



February 11, 2014

TO: Responsible School Officials  
Special Education Directors  
Special Education Cooperative Directors

FROM: Frank Podobnik, Administrator  
Division of Special Education

RE: Limited Funding for Students With Significant Behavioral or Physical Needs Served by Public Schools

## OVERVIEW

The Office of Public Instruction is making available limited funding for the costs of students with significant behavioral or physical needs served by the public schools. Funds must be obligated by **June 30, 2014**.

Based on the number of requests, the Office of Public Instruction may elect to put a limit on amounts approved for funding for Priority I and funding for Priority II. If the services are for students with disabilities and the district has significant carry over of IDEA Part B funds, funding may be further limited.

The approval of the funding on each application is specific to the request and justification for that request. If the funding is no longer needed or circumstances change (i.e., student(s) moves) or the total amount is not used, the funding must be refunded to the OPI in a timely manner.

## ELIGIBLE DISTRICTS

An eligible district is one that has one board of trustees. A K-8 and 9-12 district sharing the same board and same board chair is considered one district. Some K-12 districts have high school representatives on the board who represent outlying districts. The arrangement is still considered one district for our purposes.

## ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Eligible students include all of the following: students with significant behavioral or physical needs, students with conduct disorder, juvenile sex offenders, students identified as emotionally disturbed (ED) under special education or as severely emotionally disturbed (SED) under the Montana Mental Health Access Plan. Students DO NOT have to meet the eligibility criteria of severely emotionally disturbed (SED) or be identified as a student with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## **ALLOWABLE COSTS**

Education costs for services to students with significant behavioral or physical needs during the school day will be considered allowable costs. To be considered educational services, the funds must be used for meeting a student's mobility or physical/health care needs and/or for treating, managing and/or directing student behavior during the course of the school day. Examples of services include: nursing services, therapy (group, family, and individual), cost of instruction for teacher and paraprofessional time assigned to serving children in therapeutic group home settings and alternative education sites, provision of behavior management specialist services and enhanced supervision, including probation and contracted mental health services. The purchase of equipment (\$5,000 or more per unit) will also be considered as allowable cost provided that it can be shown that the equipment is necessary to implement the education program for the student with significant behavioral or physical needs.

Grants will be awarded based on the following priorities.

### **PRIORITY I**

Priority I awards will be made available to schools who have a student whose excess costs for education services exceed 5 percent of the district's general fund budget. Excess costs mean district general fund costs for educating the student that are specific to the student and include costs such as a paraprofessional, counselor or teacher assigned full time or part time to the student, the cost of supplies, etc. Excess costs refer only to those costs that are in addition to routine general education obligations and do not include costs such as the student's classroom teacher, administration, heat and light for the building, etc. If the Priority I application is not approved, the application will automatically become a Priority II application.

### **JUSTIFICATION**

On one page or less provide a rationale why the district should receive this funding. In this rationale, please address the following:

1. List district general fund excess costs for educating the student that are specific to the student. These costs can include the cost of services such as a paraprofessional, counselor or teacher assigned full time or part time to the student, the cost of student specific supplies, etc. **Do not** include standard expenses incurred for all other students such as general education teacher time, routine supplies and equipment, etc.
2. Provide the district's total general fund budget amount for FY **2012** and calculate whether the general fund obligations of serving the student would consume 5 percent or more of the district's general fund budget.
3. State whether the student is a resident or nonresident student. If the student is a nonresident student clarify why the costs could not be covered by the tuition fund.

## **PRIORITY IA**

Priority IA awards will be made to public school districts experiencing a significant financial impact from the **start up, expansion, or increased school enrollment from** local group homes or new therapeutic foster care homes serving multiple students for FY 2014.

To be eligible for Priority IA awards, the start up or expansion of the group home or therapeutic foster care home must meet these criteria:

1. Students from the group home **cannot have been included in the district enrollment count submitted in October 2012**;
2. The district must show that as a result of the group home or therapeutic foster home opening, expanding, or registering additional students that the employment of additional school personnel is necessary to serve the students; and
3. The district is employing additional paraprofessionals and/or special education certified FTE districtwide from the previous year.

**JUSTIFICATION:** On one page or less, please provide rationale why the district should receive this funding. In this rationale, please address the following:

1. Name the group home.
2. Specify the number of additional students attending your school from the group home that exceed the number who were included in the ANB enrollment in October 2012.
3. Name(s) of additional staff hired as a direct result of the group home.
4. Verification that the overall FTE of special education staff for your district has increased in the past year.
5. List of services that will be provided.
6. Identify who will provide the services (i.e., school personnel, contract service providers).
7. List:
  - a. the number of children identified as needing the service; and
  - b. the ages of children.
8. Describe the school's contribution to the project.

**Priority I and Priority IA applications may be received at anytime during the 2013-2014 school year; however, funds must be obligated by June 30, 2014.**

## **PRIORITY II**

Priority II awards will be made **after** Priority I and Priority IA awards have been made. All Priority II Proposals will be accepted either by mail, e-mail and/or fax (fax number is 406-444-3924). Proposals must be received during the designated application window date. Any proposals received after the designated application window date will be reviewed during the next designated application window date.

Each proposal will be reviewed using the attached rubric. Applicants scoring the highest will receive a grant for the amount established by the OPI. If more than one applicant receives the highest score, the grantees will be determined through a drawing.

**JUSTIFICATION FOR PRIORITY II.** On one page or less, please provide rationale why the district should receive this funding. In this rationale, please address the following:

1. State the services that will be provided.
2. Identify who will provide the services (i.e., school personnel, contract service providers).
- 3 List:
  - a. number of children identified as needing the service;
  - b. ages of children; and
  - c. provide an explanation that the children have significant physical or emotional needs (do not send copies of IEPs or other confidential information).
4. Describe the school's contribution to the project.
5. State the district's total student enrollment.
6. State the district's current amount of IDEA Carry-Over Funds from the close-out report submitted at the end of the previous grant year.

## **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

The Office of Public Instruction will distribute the funds directly to school districts through the Annual Cash Advance Request form. The school superintendent and Board of Trustees are responsible for direct program administration and fund accounting.

## **PROVISION OF FUNDS**

School districts interested in applying for the funds must complete the enclosed "Services for Significant Needs Students: Application for Funding" form and budget page. Please submit the forms to the Office of Public Instruction, attention Dale Kimmet, at the above address or via fax to (406) 444-3924. The Office of Public Instruction will send award notification letters to the appropriate school districts. The school district will request the funds via the Annual Cash Advance Request form for deposit in their Miscellaneous Fund 15.

Enclosures