



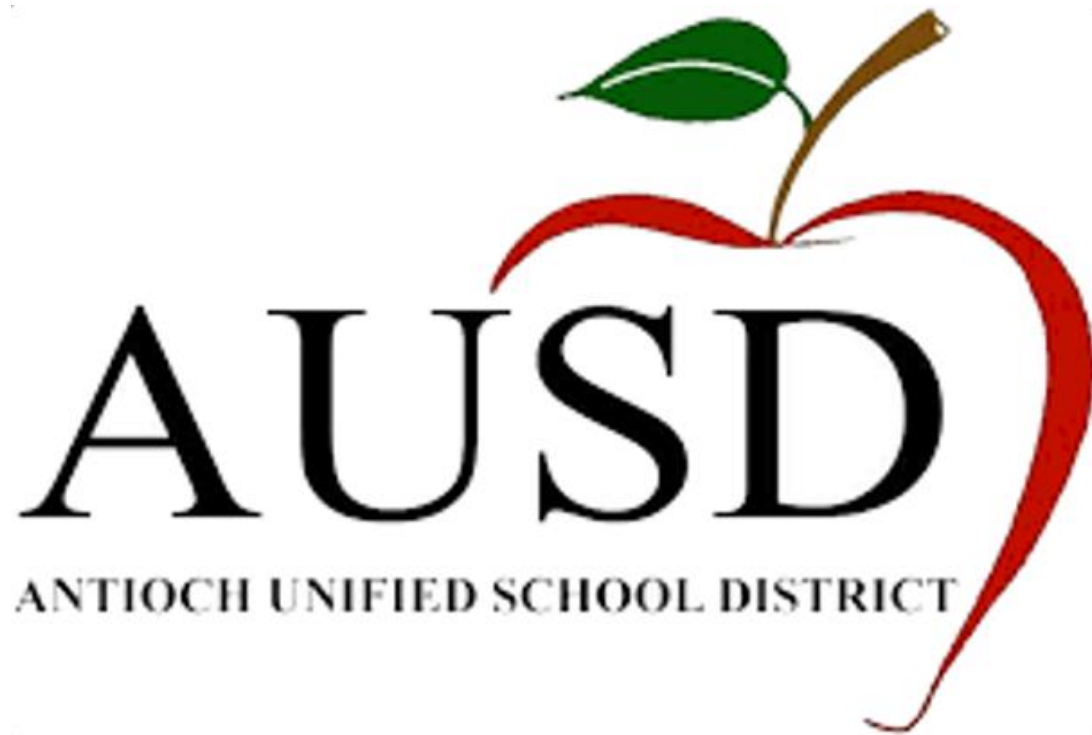
Special Education Department

www.antiochschools.net

March 11, 2026



AUSD Mission



Our Mission is to prepare every student for success in college, career, and life by ensuring all scholars learn at grade level or above.

2025 – 2026 District Goals

Special Education

Board Goal: Accelerate the performance of all students by addressing barriers and opportunities in special education.

Conduct a comprehensive review of referral processes and services to ensure equity, efficiency, and improved outcomes for historically underserved students. (include input from Special Education Ad Hoc Committee)

Indicators

1A: Complete a root cause analysis of centralized and pre-referral supports.

1B: Integrate financial and logistical reviews to strengthen service delivery and resource use.

Academic Achievement

Board Goal: Ensure instructional programs prepare all students for the demands of college, career, and life.

Review instructional programs, curriculum, and assessment systems to identify barriers to accelerating achievement and preparing all students for future success.

Indicators:

2A: Conduct an Academic Review and Analysis of programs, practices, and curriculum to identify any challenges and barriers to accelerating student achievement.

2C: Strengthen assessment systems with a districtwide framework for data use and data dialogues.

School Climate, Culture & Safety

Board Goal: Strengthen systems and protocols to ensure safe and supportive environments.

Establish a districtwide safety team (inclusive representation from staff, community partners, non-profit organizations to create a well-balanced group).

Indicators:

3A: (1) Examine systems solutions to security and bring forward recommendations. (2) Review safety protocols, and (3) update the districtwide safety plan.

3B: Conduct a districtwide Culture, Climate, and Safety study.

