

Texas Commission on Special Education Funding

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

NOVEMBER 14, 2022

Non-Formula Based Funding Recommendations

- 1. Evaluation Cost Offset:** *Reimburse school districts and charters for a portion of the cost of a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (FIIE) through a grant program.*
 - The grant should range from \$25M per year (\$250 reimbursement) to \$100M per year (\$1,000 per reimbursement).
 - Number of reimbursements per school to be based on Child Find counts submitted each summer.
- 2. SPED Educator Stipends:** *Provide salary stipends for SPED educators.*
 - The stipends should range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per SPED educator.
 - Cost could range from \$11M to \$77.5M per year depending on stipend amount, educator setting, classification, and certification eligibility requirements
- 3. SPED Certification Grants:** *Fund grant program to cover the costs for SPED certifications.*
 - The grant should range from \$500,000 to \$1.2M per year depending on number of certification exams.
 - Grant funds would only cover first attempt SPED teacher certification exams.

Non-Formula Based Funding Recommendations

4. **SSES Program:** *Remove sunset date, fund the waitlist, and provide continued funding support for the SSES program.*
 - Waitlist funded at \$100M and an increase of \$15M per year (\$46M total per year) to continue program.
 - TEA's Legislative Appropriations Request includes continued program funding cost (\$46M) but not waitlist funding.
 - **Decision Point:**
 1. **Limit access to program only once per educational career (see costs above)**
 2. **Expand access to once during elementary (K-5) and once during secondary (6-12) (\$150M total per year)**

5. **Grants to Non-Profits:** *Fund grant program for eligible non-profits to expand services for students served by SPED.*
 - The grant should fund between 10 and 40 non-profits (\$2M - \$10M per year)

6. **CCMR Outcomes:** *Increase SPED CCMR Outcomes Bonus.*
 - Increase the CCMR Outcomes Bonus additional funding for students served by SPED by \$2,000 for a total of \$4,000 per student (\$1.7M per year).

Non-Formula Based Funding Recommendations

7. **Day Placement Program Capacity:** *Provide start-up grant funding to increase the number of Day Placement Programs.*
 - The grant should fund between 8-10 to 16-20 programs (\$4M - \$8M per year).
 - Competitive grants are for two-year start-up seed funding to help new programs launch quickly at scale.
 - Priority should be given to incentivize capacity increases for locally based programs in areas of limited current capacity in order to keep students in their communities.

8. **Residential and Day Facility Cost Regulation:** *Statutory changes granting TEA regulatory authority in addition to current monitoring authority.*
 - i. *Require facilities to annually provide TEA detailed rates on program services for approval, remove requirement for a contract to be executed prior to approval, and require facilities to publish approved program service rates and fees.*
 - ii. *Allow TEA to set maximum rates at facilities for services based on historical costs, previous contracts, and/or rates set/approved by other state agencies such as HHSC.*
 - iii. *Require TEA to work with HHSC to explore the feasibility of recruiting and expanding educational based placements for residential services in facilities approved by other state agencies but not currently working with TEA, which could include State Supported Living Centers.*

Non-Formula Based Funding Recommendations (New)

- 9. SPED Educators Retire/Rehire:** *Reimburse districts and charters for the required retire/rehire TRS payment for SPED educators. (NEW – Accidentally left off 8/10 deck)*
- The grant program should range from \$2M - \$12M per year and would be prorated to assist all applications if funding provided does not cover the total requested.
 - Educators to include both teachers and other special education personnel.
- 10. Increase SPED Educator Pipeline:** *Provide grant funding for Grow-Your-Own SPED educator programs. (NEW – Accidentally left off 8/10 deck)*
- The grant program should support between 2-3 and 15-20 programs (\$5M - \$50M per year).
 - Educators to include teachers, evaluators, and related service personnel.

SPED Formula Funding Recommendations

SPED Formula Recommendation

11. SPED Transportation Allotment. *Increase PED transportation per-mile rate.*

- The transportation per-mile rate should be increased from \$1.08 to \$1.28-\$1.38 (\$5M - \$15M per year).

