Special Education Add-On Funding

The formula for Special Education – Add-On funding is designed to even out the yearly rise and fall in funding that comes from funding by count. This supports LEAs in being able to meet the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements of IDEA, and also provides stability for the assignment of specialized (and often scarce) teaching staff.

The formula is calculated using an adjusted base, with a foundation set as the minimum amount of funding. All students who qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) generate WPU under this formula, no matter what level or type of services they receive.

Foundation: Average of Special Education (Self-Contained and Resource) ADM over the previous five years. This average sets the minimum amount of Add-On funding.

New LEAs

For LEAs with less than five years in existence, the five year average cannot be calculated. In this case, the calculation of "Foundation" will be based on the average for the number of years the charter school has been in operation, until they reach five years. For new charter schools in the first operational year, funding is based on estimated enrollment. Unless the charter is specific to the needs of students with disabilities, the estimate for special education will be 10% of the estimated total enrollment.

Funding Delay

Because of the timing for legislative processes and funding allocation, special education funding formulas are two years in delay. In this case, "previous" means the five year span between seven and two years ago. Thus, the calculation of Foundation for School Year 2012-13 is based on the five year average from 2006-07 through 2010-11.

Base: Prior year Special Education Add-On WPU. This number is adjusted for positive or negative growth.

Positive Growth Adjustment: Prior year Special Education Add-On WPU plus weighted growth. Weighted growth is determined by reviewing ADM (both Special Education and Total Enrollment) from two years prior and ADM from one year prior (2009-10 with 2010-11). If the growth in Special Education exceeds growth in Total Enrollment, growth in Special Education is limited to growth in Total Enrollment (the rate of growth in the special education program cannot exceed the rate of growth in total enrollment). The percentage determined for growth is multiplied by a factor of 1.53 and added to the Base.

Prevalence Limits

The growth calculation for districts is limited to a prevalence rate of no greater than 12.18%. If a district has greater than 12.18% of the total enrollment qualifying for special education services, funding is still limited to 12.18%. This prevalence does not apply to charter schools, because the Utah State Board of Education has approved some charters that are designed specifically for students with disabilities.

Negative Growth Adjustment: Prior year Special Education Add-On WPU minus weighted negative growth. Weighted negative growth is determined by reviewing Special Education ADM from two years prior and Special Education ADM from one year prior (2009-10 with 2010-11). If the LEA experiences a decline in Special Education ADM, a negative growth adjustment will be applied. The negative growth adjustment is the Base (prior year WPU) multiplied by the percentage of enrollment decline. This number is then subtracted from the base to determine WPU. If the negative growth adjustment brings the WPU to lower than the foundation, the LEA will receive the foundation WPU.

Questions? Please contact Jennifer Howell at 801-538-7724 or jennifer.howell@schools.utah.gov