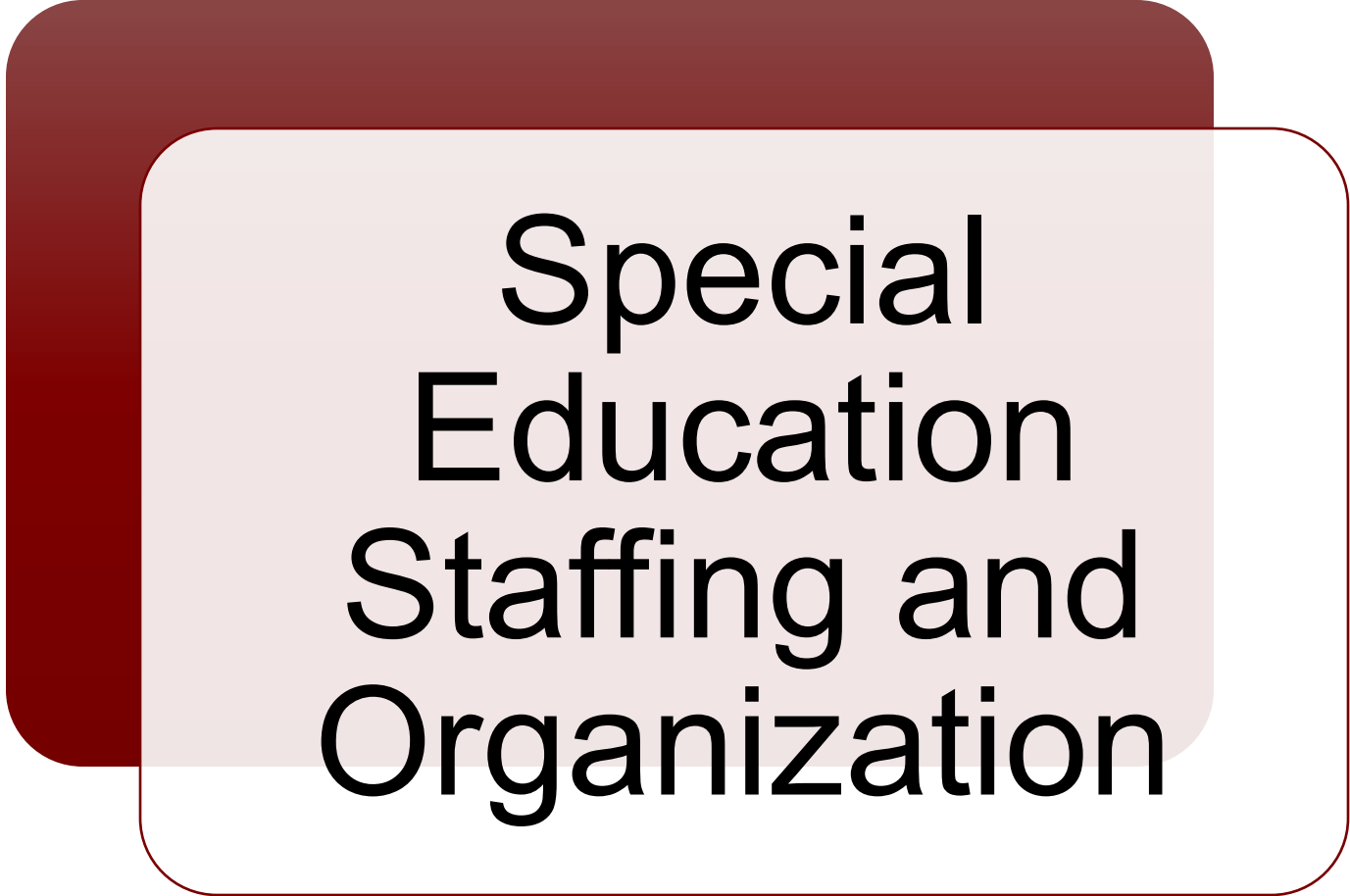
Purpose

Special Education Budget Focus

Today's discussion is focused on reviewing the current Special Education budget, highlighting key cost drivers, areas of concern, and opportunities for improvement. We will examine how staffing, services, and compliance requirements impact our financial position and explore the steps necessary to move toward fiscal solvency. This conversation is an important opportunity to understand the trade-offs we face and begin aligning on solutions that uphold our legal obligations, support students with disabilities, and maintain our commitment to responsible financial stewardship. Our goal is to be transparent and proactive as we plan for a more stable financial future.

Vision

- Serve every student as an individual first, knowing each one has unique strengths to contribute to both the school and their community. We offer innovative programs that foster independence, academics, communication and social/emotional skills. Inclusion is a priority in our District, which allows students to learn and socialize with their general education peers to the fullest extent possible.



Special Education Staffing and Organization

Organizational Chart for the Special Education Office

- Senior Director
- Assistant Director
- 2 Coordinators
- 3 Admin Assistants
- 1 SEIS (Special Education Information System)/CALPADS Tech
- 6 Program Specialists (Teacher On Special Assignment)
- 3 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA)
- 5 Behavior Support Specialists (BSS)

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Program Specialists

Sam Marquart
Taneeka Bourgeois
Fred Ostling
Cindy Mudge
Kristen Symula
David Cabezas

Senior Director Kelly Quinn

Assistant Director Melissa Wilson

Alexis Hearnnes
Coordinator

Rocky Chiasson
Coordinator

Administrative Assistants

Jennifer Ambrosini
Danyaha Brown
Karina Soeganda

Special Education Technician Wendy Manual

Speech and Language

Speech and Language Pathologist Assistants

School Psychologist

Occupational Therapist

Physical Therapist

BCBA

Mental Health Counselors (LMFT)

Valencia Cleveland

Melina Elliott

Martha Locklin

Daisy Chavez

Sean Foran

Brooke Hill

Elyse Schott

Emily Gonzalez

Christiana Mendoza

Nick Orsi

Kristy Van Fleet

Jennifer Ripley

Dean Johnson

Amanda Sutton

Paola Colosimo

Yuge "Grace" Zhu

Casey Boomer

Nicholas Wedl

Katy Johnson

Nicholas Burns

Cendy Villalobos

Caitlyn Odunuga

Maria Viera

Laila Nevis

Debra Lynch

Mark Baldwin

Meisha Senior

Ciana Marmolejo

Kellie Haser

Carmina Tongol

Sudhamani Lakkanna

Kara Rhymes

Samantha Benitez

Sunna Akbar

Edith Orcasitas

Marylee Cawthorn

Amber Sanner

Dawn Foote

Kim Moller

Erika Gonzalez

Galilea Beltran

Jasmine Altman

Diane "Amaya" Lukes

Erika Pangan

APE

Behavior Support Specialists

Benjamin Wilhelm

Alyson Moodie

Caprise Martinez

Erna Tudinovic

Sheeja Rajeev

Victor Smith

Katie Hoellwarth

Kathleen Osio

Patrick Roe

Mania Aghdasi

Sierra Kamplain

Tenika Lee Gartierez

Sindhu Jefferson

Mary Truong

Sharlene Eldridge

Tina Snowden

Katrin Gutierrez COTA

Shelley Werner

Deashia Dixon

Kayla Montiel

Zehra Husnain

Daniel Garcia

Andrea Herrera

Salecia Mekanisi

Michelle Lomax

Nancy Smith

Claudine Muika

Andrea Poirier

Megan Gomez

Delanie Loague

Mariela Vega Ramirez

George Loftis

Lezlie Smijohn

Carmen Salazar

Aditi Murali

Morgan Unanpher

Natalie Solis

Zachary Sorenson

Michele Lobo

Morgan Watts

Sierra Marquardt

Charissa Skinner

Catherine Hartman

Francisca Wilkes

Karen Paulson

Maia Correal Intern

Kierra Harris

Malika Tbaini

Melinda Cuslidge

Morgan Watts

Maya Thomas

Vijitra Balajee

Laura Babcock

BoAe Kim

Todd Pruzek

Michael Elium

Alexa Peraza

Contracted Cost

- 14 Speech and Language Pathologists: \$1,961,968.06
- 12 Speech and Language Pathologist Assistants: \$1,357,950.00
- 1.5 School Psychologists: \$360,940.00
- 2 Occupational Therapists: \$394,537.50
- 5 Mental Health Clinicians: \$637,460.40
- Total = \$4,712,855.96

Related Service Providers

Speech and Language Pathologists	Speech and Language Pathologist Assistants	Occupational Therapists	Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants	Physical Therapists	Adaptive Physical Education	Psychologists	Mental Health Therapist (LMFT)
26	21	7	1	2	2	29	5

Overview of Special Education Data

What is IDEA?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that ensures students with disabilities receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

IDEA guarantees:

- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Special education and related services
- Parent participation and procedural safeguards
- Education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



What Does It Mean to Receive IEP Services?

