

**SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
(Revised as of September 2008)**

The Special Education Personnel reimbursement program is authorized under Section 14-13.01 of the School Code and provides supplemental reimbursement to school districts and special education joint agreements for certified and non-certified personnel providing direct and support services to students with disabilities who are receiving special education and related services in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). This document is provided to assist local education agencies with answers to common questions related to the program.

For comprehensive information regarding the Special Education Personnel reimbursement program please refer to the [Special Education Personnel Approval Procedures](#) and the [Special Education Personnel Reimbursement Instructions](#).

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What is the amount of reimbursement a district or cooperative is eligible to receive for special education personnel?

Per Section 14-13.01 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/14-13.01] as amended by P.A. 95-070, all districts and special education joint agreements that employ individuals who work full-time in special education for the entire school year (i.e. 180 days), can claim and receive a maximum of \$9,000 for an eligible certified position and a maximum of \$3,500 for an eligible non-certified position. Additional reimbursement is available for employees who work during the summer and provide extended year services to fulfill the individualized education plan (IEP) of students with disabilities. A maximum of 55 additional days or 235 days total can be claimed.

For each full-time certified professional the state reimburses the lesser of

- a.) The local salary per teacher (defined as total salary minus federal funds)
- b.) The full-time equivalent (FTE) days of the teacher divided by 180 times \$9,000

For each non-certified staff worker the state reimburses the lesser of

- a.) The local salary per worker (defined as total salary minus federal funds)
- b.) One-half of the total salary (defined as all funds that contribute to total salary)
- c.) The full-time equivalent (FTE) days of the worker divided by 180 times \$3,500

For each staff worker serving children in a home or hospital setting the state reimburses the lesser of:

- a.) One-half of the total salary (defined as all funds that contribute to total salary)
- b.) The full time equivalent (FTE) of the pupils served multiplied by \$1,000
- c.) \$9,000 maximum per teacher

For each reader working with blind or partially seeing children the state reimburses the lesser of:

- a.) One-half of the total salary (defined as all funds that contribute to total salary)
- b.) The full-time equivalent (FTE) of the pupils served multiplied by \$400

What is Full-Time Equivalency (FTE)?

For purposes of the Special Education Personnel Reimbursement program, full-time equivalency is a mathematical calculation that represents the amount of time a person is employed for a special education function. FTE is determined by dividing the number of hours employed in special education by the number of hours in a normal work day (e.g. 4 hours / 8 hours = .5 FTE). No individual may be claimed for more than 1.0 FTE across all special education work assignments unless a written request is sent to the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services with a rationale explaining the reason for the excess FTE. Approval is considered on a case-by-case basis when a person is employed by more than one district.

How are days of employment calculated for full-term contract employees?

The days of employment must be 180 days for the regular term plus the days established by the district board of education and approved for the summer term (max 55 days) **prior** to the regular term, if any. The total days of employment cannot exceed 235 days in one calendar year and should include:

- Sick leave days
- Personal leave days
- Approved institute or workshop days
- Approved parent-teacher full-day conference days
- Board-granted holidays
- Approved Act of God days
- Approved Hazardous Threat to Health and Safety days

What do the “status codes” mean on the special education approval and reimbursement forms?

The status codes indicate the approval status of each work assignment code listed for a staff member based upon a verification of the credentials held by the individual.

- Status code ‘1’ indicates that the work assignment is approved;
- Status code ‘2’ indicates the individual has a time-specific approval;
- Status code ‘3’ indicates that the work assignment is disapproved; and
- Status code ‘5’ indicates a temporary approval based on a provisional certificate issued for only part of the school year.
- Status code ‘4’ indicates that a work assignment was disapproved but the other work assignment(s) entered were approved; partial reimbursement will be made.

What are the requirements to claim a director (DIR) or assistant director (PAD) of special education?

Per [23 Ill Admin Section 226.800\(g\)](#) all school districts must employ a *full-time* director of special education (emphasis added). If a district is part of a special education joint agreement, the director of the cooperative must be full-time and fulfills this requirement for each of its member districts. The director must possess at Type 75 Administrator certificate and a director of special education endorsement per [23 Ill Admin Code Section 25.365](#). An assistant director of special education (PAD) is not required to be full-time, but must possess a Type75 certificate and a director of special education endorsement.

