

Special Education and School-Age Parents Aid

Overview



Special Education and School-Age Parents Aid is the major categorical aid program supporting special education in Wisconsin. School districts and other eligible LEAs receive partial reimbursement for certain instructional, transportation and other costs of special education and related services in the prior year. Total costs have greatly exceeded the funding available for many years and currently about one-fourth of eligible expenses are reimbursed.

This categorical aid program provides state funding for special education services to children with disabilities as well as services to school-age parents. Special education aid is provided under ss. [115.88](#) and [118.255](#), Wis. Stats. and aid for school-age parents falls under s. [115.93](#); both are funded through the same appropriation, s. [20.255\(2\)\(b\)](#) and the vast majority of aid is for special education. Like Equalization Aid, this is a cost-reimbursement program that provides funding based on eligible costs in the prior year.

Eligible Agencies

School districts, CESAs, CCDEBs and non-district (2r) charter schools can receive special education aid under s. [115.88](#). Aid for health treatment related to particular disabilities under s. [118.255](#) is available to districts, CESAs and CCDEBs (not 2rs) with an approved plan, while aid for school-age parent programs under s. [115.93](#) is available only to districts.

Eligible Costs

Only the excess costs of providing special education to children with disabilities (defined in s. [115.76](#)) and school-age parents are eligible for categorical aid. Aid is available for the salary and benefits of licensed teachers, aides and support staff, as well as transportation and a few other specific costs. Staff eligibility for categorical aid depends upon both licensure and assignment. The eligibility requirements for categorical aid are generally stricter than for funding under a [federal IDEA grant](#) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/educators/fiscal>).

Funding

Special education and school-age parents categorical aid is a sum-certain appropriation in the biennial budget. In 2015-16 the total appropriation is \$368,939,100. Aid payments are prorated as total eligible costs exceed the appropriation; in recent years the proration rate has been in the range of 25 to 30 percent.

Payment Details

Aid is paid throughout the year over six payments. The first five payments are made on the third Mondays from November through March, each being 15 percent of the total amount under a conservative proration estimate. A final payment of 25 percent (plus or minus any adjustments after the proration is finalized) is made the second Monday of June. Revenue is coded to Fund 27, source 611.

Updates

Early Estimate of 2017-18 Aid Proration Rate

As of June 22, 2017 we are estimating that 2017-18 payments of Special Education and School-Age Parents Aid will reimburse last year's eligible special education costs at a rate of **25.73 percent**. This estimate is based upon an analysis of submitted 2016-17 budget data and is provided as a service to districts and other LEAs as they develop their budgets for the upcoming year. Early payments (November through March) may use a slightly lower rate to avoid overpayments. The final rate will be determined in May for the June payment.

Final 2016-17 Aid Proration Rate

Final 2016-17 Special Education and SAP Aid eligibility is based upon a proration rate of **26.24 percent**. Districts and other LEAs should use this percentage for final determination of aid transits and other provisions of cost sharing agreements.

Final 2015-16 Aid Proration Rate

Final 2015-16 Special Education and SAP Aid eligibility is based upon a proration rate of **26.49 percent**. Districts and other LEAs should use this percentage for final determination of aid transits and other provisions of cost sharing agreements.

Special Education Aid and Open Enrollment Changes

The School Management Services team (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sms>) has posted an FAQ related to the changes in open enrollment for students with disabilities that take effect for 2016-17. One point to keep in mind is that the change in law transfers all FAPE and financial responsibility to the enrolling district, which retains any state categorical aids received for a student's cost. The full FAQ is available at [Q&A About 2015 Act 55 Open Enrollment Changes for Pupils with Disabilities](#) .

Quick Links

[Eligibility and Coding](https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/special-ed/sped-sap/eligibility) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/special-ed/sped-sap/eligibility>).

What costs are eligible for aid? How do we account for them?

[Fiscal Reporting](https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/special-ed/sped-sap/fiscal-reporting) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/special-ed/sped-sap/fiscal-reporting>).

How do we report our special education costs to DPI?

[Payment Worksheets](https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/special-ed/sped-sap/worksheets) (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/aid/special-ed/sped-sap/worksheets>).

How much aid are we receiving? How was that amount determined?

*For questions about this information, contact [Roselynn Bittorf](https://dpi.wi.gov/user/635/contact)
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