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) outlines the supports a student receives to access and succeed in school.

IEP services can include:

- Specialized instruction tailored to the student's learning needs
- Related services such as speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, or adapted physical education
- Accommodations and modifications to support learning
- Goals developed by the IEP team to track progress
- IEP services ensure the student receive FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education).

Who is part of the IEP Team?

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team

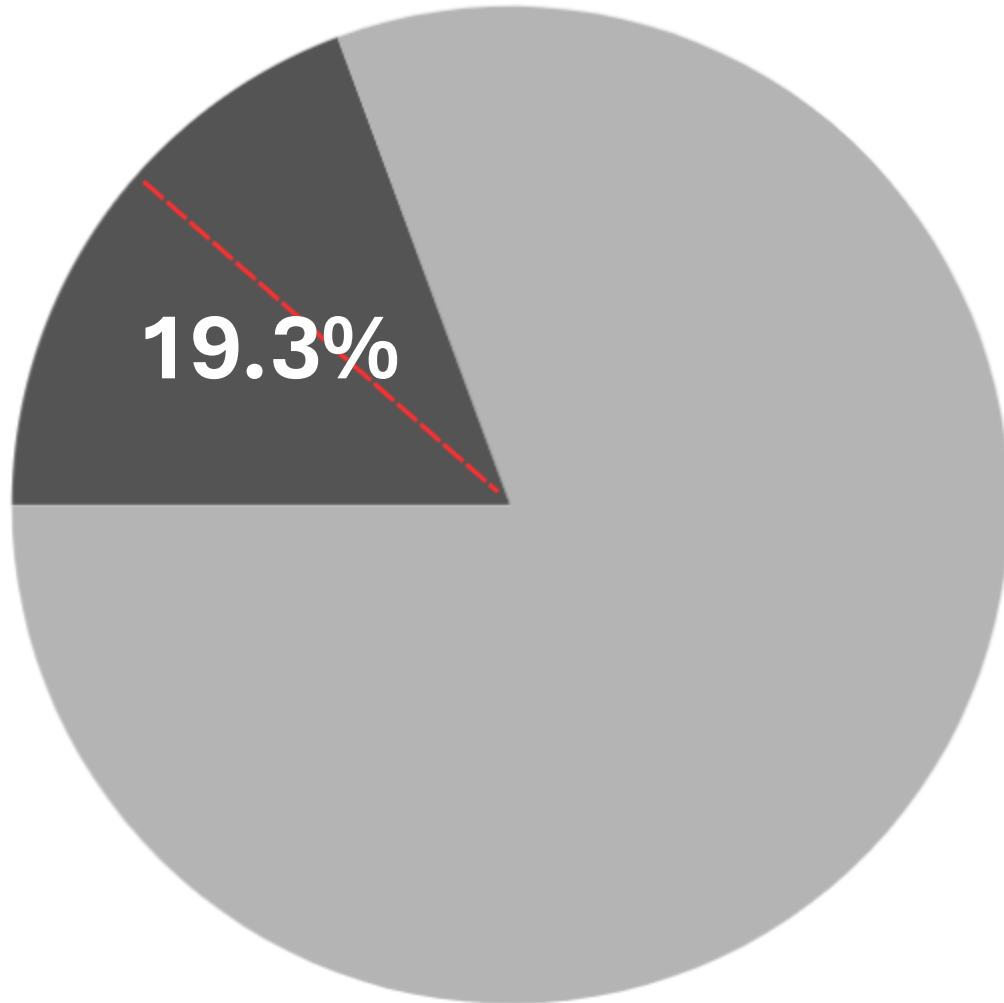
Required Members:

- Parents, Guardians or Educational Rights Holders of the child
- At least one regular education teacher
- At least one special education teacher or provider
- A representative of the public agency (district)
- An individual who can interpret evaluation results
- Other individuals with special expertise (as needed)
- The child with a disability, when appropriate



AUSD Total Enrollment

● Special Education ● All other students



Total Enrollment

15,159

Special Education

2,934

Pending

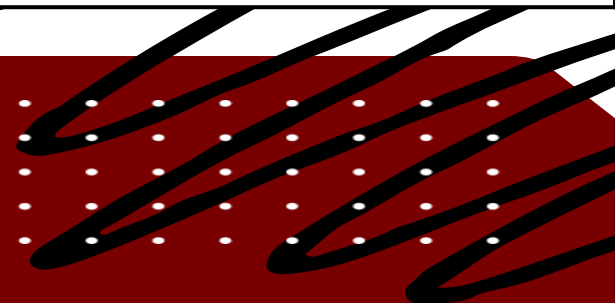
177

Target is 12%



School Year	Total # of Students	Total # of Special Education Students	% of Students in Special Education
2025-2026	15,159	2,928	19.3%
2024-2025	15,489	2,802	18%
2023-2024	15,242	2,702	17.7%
2022-2023	15,326	2,544	16.5%
2021-2022	15,336	2,338	15%
2020-2021	15,779	2,397	15%

Special Education
Enrollment by Year



Student Numbers by Eligibility Type

Eligibility Type	Total
Autism (AUT)	799
Deafness (DHH)	5
Emotional Disability (ED)	62
Established Medical Disability (EMD)	9
Hard of Hearing (HH)	21
Intellectual Disability (ID)	139
Multiple Disabilities (MD)	11
Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	13
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	398
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	1055
Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)	418
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	6
Visual Impairment (VI)	8
Grand Total	2,944
Pending	177

Program Descriptions

Resource Specialist Program (RSP)

Supports students with mild disabilities who can access general education curriculum with specialized academic instruction and accommodations.

Special Day Class (SDC) - Mild/Moderate

A self-contained classroom for students whose disabilities significantly impact their ability to access the general education curriculum without intensive support. Instruction focuses on grade-level academic standards with modification and accommodations and includes social-emotional and behavioral support as needed.

