



Interim Charge 3: Recommend solutions to barriers the school district, students with disabilities, and parents face in accessing a free and appropriate public education and in meeting the milestones of the plan and any measures needed at the state level to ensure that students with disabilities are being located, fully evaluated, and appropriately identified for special education instruction and services.

Accurate identification of students is vitally important to ensure they receive necessary services. Such identification is reliant on evaluating the student to determine any disabilities impacting their learning. To that end, the state should continue to provide funding for excess costs of evaluations for special education referrals.

Furthermore, Special Education funding is currently based on the amount of time that students with disabilities are served in their instructional settings. Although each instructional setting receives a specific weight over and above the basic allotment, the funding formula only considers the students' contact hours in his/her instructional arrangement rather than the specific cost of services provided to the student.

A more appropriate approach would be to revise the Special Education funding formula to focus on student needs rather than the amount of time spent in a particular classroom setting by funding programs based on services provided in order to ensure provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

In addition, teachers often begin their careers with a lack of training regarding behavior management techniques, specifically including positive behavior management supports and restorative practices. These techniques are particularly important for teachers of students with behavioral disabilities. Requiring educator preparation programs and alternative certification programs to include instruction in the area of behavior management techniques, including positive behavior management supports could help to address this gap.