

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy and Department of Education Allocate \$18 Million for Additional Special Education Services for Students with Disabilities Impacted By COVID-19 School Disruptions

04/1/2022

**TRENTON** – Governor Phil Murphy and the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) today announced that nearly \$18 million in federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) State Fiscal Recovery Funds will be allocated to reimburse local educational agencies (LEAs) for additional special education services provided to students who were impacted by COVID-19 related school disruptions but would otherwise have reached the maximum age of eligibility for public school services (21 years old), as required by legislation (S3434) signed by the Governor in June 2021.

“Ensuring a high-quality education for all New Jersey students is critical, especially those who have struggled during the pandemic,” said **Governor Phil Murphy**. “This initiative aims to be responsive to students with disabilities who need additional time in school to provide the skills they need to be successful upon graduating. We will continue to engage in comprehensive outreach efforts to ensure that we reach all students who are in need of these services.”

“We are committed to ensuring that all New Jersey students receive the support they need, especially in response to the disruption the pandemic has caused in the classroom,” said **Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “This funding ensures that students with individual education plans remain on track to achieve their educational goals by having the ability to receive an additional year of schooling.”

The legislation signed by the Governor in June 2021 requires LEAs to offer up to one year of additional or compensatory special education for impacted students in the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years, if a determination is made by the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team that the student requires such services. DOE did comprehensive outreach to inform the special education community of the availability of additional services and encouraged eligible students to opt-in to the program. The funding allocation announced today will reimburse LEAs for the first cohort of eligible students. DOE plans to continue comprehensive outreach efforts to ensure that the needs of the impacted student population are met.

To date, the DOE has approved reimbursement applications for 221 students in 78 LEAs. The \$18 million allocated today reimburses LEAs for the full costs of the first year of the three-year implementation of this program. Reimbursements will be distributed to LEAs in two equal installments and DOE will continue reimbursing LEAs for the full costs of this program for the next two years.

The goal of compensatory special education and related services is to remedy the knowledge and skills deficit that result when missed services are determined to have caused a denial of a student’s right to a free and appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Each IEP team determines the need, type, amount, frequency, and duration of compensatory services on a case-by-case basis.

As reflected in the Governor’s signing statement, the DOE initially estimated that the provision of such services to the three eligible cohorts of students could cost up to approximately \$600 million. That estimate was made from abundance of caution; facing uncertainty regarding the extent of the need around the State for compensatory services, the DOE’s goal is to ensure the State’s ability to reimburse 100% of the costs of services provided under this program. The DOE remains committed to that goal and will continue to reimburse all eligible costs for the duration of the program.

School officials and residents can email the NJDOE’s Office of Special Education at [OSEinfo@doe.nj.gov](mailto:OSEinfo@doe.nj.gov) (<mailto:OSEinfo@doe.nj.gov>) for more information.

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