Special Day Class (SDC) - Moderate/Severe

A self-contained program for students with significant cognitive, adaptive, and/or behavioral needs. Curriculum is individualized and functional, aligned with alternate achievement standards, and includes life skills and communication development.

Counseling Enriched Classroom (CEC)

Highly structured and therapeutic classroom for students with emotional and behavioral challenges. Includes academic instruction and embedded mental health supports.

Community-Based Instruction (CBI) –

18 to 22-Year-Old Transition Program

This program serves students with moderate to severe disabilities aged 18–22 who have completed their high school program but continue to need transition services. The focus is on independent living skills, vocational training, and community integration.

Programs Listed by Site (Elementary)

Site	Pre-School Mild/Mod	Pre-School Mod/Severe	TK Mild/Mod	Resource	SDC Mild/Mod	SDC Mod/Severe
Belshaw	0	0	0	1	1	2
Carmen Dragon	0	2	0	1	2	0
Diablo Vista	0	0	0	1	1	1
Fremont	0	0	0	1	1	2
Grant	2	1	0	1	2	2
Kimball	3	3	1	1	0	2
London	0	3	0	1	3	0
Lone Tree	0	0	0	1	2	2
Marsh	0	0	0	1	2	1
Mission	0	0	0	1	2	1
Muir	0	0	0	1	2	0
Orchard Park	0	0	0	2	0	0
Sutter	0	0	0	1	2	1
Turner	1	0	0	1	2	2
TGVA	0	0	0	1	2	0
TOTAL	6	9	1	15	22	14

Programs Listed by Site (Secondary)

Site	Resource	SDC Mild/Mod	SDC Mod/Severe	CEC	CBI
Antioch Middle	3	2	0	1	0
Black Diamond Middle	1	2	1	0	0
Dallas Ranch Middle	3	2	1	0	0
Park Middle	3	3	1	0	0
Antioch High	7	5	1	1	0
Bidwell High	0	1	0	0	0
Deer Valley High	5	6	2	1	4
Dozier-Libbey MHS	2	1	0	0	0
Live Oak High/Opportunity	0	1	0	0	0
Prospects HS/Encore	0	3	1	0	0
TOTAL	24	26	7	3	5

Nonpublic School (NPS): Services & Placements

Nonpublic Schools (NPS) offer specialized instructional and behavioral support for students whose needs are too severe for public school services as determined by an IEP team.

Key Features:

- Extensive medical needs or therapeutic learning environments
- Intensive behavioral, mental-health, and academic supports
- Small class sizes and individualized interventions

NPS/County/RTC Enrollment

NPS/County/Other Enrollment	Total Enrollment
Nonpublic Schools	142
County Programs	47
California School of the Deaf (State)	3
Residential Placement	1
District Total Enrollment	193

Significant Disproportionality

Significantly Disproportionate (SIGDIS)

What does “significant disproportionality” mean?

When a school district is found to have significant disproportionality, it means that students from a certain racial or ethnic group are affected much more often than other students in special education decisions.

This can include:

- Being identified for special education
- Being placed in more restrictive classrooms or programs
- Being suspended or expelled more often

The difference is large enough that the state and federal government require the district to take a closer look and make changes.

SIGDIS

SIG DIS = Significant Disproportionality

- Occurs when a district overidentifies a racial/ethnic group in special education, placement, or discipline.
- Triggers mandatory Compliance and Improvement Monitoring (CIM). AUSD has been assigned a Technical Assistance Facilitator.
- Requires reserving 15% of IDEA funds for CCEIS (Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening).
- District must analyze root causes and implement improvement plans.
- CIM Team includes special education staff, general education staff, site administrator, business office staff, and district representation.

SIGDIS Cont.

When a district is identified with significant disproportionality, it must:

- Review how students are referred, evaluated, placed, and disciplined.
- Make changes if needed to improve fairness and consistency.
- Requires reserving 15% of IDEA funds
- Use some special education funding to support Early help and interventions for student.
- The goal is to improve systems, not to punish families or students.

SIGDIS Cont.

AUSD is currently disproportionate in the areas of:

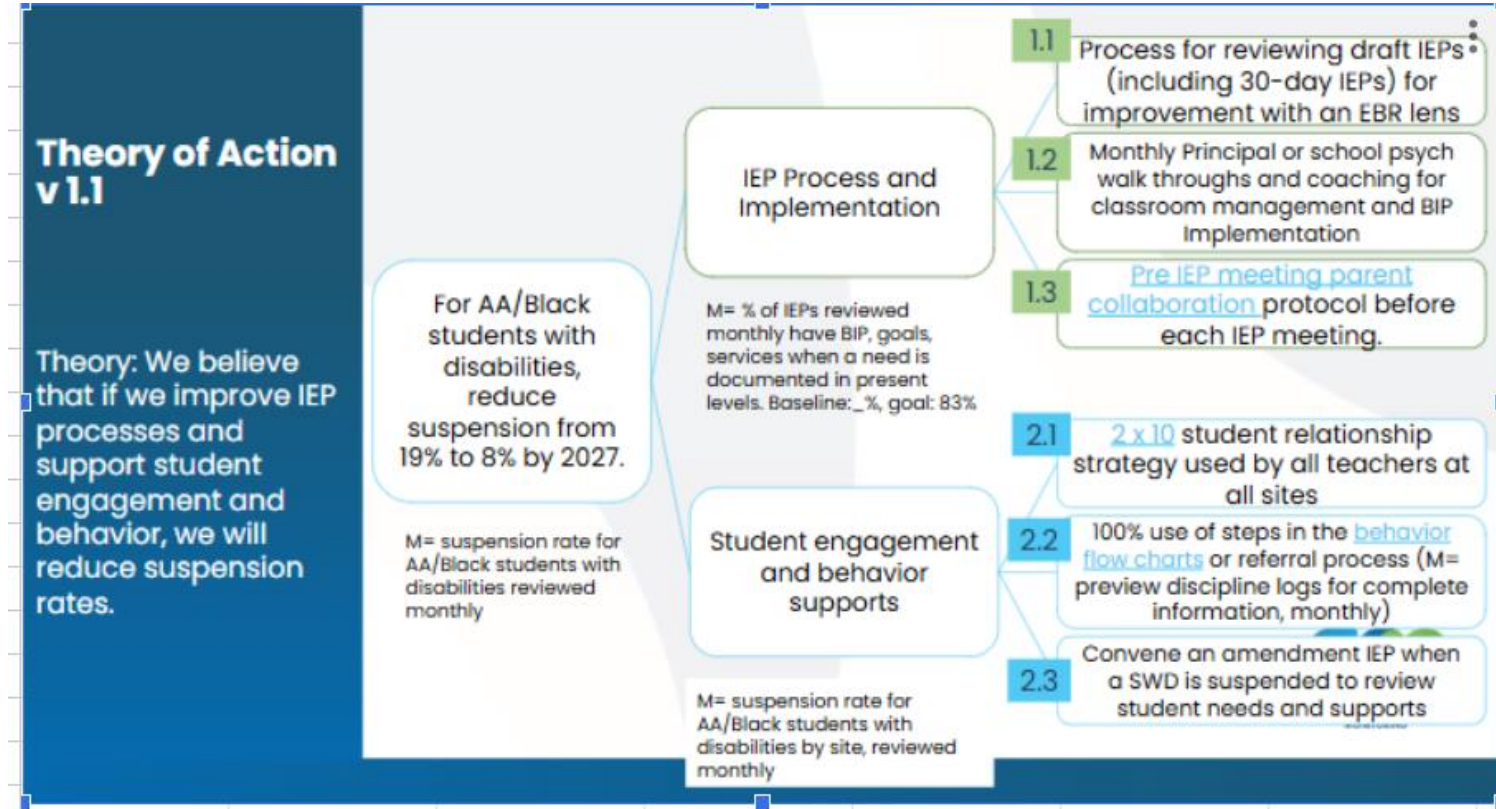
- Overidentification of African American Students in general and eligibility of “Emotional Disability”
- Suspension rates for African American students
- Chronic absenteeism for African American students
- In addition, we have not met the targets for both English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Overidentification

