



Fund ALL students who require special education – not 97%

- *Washington arbitrarily caps special education costs. If too many students in a community are enrolled, funding is cut off.*
- *This short-changes students with disabilities who require individualized instruction and supports to access general education.*
- *It also puts school districts in a bind: Federal law requires them to find and serve all children with disabilities. State budgeting practices pressure them to limit who is served.*
- *100% of qualifying students need their IEPs funded.*

What you can do:

1. Contact your legislators. You can call the legislative hotline, 1-800-562-6000, or email them. You can find your legislators and their contact information here: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>
2. Ask them to end the cap on special education funding. They can do this by passing [HB 2581](#) - Removing the special education enrollment limit for funding. Or by amending [HB 2258](#) / [SB 6117](#) – Special Education OSPI request
3. Let them know that statewide enrollment in special education is only 12.56 percent of all students. We don't have huge numbers, it's just that our budgeting practices penalize small and rural communities and larger districts with more complex students. It's not equitable and it's not good for kids.

BACKGROUND: Special education helps children with disabilities overcome obstacles that keep them from learning, so they have a fair chance to succeed in school and thrive in adulthood. The individualized education and supports are required by federal law for all qualifying students with disabilities.

Each child's individual education program (IEP) varies depending on what the student requires. Their IEP might include specialized instruction to improve reading and writing or other skills. Or it could include services like speech or occupational therapy, or a 1:1 aide.

Call 1-800-562-6000

“Stop capping special education”

4,172

Students affected by WA's 13.5% funded enrollment cap

\$36.4 million

Lost funding

136

Local education agencies affected

97%

Special education students actually funded by the state

Tell legislators: Fund 100%



Depending on the child, and their unique needs, their special education program could be modest, or very expensive. Costs are dictated by what is required for students to access the general education provided all students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IS BASIC EDUCATION: Under state law, special education is part of the state's program of basic education, and costs must be covered by state and federal funds. In fact, schools are prohibited from using local or private funds to pay for any part of basic education.

The state allocates special education funds per qualifying student to school districts and other local education agencies; schools then draw from a local pool of funds to pay for all IEP services.

But to control costs, the state cuts off funding if a local education agency has too many students with disabilities. If local communities have more than 13.5 percent of students requiring special education, they get a smaller pool of funds to serve a more complex mix of students. Schools are forced to stretch dollars, or risk breaking the law by delaying or denying services. It also puts pressure on school districts not to identify all students with disabilities.

According the 2019-20 1220 Reports, even though special education enrollment is 137,295.04 FTE students, or 12.56% percent of all K-12 full-time student enrollment, the state only allocates for 133,081.15 students.

CALL TO ACTION: The state knows how many students need and qualify for special education but chooses to fund only some. This affects about 4,200 students, more than 130 local education agencies, and about \$36 million* in lost funding. It is time to fully fund special education for all children who qualify for it.

The state needs to eliminate the funding cap and give all students with disabilities an equal opportunity to access education – no matter where they live or choose to enroll.

**Funding loss is calculated based on an average special education allocation of \$8,733 for the affected schools. Actual allocations vary by each LEA's basic education allocation and whether students spend more or less than 80 percent of their school day in a regular classroom.*