



# Wyoming Department of Education

Cindy Hill, Superintendent of Public Instruction

320 West Main

Riverton, WY 82501-3450

Phone: 307-857-9250 Fax: 307-857-9256 Website: edu.wyoming.gov

800-228-6194

---

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Legislative Service Office

**FROM:** Stephanie Weaver, Deputy Director, Special Programs Division *SN*

**DATE:** December 2, 2011

**RE:** Special Education Expenditure Report  
Summary of Reimbursed State Dollars  
Fiscal Year 2010; School Year 2009-2010

---

## SUMMARY:

In compliance with W.S. 21-13-321(d), the Wyoming Department of Education is submitting, to the Legislature its annual report, for fiscal year 2010 (FY10) state reimbursed special education costs. This report will also be distributed to the State Board of Education and local school districts and will be available to other interested parties through the Department. Please contact the following WDE personnel to obtain copies or further information: Stephanie Weaver, (307) 857-9260, or Peg Brown-Clark, (307) 857-9255.

The expenditure report is organized into three sections. Section A Exhibits analyze the number of children identified as needing special education services. The information is disaggregated by age and disability by district and change over time. Section B Exhibits analyze specific special education expenditure patterns for each district. Section C Exhibits detail special education expenditures for each individual school district for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years.

Some of the **facts** from this year's report include:

- During the 2009-10 school year, state reimbursed special education costs rose 7.41 percent from the previous year (\$12.5 million) to total \$181.5 million (Exhibit B-2). Of the \$12.5 million increase, almost 93 percent was as a result of an increase in Personnel Costs (Exhibit B-4). During the 2009-10 school year, total ADM remained virtually the same (increased by less than 1 percent, only 522 students) or a total of 86,537.553; and the number of children eligible for special education services increased by 343, or 2.78 percent, for a total of 12,405 students with disabilities.
- In FY 09, 14.15 percent of Wyoming's student population was identified as needing special education services; that percentage was practically the same in FY10 which was 14.33

percent (Exhibit A-1). The greatest number of children served through special education fall into the eligibility categories of Specific Learning Disability (4,370) and Speech-Language Impairment (3,604). These two categories alone constituted 64.2 percent of all children identified as needing special education services in Wyoming; however, percentages of students in these two categories have been slowly dropping over the last few years. Autism, Other Health Impairment and Developmental Delay continue to be the categories with the largest percentage of growth (Exhibit A-2).

- The variation in cost expenditures varied greatly from district to district, with the largest increase by any single district being 27.53 percent and the largest percentage decrease of 40.16 percent. 15 districts had a decrease in expenditures in FY 10 when compared to FY 09 while the remaining 33 districts experienced various increases. (Exhibit B-2)
- In FY 10, out of district placements constituted 5.24 percent of state reimbursed special education expenditures; this percentage has remained fairly stable over the past five years. However, this is an actual cost increase of 7.94 percent from the prior year to a total of \$9,502,607.87. (Exhibit B-3)
- In the last three years, state reimbursed special education expenditures have grown an average of 7.5 percent; in the same 3 years, the number of children needing special education services has increased 4.8 percent or 570 students overall.

#### **DETAIL EXHIBITS:**

**Exhibit A-1** illustrates full K-12 Average Daily Membership (ADM) and Special Education child counts for FY 09 and FY10. Percentage of special education child count to total ADM remained unchanged over this time period. Identification rates vary significantly across districts from 23.43 percent to 7.54 percent of ADM.

**Exhibit A-2** displays the number of students by district and disability category for school year 2009-10 (FY10), totals each district's special education child count, and shows the percentage of that district's child count to total district enrollment. School year 2008-09 (FY09) totals are included for comparison.

**Exhibit A-3** enumerates the percentage of each district's special education students by category with statewide averages shown at the bottom of the table.

**Exhibit A-4** details, each district's special education student count by age for school year 2009-10 (FY10).

**Exhibit B-1** is a recap of the FY10 state reimbursed special education costs, by key elements, for each district. Please note the analysis of increases at the bottom of the second page of the report. The greatest increase in cost during this period is due to salaries and benefits.

**Exhibit B-2** reflects that FY10 state reimbursed special education costs increased 7.41 percent over FY 09, to a total of \$181,412,753.27.

**Exhibit B-3** shows the expenditures associated with out-of-district placement of students with disabilities and then compares the district's placement cost to the district's total reimbursed special education expenditures.

**Exhibit B-4** shows the personnel expenditures and each district's percentage of increase from FY 09 to FY 10.

**Exhibits C-1 through C-48** details each district's special education expenditures for FY 09 and FY 10 and the percentage of change.

**OBSERVATIONS:**

The WDE Special Programs Division maintains an effective general supervision system, to ensure compliance with the IDEA 2004, federal regulations, and Wyoming State Rules. The system's ultimate purpose is to make certain children with disabilities are ensured a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The current accountability process is a comprehensive program review, which examines key components of IDEA most closely related to improving educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities. All districts are involved in the accountability process every year, while on-site visits are reserved for those districts demonstrating the most troubling performance data for students with disabilities.

The Wyoming Department of Education will continue to work in conjunction with the Public Funds Division in the Department of Audit to monitor and ensure appropriateness of state reimbursed special education expenditures and to require district justification and/or documentation when necessary.