

December 14, 2021

RE: 2022 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS

Dear Superintendent:

The federal government annually provides funding for accessible educational materials for eligible students who meet the definition of blindness. Each year, the Ohio Department of Education's Office for Exceptional Children, requests that all Ohio districts participate in the [Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students](#). This registration provides an allotment of funds to purchase accessible educational materials, including textbooks and equipment, for any registered student. These materials are purchased through the [American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.](#) The registration process is conducted on behalf of the Department by the [Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials \(AT&AEM\) Center](#) at OCALI. [Eligibility guidelines](#) can be viewed on the AT&AEM Center's website.

The Department requires the registration of every student **attending** your district who meets the eligibility requirements outlined in these materials. Each registered student generates \$418.75 and will be able to obtain accessible educational materials through the Federal Quota Program.*

The AT&AEM Center administers the allocation based on the number of registered Ohio students who are legally blind. The cost of braille and large print textbooks and other specialized materials are expensive, so it is important to register each eligible student.

- Please log onto <https://ohioaem.ataem.org> to **complete, submit for approval and electronically sign** the official **2022 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS** form by **Feb. 18, 2022**.
- Electronic registration submission is required even if there are no legally blind students attending your district.
- Retain a copy of the submitted district registration along with supporting documentation for each student, which includes a signed [parent permission form](#) (nine languages available) and current qualifying eye report in the event of an audit that requires proof of the student's registration.

This annual registration is **not** a part of the data reporting for EMIS or the deafblind census conducted by the Ohio Center for Deafblind Education. Federal Quota registration is used solely to generate supplemental funds for accessible educational materials for students from the American Printing House for the Blind. Disclosure of this personally identifiable information is authorized under the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974," 34CFR, Part 99.31, Paragraph (a)(4)(i).

If you have questions regarding these procedures, please contact Kelly Houston or Judy Siens at fqaemsupport@ataem.org. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Jo Hannah Ward, M. Ed.
Director, Office for Exceptional Children

cc: State Support Teams

*The Federal Quota Program is a supplemental program and is not intended to provide all of the materials required by a student. However, the AT&AEM Center pools the allocation so that a requestor can order based on students' needs.

Online Federal Quota Census Registration Instructions

Superintendents/Directors or their Designee will need to:

1. Log on to the AT&AEM Center Federal Quota Census Registration at <https://ohioaem.ataem.org>.
2. Use your email to sign in.
 - a. If your email does not work, click on "Need an account."
 - b. The AT&AEM Center will approve new users. An email will be sent upon approval with your login information.
 - c. Superintendents can also appoint a designee to have access to registration. To appoint a designee, contact fqaemsupport@ataem.org.
3. Once logged in, you will see your district(s). Click on your district to update students for the 2022 Census. If Superintendents/designees do not see their district(s) or need to change the district(s) they serve, contact fqaemsupport@ataem.org for assistance.
4. There are 4 phases of registration submission:
 - a. *Incomplete:*
 - i. Superintendents/designees will update student information and submit for review by the AT&AEM Center.
 - b. *Pending Review:*
 - i. The AT&AEM Center will review your submission and approve or reject your submission.
 - a. If rejected, the user will receive an email to log back in to correct.
 - b. If approved, the superintendent/designee will receive an email stating "ready for signature."
 - c. *Ready for Signature:*
 - i. The superintendent must log onto the registration to *electronically* sign the final student census submission. Once signed, click the submit button **by Feb. 18, 2022**. The superintendent will receive a confirmation message stating, "signature submitted successfully."
 - ii. Print to retain a copy of signed census registration form.
 - a. The copy should remain on file at the school district.
 - b. Parental permission form(s) will remain on file at the school district.
 - d. *Completed:*
 - i. District registration is now complete.
5. If you have questions about this process, please contact the AT&AEM Center via the fqaemsupport@ataem.org email.

FEDERAL QUOTA PROGRAM GUIDELINES

ELIGIBILITY

View detailed [Eligibility Guidelines](#) or download from the AT&AEM Center's website.

Students must meet the federal definition of legal blindness as outlined by the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind: "...central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with best correction; a peripheral field so contracted that the widest diameter of such field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees; or visual performance reduced by a brain injury or dysfunction when visual function meets the definition of blindness as determined by an eye-care specialist or neurologist."

- **Meets the Definition of Blindness (MDB)** - a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with best correction (using the Snellen chart) or a visual field of 20 degrees or less;
- **Functions at the Definition of Blindness (FDB)** - when visual function meets the definition of blindness as determined by an eye-care specialist (ophthalmologist or optometrist) or other medical doctor such as a neurologist. Students in this category manifest visual characteristics often found in conditions referred to as neurological, cortical, or cerebral visual impairment (e.g., brain injury or dysfunction).

AND

- Be enrolled in a formally organized public or private nonprofit educational program of less than college level including
 - students who are deafblind
 - students with multiple disabilities who are legally blind
 - students enrolled in regular education or special education programs
 - students in public, private and parochial schools

School-age students must be enrolled with the registering school or agency on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022.

