



USFRCS MEMORANDUM NO. 33

TO: Arizona Charter School Administrators

FROM: Magdalene D. Haggerty, Office of the Auditor General
Rita Sauv, Arizona Department of Education

DATE: January 12, 2001

SUBJECT: Average Daily Membership for Kindergarten and First Grade

On September 15, 2000, the Arizona Attorney General issued Opinion I00-023 regarding the practice of enrolling children in early (pre-) kindergarten or early first-grade programs and including those children as kindergarten and first-grade students, respectively, in the Average Daily Membership (ADM) data submitted to Arizona Department of Education (ADE). The Attorney General's opinion clarified that only programs that are designed, based on state standards and charter school curriculum, to advance a child to the first grade are considered kindergarten programs for the purpose of calculating ADM as provided in Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) §15-901(A)(2)(a)(i). Likewise, the opinion clarified that only programs that are designed, based on state standards and charter school curriculum, to advance a child to the second grade are considered first-grade programs for the purpose of calculating ADM as described in A.R.S. §15-901(A)(2)(b)(i).

On October 20, 2000, ADE notified all charter schools of the Attorney General's opinion and the need for ADM corrections. This memorandum provides further guidance for schools in determining whether a program qualifies for membership reporting, and further instructions for submitting the corrected 40th-day (and 100th-day, if applicable) ADM data for fiscal year (FY) 2000-01 for schools that misreported kindergarten and first-grade ADM. Charter schools are not required to correct ADM for years prior to FY 2000-01 at this time. All future ADM submissions must conform to the guidance provided in the Attorney General's opinion and this memorandum.

Only schools with misreported kindergarten and/or first-grade ADM must submit new ADM data. However, **all charter schools must complete the enclosed form** and submit it to ADE by January 31, 2001, indicating whether ADM corrections are needed. If the school misreported kindergarten and/or first-grade ADM, it must submit the corrected data to ADE **by January 31, 2001**, to allow corrected numbers to be included in the FY 2000-01 CHAR55-1 report (BSL and Additional Assistance) for the February apportionment of state aid. For information on uploading original and revised ADM data, refer to the Instructions for Required Reports (www.ade.az.gov/schoolfinance/main/Support). Questions on submitting ADM data should be directed to Rose Whelihan, ADE School Finance, at (602) 542-8240 or rwhelih@ade.az.gov. **(These corrections will impact funding for FY 2000-01 and subsequent years. Prior years will not be affected.)**

The USFRCS compliance questionnaire to be completed by the school's auditor for the year ending June 30, 2001, will be revised to include questions on kindergarten and first-grade ADM calculations. This revised questionnaire will be issued in a future USFRCS Memorandum.

MDH/RS/gr
Enclosures

Frequently Asked Questions on Early (Pre-) Kindergarten and Early First-Grade Average Daily Membership (ADM) Calculation

Q1: Can a school change its early kindergarten or early first-grade curriculum to a kindergarten or first-grade curriculum mid-year and report those students for that academic year as kindergarten and first-grade students, respectively?

A1: If the school started the year with an early kindergarten curriculum, the early kindergarten students are not eligible for membership reporting, regardless of whether the school switches to a kindergarten curriculum mid-year. By definition, ADM is calculated from the first day of school through the 100th or 200th day, as applicable, in session. If the school started the year with an early first-grade curriculum, the early first-grade students are not eligible for full-time membership reporting and must be reported as kindergarten students, regardless of whether the school switches to a first-grade curriculum mid-year. If the school began the school year with a curriculum designed to advance students to the first grade in the following year (a kindergarten curriculum), those students may be reported as kindergarten (half-time) students.

Q2: Can a school report early kindergarten or early first-grade students as normal kindergarten or first grade membership by classifying them as being retained in the kindergarten or first grade the following year?

A2: Whether or not a student is retained in a grade is not a factor for determining the student's inclusion in ADM calculations. Schools cannot include a student in the ADM calculations as a kindergarten student unless the student is in a program that is designed to advance the student to the first grade at the end of the school year. Likewise, schools cannot include a student in the ADM calculations as a first-grade student unless the student is in a program that is designed to advance the student to the second grade at the end of the school year.

Q3: Can a school grant students early admission into kindergarten or first grade if they reach the age of five or six, respectively, between September 1 and January 1 of the school year?

A3: Yes, if it is determined to be in the child's best interest, a school governing board may grant early admission at the beginning of the school year into kindergarten or first grade to children who will reach the age of five or six, respectively, between September 1 and January 1 of that school year. This must be done in consultation with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s), the child, the teacher, and the principal. Arizona Revised Statutes §15-821.C.

Kindergarten and First-Grade Average Daily Membership Corrections
in accordance with Attorney General Opinion I00-023

Charter School Name

CTDS (enter all 9 digits)

Please select from the following.

- 1. Attorney General Opinion I00-023 does not impact the Charter School—we do not offer an early (pre-) kindergarten or early first-grade program.
- 2. The Charter School offers instruction in early (pre-) kindergarten or early first grade, but already reports membership and absence data in accordance with Attorney General Opinion I00-023. [The Charter School reports early first grade as kindergarten.]
- 3. Submission of kindergarten and first-grade membership and absence data for FY 2000-01 does not meet the requirements as outlined in Attorney General Opinion I00-023. Corrections will be submitted by January 31, 2001.

If box three is checked above, please indicate the date the corrected data was/will be submitted.

Date

Superintendent/Administrator's
Signature

Date

This form must be completed, signed, and mailed or faxed to School Finance by January 31, 2001.

School Finance
Arizona Department of Education
1535 W Jefferson
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Fax: (602) 542-3099