



Special Education Funding

Amanda Sanchez-Munoz, Director of Special Education for San Elizario ISD
Member of Special Education Allotment Advisory Committee



San Elizario ISD Demographics

- ▶ Approximate Enrollment 21-22: 3,195 students
 - ▶ 99.5% Hispanic
 - ▶ 90.9% Economic Disadvantaged
 - ▶ 57.2% Limited English Proficient
 - ▶ 74.7% At-Risk
 - ▶ Special Education 12.5%
- ▶ Campuses: 6
- ▶ Located about 20 miles east of El Paso, TX in a rural community
- ▶ Based on last census report, the median income for a household in the CDP was \$20,145, and for a family was \$20,772. Males had a median income of \$16,689 versus \$12,648 for females. About 40.2% of families and 44.5% of the population were below the [poverty line](#), including 51.8% of those under age 18.



Current SPED Funding

- ▶ 21-22 SPED Budget from general fund: \$3,248,986 , 8.19% of total budget
- ▶ Final SPED allotment for 20-21: \$3,062,770
- ▶ All of current IDEA B funds are used on funding SPED teachers and paraprofessionals
- ▶ District functions with deficit in SPED allotment vs expenditure, which results in additional challenges



Current challenges

- ▶ Difficulty serving all students in 40 instructional setting (Co-teaching, Support Facilitation)
 - ▶ Two teachers for grades 3-6 in monolingual and bilingual settings spreads the teachers thin
- ▶ Smaller districts do not have access to specialists such as Autism Specialist, Behavior Specialist, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology to assist with high need/intensity cases
- ▶ Teacher & Paraprofessional Shortages
 - ▶ Charter Schools are able to pay more
 - ▶ Smaller, rural districts struggle to keep up/exceed pay provided by larger districts to attract staff
 - ▶ Current scenario: Vacancy in ECSE since December 2021; 3-5 expected vacancies for 22-23 school year (no applicants available to fill these positions)
- ▶ Other shortages include bus drivers, speech language pathologists



Contracted Services

- ▶ Current contracted services:
 - ▶ Occupational Therapist
 - ▶ Physical Therapist
 - ▶ Licensed Specialist in School Psychology
 - ▶ Contracted Diagnostician (limited funding) to assist with evaluation load
 - ▶ Contracted Speech Language Pathologist (Vacant & Limited funding) to assist with evaluation load
- ▶ Disadvantages of contracted services: staff is not available for ARD's, cost of services is more expensive due to hourly rates, service availability and ability to utilize their expertise is limited due to restricted amount of time in district



Recommendations for Funding Adjustments

- ▶ 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 are just numbers. They don't describe the intensity of service provision with each
 - ▶ Consider a mild, moderate, severe at each level based on intensity of services to include type of services provided within model (i.e. curriculum support/accommodations, behavioral supports, personal care services)
- ▶ Funding should be based on enrollment rather than ADA. The services and providers must be available whether or not the student is present on any given day and often services are required to be made up
- ▶ Related and instructional services should be considered in funding equation
 - ▶ Ex: Special education counseling, occupational therapy, physical therapy, VI, DHH
- ▶ Cost of completion of Full and Individual Evaluation Funding to include all additional components of evaluation (i.e. OT, AU, Pysch, speech, counseling, FBA)



Let's NOT forget Mental Health!

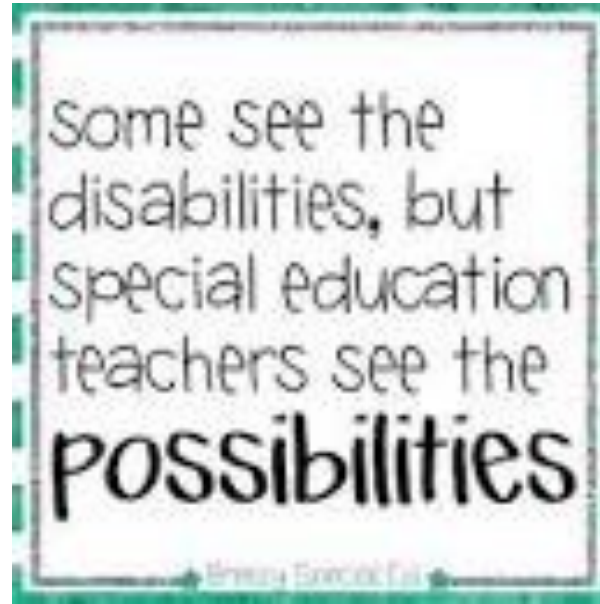
- ▶ More homebound students than ever after COVID (anxiety based concerns on rise)
- ▶ Increased demand on Special Education Counselors—more crisis situations
- ▶ More students struggling with anxiety while in school (difficulty entering classrooms, requiring more mental health supports)



SPED Funding

- ▶ It takes a village! We need to maintain every person involved from evaluation personnel, related service personnel, SPED teachers, SPED paraprofessionals, instructional support staff (VI, DHH teachers, Autism specialists/in-home trainers)
- ▶ Public schools are the ONLY agency required to serve ALL students who walk through their doors. We proudly provide services to ALL students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment. We provide every service necessary for the student to make appropriate progress on their IEP.
 - ▶ We need support to recruit, train, and retain our staff
 - ▶ Incentives to enter education field
 - ▶ Assistance to districts to increase pay especially for Special Education
 - ▶ Support public education so that funding isn't spread thinner

“



”

Thank you for your time and consideration!