

B. 502 - Special Education Formula

The Special Education Formula provides funding for Vermont school districts for their K-12 special education eligible costs not covered by federal funds or other State funds such as State placed student funding. The grant categories 4-9 provide funding for specialized services and training.

| | FY 2017 Actuals | FY2018 Budget | FY2019 Gov Rec | 18-19 Change |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| EDUCATION FUND | | | | |
| GRANTS | | | | |
| 1 Mainstream Block Grant | 31,416,399 | 33,079,717 | 31,848,426 | (1,231,291) |
| 2 Special Ed. Reimbursement | 129,358,306 | 124,692,791 | 134,489,947 | 9,797,156 |
| 3 Extraordinary Reimbursement | 13,842,313 | 19,218,454 | 19,218,454 | - |
| 4 I-Team & Regional Specialist | 1,068,464 | 1,070,024 | 1,099,878 | 29,854 |
| 5 Hearing Impaired | 940,193 | 940,193 | 966,424 | 26,231 |
| 6 Visually Impaired | 572,366 | 572,366 | 588,335 | 15,969 |
| 7 BEST | 572,249 | 566,098 | 581,892 | 15,794 |
| 8 Act 230 Training | 317,812 | 417,348 | 428,992 | 11,644 |
| 9 Higher Education Participation | - | 192,805 | - | (192,805) |
| TOTAL EDUCATION FUND | 178,088,103.25 | 180,749,796 | 189,222,348 | 8,472,552 |

Budgetary Changes: The Special Education Appropriation has several changes:

1. Mainstream block grant – the reduction in the mainstream block grant is a factor of the formula that is used to calculate the appropriation. The formula, is based on special educator salary per ADM in a supervisory union. As ADM decreases, the block grant is impacted.
2. Special education reimbursement – the funding for special education reimbursement is a factor of the service plans. This number may be updated when final budgets are submitted to the Agency to finalize the appropriation.
3. I-Team & Regional Specialists, Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, BEST, Act 230 Training – these grant amount are increased by the NEEP index.
4. Higher Education Participation – this grant has not been used since 2015, yet the appropriation has continued. The grant is not statutorily required, and it not a cut. It is simply a technical realignment of the appropriation.

Summary of Special Education Grants

1. Mainstream Block Grant – 16 V.S.A. §2961
These funds provide a block grant for each supervisory union/district based on 60 percent of the statewide average salary for: (1) 9.75 special education teaching positions per 1,000 Average Daily Membership (ADM), and (2) up to two special education administrators per supervisory union/district based on ADM.
2. Special Education Expenditures Reimbursement - 16 V.S.A. §2963; 16 V.S.A. §2967
This funding reimburses a portion of eligible special education costs not covered by another part of the formula or by federal or other state funds.
3. Extraordinary Reimbursement – 16 V.S.A. §2962
Funds provide 90 percent reimbursement for high-cost students for costs in excess of \$50,000 for individualized education programs (IEPs).

4. Interdisciplinary Team & Regional Multi-disability Specialist (I-Team) – 16 V.S.A. §2969(b)(3)&(4)
This grant provides parents and school staff services and consultation to support successful inclusion of children who have multiple disabilities. The grant supports statewide consultants with expertise in specialized areas as well as regional consultants.
5. Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Hearing Impaired) – 16 V.S.A. §2967(b)(2)
These funds support consultation and services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Regionally assigned consultants assist school staff and parents in arranging for assistive technology, accommodations, training and technical assistance.
6. Students with Visual Impairments (Visually Impaired) – 16 V.S.A. §2967(b)(2)
These funds support services by the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired for itinerant teachers to consult with school staff and parents and provide direct instruction in Braille, assist with selection of low-vision aids, recommend accommodations and provide mobility training.
7. Building Effective Supports for Teaching (BEST) – 16 V.S.A. §2969(c)
These funds assist schools in developing and implementing systemic plans to improve staff's ability to effectively respond to challenging student behaviors. They support training opportunities, coaching, technical assistance and regional partnerships to meet the needs of students who have emotional and behavioral challenges.
8. Act 230 Training Grants – 16 V.S.A. §2969(d)
Funds are granted to supervisory unions/districts for training and technical assistance to better meet student needs and to enhance tiered systems of supports.
9. Higher Education Participation:
These funds were used to support tuition reimbursement and stipends for special education teacher training. This program was not statutorily required, no funds have been expended for this purpose since 2015.