

**Department of Education**  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION**  
**Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request**

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\*State tables reflecting 2015 allocations and 2016 estimates are posted on the Department's Web page at:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/index.html>

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

For carrying out the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004, [~~\$12,522,358,000~~] \$12,822,358,000, of which [~~\$3,006,259,000~~] \$3,296,259,000 shall become available on July 1, [~~2015~~] 2016, and shall remain available through September 30, [~~2016~~] 2017, and of which \$9,283,383,000 shall become available on October 1, [~~2015~~] 2016, and shall remain available through September 30, [~~2016~~] 2017, for academic year [~~2015–2016~~] 2016-2017.<sup>1</sup> *Provided*, That the amount for section 611(b)(2) of the IDEA shall be equal to the lesser of the amount available for that activity during fiscal year [~~2014~~] 2015, increased by the amount of inflation as specified in section 619(d)(2)(B) of the IDEA, or the percent change in the funds appropriated under section 611(i) of the IDEA, but not less than the amount for that activity during fiscal year [~~2014~~] 2015.<sup>2</sup> *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall, without regard to section 611(d) of the IDEA, distribute to all other States (as that term is defined in section 611(g)(2)), subject to the third proviso, any amount by which a State's allocation under section 611(d), from funds appropriated under this heading, is reduced under section 612(a)(18)(B), according to the following: 85 percent on the basis of the States' relative populations of children aged 3 through 21 who are of the same age as children with disabilities for whom the State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under this part, and 15 percent to States on the basis of the States' relative populations of those children who are living in poverty.<sup>3</sup> *Provided further*, That the Secretary may not distribute any funds under the previous proviso to any State whose reduction in allocation from funds appropriated under this heading made funds available for such a distribution.<sup>4</sup> *Provided further*, That the States shall allocate such funds distributed under the second proviso to local educational agencies in accordance with section 611(f).<sup>5</sup> *Provided further*, That the amount by which a State's allocation under section 611(d) of the IDEA is reduced under section 612(a)(18)(B) and the amounts distributed to States under the previous provisos in fiscal year

2012 or any subsequent year shall not be considered in calculating the awards under section 611(d) for fiscal year 2013 or for any subsequent fiscal years:<sup>6</sup> *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding the provision in section 612(a)(18)(B) regarding the fiscal year in which a State's allocation under section 611(d) is reduced for failure to comply with the requirement of section 612(a)(18)(A), the Secretary may apply the reduction specified in section 612(a)(18)(B) over a period of consecutive fiscal years, not to exceed five, until the entire reduction is applied:<sup>7</sup> *Provided further*, That the Secretary may, in any fiscal year in which a State's allocation under section 611 is reduced in accordance with section 612(a)(18)(B), reduce the amount a State may reserve under section 611(e)(1) by an amount that bears the same relation to the maximum amount described in that paragraph as the reduction under section 612(a)(18)(B) bears to the total allocation the State would have received in that fiscal year under section 611(d) in the absence of the reduction:<sup>8</sup> *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall either reduce the allocation of funds under section 611 for any fiscal year following the fiscal year for which the State fails to comply with the requirement of section 612(a)(18)(A) as authorized by section 612(a)(18)(B), or seek to recover funds under section 452 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1234a)<sup>9</sup> *Provided further*, That the funds reserved under 611(c) of the IDEA may be used to provide technical assistance to States to improve the capacity of the States to meet the data collection requirements of sections 616 and 618 and to administer and carry out other services and activities to improve data collection, coordination, quality, and use under parts B and C of the IDEA:<sup>10</sup> *Provided further*, That the level of effort a local educational agency must meet under section 613(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the IDEA, in the year after it fails to maintain effort is the level of effort that would have been required in the absence of that failure and not the LEA's reduced level of expenditures:<sup>11</sup> *Provided further*, That the Secretary may use funds made available for the State Personnel Development Grants program under part D, subpart 1 of IDEA to evaluate program performance under such subpart:<sup>12</sup> *Provided further*, That the

Secretary may reserve up to \$10,000,000 of the funds made available for section 663 of the IDEA to support:(1) grants to States, outlying areas, freely associated states, and the Secretary of the Interior to carry out activities identified in their State Systemic Improvement Plans to improve results for children with disabilities birth through age 21 under Parts B and C of the IDEA; and (2) related activities for carrying out and assessing the performance of those grants:<sup>13</sup> *Provided further*, That funds reserved under the preceding proviso shall remain available for obligation through September 30, 2017:<sup>14</sup> *Provided further*, That each entity that receives a grant under the second preceding proviso may make subgrants, contracts, or otherwise distribute those funds on a competitive, targeted, or formula basis to public, private, and non-profit entities, including local educational agencies and early intervention service providers, to carry out activities authorized under that proviso:<sup>15</sup> *Provided further*, That notwithstanding section 613(f)(1) of the IDEA, local educational agencies may also use funds that they reserve under section 613(f) to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services for children ages 3 through 5, who have not been identified as needing special education and related services but who need additional developmental, academic, and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment or participate in appropriate activities:<sup>16</sup> *Provided further*, That, with respect to children receiving services under the preceding proviso, and who have not yet entered kindergarten, the Secretary may waive the requirements of section 613(f)(4) of the IDEA:<sup>17</sup> *Provided further*, That, notwithstanding section 643 of the IDEA, the Secretary may reserve up to \$15,000,000 of the funds appropriated under section 644 of the IDEA for performance-based awards to public or private non-profit entities for Pay for Success projects to increase early screening and early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and early screening, evaluation, early intervention, and other services to at-risk infants and toddlers who may otherwise not qualify for services under Part C of the IDEA in their State:<sup>18</sup> *Provided further*, That, with respect to the previous proviso, any

funds obligated for such projects shall remain available until expended.<sup>19</sup> (*Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2015*)

NOTE

Each language provision that is followed by a footnote reference is explained in the Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes document which follows the appropriations language.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes**

Language Provision	Explanation
<p><sup>1</sup>...[\$12,522,358,000] <u>\$12,822,358,000</u>, of which [\$3,006,259,000] <u>\$3,296,259,000</u> shall become available on July 1, [2015] 2016, and shall remain available through September 30, [2016] 2017, and of which \$9,283,383,000 shall become available on October 1, [2015] 2016, and shall remain available through September 30, [2016] 2017, for academic year [2015–2016] <u>2016-2017</u></p>	<p>This language provides for funds to be appropriated on a forward-funded basis for a portion of the Grants to States program, and all of the Preschool Grants, and Grants for Infants and Families programs. The language also provides that a portion of the Grants to States funds be available in an advance appropriation that becomes available for obligation on October 1 of the fiscal year following the year of the appropriation.</p>
<p><sup>2</sup> <i>Provided</i>, That the amount for section 611(b)(2) of the IDEA shall be equal to the lesser of the amount available for that activity during fiscal year [2014] <u>2015</u>, increased by the amount of inflation as specified in section 619(d)(2)(B) of the IDEA, or the percent change in the funds appropriated under section 611(i) of the IDEA, but not less than the amount for that activity during fiscal year [2014] <u>2015</u>:</p>	<p>This language limits the amount of funds required to be transferred to the Department of the Interior under the Grants to States program to the lesser of an amount equal to the amount transferred to the Department of the Interior in 2015 plus inflation or the percent change in the appropriation for the Grants to States program. This language also clarifies that in the event of a decrease or no change in the appropriation for the Grants to States program, the amount of funds required to be transferred to the Department of the Interior remains level with the amount they received under the fiscal year 2015 appropriation.</p>

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
<p><sup>3</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the Secretary shall, without regard to section 611(d) of the IDEA, distribute to all other States (as that term is defined in section 611(g)(2)), subject to the third proviso, any amount by which a State's allocation under section 611(d), from funds appropriated under this heading, is reduced under section 612(a)(18)(B), according to the following: 85 percent on the basis of the States' relative populations of children aged 3 through 21 who are of the same age as children with disabilities for whom the State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under this part, and 15 percent to States on the basis of the States' relative populations of those children who are living in poverty:</p>	<p>This language authorizes the Department to reallocate funds that are reduced from a State's award as a result of a failure to meet the maintenance of financial support requirements of section 612 of the IDEA and requires that those funds be distributed to other States on the basis of their relative populations of children in the age ranges for which a State ensures a free appropriate public education and those children living in poverty.</p>
<p><sup>4</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the Secretary may not distribute any funds under the previous proviso to any State whose reduction in allocation from funds appropriated under this heading made funds available for such a distribution:</p>	<p>This language ensures that any State receiving a reduction in their section 611 allocation as a result of not meeting the maintenance of financial support requirements of section 612 of the IDEA does not receive funds redistributed as a result of another State's failure to meet those same requirements.</p>
<p><sup>5</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the States shall allocate such funds distributed under the second proviso to local educational agencies in accordance with section 611(f):</p>	<p>This language requires States to distribute the funds received under the second proviso to local educational agencies without reserving a portion of those funds for State-level activities.</p>

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
<p><sup>6</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the amount by which a State's allocation under section 611(d) of the IDEA is reduced under section 612(a)(18)(B) and the amounts distributed to States under the previous provisos in fiscal year 2012 or any subsequent year shall not be considered in calculating the awards under section 611(d) for fiscal year 2013 or for any subsequent fiscal years:</p>	<p>This language allows the Department to calculate a State's allocation under section 611(d) in future years without regard to reductions in awards made as a result of a failure to meet the maintenance of financial support requirements in section 612. This language mitigates the potential long-term impact of one-time reductions in awards.</p>
<p><sup>7</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That, notwithstanding the provision in section 612(a)(18)(B) regarding the fiscal year in which a State's allocation under section 611(d) is reduced for failure to comply with the requirement of section 612(a)(18)(A), the Secretary may apply the reduction specified in section 612(a)(18)(B) over a period of consecutive fiscal years, not to exceed five, until the entire reduction is applied:</p>	<p>This language permits the Secretary to spread out a reduction from a State's award as a result of a failure to meet the maintenance of financial support requirements of section 612 of the IDEA over a maximum of 5 years.</p>
<p><sup>8</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the Secretary may, in any fiscal year in which a State's allocation under section 611 is reduced in accordance with section 612(a)(18)(B), reduce the amount a State may reserve under section 611(e)(1) by an amount that bears the same relation to the maximum amount described in that paragraph as the reduction under section 612(a)(18)(B) bears to the total allocation the State would have received in that fiscal year under section 611(d) in the absence of the reduction:</p>	<p>This language permits the Secretary to reduce the maximum State set-aside for State administration by the same percentage as the reduction in the State's overall IDEA section 611 grant.</p>

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
<p><sup>9</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the Secretary shall either reduce the allocation of funds under section 611 for any fiscal year following the fiscal year for which the State fails to comply with the requirement of section 612(a)(18)(A) as authorized by section 612(a)(18)(B), or seek to recover funds under section 452 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1234a):</p>	<p>This language permits the Secretary to: (1) seek to recover non-Federal (State) funds in the amount of the State's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) shortfall under the recovery of funds provision in section 452 of the General Education Provisions Act, or (2) reduce the State's IDEA section 611 grant.</p>
<p><sup>10</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the funds reserved under 611(c) of the IDEA may be used to provide technical assistance to States to improve the capacity of the States to meet the data collection requirements of sections 616 and 618 and to administer and carry out other services and activities to improve data collection, coordination, quality, and use under parts B and C of the IDEA:</p>	<p>This language authorizes the Department to use funds available under section 611(c) to provide technical assistance and support to States on a broad range of issues, including compliance with applicable privacy laws and appropriate coordination and linking of information within and across Federal, State and local data systems for the unique needs of students with disabilities and their families and the purposes of the IDEA programs and data collections.</p>
<p><sup>11</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the level of effort a local educational agency must meet under section 613(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the IDEA, in the year after it fails to maintain effort is the level of effort that would have been required in the absence of that failure and not the LEA's reduced level of expenditures:</p>	<p>This language clarifies that the level of effort a LEA must meet under maintenance of financial support requirements in section 613 of the IDEA, in the year after it fails to maintain effort, is the level of effort that would have been required in the absence of that failure and not the LEA's reduced level of expenditures.</p>
<p><sup>12</sup> <i>Provided further</i>, That the Secretary may use funds made available for the State Personnel Development Grants program under part D, subpart 1 of IDEA to evaluate program performance under such subpart:</p>	<p>This language permits the Secretary to use funds appropriated for the State Personnel Development Grants program under Part D of the IDEA to evaluate program performance.</p>

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
<p><sup>13</sup> <u>Provided further, That the Secretary may reserve up to \$10,000,000 of the funds made available for section 663 of the IDEA to support: (1) grants to States, outlying areas, freely associated states, and the Secretary of the Interior to carry out activities identified in their State Systemic Improvement Plans to improve results for children with disabilities birth through age 21 under Parts B and C of the IDEA; and (2) related activities for carrying out and assessing the performance of those grants:</u></p>	<p>This language would authorize the Secretary to reserve up to \$10 million under the Technical Assistance and Dissemination program for competitive grants to States to build State capacity to carry out State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIPs) for children birth through age 21, and related activities such as peer review, technical assistance, and evaluation.</p>
<p><sup>14</sup> <u>Provided further, That funds reserved under the preceding proviso shall remain available for obligation through September 30, 2017:</u></p>	<p>This language would permit the funds made available under the 12th proviso to remain available for 2 years.</p>
<p><sup>15</sup> <u>Provided further, That each entity that receives a grant under the second preceding proviso may make subgrants, contracts, or otherwise distribute those funds on a competitive, targeted, or formula basis to public, private, and non-profit entities, including local educational agencies and early intervention service providers, to carry out activities authorized under that proviso:</u></p>	<p>This language authorizes grantees receiving funds under the 12<sup>th</sup> proviso to subgrant and subcontract with public, private, and non-profit entities, including local educational agencies and early intervention service providers.</p>

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
<p><sup>16</sup> <u>Provided further, That notwithstanding section 613(f)(1) of the IDEA, local educational agencies may also use funds that they reserve under section 613(f) to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services for children ages 3 through 5, who have not been identified as needing special education and related services but who need additional developmental, academic, and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment or participate in appropriate activities:</u></p>	<p>This language authorizes local educational agencies to reserve funds provided under the Grants to States and Preschool Grants to State programs for coordinated early intervening services for children ages three through five.</p>
<p><sup>17</sup> <u>Provided further, That, with respect to children receiving services under the preceding proviso, and who have not yet entered kindergarten, the Secretary may waive the requirements of section 613(f)(4) of the IDEA:</u></p>	<p>This language would provide the Secretary the authority to waive the reporting requirement for children who have not yet entered kindergarten receiving services under the 15<sup>th</sup> proviso.</p>
<p><sup>18</sup> <u>Provided further, That, notwithstanding section 643 of the IDEA, the Secretary may reserve up to \$15,000,000 of the funds appropriated under section 644 of the IDEA for performance-based awards to public or private nonprofit entities for Pay for Success projects to increase early screening and early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and early screening, evaluation, early intervention, and other services to at-risk infants and toddlers who may otherwise not qualify for services under Part C of the IDEA in their State:</u></p>	<p>This language allows the Secretary to reserve up to \$15,000,000 of the funds appropriated for the Grants for Infants and Families program to support Pay for Success projects designed to increase early screening, identification, early intervention, and other services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and at-risk infants and toddlers who do not qualify for Part C services in their State.</p>

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes**

Language Provision	Explanation
<p><sup>19</sup> <u>Provided further, That, with respect to the previous proviso, any funds obligated for such projects shall remain available until expended.</u></p>	<p>This language extends the period of availability for funds reserved under the 18<sup>th</sup> proviso until they have been expended.</p>

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Appropriation, Adjustments and Transfers**  
(dollars in thousands)

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Appropriation/Adjustments/Transfers	2014	2015	2016
<hr/>			
<b>Discretionary:</b>			
Appropriation .....	\$12,497,300	\$12,522,358	\$12,822,358
<b>Advance:</b>			
Advance for succeeding fiscal year.....	-9,283,383	-9,283,383	-9,283,383
Advance from prior year .....	<u>9,283,383</u>	<u>9,283,383</u>	<u>9,283,383</u>
Total, budget authority.....	12,497,300	12,522,358	12,822,358

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**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Summary of Changes**  
(dollars in thousands)

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2015.....	\$12,522,358
2016.....	<u>12,822,358</u>
Net change.....	+300,000

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<b>Increases:</b>	<u>2015 base</u>	<u>Change from base</u>
<u>Program:</u>		
Increase in funding for Grants to States (IDEA-B-611), which would provide an estimated average per pupil increase of \$26 for children with disabilities.	\$11,497,848	+\$175,000
Increase in funding for Preschool Grants to States (IDEA B-619), which would provide an estimated average per pupil increase of \$67 for children with disabilities ages three through five.	353,238	+50,000
Increase in funding for Grants for Infants and Families (Part C), which would increase the average State award by approximately \$945,000 and provide up to \$15 million for Pay for Success pilots.	438,556	+65,000
Increase in funding for Technical Assistance and Dissemination (Part D) for Results Driven Accountability Implementation grants.	44,345	<u>+10,000</u>
Total, increases		+300,000

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**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Authorizing Legislation**

(dollars in thousands)

Activity	2015 Authorized	2015 Estimate	2016 Authorized	2016 Request
<b>State Grants:</b>				
Grants to States ( <i>IDEA-B-611</i> )	Indefinite <sup>1</sup>	\$11,497,848 <sup>2</sup>	Indefinite <sup>1</sup>	\$11,672,848 <sup>2</sup>
Preschool grants ( <i>IDEA-B-619</i> )	Indefinite	353,238	Indefinite	403,238
Grants for infants and families ( <i>IDEA-C</i> )	0 <sup>3</sup>	438,556	0 <sup>3</sup>	503,556
<b>National activities:</b>				
State personnel development ( <i>IDEA-D-1</i> )	0 <sup>3</sup>	41,630	0 <sup>3</sup>	41,630
Technical assistance and dissemination ( <i>IDEA-D-2-663</i> )	0 <sup>3</sup>	44,345	0 <sup>3</sup>	54,345
Personnel preparation ( <i>IDEA-D-2-662</i> )	0 <sup>3</sup>	83,700	0 <sup>3</sup>	83,700
Parent information centers ( <i>IDEA-D-3-671-673</i> )	0 <sup>3</sup>	27,411	0 <sup>3</sup>	27,411
Educational Technology, Media, and Materials ( <i>IDEA-D-3-674</i> )	0 <sup>3</sup>	28,047	0 <sup>3</sup>	28,047
Special Olympics education programs ( <i>SOSEA</i> <sup>4</sup> 3(a))	<u>0<sup>5</sup></u>	<u>7,583<sup>6</sup></u>	<u>0<sup>5</sup></u>	<u>7,583</u>
Total definite authorization	0		0	
Total annual appropriation		12,522,358		12,822,358
Portion of request subject to reauthorization				746,272

<sup>1</sup> Funding for technical assistance on State data collection is limited to \$25,000 thousand adjusted for inflation. This amount is estimated to be \$32,086 thousand for fiscal year 2015 and \$32,592 thousand for fiscal year 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Includes \$15,000 thousand for technical assistance on State data collection in fiscal year 2015 and \$17,000 thousand in fiscal year 2016.

<sup>3</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011; continued funding is proposed for this program in fiscal year 2016 through appropriations language.

<sup>4</sup> Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004.

<sup>5</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2010; continued funding is proposed for this program in fiscal year 2016 through appropriations language.

<sup>6</sup> Funds for Special Olympics Education programs were included in Technical Assistance and Dissemination in the Department of Education Appropriation Act, 2014, and the Department of Education Appropriation Act, 2015.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Appropriations History (dollars in thousands)

Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2007 (2007 Advance for 2008)	\$11,697,502 (6,215,200)	N/A <sup>1</sup>	N/A <sup>1</sup>	\$11,802,867 (5,424,200)
2008 (2008 Advance for 2009)	11,485,147 (6,215,200)	\$12,362,831 (6,641,982)	\$12,330,374 (5,924,200)	11,993,684 (6,856,444)
2009 (2009 Advance for 2010) Recovery Act Supplemental (P.L. 111-5)	12,335,943 (7,647,444) 0	12,587,920 <sup>2</sup> (8,592,383) 13,600,000	12,511,631 <sup>2</sup> (7,647,444) 13,500,000	12,579,677 (8,592,383) 12,200,000
2010 (2010 Advance for 2011)	12,579,677 (8,592,383)	12,579,677 (8,592,383)	12,587,856 <sup>3</sup> (8,592,383)	12,587,035 (8,592,383)
2011 (2011 Advance for 2012) Rescission (P.L. 112-74)	12,846,190 (8,592,383)	12,564,953 <sup>4</sup> (8,592,383)	12,787,035 <sup>3</sup> (8,592,383)	12,526,672 <sup>5</sup> (8,592,383) (-16,240)
2012 (2012 Advance for 2013)	12,861,351 (9,433,103)	13,757,844 <sup>6</sup> (8,592,383)	12,553,066 <sup>6</sup> (8,592,383)	12,640,709 (9,283,383)
2013 (2013 Advance for 2014)	12,687,307 (10,124,103)	12,640,709 <sup>7</sup> (9,283,383)	12,770,709 <sup>7</sup> (9,283,383)	11,982,364 (9,283,383)
2014 (2014 Advance for 2015)	12,657,307 (10,124,103)	N/A <sup>8</sup>	12,803,387 <sup>3</sup> (9,283,383)	12,497,300 (9,283,383)
2015 (2015 Advance for 2016)	12,600,627 (10,124,103)	N/A <sup>8</sup>	12,555,044 <sup>9</sup> (9,283,383)	12,522,358 (9,283,383)
2016 (2016 Advance for 2017)	12,822,358 (9,283,383)			

<sup>1</sup> This account operated under a full-year continuing resolution (P.L. 110-5). House and Senate Allowance amounts are shown as N/A (Not Available) because neither body passed a separate appropriations bill.

<sup>2</sup> The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2009 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress only through the House Subcommittee and the Senate Committee.

<sup>3</sup> The level for the Senate allowance reflects Committee action only.

<sup>4</sup> The level for the House allowance reflects the House-passed full-year continuing resolution.

<sup>5</sup> The level for appropriation reflects the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).

<sup>6</sup> The level for the House allowance reflects an introduced bill, and the level for the Senate allowance reflects Committee action only.

<sup>7</sup> The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2013 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress only through the House Subcommittee and the Senate Committee.

<sup>8</sup> The House allowance is shown as N/A because there was no Subcommittee action.

<sup>9</sup> The level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Subcommittee action only.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2016 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

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(in thousands of dollars)						
Account, Program and Activity	Category Code	2014 Appropriation	2015 Appropriation	2016 President's Budget	2016 President's Budget Compared to 2015 Appropriation Amount	Percent
<b>Special Education</b>						
1. State grants:						
(a) Grants to States (IDEA-B-611)						
Annual appropriation	D	2,189,465	2,214,465	2,389,465	175,000	7.903%
Advance for succeeding fiscal year	D	9,283,383	9,283,383	9,283,383	0	0.000%
Subtotal		11,472,848	11,497,848	11,672,848	175,000	1.522%
(b) Preschool grants (IDEA-B-619)	D	353,238	353,238	403,238	50,000	14.155%
(c) Grants for infants and families (IDEA-C)	D	438,498	438,556	503,556	65,000	14.821%
Subtotal, State grants		12,264,584	12,289,642	12,579,642	290,000	2.360%
2. National activities (IDEA-D):						
(a) State personnel development (Subpart 1)	D	41,630	41,630	41,630	0	0.000%
(b) Technical assistance and dissemination (section 663) <sup>1</sup>	D	44,345	44,345	54,345	10,000	22.550%
(c) Personnel preparation (section 662)	D	83,700	83,700	83,700	0	0.000%
(d) Parent information centers (sections 671-673)	D	27,411	27,411	27,411	0	0.000%
(e) Educational technology, media, and materials (section 674)	D	28,047	28,047	28,047	0	0.000%
Subtotal		225,133	225,133	235,133	10,000	4.442%
3. Special Olympics education programs (Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act) <sup>1</sup>						
	D	7,583	7,583	7,583	0	0.000%
Total, Appropriation	D	12,497,300	12,522,358	12,822,358	300,000	2.396%
Total, Budget authority	D	12,497,300	12,522,358	12,822,358	300,000	2.396%
Current		3,213,917	3,238,975	3,538,975	300,000	9.262%
Prior year's advance		9,283,383	9,283,383	9,283,383	0	0.000%

NOTES: D = discretionary program; M = mandatory program; FY = fiscal year

Accounts are shown under the administering office that has primary responsibility for most programs in that account; however, there may be some programs that are administered by another office.

Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup> Funds for Special Olympics Education programs were included in Technical Assistance and Dissemination in the Department of Education Appropriation Act, 2014, and the Department of Education Appropriation Act, 2015.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

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### Summary of Request

The Administration is committed to ensuring that all children, including students with disabilities, have an equal opportunity to participate in a high quality education; are expected to perform to high levels; and to the maximum extent possible, are prepared to lead productive, independent lives. The fiscal year 2016 budget request for Special Education of \$12.8 billion is aimed at making this goal a reality by helping States and school districts improve the results for children with disabilities.

The Administration requests \$11.7 billion for the **Grants to States** program, an increase of \$175 million from the fiscal year 2015 level, to assist States and schools in covering the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities ages 3 through 21. The request would provide an average of \$1,768 for each of the 6.6 million children with disabilities who are estimated to be served in 2016. The Federal contribution toward meeting the excess cost of special education and related services would be approximately 16 percent of the national average per pupil expenditures under this request.

The request of \$403.2 million for **Preschool Grants** is a \$50 million increase over the fiscal year 2015 level and would provide support to States and schools for providing special education services to children ages 3 through 5. Under the current statute, local educational agencies (LEAs) may reserve up to 15 percent of the funds they receive under Part B of the IDEA to provide coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) to children in grades kindergarten through twelve to help children who may need additional academic or behavioral support. The Administration is requesting additional flexibility to allow LEAs to provide CEIS to children ages 3 through 5. In addition to expanding the age range of students eligible for CEIS, the Administration is also requesting a waiver of some reporting requirements for children three through 5 in order to reduce burden on LEAs who opt to exercise this flexibility.

