



MI Special Education Finance Reform Blueprint

Sec. 51h: Special Education Study

rethinking special education funding

House Appropriations Subcommittee
School Aid and Department of Education
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Project Team

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Background

- Special Education Reform Taskforce Recommendations (2016)
- School Finance Research Collaborative (2018, 2021)
- Special Education Coalition (2019-2024)
- Special Education Experience Survey (2024)



Boilerplate

Sec. 51h Highlights

- Independent entity that has extensive experience in school finance, including the opportunity index, **to conduct research, interviews, data collection, analysis, and financial modeling to develop an implementation framework that outlines the cost of fully providing special education services and supports to students with disabilities through the application of an equity-driven model.**
- The independent entity shall issue a report with its findings and make its findings available on a publicly available website.



Boilerplate

Sec. 51h Highlights

- The study must include key areas of school finance related to the education costs of students with disabilities. The study must provide objective guidance to the legislature regarding both of the following:
 - **Modeling analysis of a weighted funding formula related to students with disabilities to determine accurate cost estimates to fully fund special education** according to consensus-built weighted multipliers.
 - **Policy and implementation recommendations based on an equitable framework** that considers the intersection with the opportunity index and will improve how this state funds students with disabilities.



Project Phases and Timeframes

Stakeholder feedback

February – September

Financial Analysis

April – September

Report to legislature

October





Reform is happening

Colorado, Mississippi, and Tennessee recently overhauled their school funding system including shifting special education to a weighted student structure.

A special education specific costing out study in Ohio identified the cost of implementing evidence-based practices for students with disabilities. Other states are using the recommendations from this analysis to inform their special education finance reform efforts.



Analysis

Model Michigan's special education finance system and identify what drives identification, cost, and revenue differences across the state.

Model the finance structure from the SFRC and the Ohio costing out study.

Develop a cost sharing structure.



Report to the Legislature

- Modeling analysis to define accurate costs to fully fund special education
- Present an actionable framework for a fair, student-centered system
- Policy and implementation recommendation
- Delivered by end of October 2025



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Thank you

<https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/education-initiatives/mi-blueprint/>

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