12. SPED Allotment Formula Recommendation: *To further support Texas in reaching goals supporting students with disabilities on an individualized basis to ensure the same access to the same programs of all students that lead to academic success, Texas should move to an intensity-based funding formula that takes into account each student's educational arrangement and specialized services required. This formula should include multiple tiers and service groups to effectively account for the unique, individualized needs of students with disabilities. This transition should include the authority for TEA to collect the necessary data, make technical adjustments within the formula during the first few implementation years to ensure state Maintenance of Financial Support and local district and charter school Maintenance of Effort levels are met. TEA should follow a measured process to ensure school systems are transitioned to this formula.*

Intensity of Service - Based Funding

Weighted Funding Tiers + Additional Services Group

- The funding model is comprised of **7 weighted funding tiers**. The intensity of service needs increase as one goes up the tiers and the weights increase.
- The lowest tiers are mainly for students who receive academic supports and then the **tiers increase in intensity** with the highest tiers pertaining to day- and residential placement.
- In addition to the tiers, students who receive specific services, regardless of tier, would generate **additional funding based on the specific services group** that applies.
- This model **eliminates the need for high-cost fund and residential placement set aside** as all LEAs with students requiring those placements would receive funding as part of the model (Tiers 6 and 7).

Weighted Funding Tiers

Tier One. Students receive SPED services:

- In a SPED setting to provide direct support in up to two foundation subject areas;
- In a general education setting to provide indirect support in up to four foundation subject areas; or
- A single instructional or related service is provided such as speech or dyslexia services.

Tier Two. Students receive push-in SPED services:

- In up to two foundation content areas in a general education setting.
- This would be typically be characterized as a collaborative or co-teaching model.

Tier Three. Students receive SPED services:

- In a SPED setting to provide direct support in three or four foundation content areas.

Tier Four. Students receive SPED services:

- In a general educating setting with push-in supports for three or four foundation content areas. This typically would be characterized as a collaborative or co-teaching model;
- In a hospital or homebound environment because of a qualifying medical condition; or
- In a community setting primarily to provide employment supports.

Weighted Funding Tiers

Tier Five. Students receive SPED services:

- In all foundation content areas to address functional goals described in their IEP and/or to address behavioral disabilities at a level of intensity requiring a SPED self-contained setting. In many schools, this level of service is known as a self-contained program.

Tier Six. Students receive intensive full time SPED services requiring a highly specialized district program.

- This includes school within a school program placement or, through contracted services with a third party for on- or off-campus day treatment programming. In many instances, students in this tier attend a non-public day program.

Tier Seven. Students receive intensive full-time special education services requiring a residential placement to meet those educational needs.

- These are the students for whom LEAs would typically apply for reimbursement under the residential placement reimbursement program.