The request of \$503.6 million for **Grants for Infants and Families** is an increase of \$65 million from the fiscal year 2015 level. The additional funding for the Grants for Infants and Families program would provide additional assistance to States to help them implement statewide systems of early intervention services for children from birth through age 2. This request would also allow the Department to reserve \$15 million of this increase for Pay for Success pilots to build evidence to expand early screening and early intervention services to infants and toddlers who would not otherwise qualify for services under Part C of the IDEA in their State.

The \$235.1 million request for **National Activities** programs would support a variety of technical assistance, dissemination, training, and other activities to help States, local educational agencies, parents, and others in improving results for children with disabilities. The **Technical Assistance and Dissemination** program would be funded at \$54.3 million, a \$10 million increase over the fiscal year 2015 level. This increase would be used to support Results Driven Accountability Implementation grants, which would provide competitive grants to States to build State capacity to identify and implement promising, evidence-based reforms that will improve service delivery for children with disabilities while also building State and local capacity to continue to improve outcomes for those children in the long-term. For the other National Activities programs, the Administration's 2016 request provides funding at the 2015 level. The **Special Olympics Education Programs** would also be funded at the same level as in fiscal year 2015 (\$7.56 million). In fiscal year 2015, funds for this program were appropriated under the Technical Assistance and Dissemination program.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### State grants: Grants to States

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#### State grants: Grants to States

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, Section 611)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: Indefinite <sup>1,2</sup>

Budget Authority:

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
Annual appropriation	\$2,214,465 <sup>3</sup>	\$2,389,465 <sup>3</sup>	+\$175,000
Advance for succeeding fiscal year	<u>9,283,383</u>	<u>9,283,383</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	11,497,848	11,672,848	+175,000

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<sup>1</sup> Section 611(c) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act limits technical assistance activities to \$25,000 thousand, increased by the amount of inflation from year to year. It is estimated that the maximum amount authorized for fiscal year 2016 would be \$32,592 thousand.

<sup>2</sup> Section 611(b)(2) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that from the funds appropriated for Grants to States, 1.226 percent shall be set aside for the Department of the Interior. It is estimated that the maximum amount authorized for FY 2016 would be \$143,416 thousand.

<sup>3</sup> Includes \$15,000 thousand for technical assistance activities in fiscal year 2015 and \$17,000 thousand in fiscal year 2016.

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Grants to States program provides formula grants to assist the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Department of the Interior, Outlying Areas, and the Freely Associated States in meeting the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. In order to be eligible for funding, States must serve all children with disabilities between the ages of 3 through 21, except that they are not required to serve children aged 3 through 5 or 18 through 21 years if services are inconsistent with State law or practice or the order of any court. A State that does not provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities aged 3 through 5 cannot receive base payment funds attributable to this age group or any funds under the Preschool Grants program.

Funds are allocated among States in accordance with a variety of factors. First, each State is allocated an amount equal to the amount that it received for fiscal year 1999. If the total program appropriation increases over the prior year, 85 percent of the remaining funds are allocated based on the number of children in the general population in the age range for which the States guarantee FAPE to children with disabilities. Fifteen percent of the remaining funds are allocated based on the number of children living in poverty that are in the age range for which the States guarantee FAPE to children with disabilities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) also includes several maximum and minimum allocation requirements that are triggered when the amount available for distribution to

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### State grants: Grants to States

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States increases. The amount that any single State's allocation may increase from one year to the next is capped at the amount the State received in the prior year multiplied by the sum of 1.5 percent and the percentage increase in the total amount appropriated for Part B of IDEA from the prior year. The maximum amount that any State may receive in any single fiscal year is calculated by multiplying the number of children with disabilities ages of 3 through 21 served during the 2004-2005 academic year in that State by 40 percent of the annual per pupil expenditure, adjusted by the rate of annual change in the sum of 85 percent of the children aged 3 through 21 for whom that State ensures FAPE and 15 percent of the children living in poverty. Because there are multiple caps, in any single year, the "effective cap" on any single State's allocation is the lowest cap for that State.

If the amount available for allocation to States remains the same from one year to the next, States receive the same level of funding as in the prior year. If the amount available for allocation to States decreases from the prior year, any amount available for allocation to States above the 1999 level is allocated based on the relative increases in funding that the States received between 1999 and the prior year. If there is a decrease below the amount allocated for 1999, each State's allocation is ratably reduced from the 1999 level.

Most of the Federal funds provided to States must be passed on to LEAs. However, a portion of the funds may be used for State-level activities. Any funds not set aside by the State must be passed through to LEAs. These sub-State allocations are made in a fashion similar to that used to allocate funds among States when the amount available for allocation to States increases.

State Administration – A State may reserve for State administration up to the greater of the maximum amount the State could reserve for State administration from fiscal year 2004 funds, or \$800,000, increased by inflation as reflected by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. For fiscal year 2016, the latter amount is estimated to be \$1,044,851.

Other State Activities – A State may also reserve funds for a variety of other State-level activities such as monitoring, enforcement, addressing personnel needs, and providing technical assistance to LEAs. One authorized activity involves allocating set-aside funds to support a risk pool, or high cost fund, that is used to assist LEAs in meeting the costs of serving high need, high-cost children. If a State opts to use State-level funds for a risk pool, it must use 10 percent of the funds it reserves for other State-level activities for this purpose. Federal funds set aside by a State must be distributed to LEAs or consortia of LEAs to address the needs of specific high-cost children.

Starting in 2007, the amount that a State may set aside for other State-level activities is based on a percentage of its total allocation for 2006, increased for inflation. The percentage is based on whether the State opts to use funds for a risk pool and the amount of funds that the State sets aside for administration. If the State opts to use funds for a risk pool and the State sets aside \$850,000 or less for administration, the percentage is 10.5 percent. If the State opts to use funds for a risk pool and the State sets aside more than \$850,000 for administration, the percentage is 10 percent. If the State opts not to use funds for a risk pool and the State sets aside \$850,000 or less for administration, the percentage is 9.5 percent. If the State opts not to use funds for a risk pool and the State sets aside more than \$850,000 for administration, the percentage is 9 percent.

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### State grants: Grants to States

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Maintenance of Effort – The IDEA also requires each State to maintain its level of State financial support for special education and related services from one year to the next. This requirement is commonly referred to as the State “maintenance of effort, or MOE.” However, the IDEA allows any State that provided 100 percent of the non-Federal costs of special education services in the 2003-2004 school year, or any subsequent year, to reduce its level of expenditures by up to 50 percent of any increase in its allocation under the Grants to States program over the prior year. The Department may prohibit a State from exercising this authority if it is determined that a State is not adequately carrying out its responsibilities under the IDEA.

The IDEA also contains a local “maintenance of effort” requirement. Under this requirement, each LEA must maintain its total expenditures, including State and local contributions, on special education from one year to the next. The standard for determining whether this MOE requirement has been met is that the LEA actually expends, in total or per capita, an equal or greater amount of local, or State and local, funds in each subsequent year. However, in any fiscal year that an LEA’s IDEA Part B subgrant allocation exceeds the amount that the LEA received in the previous fiscal year, the IDEA also permits certain LEAs to reduce the level of support otherwise required by this local maintenance of effort requirement by up to 50 percent of any increase in their Part B allocation. LEAs taking advantage of this flexibility must use any funds that otherwise would have been used for the education of children with disabilities to support activities that are authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. Also, if a State educational agency (SEA) determines that an LEA is not meeting all of the requirements of Part B, including meeting targets in the State’s performance plan, the SEA must prohibit that LEA from reducing its level of support.

Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) – Certain LEAs may also use up to 15 percent of their allocation, less any amount used to reduce that LEA’s maintenance of effort level, for early intervening services. Early intervening services generally address the needs of students who require additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed, but who are not identified as needing special education. If an SEA determines that an LEA has significant disproportionality on the basis of race in the identification of children as children with disabilities, in particular disability categories, in placement in particular educational settings, or in discipline, the SEA must require the LEA to use the full 15 percent for early intervening services.

The IDEA requires awards to the Freely Associated States of the Pacific Basin (Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands) to be the same amounts that they received from the fiscal year 2003 appropriation.

The IDEA also authorizes the Department to set aside a portion of the Grants to States appropriation to provide technical assistance to improve the capacity of States to meet data collection requirements necessary for the implementation of the program.

IDEA requires that from the funds appropriated for Grants to States, 1.226 percent shall be set aside for the Department of the Interior. It is estimated that the maximum amount authorized for FY 2016 would be \$143,416 thousand.

This is a forward-funded program that includes advance appropriations. In a typical year, a portion of the funds – the forward-funded portion – becomes available for obligation on July 1 of the fiscal year of the appropriation and remains available for 15 months, through September 30 of the following year. The remaining funds – the advance appropriation – become available for

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obligation on October 1 of the fiscal year following the year of the appropriations act and remain available for 12 months, expiring at the same time as the forward-funded portion. For fiscal year 2016, school districts will use both the forward- and advance-funded amounts primarily during the 2016-2017 school year.

Both forward-funded and advance funds remain available for obligation at State and local levels for an additional year. Hence, States and local educational agencies (LEAs) will have until September 30, 2018, to obligate their fiscal year 2016 awards.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011 .....	\$11,465,960
2012 .....	11,577,855
2013 .....	10,974,866
2014 .....	11,472,848
2015 .....	11,497,848

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### FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$11.67 billion in fiscal year 2016 for Grants to States to assist in covering the excess costs associated with providing special education and related services to children with disabilities and improving the quality of those services. The requested level includes an increase of \$175 million over the fiscal year 2015 level to support all States in implementing improvement efforts identified in their State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIP) in addition to special education and related services for children with disabilities. SSIP's are plans States submit to the Department to evaluate their results for children with disabilities, their capacity to improve those results, and the needed steps to improve State support systems and local service delivery systems.

The request level would increase the Federal contribution toward offsetting the cost of special education and related services for children with disabilities to approximately 16 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure (APPE) based on the anticipated growth of APPE in fiscal year 2016. This request would provide an average of \$1,768 per child. This average is based on the assumption that the number of children aged 3 through 21 who will be served will remain constant at the 2014 level of 6.593 million.

From 1975, when the IDEA was enacted, through 2005, the growth in the number of children with disabilities served outpaced the growth in the general population ages 3 through 21. However, from 2006 to 2009, the count of children with disabilities reported by States decreased slightly each year from the prior fiscal year. Fiscal year 2010 represented the first increase in this population of students in 5 years, but the population declined again in fiscal year 2011 and 2012. The child count increased again slightly in 2013 and 2014; however, the Department believes the population of children with disabilities will continue to trend downward in future years. In the absence of more certain information, we have projected the numbers of children with disabilities expected to be served for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 at 6.593 million children, the same level as reported by States for fiscal year 2014.

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### **State grants: Grants to States**

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Prior to the enactment of the IDEA, as many as 1 million children with disabilities were excluded from educational services. The IDEA guarantees that any child identified as having a disability will have access to a free appropriate public education. One of the primary objectives of the program is to improve the quality of the education provided, so that children with disabilities can be involved in, and make progress in, the general education curriculum based on the State's academic content standards, meet the same rigorous standards that have been established for all children to help prepare them for college and a career, and be prepared to lead productive, independent adult lives to the maximum extent possible.

### **Results Driven Accountability (RDA)**

In 2012, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) began to develop a new accountability system, RDA, that shifts the focus of the Department's monitoring efforts from compliance to improved results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities under Parts B and C of the IDEA (e.g., performance on assessments and graduation rates). While the Department recognizes the importance of States' compliance with the statutory requirements of the IDEA, and will continue to ensure that States meet those obligations, we believe that focusing our monitoring and technical assistance efforts on significant areas of need, such as academic performance and significant disproportionality, identified by States will have the greatest impact on improving results for children with disabilities, age birth through 21.

In developing RDA, the Department has worked extensively with States and other stakeholders to develop fair, results-driven performance measures to guide the work. However, because RDA is dependent on States' evaluating data and thoughtfully modifying or refining support and service delivery systems at the local level, some States may need technical assistance in transitioning to this new framework. Therefore, the Department is investing more than \$21 million in fiscal year 2015 in continuation awards for technical assistance centers through the IDEA Technical Assistance and Dissemination and the Technical Assistance to Improve State Data Capacity programs to support States in improving their data quality and to assist them with the development of their SSIPs. In their SSIPs, States evaluate their results for children with disabilities, their capacity to improve those results, and the needed steps to improve State support systems and local service delivery systems.

As the Department shifts to a RDA framework, States, lead agencies, districts, and early childhood providers will need support on multiple fronts in identifying, prioritizing, and implementing evidence-based practices to improve results for children with disabilities. The requested \$175 million increase in the Grants to States program and the \$10 million for new Results Driven Accountability Implementation grants in the Technical Assistance and Dissemination program would provide needed additional funds to States and lead agencies for State-wide technical assistance, professional development, or other coordinated activities across a broad range of service providers while also ensuring that local education agencies and early childhood providers have additional resources to provide high quality direct services to children with disabilities and their families.

### **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility**

All States are eligible to receive ESEA flexibility, and the Department has established a rigorous process for reviewing and approving State requests, including expert peer review. As of the 2014-2015 school year, 42 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico are approved to

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implement ESEA flexibility. The Department also approved a separate request for waivers from the California Office to Reform Education districts (7 districts) in California. The waivers may be revoked if Congress reauthorizes the ESEA, but in the continued absence of reauthorization the Department invited eligible SEAs to request extensions that would remain in effect through the 2014-2015 school year. States that have been approved for waivers will need to apply for renewal for the 2015-2016 school-year in 2015, absent reauthorization.

States seeking ESEA flexibility must submit plans to the Department describing how they will transition to State college- and career-ready standards and aligned assessments capable of measuring student academic growth; implement differentiated recognition, accountability, and support systems that identify and reward high-performing schools, require rigorous interventions in the lowest-performing schools, target meaningful improvement measures to schools with the largest achievement gaps; and develop and implement high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that use multiple valid measures, including data on student growth as a significant factor, to determine performance levels. While these reforms support efforts to improve outcomes for all students including students with disabilities (SWD), the Department required States to ensure that the needs of SWD were taken into account across all components of the State's plan. Additionally, SEAs approved for ESEA flexibility committed to eliminating the use of alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards beginning no later than the 2014-2015 school year.

### FY 2016 Proposed Appropriations Language

The Administration is continuing to propose appropriations language requested and received in previous years regarding State and local MOE requirements, the technical assistance set-aside under section 616(i) of the IDEA, and the allocation provided to the Bureau of Indian Education.

### State Maintenance of Effort

The IDEA requires each State to make available for special education and related services at least as much funding as it did in the prior year. If a State fails to maintain its fiscal support for special education and related services and does not receive a waiver of the requirement, the IDEA directs the Department to reduce that State's award under the Special Education Grants to States program. In 2012, the Department reduced Kansas's award under this provision and has denied the waiver requests of South Carolina and New Mexico. Under IDEA, the Department does not have authority to redistribute or otherwise spend any funds made available as a result of such a reduction.

As in previous years, the Administration proposes language that would (a) allow the Department to redistribute reductions to other States and (b) mitigate the ongoing impact of a reduction on a State's future year awards. Without the language, any funds reduced from a State's award would revert to Treasury at the end of the period of availability. The proposed language would allow the Department to provide these funds to other States that have not had their awards reduced as a result of a failure to maintain financial support for special education and related services, so that these funds are used to offset the additional costs of providing services to students who qualify for services under the IDEA. Additionally, because of the way that the formula for determining State allocations operates, a State's award in any year depends, in part, on the amount the State received in the prior year. Without this additional language, a reduction in a State's award taken in any one year could have long-lasting impacts on that State's award,

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depending on the growth in the Grants to States appropriation and the size of the reduction in the individual State's award.

As in fiscal year 2015, the Administration proposes language that would provide additional flexibility in enforcing MOE requirements while protecting the services provided to students with disabilities supported with Federal funds. Specifically, the proposed language would allow the Department, for a State's failure to meet MOE in any fiscal year, to: (1) spread out the reductions in awards due to a State's failure to meet MOE over a maximum of 5 years; (2) reduce the maximum State set-aside by the same percentage as the reduction in the State's overall award; and (3) either recover non-Federal (State) funds in the amount of the State's MOE shortfall under the recovery of funds provision in section 452 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), or reduce the State's IDEA grant.

Under the IDEA, the Department must reduce a State's award in one fiscal year, and cannot spread the penalty over a number of years. The Department is concerned that, due to the potential size of future reductions as a percentage of overall State awards, services provided to students with disabilities will be adversely affected, particularly those supported with Federal funds. By providing the Department the authority to spread out the penalty over a maximum of 5 years, the Department hopes to limit the direct impact on students with disabilities in any given year.

Under current law, in a year in which the Secretary has reduced a State's award due to an MOE violation, a State can pass on the entire reduction in its IDEA funding to LEAs. Providing the Department the authority to proportionally reduce the maximum available State set-aside by the same percentage as the reduction in the overall State award would directly impact State entities for failing to maintain financial support. For example, a 30 percent reduction in a State's award would result in a 30 percent reduction in the maximum amount that can be set-aside by the State for State-level activities.

When LEAs have fewer Federal funds available for expenditure, children with disabilities may receive reduced services. By exercising the flexibility of either recovering State funds or reducing the State's IDEA grant, the Department can mitigate the impact of a reduction in funds on services for children with disabilities.

### Local Educational Agency Maintenance of Effort

The IDEA requires LEAs to provide through a combination of local or State support at least the same level of special education funding provided in the previous fiscal year. As in previous years, the Administration is proposing language to clarify that the level of effort a LEA must meet under maintenance of effort requirements in the year after it fails to maintain effort is the level of effort that would have been required in the absence of that failure and not the LEA's reduced level of expenditures. This language would provide clarity to LEAs and is consistent with State MOE statutory language.

### Technical Assistance

The IDEA emphasizes improving results for children with disabilities through the collection and use of performance data. The law requires each State to develop a State Performance Plan that includes measurable and rigorous targets in a number of key monitoring areas: free

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appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment; disproportionate representation of children in special education based on race and ethnicity; and State exercise of general supervision authority in areas such as child find, monitoring, mediation, and transition. Each State has supervisory responsibility over the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities within its jurisdiction, to ensure that the requirements in the IDEA are met. State performance data are collected through Annual Performance Reports.

The IDEA authorizes the Department to use a portion of Grants to States funds to provide technical assistance to States to improve their capacity to meet these data collection requirements. The request includes \$17 million for such technical assistance, an increase of \$2 million more than the amount that would be set-aside for this purpose at the fiscal year 2015 level. The request would be used for continuation costs for the National IDEA Technical Assistance Center on Early Childhood Longitudinal Data Systems, which supports States in developing and using their early childhood data systems, the National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Data Capacity to Accurately Collect and Report IDEA Data, which provides technical assistance to States and local educational agencies on improving their data collection and analytic processes in order to promote use of data to drive program improvement, the Fiscal Technical Assistance Center, which provides technical assistance to States to improve the reporting of fiscal data, and the Data Management Center, which works with States to improve system architecture to ensure IDEA data can be used with other data collections to improve results for students with disabilities. In addition, these funds would be used to support a contract to provide logistical support and quality control of State reported data to ensure its accuracy and improve data quality.

As in previous years, the Department is proposing appropriations language that would expand the authority of the Department to administer and carry out other services and activities to improve data collection, coordination, quality, and use under parts B and C of the IDEA. This language would maintain the expanded authority enacted through appropriations language in fiscal year 2015, which is currently being used in several of the Department's technical assistance investments.

### **Department of the Interior Set-Aside**

As in previous years, the Administration proposes that the fiscal year 2016 budget include special appropriations language limiting the amount of funding required to be provided to the Department of the Interior (Interior). The special language would limit funding for Interior to the prior year's funding level plus the lesser of inflation or the percentage change in the appropriation for the Grants to States program. In the event of a decrease or no change in the appropriation for the Grants to States program or deflation, the amount of funds to be transferred to Interior would remain level with the amount Interior received in the prior fiscal year. The IDEA requires that 1.226 percent of the funds appropriated for Grants to States be provided to Interior for serving Indian children with disabilities, regardless of the number of children served by Interior. At the request level, the uncapped allocation to Interior would provide an average of approximately \$22,003 for each child with a disability it served in the fall of 2012, which is approximately 12 times the average amount per child that States would receive. At the fiscal year 2016 request level with the cap, Interior would receive about 8.3 times the average amount per child that States would receive, which translates into an average of \$14,674 for each child with a disability, or about 133 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure (APPE) compared to 16 percent of the APPE for States overall.

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#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Program funding:</u>			
Formula grants to States	\$11,323,218	\$11,348,014	\$11,519,394
Formula grants to Outlying Areas	34,246	34,246	34,435
Grants to Freely Associated States	6,579	6,579	6,579
Department of the Interior	93,805	94,009	95,440
<u>Technical Assistance (TA):</u>			
IDEA Data Validation Contract	0	1,800	2,004
Early Childhood Data	7,996 <sup>1</sup>	3,698 <sup>2</sup>	2,796
Fiscal Data Center	2,806 <sup>3</sup>	3,200	3,200
IDEA Data Management Center	2,500 <sup>4</sup>	0	2,500
TA Center on State Data	<u>1,698 <sup>5</sup></u>	<u>6,302</u>	<u>6,500</u>
Subtotal, TA	15,000 <sup>6</sup>	15,000 <sup>7</sup>	17,000
Peer review of new Technical Assistance award applications			
	<u>0 <sup>8</sup></u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	11,472,848	11,497,848	11,672,848
Number of children with disabilities served ages 3 through 21			
	6,592,960 <sup>9</sup>	6,592,960 <sup>9</sup>	6,592,960 <sup>9</sup>
Average Federal share per child (whole dollars)			
	\$1,743 <sup>9</sup>	\$1,742 <sup>9</sup>	\$1,768 <sup>9</sup>
Average per pupil expenditure (APPE) (whole dollars)			
	\$10,772	\$10,876 <sup>9</sup>	\$11,057 <sup>9</sup>
Federal funding as a percentage of APPE			
	16%	16% <sup>9</sup>	16% <sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Department obligated \$6,495 thousand of fiscal year 2013 funds in fiscal year 2014, and plans to obligate \$6,496 thousand of fiscal year 2014 funds in fiscal year 2015.

<sup>2</sup> The Department plans to obligate \$3,698 thousand of fiscal year 2015 carry-over funds in fiscal year 2016.

<sup>3</sup> The Department obligated \$395 thousand of fiscal year 2013 funds in fiscal year 2014.

<sup>4</sup> The Department obligated \$2,500 thousand of fiscal year 2013 funds in fiscal year 2014, and plans to obligate \$2,500 thousand of fiscal year 2014 funds in fiscal year 2015.

<sup>5</sup> The Department plans to obligate \$198 thousand of fiscal year 2014 funds in fiscal year 2015.

<sup>6</sup> The Department carried over \$15,934 thousand of the fiscal year 2013 multi-year appropriation into fiscal year 2014.

<sup>7</sup> The Department carried over \$9,198 thousand of the remaining fiscal year 2014 multi-year appropriation into fiscal year 2015.

<sup>8</sup> The Department obligated \$44 thousand of fiscal year 2013 funds in fiscal year 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Estimate, based on State-reported cumulative total for children served in the fall of 2013; however, this does not include the child count for Wyoming or BIE.

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#### Basis for Leaving Special Education for Youth with Disabilities Ages 14 and Older

<u>Basis:</u>	<u>School</u> <u>Year</u> <u>2010-2011</u>	<u>School</u> <u>Year</u> <u>2010-2011</u>	<u>School</u> <u>Year</u> <u>2011-2012</u>	<u>School</u> <u>Year</u> <u>2011-2012</u>	<u>School</u> <u>Year</u> <u>2012-2013</u>	<u>School</u> <u>Year</u> <u>2012-2013</u>
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>
Graduating with regular diploma	39.7%	255,801	39.7%	250,575	41.9%	257,982
Graduating through certification	9.2%	58,946	8.5%	53,910	9.2%	56,399
Transferred to regular education	9.5%	61,243	10.2%	64,637	9.4%	57,639
Dropped out, or moved but not known to have continued in education	12.6%	80,927	12.7%	80,427	12.1%	74,502
Moved, but known to have continued in education	28.2%	181,618	27.9%	175,709	26.5%	162,887
Reaching maximum age for services and other reasons	<u>0.8%</u>	<u>5,245</u>	<u>0.9%</u>	<u>5,565</u>	<u>0.9%</u>	<u>5,839</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>643,780</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>630,823</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>615,248</b>

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Source: Annual data collection from States by OSERS and through the Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN)/EDFacts.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

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#### History of Children Served and Program Funding – FYs 1978 through 2016

Fiscal Year	Children Served (thousands)	Appropriation (dollars in thousands)	Federal Share Per Child <sup>1</sup> (whole dollars)	Percentage of APPE
1978	3,561	\$566,030	\$159	10%
1979	3,700	804,000	217	13%
1980	3,803	874,500	230	12%
1981	3,941	874,500	222	10%
1982	3,990	931,008	233	10%
1983	4,053	1,017,900	251	10%
1984	4,096	1,068,875	261	9%
1985	4,124	1,135,145	275	9%
1986	4,121	1,163,282	282	8%
1987	4,167	1,338,000	321	9%
1988	4,236	1,431,737	338	9%
1989	4,347	1,475,449	339	8%
1990	4,419	1,542,610	349	8%
1991	4,567	1,854,186	406	9%
1992	4,727	1,976,095	418	8%
1993	4,896	2,052,728	419	8%
1994	5,101	2,149,686	421	8%
1995	5,467	2,322,915	425	8%
1996	5,629	2,323,837	413	7%
1997	5,806	3,107,522	535	9%
1998	5,978	3,807,700	636	11%
1999	6,133	4,310,700	701	11%
2000	6,274	4,989,685	793	12%
2001	6,381	6,339,685	991	14%
2002	6,483	7,528,533	1,159	15%
2003	6,611	8,874,398	1,340	17%
2004	6,723	10,068,106	1,495	18%
2005	6,820	10,589,746 <sup>2</sup>	1,558	18%
2006	6,814	10,582,961 <sup>2</sup>	1,551	18%
2007	6,796	10,782,961 <sup>2</sup>	1,584	17%
2008	6,718	10,947,511 <sup>2</sup>	1,609	17%
2009	6,599	22,805,211 <sup>2,3</sup>	3,453 <sup>3</sup>	33% <sup>3</sup>
2010	6,614	11,505,211 <sup>2</sup>	1,736	16%

<sup>1</sup> The Federal share per child is calculated from IDEA Part B Grants to States funding, excluding amounts available for studies and evaluations or technical assistance, as applicable.