There is no chronological age limit for eligibility. The federal law limits registration to persons working at less than college level but places no restrictions on the ages of eligible students.

- **Adults over 21 years of age** who meet the definition of blindness and are enrolled in instructional programs at less than college level for 20 hours per week of documented intervention.
- **Eligible infants/birth to age three.** An infant can be registered if they meet the following three requirements:
 - Are enrolled in a formally organized (i.e., Help Me Grow Early Intervention, Early Head Start, or attending a licensed early care and educational program), regularly scheduled educational or training program and have a written education plan. An individualized family service plan (IFSP) or any other written plan may be used.
 - Meet the definition of blindness. An infant can be registered with a note from their pediatrician, or any eye care specialist, stating the infant meets the definition of blindness since an actual acuity is impossible to obtain at this age. When the child turns three, a new, official eye report from their eye care specialist (optometrist/ophthalmologist) must be obtained with acuities to determine if they meet the definition of blindness, or from their neurologist if they function at the definition of blindness due to a brain injury.
 - Signed parent permission form. Parent permission forms are required for all students in the birth to three age group.
- **Preschool Children and Homebound Students** who have a written education plan are enrolled in a formally organized program.
- **Eligibility of Students Who Are Home-Schooled** who have a written education plan and meet Ohio's eligibility requirements.

Please note the following student groups may not be eligible

- **Students of Armed Services Personnel**
 - The Department of Defense Education Agency (DOD-EA) is responsible for meeting the educational needs of military base school students who would otherwise be eligible for federal quota funds.
 - The DOD-EA is allowed to use the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC).

- **Students residing on reservations who receive funding from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)**
 - The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) is responsible for meeting the educational needs of students in reservation schools who would otherwise be registered for federal quota funds.
 - The BIE has not coordinated with the NIMAC. For more information, contact nimac@aph.org.

PARENT PERMISSION

Each infant, preschool, or school-aged student is required to have a permission form signed by the parent (one time only) to be registered in the Federal Quota program. If a student is an adult (18 or older) and his or her own guardian, you do not have to get parent permission. In these cases, if the student is subject to FERPA and IDEA, the student will need to provide permission for release of personally identifiable information (PII).

[Parent Permission forms](#) are available in: Albanian, Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Ukrainian.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

To protect student identity, the AT&AEM Center encrypts all electronic correspondence with districts and provides a method for districts to return encrypted reporting materials.

Log onto the *2022 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS* portal at <https://ohioaem.ataem.org> and report **every student who is legally blind and in attendance in your school district or agency** as of **Monday, January 3, 2022**. Only the **school district of attendance** reports each student who is legally blind. Please note there may be students who could be eligible and **not** be listed in your account. Additional students to review:

- students who have moved into the district within the last year
- students who have a change in their visual acuity

Superintendent's report using one of the two codes defined above, MDB - Meets the Definition of Blindness or **FDB** - Functions at the Definition of Blindness.

Superintendents must:

- Verify the eligibility of each student listed;
- Obtain parental permission for each student being enrolled, if not currently on file;
- Check the accuracy of the information provided;
- Update incorrect information;
- Add new students;
- Submit for approval by the AT&AEM Center;
- Once approved, electronically sign the approved final student census submission, and click submit by **Feb. 18, 2022**. Once submitted, the superintendent will receive a confirmation message saying, "signature submitted successfully."
- Print and retain a copy of the registration form for district record; and
- The **superintendent's electronic signature** on the submitted registration form **verifies the existence** of these records.

Electronically sign and submit the registration form to the AT&AEM Center even if there are no enrolled students who are legally blind.

Only the codes listed in the [ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES](#) can be accepted

Each district must have the following documents on file for each registered student:

- **Written education plan.** Such as an IEP, a 504 plan or any other written action plan that verifies the student is in a formally organized education program.
- **Current eye report by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist.*** A report from a medical doctor such as a neurologist is acceptable for students classified as “Functions at the Definition of Blindness.” **FDB** is a category indicating blindness due to a brain injury or dysfunction. The report must be **current within three years (2019 or later)** of the last report date. Exemptions from the current eye report regulation include students who are totally blind or whose eyes have been enucleated or who have proven non-changing eye conditions.
 - The current eye report requirement has been waived for the 2022 Federal Quota Registration of blind students due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
 - *Students with an eye report:* Eye reports from an ophthalmologist or optometrist do not need to be dated 2019 or later. Any date is accepted for the 2022 Federal Quota Census.
 - *Students without an eye report:* The education team needs to consider all available data, including functional vision assessments, current performance and medical documentation, to determine if the student could be classified as ‘Functions at the Definition of Blindness’ (FDB) or ‘Meets the Definition of Blindness’ (MDB) for the 2022 Federal Quota Census.
- **Signed Parent Permission.** [Parent permission forms](#) can be found on the AT&AEM website.

SUBMISSION

Superintendent’s electronic signature for the **2022 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS FORM** must be received no later than Friday, **Feb. 18, 2022**.