

SPECIAL EDUCATION **Funding Explained**

THE PURPOSE of special education funding is to help students with disabilities access their curriculum in the Least Restrictive Environment.*

Terms marked with * are defined below



Every student is first a general education student—**each student gets one WPU.***



Students with disabilities, who have an IEP,* get a second WPU.



Special Education funding comes from federal, state, and local sources.



Restricted special education funds must be spent for the education of students with disabilities under the guidelines of IDEA* and USBE* rules. **Schools are monitored** regularly for proper use of special education funds.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS (district and charter schools) **are required** to implement IDEA, Utah Statute, and USBE Rules.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS **are not required** to follow the same rules, only students enrolled in a public school (district or charter) are eligible for an IEP.



DEFINITIONS:

- ***WPU/Weighted Pupil Unit:** The basic per-pupil unit used to calculate the amount of state funds for which a school district/charter is eligible.
- ***IEP/Individualized Education Program:** A plan developed by a child's IEP team which includes the student, parents, teachers, and other professionals to ensure that a child with a disability receives appropriate specialized instruction and related services from licensed, qualified, and trained personnel.
- ***IDEA/Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:** A federal law that sets requirements for the education of all students with disabilities.
- ***LRE/Least Restrictive Environment:** This is not a place; it's a principle that guides a child's education program in determining not only where a student will spend time in school but also how special education services will be provided. It's where a student is least restricted in accessing their curriculum.
- ***USBE/Utah State Board of Education:** The USBE is the body that has general control and supervision over the public education system in Utah.

Find more information on Special Education Funding at the USBE website:
<https://www.schools.utah.gov/specialeducation>



SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDS

Did You Know?

- Students with IEPs are entitled to receive services from licensed special education providers, even when those services are delivered in the general education classroom.
- Special education paraeducators can support special education students in the general education classroom if they are properly trained and supervised by the licensed special education provider. Supervision does not mean the paraeducator must be in line of sight of the supervisor.
- In the 2020–21 school year, 86,317 Utah students, ages 3–22, received special education services, which is 12% of the students in our state.
- Meaningful inclusion for students with disabilities is a priority. It requires they have access to grade-appropriate content provided by content experts as well as access to the services and supports on their IEPs provided by licensed special education providers or trained and supervised paraeducators.
- Restricted special education funds should be used to serve students with disabilities. If district or charter schools need more funds to support general education students, they should advocate for an increase in the WPU as opposed to unrestricting special education funds.⁺
- The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the USBE Special Education Rules articulate the allowable uses of special education funds. Allowable uses include but are not limited to:
 - Special education administrative staff
 - Special education teachers
 - Special education paraeducators
 - Speech therapists and audiologists
 - Occupational therapists and physical therapists
 - IEP-related counseling and nursing services
 - Transition assessments and services
 - Special education-specific curricular materials
 - Behavior supports and assistive technology

⁺USBE 2021 position

Produced by the **Utah PTA Special Needs Committee** in collaboration with the following:

