



The SEAC Statement on Federal and State Funding

Currently, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across the state use local levy revenue to supplement federal and state funding in order to provide special education programming. The need to rely on local tax revenue, that is intended to enhance basic education, is clear evidence that the current funding model is insufficient to meet the basic requirement for LEAs to provide a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities as a required component of basic education.

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) acknowledges that addressing the gap between local funding and state and federal revenue does not equate to fully funding special education. Students receiving special education services are general education students first. In order to meet the goal of equitable access and opportunity through inclusive practices for students with disabilities the SEAC believes that the Prototypical School funding model must also be updated to ensure general education staffing allocations are aligned with best practices for equitable access and inclusion.

The SEAC strongly supports a redesign of the State's special education funding model. We appreciate the multiple options being put forth. SEAC believes that the final solution for any special education funding reform must:

- Result in improved outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Provide for the resources and supports needed for a student to be educated in their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) while meeting the service and accommodation requirements of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Require guidance be given to LEAs on how co-teaching practices, inclusion and LRE improve outcomes for students with disabilities and impact the data collection for service minutes.
- Meet the full special education funding obligation immediately to allow LEAs to provide a basic education for students receiving special education services.
- Require Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to monitor the implementation of the new funding model and report on the impact on student outcomes, student placement and LEA's special education budgets.

- Ensure LEAs have the resources to provide a range of service delivery options. For example, the work of a special educator who is supporting students in a resource room environment is substantially different from an educator providing services in an inclusive service delivery model.
- Recognize that paraeducators are valuable resources who support special educators and related service providers in the provision of special education services; however, paraeducators should be properly trained and supervised, and should not be used in place of certificated personnel as a cost-saving measure.
- Provide for the essential staff to appropriately evaluate students and provide instruction in social emotional learning, adaptive skills, related services and core academic areas.
- Minimize additional work needed from LEAs on data and reporting that may result from the new funding formula.

The SEAC is particularly interested in the tiered multiplier approach as it most closely aligns with the goals of special education to meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities. The SEAC is available to provide further input on funding proposals as requested.

Other Resources:

OSP–Special Education–SEAC:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/SEAC/default.aspx>

SEAC Email: SEAC@k12.wa.us

OSPI–Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/waOSPI>

OSPI–Twitter: <https://twitter.com/waOSPI>

OSPI-Special Education: 360-725-6075