<sup>2</sup> Includes \$10,000 thousand for technical assistance activities in 2005, \$15,000 thousand in 2006 through 2009 and 2014 through 2015, \$25,000 thousand in 2010 through 2012, and \$23,693 thousand in 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Includes funds available in fiscal year 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (P.L. 111-5).

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#### History of Children Served and Program Funding- Continued

Fiscal Year	Children Served (thousands)	Appropriation (dollars in thousands)	Federal Share Per Child <sup>1</sup> (whole dollars)	Percentage of APPE
2011	6,558	\$11,465,960 <sup>2</sup>	\$1,745	16%
2012	6,543	11,577,855 <sup>2</sup>	1,766	16%
2013	6,574	10,974,866 <sup>2</sup>	1,674	15%
2014	6,593	11,472,848 <sup>2</sup>	1,743	16%
2015	6,593	11,497,848 <sup>2</sup>	1,742	16%
2016	6,593	11,672,848 <sup>2</sup>	1,768	16%

<sup>2</sup> Includes \$10,000 thousand for technical assistance activities in 2005, \$15,000 thousand in 2006 through 2009 and 2014 through 2015, \$25,000 thousand in 2010 through 2012, \$23,693 thousand in 2013, and \$17,000 in 2016.

### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

#### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

**Goal: Ensure all children with disabilities served under the IDEA have available to them a free appropriate public education to help them meet challenging standards and prepare them for independent living and postsecondary education and/or competitive employment by assisting State and local educational agencies and families.**

**Objective:** *All children with disabilities will meet challenging standards as determined by national and State assessments with accommodations as appropriate.*

#### National Assessment of Educational Progress Measures

**Measure:** The percentage of fourth-grade students with disabilities scoring at or above Basic on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading.

Year	Target	Actual
2007	35	36%
2009	37	34
2011	39	32
2013	40	28
2015	40	

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**Measure:** The percentage of eighth-grade students with disabilities scoring at or above Basic on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics.

Year	Target	Actual
2007	33	33
2009	35	36
2011	37	35
2013	38	31
2015	38	

#### Additional information:

As defined for purposes of NAEP, “students with disabilities” includes any student classified by a school as having a disability, including children who receive services under a Section 504 plan. These measures include data for “national public” schools only. “National public” is defined as: “public schools only. Includes charter schools; excludes Bureau of Indian Education schools and Department of Defense Education Activity schools.” NAEP is a biennial assessment. No comparable NAEP assessments are scheduled for mathematics in 2012 and 2014.

**Fourth-grade Reading:** NAEP defines “Basic” for students participating in the fourth-grade reading assessment as follows: “Fourth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should be able to locate relevant information, make simple inferences, and use their understanding of the text to identify details that support a given interpretation or conclusion. Students should be able to interpret the meaning of a word as it is used in the text.”

Reading scores, measured every 2 years, decreased and fell short of their targets since 2009 after moderate increases over the course of the previous 4 years. The data show that the majority of students with disabilities do not meet or exceed even the Basic levels of achievement at any of the grade levels tested. Likewise, students with disabilities score well below other students. On the 2013 fourth-grade reading assessment, only 28 percent of students with disabilities scored at or above Basic, while 73 percent of other students scored at or above Basic.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects data on the percentage of students with disabilities who are excluded from the NAEP assessments because of their disabilities. Exclusion rates are important to keep in mind when considering the performance of students with disabilities because increases in performance accompanied by reductions in students with disabilities tested might simply reflect higher exclusion rates among lower functioning students. Between 1998 (the first year accommodations were permitted) and 2013, the exclusion rate for students with disabilities on fourth-grade reading assessments dropped from 42 percent to 16 percent. In 2010, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) released a policy statement setting a goal for no more than 15 percent exclusion of students with disabilities on NAEP assessments and began identifying national, State, and districts samples not meeting this goal in its reporting. In 2013, 16 States had exclusion rates of students with disabilities exceeding 15 percent on the fourth-grade reading assessment, down from 23 States in 2011. It should be noted that these percentages only include students with disabilities who have been

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included in the NAEP testing sample. Students in schools specifically for children with disabilities are not included in the NAEP sample.

The use of accommodations for students with disabilities, such as testing in small groups and extended time, has increased substantially. The share of the overall population that is students with disabilities who receive accommodations increased from 2 percent to 5 percent from 2000 to 2013. Among fourth-grade students with disabilities assessed in reading in 2013, 68 percent received accommodations.

Eighth-grade Mathematics: NAEP defines “Basic” for students participating in the eighth-grade mathematics assessment as follows: “Eighth-graders performing at the *Basic* level should complete problems correctly with the help of structural prompts such as diagrams, charts, and graphs. They should be able to solve problems in all NAEP content areas through the appropriate selection and use of strategies and technological tools—including calculators, computers, and geometric shapes. Students at this level also should be able to use fundamental algebraic and informal geometric concepts in problem solving. As they approach the *Proficient* level, students at the *Basic* level should be able to determine which of the available data are necessary and sufficient for correct solutions and use them in problem solving. However, these eighth-graders show limited skill in communicating mathematically.”

NAEP data for mathematics demonstrate slow progress. The performance of students with disabilities had improved steadily over baseline years and exceeded the 2009 target. However, since 2011, eighth-grade math scores decreased and did not meet the target. These decreases correspond with decreasing rates of exclusion, which could produce a more diverse sample of students with disabilities. The NAEP data also show that the majority of students with disabilities do not meet or exceed even the Basic levels of achievement at any of the grade levels tested. Likewise, students with disabilities score well below other students. On the 2013 math assessment, only 31 percent of eighth-graders with disabilities scored at or above Basic, while 79 percent of other eighth-grade students scored at or above Basic.

The NCES collects data on the percentage of students with disabilities who are excluded from the NAEP assessments because of their disabilities. Exclusion rates are important to keep in mind when considering the performance of students with disabilities because increases in performance accompanied by reductions in students with disabilities tested might simply reflect higher exclusion rates among lower functioning students. Between 2000 (the first year accommodations were permitted) and 2013, the exclusion rate on eighth-grade mathematics assessments dropped from 32 percent to 10 percent. NAGB’s 2010 policy statement regarding exclusion of students with disabilities also applied to the mathematics assessment. In 2013, only two States had exclusion rates of students with disabilities higher than 15 percent, down from 19 States in 2011. It should be noted that these percentages only include students with disabilities who have been included in the NAEP testing sample. Students in schools specifically for children with disabilities are not included in the NAEP sample.

The use of accommodations for students with disabilities, such as testing in small groups and extended time, has increased substantially. For example, whereas less than one quarter of the eighth-grade students with disabilities assessed in mathematics in 2000 received accommodations, 80 percent received accommodations in 2013.

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#### Elementary and Secondary Education Measures

The Department has adopted 4 measures for the Special Education Grants to States program that are parallel with those used for the Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies program. Data on the measures are collected annually through the Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN) and made available through ED Facts. Targets are based on a straight-line trajectory toward the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goal to have all children performing at proficient or advanced levels by 2014. States were not required to test students in all grades 3 through 8 in 2005. However, they were required to test children in grades 3 through 8 in 2006. The targets for 2007 were based on the incomplete 2005 tests. Targets for 2008 through 2012 were revised based on the more comprehensive 2006 data.

The first two measures focus on the percentages of students with disabilities scoring at the proficient or advanced levels in grades 3 through 8 on State reading and mathematics assessments. The other two measures focus on the differences between the percentages of students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State reading and mathematics assessments and the percentage of all students in grades 3 through 8 scoring at these levels.

**Measure:** The percentage of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State reading assessments.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	77.0%	44.3%
2012	84.7	42.2
2013	92.4	37.4
2014	100	
2015	100	
2016	100	

**Measure:** The percentage of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State mathematics assessments.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	76.7%	45.7%
2012	84.4	41.8
2013	92.2	36.0
2014	100	
2015	100	
2016	100	

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**Measure:** The difference between the percentage of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State reading assessments and the percentage of all students in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State reading assessments.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	11.1	28.1
2012	7.4	28.1
2013	3.6	28.3
2014	0	
2015	0	
2016	0	

**Measure:** The difference between the percentage of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State mathematics assessments and the percentage of all students in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State mathematics assessments.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	10.2	26.0
2012	6.9	26.4
2013	3.4	26.9
2014	0	
2015	0	
2016	0	

**Additional information:** States improved their performance with respect to students with disabilities on State mathematics and reading assessments between 2008 and 2010. However, in 2013, State scores have regressed in both reading and mathematics. The data suggest States were making some progress in ensuring that students with disabilities who participate in State reading and math assessments were reasonably well-equipped to perform on these assessments, but that progress has decreased and is not substantial enough to keep up with the increasing targets that would bring all students with disabilities to proficiency by 2014. It should also be noted that fewer than half of students with disabilities scored at the proficient or advanced levels in reading and math on State assessments (37.4 percent and 36 percent, respectively).

The two previous tables indicate that there continue to be significant gaps between the percent of students with disabilities scoring at proficient or advanced levels on State assessments in reading and math and the percent of all students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels (28.3 percentage points and 26.9 percentage points, respectively). The scores among students with disabilities over the past few years have increased those gaps.

Because definitions of proficient and advanced vary across States, the national data presented here, which simply aggregates State data, may not give a clear or entirely meaningful picture of

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student achievement. In addition, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards, and students with disabilities whose disability has precluded them from achieving grade-level proficiency may take alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards. States may include scores from these assessments for the purposes of adequate yearly progress (AYP) decisions, but only up to a cap of 3 percent of the total population tested, a maximum of 2 percent from alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards and a maximum of 1 percent from alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. In 2012, approximately 21 percent of students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8 were tested in math and reading using an alternate assessment (including those based on modified achievement standards and alternate achievement standards). In fiscal year 2015, the Department plans to publish final regulations which would modify the use of alternative assessments based on modified achievement standards.

**Objective:** *Secondary school students will complete high school prepared for postsecondary education and/or competitive employment.*

**Measure:** The percentage of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who graduate from high school with a regular high school diploma.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	61.0%	63.6%
2012	62.0	63.9
2013	63.0	65.1
2014	64.0	
2015	65.0	
2016	66.0	

**Additional information:** From 2008 to 2013, States successfully increased their graduation rates among students with disabilities and exceeded the targets for the graduation rate during the past 7 years for which data are available. However, there have been significant changes to reporting requirements for graduation and dropout rates over the last 4 years.

The instructions States received from the Department for calculating and submitting their graduation and dropout rates changed substantially in 2009. Previously, States used various methods of defining and calculating graduates and dropouts. Beginning in 2009, through their Annual Performance Reports (APR), States were asked to report using the calculation and timeline required under the 2008 Title I ESEA regulations. The graduation rate under ESEA is a cohort rate that defines a graduate as someone who receives a diploma in 4 years and adjusts for transfers in and out of the school. Students who receive modified diplomas or GEDs do not count as graduates in this calculation. States may receive permission from the Department to report data on cohorts of different lengths of time (such as a 5- or 6-year cohort).

The new graduation rate calculation requires States to track students using a longitudinal data system, which not all States have fully implemented. Most States complied with the new requirements for reporting graduation rate data in 2009. Only 9 States reported graduation rates using previous methods with data compiled under Section 618 of the IDEA. In the 2010-

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11 through 2012-13 school-years, all but 4 States used the new methods for calculating their graduation rates.

For the 2010-11 school-year, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education eliminated the State-reported data element "dropout" from the Consolidated State Performance Report for all students and subgroups due to substantial concerns with the validity and usability of the data. In an attempt to reduce the reporting burden of States, they are no longer required to report this data element.

### Postsecondary Outcomes

One of the purposes of the IDEA is to help prepare children with disabilities for further education, employment, and independent living. In 2011, the Department developed an indicator on employment and postsecondary education. This indicator tracks the median percentage of students who are no longer in secondary school that had individualized education programs (IEPs) in effect at the time they left school, and were: a) enrolled in higher education within 1 year of leaving high school; b) enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within 1 year of leaving high school; or, c) enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program, or competitively employed or in some other form of employment within 1 year of leaving high school. Data for this indicator is collected directly from the States on an annual basis. The Department believes that this is a critical indicator for the program, since it is a reflection of the ultimate results of efforts to provide special education under the Grants to States program.

**Measure:** The median percentage of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within 1 year of leaving high school.

Year	Target	Actual
2013	baseline	73.4%
2014	74.0	
2015	74.5	
2016	75.0	

**Additional information:** The Department collected baseline data in fall 2011 and 2012 and identified numerous data quality and collection issues across States. The Department worked with States to provide technical assistance to identify improvement activities to produce meaningful data on postsecondary outcomes and set baseline data in 2014. However, States continue to struggle to collect a representative sample in their surveys. Response rates ranged from 9.8 percent to 100 percent, with an average response rate of 52.4 percent. In addition, only two States reported a representative respondent group representative of all five subgroups, which include disability, gender, race/ethnicity, age, and exit status. In fiscal year 2014, the Department funded the National Technical Assistance Center on Improving Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students With Disabilities, which will continue to work with States to improve their data quality and postsecondary outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

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#### Efficiency Measure

The Department previously collected data through its program monitoring files to determine the average number of workdays between the completion of a site visit and the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) response to the State. In 2010, the last year the Department collected this data, the Department reduced the number of days to issue responses to 66 days, far exceeding its target of 79 days, by revising its reporting format to remove extraneous descriptions and text that is not relevant to the findings.

The Department is currently in the process of modifying its accountability system, including the onsite visit component, in order to increase efficiency and balance our focus on improved results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and compliance with the requirements of the IDEA. In the meantime, OSEP continues to meet its statutory monitoring responsibilities through the State Performance Plan (SPP)/APR process, fiscal monitoring, and its work with State dispute resolution systems. The Department is actively developing new efficiency measures aligned to the modified accountability system. However, we do not expect data on these measures to be available until fall 2015 at the earliest.

#### Other Performance Information

##### IDEA National Assessment

Section 664 of the IDEA requires the Department to conduct a national assessment of activities carried out with Federal funds. To implement this requirement, funds requested for the Special Education Studies and Evaluation program in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) account are being used to conduct an independent evaluation of the program. As required by the IDEA, the IDEA National Assessment addresses the extent to which States, districts, and schools are implementing the IDEA programs and services to promote a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible and in partnership with parents. The National Assessment will also address the effectiveness of the IDEA programs and services in promoting the developmental progress and academic achievement of children with disabilities. The National Assessment includes the following activities:

Analytic Support. A report published in January 2010, "Patterns in the Identification of and Outcomes for Children and Youth with Disabilities (Patterns)" (see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20104005/index.asp>), provided a synthesis of existing evidence and new analyses of extant data sources to address research questions for the IDEA National Assessment, targeting three topic areas: (1) identification of children for early intervention and special education, (2) declassification of children for early intervention and special education services, and (3) developmental and academic outcomes for children with disabilities. Among the data sources used for the study are the NAEP data from State academic assessments of children with disabilities, data submitted by States to the Department pursuant to section 618 of the IDEA, population counts by State and year from the NCES Common Core of Data and the National Vital Statistics System, and data gathered from four national longitudinal studies of children with disabilities (National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study, Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study, Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study, and National Longitudinal Transition Study-2).

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From 1997 to 2005, the percent of children aged 6 to 17 served under IDEA increased from 12.3 to 12.9. The percentage varies by race/ethnicity, with a low of 6.3 percent for Asian children served under IDEA up to a high of 16.7 percent for black children. There is also variation by State, ranging from 9.9 percent up to 18.6 percent. From 1997 to 2005, the largest increases in disability types were autism, a 400 percent increase among children ages 10 to 17 years, and developmental delay, almost a 2,000 percent increase among children ages 3 to 9 years. The study cited research on declassification (Holt, McGrath, and Herring 2007) that showed almost 50 percent of children eligible in kindergarten were no longer eligible for services by third grade. Children with speech/language impairment are the most likely to be declassified within 2 years (34 percent). Declassified children had higher literacy and math outcomes than children who continued to receive services under IDEA.

The Patterns study confirms data presented above that children with disabilities are performing increasingly well on NAEP tests, but that they are still far behind their non-disabled peers. Children with disabilities also have a much larger range of performance on the NAEP exam than do children without disabilities. State assessment data point to a wide array of outcomes and standards for proficiency. In 4th grade math and reading, the percent of children with disabilities who scored proficient or above on a State's assessment ranged from just less than 10 percent up to 80 percent.

Implementation Study. The final report for the IDEA National Assessment Implementation Study was published in July 2011. This study collected data from State agencies and school districts to address implementation questions for the IDEA National Assessment in four broad areas targeted for this study: (1) services to young children with disabilities; (2) identification of children and youth with disabilities; (3) efforts to promote positive developmental and educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities; and (4) dispute resolution and mediation. Data collection included three surveys of State administrators: (1) IDEA Part B administrators responsible for programs providing special education services to school-aged children with disabilities ages 6-21; (2) IDEA Part B section 619 coordinators who oversee preschool programs for children with disabilities ages 3-5; and (3) IDEA Part C coordinators who are responsible for early intervention programs serving infants and toddlers. A fourth survey collected district level data from a nationally representative sample of local special education administrators about preschool and school-age programs for children with disabilities ages 3-21.

The study specifically focused on implementation related to new or revised provisions from the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA. One such provision, Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS), allows districts to use up to 15 percent of their Part B funds to provide services to children not yet identified as in need of special education. Three percent of districts are required to use CEIS due to significant disproportionality and 11 percent of districts are voluntarily implementing CEIS. Of the districts that implement CEIS, it is used at the elementary school level in 93 percent of districts and focuses on literacy instruction in 84 percent of districts. The study found that the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) is also widespread, and is being used in 71 percent of districts nationally. Similar to CEIS, RTI is most commonly used in elementary schools and in reading/language arts. However, only 41 percent of districts reported using IDEA funds for RTI, while 80 percent of districts reported using their own general funds.

The study looked at qualifications and distribution of "highly qualified" special education personnel. Almost 90 percent of special education teachers meet their State's definition of highly qualified, but States range from 56 percent to 100 percent. Districts reported difficulty

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finding qualified personnel for secondary schools, particularly those trained in math and working with students with emotional disturbances and with autism. The most common method districts use to increase the qualifications of their staff, implemented by 64 percent of all districts and 76 percent of districts facing routine shortages of quality applicants, is to provide professional development. No other approach was used by more than 25 percent of districts.

Finally, the study found that dispute resolution events are very infrequent, with 23 or fewer events for every 10,000 students served between 2004 and 2008. The number of due process hearing requests over that time has been steady at about 21 requests per 10,000 students, but the frequency of due process hearings completed has decreased from 3.36 hearings per 10,000 students in 2004 to 1.61 hearings in 2008.

Impact Evaluation of Response to Intervention Strategies. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-step approach to providing early and more intensive intervention and monitoring within the general education setting. In principle, RTI begins with research-based instruction and behavioral support provided to students in the general education classroom, followed by screening of all students to identify those who may need systematic progress monitoring, intervention, or support. Students who are not responding to the general education curriculum and instruction are provided with increasingly intense interventions through a "multi-tiered" system, and they are frequently monitored to assess their progress and inform the choice of future interventions, including possibly special education for students determined to have a disability. The IDEA permits some Part B special education funds to be used for "early intervening services" such as RTI and also permits districts to use RTI to inform decisions regarding a child's eligibility for special education.

The RTI evaluation is employing a quasi-experimental design to examine the natural variations in elementary school reading instruction, intervention, and support in schools that may already be implementing RTI in 13 States, to address the following research questions:

- What are the effects on academic achievement of providing intensive secondary reading interventions to elementary school children who have been identified as at risk for reading difficulties compared with children just above the cut point for providing intervention?
- How do academic outcomes, including reading achievement and special education identification, vary with elementary schools' adoption of Response to Intervention practices for early grade reading?
- How do Response to Intervention practices for early grade reading vary across schools?

Data collection on RTI implementation and on student outcomes including reading achievement and identification for special education occurred during the 2011-12 school year. The report for this study is now scheduled for release in 2015 rather than 2014, as previously reported.

Other Studies: The Department sponsored the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) to provide nationally representative information about secondary-school-age youth who were receiving special education services in 1985 and 2000, respectively. Data collection consisted of telephone interviews or mail surveys with youth or the youth's parents if the youth were not able to respond themselves. The National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER), in a September 2010 report,

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Comparisons Across Time of the Outcomes of Youth With Disabilities up to 4 Years After High School, compared the changes in outcomes among youth in the NLTS and NLTS2 who had been out of high school for up to 4 years. The report focused on changes in rates of postsecondary education, employment, engagement in either postsecondary education or employment, household circumstances and community integration. Researchers also compared outcomes of youth with disabilities to the general population and across subgroups including disability category, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, high school completion status, and length of time since leaving high school.

According to the NCSER report, youth with disabilities were more likely to have enrolled in postsecondary education within 4 years of leaving high school in 2005 than in 1990. Almost half (46 percent) of all youth with disabilities had spent some time in postsecondary education in 2005. The rate of youth with disabilities who were currently enrolled in postsecondary education and/or employed was 86 percent in 2005, a 21 percentage-point increase over 1990. This increase is likely attributable to an increase in youth who were concurrently enrolled in postsecondary education and employed, given that rates of engagement in only one of these activities did not change significantly over that period of time. The report also illustrated the increasingly important connection between high school completion and postsecondary outcomes, as high school completers had significant and positive changes between 1990 and 2005 in a greater number of outcome measures than non-completers. Youth with disabilities from low-income households increased their postsecondary enrollment rate by 16 percentage points to 35 percent in 2005, but a significant enrollment gap remains between the highest and lowest income households. Similarly, in 2005, youth with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education at a rate well below the general population, specifically, 46 percent compared to 63 percent.

Impacts of School Improvement Status on Students with Disabilities. As part of the IDEA National Assessment, IES is studying changes in student outcomes after schools adopt programs focused on improving academic outcomes for students with disabilities. The focus of the study is on comparing outcomes for students with disabilities in elementary and middle schools identified for improvement with corresponding outcomes in schools not identified for improvement but still accountable for the performance of students with disabilities (SWD).

The evaluation relied on existing data and surveys of school principals in 2010 and 2011. Key outcomes for this study align with the outcomes identified in section 664 of the IDEA, which relate to: academic achievement (including reading and mathematics); participation in the general education curriculum; receipt of special education services; receipt of such services in the least restrictive appropriate environment; and grade transitions.

The Interim Report on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in School Accountability Systems was released in November 2013. This report presented data on schools in 44 States. Of these 44 States, 35 percent of public schools have a large enough population of SWD to be required to meet SWD subgroup accountability standards for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Eleven percent of all public schools in 39 States and DC failed to make AYP in the 2009–10 school year because of SWD subgroup performance and other reasons, and 6 percent missed it solely because of SWD subgroup performance. Among schools with a large enough population of SWD to be required to meet the accountability standards for the duration of the study, 44 percent were identified for school improvement. By comparison, 20 percent of schools with

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small SWD populations were identified for improvement. The final report is now scheduled for release in 2015 rather than 2014, as previously reported.

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**State grants: Preschool grants**

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, Section 619)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: Indefinite

Budget Authority:

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$353,238	\$403,238	+\$50,000

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Preschool Grants program provides formula grants to States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to make available special education and related services for children with disabilities aged 3 through 5. In order to be eligible for these grants, States must serve all eligible children with disabilities aged 3 through 5 and have an approved application under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A State that does not make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to all children with disabilities aged 3 through 5 cannot receive funds under this program or funds attributable to this age range under the Grants to States program. Currently, all States are making FAPE available to all children aged 3 through 5 with disabilities.

At their discretion, States may include preschool-aged children who are experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, who need special education and related services. If consistent with State policy, State and local educational agencies also may use funds received under this program to provide FAPE to 2-year olds with disabilities who will turn 3 during the school year. IDEA requires that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled and that removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. However, States are not required to provide public preschool programs for the general population. For this reason, preschool-aged children with disabilities are served in a variety of settings, including public or private preschool programs, regular kindergarten, Head Start programs, and child care facilities.

Funds are distributed to eligible entities through a formula based on general population and poverty. Under the formula, each State is first allocated an amount equal to its fiscal year 1997 allocation. For any year in which the appropriation is greater than the prior year level, 85 percent of the funds above the fiscal year 1997 level are distributed based on each State's relative percentage of the total number of children aged 3 through 5 in the general population. The other 15 percent is distributed based on the relative percentage of children aged 3 through 5 in each State who are living in poverty. The formula provides several floors and ceilings regarding the amount a State can receive in any year. No State can receive less than it

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received in the prior year. In addition, every State must receive an increase equal to the higher of: (1) the percent the appropriation grew above the prior year, minus 1.5 percent, or, (2) 90 percent of the percentage increase above the prior year. The formula also provides for a minimum increase in State allocations of 1/3 of 1 percent of the increase in the appropriation over the base year and places a ceiling on how much the allocation to a State may increase, in that no State may be allocated an increase above the prior year greater than the percent of growth in the appropriation from the prior year plus 1.5 percent. These provisions help ensure that every State receives a part of any increase and that there is no radical shift in resources among the States.

States must distribute the bulk of their grant awards to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). They may retain funds for State-level activities up to an amount equal to 25 percent of the amount they received for fiscal year 1997 under the Preschool Grants program, adjusted upward each year by the lesser of the rate of increase in the State's allocation or the rate of inflation. The amount that may be used for administration is limited to 20 percent of the amount available to a State for State-level activities. These funds may also be used for the administration of the Grants for Infants and Families program (Part C). State-level activities include: (1) support services, including establishing and implementing a mediation process, which may benefit children with disabilities younger than 3 or older than 5, as long as those services also benefit children with disabilities aged 3 through 5; (2) direct services for children eligible under this program; (3) activities at the State and local level to meet the goals established by the State for the performance of children with disabilities in the State; and (4) supplements to other funds used to develop and implement a statewide coordinated services system designed to improve results for children and families, including children with disabilities and their families, but not to exceed 1 percent of the amount received by the State under this program for a fiscal year. The State may also use its set-aside funds to provide early intervention services. These services must include an educational component that promotes school readiness and incorporates preliteracy, language, and numeracy skills. In addition, they must be provided in accordance with the Grants for Infants and Families program to children who are eligible for services under the Preschool Grants program and who previously received services under Part C until such children enter or are eligible to enter kindergarten and, at a State's discretion, to continue service coordination or case management for families who receive services under Part C.

