# INFORMATION ON

# FUNDING FOR STUDENTS WITH INTENSIVE SUPPORT NEEDS

## VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONDEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAND STUDENT SERVICES

## Office of Special Education and Finance

### **Background**

Historically, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provided funds to school divisions to offset the high cost of providing instructional and other services for students identified in low incidence disability categories. Historically, these funds were provided to school divisions that were participants in partnerships known as Special Education Regional Programs. These partnerships included 11 Regional Programs, with 58 participating school divisions.

Even though special education and related services were provided through the entities known as the Regional Programs, funds have always been provided directly to the school divisions.

In 2015, the VDOE was directed to conduct a study of these Regional Programs and the funding model used to provide funds to school divisions. As a result of the study, in 2017 the VDOE began to transition to the new funding model, where all school divisions would be eligible to receive funds for services provided to students that meet the criteria for students identified as having Intensive Support Needs.

### **Availability of Funds**

Funds are authorized through a line item in the Governor’s Budget specifically allotted to what are still called Special Education Regional Programs. These funds are now identified by the VDOE as Funds for Students with Intensive Support Needs.

After the state budget has been finalized, the VDOE determines an estimated amount that could potentially be made available for each eligible school division; this estimated amount is determined for each fiscal year in the current Biennial Budget and is specified in the school division’s [Calculation Tool (Calc Tool)](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/budget/calc_tools/index.shtml). These Calc Tool estimated amounts may change at several points in the year; these Calc Tool estimates also are not a guarantee of funds – school divisions will still only receive funds for those students that meet the eligible criteria.

Questions related to the Calc Tool should be addressed to the [VDOE Budget Office](http://www.va-doeapp.com/StaffByDivisions.aspx?o=Budget&20Finance&w=true). Questions related to the Students with Intensive Support Needs Application (SISNA) should be addressed to [VDOE’s Office of Special Education Finance and Budget](http://www.va-doeapp.com/StaffByDivisions.aspx?a=Instructional%20Services&w=true).

As part of the transition to a new funding model, school divisions become eligible to receive funds by submitting the SISNA. The SISNA is submitted annually to the VDOE and information on the SISNA is available to all school divisions.

Funds for students identified as meeting the criteria as a Student with Intensive Support Needs are provided through a reimbursement model. The amount reimbursed is determined after the school division submits the actual costs expended for an individual student and after the VDOE applies the division’s Local Composite Index to the actual costs, resulting in an amount representing the State Share of the actual costs reported.

Once school divisions have identified students to be included in the SISNA and have identified the expected annual costs to be expended for those students, also to be included in the SISNA, the school division should analyze whether the State Share that will be reimbursed for these costs will provide a greater fiscal benefit to the school division than the typical average daily membership (ADM) or standards of quality (SOQ) funds. The VDOE staff will provide individual school division guidance with this analysis when they meet with school divisions.

It is likely a school division will include a review of the amount identified for Intensive Support Funds in the division’s Calc Tool. This amount is still identified in the Calc Tool as Special Education Regional Program funds. The VDOE staff will address how a school division might best include a review of their Calc Tool as part of the individual guidance to be provided.

### **Funding Reimbursement Process**

The following three points are critical for school divisions to understand when receiving funds for Students with Intensive Support Needs:

1. Reimbursement of funds are contingent upon the availability of funds and reimbursement is made available for a portion of the costs associated with providing services to eligible students; funds are provided “in lieu of” other state education funding available for each student;
2. The “in lieu of” condition primarily addresses the state ADM per pupil amount provided for all students but also other state funds. School divisions will need to analyze their actual costs proposed to be submitted, the State Share to be reimbursed after the LCI is applied, and compare to the school division’s estimate of other state funds that would not be provided. A school division will need to determine which funds provide the most fiscal benefit.
3. The next factor of the “in lieu of” condition to be considered is that students claimed for Intensive Support Funds reimbursement are not included in the Standards of Quality (SOQ) formula for determining funds to be provided for funded teaching positions for the school division. This funding model uses similar criteria to the eligibility criteria for Students with Intensive Support Needs, however there are significant differences. A school division should conduct an analysis of their Special Education Child Count data, specifically data for disability categories by school and percentages of amount of special education received for students for reported disability categories, to determine the impact on claiming reimbursement for certain students. The VDOE staff are available to help with this analysis.

