

Resources and Adjustments for Special Needs Students in 2016 Study

In the 2016 adequacy study report, the study team recommended the following adjustments, or weights, for special needs students:

Compensatory Education	0.35
LEP	0.35
Special Education	0.91

These adjustments were based upon the resources recommended by the professional judgment (PJ) and the evidence-based (EB) approaches. The resources identified by each approach were derived independently, then compared in terms of both what resources were identified and their relationship to the base (i.e. the scale of the adjustment).

Compensatory Education

Both the EB and PJ approaches recommended similar resources for compensatory education students:

- instructional/intervention support
- social-emotional support from counselors/social workers
- extended learning time through before/after school and summer school

The resulting adjustments from the EB and PJ approaches were similar, with an EB weight of 0.29 and an averaged PJ weight across the three concentration levels of 0.39. The EB weight did not include the resources for an alternative school (instead the resources for an alternative school were kept as a separate categorical) while the PJ weight did; if these resources were instead included the EB weight would be 0.31.

Given the results of the study team's analysis of student assessment performance in Maryland, coupled with panel discussions that often emphasized the significant instructional and support resources needed to serve these students, the study team felt that the PJ panel weight was a better estimate of the additional resources required to provide compensatory education students with the services they need to meet state standards. Therefore, the study team developed a blended set of resources that resulted in a weight of 0.40 weight for compensatory education students, which was then reduced to 0.35 based upon available federal resources.

The table on the following page presents the blended model resources underlying the 0.35 weight recommended.

	Elementary School of 450 students 50% Comp. Ed. (225 students)	Middle School of 720 students 50% Comp. Ed. (360 students)	High School of 1,200 students 50% Comp. Ed. (600 students)
	Blended Model	Blended Model	Blended Model
Personnel (FTE)			
Instructional Staff			
Teachers	2.0	3.0	5.0
Instructional Facilitator (Coach)	1.0	1.0	2.0
Teacher Tutor/ Interventionist	1.0	2.0	3.0
Instructional Aides			
Pupil Support Staff			
Counselor, Social Worker, PPW, Behavior Specialist, etc.	2.0	3.0	5.0
Administrative Staff			
Assistant Principal			
Dean		1.0	1.0
Clerical/Data Entry			
Other Staff			
School Resource Officer (paid by outside agency)			
School Resource Officer (paid by district)			
School Based Site/Service Coordinator	1.0		
Substitute			
Other Costs (per student amounts)			
Supplies, Materials and Equipment	\$100	\$100	\$100
Additional Programs (Summer School, Before and After School, etc)	\$1,537	\$1,537	\$1,537
District-Level (Alternative School)	\$125	\$125	\$125

LEP

The resources and the weights for LEP from the EB and the PJ approaches were very different. The EB weight was 0.37, with 0.07 to address language services and 0.30 to provide support services. The EB model also used an unduplicated count; that is, LEP students who are also eligible for the compensatory education weight only receive the LEP weight. The PJ model identified an average weight of 0.64 to address both the instructional and support service needs of LEP students. The PJ model also applies the compensatory weight to LEP students who meet the income criteria, meaning a student who is low-income and identified as a LEP would receive both the compensatory education and the LEP weight.

To determine the appropriate blended weight, the study team first looked deeper into the resource allocations in the two models. The study team determined that support services needed for LEP students, as identified in the two approaches, were very similar to the services needed for compensatory education students, and in fact many of LEP students qualify for both programs. Therefore, the study team believes a weight of 0.40 would be appropriate to meet the support service needs for the LEP population outside of the specific language needs.

Next, looking specifically at the resources provided in each model to address student instructional needs, the study team found that the two models had very disparate recommendations, with the EB model recommending an LEP student-to-staff ratio of 100:1, and the PJ model recommending about 15:1. The case studies indicated that staff-to-student ratio from the PJ approach was a lower ratio than what is currently being utilized in successful schools, while the EB ratio was much higher.

The study team’s analysis of student assessment performance indicates that there are significant achievement gaps for LEP students, even higher than that of other student populations. Based on this information, the study team determined that an adequate level of funding for language services would need to be closer to the resource estimates from the PJ approach to better address these persistent performance gaps. Therefore, the study team recommends a 0.40 weight to address the language needs of LEP students, which was reduced to 0.35 for the final recommendation given available federal resources. Students who are both LEP and eligible for compensatory education would also receive the compensatory education weight of 0.40 for necessary support services, for a combined weight of 0.80.