The number of children served under this program decreased slightly from 749,166 in fiscal year 2013 to 744,741 in fiscal year 2014; however, this count does not include data from Wyoming due to poor data quality. Based on historical child count data, the 2014 count would be a slight decrease from the previous year. The decrease in 2014 was the first since 2009. The variations in the total number of children served and data quality issues make it difficult to forecast the number of children being served in future fiscal years. In the absence of better information, the Department predicts that the number of children with disabilities aged 3 through 5 will remain at the 2014 level for fiscal years 2015 and 2016.

This is a forward funded program. Funds become available for obligation on July 1 of the fiscal year in which they are appropriated and remain available through September 30 of the following year.

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Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011 .....	\$373,351
2012 .....	372,646
2013 .....	353,238
2014 .....	353,238
2015 .....	353,238

### FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$403.2 million for the Preschool Grants program. The request would increase funding for this program by \$50 million over the fiscal year 2015 level, and provide an average of \$541 per child, \$67 more per child than in fiscal year 2015. These averages are based on the assumption that the number of children aged 3 through 5 who will be served will remain constant at the 2014 level of 744,741. This increase will provide a much needed increase in resources to support activities for young children with disabilities. These funds are paired with those available under the Grants to States program under IDEA, Part B.

The Administration is requesting \$11.67 billion for the Grants to States program for fiscal year 2016, which will provide an average of \$1,768 per child. Funding under Preschool Grants supplements the funds provided to States under the Grants to States program, which serves children with disabilities aged 3 through 21, including all children served under the Preschool Grants program.

IDEA currently allows LEAs to reserve up to 15 percent of their Part B allocations for Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment. The Administration is proposing appropriations language to expand access to CEIS to children ages 3 through 5, which we believe will encourage LEAs to use CEIS funds to develop high quality, inclusive preschool programs. In addition to expanding access to CEIS, the Administration is requesting appropriations language to provide the Secretary the authority to waive the reporting requirements for CEIS for children ages 3 through 5 who are not in kindergarten. The Administration believes reducing the reporting burden will encourage LEAs to establish CEIS programs for this age range. Moreover, this will allow LEAs to focus on providing expanded services to preschool-age children while the Department works to build the capacity of States to report accurate early learning data in future years.

### Administration's Early Learning Agenda

The Administration believes high-quality early learning is critical to the future success of all children, including children with disabilities, and that improved coordination among State and Federal early learning programs will lead to improved services and results. The fiscal year 2016 Budget includes several new and continuing investments that support this goal. The Budget provides \$503.6 million, a \$65 million increase for the IDEA Grants for infants and families program to provide services designed to lessen the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities for future or more extensive services and to ensure that very young children with

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disabilities receive the supports and services they need to prepare them to enter formal education. The Preschool Grants to States program also supports the inclusion of young children with disabilities in State early learning programs and federally funded programs, such as Head Start and child care programs supported under the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG). States frequently use the IDEA Preschool Grants program State-level set-aside funds to ensure that children with disabilities are included in State early learning programs and programs operated or supported by other Federal programs.

The Administration is proposing to increase support for other early learning programs in the School Readiness account that also serve children with disabilities, including increasing the Department's Preschool Development Grants by \$500 million in fiscal year 2016 compared to 2015, for a total investment of \$750 million. The Preschool Development Grants provide competitive grants to States to support efforts to: (1) build or enhance a preschool program infrastructure that would enable the delivery of high-quality preschool services to children, and (2) implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs in targeted high-need communities that would serve as models for expanding preschool to all 4-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families. This effort will lay the groundwork to ensure that more States are ready to participate in the Preschool for All program, a 10-year \$75 billion mandatory investment that establishes a Federal-State partnership to provide all low- and moderate-income 4-year-olds with high-quality preschool.

The Budget also includes almost \$10.2 billion for the Department of Health and Human Service's Head Start Program (an increase of \$1.5 billion over the fiscal year 2015 level), including \$650 million for Early Head Start and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships that serve low-income infants and toddlers (a \$150 million increase over the fiscal year 2015 level). The Budget also expands funding for evidence-based voluntary home visiting programs and makes an historic investment in child care assistance to ensure that all eligible low- and moderate-income families with children under four have access to high quality care that support working families and promote healthy child development.

### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Children Served <sup>1</sup>	744,741 <sup>2</sup>	744,741 <sup>2</sup>	744,741 <sup>2</sup>
Share per child (whole dollars)	\$474 <sup>2</sup>	\$474 <sup>2</sup>	\$541 <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> States may, at their discretion, provide free appropriate public education to 2-year olds who will turn 3 during the school year. However, the figures for the number of children served do not include children served by the States who are 2 years old at the time of the count, but will turn 3 during the school year.

<sup>2</sup> Estimate, based on State-reported cumulative total for children served in the fall of 2014. Data with questionable data quality were not included in this total.

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#### History of Children Served and Program Funding

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Children Served</u> (thousands)	<u>Appropriation</u> (dollars in thousands)	<u>Federal Share per Child</u> (whole dollars)
1977	197	\$12,500	\$64
1978	201	15,000	81
1979	215	17,500	81
1980	232	25,000	108
1981	237	25,000	105
1982	228	24,000	105
1983	242	25,000	103
1984	243	26,330	108
1985	260	29,000	112
1986	261	28,710	110
1987	266	180,000	677 <sup>1</sup>
1988	288	201,054	698
1989	322	247,000	767
1990	352	251,510	715
1991	367	292,766	798 <sup>2</sup>
1992	398	320,000	804
1993	441	325,773	739
1994	479	339,257	709
1995	522	360,265	689
1996	549	360,409	656
1997	562	360,409	642
1998	572	373,985	654
1999	575	373,985	651
2000	589	390,000	662
2001	599	390,000	652
2002	617	390,000	632
2003	647	387,465	599
2004	680	387,699	571
2005	702	384,597	548
2006	704	380,751	546
2007	714	380,751	533
2008	710	374,099	527

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<sup>1</sup> The Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 changed the Preschool Grants program from a grant program, that provided an incentive for States to serve children with disabilities aged 3 through 5, to a formula grant program. Funding was increased to support the change in statutory authority.

<sup>2</sup> Beginning in fiscal year 1991, the IDEA required that services be made available to all eligible children with disabilities aged 3 through 5 as a condition for receiving funding for children in this age range under the Grants to States program.

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#### History of Children Served and Program Funding - Continued

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Children Served</u> (thousands)	<u>Appropriation</u> (dollars in thousands)	<u>Federal Share per Child</u> (whole dollars)
2009	709	\$774,099 <sup>3</sup>	\$1,092 <sup>3</sup>
2010	732	374,099	511
2011	738 <sup>4</sup>	373,351	508
2012	745 <sup>4</sup>	372,646	500
2013	749 <sup>4</sup>	353,238	472
2014	745 <sup>4</sup>	353,238	474
2015	745 <sup>4</sup>	353,238	474
2016	745 <sup>4</sup>	403,238	541

<sup>3</sup> These figures include funds provided under the Recovery Act in fiscal year 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Beginning in fiscal year 2011, this table reports the number of children served by the 50 States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Prior fiscal years also include the number of children served in the Outlying Areas, Freely Associated States, and the Bureau of Indian Education, which do not receive Preschool Grant awards.

### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

#### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

**Goal: To help preschool children with disabilities enter school ready to succeed by assisting States in providing special education and related services.**

**Objective:** *Preschool children with disabilities will receive special education and related services that result in increased skills that enable them to succeed in school.*

Three of the performance measures for the Preschool Grants program look at the percentage increase in growth by preschool children with disabilities in specific areas — positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships), acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs — as measured from the point of time on entering a program to the time the child exits the program.

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**Measure:** The percentage of children who entered the program below age expectations in positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships) who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	80%	79%
2012	81	79
2013	82	80
2014	83	
2015	84	
2016	84	

**Measure:** The percentage of children who entered the program below age expectations in acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy) who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	80%	79%
2012	81	80
2013	82	80
2014	83	
2015	84	
2016	84	

**Measure:** The percentage of children who entered the program below age expectations in the use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	80%	78%
2012	81	77
2013	82	80
2014	83	
2015	84	
2016	84	

**Additional information:** Through their Annual Performance Reports (APRs), States report on the cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioral development of children with disabilities served through the Preschool Grants program. The Department, with the assistance of its grantee, the Early Childhood Outcomes Center, funded under the Technical Assistance and Dissemination program, uses these data to assess outcomes for children served through this program. Measuring growth in these outcomes, especially for preschool aged children, is a complicated

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endeavor that requires a significant investment of time and technical assistance at both the Federal and State levels to ensure that the data collected are valid, reliable, and meaningful.

The Department has been deliberate in developing these measures due to the challenges of assessing program performance based on growth in early childhood outcomes, especially for children with disabilities. In 2005, States began developing systems for collecting entry and exit data on children with disabilities who receive services through the preschool program and remain in the program for at least 6 months. The Department has made substantial investments in technical assistance to States to improve data quality concerns since 2010 when all States were required to report complete entry and exit data for a full cohort of children with disabilities aged 3 through 5 for the first time.

The quality of the data States reported in their APRs since February 2011 has demonstrated marked improvement, and the sample of States with the highest quality data increased from 39 to 41 out of 59 States and jurisdictions in the 2013. To help determine an appropriate baseline for these three measures, a weighted data set was derived from these 41 States, excluding from the percentage calculation all States that had high proportions of missing data, anomalous outcomes, or were known to have other data quality or collection issues. The weighted data showed that, of this smaller sample of States, more than 80 percent of preschoolers substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program in each measure category: 80 percent in the acquisition and use of knowledge, 80 percent in positive social-emotional skills, and 80 percent in the use of appropriate behavior. These results represent a slight decrease from the 2013 school year and do not meet the targets set for each category; however, this decrease may be attributed to a larger sample and increased reporting. The targets for these measures were set based, in part, on the outcomes of this sample of States with higher quality data. As States have improved their data collection, the number of children served by this program for whom outcome data are reported has increased substantially each year. Since outcomes have generally improved as data are reported for more children and States are better able to target program improvement, the Department is optimistic that, within the next few years, the national data will demonstrate that the children served by the program are improving at levels similar to the children in States with the best data quality.

States are engaged in implementing quality control systems to identify and improve the accuracy of local data, and have indicated that they believe the data will be useful in their program improvement efforts. The Department acknowledges that some data quality issues still exist, particularly with regards to missing data. The extent of missing data is difficult to determine precisely because States do not report on the number of children exiting the program. Furthermore, States may be unable to collect exit data for all children (e.g., due to a move to another State, withdrawal from the program without prior notice, or death). Through its technical assistance investments, the Department continues to work with the States to resolve implementation issues, improve the validity and reliability of reported data, and use these data to inform program improvements.

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**Measure:** The percentage of children with disabilities (ages 3 through 5) attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program.

Year	Target	Actual
2013	Baseline	43.5%
2014	44	
2015	45	
2016	46	

**Additional information:** This measure replaced a previous measure on the extent to which children with disabilities receive their special education services in regular education settings. The earlier measure required States to report the percentage of children with disabilities (aged 3 through 5) who receive special education and related services in a regular early learning program at least 80 percent of the time; however, the Department revised the Preschool Educational Environment reporting categories to better assess the inclusive experiences of preschool children with disabilities. In addition, the Department received feedback that the previous Preschool Educational Environments reporting categories were challenging to report on and provided little information regarding the inclusive experiences of children with disabilities in regular early childhood programs.

In the new measure, the Department simplified data collection and reduced the reporting burden by removing the requirement to report the proportion of time that a child spends each week in a regular early childhood program. The revised form only requires the IEP team including the parents to determine whether the child attends a regular early learning program and, if yes, if it is less than or more than 10 hours a week. The revised data collection is designed to obtain information on where children receive the majority, at least 50 percent of the time, of their special education and related services. The first collection of preschool educational environment data using the new form was the 2010-11 school year, with the first data reported in the Annual Performance Reports in February 2013. The Department developed a baseline in 2014.

The Department is using technical assistance providers such as the National Technical Assistance Center to Improve State Data Capacity to Accurately Collect and Report IDEA Data, the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, and the Center for Systemic Improvement to assist States in collecting the preschool educational environments data, and is providing additional technical assistance through mechanisms such as presentations at the annual State data managers' conference and other meetings and the provision of "Frequently Asked Questions" documents and a data dictionary (<http://www.ideadata.org/docs/bdatadictionary.pdf>).

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**Measure:** The number of States with at least 90 percent of special education teachers of children with disabilities aged 3 to 5 who are fully certified in the areas in which they are teaching.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	41	45
2012	41	44
2013	42	43
2014	45	
2015	46	
2016	47	

**Additional information:** The Department exceeded its target for fiscal years 2010 through 2012, with 2013 being the most recent year for which data are available. From 2007 to 2011, performance on this measure increased from 34 States to 45 States that met the 90 percent requirement ensuring their special education teachers are fully certified in the areas in which they are teaching. This measure includes the 50 States, D.C., Puerto Rico, the Outlying Areas and the Bureau of Indian Education.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has made a number of investments designed to assist States in preparing a sufficient number of qualified preschool special education personnel. In 2012, the Department established an Early Childhood Personnel Center to improve professional development for personnel working with children with disabilities birth through age 5 and their families. This Center helps to address State-identified needs for highly qualified personnel in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education to work with infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through scientifically based research and experience, to be successful in serving those children.

The Department also created the National IDEA Technical Assistance Center on Early Childhood Longitudinal Data Systems in 2012. This center provides technical assistance on developing and expanding statewide, longitudinal data systems that incorporate data required under Sections 616 and 618 of IDEA. The center works intensively with 10-12 States in four main areas of data collection: defining data elements, acquiring data, validating data, and using data to examine validity and program improvement. The center also coordinates with other Department initiatives related to data systems and early learning, including Race To the Top – Early Learning Challenge Fund and the Statewide Longitudinal Data System grant program.

### Efficiency Measure

The Department previously collected data through its program monitoring files to determine the average number of workdays between the completion of a site visit and the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) response to the State. In 2010, the last year the Department collected this data, the Department reduced the number of days to issue responses to 66 days, far exceeding its target of 79 days, by revising its reporting format to remove extraneous descriptions and text that is not relevant to the findings.

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The Department is currently in the process of modifying its accountability system, including the onsite visit component, in order to increase efficiency and balance our focus on improved results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and compliance with the requirements of the IDEA. In the meantime, OSEP continues to meet its statutory monitoring responsibilities through the State Performance Plan (SPP)/APR process, fiscal monitoring, and its work with State dispute resolution systems. The Department is actively developing new efficiency measures aligned to the modified accountability system. The Department does not expect data on these new measures to be available until fall 2015 at the earliest.

### Other Performance Information

Pre-Elementary Longitudinal Study (PEELS): The PEELS study involved a nationally representative sample of children, 3 to 5 years of age when they entered the study, with diverse disabilities who are receiving preschool special education services in a variety of settings. The study answered questions such as:

- What are the characteristics of children receiving preschool special education?
- What services do they receive and in what settings? Who provides these services?
- What child, family, community, and system factors are associated with the services children receive and the results they attain?
- What are their transitions like between early intervention (programs for children from birth to 3 years old) and preschool, and between preschool and elementary school?
- To what extent do the children participate in activities with other children their age who are not receiving preschool special education services? To what extent are preschool special education graduates included in general elementary education classes and related activities?
- What short- and long-term results do children achieve in preschool, kindergarten, and early elementary school?

#### *Results from the PEELS Study*

In October 2010, the National Center for Special Education Research released the report, "Access to Educational and Community Activities for Young Children with Disabilities." As reported in parent interviews, participation in community activities such as sports, organized clubs, art, and music varied significantly by type of disability and by household income. Children from households with annual incomes greater than \$40,000 participated in sports with greater frequency than children from households with lower incomes. Children of parents who perceived their neighborhood to be unsafe or who reported that their transportation did not meet their families' needs were significantly less likely to participate in extracurricular activities. Parents also reported on educational settings, and 69 percent said they sent their children to full day kindergarten. Children from high wealth districts and those from suburban settings were less likely to attend full-day kindergarten than their peers.

In a survey of kindergarten teachers, 73 percent of teachers reported that the regular education classroom was the main setting for children receiving special education services. This inclusion

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rate was significantly higher in very large districts (91 percent) than districts of other sizes, and significantly higher in rural districts (86 percent) than in suburban or urban districts. Children in very low wealth districts were less likely to have regular classrooms as their main setting (59 percent) compared to all other districts. On average, children spent 17.1 hours per week in regular classrooms and 7.1 hours in special education settings.

Teachers also reported on modifications and accommodations provided to children with disabilities. Overall, teachers reported using unmodified grade-level materials in 44 percent of cases, while 14 percent of children received specialized materials or curricula. There was no significant variation in these data across district size or wealth. The study also found that children who received special education services in a regular classroom were in classrooms in which, on average, 82 percent of students were nondisabled (<http://www.peels.org>).

In August 2011, the latest report from this study was released, "A Longitudinal View of the Receptive Vocabulary and Math Achievement of Young Children with Disabilities." This report was designed to address two PEELS specific research questions:

- How do children who received preschool special education services perform over time on assessments of receptive vocabulary and math skills?
- How does their receptive vocabulary and math performance vary over time by primary disability category?

Children who received preschool special education services showed growth each year in vocabulary and mathematics; however, growth slowed in both math and vocabulary as they got older. Children's performance varied across assessments and across subgroups defined by disability. At age 3, children with a speech or language impairment had higher average scores than those with developmental delays. At age 10, the gap between these subgroups persisted, and there were no statistically significant differences in growth rates between subgroups.

Other Studies: The Department also is investing in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study program through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This program involves two complementary cohort studies, a Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) and a Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), that focus on children's early school experiences. The ECLS-K has followed the kindergarten class of 1998-99 through eighth grade. The ECLS-K provides descriptive information on children's status at entry to school and their transition into school, and their progression through middle school. The ECLS-B is designed to follow children from 9 months through kindergarten. It focuses on health, development, early care, and education during the formative years of children born in 2001. These studies also are providing some data on outcomes experienced by children with disabilities participating in preschool programs and baseline data on outcomes experienced by nondisabled children.

OSEP, and subsequently the National Center on Special Education Research, have sponsored a special education questionnaire for teachers in the ECLS-K Study and the collection of more extensive data on children with disabilities and their programs, including the identification of, receipt of services for, and use of special equipment for a number of disabling conditions that may interfere with a sampled child's ability to learn. The children in the ECLS-K cohort were 5 years of age in school year 2006-07, when the first kindergarten data collection was conducted. During this collection, the majority of the children in the cohort were age-eligible for

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kindergarten, although all sample children were evaluated, regardless of kindergarten enrollment status. Since about a quarter of the cohort were not age-eligible for kindergarten until fall 2007, a second kindergarten data collection was fielded in 2007 to measure the kindergarten experiences of these children. The ECLS-K followed children through the cohort's eighth grade year in school year 2008-09. The final data for the 8th and final year of data collection was released in July 2009. A new study, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011) replaces the ECLS-K and will be an ongoing study sponsored by NCES. The ECLS-K: 2011 will provide descriptive information on children's status at entry to school, their transition into school, and their progression through the elementary grades.

Data from ECLS-K on demographic and school characteristics indicate that for the cohort of students beginning kindergarten in 1998, specific learning disabilities and speech or language impairments were the most prevalent primary disabilities over the grades studied. The percentage of the student cohort receiving special education grew from 4.1 percent in kindergarten to 11.9 percent of students in fifth grade. The results also indicate that higher percentages of boys than girls and of poor students than nonpoor students received special education. About 12 percent of students receive special education in at least one of the grades: kindergarten, first, and third grade, including 16 percent of boys, 8 percent of girls, 18 percent of poor children, and 10 percent of nonpoor children. One in three students who receive special education in early grades, first receive special education in kindergarten. Half of those who begin special education in kindergarten are no longer receiving special education by third grade. In addition to students' gender and poverty status, results are presented separately for other student and school characteristics, including race/ethnicity and school control, urbanicity, region, and poverty concentration.

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**State grants: Grants for infants and families**  
(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0 <sup>1</sup>

Budget Authority:

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$438,556	\$503,556	+\$65,000

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<sup>1</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011; continued funding is proposed for this program in FY 2016 through appropriations language.

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Grants for Infants and Families program (Part C) awards formula grants to the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Department of the Interior, and Outlying Areas to assist them in implementing statewide systems of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs and making early intervention services available to children with disabilities, aged birth through 2, and their families. Under the program, States are responsible for ensuring that appropriate early intervention services are made available to all eligible birth-through-2-year-olds with disabilities and their families, including Indian children and families who reside on reservations geographically located in the State. Infants and toddlers with disabilities are defined as children who: (1) are experiencing developmental delays, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following five areas: cognitive development, physical development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; or (2) have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Within statutory limits, "developmental delay" has the meaning given the term by each State. In addition, States have the discretion to provide services to infants and toddlers who are at risk of having substantial developmental delays if they do not receive appropriate early intervention services.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) gives States the discretion to extend eligibility for Part C services to children with disabilities who are eligible for services under section 619 and who previously received services under Part C, until such children enter or are eligible under State law to enter kindergarten or elementary school, as appropriate. The Act further stipulates that any Part C programs serving children aged 3 or older must provide an educational component that promotes school readiness and incorporates pre-literacy, language, and numeracy skills and provide a written notification to parents of their rights regarding the continuation of services under Part C and eligibility for services under section 619. In fiscal year 2009, two States (New Mexico and Maryland) elected to make Part C services available to children with disabilities beyond their third birthday and continued to do so in 2010, 2011, and 2012. New Mexico stopped exercising this flexibility beginning in 2013. No other States have elected to implement this option since fiscal year 2009.

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In any fiscal year in which the appropriation for Part C exceeds \$460 million, the statute also includes authority for the Department to reserve 15 percent of the amount above \$460 million for a State Incentive Grants program. The purpose of this program is to provide funding to assist States that have elected to extend eligibility for Part C services to children with disabilities aged 3 years until entrance into kindergarten or elementary school, or for a portion of this period. No State can receive more than 20 percent of the amount available for State Incentive Grants in a fiscal year. In fiscal year 2009, due to the addition of funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the total of funds appropriated for Part C exceeded the \$460 million level. The States that opted to extend their provision of Part C services beyond age 3 received additional funds through this program, and had until September 30, 2011, to expend these funds. The appropriation for fiscal years 2010 through 2015 did not exceed \$460 million, so the Department did not have authority to award State Incentive Grants in any of these fiscal years.

The statewide system also must comply with additional statutory requirements, including having a lead agency designated with the responsibility for the coordination and administration of funds and a State Interagency Coordinating Council to advise and assist the lead agency. One of the purposes of the Part C program is to assist States to coordinate payment for early intervention services from Federal, State, local, and private sources, including public and private insurance coverage. These include Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income, and Early Head Start.

Funds allocated under this program can be used to: (1) maintain and implement the statewide system described above; (2) fund direct early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families that are not otherwise provided by other public or private sources; (3) expand and improve services that are otherwise available; (4) provide a free appropriate public education, in accordance with Part B of the IDEA, to children with disabilities from their third birthday to the beginning of the following school year; (5) continue to provide early intervention services to children with disabilities from their third birthday until such children enter or are eligible to enter kindergarten or elementary school; and (6) initiate, expand, or improve collaborative efforts related to identifying, evaluating, referring, and following up on at-risk infants and toddlers in States that do not provide direct services for these children.

The IDEA requires that early intervention services be provided, to the maximum extent appropriate, in natural environments. These services can be provided in another setting only when early intervention cannot be achieved satisfactorily for the infant or toddler in a natural environment. The natural environment includes the home and community settings where children would be participating if they did not have a disability. Each child's individualized family service plan (IFSP) must contain a statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services will be provided, including a justification of the extent, if any, to which the services will not be provided in a natural environment.

Allocations are based on the number of children in the general population aged birth through 2 years in each State. The Department of Education uses data provided by the United States Census Bureau in making this calculation. No State can receive less than 0.5 percent of the funds available to all States, or \$500,000, whichever is greater. The Outlying Areas may receive not more than 1 percent of the funds appropriated. The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Education, receives 1.25 percent of the aggregate of the amount available to all States. Interior must pass through all the funds it receives to Indian tribes, tribal

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organizations, or consortia for the coordination of early intervention services on reservations with Interior schools. Tribes and tribal organizations can use the funds they receive to provide (1) help to States in identifying Indian infants and toddlers with disabilities, (2) parent training, and (3) early intervention services.

This is a forward funded program. Funds become available for obligation on July 1 of the fiscal year in which they are appropriated and remain available through September 30 of the following year.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011.....	\$438,548
2012.....	442,710
2013.....	419,653
2014.....	438,498
2015.....	438,556

### FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$503.6 million for the Part C program for fiscal year 2016, an increase of \$65.0 million over the fiscal year 2015 level. The requested amount would provide support to increase access to high-quality early childhood programs for children with disabilities. These funds would support early intervention programs that provide services designed to lessen the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities for future or more extensive services and to ensure that very young children with disabilities receive the supports and services they need to prepare them to enter formal education.

At the requested level, the average State award would increase by approximately \$945,000 over the fiscal year 2015 amount. These additional funds would help States enhance their systems for identifying infants and toddlers with disabilities and determining appropriate services, and facilitate better coordination with other programs serving young children.

In addition, because the requested level is above the statutory \$460.0 million trigger, the Department would be able to make State Incentive Grants to States under section 643(e) of the IDEA to promote and facilitate the implementation of policies allowing parents of children with disabilities to choose the continuation of early intervention services for their children until they are eligible to enter elementary school. The Administration believes that these incentive grants, ranging in size based on the number of children in the State (up to a maximum of \$1.3 million), will encourage a number of additional States to begin to offer this flexibility to parents and families.