What are the requirements to claim a special education supervisor (SUP)?

A supervisor is not required to be employed full-time in special education, but must possess a supervisory certificate or endorsement for supervising and must have approval, endorsement, or certification in the disability area(s) they are supervising. This means that a Type 75 Administrative certificate in combination with a Type 03 (Elementary) or Type 09 (High School) certificate would not qualify a person to supervise special education unless they had a special education area of endorsement or approval on file with the ISBE Certification Division. If all of the conditions are met, special education supervisors are eligible for reimbursement.

If a teacher holds an early childhood certificate, can the district claim that person as an early childhood special education (ECT) teacher?

No. An early childhood teaching certificate is not sufficient for approval of the ECT work assignment. Early childhood special education (ECT) approval must be obtained through the certification process using [ISBE Form 73-26](#).

What are the requirements to claim a school nurse (STN) or a registered nurse (NHA)?

School nurses claimed for Special Education Personnel Reimbursement must meet the following approval criteria:

- The nurse must be approved on the special education approval file prior to being claimed for reimbursement as a school nurse (STN).
- The nurse must be approved with Type 73 (School Service Personnel Certificate) or Type 74 (Provisional School Service Personnel Certificate), endorsed as a School Nurse.
- A registered nurse must be approved as a Non-Certified Health Aide (NHA) to qualify for reimbursement.

Claimable FTE for school nurses must be documented to distinguish unique functions performed for special education students that are over and above functions for the regular school population (e.g. case study referrals or reevaluations). Non-claimable FTE would include, but is not limited to, Child Find screenings, dispensing daily medication or attending to unexpected injuries.

A job description with specific language that describes the duties and time serving special education students can be used to document claimable FTE. Another example of acceptable documentation would be the completion of a time and effort study that logs daily activities in quarter day increments during the school year. The reports can be summarized every two weeks in conjunction with a normal payroll cycle. A service log can be used to assist in the development of the time and effort study and used as a guide for calculating appropriate FTE.

Can a district claim a physical education teacher who is working with special education students?

Yes. The teacher must have approval for Adaptive Physical Education (PPE) and be teaching a class of all special education students. The period(s) of the school day spent teaching special education students may be claimed. However, teaching a classroom that includes a blend of special education and general education students is not claimable unless a general education teacher is co-teaching with the PPE teacher.

What is the recourse if the district cannot find a fully qualified special education teacher?

A district that is unable to employ a fully qualified LBS1 teacher for students with a specific learning disability (SLD), an emotional disturbance (ED), cognitive disability/mental retardation (MR), or an orthopedic impairment (PI), must request a Short-Term Emergency Special Education Certificate using [ISBE Form 73-86](#).

Can the district claim teachers given a Short-Term Emergency Special Education Certificate?

Districts should report the disability codes for the students that the teacher is serving. ISBE will verify proper certification, including this new certificate.

Can substitute teachers be listed on the special education approval file?

Substitute teachers with a Type 39 certificate are not credentialed in a specific disability and therefore cannot be listed on the approval file. However, a certified teacher holding an early childhood, elementary, high school or special certificate credentialed in a specific disability may substitute teach for a period not to exceed 120 school days, can be listed on the approval file and receive reimbursement.

A teacher is under contract but is being docked for disciplinary reasons. Can the district hire a substitute teacher and be reimbursed?

Yes. A certified substitute teacher may be placed on the special education approval file and claimed for reimbursement if the substitute teacher is properly credentialed for the position. A person who possesses a substitute Type 39 certificate only does not qualify for reimbursement.

Should all certificates that an instructor has obtained be placed on the approval file?

No. The work assignment entries on the approval file should reflect the primary disability of the students the teacher is serving. A maximum of three work assignments can be entered. ISBE will check for valid certification.

Is the work assignment code Other Necessary Personnel (PZZ) still valid?

The work assignment code PZZ is still valid for teachers who received this approval prior to January 1, 2002.

Can a program aide be assigned to more than one teacher and still be claimed?

For purposes of special education personnel reimbursement, special education aides are not assigned to a particular teacher. A “floater” working all day in special education can be reported for approval and claimed for reimbursement.

Under what circumstances are non-certified employees other than aides approved?

