



“It is the Commonwealth’s obligation to place each [disabled] child in a free, public program of education and training appropriate to the child’s capacity.”

- P.A.R.C. v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 334 F. Supp. 279 (E.D. PA 1972)

Special education funding ensures that students with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education

What is Special Education Funding (SEF)?

State funding for specific programs and services to enable students with disabilities to better access the general education curriculum

- Premise: with appropriate supports, students with disabilities can and should be educated with non-disabled peers
- Provides school districts supplemental resources to basic ed funding to support students with disabilities
- Public schools must provide needed educational services to students at no cost to parents

What is Special Education Funding (SEF)?

- Second largest K-12 education line item in state budget (after Basic Education Funding)
- About \$1.2 billion for 500 school districts
- Represents about 9% of all state funding to school districts

Who Does SEF Affect?

EVERYONE!

- Growing number of children are being diagnosed with a disability (currently about 16% of enrollment)
- Local communities must step up when state and federal governments don't pay their fair share
- Both of these issues are impacting local communities in PA

How Does SEF Work?

Like BEF, there are two components of SEF for school districts:

1. “Base” funding (what the district got in 2013-14)
2. “Formula” funding (the district’s share of funding added after 2013-14; based on dynamic metrics)

How Does the SEF Formula Work?

Student-Based Factors

- tier of special ed services provided (low, intermediate, high)
- tier weights



Weighted Student Headcount (WSHC)



District-Based Factors

- sparsity and size
- income/poverty level
 - tax effort
 - tax capacity

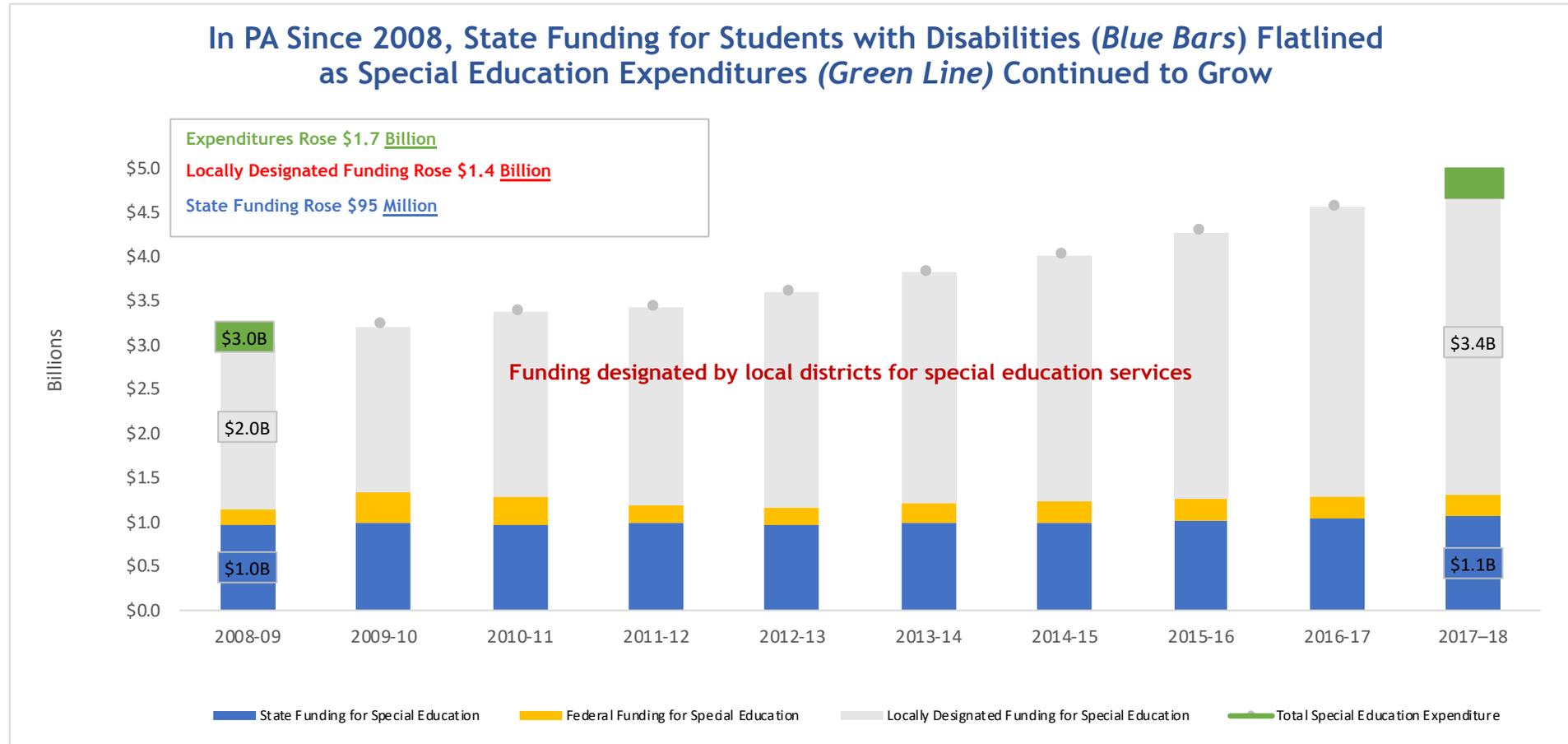


Adjusted Weighted Student Headcount



School District's Share of Funding

How is SEF Measuring Up?



How is SEF Measuring Up?



PENNSYLVANIA
2008-2018

CHAMBERSBERG AREA SD

\$7.4 million = ↑ special ed costs

\$471,000 = ↑ state funding

\$6.9 million = local budget gap

WILLIAM PENN SD

\$10.1 million = ↑ special ed costs

\$535,000 = ↑ state funding

\$9.6 million = local budget gap

What Should State Officials Do?

Commit to significant, sustained increases in SEF

- \$50 million SEF increase in the 2019-2020 State Budget was significant – but not enough
 - District costs increased by 3 times that amount last year
 - Total special education costs increased by \$1.7 billion since 2008
 - Annual increases of at least \$100 million needed
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- **Improve the SEF formula**
 - Bipartisan Special Education Funding Commission reconvened last year to make recommendations to the SEF Formula
 - Failed to issue report that was mandated to be released November 30, 2019

What Can You Do?



Still Shortchanging Children with Disabilities:
State Underfunding of Special Education Continues

October 2019

- **GET INFORMED:** Read our report at bit.ly/spec-ed-report-2019
- **GET SOCIAL:** Invite your friends to “Like” PA Schools Work on Facebook & Follow on Twitter
- **SIGN UP** for PA Schools Work email updates
- **CALL/WRITE Gov. Wolf and your legislators** to discuss the importance of greater state investment in Special Education

Katie Yost
Director of Government & Chapter Relations
The Arc of Pennsylvania



 1007 Mumma Road, Suite 100

 Lemoyne, PA 17043

 717-234-2621

 W: www.thearca.org

 T: @TheArcPA

 E: kyost@thearca.org

Reynelle Brown Staley
Policy Director
Education Law Center - PA

EDUCATION
LAW CENTER

 1800 JFK Boulevard, Suite 1900-A

 Philadelphia, PA 19103

 267-825-7710

 W: www.elc-pa.org

 T: [@edlawcenterpa](https://twitter.com/edlawcenterpa)

 E: rstaley@elc-pa.org