### Pay for Success Early Intervention Pilots

Investment in the early stages of a child's life and education can pay enormous dividends in the future. These dividends accrue not only to the child served, but also to the school districts that will later serve these children and to the public, because early intervention reduces the need for

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costlier supports later on.<sup>1</sup> Interventions to reach infants and toddlers at risk of not attaining key developmental milestones may be especially powerful.<sup>2</sup> For example, early detection and intervention for children with autism has shown promise in reducing the subsequent need for more intensive services.<sup>3</sup>

The Administration strongly supports increased investment in early childhood through traditional funding mechanisms. But, in view of ongoing budget constraints in States, the Administration also supports testing alternative approaches which draw on non-government sources to support expanded provision of services. To this end, the Administration is proposing a \$15 million set-aside within the Part C program in fiscal year 2016 to support local or regionally focused Pay for Success pilots that will expand the availability of early screening and intervention services for children with developmental delays.

Pay for Success programs allow private or philanthropic investors to provide the operating funds necessary to administer and expand promising social programs in exchange for performance-based payments tied to achieving specific outcomes. If a program fails to reach specified performance objectives, the Government does not make a payment and the investor gets nothing. The Pay for Success model permits the Government to fund only those programs that meet or exceed expectations.

State and local governments have begun to test out Pay for Success approaches in the early childhood arena. The City of Chicago, for example, recently utilized a Pay for Success arrangement to expand its Child-Parent Center, a prekindergarten education and family engagement program. Likewise, in 2013, the United Way of Salt Lake, local school districts, Salt Lake County, and other private and nonprofit groups used a Pay for Success model to grow its Utah High Quality Preschool Program. The successes and challenges in these locations will provide lessons on which new investments can build.

The Pay for Success pilots in Part C would make performance-based payments to consortia of government agencies, non-profit organizations, or other entities that successfully develop and implement programs that increase early screening and early intervention services for infants

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Savelyev, P. A., Yavitz, A. (2010). A New cost-benefit and rate of return analysis for the Perry Preschool Program: A Summary. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 16180. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16180>.

Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., White, B. A. B., Ou, S., & Robertson, D. L. (2011). Age 26 cost-benefit analysis of the Child-Parent Center early education program. *Child Development*, 82(1), 379-404.

Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2005). Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40. Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 14. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. <http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=219>

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: Heckman, J. J. and D. V. Masterov (2007). The productivity argument for investing in young children. *Review of Agricultural Economics* 29 (3), 446-493.

Deming, D. (2009). Early childhood intervention and life-cycle skill development: Evidence from Head Start. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 1(3), 111-134.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example: Baranek, J.T., Watson, L.R., Turner-Brown, L., Field, S.H., Crais, L.R., Wakeford, L., Little, L.M., & Reznick, J.S. (2014). Preliminary efficacy of Adapted Responsive Teaching for infants at risk of autism spectrum disorder in a community sample. *Autism Research and Treatment*, 2015.

Dawson, G., Rogers, S., Munson, J., Smith, M., Winter, J., Greenson, J., Donaldson, A., & Varley, J. (2010). Randomized, controlled trial of an intervention for toddlers with autism: the Early Start Denver Model. *Pediatrics*, 125(1), e17-e23.

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and toddlers with disabilities, and early screening, evaluation, early intervention, and other services to at-risk infants and toddlers who would not otherwise qualify for Part C services in their State. Consortia would submit funding applications to the Department identifying key partners in the region, a plan for expanding the availability of early screening opportunities and expanding service provision, and proposed performance targets.

In the most typical Pay for Success model, the Department would contract with a given entity who would act as an intermediary between the Department, private investors, service providers, and third-party evaluators. The intermediary would then raise capital from private investors and contract with the service providers, who would provide the interventions, and arrange for an independent evaluation of the program. Consortia who submit applications under this program may serve as intermediaries, or may consist of entities who serve as both intermediaries and service providers.

While the Department would look to applicants for the establishment of performance targets and payment schedules, appropriate targets must incentivize improvement in child outcomes without discouraging the provision of appropriate services where needed. During the 5-year project period, grantees would provide screenings and early intervention services to infants and toddlers within the region and collect outcomes data demonstrating the efficacy of their pilot and the degree to which they have met the performance benchmarks.

The Administration expects the Pay for Success pilots to generate high-quality, robust screening and intervention programs that will have lasting positive effects on at-risk, underserved children.

### Administration's Early Learning Agenda

The Administration believes high-quality early learning is critical to the future success of all children, including children with disabilities, and that improved coordination among State and Federal early learning programs will lead to improved services and results. The fiscal year 2016 Budget includes several new and continuing investments that support this goal. The Budget provides \$403 million, a \$50 million increase for the IDEA Preschool Grants program to provide services needed to prepare young children with disabilities to enter school ready to learn. This program also supports the inclusion of young children with disabilities in State early learning programs and federally funded programs, such as Head Start and child care programs supported under the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG). States frequently use the IDEA Preschool Grants program State-level set-aside funds to ensure that children with disabilities are included in State early learning programs and programs operated or supported by other Federal programs.

The Administration is proposing to increase support for other early learning programs in the School Readiness account that also serve children with disabilities, including increasing the Department's Preschool Development Grants by \$500 million in fiscal year 2016 compared to 2015, for a total investment of \$750 million. The Preschool Development Grants provide competitive grants to States to support efforts to: (1) build or enhance a preschool program infrastructure that would enable the delivery of high-quality preschool services to children, and (2) implement and sustain high-quality preschool programs in targeted high-need communities that would serve as models for expanding preschool to all 4-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families. This effort will lay the groundwork to ensure that more States are ready to participate in the Preschool for All program, a 10-year \$75 billion mandatory investment that

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establishes a Federal-State partnership to provide all low- and moderate-income 4-year-olds with high-quality preschool.

The Budget also includes almost \$10.2 billion for the Department of Health and Human Service's Head Start Program (an increase of \$1.5 billion over the fiscal year 2015 level), including \$650 million for Early Head Start and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships that serve low-income infants and toddlers (a \$150 million increase over the fiscal year 2015 level). The Budget also expands funding for evidence-based voluntary home visiting programs and makes an historic investment in child care assistance to ensure that all eligible low- and moderate-income families with children under four have access to high quality care that support working families and promote healthy child development.

#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Range in size of awards to States:			
Smallest State regular Part C award <sup>1 2</sup>	\$2,149	\$2,149	\$2,463
Average State regular Part C award <sup>1</sup>	\$8,265	\$8,265	\$9,210
Largest State regular Part C award <sup>1</sup>	\$53,044	\$52,545	\$58,266
Children served <sup>3</sup>	340,000	340,000	340,000

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<sup>1</sup> The calculations exclude funds for the Outlying Areas or the Department of the Interior.

<sup>2</sup> IDEA, section 643(c)(2) provides for a minimum allocation to States of the greater of \$500,000 or ½ of 1 percent of the amount available to States after the reservations for the Outlying Areas and the Bureau of Indian Education are excluded.

<sup>3</sup> Estimates.

#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

##### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

**Goal: To enhance the development of infants and toddlers (birth to three) with disabilities and support families in meeting the special needs of their child.**

**Objective:** *The functional development of infants and toddlers will be enhanced by early intervention services.*

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**Measure:** The percentage of infants and toddlers who entered the program below age expectations in positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships) who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	65%	68%
2012	67	66
2013	69	66
2014	69	
2015	70	
2016	70	

**Measure:** The percentage of infants and toddlers who entered the program below age expectations in acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy) who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	69%	73%
2012	71	72
2013	73	71
2014	73	
2015	75	
2016	76	

**Measure:** The percentage of infants and toddlers who entered the program below age expectations in the use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	69%	73%
2012	71	73
2013	73	71
2014	73	
2015	75	
2016	77	

**Additional information:** Through their Annual Performance Reports (APRs), States report on the cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioral development of children with disabilities served through the Part C program. The Department, with the assistance of its grantee, the Early Childhood Outcomes Center, uses these data to assess outcomes for children served through this program. Measuring growth in these outcomes, especially for infants and toddlers, is a complicated endeavor that requires a significant investment of time and technical assistance at both the Federal and State levels to ensure that the data collected are valid, reliable, and

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meaningful. The Department has been deliberate in developing this measure due to the challenges of assessing program performance based on growth in early childhood outcomes, especially for children with disabilities. In 2005, States began developing systems for collecting entry and exit data on children with disabilities who receive services through the Part C program and remain in the program for at least 6 months. While three States have received approval from the Department to collect data for a representative sample of the children they serve through the Part C program, all other States are responsible for reporting data on all children served. The APRs submitted by States in February 2010 included the first opportunity for States to have a set of complete entry and exit data for a full cohort of infants and toddlers, but the Department did not publish these data because a large number of States had high percentages of missing data or other data quality concerns.

However, the quality of the data States reported in their APRs in February of 2011, 2012, and 2013 (providing data on program years 2010, 2011, and 2012, respectively) demonstrated marked improvement. In the APRs submitted in 2010, only 19 States provided high quality data, meaning that they did not have high proportions of missing data, anomalous outcomes, nor were known to have other data quality or collection issues. In the APRs submitted in 2011, 29 States provided high quality data, increasing to 39 in 2012. Despite a decrease to 33 in 2013, 41 States provided high quality data in APRs submitted in 2014 (for program year 2013). The Department believes that the reduction in the number of States submitting high quality data in 2013 was largely the result of shifts in data collection approaches at the State level and that these new approaches, in conjunction with broader State efforts to address data quality issues, will result in better information moving forward.

States have indicated that they believe data on these measures will be useful in their program improvement efforts. States are engaged in implementing quality control systems to identify and improve the accuracy of local data. The Department acknowledges that some data quality issues persist, particularly concerning missing data. In some instances, States may be unable to collect exit data for all children (e.g., due to a move to another State, withdrawal from the program without prior notice, or death). Through its technical assistance investments, the Department continues to work with the States to resolve implementation issues, improve the validity and reliability of reported data, and use these data to inform program improvements.

At this time, it is difficult to determine trends with such a small number of data points and changes in the quality of data being submitted by States. As data quality continues to improve, results reported on this measure will converge with actual performance in the field. However, at this time, it is not possible to accurately determine whether actual performance is above, below, or equal to the results presented above. Data for fiscal year 2014 are expected to be available in fall 2015.

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**Objective:** *All infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families will receive early intervention services in natural environments that meet their individual needs.*

**Measure:** The number of States that serve at least 1 percent of infants in the general population under age 1 through Part C.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	27	26
2012	27	28
2013	27	30
2014	28	
2015	30	
2016	32	

**Additional information:** For a number of years, only 24 or 25 States have served at least 1 percent of infants in the general population under the age of 1. The program made progress in 2012 and 2013, exceeding its targets. The 1 percent threshold for this measure is based on data collected by the U.S. Census bureau on prevalence rates for 5 conditions: 0.4 percent - severe mental retardation<sup>1</sup>; 0.2 percent - hearing impairment; 0.1 percent - visual impairment; 0.2 percent - physical conditions (spina bifida, cerebral palsy, etc.); and 0.1 percent - autism. State lead agencies responsible for the implementation of these programs report data annually to the Department through their APRs on numbers of infants and toddlers with disabilities served under the Grants for Infants and Families program. Through its monitoring and technical assistance efforts, the Department is working with States to ensure that they are appropriately identifying and serving all eligible infants with disabilities and expects the number of States serving at least 1 percent of infants in the general population under age 1 to increase further as a result. Data for fiscal year 2014 are expected to be available in fall 2015.

**Measure:** The number of States that serve at least 2 percent of infants and toddlers in the general population, birth through age 2, through Part C.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	32	42
2012	32	44
2013	42	41
2014	45	
2015	45	
2016	46	

**Additional information:** The State lead agencies responsible for the implementation of these programs report data on the numbers of infants and toddlers with disabilities served under the Grants for Infants and Families program annually to the Department through their APRs. The Department sets the 2-percent threshold for this measure using data from the U.S. Census

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<sup>1</sup> Consistent with P.L. 111-256, the Department uses the term “intellectual disabilities” instead of “mental retardation,” but we have retained the term here to permit verification of the data that were used to set the threshold.

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bureau on the percentage of infants and toddlers with disabilities in the general population. Through its monitoring and technical assistance efforts, the Department helps States enhance their child find systems to ensure that they are appropriately identifying and serving eligible toddlers with disabilities. The Department believes that these efforts are partially responsible for the improved performance of States under this measure over the past 4 years. Data for fiscal year 2014 are expected to be available in fall 2015.

**Measure:** The percentage of children receiving age-appropriate early intervention services in the home or in programs designed for typically developing peers.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	93%	95%
2012	93	95
2013	94	95
2014	95	
2015	95	
2016	95	

**Additional information:** State lead agencies report annually to the Department on the settings in which children receive services provided under the Part C program. In 2001, States reported that only 76 percent of children receiving early intervention services through the Part C program were served in the home or in programs designed for typically developing peers, so performance on this indicator has improved dramatically in the past 11 years (by 19 percentage points). To assist States to continue to improve their performance in this area, the Department provides technical assistance and disseminates information on effective home visits and other practices related to providing services in natural settings. Previously, the Administration reported that 94 percent of children received age-appropriate early intervention services in the home or in programs designed for typically developing peers in 2011. However, the Department's recalculated data for this measure so that 95 percent of children received such services in such settings.

### Efficiency Measures

The Department previously collected data through its program monitoring files to determine the average number of workdays between the completion of a site visit and the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) response to the State. In 2010, the last year the Department collected this data, the Department reduced the number of days to issue responses to 66 days, far exceeding its target of 79 days, by revising its reporting format to remove extraneous descriptions and text that is not relevant to the findings.

The Department is currently in the process of modifying its accountability system, including the onsite visit component, in order to increase efficiency and balance our focus on improved results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and compliance with the requirements of the IDEA. In the meantime, OSEP continues to meet its statutory monitoring responsibilities through the State Performance Plan (SPP)/APR process, fiscal monitoring, and its work with State dispute resolution systems. The Department is actively developing new efficiency

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measures aligned to the modified accountability system. However, we do not expect data on these measures to be available until fall 2015 at the earliest.

#### Other Performance Information

Through the “Early Childhood Longitudinal Study - Birth Cohort” (ECLS-B), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collected longitudinal data on a nationally representative sample of 14,000 children from their birth in 2001 through their entry into kindergarten. Approximately 75 percent of the sample entered kindergarten in fall 2006, with the remaining 25 percent entering in the following year. The ECLS-B study provides data on the early development of these children, their preparation for school, and key transitions experienced by these children during the early childhood years. The study includes detailed data on the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of these children.

Analyses of the data collected through this study have provided important demographic information on infants and toddlers with disabilities. For example, the ECLS-B data collection over-sampled moderately low and very low birth weight children because low birth weight was believed to be associated with developmental issues, including a variety of disabilities. This relationship was confirmed by the study. The Department anticipates that further analyses associated with the study may provide additional information about children’s health and development that is relevant to children with disabilities. More information on this study is available on the NCES Web site at: <http://nces.ed.gov/ECLS/birth.asp>.

In July 2011, IES published the final report for the “IDEA National Assessment Implementation Study.” The report from the congressionally mandated study provides a national picture of State agency implementation of early intervention programs for infants and toddlers under Part C of IDEA, and both State and school district implementation of special education programs for preschool- and school-age children under Part B of IDEA.

The study was based on surveys of State agency directors and a nationally representative sample of district special education directors conducted in 2009. The key findings relating to the Part C program include:

- Referral and identification—The most common outreach activity reported by States was the development and/or dissemination of written materials for pediatricians and other health care providers, followed by Web-based dissemination and outreach to child care providers. States reported family members and primary healthcare providers as the most frequent sources of referral to the Part C program.
- Coordination and transition between IDEA programs—At the time the surveys were conducted, States reported supporting the transition of young children with disabilities from the Part C program to preschool services under section 619 of Part B, but no States reported expanding Part C services to serve eligible children with disabilities until they enter kindergarten. Forty-six States reported having different coordinators for the Part C and Preschool programs, but 67 percent of Part C coordinators reported meeting at least monthly with the coordinator for the Preschool program.
- Financing—For the 37 States that provided this information, the average percentage of early intervention services funding that came from the Part C program in fiscal year 2009 was

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21 percent. Twenty-three States indicated that State early intervention services funding represented the largest source of funding for early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. The largest sources of funding in other States were: Part C (8 States), Medicaid/Title XIX (8 States), local municipality or county funds (4 States), and Part B (1 State).

The final report for the “IDEA National Assessment Implementation Study” is available on the IES Web site at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20114026/index.asp>.

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### **National activities: State personnel development**

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part D, Subpart 1)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0 <sup>1</sup>

Budget Authority:

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$41,630	\$41,630	0

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<sup>1</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011; continued funding is proposed for this program in FY 2016 through appropriations language.

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The State Personnel Development (SPD) program provides grants to assist State educational agencies (SEAs) in reforming and improving their systems for personnel preparation and professional development of individuals providing early intervention, educational, and transition services to improve results for children with disabilities.

The SPD program focuses on professional development needs. Each State must spend at least 90 percent of its funds on professional development activities, including the recruitment and retention of highly qualified special education teachers. No more than 10 percent of the State's funds can be spent on State activities, such as reforming special education and regular education teacher certification (including recertification) or licensing requirements and carrying out programs that establish, expand, or improve alternative routes for State certification of special education teachers.

Awards are based on State personnel development plans that identify and address State and local needs for the preparation and professional development of personnel who serve infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or children with disabilities, as well as individuals who provide direct supplementary aids and services to children with disabilities. Plans must be designed to enable the State to meet the personnel requirements in Parts B and C (section 612(a)(14) and section 635(a)(8) and (9)) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These plans must also be integrated and aligned, to the maximum extent possible, with State plans and activities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Grants are made on a competitive basis for any fiscal year in which the amount appropriated is less than \$100 million. However, if the amount appropriated is \$100 million or greater, funds would be distributed as formula grants, with allotments based on the relative portion of the funds the State received under Part B of IDEA. Competitive awards are made for periods of 1 to 5 years with minimum awards to States of not less than \$500,000 and not less than \$80,000 for Outlying Areas. The maximum award that can be made to States is \$4 million per fiscal year.

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### National activities: State personnel development

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The factors used to determine the ultimate amount of each competitive award are: the amount of funds available; the relative population of the State or Outlying Area; and the types of activities proposed, alignment of proposed activities with the State's personnel standards, alignment of proposed activities with the State's plan and application under sections 1111 and 2112 of the ESEA, and the use, as appropriate, of scientifically based research.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011 .....	\$46,846
2012 .....	43,917
2013 .....	41,630
2014 .....	41,630
2015 .....	41,630

### FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$41.63 million for the State Personnel Development grants program to assist State educational agencies to improve results for children with disabilities through the delivery of high quality instruction and the recruitment and retention of effective and highly qualified personnel. The request, which is level with the fiscal year 2015 appropriation, would support 32 continuation awards, 7 new awards, and performance evaluation activities. As in fiscal year 2015, the Administration is requesting appropriations language in the 2016 Budget that would provide the Secretary the authority to use SPD funds under section 655 of IDEA to carry out performance evaluation activities. SPD is the only program within Part D of IDEA that does not have the authority to use funds to evaluate program performance.

Personnel shortages and inadequately trained teachers in special education are among the most pressing and chronic problems facing the field. SPD projects assist in addressing critical State and local needs for personnel preparation and professional development identified in the State's Personnel Development Plan. Projects provide personnel with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of, and improve the performance and achievement of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children with disabilities, and to meet the State's performance goals established in accordance with section 612(a)(15) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Support for special education personnel preparation activities is also provided through the Personnel Preparation program, under which the Department makes competitive awards, primarily to institutions of higher education, to help States meet their responsibility to train and employ adequate numbers of fully certified personnel to serve children with disabilities.

Activities funded through this program are intended to support a statewide strategy to prepare, recruit, and retain teachers who are highly qualified under IDEA and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), who are prepared to deliver scientific research-based or evidence-based instruction, and who are effective in improving outcomes for children with disabilities. States must develop SPD activities in a collaborative fashion and seek the input of teachers, principals, parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, and other school personnel.

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#### **Funding Priorities**

To improve the outcomes of children with disabilities, the Department plans to focus the program's available resources in fiscal year 2016 to support projects that: 1) provide evidence-based professional development activities that increase implementation of effective practices; and 2) provide on-going assistance to personnel who have received SPD-supported professional development, including assisting local educational agencies (LEAs) to build upon systems that support implementation of effective practices. Such activities would ensure that personnel receive the necessary support to use the acquired knowledge and skills to implement practices with fidelity. New projects funded in fiscal year 2016 will be required to use technology to provide more efficient and effective ongoing professional development, including to personnel in rural areas and to other populations that are less likely to receive comprehensive professional development. The SPD program has worked to expand the use of technology that can assist projects in becoming more effective and efficient in their delivery of professional development. With the increased emphasis on ongoing professional development and coaching, increased use of technology is necessary if SPD grantees are to work with more than a few sites and/or work with schools in rural areas.

Teacher quality is one of the most important factors in improving student achievement and eliminating achievement gaps between our neediest students and their more advantaged peers. Research shows that effective teaching is integral to improving the academic achievement of students who are at greatest risk of not meeting high academic standards. The SPD program provides funding for professional development to improve the knowledge and skills of special education and regular education teachers serving children with disabilities. Specifically, SPD funds are used to provide training in effective interventions. Examples of such interventions include positive behavioral interventions and supports to improve student behavior in the classroom, scientifically based reading instruction, early and appropriate interventions to identify and help children with disabilities, effective instruction for children with low incidence disabilities, and successful transitioning to postsecondary opportunities. Funds also assist States in utilizing classroom-based techniques to assist children prior to referral for special education.

#### **Personnel Recruitment and Retention**

The SPD program also supports States in developing and implementing strategies that are effective in promoting the recruitment and retention of effective and highly qualified special education teachers. These include strategies such as teacher mentoring provided by exemplary special education teachers, principals, or superintendents; induction and support for special education teachers during their first 3 years of employment as teachers; and providing incentives, including financial incentives, to retain special education teachers who have a record of success in helping students with disabilities. Listed below are examples of how States are using SPD funds to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers serving children with disabilities.

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- Louisiana SPD funds support collaboration between the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) in Louisiana to increase the number of special education teachers graduating each year and also to improve their effectiveness. The LDOE worked with IHEs to develop effective reading competencies to improve literacy instruction for pre-service teachers. In addition, this funding was used to facilitate meetings and provide resources to IHEs that resulted in 50 percent of Louisiana's IHEs receiving approval to implement a blended program. These blended programs have been found to increase literacy rates for students with disabilities.

Ten out of 15 (67 percent) districts in Louisiana that received professional development in the areas of Family Engagement, Inclusive Practices, Data-Based Decision Making, and Culturally Responsive Practices from the Louisiana SPD had an increase of 5 percent or more in their District Performance Score (DPS) from 2008 to 2011. The DPS is a measure that includes a school district's individual student scores on the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP), the iLEAP score (the LEAP for special populations Graduation Exit Exam), and attendance, dropout, and graduation data. The other 5 districts made DPS gains, but were below the 5 percent target.

- The Missouri SPD project developed the Missouri Integrated Model (MIM) framework in 2007-08, which has been implemented with fidelity in 25 schools in 14 districts across the State. The MIM design was grounded in research from multiple tiered models: (a) Response to Intervention (RTI), (b) Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports, (c) High Schools That Work, (d) Reading First, and (e) Professional Learning Communities. The percentage of students with disabilities in MIM schools who demonstrate proficiency or better on State assessments has risen steadily for both communication arts and for math: in 2006-07, the year preceding the first funding year of the MIM, only 14.6 percent of students with disabilities demonstrated proficiency or better in communication arts, and 17.9 percent demonstrated proficiency or better in math. By 2011-12, these rates had risen to 23.89 percent for communication arts, an increase of 9.29 percent, and to 29.82 percent for math, an increase of 11.9 percent, outpacing statewide increases. From 2009 to 2012, MIM schools increased math statewide achievement test scores for students with IEPs by 10.7 percent, while non-MIM schools increased students with IEP scores by only 3.2 percent. For communication arts, students with IEPs in MIM schools increased their scores by 8.59 percent and non-MIM schools increased their scores by 3.49 percent.

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#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Project funding:</u>			
New SPD awards	0	\$8,174	\$6,645
Continuation SPD awards	\$41,630 <sup>1,2</sup>	33,326	34,855
Performance evaluation	0	92	92
Peer review of new award applications	<u>0</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>38</u>
Total funding	41,630	41,630	41,630
Average award (whole dollars)	1,094	1,068	1,064
<u>Number of awards:</u>			
New	0	10	7
Continuations	<u>37</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>32</u>
Total awards	37	40	39

<sup>1</sup> About \$47 thousand of FY 2013 funds were used to support project continuation costs in FY 2014.

<sup>2</sup> About \$1,209 thousand of FY 2014 funds will be used to support FY 2015 continuations.

#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

##### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, and measures.

**Goal: To assist State educational agencies in reforming and improving their systems for providing educational, early intervention, and transitional services, including their systems of professional development, technical assistance, and dissemination of knowledge about best practices, to improve results for children with disabilities.**

**Objective 1:** *Provide personnel with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of, and improve the performance and achievement of, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children with disabilities.*

**Objective 2:** *Improve the quality of professional development available to meet the needs of personnel serving infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.*

In fiscal year 2011, the Department revised its measures to better align with the current focus of the professional development provided by the program. The measures are based on the belief that no intervention practice, no matter what its evidence base, is likely to be learned and adopted if the methods and strategies used to teach or train personnel are not themselves effective. The new measures were implemented in the project year that began October 1, 2011, for SPD cohorts funded in fiscal year 2011 and beyond. Performance data and other information reported in 2012 through 2014 were used to refine the measures, methodology, and

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scoring. The Department will use data reported in 2012 through 2014 to develop a baseline target in 2015. The actual data and targets for these measures will reflect the performance in the year the initiative took place, in this case the year the initiative was implemented or delivered.