- Over-identification in special education happens when too many children—often from certain racial, cultural, or language backgrounds—are labeled as having a disability when they really don't. This can happen because tests aren't fair, behaviors are misunderstood, or the school system has built-in biases. When this happens, kids may be placed in special education even though they don't need it, which can limit their learning and separate them from their peers. Because of this, the government requires schools to watch for unfair patterns and fix them.

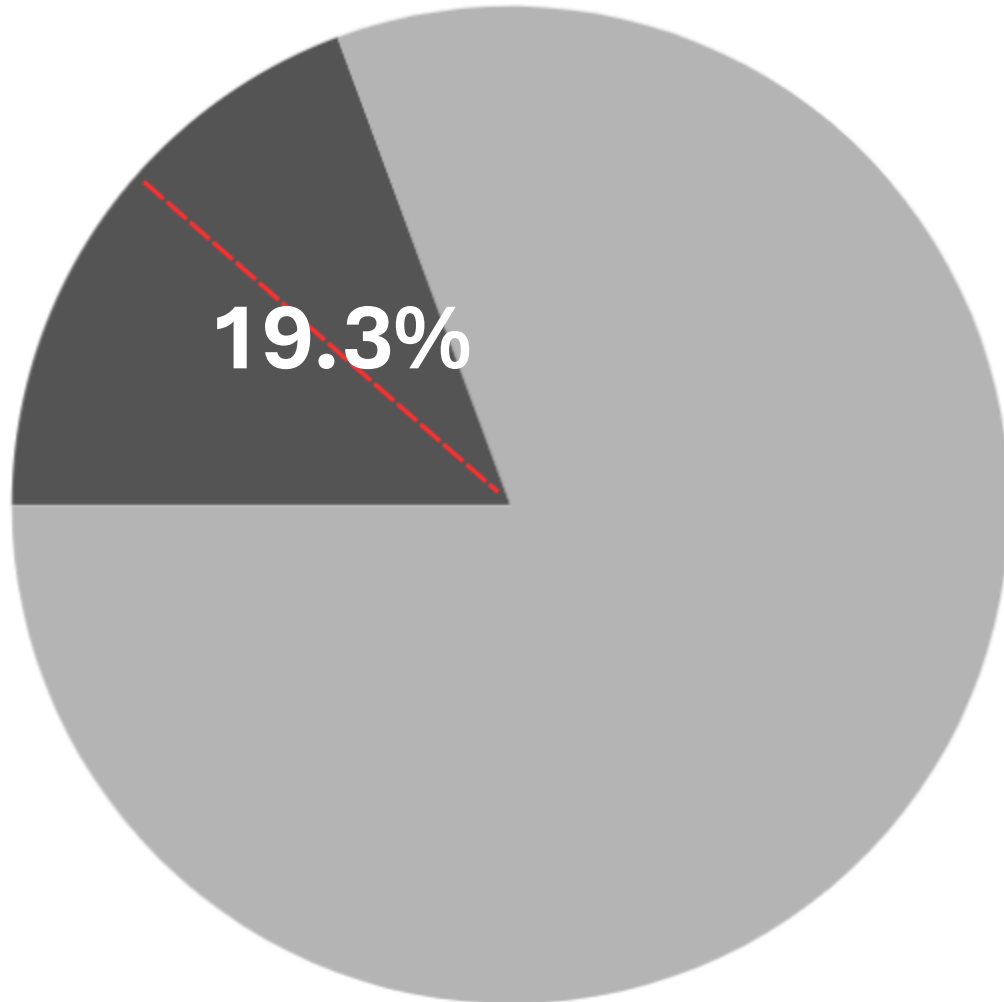
SIGDIS Cont.

- **Aim Statement:** For AA/Black students with disabilities, reduce suspension from 19% to 8% by 2027.



