PDE will only review submissions after the submission window has closed
  – PDE will answer questions via e-mail or telephone prior to submission
Common Questions

• What format should be used for the submission e-mail subject and the attachment(s)?
  – Refer to PDE’s Instructions under Documentation, on page 3, number 1 and the Checklist under Documentation Requirements, on page 1, first and second topics
  – Do not include a SD name in either the e-mail subject line or attachment file names
• When will PDE return requests that cannot be processed due to errors?
  – PDE will begin reviewing requests the first business day after the submission window has closed (i.e. on the 26th)
  – E-mails indicating that a request cannot be processed will be sent to charter schools as soon as possible
• When will PDE send payment confirmation e-mails and spreadsheets?
  – E-mails will be sent to charter schools (and to school districts regarding deductions) after Unipay processing has been finalized by both PDE and the Office of Comptroller Operations
  – Payment information will be visible to charter schools in the FAI web-based application (as “In Process” until the date of payment)
• Common Errors
  – Submitting redirection requests either before or after the processing window
  – Data Entry errors, such as:
    • Typing incorrect tuition rates
    • Typing incorrect SD AUNs
    • Typing incomplete SD names
• Common Errors
  – Information or data on the *Summary of Unipay Request* does not match the *Summary Information Sheet* due to data entry errors
  – Failure to include prior PDE deductions (including those scheduled but not yet paid)
  – Invalid enrollment months included on submission (i.e. requesting deduction for a month where the SD has not had sufficient opportunity to make payment)
• Common Errors
  – Not using updated templates from PDE’s website (or, for system-designed templates, fields and/or layout are different)
  – Not completing all template fields, such as:
    • All three dates on the Summary Information Sheet
    • PA Secure ID and First Day Educated on the Individual Student Information Sheet
Common Errors

- Not including page headers on all templates
- Not properly completing information required in template header

• **Summary of Unipay Request** – 3rd row: ending month and year should match the enrollment
• **Summary Information Sheet** – 4th row: ending month and year should match the enrollment
Common Errors

- Submitting an SD-prepared PDE-363 without the second page
- Submitting an SD-prepared PDE-363 that PDE cannot verify as authentic
- Not clearly stating source of tuition rates used in the submission
- Referencing PDE website rates for a SD and also attaching a PDE-363 form for that SD
Common Errors

- Submission e-mail subject and/or attachments do not conform to PDE’s Instructions (see Instructions under Documentation, page 3, number 1 and Checklist under Documentation Requirements, page 1, first and second topics)
- Reconciliation reports submitted to both SD and PDE prior to July 1 (must be on or after July 1)
- Reconciliation reports submitted to SD after October 1 or PDE after April 25
Timeline for Submission to PDE

• Commonwealth Payment Schedule
  – Most PDE state subsidy payments occur in the “Unipay” (last Thursday of each month)
  – Schedule set by Office of Comptroller Operations
  – Unipay Schedule is posted online: [www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov), Policy and Funding, School Finances, Reporting, Office of Comptroller Operations
PDE Suggestions

• Double-check data before submitting request to PDE
  – Print and complete Checklist and use every time a redirection request is prepared
  – Verify tuition rates were accurately typed in template
  – Reference tuition rate data source (either website or expenditures and ADM for CS-calculated rates)
• Double-check data before submitting request to PDE
  – Confirm every SD name and AUN in PDE’s EdNA, www.edna.pa.gov, prior to submitting the redirection request
  – Contact PDE to assist with clarifying unclear topics prior to submitting redirection request
Contact Information

For more information on this topic:

www.education.pa.gov/CSFunding

ra-CSFunding@pa.gov

717.787.5423
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