**Annual Measures:** For each of the three annual performance measures that follow, data are collected and analyzed by a contractor using expert panels of reviewers who assess grant implementation by reviewing the components of each grantee's professional development system included in their annual performance reports. The data are evaluated on a rubric based on the 4 domains of professional development (selection, training, coaching, and performance assessment) including 6 components adapted from the work by the National Implementation Research Network, Learning Forward, and relevant experts such as Thomas Guskey. Each year the grantees included in this measure consist of States in SPD cohorts that are in years 2 through 5 of their SPD grant implementation. Grantees submit up to two initiatives a year based on input from Office of Special Education Programs project officers for each of the measures. The specific rubric used to assess initiatives is identified below in the Additional Information section following each measure.

**Measure:** The percentage of SPD-funded initiatives that meet the benchmarks for use of evidence-based professional development practices in years 2 to 5.

**Additional information:** Expert panels review the components of each SPD grant to determine whether the initiative has met its benchmark on a scale ranging from 1-4 (1= Inadequate, 2 = Barely adequate, 3 = Good, or 4 = Exemplary). In order to meet a benchmark, a certain percentage of each initiative's components must receive a score of three or four each year, including: (a) 50 percent of components in year 2, (b) 70 percent of components in year 3, and (c) 80 percent of components in years 4 and 5. The Department considers individual components that receive a total score of 3 or 4 to have met the benchmark.

**Measure:** The percentage of SPD-funded initiatives that meet the benchmark for improvement in implementation in their third through fifth years.

**Additional information:** This measure represents the percentage of SPD-funded professional development projects demonstrating improvement in implementation of SPD-supported practices in project performance years 3 through 5. Expert panels assess the implementation of each initiative as measured by a fidelity measure that denotes the presence or absence of the core features of the set of practices, innovation, program, or system representing the focus of the training initiative. Panels review the data reported that indicates the evidence of fidelity of implementation of evidence based practices (EBP's) in targeted programs. Grantees report surveys from targeted programs and the number and percentage of participants in these programs determined to be implementing EBPs at the benchmark level. Each grantee creates a plan indicating (a) how they will collect implementation data, (b) the population universe, and (c) yearly fidelity benchmarks for each cohort of trainees. The data reported is evaluated with respect to each specific initiative to determine whether it has met its benchmark. The total number of initiatives meeting improvement benchmarks is then divided by the total number of initiatives to produce this measure.

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**Measure:** The percentage of initiatives that meet targets for their use of funds to sustain SPD-supported practices.

**Additional information:** Grantees submit data describing the cost of the fidelity activities designed to sustain individual initiatives divided by the total cost of all professional development activities carried out for that initiative. Targets for each initiative are set in conjunction with the grantee, and expert panels review the data to determine whether the grantee has met the target for spending on that initiative within 5 percent of the target.

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(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part D, Subpart 2, Section 663)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0 <sup>1</sup>

Budget Authority:

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$44,345	\$54,345 <sup>2</sup>	+\$10,000

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<sup>1</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011; continued funding is proposed for this program in FY 2016 through appropriations language.

<sup>2</sup> Includes \$10,000 thousand for new Results Driven Accountability Implementation grants.

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Technical Assistance and Dissemination program is the Department's primary vehicle under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for providing educators, policymakers, other service providers, and parents of children with disabilities with information on effective practices for meeting the needs of children with disabilities and their families. The program makes competitive awards to provide technical assistance, support model demonstration projects, disseminate useful information, and implement activities that are supported by scientific research. These awards are intended to improve services provided under the IDEA, including the practices of professionals and others involved in providing services that promote academic achievement and improve results for children with disabilities.

A majority of the grants currently funded under the Technical Assistance and Dissemination program support technical assistance centers that focus on a particular topic, population, or age range, such as early intervening services, dispute resolution, early childhood, college- and career-readiness, and positive behavioral interventions and supports to improve results for children with disabilities. Most centers use a service model that provides three levels of technical assistance: intensive/sustained, targeted/specific, and general/universal. At the intensive/sustained level, a handful of States receive on-site, ongoing planned assistance designed to reach an outcome desired by the recipient. Through targeted/specific services, centers support activities based on the topical or technical needs common to multiple recipients and can be one-time or short-term events such as consultation services or presentations at conferences. The centers also provide general/universal technical assistance services that permit a broader audience to access information and services through presentations, newsletters, or research syntheses that are made available on center websites. Most activities supported through this program are designed to address the needs of a variety of audiences. While these audiences vary, in general, they include teachers, related services personnel, early intervention personnel, administrators, parents, and individuals with disabilities.

In addition to facilitating the adoption of model practices, technical assistance and dissemination activities promote the application of knowledge to improve practice by: determining areas where

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technical assistance and information are needed, preparing or ensuring that materials are prepared in formats that are appropriate for a wide variety of audiences, making technical assistance and information accessible to consumers, and promoting communication links among consumers.

The technical assistance and dissemination activities supported through this program are based on the best information available. One source of the scientifically based research findings that are used to inform technical assistance and dissemination activities is the What Works Clearinghouse in the Institute of Education Sciences. This is particularly true in cases where there is alignment between the topical focus of a center and work being supported through the What Works Clearinghouse, such as dropout prevention.

The duration of awards varies with the award's purpose. Most individual awards are made for a period of 5 years.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011 .....	\$48,806
2012 .....	46,781 <sup>1</sup>
2013 .....	44,345 <sup>2</sup>
2014 .....	44,345 <sup>2</sup>
2015 .....	44,345 <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Excludes \$8,000 thousand in funds used to support the Special Olympics.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes \$7,583 thousand in funds used to support the Special Olympics.

### FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2016, the Administration is requesting \$54.3 million for the Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) program, an increase of \$10 million more than the fiscal year 2015 level. In fiscal year 2016, 70 percent of the funds requested would be used to support continuation costs and \$16.3 million would be used to fund new competitions, including \$10 million for new Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Implementation grants. The Administration is also requesting appropriations language to extend the availability of funds for RDA Implementation grants over 2 years, and provide States additional flexibility through subgranting and subcontracting authority.

TA&D activities support the application of knowledge to improve practices among professionals and others involved in providing services that promote academic achievement and improve results for children with disabilities. TA&D activities combine the identification and dissemination of evidence-based practices with an effort to build capacity at the State and local levels to implement, sustain, and scale-up such practices. These activities have facilitated the adoption and spread of evidence-based practices such as positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), which have been implemented in more than 21,000 schools nationwide, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, which have been implemented and widely used throughout the country as a framework for delivering differentiated instruction.

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#### **Results Driven Accountability Implementation Grants**

As the Department shifts to a RDA framework, States, lead agencies, districts, and early childhood providers will need support on multiple fronts in identifying, prioritizing, and implementing evidence-based practices to improve results for children with disabilities. In addition to the requested \$175 million increase in the Grants to States program, the \$50 million increase to the Preschool Grants to States program, and the \$65 million increase to the Grants for Infants and families program, the Administration proposes to provide \$10 million for RDA Implementation grants. These competitive grants would provide funds to States and lead agencies for statewide technical assistance, professional development, or other coordinated activities across a broad range of service providers while also ensuring that local education agencies and early childhood providers have additional resources to provide high quality direct services to children with disabilities and their families. These funds would provide additional resources to Part B and C lead agencies to develop capacity to implement the State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIPs) that States are required to submit to the Department in April of 2015.

These 4-year grants will be used by States to build State capacity to implement promising, evidence-based reforms that will improve service delivery for children with disabilities while also building local capacity to continue to improve long-term outcomes for children with disabilities. States receiving implementation grants would have a demonstrated commitment to using results data in their IDEA-required local determinations, consistent with the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP's) RDA framework, to support their efforts to implement evidence-based practices that have a demonstrated positive impact on results for children with disabilities. Examples of evidence-based practices include: (1) instructional coaching to improve effectiveness of teachers and leaders; (2) high-quality early learning programs and services; (3) multi-tiered systems of support; (4) early literacy activities; and (5) robust secondary transition systems. States receiving grants would be encouraged to coordinate these activities with other improvement initiatives in the State, such as ESEA Flexibility, School Improvement Grants, and Preschool Development Grants.

Each State has unique needs and will face different challenges when implementing these changes. Through the SSIPs, States may identify evidence-based practices addressing needs of students in varying age ranges, in multiple instructional settings, in differing levels of urbanicity, and within differing sizes of State populations. As such, the Administration would support grants of varying sizes depending on these factors. In addition, the Administration would give States flexibility on the manner in which they implement their SSIPs and focus on how best to improve outcomes for children with disabilities. While the actual number and size of grants would be dependent on the applications for funding received, the Administration currently anticipates awarding 8 grants, ranging from \$500,000 to \$800,000, to States focusing on Part B systems, and 8 grants, ranging from \$400,000 to \$600,000, to States focusing on reforms in Part C systems. Additionally, the Administration plans to reserve a portion of RDA funds for rigorous formative and summative evaluations of State reforms to learn from improvement efforts and build communities of practice across States.

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#### Additional Technical Assistance Activities

The Administration's request includes \$6.3 million for other new awards in fiscal year 2016 that will focus on areas of specific need. For example, the Administration plans to fund a new center to provide technical assistance on and dissemination of evidence-based intensive interventions for students with persistent learning or behavioral difficulties. This center will work with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to identify and enhance the system components that promote the implementation and sustainability of such interventions. In addition, the Administration plans to fund a new center on educational outcomes to provide technical assistance on improving results for students with disabilities by increasing their participation rates in high quality assessment and accountability systems, improving the quality of assessments in which they participate, improving the capacity of States to meet data collection requirements, and strengthening accountability for results. The Administration will also provide funding for a new model demonstration project focused on building an inventory of practices with a strong theory or evidence of promise. Finally, funding would support a new center to support the Department's statutory requirement to address the postsecondary, vocational, technical, continuing, and adult education needs of individuals with deafness.

Continuation funding would be provided for a variety of projects, including those that focus on particular topics, age ranges of children, and student needs or disabilities. These include, for example:

#### *Projects focusing on particular topical areas:*

Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) – CADRE provides State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Part C Lead Agencies with resources that can help them effectively implement a range of dispute resolution options, including strategies that other SEAs and Part C Lead Agencies use to address the State Systematic Improvement Plan indicators related to dispute resolution. CADRE helps ensure that parents and families get the information they need about various methods for resolving disputes and helps avoid costly adversarial due process hearings.

Support for the Comprehensive Centers administered by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) – OSEP will provide \$750,000 for activities related to the Comprehensive Centers in 2016. As part of the Comprehensive Center on Effective Teachers and Leaders' overall work on teacher evaluation, funds will supplement this Center's work on developing effective teacher evaluation systems for special education personnel. Comprehensive centers are part of the Department's comprehensive wide-ranging technical assistance network that includes the regional educational laboratories (RELs), What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), Equity Assistance Centers, OSEP-funded Technical Assistance Centers, and other Department-supported single centers, designed to provide high-quality support to SEAs, LEAs, and schools that is accessible, comprehensive, and relevant.

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*Projects focusing on supporting State's Transition to Results Driven Accountability*

National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) – NCSI provides States with technical assistance to support LEAs and local early intervention service providers in improving educational results and functional outcomes for children with disabilities. NCSI is also supporting States in the development of their State Systemic Improvement Plans, which is a key component of RDA. NCSI works collaboratively with other OSEP-funded TA centers to focus on areas such as special education fiscal management, early-childhood programs, and postsecondary transition.

*Projects focusing on children with disabilities by age or grade:*

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center – This Center provides technical assistance to States to help them develop early childhood data systems for children with disabilities. Its focus is on helping States develop the capacity to use data for program improvement to improve early learning outcomes, to enable more data-based decision making, and to support programs or practices with strong or moderate evidence of effectiveness.

*Projects focusing on children with particular needs:*

Deaf-Blindness Projects – The Department supports State and multi-State projects providing technical assistance on services for children who are both deaf and blind. The Department also supports a coordinating center that provides technical assistance to State and multi-State projects

For more information on the OSEPs technical assistance Centers, visit: <http://www.tadnet.org/>.

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### National activities: Technical assistance and dissemination

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#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Program Funding:</u>			
Specialized technical assistance and dissemination:			
New	0	0	\$3,851
Continuations	<u>\$10,319</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>\$10,719</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>6,851</u>
Subtotal	10,319	10,719	10,702
Model demonstration centers:			
New	0	1,200	1,200
Continuations	<u>2,666</u>	<u>1,196</u>	<u>1,200</u>
Subtotal	2,666	2,396	2,400
Regional/Federal Resource Centers:			
New	8,910 <sup>3</sup>	0	0
Continuations	<u>0</u>	<u>8,772</u>	<u>8,772</u>
Subtotal	8,910	8,772	8,772
Early childhood technical assistance:			
New	0	0	0
Continuations	<u>4,500</u>	<u>4,500</u>	<u>4,500</u>
Subtotal	4,500	4,500	4,500
Secondary, transition and postsecondary technical assistance:			
New	2,100	0	1,300
Continuations	<u>1,300</u>	<u>3,400</u>	<u>2,100</u>
Subtotal	3,400	3,400	3,400
Technical assistance for children who are both deaf and blind:			
Continuations	<u>11,350</u>	<u>11,350</u>	<u>11,350</u>
Subtotal	11,350	11,350	11,350

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<sup>1</sup> About \$16 thousand of fiscal year 2013 funds were used to pay 2014 continuation costs.

<sup>2</sup> About \$384 thousand of fiscal year 2015 funds will be used to pay 2016 continuation costs.

<sup>3</sup> About \$138 thousand of fiscal 2014 funds were used to pay 2015 continuation costs.

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands) (continued)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Transfers to Elementary and Secondary Education for comprehensive centers:			
Continuations	\$750	\$750	\$750
Subtotal	<u>750</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>750</u>
Results Driven Accountability Implementation Grants			
New	0	0	10,000
Subtotal	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Federal technical assistance; technical assistance on data analysis; State, and Federal information exchange; other:			
SISEP Center (grant) <sup>1</sup>	1,100	1,100	1,100
ACDM contract <sup>2</sup>	625	620	606
Performance Measures contract	90	92	94
CIPP contract <sup>3</sup>	133	148	100
Annual Report to Congress contract	454	467	481
Subtotal	<u>2,402</u>	<u>2,427</u>	<u>2,381</u>
<i>New, Subtotal</i>	625	0	0
<i>Continuations, Subtotal</i>	1,777	2,427	2,381
Peer review of new award applications:	48	31	90
Total program funding:			
New	11,635	1,200	16,351
Continuations	32,662	43,114	37,904
Peer review	<u>48</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>90</u>
Total	44,345 <sup>4</sup>	44,345 <sup>4</sup>	54,345

<sup>1</sup> State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center.

<sup>2</sup> Analysis, Communications, Dissemination, and Meetings contract.

<sup>3</sup> Center to Improve Project Performance contract.

<sup>4</sup> Excludes \$7,583 thousand for the Special Olympics in fiscal years 2014 and 2015.

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#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

##### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

**Goal: To assist States and their partners in systems improvement through the integration of scientifically-based practices.**

***Objective 1:** States and other recipients of Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination program services will implement scientifically or evidence-based practices for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.*

***Objective 2:** Improve the quality of Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination projects.*

***Objective 3:** The Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination program will identify, implement, and evaluate evidence-based models to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.*

Six performance measures were developed for the Technical Assistance and Dissemination program. Three of these measures are annual measures, two are long-term, and the last is a measure of efficiency.

Annual Measures: The three annual measures deal with the quality, relevance, and usefulness of products and services provided by the program. These measures were developed as part of an effort to make measures relating to technical assistance and dissemination activities more consistent Departmentwide. However, the measures have been adapted to reflect the unique purposes of the TA&D program. Targets for 2011 and beyond were revised in 2010 to reflect strong performance that exceeded targets.

The actual data and targets for these measures were adjusted in the fiscal year 2012 Congressional Justification from prior year Congressional Justifications to more accurately reflect the performance in the year that the activity took place, in this case the year the product or service was developed or delivered. In previous years, the Department reported data by the year in which those data were collected.

For each of the three annual performance measures that follow, data are collected and analyzed by a contractor, using expert panels of reviewers who assess grant implementation by reviewing a sample of products and services developed by grantees. Products and services are reviewed against a listing of evidence-based practices in key target areas that the Department has identified as critical. The sample of grantees included in this measure for each year consists of approximately 11 TA&D centers and 10 State Deaf-Blind programs. Each TA&D center included in the sample submits a list of every new product and service from the previous

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year, from which one new product and service are selected to be reviewed. Each State Deaf-Blind grantee included in the sample is asked to submit a list of every new service from the previous year, from which one product is selected to be reviewed. Products and services are divided into the categories of policy and practice. Items that are considered to be in the area of practice are reviewed by the science panel, and policy items are reviewed by the State representative stakeholder panel.

Panels of experts review and score all products and services based on an OSEP-designed rubric that is specific to each performance measure, rating the products and services on the extent to which they meet the measure's performance indicators. Data for each indicator are calculated by dividing the number of TA&D center products and services that received an average quality rating of six or better, out of nine possible points, by the total number of TA&D products and services reviewed. The Department performs the same calculation for the services provided by State Deaf-Blind grantees, assigns weights to each of these calculations to correspond to the proportion of total program funds expended in each area, and then adds the figures together to produce an overall quality rating for the program. The specific rubric used to assess products and services for each measure is identified below in the Additional Information section following the Measure.

**Measure:** The percentage of Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantive content of the products and services.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	90%	91%
2012	92	100
2013	94	81
2014	95	
2015	95	
2016	95	

**Additional information:** Expert panels review all products and services and score them based on a rubric that assesses the extent to which the content of these materials is: evidence-based, valid, complete, and up-to-date. Specifically, the panels assess the quality of the materials on the following dimensions: (1) Substance (Does the product reflect the best of current research and theory or policy guidance, as demonstrated by a scientifically- or evidence-based approach, a solid conceptual framework, appropriate citations and other evidence of conceptual soundness?); and (2) Communication (Does the product have clarity in its presentation, as evidenced by being free of editorial errors, appropriately formatted, and well organized?). The total score for any individual product or service reviewed is the sum of the two quality dimension sub-scores. The Department considers any individual product or service that receives a total score of six or higher out of nine possible points to be of high quality.

Actual performance failed to meet the performance target in 2013 after meeting targets for this measure over the previous 4 years. Based on the most recent data available, in 2013, the program fell short of the target with 25 out of 31 products and services meeting the standard for high quality. The Department is examining why the performance of this measure did not meet

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### National activities: Technical assistance and dissemination

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the high standard from previous years, and will monitor any individual grantees that receive lower scores more aggressively to improve program performance and ensure that these grantees take steps to improve the quality of their products and services.

**Measure:** The percentage of Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	94%	100%
2012	95	94
2013	95	94
2014	95	
2015	95	
2016	95	

**Additional information:** Expert panels review the products and services and score them based on a rubric that assesses the extent to which the content of materials is responsive to priority issues and challenges confronting the target groups. Specifically, the rubric is designed to yield ratings on the basis of the following three dimensions related to relevance: (1) Need (Does the content of the material attempt to solve an important problem or critical issue?); (2) Pertinence (Does the content of the material match the problem or issue facing the target group or groups?); and (3) Reach (To what extent is the content of the material applicable to diverse populations within the target group?). The total score for any individual product or service reviewed is the sum of the three quality dimension sub-scores. High relevance for any individual product or service is defined as a total score of six or higher of nine possible points.

Overall performance under this measure has been strong in every year for which data have been collected. Based on the most recent data available, in 2013, the program fell just short of the target with 29 out of 31 products and services meeting the standard for high relevance. The Department seeks to maintain the high levels of performance for this measure and will monitor any individual grantees that receive lower scores more aggressively to improve program performance and ensure that these grantees take steps to improve the relevance of their products and services.

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### National activities: Technical assistance and dissemination

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**Measure:** The percentage of all Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be useful to improve educational or early intervention policy or practice.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	89%	93%
2012	92	83
2013	95	84
2014	95	
2015	95	
2016	95	

**Additional information:** Expert panels review the products and services and score them based on a rubric that assesses the extent to which the content of materials can be easily and quickly adopted or adapted by the target group, and the likelihood that the product or service, if adopted, will produce the desired result. Specifically, the rubric is designed to yield ratings on the basis of the following three dimensions related to usefulness: (1) Ease (Does the content of the product or service description address a problem or issue in an easily understood way, with directions or guidance regarding how a problem or issue can be addressed?); (2) Replicability (Is it likely that the information derived from the product or service will eventually be used by the target group to achieve the benefit intended?); and (3) Sustainability (Is it likely that the information derived from the product or service will eventually be used in more than one setting successfully over and over again to achieve the intended benefit?). The total score for any individual product or service reviewed is the sum of the three quality dimension sub-scores. High usefulness for any individual product or service is defined as a total score of six or higher of nine possible points.

Actual performance at the program level exceeded established targets in 2007 through 2011. Grantees failed to meet the target in 2012 and 2013, the most recent data available. Overall, 26 out of 31 products and services met the standard for high usefulness. To ensure that grantees continue to improve their performance under this indicator, the Department will monitor more aggressively any individual grantees that receive relatively lower scores to improve program performance and ensure that they take steps to improve over time.

Long-term Measures: The Department established two long-term measures for this program. Data for the long-term measures are collected every 2 years.

**Measure:** The percentage of effective evidence-based program models developed by model demonstration projects that are promoted to States and their partners through the TA&D Network.

In 2010, the Department began developing a new long-term pilot measure because the previous measure did not provide meaningful data for program improvement. This new measure will provide the Department valuable data on how well model demonstration projects are disseminating effective practices, a key component of this program. In November 2012, the Department began collecting the new data using a revised methodology, and will use the results to continue to refine the measure and set performance targets for future years.

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### National activities: Technical assistance and dissemination

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**Measure:** The percentage of school districts and service agencies receiving technical assistance and dissemination services regarding scientifically- or evidence-based practices for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities that implement those practices.

Year	Target	Actual
2009		79%
2011		86
2013	86%	83
2015	87	

**Additional information:** Experts review data from States that have received intensive technical assistance from OSEP TA&D Centers in six focus areas. These areas include assessment, behavior, instructional strategies, early intervention, secondary transition, and inclusive practices. Scientifically or evidence-based practices are defined as practices that have been demonstrated as effective within multiple settings through rigorous studies that document similar outcomes, and State implementation is defined as having practitioners within some portion of the school district or service agency use the practice.

In 2009, the first year data were collected for this measure, 79 percent of districts and agencies sampled were implementing evidence-based practices. In 2011, this figure increased to 86 percent of districts and agencies sampled. In 2013, the Department did not meet the target; however, the Department was able to obtain data demonstrating 5 out of 6 States did implement evidence-based practices for which they received technical assistance. Due to staff turnover at the State level, the Department did not have enough data to determine whether the sixth State is implementing evidence-based practices. OSEP will aggressively monitor any individual grantees that receive relatively lower scores to ensure that they take steps to improve over time.

### Efficiency Measures

The Department developed a common efficiency measure for OSEP programs that provide technical assistance. The measure is “the cost per unit of technical assistance.” The TA&D program uses a slightly modified “cost per unit of target audience,” which divides the total cost of a product or service by the number of target audience units that receive the technical assistance. A target audience unit may be an individual, such as a teacher, or an organization, such as a State educational agency. To calculate this measure, each year the Department uses the cost per unit data of a product and a service developed in the most recent fiscal year from a sample of approximately 11 TA&D centers and the cost per unit data for services of 10 State Deaf-Blind programs.

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### National activities: Technical assistance and dissemination

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**Measure:** The Federal cost per unit of technical assistance provided by the Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination program, by category.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		\$651
2012		890
2013		
2014	TBD	
2015	TBD	
2016	TBD	

Since 2008, the first year of data collection, the Department has struggled to produce a reliable cost per unit of target audience results. Due to concerns about data quality, compliance, and methodology, the Department has since enhanced guidance and changed methodologies. Beginning in 2009, the Department realized that aggregate data were not useful because the cost of providing technical assistance varies significantly based on the sample and decided instead to disaggregate the cost per unit based on three levels of intensity of technical assistance (intensive/sustained, targeted/specific, and general/universal). In 2010, the cost per unit was \$5,786, which subsequently fell to \$651 in 2011, and rose to \$890 in 2012. These variable results demonstrate the lack of reliability in the current measure and a need for an improved methodology. The Department is exploring different alternatives to evaluate the efficiency of TA&D investments and began piloting a new measure in 2013. Therefore, no targets have been set for fiscal years 2014-2016.

### Other Performance Information

In August 2009, as part of the ongoing National Assessment of IDEA, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) launched a 5-year evaluation of the IDEA TA&D program and various technical assistance activities that are currently supported under the other IDEA, Part D programs, such as centers that provide technical assistance on specific topical areas. The initial goals of this evaluation were to inform policymakers and practitioners about (a) the nature of the technical assistance services provided by TA&D grantees, (b) the experiences of SEAs and LEAs that interact with such grantees, (c) the implementation of practices recommended by such grantees, and (d) whether implementation of recommended practices is associated with improved outcomes for children and youth with disabilities.

Initial data collection and analysis revealed limitations of the data, so the objectives of the evaluation were revised to determine (a) the needs and uses for TA&D services, (b) what services are seen as most helpful in contributing to the improvement of key student outcomes, (c) the perceived barriers to local level implementation, (d) how TA&D grantees identify their clients, assess their needs, and develop and maintain their relationship with clients, and (e) the extent to which assistance from TA&D grantees relate to implementation of special education policies and practices that support the implementation of IDEA. The evaluation addresses these research questions using data gathered from OSEP, through *EDFacts*<sup>1</sup>, and through new surveys of TA&D grantees, SEA officials responsible for IDEA implementation, and school district special education directors.

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In October 2013, IES released an interim report, the “National Evaluation of the IDEA Technical Assistance & Dissemination Program.” Technical assistance providers most commonly reported providing technical assistance on the topics of “parent and family involvement”, and “data systems and use of data for improvement.” Recipients of technical assistance identified General Supervision/Monitoring, early childhood transition, special education finance, and Response to Intervention as the topics for which they had the greatest need for technical assistance in the 2010–11 school year. In addition, this analysis found some potential duplication of services provided by technical assistance providers; however, this analysis was unable to establish whether such cases were indicators of inefficiency or of complementary and coordinated services.