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Target is 12%

Percentage of Students By Ethnicity



IEP Compliance

Key Practices to Ensure Students Receive Required Services:

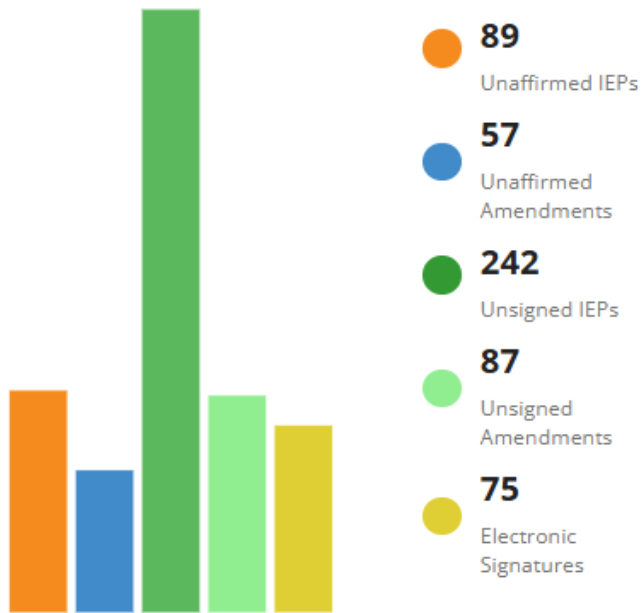
- Keep IEPs current and aligned with assessments and student needs.
- Deliver all services exactly as written and monitor service logs.
- Hold all IEP meetings on time with required team members present.
- Document all communication and service-related efforts thoroughly.



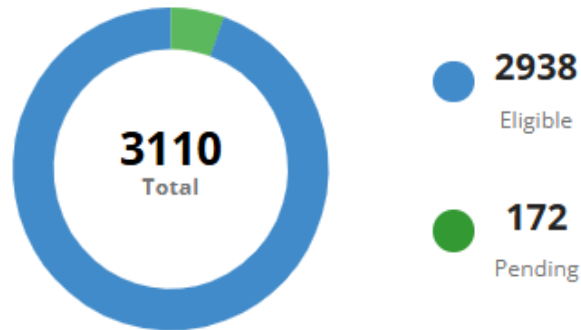
SEIS Dashboard

SEIS Dashboard as of
March 9, 2026

Follow Up



Students



Meeting Alerts

Next
Annual Plan
Review

232
Total

72
Past Due

Next
Reevaluation

145
Total

31
Past Due

Initial
Evaluations

13
Total

2
Past Due

30-Day
Reviews

17
Total

3
Past Due

Special Education Budget

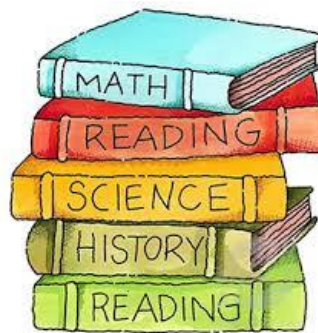


SPED Budget Insights

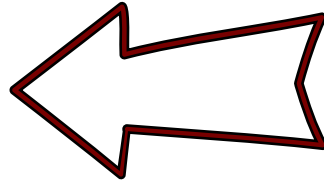
- **Statewide cost pressures:** Special education costs are rising across districts due to increased service intensity, placements, and compliance requirements.
- **Primary cost drivers:** Growth in nonpublic school placements, county services, and high-intensity supports continues to drive expenditures.
- **Increasing student and system demands:** Expanded academic, behavioral, and compliance needs require additional services and monitoring.
- **Structural state underfunding:** State and Federal contributions of approximately **\$26 million** support a program now nearing **\$100 million** in total costs.
- **Need for improved fiscal oversight:** Past spending without a fully aligned budget framework highlights the need for stronger planning, monitoring, and efficiency.

Curriculum

- Pre- K – Frog Street
- K-12 Resource – Sonday (Orton-Gillingham)
- Elementary SDC (Mild/Moderate) – Reading Mastery/Corrective Reading – UFLI – Secret Stories
- Elementary/Middle SDC (Moderate/Severe) - STAR and SOLER
- Middle School SDC – Corrective Reading Pilot
- Secondary SDC (Moderate/Severe) – LINKS, Unique, Symbol Stix, N2Y
- Goalbook IEP Compliance Software



