



Remove the cap on special education funding

Ramona Hattendorf, rhattendorf@arcofkingcounty.org, Moses Perez, MosesP@OpenDoorsWA

Who is working on this issue?

Open Doors for Multicultural Families,
The Arc of King County, The Arc of Washington,
and other chapters of The Arc

Advocacy areas

Civil rights, K-12 education

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

- An arbitrary limit on special education funding is unconstitutional and harms black, indigenous, and students of color.

Districts are cut off if they have “too many” students qualifying for special education services. Right now, the state sends per-student allocations to districts who have up to 15% of students enrolled in special education services.

Each district pools their allocations, then uses that pool of funds to cover their special education costs. If they have “too many” students qualifying, they must spread their funds more thinly. Legally, districts can’t deny services to students with disabilities who require them. But practically, the state gives districts an incentive to cap their special education enrollment.



What is your proposed solution?

- End unconstitutional limitations on special education funding and ensure that students have access to the resources and funding they need.
- Improve accountability and transparency metrics for special education program outcomes
- Ensure funding follows students into the least restricted environment and is not used to unnecessarily segregate students from peers without disabilities

Why is this a good solution?



The cap on funding compounds barriers for BIPOC students with disabilities. Students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds with disabilities experience numerous additional barriers to receiving an education.

Underfunded and ill-equipped school districts struggle to provide essential special education support services for students and their families.

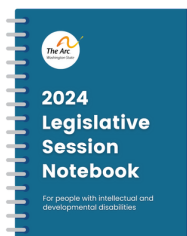
- Communities often can't afford the enrichment levies districts use to fund special education.
- Parents requiring interpretation services often rely on their students to communicate with special teachers and administrators rather than credentialed interpreters

The cap is arbitrary and limits resources for students who most need them.

- Over 100 school districts serve a special education enrollment of more than 15%
- Districts discourage or refuse new special education students due to limited funding.
- Districts are incentivized to limit support services that students need to succeed.

During the 2023 legislative session HB 1436 was passed, raising the funded enrollment cap from 13.5% to 15% and declared that the legislature must ensure funding limitations do not negatively impact students receiving special education support. Independent audits and additional research required by HB 1436 will demonstrate that fully funding special education is desperately needed. The continuation of arbitrary limits on funding only harms our most vulnerable and at-risk students who need special education services to succeed

What is the fiscal impact?	Is there a bill number?	Is there a legislator working on this issue?
<p>The estimated impact (OSPI budget request)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fiscal year 2025: \$12,415,000• Fiscal year 2026: \$16,363,000• Fiscal year 2027: \$16,827,000	<p><u>SB 6014</u> and <u>HB 2180</u> increase cap to 17.25%</p> <p><u>HB 2174</u> removes the cap and adds monitoring</p> <p><u>HB 2175</u> removes the cap</p>	<p>Raise to 17.25% Sen. Lisa Wellman, 41st LD, lisa.wellman@leg.wa.gov Rep. Lisa Callan, 5th LC, lisa.callan@leg.wa.gov</p> <p>End cap Rep. Gerry Pollet, 46th LD, gerry.pollet@leg.wa.gov Rep. Michelle Caldier, 26th LD, michelle.caldier@leg.wa.gov</p>



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