The report found that 71 percent of technical assistance recipients had a "very satisfactory" overall experience. On average, customers receiving high intensity technical assistance were significantly more satisfied than those receiving lower intensity technical assistance (i.e., infrequent training and consultation or web-only support). The final report is now scheduled to be published in 2016, rather than 2014 as previously reported.

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<sup>1</sup> *EDFacts* is a U. S. Department of Education initiative to put performance data at the center of policy, management and budget decisions for all K-12 education programs. *EDFacts* centralizes performance data supplied by K-12 State educational agencies (SEAs) with other data assets, such as financial grant information, within the Department to enable better analysis and use in policy development, planning and management. *EDFacts* relies on the Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN), a centralized portal through which States submit their educational data to the U.S. Department of Education.

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### **National activities: Personnel preparation**

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part D, Subpart 2, Sections 661 and 662)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0 <sup>1</sup>

Budget Authority:

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$83,700	\$83,700	0

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<sup>1</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011; continued funding is proposed for this program in FY 2016 through appropriations language.

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Personnel Preparation program helps meet State-identified needs for adequate numbers of fully certified personnel to serve children with disabilities by supporting competitive awards to:

- Provide research-based training and professional development to prepare special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education personnel to work with children with disabilities;
- Ensure that those personnel are highly qualified, and possess the skills and knowledge that are needed to serve children with disabilities; and
- Ensure that regular education teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide instruction to students with disabilities in regular education classrooms.

The Department is required to make competitive grants that support training activities in a few high priority areas, including: general personnel development and preparing beginning special educators, personnel serving children with low incidence disabilities, and leadership personnel. These grants are typically 5 years in length.

Personnel Development. This broad authority requires the Department to support at least one of the following activities: (a) promoting partnerships and collaborative personnel preparation and training between institutions of higher education (IHEs) and local educational agencies (LEAs), (b) developing, evaluating, and disseminating innovative models for the recruitment, induction, retention, and assessment of highly qualified teachers, (c) providing continuous training and professional development to support special education and general education teachers and related services personnel, (d) developing and improving programs for paraprofessionals to become special educators, (e) promoting instructional leadership and improved collaboration between general and special education, (f) supporting IHEs with minority enrollment of not less than 25 percent, and (g) developing and improving programs to train special educators to develop expertise in autism spectrum disorders.

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Beginning Special Educators. The Department also is required to provide support to beginning special educators. Specifically, the Department is required to make at least one award to: (a) enhance and restructure existing teacher education programs or develop teacher education programs that prepare special education teachers by incorporating an extended clinical learning opportunity, field experience, or supervised practicum (e.g., an additional 5th year), or (b) create and support teacher-faculty partnerships between LEAs and IHEs (e.g., professional development schools) that provide high-quality mentoring and induction opportunities with ongoing support for beginning special educators or in-service support and professional development opportunities.

Personnel to Serve Children with Low Incidence Disabilities. Awards to support personnel to serve children with low incidence disabilities are designed to help ensure the availability of quality personnel in this area by providing financial aid as an incentive to the pursuit of careers in special education, related services, and early intervention. Under this authority, the term “low incidence disabilities” primarily refers to visual or hearing impairments and significant intellectual disabilities, however, beginning in fiscal year 2014, the Administration expanded the definition to also include persistent and severe learning and behavioral problems that need the most intensive individualized supports. In carrying out this authority, the Department is required to support activities that benefit children with low incidence disabilities, such as: preparing personnel; providing personnel from various disciplines with interdisciplinary training that will contribute to improvements in early intervention and educational outcomes for children with low incidence disabilities; and preparing personnel in the innovative uses of technology to enhance educational outcomes for children with low incidence disabilities, and to improve communication with parents.

Leadership Personnel. Leadership preparation activities focus on improving results for students with disabilities by ensuring that leadership personnel in both regular and special education have the skills and training to help students with disabilities achieve to high standards. Under this authority, leadership personnel may include a variety of different personnel, such as teacher preparation and related service faculty, administrators, researchers, supervisors, and principals. Authorized activities include preparing personnel at the graduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels, and providing interdisciplinary training for various types of leadership personnel.

All Personnel Preparation competitions emphasize the value of incorporating best practices, as determined through research, evaluations, and experience. These include practices related to personnel training and professional development, as well as the provision of special education, related services, and early intervention services.

While individuals and students are not eligible for awards under the Personnel Preparation program, many grantees are required to use at least 65 percent of their award(s) for student support (e.g. tuition, stipends, and payment of fees). Students who receive financial assistance from projects funded under the program are required to pay back such assistance, either by working for a period of time after they complete their training in the area(s) for which they received training, or by making a cash repayment to the Federal Government. In recent years, approximately half of the program’s total appropriations have been used to support student scholarships.

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A large majority of grants awarded through this program goes to IHEs to provide scholarships to train additional special education and early intervention personnel. However, the Department also makes awards to centers under this program. Unlike awards that provide support for scholarships, which are designed primarily to increase the supply of personnel, center-based awards tend to focus on enhancing the quality of work in a particular topical area through such activities as professional development, technical assistance, partnerships, or the development of materials and best practices.

Additional support for personnel preparation activities is provided through the State Personnel Development Grants program, under which the Department makes competitive awards to help SEAs reform and improve in-service training and professional development activities for teachers, including the recruitment and retention of highly qualified special education teachers. A variety of other programs administered by the Department also make competitive awards that support training and professional development activities that are designed to improve the effectiveness of teachers, including special education personnel.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011.....	\$88,466
2012.....	88,299
2013.....	83,700
2014.....	83,700
2015.....	83,700

### FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

For fiscal year 2016, the Administration requests \$83.7 million for the Personnel Preparation program, level with the fiscal year 2015 amount. Of this amount, approximately \$15.0 million would be used for new projects (including peer review costs of approximately \$400,000) and \$68.7 million would support the continuation of grants made in prior years. Approximately \$9.5 million of the funding for new projects in fiscal year 2016 would be used to support training for special education and early intervention personnel, and approximately \$3.3 million would be used to support the training of special education leadership personnel. The remaining additional funding would be used to support training for personnel regarding postsecondary education for the deaf.

### Program Funding Priorities

The Administration continues to explore how funds available to support new activities under this program can be better targeted to support human capital systems that effectively prepare, recruit, support, evaluate, compensate and retain effective educators, and to address Administration priorities relating to the special education personnel workforce. Administration priorities in this area include: ensuring teachers enter the classroom with the skills they need to provide effective education through better teacher preparation program information and accountability, addressing the inequities in the distribution of effective and highly qualified

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teachers (consistent with Section 14005(d)(2) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act)); implementing high quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that take into account student growth and provide useful feedback to inform instruction and professional development; alleviating ongoing personnel shortages by targeting funds on training programs that provide for alternative certification and dual certification; increasing the supply of principals who are adequately prepared to ensure the provision of evidence-based services for children with disabilities; and improving the quality of teacher pre-service preparation programs through the use of data on the effectiveness of graduates in the classroom.

To address these priorities, beginning in fiscal year 2010, the Administration included provisions in its two largest competitions in this program to encourage grantees to provide scholar practicum experiences in high-poverty and/or low-performing schools and track and evaluate program graduates to ensure that they possess the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of students with disabilities in high-need schools.

Since fiscal year 2011, the Administration has continued these efforts to bolster highly-effective human capital systems in new grant competitions each year in a number of different areas by requiring preparation programs supported under this program to track the impact that program completers had on students after they completed their training and entered the field. Specifically, grantees are required, during their project periods, to track impacts on student growth and social, emotional, and academic development, as appropriate. These requirements will be continued in new competitions in fiscal year 2016.

In fiscal year 2012, the Administration also funded a new technical assistance center to, among other things, assist States and institutions of higher education in evaluating and improving personnel preparation programs by using data on outcomes for students with disabilities. Fiscal year 2016 will be the final year of funding for this center.

Additionally, while the funds available through this program are by no means sufficient to resolve ongoing nationwide personnel shortages in special education, they do contribute to: the on-going development of best practices; improvements in the overall quality of training offered; and the training of additional special education, related services, and leadership personnel in certain high priority areas where program investments have been targeted over time, such as training personnel to provide services to students with low incidence disabilities.

### **Data on Personnel Shortages**

Available data relating to personnel shortages in special education, including State-reported data outlining the percentage of special education teachers fully certified in States and Outlying Areas, strongly support the need for continued Federal investment in this area. Persistent shortages of qualified personnel have been reported since the enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975. While States and local educational agencies across the country experience personnel shortages, recruiting and retaining special educators is particularly challenging for schools in high-poverty districts. Data from "Teacher Quality Under No Child Left Behind: Final Report," illustrate the challenge. According to this study, completed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) for the Department in January 2009,

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approximately half of all districts in the country reported difficulty attracting highly qualified special education teachers in the 2006-2007 school year, while 90 percent of high-poverty districts reported the same difficulty (see <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/teaching/nclb-final/index.html>).

According to data that States are required to report pursuant to Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA), through the 2009-2010 academic year, more States reported shortages in special education personnel than in any other area. Forty-nine States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, and Virgin Islands reported shortages in special education (see <https://title2.ed.gov/TitleIIReport13.pdf>).

The National Assessment of IDEA also found that 51 percent of district Part B special education administrators reported that their districts routinely had difficulty finding qualified special education applicants over the past 3 years, and approximately 5 percent of preschool-age and school-age special education teacher full-time positions were left vacant in the 2008-2009 academic year (see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20114026/pdf/20114026.pdf>).

### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Program Funding:</u>			
Low incidence disabilities grants:			
New	\$6,272	\$2,485	\$4,149
Continuations	<u>12,862</u>	<u>12,790</u>	<u>13,806</u>
Subtotal	19,134	15,275	17,955
Leadership training grants:			
New	3,999	3,750	3,250
Continuations	<u>11,673</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>13,593</u> <sup>2</sup>	<u>14,755</u>
Subtotal	15,672	17,343	18,005
Minority institution grants: <sup>3</sup>			
New	2,389	2,007	1,978
Continuations	<u>6,390</u>	<u>8,686</u>	<u>8,525</u>
Subtotal	8,779	10,693	10,503
Program improvement grants:			
Continuations	<u>13,486</u>	<u>9,088</u>	<u>6,500</u>
Subtotal	13,486	9,088	6,500
Early childhood grants:			
New	4,672	3,926	3,867
Continuations	<u>13,699</u>	<u>18,189</u>	<u>17,875</u>
Subtotal	18,371	22,115	21,742

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#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Other personnel development grants:			
New	\$1,606	\$1,349	\$1,330
Continuations	<u>4,297</u>	<u>5,840</u>	<u>5,733</u>
Subtotal	5,903	7,189	7,063
National Activities:			
New	642	0	0
Continuations	<u>1,259</u>	<u>1,567</u>	<u>1,532</u>
Subtotal	1,901	1,567	1,532
Peer review of new award applications	454	430	400
<u>Total Program Funding:</u>			
New	19,637	13,517	14,574
Continuations	63,609	69,753	68,726
Peer review of new award applications	<u>454</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>400</u>
Total	83,700	83,700	83,700

<sup>1</sup> The fiscal year 2014 continuation awards total includes approximately \$1,726 thousand in fiscal year 2014 funds for support of fiscal year 2015 continuation costs.

<sup>2</sup> The fiscal year 2015 continuation awards total includes approximately \$1,713 thousand in fiscal year 2015 funds for support of fiscal year 2016 continuation costs.

<sup>3</sup> This category includes awards to institutions with minority enrollments of not less than 25 percent. Under IDEA, Part D, Sec. 681(c)(2), the Department is required to reserve not less than 2 percent of the total amount of funds appropriated under Part D, subparts 2 and 3, for outreach and technical assistance activities for historically Black colleges and universities and IHEs with minority enrollments of not less than 25 percent.

#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

##### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

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**Goal:** To prepare service providers and leadership personnel in areas of critical need who are highly qualified to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.

**Objective 1:** *Improve the curricula of IDEA training programs to ensure that personnel preparing to serve children with disabilities are knowledgeable and skilled in practices that reflect the current knowledge base.*

**Objective 2:** *Increase the supply of teachers and service providers who are highly qualified for and serve in positions for which they are trained.*

**Objective 3:** *Enhance the efficiency of the expenditure of Federal dollars under the program.*

### Long-Term Performance Measures

The program has two long-term measures that are designed to provide information on the quality of the program by looking at the skills of scholars supported using program funds.

**Measure:** Percentage of degree/certification recipients who maintain employment for 3 or more years in the area(s) for which they were trained and who are fully qualified under IDEA.

**Additional Information:** In recent years, the Department has found it difficult to accurately and meaningfully calculate and report data on this measure. As such, we are currently evaluating this measure and the available methodologies for accurately calculating it. The Department expects a revised measure or methodology to be in place by March 2015.

**Measure:** Percentage of scholars completing Special Education Personnel Preparation funded training programs who are knowledgeable and skilled in evidence-based practices for children with disabilities.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	51%	88%
2012	85	80
2013	85	
2014	85	
2015	90	
2016	90	

**Additional Information:** Grantees submit data annually through the Department Personnel Preparation Data Report (PPD) Web-based data collection (see: <http://www.oseppdp.ed.gov>). This measure presents information on the percentage of scholars completing programs who passed an independent exam, such as the Praxis II, that is designed to assess the knowledge and skills of special educators. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of scholars who graduated in a given year and pass an exam demonstrating knowledge and skills in evidence-based practices for children with disabilities (1,274 students in fiscal year 2012) by the total number of students who completed training programs – including students who passed

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a test (1,274 students), students who did not take a test (145 students), students who did not pass a test or whose testing status or results are missing or unknown (168 students), and students for whom testing was not applicable (2 students). Data for fiscal year 2013 are expected to be available in fall 2015.

The Department does not currently require IHEs receiving program funds to use an independent assessment to assess the knowledge and skills of individuals graduating from institutions supported with program funds. Historically, actual data and targets for this measure were unusually low because, while all scholars receiving program funds are included in the denominator, a substantial number of those scholars (approximately 908 out of 2,712, or 33 percent, in fiscal year 2008) did not participate in independent assessments according to grantees. While these scholars attend programs at IHEs located in States that did not require graduates to pass an independent assessment to measure the knowledge and skills of graduates, the Department has worked closely with grantees to improve data collection on graduates who take other, non-required assessments and to ensure that data on non-standardized measures of knowledge and skills are reported by grantees (such as an oral examination administered by faculty at the IHE). However, despite these efforts, there was another increase in the number of scholars for whom testing status was not known by the grantee in 2012 (increasing from 34 in 2011 to 136 in 2012), resulting again in lower performance on this measure overall. The Department will continue to work with grantees to ensure that, whenever possible, data on scholar performance on assessments is gathered and reported.

### Annual Performance Measures

The program has five annual performance measures. All five of these measures are designed to provide information on various aspects of program quality, including scholars who receive funding through the program. These measures are:

**Measure:** Percentage of projects that incorporate scientifically- or evidence-based practices in their curricula.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	90%	74%
2012	95	89
2013	90	82
2014	90	
2015	90	
2016	90	

**Additional Information:** Data are collected and analyzed by a contractor using a panel of five to seven experts, who review a randomly selected sample of 50 percent of grantee course syllabi submitted by funded applicants in the same cohort of grantees. Syllabi, which are taken from grantee applications, are reviewed for the inclusion of between five and seven scientifically or evidence-based practices in key target areas that have been identified by the Department as

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critical for all projects -- including assessment, behavior, inclusive practices, instructional strategies, literacy, transition, and early childhood, as appropriate. The score for every individual syllabus is the sum of the evidence-based practices observable in that syllabus. In order to meet the standard for incorporating evidence-based practices, all evidence-based practice areas reviewed must be identifiable in the syllabus.

In the fiscal year 2014 review, 33 syllabi from fiscal year 2013 personnel development grantees and fiscal year 2009 through 2011 program improvement grantees were included from the following types of projects: early childhood (5 syllabi scored), leadership (8 syllabi scored), low incidence (7 syllabi scored), high incidence (7 syllabi scored) and minority institutions (6 syllabi scored).

Performance under this measure in 2009 and 2010 was well above established targets, which led the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to increase the criteria for a set of syllabi under review to be identified as “evidence-based” across all five domains for the review of 2011 grantees – from 50 percent agreement to at least two-thirds. While there was a drop in performance in 2011, the Department believes that it is largely a result of the higher standard rather than any decrease in actual quality of syllabi. In 2012 and 2013, the syllabi review was conducted by expert panels grouped according to area of specialization (e.g., early childhood, low-incidence). With higher standards and content-specific review panels, performance on this measure increased dramatically from the prior year. Moving forward, the Department believes that this higher standard and review process will ultimately lead to better data on this measure and the quality of projects funded under this program.

**Measure:** Percentage of scholars who exit training programs prior to completion due to poor academic performance.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	1.9%	1.7%
2012	1.9	1.6
2013	1.9	
2014	1.9	
2015	1.9	
2016	1.9	

**Additional Information:** Grantees submit data annually through the Department Personnel Preparation Data Report (PPD) Web-based data collection (see: <http://www.oseppdp.ed.gov>). No calculation is necessary. The data are taken directly from the PPD data collection. Approximately 1.6 percent of all scholars receiving program funds exited their training programs early due to poor academic performance in 2012, down from 2.0 percent, 1.9 percent, and 1.7 percent in 2009, 2010, and 2011, respectively, but still higher than 1.4 percent in 2007 and 1.6 percent in 2008. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of scholars exiting their training program due to poor academic performance (n=27 in 2012) and dividing it by the total number of scholars completing a training program (n=1,590 in 2012) and the number of

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scholars exiting their training program prior to completion for any reason (n=101 in 2012). Data for fiscal year 2013 are expected to be available in fall 2015.

A low number of scholars exiting their training programs early could reflect either a strong recruitment effort by IHEs to ensure high quality students receive Federal scholarship funds or a strong student support network in programs receiving Federal funds. While there is still room for improvement, IHEs on average seem to be adequately ensuring that scholars do not exit training programs prior to completion due to poor academic performance. However, despite the reasonably strong performance of grantees on this measure, the Department believes that this measure is essential to maintain to ensure that grantees continue to maintain high standards when recruiting scholars.

**Measure:** Percentage of degree/certification recipients who are working in the area(s) for which they are trained upon program completion.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	84%	82%
2012	84	
2013	85	
2014	85	
2015	85	
2016	85	

**Additional Information:** Grantees submit data annually through the PPD Web-based data collection. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of degree and certification recipients who were working in the area(s) for which they received training at the completion of the program by all degree and certification recipients who were employed in their area of training, recipients who were not employed in their area of training, recipients for whom grantees did not know if they were employed upon program completion, recipients who were not employed, and recipients for whom employment data were missing. Individuals who received only an endorsement are excluded from all calculations.

Although performance on this measure increased from the prior year, approximately 1 in 5 degree/certification recipients funded through this program do not work in the area for which they were trained upon graduation. It is difficult to determine the ultimate driver of this trend. It is possible that a number of degree recipients are doing so purposefully. While the program has in place a service obligation requirement that mandates that degree recipients provide services to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities, it is possible that a portion of graduates have chosen to provide special education and related services outside of their area of expertise or to not provide special education and related services at all. Additionally, teaching assignments are not wholly at the discretion of the program's graduates, but are instead largely at the discretion of LEAs and schools that may opt to place a teacher in an assignment that is out of area. Given the continuing impacts of the recession, shrinking local and State government budgets, and the increased number of teacher layoffs, we are likely to see a number of teachers placed "out-of-area" as LEAs attempt to cope with smaller numbers of personnel. With smaller local budgets

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and fewer LEAs hiring, program graduates may accept teaching positions outside of their field of training in order to secure employment with a view to transition to their area of expertise in a number of years. The Department is currently conducting a review to determine if those graduates who are not working in the area for which they were trained are nevertheless employed in special education or if they are working in non-special education placements. The Department is also considering additional steps to ensure that grantees more effectively recruit and train students who will work in the area for which they received training; to improve training courses and curricula to ensure that graduates are competitive in the market; and to promote high quality residency programs that help graduates build relationships with LEAs and increase their competitiveness.

In January 2015, the Department shifted its data collection tool for this measure to a new online survey instrument which will increase data validity and reliability. Data from the new survey instrument for fiscal year 2012 will be available beginning in summer 2015.

**Measure:** Percentage of degree/certification recipients who are working in the area(s) for which they are trained upon program completion and who are fully qualified under IDEA.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	80%	79%
2012	83	
2013	83	
2014	83	
2015	83	
2016	83	

**Additional Information:** Grantees submit data annually through the PPD Web-based data collection. This measure is calculated by dividing the total number of non-leadership degree recipients who were working in the area(s) for which they received training at the completion of the program and who are highly qualified by all degree recipients who were employed, who were not employed, and for whom the employment status was not known, minus students working in positions for which the State does not have certification or licensure requirements. Note that the population included in calculations for this measure differs from the population included in the previous measure. While the denominator in the previous measure includes all students currently employed, not employed, and those for whom employment status was not known, the denominator here excludes students working in positions for which the State has no licensure or certification requirements. Additionally, scholars who received only an endorsement, as well as students who received leadership training, are excluded from all calculations because highly qualified status does not apply to these individuals.

As noted in the discussion of the previous measure, there are a number of reasons why degree/certification recipients funded through this program may not work in the area for which they were trained upon program completion. More importantly, the comparison of this measure to the previous one provides an important insight into the alignment of training programs supported under this program and the certification standards outlined in IDEA. Despite

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improvement in this measure over the last 4 years, this measure has consistently lagged behind the previous one by 3 to 5 percentage points, indicating that, even of those individuals who obtain employment in the area for which they were trained, a consistent subset do not meet the certification standards of the field despite program regulations that require program graduates to meet State certification and licensure standards. The Department is currently taking several steps to determine the full extent and cause of this shortfall and address it. Through updated data collection instruments employed in fiscal year 2011, the Department seeks to gather more information about the subset of scholars who do not meet State certification and licensure standards and the specific causes (e.g., not taking or failing State licensure exams, or a lack of appropriate coursework). In its grant application review process, the Department has provided greater direction to reviewers and applicants to ensure a more thorough review of course syllabi submitted by applicants to ensure that program funds are used to support high quality programs. Additionally, through a new technical assistance center funded in fiscal year 2012, the Department is providing support to a number of teacher and paraprofessional training programs to restructure their curricula to align with State standards for certification and accreditation.

In January 2015, the Department shifted its data collection tool for this measure to a new online survey instrument which will increase data validity and reliability. Data from the new survey instrument for fiscal year 2012 will be available beginning in summer 2015.

### Efficiency Measures

The Department established one efficiency measure for the Personnel Preparation program. This measure is:

**Measure:** The Federal cost per degree or certification program recipient working in the area(s) in which they were trained upon program completion.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	\$25,000	\$32,822
2012	25,000	30,256
2013	25,000	
2014	25,000	
2015	25,000	
2016	25,000	

**Additional Information:** This measure links directly to the program's annual performance measures, and should enable comparisons across grantees or sub-sets of similar grantees. The Department is currently working with a contractor to analyze grantee-level results to identify high performing institutions that other grantees can look to as examples for improving program performance. Grantee-level data will also be used to compare the relative efficiency of program grantees, both in relation to one another as well as in relation to other Federal programs that provide graduate level scholarships.

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The data used to calculate this measure come from the Department's PPD Web-based data collection. The cost per degree/certification program recipient is calculated for individual cohorts of grantees by dividing the sum of all project costs supported with Federal funds (across all years of each individual scholar's training) (\$40,150,210 in fiscal year 2012) by the number of degree recipients who successfully completed funded training programs closing in that year and who are fully qualified (1,327 in 2012). Results on this measure were higher in fiscal years 2011 and 2012 than in previous years, but the Department believes these increased costs actually reflect the fact that a larger proportion of grants expiring in that year supported doctoral training programs (30 percent of grants in 2012, compared to only 25 percent of grants in 2010), which tend to be more expensive per scholar than those at the masters' level. Data for fiscal year 2013 are expected to be available in fall 2015.

### Other Performance Information

At the end of fiscal year 2007, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) awarded a \$2.8 million, 4-year contract for the evaluation of the Personnel Development Program. The evaluation included two separate components. The first was a study of IHEs that have applied for funds to train personnel under the program. This portion of the study was designed to: (1) collect descriptive data from all the funded and non-funded applicants to the fiscal year 2006 and fiscal year 2007 competitions (approximately 185 funded and 265 non-funded), and (2) document changes to the funded applicants' courses of study. The second component of the evaluation was a study of the national centers funded under the program. This component of the evaluation was designed to: (1) document the products and services generated by the national centers; (2) produce a rough estimate of their costs; and (3) rate the quality, relevance, and usefulness of a sample of those products and services. The study of the national centers included all 12 of the centers funded between 2001 and 2008.

The study (see <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=NCEE20144007>) determined that, in the fiscal year 2006 and fiscal year 2007 competitions, the percentage of successful applications was higher for public IHEs than for private IHEs (37 percent versus 32 percent), for doctorate-granting IHEs than for non-doctorate-granting IHEs (38 percent versus 25 percent), and for minority institutions than for non-minority institutions (38 percent versus 34 percent). Of the 190 applications that were funded in the fiscal year 2006 and fiscal year 2007 competitions, 53 percent of funded applications proposed new courses of study. Of unsuccessful applicants proposing a new course of study in their application, only 8 percent were developed without funding (compared to 88 percent of existing courses of study that were maintained without funding).

In funded training programs in which scholar stipends were required, 73 percent of grant funds were used for monetary support for scholars. An additional 18 percent of grant funding was used to support faculty in that training program. Additionally, in supported programs, 88 percent of enrolled students received monetary support from the grant in the 2008-2009 academic year, averaging \$11,558 per scholar.

By the 2008-2009 academic year, 3,038 scholars enrolled in courses of study funded in the fiscal year 2006 and fiscal year 2007 competitions had completed their training, averaging 17 scholars per program, with 86 percent receiving State-issued credentials and 46 percent

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earning a master's or education specialist degree. The study also determined that the average number of enrollees, scholars, and completers in funded training programs increased from the academic year preceding funding to the first year of full grant funding.

In funded training programs that identified changes made since the time of application, an expert panel determined that 58 percent of those changes were of "high" or "very high" quality, and 55 percent were of "high" or "very high" relevance/usefulness.

