



# PAIU

PENNSYLVANIA  
ASSOCIATION OF  
INTERMEDIATE UNITS

## Special Education

### FAST FACTS:

**\$1.236 billion**  
2021-2022 allocation

**\$3,651**  
Per child allocation

**\$1.436 billion**  
Governor's budget recommendation **16.2% increase**

**\$4,242**  
Governor's budget per child allocation

**\$25,000 - \$30,000**  
Average annual cost to educate a student with a disability

### Special education costs continue to increase.

Today, students often require multiple special education services (e.g., speech therapy, behavioral and mental health services, etc.).

Pennsylvania regulations exceed requirements mandated by federal law.

The complaint and dispute resolution process imposes a considerable burden on school districts with legal fees and personnel time.

- The district is required to pay the legal fees for both the parent and the district.
- Planning for and participating in due process hearings often requires significant personnel time (i.e., teachers, school psychologists, principals, specialists, and district administrators), which could otherwise be focused on serving students.

### Areas where PA regulations exceed federal requirements:

*(Abridged, courtesy of PASA):*

- Evaluations and reevaluations of students completed within 60 calendar days, as opposed to 60 school days as permitted by federal law;
- Reevaluation of students with intellectual disabilities every two years, rather than three years as required by law;
- New special education teachers must hold a dual certificate in special education and a subject area, which requires additional staffing levels;
- Instructional classroom aides and personal care assistants working with students with disabilities must hold a two-year college degree or equivalent;
- Classroom aids must be provided at least 20 hours of professional development per year;
- Transition planning for students must begin at age 14. Federal requirement age is 16;
- Extended school year services and timelines exceed federal requirements;
- Discipline of students with disabilities through suspension/expulsion is treated as "changes in placement," which requires costly procedural actions;
- Teacher-student caseload maximums increase staffing levels and limit district flexibility;
- Amount of homebound instruction provided to a student with a disability is limited to 30 days, regardless of the circumstances;
- The assessment, plan development, notification and reporting requirements for behavior supports; and
- Parents can request mediation in lieu of filing a complaint. During this process, the district must maintain the educational setting for the child.

### Legislative Request:

- 1 Support Governor's request** to increase special education funding.
- 2 Review PA's Special Education Regulations to provide regulatory relief to districts without reducing services** to identified children.
- 3 Require alternative dispute resolution processes** such as mediation to help resolve disputes in a timely, less costly manner.

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