Certain work assignments are reimbursable for personnel employed in separate schools or in schools having separate special education classrooms. For example, a custodian assigned full-time to a school serving only special education students would be reimbursable for the time spent at that separate school.

Can a special education teacher who is teaching a class with a blend of students with disabilities and general education students who are assigned to the class be claimed for reimbursement?

Special education personnel reimbursement is applicable to staff who are teaching students with disabilities. If there is a single teacher in a blended class, no FTE is claimable; however, the special education teacher can be claimed if he or she is teaching students with disabilities along with a general education co-teacher in the same class.

Can a special education certified teacher, providing Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions to students who do not have IEPs, be claimed for Sp Ed Personnel reimbursement?

No. If the special education teacher is not providing approved special education services to students pursuant to IEPs then personnel reimbursement is not appropriate. Furthermore, although it may be appropriate to utilize the special educator in the provision of those interventions, districts should be exercising care in how that is actually implemented and make sure boundaries are not being overstepped in providing special education services without first going through the appropriate evaluation and drafting an IEP.

When a regular education teacher instructs a home economics class of students with disabilities, can the district claim special education reimbursement for the teacher?

Yes under the following conditions:

- The teacher must possess a valid certificate with an endorsement for teaching home economics;
- the class must be composed entirely of students with disabilities having IEPs;
- the curriculum is appropriate to the students' IEPs and abilities; and
- the teacher is reimbursable for the class hours spent teaching these children.

The same policy applies to music, art, drama, and industrial arts instructors.

A student with disabilities attends a general education classroom for one class a day. The instructor is a general education teacher. The student has a one-on-one aide while in the classroom. Can the district claim reimbursement for the time the aide spends one-on-one with the student with disabilities?

Yes. If the IEP for the student requires a one-on-one aide and the aide is approved through the special education approval procedures, the district can claim reimbursement.

Can a district claim a teacher who instructs a student with disabilities in a jail, detention center or correctional institution?

Yes, as long as the costs for the teacher are not being claimed under the special education individual orphanage program. A certified special education teacher must provide instruction for a student with disabilities to fulfill the IEP. If the student does not have an IEP, the district must complete a diagnostic evaluation of the student and develop an appropriate IEP.

Are interns claimable for special education personnel reimbursement and if so, what ID Codes should be used on the claim?

Yes. A district may claim reimbursement for interns (i.e. School Counselor Intern, School Psychologist Intern, School Nurse Intern, School Social Worker Intern, Speech/Language Pathologist Intern) if they are entered on the special education approval file and verified with the Division of Certification at ISBE. Enter ID Code 1 if at least a portion of the employee's salary is being paid with local funds. Enter ID Code 7 if the employee's salary is fully paid with funding sources other than local funds.

Can a job coach, who accompanies a student with disabilities to a work site and remains with that student throughout the day, be claimed for reimbursement?

Yes. The job coach in this instance would be qualified for reimbursement in the work assignment category of Other Necessary Personnel (NZZ) ID Code 3. The district/cooperative is eligible for a maximum of \$3,500 if the position were full-time.

If a district does not consider study hall as instruction time, and teachers have a full day schedule without the study hall, when the district uses special education teachers to supervise such a study hall, can the teachers be claimed as working full-time in special education?

No. Study hall is considered instructional time regardless of how the district defines it. If special education teachers supervise a study hall which includes any regular education students, the time claimed for special education reimbursement must be prorated.

Can the district claim special education personnel reimbursement for certain non-instructional staff based on the ratio of students served to the total number of students assigned? For example, if a guidance counselor has a caseload of 100 students and 10 of these are special education students, could 10% of the counselor's time be claimed for personnel reimbursement?

No. Persons employed to perform a regular education function are not reimbursable because they also perform the same function for a student with disabilities. Special education personnel reimbursement is limited to persons who are assigned to perform a special education function, not a general education function. Adequate documentation of employee time and effort must be kept to document claimable FTE and reimbursement. A job description with specific language that describes the duties and time serving students with disabilities can be used to document claimable FTE. Another example of acceptable documentation would be the completion of a time and effort study that logs daily activities in quarter day increments during the school year. The reports can be summarized every two weeks in conjunction with a normal payroll cycle. A service log can be used to assist in the development of the time and effort study and used as a guide for calculating appropriate FTE.

