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**SENATE BILL 6524**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Braun, Rolfes, Rivers, Fain, Zeiger, Hawkins, Mullet, and Miloscia

AN ACT Relating to special education funding; amending RCW 28A.150.390 and 28A.150.392; and adding a new section to chapter 28A.155 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.150.390 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 13 s 406 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The superintendent of public instruction shall submit to each regular session of the legislature during an odd-numbered year a programmed budget request for special education programs for students with disabilities. Funding for programs operated by local school districts shall be on an excess cost basis from appropriations provided by the legislature for special education programs for students with disabilities and shall take account of state funds accruing through RCW 28A.150.260 (4)(a), (5), (6), and (8).

(2) The excess cost allocation to school districts shall be based on the following:

(a) A district's annual average headcount enrollment of students ages birth through four and those five year olds not yet enrolled in kindergarten who are eligible for and enrolled in special education, multiplied by the district's base allocation per full-time equivalent student, multiplied by 1.15; and

(b) A district's annual average full-time equivalent basic education enrollment, multiplied by the district's funded enrollment percent, multiplied by the district's base allocation per full-time equivalent student, multiplied by 0.9309.

(3) As used in this section:

(a) "Base allocation" means the total state allocation to all schools in the district generated by the distribution formula under RCW 28A.150.260 (4)(a), (5), (6), and (8), to be divided by the district's full-time equivalent enrollment.

(b) "Basic education enrollment" means enrollment of resident students including nonresident students enrolled under RCW 28A.225.225 and students from nonhigh districts enrolled under RCW 28A.225.210 and excluding students residing in another district enrolled as part of an interdistrict cooperative program under RCW 28A.225.250.

(c) "Enrollment percent" means the district's resident special education annual average enrollment, excluding students ages birth through four and those five year olds not yet enrolled in kindergarten, as a percent of the district's annual average full-time equivalent basic education enrollment.

(d) "Funded enrollment percent" means:

(i) The lesser of the district's actual enrollment percent or thirteen and five-tenths percent; or

(ii) For school districts with a student enrollment under one thousand students, the actual enrollment percent, if above thirteen and five-tenths percent.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.150.392 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 13 s 407 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) To the extent necessary, funds shall be made available for safety net awards for districts with demonstrated needs for special education funding beyond the amounts provided through the special education funding formula under RCW 28A.150.390. The state allocation for the special education safety net shall be specified in the omnibus appropriations act but must be at least five percent of the total allocated to school districts under RCW 28A.150.390(2)(b).

(b) If the federal safety net awards based on the federal eligibility threshold exceed the federal appropriation in any fiscal year, then the superintendent shall expend all available federal discretionary funds necessary to meet this need.

(2) Safety net funds shall be awarded by the state safety net oversight committee subject to the following conditions and limitations:

(a) The committee shall award additional funds for districts that can convincingly demonstrate that all legitimate expenditures for special education exceed all available revenues from state funding formulas.

(b) In the determination of need, the committee shall consider additional available revenues from federal sources.

(c) Differences in program costs attributable to district philosophy, service delivery choice, or accounting practices are not a legitimate basis for safety net awards.

(d) In the determination of need, the committee shall require that districts demonstrate that they are maximizing their eligibility for all state revenues related to services for special education-eligible students and all federal revenues from federal impact aid, medicaid, and the individuals with disabilities education act-Part B and appropriate special projects. Awards associated with (e) and (f) of this subsection shall not exceed the total of a district's specific determination of need.

(e) The committee shall then consider the extraordinary high cost needs of one or more individual special education students. Differences in costs attributable to district philosophy, service delivery choice, or accounting practices are not a legitimate basis for safety net awards.

(f) Using criteria developed by the committee, the committee shall then consider extraordinary costs associated with communities that draw a larger number of families with children in need of special education services, which may include consideration of proximity to group homes, military bases, and regional hospitals. Safety net awards under this subsection (2)(f) shall be adjusted to reflect amounts awarded under (e) of this subsection.

(g) The maximum allowable indirect cost for calculating safety net eligibility may not exceed the federal restricted indirect cost rate for the district plus one percent.

(h) Safety net awards shall be adjusted based on the percent of potential medicaid eligible students billed as calculated by the superintendent of public instruction in accordance with chapter 318, Laws of 1999.

(i) Safety net awards must be adjusted for any audit findings or exceptions related to special education funding.

(3) The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt such rules and procedures as are necessary to administer the special education funding and safety net award process. By September 1, ((~~2019~~)) 2018, the superintendent shall review and revise the rules to achieve full and complete implementation of the requirements of this subsection and subsection (4) of this section. Before revising any standards, procedures, or rules, the superintendent shall consult with the office of financial management and the fiscal committees of the legislature. In adopting and revising the rules, the superintendent shall ensure the application process to access safety net funding is streamlined, timelines for submission are not in conflict, feedback to school districts is timely and provides sufficient information to allow school districts to understand how to correct any deficiencies in a safety net application, and that there is consistency between awards approved by school district and by application period. The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall also provide technical assistance to school districts in preparing and submitting special education safety net applications.

(4) On an annual basis, the superintendent shall survey districts regarding their satisfaction with the safety net process and consider feedback from districts to improve the safety net process. Each year by December 1st, the superintendent shall prepare and submit a report to the office of financial management and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the legislature that summarizes the survey results and those changes made to the safety net process as a result of the school district feedback.

(5) The safety net oversight committee appointed by the superintendent of public instruction shall consist of:

(a) One staff member from the office of the superintendent of public instruction;

(b) Staff of the office of the state auditor who shall be nonvoting members of the committee; and

(c) One or more representatives from school districts or educational service districts knowledgeable of special education programs and funding.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 28A.155 RCW to read as follows:

(1) School districts are encouraged to participate in the establishment or continuation of existing cooperative programs between or among school districts, or educational service districts and school districts, to provide special education and services to eligible students with disabilities.

(2) Prior to the 2019-20 school year and every five years thereafter, each special education cooperative must apply for approval of the program by the superintendent of public instruction.

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