Local Control Funding
Formula (LCFF) FUNDS
\$217,000,000



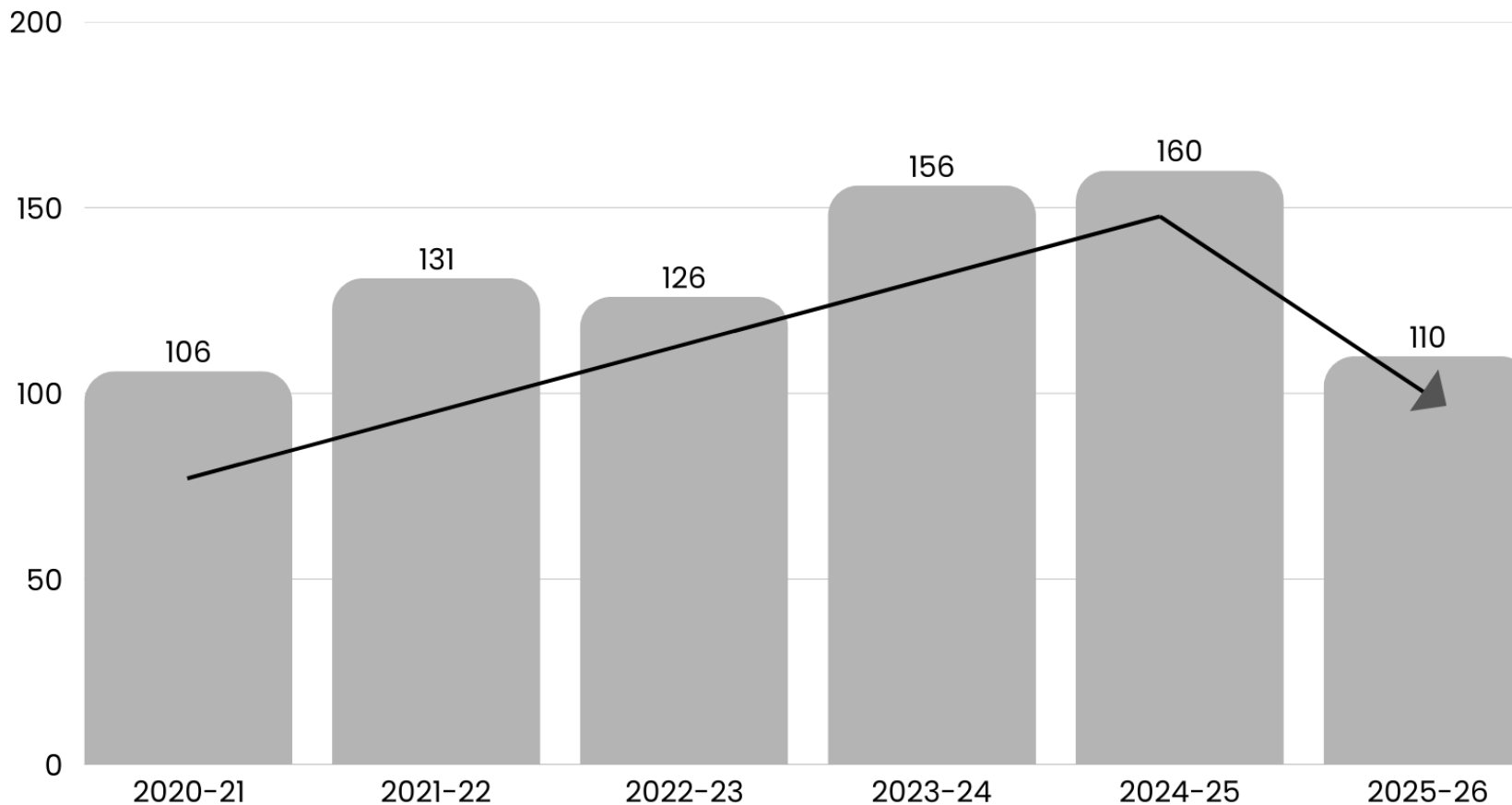
Multi – Year Increases

SPECIAL EDUCATION - EXPENSE HISTORY			FINAL - AFTER 2025-26 SECOND INTERIM REPORT									
GOAL 5XXX ONLY												
AS OF 03.06.2026												
RESOURCE OBJECT	(All) (Multiple Items)	Excluding Object 79XX										
	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	
Row Labels	Sum of CY_REVISED_BUD	Sum of LY_MEMO_BAL	Sum of 2024 ACTUAL	Sum of 2023 ACTUAL	Sum of 2022 ACTUAL	Sum of 2021 ACTUAL	Sum of 2020 ACTUAL	Sum of 2019 ACTUAL	Sum of 2018 ACTUAL	Sum of 2017 ACTUAL	Sum of 2016 ACTUAL	
1	23,388,114.92	20,898,876.34	19,028,145.32	15,904,012.21	13,504,105.14	12,605,392.18	11,821,173.10	11,377,037.00	11,734,394.62	12,200,375.28	11,389,526.63	
2	19,751,146.52	18,577,892.62	14,848,190.37	12,626,825.89	10,862,128.13	10,124,053.58	10,386,752.70	9,670,739.35	9,111,250.46	9,169,065.26	8,503,429.53	
3	22,192,154.31	20,317,208.24	15,852,437.11	13,153,970.22	11,120,200.57	10,120,062.33	9,884,445.02	9,968,643.18	8,283,226.86	8,375,985.04	7,651,614.96	
4	850,232.81	823,070.70	707,258.06	250,959.21	173,468.45	260,441.95	133,062.34	110,132.65	152,947.95	156,744.96	211,900.60	
5	30,694,900.90	29,266,501.31	21,765,618.11	19,229,356.81	14,461,785.92	14,123,861.88	16,249,000.39	17,154,244.50	16,185,436.77	13,419,570.83	12,514,321.37	
6	31,975.09	46,972.00	14,776.30	10,755.07	0.00	7,291.35	7,291.35	0.00	126,964.21	0.00	0.00	
7	0.00	0.00	15,210.00	891.00	911,333.00	1,528,541.58	349,753.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Grand Total	96,908,524.55	89,930,521.21	72,231,635.27	61,176,770.41	51,033,021.21	48,769,644.85	48,831,477.90	48,280,796.68	45,594,220.87	43,321,741.37	40,270,793.09	
YOY CHANGE - \$	6,978,003.34	17,698,885.94	11,054,864.86	10,143,749.20	2,263,376.36	(61,833.05)	550,681.22	2,686,575.81	2,272,479.50	3,050,948.28		
YOY CHANGE - %	7.76%	24.50%	18.07%	19.88%	4.64%	-0.13%	1.14%	5.89%	5.25%	7.58%		