Why are regular term days sometimes recalculated by ISBE when processing the reimbursement claim?

Regular term days are recalculated due to the approved term code or because of certification issuance dates. ISBE reimburses for 30 days prior to the issuance date pursuant to Section 14-12.01 of the School Code.

Who is claimable for summer school?

Summer term reimbursement is allowable for special education personnel who provide instruction to students who require extended year services (ESY) per their IEP. This should not be equated with a teacher who simply teaches summer school. Please see the [November 2001 memorandum](#) regarding the distinction between summer school and extended year services. Reimbursement also extends to persons who work directly with students in a diagnostic capacity or for other personnel needed to support instruction and diagnostic staff. Reimbursement is not allowed for office or other clerical staff that work during the summer.

How is summer term FTE computed?

In order to claim summer term special education personnel reimbursement, as authorized by Section 18-4.3 of the School Code, at least 60 total class hours of instruction is required, with 4 class hours constituting one summer school day. In addition to the required 60 class hours of instruction, the district is allowed to count class preparation time by the teacher. Summer term full-time equivalency is computed by dividing the class hours employed by 4 class hours.

A district conducts special education early childhood classes during the summer term for students who are three to five years of age. The class hours are two hours a day, not four hours. Can the district claim reimbursement for the certified teachers?

To receive full reimbursement, four class hours per day are required for summer term. However, if the children can only attend two hours a day, calculate the FTE by dividing the class hours employed by four class hours ($2/4 = .500$ FTE). If the district has 50 summer term days, enter .500 FTE and 50 days in the appropriate fields on the Special Education Personnel Reimbursement claim.

How are days of employment for contract employees hired or terminated during the term calculated?

Any individual, certified or non-certified, employed for less than full-term (180 days) whose compensation is based on a specified amount per hour, or a specified amount per day, and whose condition of employment does not include compensation for sick leave, personal leave, approved institute or workshop, approved parent-teacher full-day conference, board-granted holiday, approved Act of God Day, and/or approved hazard threat to health and safety day, can only be included on special education personnel reimbursement claim for the actual number of days worked and paid.

Can districts claim Teacher Retirement System (TRS) contributions as local salary?

Districts may claim TRS contributions as salary when the district pays a salary and deducts a portion of that salary for TRS. For example, if a salary of \$60,000 is paid and \$5,000 of the total is deducted for TRS contributions then \$5,000 can be claimed as local salary. However, if the district pays a salary of \$60,000 and pays an additional \$5,000 contribution to TRS, the additional amount is not part of the salary and is non-claimable.

Can a stipend be claimed as a part of the local salary?

If a stipend is not part of the contractual salary, stipends cannot be included in the salary column.

What is considered local funds?

Per the Illinois Program Accounting Manual, local funds are those that are identified as unrestricted grants-in-aid in revenue classifications 3000 or 4000 or any revenue posted in revenue classification 1000 that can be appropriately used for salaries.

Can transportation personnel be approved and claimed for reimbursement?

No. Transportation aides and other transportation personnel cannot be claimed for special education personnel reimbursement. Costs for these staff can be claimed on the district or cooperative's Annual Claim for Pupil Transportation Reimbursement.

An approved non-certified health aide is working 10% of the day with students with disabilities, can this time be claimed?

The staff member may be claimable; however, when personnel are assigned to special education functions on a part-time basis, ISBE auditors will require that the special education FTE be clearly documented through time sheets. The district will also want to specify what functions the health aide is performing beyond what is performed for the regular education population.

HOME/HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION

When should a district provide home/hospital instruction and what is the eligible amount for reimbursement?

Home/hospital instruction can be provided to a general education student or a student with disabilities when a physician licensed to practice medicine determines that the student will be absent from school for at least two consecutive weeks (10 days) due to a health or medical impairment certified in writing. When the certification statement is provided by a physician, education services may begin immediately and the district is eligible for reimbursement. A district may choose to provide instruction without a physician's statement; however, they are not obligated to do so nor are they eligible for home/hospital reimbursement.

