

Hope for Every Pennsylvania Student: Boosting Special Education Funding

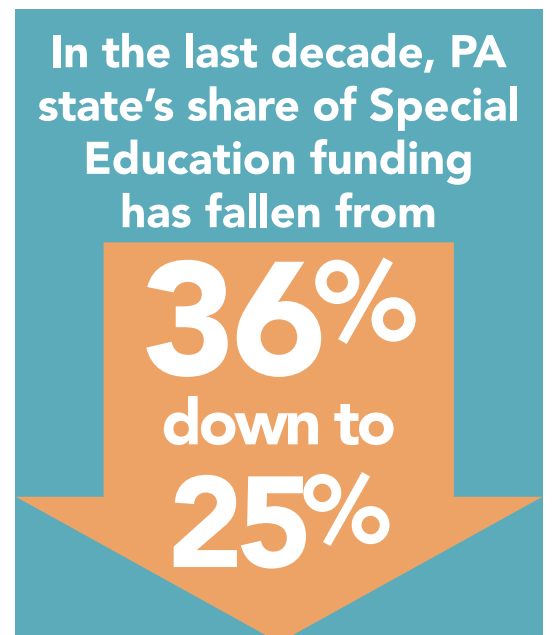
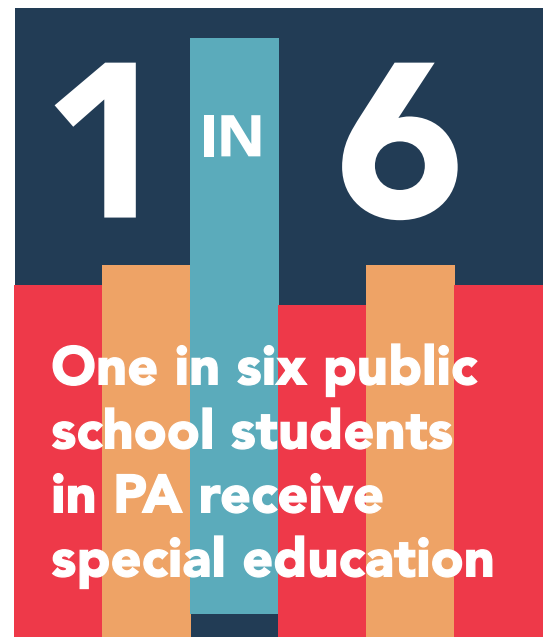
Every student deserves a quality education. In Pennsylvania, students with disabilities are legally entitled to special education that provides them with the additional supports and services that are essential to help them learn and achieve.

Students entitled to special education include those with intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbances, hearing or visual impairments, speech and language impairments, autism, specific learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or other health impairments.

Students receiving special education may need:

- Learning support in reading, writing, math, speaking or listening related to academics
- Emotional or behavioral help
- Life skills support so children can live and work independently
- Blind and visually impaired support
- Deaf and hard of hearing support
- Speech and language support to help children develop communication skills
- Physical support for children who have a physical disability
- Autistic support in the areas of communication, social skills, or behavior
- Multiple disabilities support for children with more than one disability

These services can often require support from certified school psychologists, therapists, nurses and specially trained teachers.



Special Education Funding in Pennsylvania

Special education is supported by a mix of federal, state, and local school district funding. Because school districts are the funder of last resort, they must cover any necessary and mandated special education costs remaining after the federal and state governments determine what they will fund.

**SINCE
2010-11**

special education costs
have increased by nearly

29%

but state funding increased
by only a little over

4%

[PSBA, 2018]

Inadequate state funding is resulting in an insufficient number of staff to support our students and not enough resources and services critical for these students to make educational progress. It also is forcing school districts to divert money from their operating budgets to close the shortfall, which harms all children.

PA Schools Work – a nonpartisan statewide campaign to ensure all Pennsylvania students have the resources they need to succeed – is calling on state government to do its part for students with disabilities. In addition to fully funding basic education to support all students, we urge state leaders to increase the state's share of special education costs from 25 percent back up to the 36 percent level it was a decade ago.

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