### **Brief explanation of the funding model process:**

* The annual costs for providing special education and related services to an individual student are determined by the school division;
* The school division submits claims for reimbursement for the identified costs for a student, for first and second semesters, and possibly the summer semester;
* The claims are submitted in the division’s Student Record Collection (SRC);
* The division Local Composite Index (LCI) is applied to each semester claims total;
* After applying the LCI, the resulting State Share for each semester is determined, and the division can identify the total annual reimbursement;
* The State Share reimbursement is provided “in lieu” of other state funds, primarily but not only, the Average Daily Membership (ADM) per pupil amount; and
* After determining the net reimbursement for a student, the school division can determine whether it would be beneficial for the division to claim Intensive Support Funds or receive the usual other state funds.

### **Services/Claims Periods**

School divisions should define the starting dates and ending dates of the three reporting periods, i.e., first semester, second semester andthird semester (summer), in accordance with information submitted to the VDOE annually through the Educational Registry Application. The amounts submitted for each semester for individual students claimed should be in accordance with information reported under the school division's Annual School Financial Report (i.e., as categorized by the school division as regular school year costs versus summer school costs).



1. The Third Semester (Summer Semester, including Summer School sessions and Extended School Year services) for a school division is defined as starting with the day after the designated date for the end of the regular school year (i.e., close of school), through the day before the designated date for the beginning of the regular school year (i.e., opening of school).

1. The First Semester for a school division is defined as starting with the designated date for the opening of school, through the end of the first semester (i.e., may be through January 31).

1. The Second Semester for a school division is defined as the designated start of second semester (i.e., starting after the first semester and may start with February 1), through the designated date for the close of school or end of regular school year.
2. The Services / Claims Periods and Data Submission Dates follow a standard school year cycle.

### **Data Reporting Dates**

1. Claims for costs incurred during a designated third Semester (Summer Semester, including Summer School sessions and Extended School Year services) are submitted with the December 1 Special Education Child Count.
2. Claims for costs incurred during a designated First Semester are submitted with the Spring Student Record Collection (SRC).
3. Claims for costs incurred during a designated Second Semester are submitted with the End of Year (EOY) Student Record Collection (SRC).

### **Reimbursement/ Payment Cycle**

1. The Reimbursement / Payment Cycle **does not** follow a standard school year cycle; the Reimbursement / Payment Cycle crosses two (2) state fiscal years;
2. The Reimbursement / Payment Cycle for each fiscal year starts with the second semester of the previous school year and includes the third (Summer) semester and the first semester of the current school year;
3. Reimbursement for claims submitted for the third (Summer) semester costs of any year are paid out in June of that school year/fiscal year;
4. Reimbursement for claims submitted for the first semester costs of any year are paid out in June of that school year/fiscal year; and
5. Reimbursement for claims submitted for the second semester costs of any year are paid out the following fiscal year.

### **SERVICES/CLAIMS PERIODSDATA REPORTING DATES and REIMBURSEMENT/PAYMENTCYCLES**

The following table describes services/claims periods, data reporting dates, and reimbursement/payment cycles for two fiscal years.

| **Semesters** | **Services /Claims****Periods** | **Data Reporting Dates** | **Payment Cycle** | **Fiscal Year** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Third Semester (Summer)** | Day after Close of School through Day before Opening of School | December 1SPED Child Count | Juneof Fiscal Year  | Same as School Year |
| **First Semester****(Fall)** | Opening of School throughEnd of First Semester | Spring Student Record Collection |  June of Fiscal Year | Same as School Year |
| **Second Semester****(Spring)** | Start of Second Semester throughClose of School | End of YearStudent Record Collection | Incremental paymentsJanuary through June of Fiscal Year | Next Fiscal Year |

For additional information or questions please contact Cynithia Reid, Special Education Intensive Support Analyst, at Cynithia.Reid@doe.virginia.gov.