Caseloads, Assessments, New Classes

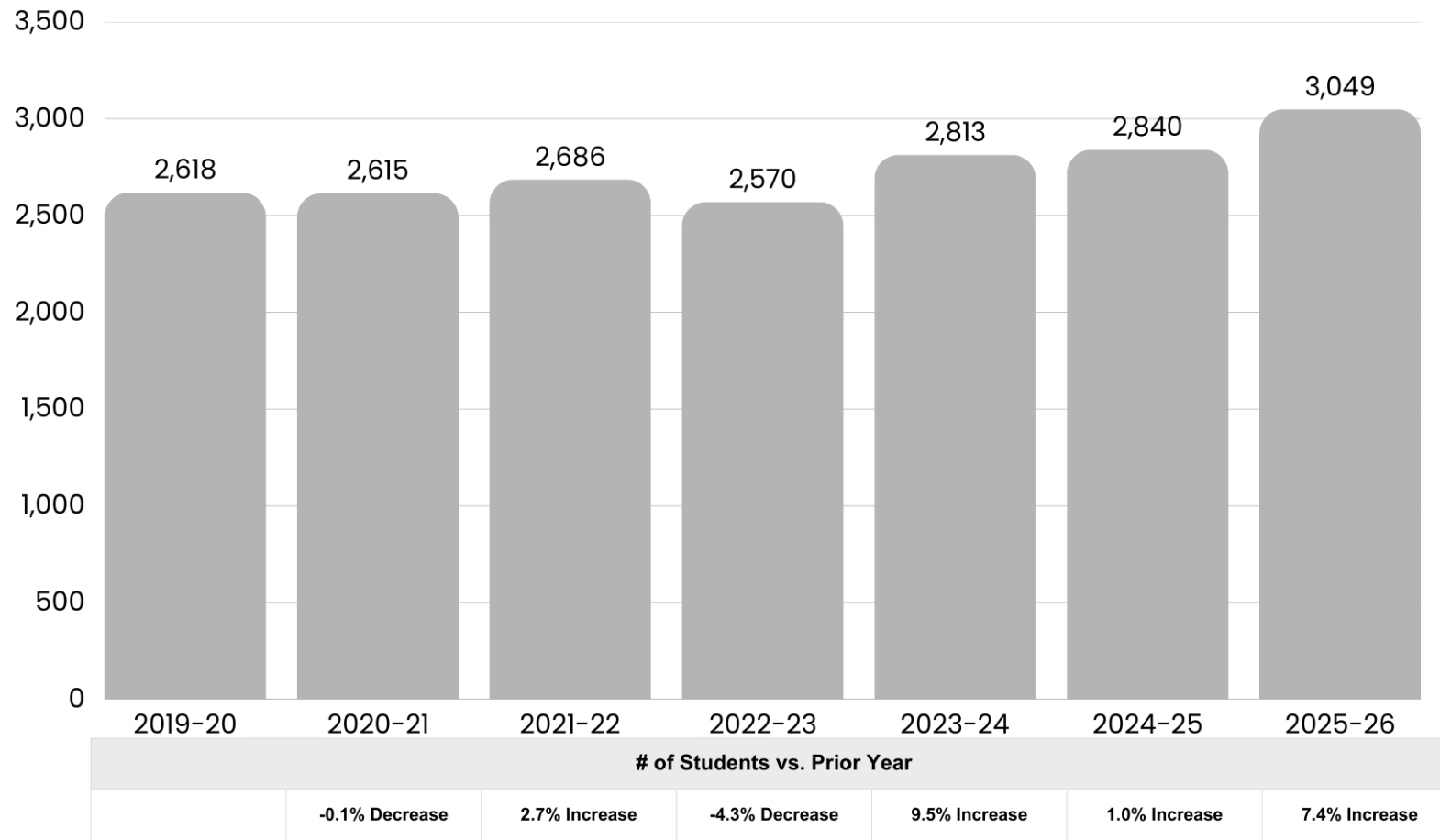
Preschool

Trend in Preschool Assessment Plans



Preschool assessment plans rose from 106 in 2020–21 to a peak of 160 in 2024–25 before dropping to 110 this year. It is important for you to know that this year's decline is due to more students participating in early-intervention programs before families request assessments with the district.

Special Education: Student Enrollment



NOTES:

- Overall growth across the period:** From **2,618** in 2019-20 to **3,049** in 2025-26 — a net gain of **+431 students (+16.5% total)**.
- A dip, then a strong rebound:** Enrollment **fell in 2022-23 to 2,570 (-4.3%)**, then **surged in 2023-24 (+9.5%)** and kept rising. From the 2022-23 low to 2025-26, enrollment grew by **+479 students (+18.6%)**.
- Recent momentum:** The last two years show **continued increases**, capped by **2025-26: 3,049 (+7.4%)**, the **highest** level in the series.
- Range and volatility:** Changes are mostly moderate except for two notable swings:
- Largest decrease:** 2022-23 (-116; -4.3%).
- Largest increase:** 2023-24 (+243; +9.5%).

New Preschool Classes and FTE

Year	Number of classes
2020-2021	7
2021-2022	0
2022-2023	9
2023-2024	11
2024-2025	13
2025-2026	14
Total Increase to FTE	7 FTE
Total:	\$1,365,628.60



Over the last six years, we've added more preschool classes because more of our young scholars are qualifying for services.

New Elementary Classes and FTE

Year	Number of classes
2020-2021	32
2021-2022	43
2022-2023	47
2023-2024	57
2024-2025	57
2025-2026	52
Total Increase to FTE	20 FTE
Total:	\$3,328,410.22



New Secondary Classes and FTE

Year	Number of classes
2020-2021	51
2021-2022	54
2022-2023	56
2023-2024	60
2024-2025	64
2025-2026	65
Total Increase to FTE	13 FTE
Total:	\$2,295,799.24



Paraprofessional Staff

	Para I	Para II	Para III	Total
Staff Count	57	129	27	213
Annual Cost	\$2,870,349	\$6,658,464	\$1,666,548	\$11,195,361

NPS/NPA Costs

Program Type	2025-2026 Cost
Non-Public School	\$18,380,364.13 (142 students) Average cost/Student = \$129,439
Residential	\$465,550.00 (1 student)
Non-Public Agency (contracts for district vacancies)	\$10,357,404.50
Total	\$29,203,318.63

Transportation Cost

Transportation Type	Cost
Private Transportation	\$870,000.00 (15 Students) Average Cost/Student = \$58,000
NPS Provided Transportation	\$731,112.00 (39 students) Average Cost/Student = \$18,746
Total Cost to Special Education Department	\$1,601,112.00

Group Homes/Foster

- Average AUSD monthly Foster Student count is 143
 - 84 are students with disabilities.
- There are 9 Foster Homes within the AUSD School District boundaries.
- Key California Education Code Provisions:
- School of Origin (EC § 48853.5): Foster youth have the right to remain in their school of origin for the duration of court jurisdiction, promoting stability.
- Immediate Enrollment (EC § 48853.5(f)(8)(B)): Schools must immediately enroll a foster child, regardless of missing documentation (immunizations, transcripts, or uniforms) or outstanding fees.

Average Cost Per Student With A Disability

- **Average annual cost per special education student:**
Approximately \$25,000–\$27,000, reflecting smaller class sizes and related service supports.
- **Typical cost range:**
\$12,000–\$80,000+ per student, depending on service intensity and placement type, including:
 - Resource Specialist Program (RSP) students
 - Special Day Class (SDC) students
- **High-cost placements:**
\$100,000+ annually per student for extreme placements, including:
 - Nonpublic Schools (NPS)
 - Residential Treatment Centers (RTC)
- **Districtwide investment:**
Approximately 3,000 students with disabilities (SWD) equates to an estimated **\$81 million annually** based on average per-pupil costs.

Next Steps

Next Steps

- **Moving forward**, we should establish a consistent budgeting structure, implement routine progress checks, and set clear accountability measures to ensure resources are used strategically and transparently.
- **Analyze over-identification patterns by subgroup and site** to determine where and for whom students are disproportionately identified for special education.
- **Use analysis findings to identify targeted professional learning needs** focused on strengthening Tier I and Tier II instructional practices and early interventions to address root causes.
- **Ensure alignment between site special education demographics and overall student demographics** by monitoring identification practices and strengthening inclusive, equitable systems of support.
- **Look at potential revenue** – Evaluate other funding sources such as regionalization within our SELPA, establish and open our own programs, grants.
- **Work with our parent groups** – Continue the work and information that resulted from our AdHoc Committees, Continue Quarterly Parent Information Meetings, Begin CARES (Collaboration, Advocacy, Resources, Engagement, Support)