The goal of home/hospital instruction is to afford the student experiences equivalent to those afforded to other students at the same grade level. Such experiences are designed to enable the student to return to the classroom. Thus, the content of the instruction, generally academic, is to enable the student to remain synchronized with the other students in his or her class.

The amount of instructional or related service time provided through the home or hospital program shall be determined in relation to the child's educational needs, physical and mental health needs. Note: Related instructional services such as speech language pathology may be reimbursable but other services such as occupational or physical therapy does not qualify for reimbursement. Student instruction for a regular education student must be provided by a certified teacher and occur on days when school is in session. Student instruction for a student with disabilities must be provided by a certified teacher who is also credentialed in the area of the student's disability and occur on days when school is in session. The amount of instructional time shall not be less than five hours per week unless the physician has certified in writing that the child should not receive as many as five hours of instruction in a school week.

For each staff worker serving children in a home or hospital setting the state reimburses the lesser of:

- a.) One-half the total salary (defined as all funds that contribute to total salary)
- b.) The full time equivalent (FTE) of the pupils served multiplied by \$1,000
- c.) \$9,000 maximum per teacher

To receive reimbursement, home/hospital instructors must be approved and claimed with an ID Code 4 or 6.

Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 14-13.01(a)

Administrative Rule: 23 Ill Admin 226.300(d)

When is ID Code 6 used for home/hospital instructors?

When a student is in a hospital located outside of Illinois and a teacher licensed in that state provides services, the teacher should be listed on the approval file with an ID Code of 6.

Can a district use a substitute (Type 39 Certificate) to educate a student with disabilities in a home or hospital?

No. Districts can only use a certified special education teacher with endorsement in the area of the student's disability to fulfill the IEP of special needs student in a home or hospital.

Can a district use a substitute (Type 39 Certificate) to educate a general education student in a home or hospital?

No. Section 21-9b of the School Code states "A teacher holding a substitute teacher's certificate may teach only in the place of a certified teacher who is under contract with the employing board..." Therefore, the Type 39 Substitute Certificate is not appropriate for the work assignment of a home/hospital instructor; approval and reimbursement are denied.

Does a Type 73 School Service Personnel Certificate or a Type 75 Administrative Certificate qualify an employee to instruct home/hospital students?

No. A Type 73 or a Type 75 Certificate does not qualify an employee to teach home/hospital students. The instructor must have a valid teaching certificate.

Home/hospital instructors are employed by a special education joint agreement but are also working for a school district. Which entity claims and receives reimbursement for the instructors?

The special education cooperative should bill the resident district for the home/hospital instruction. The district can submit for approval and claim reimbursement due to the fact that the district contracted the instructors from the cooperative.

What is the obligation of a district when home/hospital services are requested at the end of the school year?

[23 Ill Admin Code, Special Education Section 226.300\(d\)](#) indicates that a child must have “a medical condition that will cause an absence for two or more consecutive weeks of school.” When the referral is made with less than two weeks of school left in the school year, there is no requirement to initiate home/hospital services, unless the student is entitled to extended year services pursuant to her/his IEP. If the student is receiving home/hospital instruction and requires a continuum of services past the end of the regular school term, the student must be provided instruction and the district will be reimbursed. The district must keep detailed information and time records for audit purposes.

What can a district do if the student is now homebound and needs a lab course to complete requirements for graduation?

The school district’s obligation is to provide instruction based on the student’s needs. Fulfilling graduation requirements is a student need. It is suggested that the curriculum be modified to allow for an independent study or to allow another course to be substituted so that the student can meet requirements for graduation.

When a student is pregnant, what responsibility does the district have for providing homebound instruction?

There are two components to the district’s responsibility according to 105 ILCS 5/10-22.6a. Before the birth of the child, home instruction must be provided if a physician licensed to practice medicine states that the student is medically unable to attend regular classroom instruction. Second, for up to three months following the birth of a child or a miscarriage, the district is to ensure the provision of educational services to the mother; no doctor’s statement is required for these services. In both of these cases, home/hospital instruction may be claimed for reimbursement.

If the student who is eligible for home/hospital services is a special education student, must the district reconvene the IEP for a change of placement?

If an IEP team determines that home or hospital services are medically necessary, based on a written statement from a physician licensed to practice medicine, the team shall develop or revise the child's IEP accordingly. This is consistent with [23 Ill Admin Code, Special Education Section 226.300\(d\)](#).