The blended model resources that support the recommended weight are shown in the table below:

	Elementary School of 450 students 7% ELL (32 students)	Middle School of 720 students 7% ELL (50 students)	High School of 1,200 students 7% ELL (84 students)
	Blended Model	Blended Model	Blended Model
Personnel (FTE)			
Instructional Staff			
Teachers	1.3	2.0	3.4
Instructional Facilitator (Coach)	0.3	0.4	0.7
Other Costs (per student amounts)			
Supplies, Materials and Equipment	\$100	\$100	\$100
District-level Support (Center Program, Contracted Translation Services)	\$100	\$100	\$100

Special Education

Based upon recommended resources, the PJ study resulted in a higher weight of 1.25 than the EB study's weight of 0.70. This is primarily because the EB study assumed high cost special education student services were to be fully paid for by the State, which results in their exclusion from the approach's 0.70 weight. Alternatively, the PJ study includes these students in the calculation of its 1.25 weight. If the EB model included the high-cost special education students, then the resulting weight would be higher. Using the 3.86 weight for severe special education students from the PJ approach, and the same weighting based upon the proportion of students in each need category as was done to create the average PJ weight, an EB weight that includes these higher cost students would be 0.96. Averaging the EB and PJ weight produces a weight of 1.11. Knowing that meaningful achievement gaps exist for these students, the study team recommends a rounded weight of 1.10 for special education students, including mild, moderate, and severe categories. Less available federal resources, the final recommended weight was 0.91.

The table below shows the blended model resources that can be provided given the recommended weight:

	Elementary School of 450 students 12% Special Education (54 students)	Middle School of 720 students 12% Special Education (86 students)	High School of 1,200 students 12% Special Education (144 students)
	Blended Model	Blended Model	Blended Model
Personnel (FTE)			
Instructional Staff			
Teachers	3.0	4.8	8.0
Instructional Aides	3.0	4.8	8.0
Special Education Staff			
Therapists (Speech, OT/PT, Behavior, etc)	1.5	1.5	2.0
Coordinator (IEP, Transition)	0.5	1.0	2.0
Job Coaches (Para)			2.0
Other Costs (per student amounts)			
District-level Support (Administration, Related Services, Out of District Placement, Extended School Year, Legal, Supplies, Materials, and Equipment, etc)	\$2,745	\$2,745	\$2,745

Examples of Other States' Special Needs Weights

Concentration of Poverty Rate

Examples of other state's concentration factors

All but four states provide additional resources for at-risk students; eight states' formulas provide multiple weights for at-risk students based on the concentration of at-risk students. It is important to note that each state has a different "base" amount, so the same weight will generate differing amounts of additional revenue in different states. Several examples of state's multiple weights based on concentration of poverty follow:

Colorado: Eligibility for participation in the federal free lunch program is used as a proxy of each school district's at-risk pupil population. For each at-risk pupil, a district receives funding equal to at least 12%, but no more than 30%, of its Total Per-pupil Funding. As a district's percentage of at-risk population increases above the statewide average (roughly 36.7%), an increased amount of at-risk funding is provided.

Nebraska: Additional funding is provided by multiplying the statewide average general fund operating expenditures per formula student multiplied by the number of poverty students in the school, by weights designated by the concentration of students in the district:

- 0.0375 for poverty students comprising more than five percent and not more than ten percent of the formula students in the school district, plus
- 0.0750 for poverty students comprising more than ten percent and not more than 15% percent of the formula students in the school district, plus
- 0.1125 for poverty students comprising more than 15% and not more than 20% of the formula students in the school district, plus
- 0.1500 for poverty students comprising more 20% and not more than 25% of the formula students in the school district, plus
- 0.1875 for poverty students comprising more than 25% and not more than 30% of the formula students in the school district; plus
- 0.2250 for poverty students comprising more than 30% of the formula students in the school district.

New Jersey: Additional weights are provided for students enrolled in the federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program. Weight varies from .41 to .46 for at-risk students, based on the percentage of at-risk students in the district: lowest weight for those districts with less than 20% of at-risk students in the district; and .46 weight for districts with more than 40% and less than 60% of at-risk students. Due to a cap in the weight, districts with greater than 40% of at-risk students also receive the .46 weight per at-risk student.

Virginia: The "At-Risk Add On" provides 1 to 13 percent above Basic Aid per student per student eligible for the federal free lunch program (capped at 13%).

Special Education

Sixteen states provide funding for special education through multiple weights in their state funding formulas. Most often, the weights are based on the type/classification of the disability or are based on the level of service required to serve the student. It is important to note that each state has a different “base” amount, so the same weight will generate differing amounts of additional revenue in different states. Several examples of state’s special education weights follow:

Weights Based on Disability

Arizona: Special education is funded through two groups: "Group A" means educational programs for career exploration, a specific learning disability, an emotional disability, a mild intellectual disability, remedial education, a speech/language impairment, developmental delay, homebound, bilingual, other health impairments and gifted pupils.

"Group B" means educational improvements for pupils in kindergarten programs and grades one through three, educational programs for autism, a hearing impairment, a moderate intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, multiple disabilities with severe sensory impairment, orthopedic impairments, preschool severe delay, a severe intellectual disability and emotional disabilities for school age pupils enrolled in private special education programs or in school district programs for children with severe disabilities or visual impairment and English learners enrolled in a program to promote English language proficiency.

