

FAQ FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS ON IMPACT AID PARENT-PUPIL SURVEYS

Have you been asked to complete an Impact Aid Parent-Pupil Survey form, but aren't sure why? Do you wonder how the information you provide will be used? See below for some of the most frequently asked questions about the Impact Aid Parent-Pupil Survey.

1. What is Impact Aid?

Impact Aid is a Federal education program that reimburses school districts for the lost revenue and additional costs associated with the presence of nontaxable Federal property, including military installations; Indian Trust or Treaty lands; Federal low-rent housing facilities; and national laboratories, Federal dams, national parks and other Federal buildings or lands. School districts containing such property are known as "federally impacted school districts."

2. Why is Impact Aid important?

Most public school districts are funded in large part by local revenue, primarily local property taxes on homes and businesses and other local fees. Funding is limited for federally impacted school districts because Federal property – and the housing, businesses and other facilities located on that property – are tax-exempt. This means the Federal government's land does not contribute to the costs of running a school district, including the cost of educating students associated with the land. Impact Aid is "Uncle Sam" paying his taxes – if it did not exist, local taxpayers would be burdened to make up the difference or students would have to go without the resources and opportunities the funding provides.

3. How do school districts use Impact Aid funds?

Impact Aid, like revenue generated by taxes, can be used for any general fund purpose, such as instructional materials, teacher salaries, transportation, technology, social-emotional supports or facilities. All decisions on how Impact Aid funds are spent are made by school district leaders and locally elected school boards. This flexibility and local control ensures funds are targeted wherever the needs are greatest.

4. Does my school district receive all the Impact Aid funding it is due?

No. Impact Aid funding is voted on each year by Congress. Because of limited Federal funding and competing interests, the program has not been fully funded since 1969. It currently receives 60 percent of full funding, limiting the educational supports and services public schools can provide to all students.

5. Why is Impact Aid part of the school district's general fund and not used specifically for my student?

When community residents pay taxes, that money is not directed to their student but to the entire school district. Impact Aid takes the place of revenue that a community would otherwise generate through property, income and sales taxes. Therefore, it goes into a school district's general fund and is used to support all students in the district, just like other local tax revenue.

6. Why do I need to fill out a Parent-Pupil Survey form?

For a school district to receive Impact Aid Basic Support funding, the Federal government requires it to collect specific information from parents and guardians after the start of the school year. The amount of Impact Aid that a school district receives is determined by a formula that includes the number of federally connected students (those who have a parent or guardian on active duty in the military; live on Indian lands, in Federal low-income housing or other federally owned property; or live with a parent or guardian who works on Federal property) in the district, among other factors. The more such students in the district, the more the district will receive.

7. What information does the school district need to collect from parents/guardians? Required information includes enrollment information (such as name, birthdate and school) and residence and parent employment information (including, but not limited to, student address if on Federal property; name and address of the Federal property on which a parent is employed; and name, rank and branch of service of a parent who is a member of the uniformed services on active duty).

The form must be signed and dated by the parent/guardian providing the information. All required information must be provided, or the student will not be counted as federally connected (which means less money for the school district).

8. Why do I have to complete these forms every year? Didn't the school district collect this information when my child enrolled?

Since enrollment changes and students move from year to year, the U.S. Department of Education requires school districts to count students annually. Each school district selects a "count date" for Impact Aid. Only students enrolled in the district on this date – which must be after the third day of school – can be counted for Impact Aid. This way, any student who enrolled during the summer but subsequently moved is not counted.

All required information for eligible students must be verified by parents/guardians on or after the count date – the school district is not allowed to verify that information, even if it already has it.

9. Can I submit this information electronically?

The U.S. Department of Education is currently piloting a program to allow completion of the Parent-Pupil Survey electronically. However, so far only a few school districts have been approved to participate, so most parents and guardians must complete paper forms.

10. What if I don't want to (or can't) release my residence or employment location information?

Because Impact Aid payments are tied to federally owned land, only students who are connected to that land are counted for the program. Parent residence and/or employment location proves the connection. If a federally connected student is not counted, the district will receive less Impact Aid funding.

11. How is this information shared and protected?

Information collected on the Parent-Pupil Survey form is used only for purposes of submitting the Impact Aid application. It is subject to a district's student privacy policy, as well as Federal and state laws protecting the privacy of students and families. If the Federal Impact Aid program needs to review a survey form, the document is shared through a secure electronic exchange system that protects the document and destroys it following the review.

12. What can I do to support Impact Aid and ensure my school district gets the funding it deserves?

Be sure to complete all Impact Aid survey forms in their entirety. If you hear other parents questioning why they need to fill out the forms, let them know how important Impact Aid funding is to ensuring students have access to the opportunities they need to maximize their potential.

To learn more about Impact Aid and how to advocate for the program, visit the NAFIS website at www.nafisdc.org.