Weighted Funding Tiers & Service Groups Example

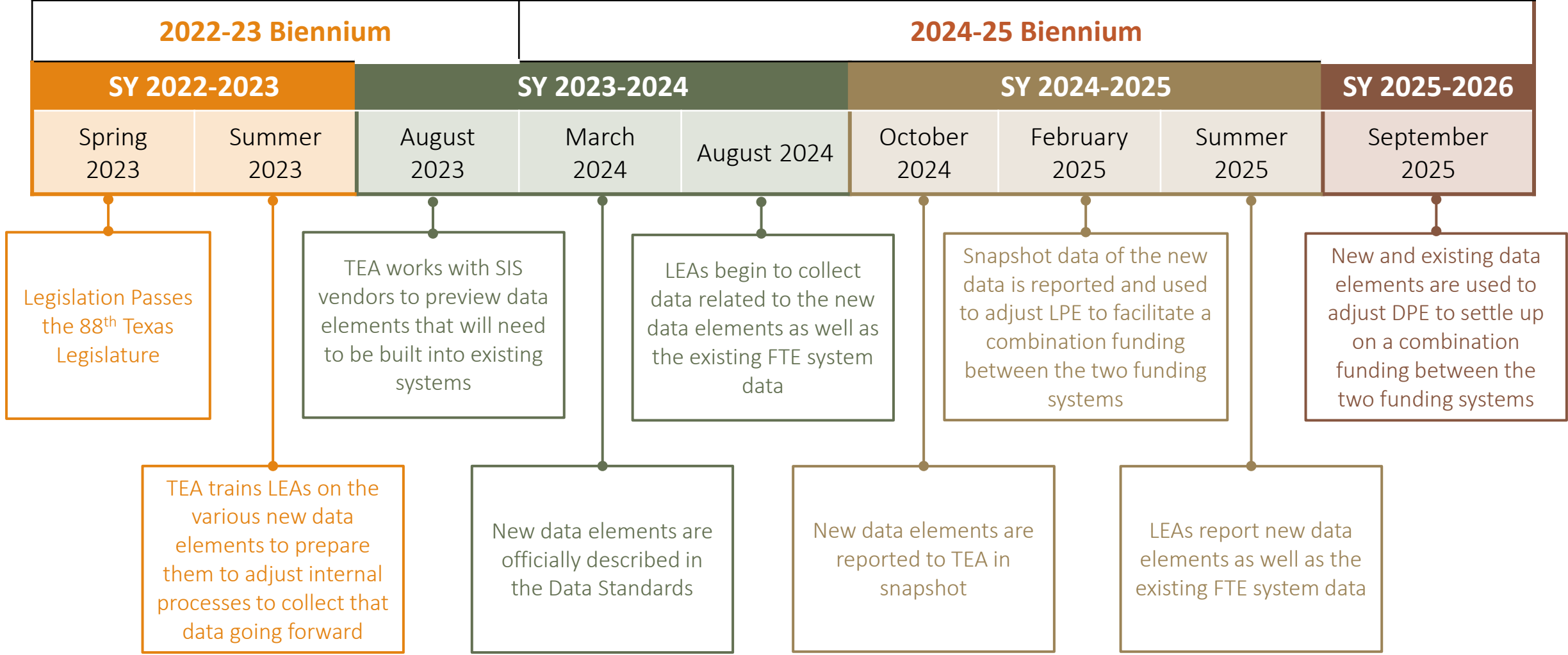
Seven weighted tiers using *weights applied to the adjusted basic allotment* and *special education student average daily attendance*.

- Tier 1 – Weight 0.66-0.88 (assumed 56% of SPED ADA in tier)
- Tier 2 – Weight 0.82-1.10 (assumed 11% of SPED ADA in tier)
- Tier 3 – Weight 0.97-1.32 (assumed 3% of SPED ADA in tier)
- Tier 4 – Weight 1.28-1.70 (assumed 12% of SPED ADA in tier)
- Tier 5 – Weight 1.50-1.99 (assumed 17% of SPED ADA in tier)
- Tier 6 – Weight 4.80-6.00 (assumed <1% of SPED ADA in tier)
- Tier 7 – Weight 20 (assumed 1% of SPED ADA in tier)

SERVICE GROUP	ENROLL DISTRIBUTION	DOLLAR AMOUNT
1	44%	\$ 1,200
2	1%	\$ 1,500
3	1%	\$ 10,000
4	2%	\$ 20,000

Estimated **\$100M-\$1.6B increase per year (TBD by Statute/GAA)**

Timeline of Events for Data Collection and Transition in Funding



Formula Based Funding Recommendations

Intensity Based Service Formula:

- Weighted Funding Tiers + Additional Services Group
- See following pages for details and examples

Transportation:

- Increase the Transportation Mileage Rate from \$1.08
- See following pages for details and examples

At minimum price point:

- \$100M Annual Statewide Cost (includes \$5M for transportation)

At maximum price point:

- \$1.6B Annual Statewide Cost (includes \$15M for transportation)