Oklahoma: Eleven special education weights are included in the formula:

- Vision impaired: 3.8
- Learning disabilities: 0.4
- Deaf or hard-of-hearing: 2.9
- Deaf and blind: 3.8
- Educable mentally handicapped: 1.3
- Emotionally disturbed: 2.5
- Gifted: 0.34
- Multiple handicapped: 2.4
- Physically handicapped: 1.2
- Speech impaired: 0.05
- Trainable mentally handicapped: 1.3

South Carolina: Five special education weights are included in the formula:

- Educable mentally handicapped pupils and learning disabilities pupils: 1.74
- Trainable mentally handicapped pupils, emotionally handicapped pupils and orthopedically handicapped pupils: 2.04
- Visually handicapped pupils, pupils with autism and hearing handicapped pupils: 2.57
- Speech handicapped pupils: 1.9
- Pupils who are homebound: 1.0

Weights Based on Level Service

Iowa: Three special education weights are included in the formula:

- Level 1 - Students receiving specially designed instruction for a part of the educational program (includes modifications and adaptations to the general education program): 0.72
- Level 2 - Students receiving specially designed instruction for a majority of the educational program (includes substantial modifications, adaptations, and special education accommodations to the general education program): 1.21
- Level 3 – Students receiving specially designed instruction for most or all of the educational program (requires extensive redesign of curriculum and substantial modification of instructional techniques, strategies and materials): 2.74

New Mexico: Four special education weights are included in the formula:

- Students requiring a minimal amount of special education: 0.7
- Students requiring a moderate amount of special education: 0.7
- Students requiring an extensive amount of special education: 1.0
- Student requiring a maximum amount of special education: 2.0

Texas: Twelve special education weights are included in the formula:

- Homebound: 5.0
- Hospital class: 3.0
- Speech therapy: 5.0
- Resource room: 3.0
- Self-contained, mild and moderate, regular campus: 3.0
- Self-contained, severe, regular campus: 3.0
- Off home campus: 2.7
- Nonpublic day school: 1.7
- Vocational adjustment class: 2.3
- State schools: 2.8
- Residential care and treatment: 4.0
- Mainstream: 1.1

ELL

Forty-eight states provide additional resources to districts for English Language Learners (ELLs). States generally fall into 5 categories based on their funding mechanism: Flat Weight or Dollar Amount; Multiple Weights; Categorical Grants; Reimbursement; or Resource Allocation Model. Examples of state funding for ELL students in these categories follows.

Flat Weight or Dollar Amount

Oklahoma: The formula provides an additional 25% of base funding for each ELL student.

Arkansas: Each ELL student generates an additional \$338.

Multiple Weight

Maine: *Multiple Weights based on Concentration of ELL Students*

- Districts with less than 15 ELL students: 1.7
- Districts with more than 15, but less than 251 ELL students 1.5
- Districts with more than 251 ELL students: 1.525

Hawaii: *Multiple Weights based on Proficiency Level of ELL Students*

- Fully English Proficient: 1.0648
- Limited English Proficient: 1.1944
- Non-English Proficient: 1.3888

Ohio: *Multiple Weights based on Duration of Enrollment*

- Enrollment for less than 180 Days: \$1,515
- Enrollment for more than 180 Days: \$1,136

Categorical Grant

Alabama: Legislative appropriation that varies year-to-year: \$2,755,334 for FY18

Nevada: Separately funded program (Zoom Schools) outside of funding formula

- **Reimbursement**

Illinois: Partial reimbursement for ELL expenses; must submit actual expenditures to the state

Wisconsin: Partial reimbursement for ELL expenses; must submit actual expenditures to the state

- **Resource Allocation Model**

Tennessee: Funding formula provides districts with funding for an additional teaching position for every 20 ELL students and additional interpreter for every 200 ELL students.

Sources: M. Griffith and E. Parker, *School Funding Across the States*, Education Commission of the States, Denver, CO. Prepared for Augenblick, Palaich and Associates for the State of Nevada, April 24, 2018.; T. C. A. § 49-3-307; OH R.C. § 3317.016; M.R.S.A. § 15675; A.C.A. § 6-20-2305; 70 Okl.St. Ann. § 18-201.1; Code of Virginia § 22.1-199.1; NE Ch 79 § 1007.06; Code of Virginia § 22.1-199.1; TEC § 42.151; NM 22-8-1; Iowa Code § 256B.9(1); AZ 15-752; <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/fy2017-18brochure>; <http://www.state.nj.us/education/stateaid/1617/EAR2017.pdf>; <https://ed.sc.gov/finance/financial-services/manual-handbooks-and-guidelines/funding-manuals/fy-2017-2018-funding-manual/>