When a general education student or a student with disabilities has been receiving homebound instruction and, at the end of the school term, needs to continue instruction in order to be able to complete the assigned grade and move into the next year with his class, can the district provide homebound services in the summer?

It is recommended that homebound instruction be provided for general education students, particularly if summer school is being provided in the student's home school building or in the resident district. Homebound instruction must occur for students with disabilities who require extended year services. Instruction shall occur only on the days when school is regularly in session unless otherwise agreed to by the parties.

Must a district provide home/hospital instruction for a student who is enrolled in a private/parochial school and who now requires such services?

There is no requirement for a public school to provide home/hospital services for a student who is not enrolled in the district. Further, there is no general state aid or home/hospital reimbursement to a district for any services provided for a student not enrolled in the district.

When a student is suspended or expelled from school, can a district claim homebound instruction?

No. Home/hospital expenses are only claimable when the student's absence from school for the specified time period is required by a statement from a physician licensed to practice medicine. This applies to general education students as well as to a student with disabilities. However, according to [23 Ill Admin Special Education Part 226.400](#) "upon the occurrence of any act that may subject the student either to expulsion from school or suspension resulting in more than ten cumulative days of suspension during any one school year, the district shall be required to convene a meeting of the IEP Team to review the student's behavioral intervention plan or, if a behavioral intervention plan has not yet been developed, to develop one."

When a student is placed in a residential substance abuse treatment facility, can home/hospital reimbursement be claimed?

No. A substance abuse facility is not a home or hospital environment and the student would not meet the requirements of home or hospital instruction (i.e. physician licensed to practice medicine determines that the student will be absent from school for at least two consecutive weeks (10 days) due to a health or medical impairment certified in writing.) See also Section 10-20.12a of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.12a].

Are related services in addition to instruction reimbursable for home/hospital reimbursement?

Section 14-13.01a of the School Code provides reimbursement of teachers only. Related services are not claimable when they are provided in a home or hospital setting.

When providing home/hospital services, how does the district record student attendance for General State Aid?

According to Section 18-8.05(F)(2)(e) of the School Code, “*A session of not less than one clock hour of teaching hospitalized or homebound pupils on-site or by telephone to the classroom may be counted as ½ day of attendance, however these pupils must receive 4 or more clock hours of instruction to be counted for a full day of attendance.*”

What should a district do if a student has a chronic illness and can only attend school for a limited part of the day and receives homebound instruction in addition?

A statement must be on file from a physician licensed to practice medicine indicating that the student has a chronic illness and is limited to instruction for only a portion of the school day. Education services can be provided at school and in the home. The district can claim part-time attendance for the portion of the day the student is instructed at school on the basis of 1/6 for every class period of 40 minutes or more. The part of the school day when the student receives services in the home would be counted for a maximum of one-half day of not less than one hour. In no instance may attendance be claimed greater than a full-day.

Can mileage paid by the district for a home/hospital teacher’s travel be included in the salary stated on the personnel reimbursement claim or on the pupil transportation claim?

No. Reimbursement is based on the salary and FTE of the teacher providing instruction.

Can a district claim home/hospital instruction for a student with disabilities and on the Special Education Excess Cost claim?

If a district claims home/hospital instruction for a student with disabilities the enrollment for the period of time the student receives home/hospital instruction must be reduced on the Special Education Excess Cost claim. A student cannot be claimed more than a full year between both programs.

Can a district claim home/hospital instruction for a student with disabilities and on the Special Education Private Facility claim?

If a district claims home/hospital instruction for a student with disabilities and the district is also being charged by a special education private facility for the days the student is absent at the facility per contractual obligations, the district is allowed to claim enrollment and tuition for the full year on the Special Education Private Facility claim. However, if the facility offers and/or provides a tuition reduction for the period of time the student is receiving home/hospital services, the district must reduce the enrollment on the Special Education Private Facility claim accordingly.

Can a district claim home/hospital instruction for an orphanage student with disabilities per Section 14-7.03 of the School Code?

No. The district should claim all instructional costs in accordance with Section 14-7.01 and [23 Ill Admin Part 130](#) for an orphanage student with disabilities on the Special Education Individual Orphanage Reimbursement claim.