Of non-funded training programs in the fiscal year 2006 competition, 70 percent reapplied to the same priority/focus area within 4 years, and 50 percent were funded. Of those with non-funded applications in the fiscal year 2007 competition, 57 percent reapplied to the same priority/focus area within 3 years and 33 percent were funded.

The study also assessed the work of national centers funded under this program between fiscal years 2001 and 2007. They determined that 77 percent of "signature" products/services of these centers were "high" or "very high" quality and 82 percent of them were "high" or "very high" relevance/usefulness. They also determined that 73 percent of "nonsignature" products/services of these centers were "high" or "very high" quality and 68 percent were "high" or "very high" relevance/usefulness.

The study also examined the costs of various products and services provided by the centers, where possible. The largest number of products and services identified were presentations and webinars (47 percent of all identified). Only 10 of 12 centers were able to provide individualized costs for products and services, and they reported them for 51 percent of the total produced by all 12 centers. The largest share of costs reported by the centers was for 69 conferences, institutes, or workshops, totaling 48 percent of the identified costs. These included center-produced events for the purposes of training recipients, providing general TA, or disseminating information to targeted recipients.

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(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part D, Subpart 3, Sections 671-673)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0<sup>1</sup>

Budget Authority:

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$27,411	\$27,411	0

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<sup>1</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011; continued funding for this program is proposed in fiscal year 2016 through appropriations language.

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Parent Information Centers program is one of the primary vehicles under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for providing information and training to parents of children with disabilities. The program supports competitive awards to help ensure that:

- Children with disabilities and their parents receive training and information designed to assist these children in meeting developmental and functional goals and challenging academic achievement goals, and in being prepared to lead productive independent adult lives;
- Children with disabilities and their parents receive training and information on their rights, responsibilities, and protections under IDEA, in order to develop the skills necessary to cooperatively and effectively participate in planning and decision making relating to early intervention, educational, and transitional services; and
- Parents receive coordinated and accessible technical assistance and information to assist them in improving early intervention, educational, and transitional services and results for their children and families.

The IDEA authorizes three types of competitive projects: parent training and information centers, community parent resource centers, and technical assistance for parent centers. The award period for these projects is typically 5 years.

Parent training and information centers must serve parents of children of all ages (birth to 26) and all types of disabilities. Awards are made only to parent organizations as defined by IDEA. The training and information provided by the centers must meet the training and information needs of parents of children with disabilities living in areas served by the centers, particularly underserved parents and parents of children who may be inappropriately identified. At least one award for a parent training and information center must be made in each State, subject to the receipt of acceptable applications. Large and heavily populated States have multiple centers

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that serve designated counties. One center specifically serves the unique needs of military families and another center serves Native American families across the country.

The parent centers also play an important role in dispute resolution by explaining to parents the benefits of alternative methods of dispute resolution, such as mediation, which States are required, by the IDEA, to make available. Parent center staff attended or facilitated over 1,000 alternative dispute resolution sessions in 2014. These alternative methods of dispute resolution can help avoid costly litigation. As part of that role, parent centers are required, if State educational agencies choose, to contract with those State educational agencies to provide individuals who will meet with parents to explain the IDEA-mandated mediation process.

The Department allocates funds to parent centers through a formula based on three weighted indicators of need: State population of ages 0 to 26 (85 percent), child poverty (10 percent), and rural school enrollment (5 percent), with all centers receiving at least \$200,000. No center will receive a reduction of more than 20 percent below the amount of their fiscal year 2007 grant. When the appropriation for the program increases, this formula ensures that centers in States with the greatest need and the lowest per capita funding receive more funds.

Community parent resource centers are parent training and information centers, operated by local parent organizations, that help ensure underserved parents of children with disabilities, including low-income parents, parents of children who are English learners, and parents with disabilities, have the training and information they need to enable them to participate effectively in helping their children. Community parent resource centers are required to establish cooperative partnerships with the other parent training and information centers in their States.

Technical assistance is authorized to assist parent training and information centers, including community centers, in areas such as coordinating parent training efforts, disseminating scientifically based research and information, and the effective use of technology. These technical assistance services enhance the capacity of parent centers to serve parents effectively. The parent technical assistance center network maintains a Web site with a wide variety of information and materials for parents and professionals, as well as a directory of the parent centers (<http://www.parentcenternetwork.org/>).

In order to receive an award for a parent center, the IDEA requires that applicants must be a parent organization that has a board of directors, the majority of which must consist of parents of children with disabilities. The board must also include individuals with disabilities and individuals working in the fields of special education, related services, or early intervention. The parent and professional members of the board must be broadly representative of the population to be served, including low-income parents and parents of English learners.

While parent centers serve as direct resources for parents and families, they also act as referral points to other resources such as those available under the Technical Assistance and Dissemination program and from the Institute of Education Sciences. Technical Assistance and Dissemination activities are coordinated with Parent Information Centers program activities to ensure that parents participating in parent training projects as well as other parents have access to valid information that is designed to address their needs.

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Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011.....	\$27,972
2012 .....	28,917
2013.....	27,411
2014.....	27,411
2015.....	27,411

### FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration’s request of \$27.4 million for fiscal year 2016 for the Parent Information Centers program would provide \$3.0 million for new awards to Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) and \$24.3 million for continuing awards to Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and technical assistance centers. The request would support a total of 103 Centers, including 64 PTIs, 30 CPRCs, and 9 Technical Assistance Centers. Together, these centers provide training and information to over one million parents and professionals each year. Family involvement in children’s learning is critical to achieving high-quality education. Decades of research show that positive school-family partnerships can be built to inform families about and involve families in their children’s learning. Studies show that all families can take concrete steps that significantly help their children succeed in school, regardless of their income, education, disability status, or knowledge of the English language.

The training and information provided by the parent centers help ensure that parents have the knowledge and skills to help their children with disabilities succeed. In addition to assisting parents to understand better the nature of their children’s disabilities and their educational and developmental needs, the centers provide training and information on how parents can work with professionals serving their children. For parents of school-aged children, this includes participating with administrators and teachers in the development of their child’s individualized education programs (IEPs), as provided for by the IDEA. For parents of infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services, it means participating with a multidisciplinary team in the development of individualized family service plans (IFSPs). Parent centers also serve as sources of information and training for hundreds of thousands of teachers and other professionals each year.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which includes provisions that affect all children, emphasizes the role of parents in education through provisions that stress shared accountability between schools and parents for high student achievement, educational options, local development of parental involvement plans, and building parents’ capacity for using effective practices to improve their children’s academic achievement. For a non-regulatory guidance document that provides a detailed overview of parent involvement in the context of ESEA, see: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc>.

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Parent centers use a variety of mechanisms for providing information to parents and professionals. These include Web sites, one-on-one support, telephone call-in numbers, training workshops, and dissemination of written materials. In recent years, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has worked with parent centers to improve their Web sites and make their resources available in languages other than English, particularly Spanish (see <http://www.neparentcenters.org/glossary/index.html>).

#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Program Funding:</u>			
Parent Training & Information Centers:			
New	\$6,646	\$14,118	0
Continuations	<u>14,953</u>	<u>7,264</u>	<u>\$21,184</u>
Subtotal	21,599	21,382	21,184
Community Parent Resource Centers:			
New	0	0	3,052
Continuations	<u>2,800</u>	<u>2,800</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	2,800	2,800	3,052
Technical Assistance Centers:			
New	302	0	0
Continuations	<u>2,398</u>	<u>2,893</u>	<u>2,899</u>
Subtotal	2,700	2,893	2,899
Other (contracts):			
New	88	0	0
Continuations	<u>160</u>	<u>256</u>	<u>216</u>
Subtotal	248	256	216
Peer Review of new award applications:	64	80	60
<u>Total Program Funding:</u>			
New	7,036	14,118	3,052
Continuations	20,311	13,213	24,299
Peer Review	<u>64</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>60</u>
Total	27,411	27,411	27,411

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#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Number of Projects:</u>			
Parent Training & Information Centers:			
New	23	41	0
Continuations	43	23	64
Community Parent Resource Centers:			
New	0	0	30
Continuations	28	28	0
Technical Assistance Centers:			
New	1	0	0
Continuations	8	9	9
Total number of grant projects:			
New	24	41	30
Continuations	<u>79</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>73</u>
Total	103	101	103
Other (contracts):			
New	1	0	0
Continuations	2	3	3

#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

##### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

**Goal:** To provide training and information to parents of children with disabilities.

**Objective 1:** *Improve the quality of parent training and information projects.*

**Objective 2:** *Parents served by Special Education Parent Information Centers will be knowledgeable about their IDEA rights and responsibilities.*

**Objective 3:** *Parents served by Special Education Parent Information Centers will be able to advocate for scientifically or evidence-based practices for their child.*

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Six performance measures have been developed for the Parent Information Centers program. There are three annual measures, two long-term measures, and one efficiency measure.

#### Annual Measures

The three annual measures deal with the quality, relevance, and usefulness of products and services provided by the program. These measures were developed as part of a cross-departmental effort to make measures relating to technical assistance and dissemination activities more consistent Departmentwide. However, the measures were adapted to reflect the unique purposes of the Parent Information Centers program. Targets for 2012 through 2016 were established based on performance data from 2007 to 2013. The measures are:

**Measure:** The percentage of materials used by Parent Information Centers projects that are deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise to review the substantive content of the products and services.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	76%	89%
2012	78	96
2013	80	100
2014	97	79
2015	97	
2016	97	

**Additional Information:** Data are collected and analyzed by a contractor, using expert panels of reviewers who assess grant implementation by reviewing a randomly selected sample of materials disseminated by centers for the purpose of training and informing parents. In an effort to ensure that the sample materials reviewed in 2013 were representative of all grantees, 1 service was drawn from a stratified random sample of CPRCs and PTIs, for a total of 28 services reviewed. Prior to 2013, OSEP collected and analyzed data on this measure for both products and services. However, because the primary focus of CPRCs and PTIs is on the provision of services, beginning in 2013, the Department no longer collected information on products in order to more accurately reflect the work of these centers.

All services are reviewed and scored on the basis of a rubric, developed by the OSEP, that is designed to yield ratings on the extent to which the content of submitted materials is: evidence-based, valid, complete, and up-to-date. Specifically, the rubric is designed to yield ratings on the basis of the following two quality dimensions: (1) Substance (does the service reflect the best of current research and theory or policy guidance, as demonstrated by a scientifically- or evidence-based approach, a solid conceptual framework, appropriate citations, and other evidence of conceptual soundness?); and (2) Communication (does the service have clarity in its presentation, as evidenced by being free of errors, appropriately formatted, and well organized?). The total score for any individual service reviewed is the sum of the two quality dimension sub-scores. High quality for any individual service is defined as a total score of six or higher of nine possible points. Prior to 2013, this same methodology was used for both products and services.

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This measure is calculated by dividing the number of individual services that received an average quality rating of six or better (27 services) by the total number of services reviewed (34), multiplied by 100 percent. Prior to 2013, this same methodology was used for both products and services. For 2014, 79 percent ( $27/34 = 0.794 \times 100 \text{ percent} = 79.4 \text{ percent}$ ) of services were deemed to be of high quality, which is a decrease compared to 2013 and falls short of the target level. The Department continues to use the feedback from the expert panel to work with grantees to improve continuously their services.

**Measure:** The percentage of Parent Information Centers products and services deemed to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice by an independent review panel of qualified members of the Parent Information Centers target audience.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	96%	99%
2012	96	100
2013	96	96
2014	97	85
2015	97	
2016	97	

**Additional Information:** Data are collected and analyzed by a contractor, using panels of special education parent stakeholders to review a randomly selected sample of materials disseminated by centers for the purpose of training and informing parents. In an effort to ensure that the sample materials reviewed in 2013 were representative, 1 service was drawn from a stratified random sample of CPRCs and PTIs, for a total of 28 services reviewed. Prior to 2013, OSEP collected and analyzed data on this measure for both products and services. However, because the primary focus of CPRCs and PTIs is on the provision of services, beginning in 2013, the Department no longer collected information on products in order to more accurately reflect the work of these centers.

All materials are reviewed and scored on the basis of a rubric, developed by OSEP, that is designed to yield ratings on the materials' responsiveness to priority issues and challenges confronting the target groups. Specifically, the rubric is designed to yield ratings on the basis of the following three dimensions related to relevance: (1) Need (does the content of the material attempt to solve an important problem or critical issue?); (2) Pertinence (does the content of the material match the problem or issue facing the target group or groups?); and (3) Reach (to what extent is the content of the material applicable to diverse populations within the target group?). The total score for any individual service reviewed is the sum of the three relevance dimension sub-scores. High relevance for any individual service is defined as a total score of six or higher of nine possible points.

This measure is calculated by dividing the number of individual services that received an average relevance rating of six or better (29 services) by the total number of services reviewed (34), multiplied by 100 percent. Prior to 2013, this same methodology was used for both products and services. For fiscal year 2014, 85.3 percent ( $29/34 = 0.853 \times 100 \text{ percent} = 85.3 \text{ percent}$ ) of services were deemed to be of high relevance.

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Based on the most recent years of data it appears that program grantees generally do a good job of ensuring that products and services are of high relevance to education and early intervention policy or practice. The actual percentage of materials judged to be of high relevance did not meet the target, but only one of the grantees that failed to be judged of high relevance scored below a five of nine possible points.) The Department is using the feedback from the expert panel to work with grantees to improve their services and maintain the high standard achieved in 2013.

**Measure:** The percentage of all Parent Information Centers products and services deemed to be useful by target audiences to improve educational or early intervention policy or practice.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	95%	92%
2012	95	100
2013	96	93
2014	97	88
2015	97	
2016	97	

**Additional Information:** Data are collected and analyzed by a contractor, using a panel of six to eight parent stakeholders who assess grant implementation by reviewing a randomly selected sample of materials (n = 28) disseminated by the centers. In an effort to ensure that the sample materials reviewed were representative, 1 service were drawn from a stratified random sample of 28 CPRCs and PTIs, for a total of 28 services reviewed. Prior to 2013, OSEP collected and analyzed data on this measure for both products and services. However, because the primary focus of CPRCs and PTIs is on the provision of services, beginning in 2013, the Department no longer collected information on products in order to more accurately reflect the work of these centers.

All materials are reviewed and scored on the basis of a rubric, developed by OSEP, that is designed to yield ratings on the extent to which the content can be easily and quickly adopted or adapted by the target group, and the likelihood that the product or service, if adopted, will produce the desired result. Specifically, the rubric is designed to yield ratings on the basis of the following three dimensions related to usefulness: (1) Ease (does the content of the service description address a problem or issue in an easily understood way, with directions or guidance regarding how a problem or issue can be addressed?); (2) Replicability (is it likely that the information derived from the service will eventually be used by the target group in multiple settings to achieve the intended benefit?); and (3) Pertinence (does the content of the material match the problem or issue facing the target group or groups?). The total score for any individual service reviewed is the sum of the three quality dimension sub-scores. High usefulness for any individual product or service is defined as a total score of six or higher of nine possible points.

This measure is calculated by dividing the number of individual services that received an average usefulness rating of six or better (30 services) by the total number of services reviewed (34), multiplied by 100 percent. Prior to 2013, this same methodology was used for

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both products and services. For fiscal year 2014, 88.2 percent ( $30/34 = 0.882 \times 100 \text{ percent} = 88.2 \text{ percent}$ ) of services were deemed to be useful by target audiences.

Based on the most recent years of data it appears that the program's grantees generally produce products and services that are useful to target audiences. The actual percentage of materials judged to be useful decreased from the prior year and failed to meet the target. The Department is using the feedback from the expert panel to work with grantees to improve their services and maintain the high standard achieved in previous fiscal years.

### Long-Term Measures

Two long-term measures have been developed for the program. Data are collected every 2 years through an OSEP-supported survey of parents who had received services from the parent centers. In 2009, OSEP conducted an independent survey of the same population to test the validity of these measures. The survey found parents' answers to questions were not significantly different from the original data and confirmed the accuracy of the data collection methods used for the following long-term measures:

**Measure:** The percentage of parents receiving Special Education Parent Information Centers services who promote scientifically- or evidence-based practices for their infants, toddlers, children and youth.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	74%	79%
2011	75	77
2013	76	80
2015	77	

**Additional Information:** Data are collected by the parent centers every 2 years using telephone interviews with 25 randomly selected parent stakeholders per center ( $n = 3,195$ ). The National PTI Technical Assistance Center developed the survey. To calculate the measure, a weighted sum of the number of parents whose answers displayed an enhanced knowledge of evidence-based practices is divided by the total number of parents who responded to four relevant survey questions. Baseline data for this relatively new measure were first collected in 2007 and used to establish targets for later years.

Based on the most recent years of data, it appears that program grantees do a reasonably good job of ensuring that parents receiving parent information centers services promote sound practices for their children. The Department uses the results of this measure and the annual quality measure to provide the centers with feedback on how they can better align their products and services with evidence-based practices.

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**Measure:** The percentage of parents receiving Special Education Parent Information Centers services who report enhanced knowledge of IDEA rights and responsibilities.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	85%	91%
2011	87	85
2013	89	88
2015	91	

**Additional Information:** Data are collected for this measure by the parent centers every 2 years using telephone interviews with 25 randomly selected parent stakeholders per center (n = 3,195). The National PTI Technical Assistance Center developed the survey. To calculate the measure, a weighted sum of the number of parents whose answers displayed an enhanced knowledge of IDEA rights and responsibilities is divided by the total number of parents who responded to three relevant survey questions. The targets were established based on results from the survey in prior years.

Data for this measure suggest that most of the parents receiving services from the grantees believe they enhanced their understanding of their rights and responsibilities under IDEA. However, while the actual percentage of parents who reported enhanced knowledge increased from last year, performance on this measure still fell below the target level.

### Efficiency Measure

**Measure:** The Federal cost per unit of output provided by the Special Education Parent Training and Information Centers, by category.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	\$1.14	\$1.13
2012	1.12	1.26
2013	1.10	1.17
2014	1.08	1.14
2015	1.08	
2016	1.08	

**Additional Information:** The efficiency measure for the Parent Information Centers program is “the cost per output, by category, weighted by an intensity rating.” From 2012 through 2014, the cost per unit of services exceeded the target level. The Department believes that data for 2012 represent an outlier, given performance on this measure in 2011 and 2013, which were significantly lower than in 2012.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### **National activities: Parent information centers**

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The data for this measure are collected by a survey developed by the National PTI Technical Assistance Center. The measure is calculated by dividing the total value of all Federal funds in the Parent Information Centers program by the number of parents reported to be served under the program weighted by an index reflecting the intensity of the services provided ( $\$28,917,243 / 25,419,128 = \$1.14$ ). The intensity weights represent the amount of interaction and support required to render each type of service. High intensity services such as IEP facilitation meetings receive a weight of four; medium intensity services such as group trainings and counseling phone calls receive a weight of three and two, respectively; and low intensity services such as visits to parent center Web sites receive a weight of one. However, these whole number intensity weights do not reflect precise estimates of the relative amounts of time and resources associated with different types of services. The Department has examined revising these weights, but an analysis of data and input from performance measures specialists and parent center directors found that the weights could have a wide range of possible values, depending on the mix of services and costs at each parent center. In light of these findings, the Department has kept the weights unchanged to preserve the simplicity and transparency of this measure.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

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### **National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials**

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part D, Subpart 3, Section 674)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0<sup>1</sup>

Budget Authority:

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$28,047	\$28,047	0

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<sup>1</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011; continued funding for this program is proposed in fiscal year 2016 through appropriations language.

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program (formerly known as the Technology and Media Services program) is the primary source of support for accessible technology and media-related activities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Technology activities promote the development, demonstration, and use of technology. It includes research on using technology to improve learning and provide access to curricula, and technical assistance and dissemination activities to enhance the use of technology by parents and teachers. Media and materials activities include closed captioning, video description, timely provision of books and other educational materials in accessible formats, and other activities to improve access to education for students with disabilities.

The Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program ensures that educational media that are not otherwise required to be made accessible are available to students with disabilities. Despite the passage of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, which expanded the range of media that must be closed captioned and updated accessibility standards to include emerging Internet and mobile technologies, significant gaps in captioning coverage remain. Mandatory captioning only applies to broadcast television, not to video broadcast exclusively over the Internet or video produced for classroom viewing. Funding for this program supports the captioning and nationwide distribution of thousands of titles of educational media per year.

Video description consists of verbal explanations of key visual elements in a video or television program that are inserted into natural pauses in the spoken dialogue. These descriptions supplement the regular audio track of the program. They provide individuals with visual impairments access to television and other media that include visual images. Federal law only requires video description of 4 hours of television programming a week on each broadcast television network and the five most watched cable networks. All other video programming, including increasingly popular Internet media, are not subject to description requirements. In 2013, over 1,200 hours of educational video were described by grantees funded through this program. The IDEA requires that description and captioning funds be used only for programs that are suitable for use in a classroom setting. These funds may not be used to describe or caption news programs even when they are suitable for use in classrooms.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### **National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials**

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Educational materials activities include the preparation of electronic files suitable for efficient conversion into specialized accessible formats. The educational materials provided by this program are written and published for instructional purposes of students with disabilities in the classroom and are required by a State educational agency or local educational agency. As such, the timely delivery of these materials supports students' access to the general curriculum and participation in statewide assessments.

The single largest grant in this program provides funding for the production and distribution of textbooks and other educational materials in accessible formats to students with visual impairments and other print disabilities. These activities can be accomplished more rapidly and cheaply than ever before due to recent advances in digital technologies. In 2013, this grantee provided more than 1.3 million accessible books and other materials at no cost to eligible students across the country.

The Department makes awards for projects throughout the fiscal year. The initial project periods of most awards start at the beginning of the fiscal year following the year of the appropriation. The duration of awards typically varies from 3 to 5 years.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011 .....	\$28,644
2012 .....	29,588
2013 .....	28,047
2014 .....	28,047
2015 .....	28,047

### **FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST**

The Administration's request for fiscal year 2016 for the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program is \$28.0 million, the same as the 2015 level. The fiscal year 2016 request would provide approximately \$6.7 million for about 7 new awards and approximately \$21.3 million for 27 continuation projects.

Projects funded under the program support improved access to, and participation in, the general education curriculum; developmentally appropriate activities for preschool children; and statewide assessments. By supporting research on, and dissemination of, accessible instructional materials and technology, this program helps ensure that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education guaranteed for them under the IDEA. This program funds innovations in accessible technologies and broadens the understanding of how technology can be effectively utilized to increase academic achievement. The Administration believes that improved access and participation result in higher expectations and improved outcomes for children with disabilities.

### **Educational Technology**

The request includes \$15.1 million for Technology activities, which promote the development, demonstration, and use of accessible technology. This is accomplished primarily through research, for which at least \$12.7 million is proposed, including \$2 million to support 4 new

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### **National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials**

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Stepping Up Technology Implementation awards and \$8 million for 18 continuing Stepping Up projects. These model demonstration grants validate and scale up promising technology-based products or interventions such as curriculum materials, accessible products, or instructional methodologies.

Of the \$15.1 million research request, about \$1.5 million in new funding would be used for the Center on Online Learning for Students with Disabilities (<http://centerononlinelearning.org/>). This project investigates how the rapid growth of instruction delivered through the Internet affects students with disabilities, both positively and negatively, and develops promising practices for delivering online instruction to these students. Approximately \$1.2 million would provide continuation funding for early childhood technology model demonstration grants.

In addition to research projects, the request for Technology activities includes \$1.4 million for a continuation award to support technical assistance and dissemination activities carried out by the Center on Technology and Disability (<http://ctdinstitute.org/>). This Center is designed to increase the capacity of families and providers to advocate for, acquire, and implement effective assistive and instructional technology practices, devices, and services.

The request also would provide \$1 million for an award to address the needs of postsecondary institutions related to recruiting, enrolling, retaining, and instructing students who are deaf, and addressing the varying communication and technology needs of and methods used by individuals who are deaf. This project is jointly supported with funds from the Personnel Preparation and Technical Assistance and Dissemination programs. Under IDEA section 682(d)(1)(B), the Department is required to provide at least \$4 million of the funds provided for programs authorized under subparts 2 and 3 of Part D of IDEA “to address the postsecondary, vocational, technical, continuing, and adult education needs of individuals with deafness.”

### **Educational Media and Materials**

Media and materials activities include a variety of activities targeted toward providing educational materials, such as textbooks, in accessible formats for individuals with disabilities, particularly deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals and blind and other visually impaired individuals. In fiscal year 2016, \$12.5 million would be allocated to these activities.

About \$2.2 million of the request would be available for new awards in 2016. Approximately \$1.5 million would support a new award under the Described and Captioned Media Program (<http://www.dcmp.org>), which makes accessible media (video other than television) available at no cost to students. This project not only captions and describes educational media, but also efficiently distributes the media to schools via the Internet and other channels. The support for video description of educational programming is essential for individuals with visual impairments because, unlike closed captioning, there are few Federal requirements for providing video descriptions. Teachers and students can browse the media library of over 4,000 titles.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### **National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials**

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The IDEA requires the Department to support the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC), which is awarded noncompetitively to the American Printing House for the Blind. The NIMAC (<http://www.nimac.us/>) is a national electronic file repository that makes electronic files that comply with the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) available for the production of print instructional materials in specialized formats. NIMAC receives source files from textbook publishers and provides these files to State and local educational agencies for use in producing materials in accessible media, such as braille, audio, and digital text. NIMAC contained over 36,000 books and other items as of January 2014. The request includes \$650,000 for a new award for this project in fiscal year 2016.

The 2016 request for continuation activities in educational media and materials includes a total of \$8.4 million for accessible books and other instructional materials. Of this, \$6.5 million is for an award to support the development, production, and distribution of educational materials in accessible formats to students with visual impairments and other print disabilities. The current grantee, Bookshare for Education (<http://www.bookshare.org>), has transformed the provision of educational materials in accessible formats by nationally providing free educational media, including textbooks, much more efficiently and quickly than was previously possible. Approximately \$1.2 million of this funding would provide continued support for a project awarded in fiscal year 2014 that provides technical assistance to States and other entities on the provision of books and other educational materials in accessible formats. In prior years, the Department has funded similar projects that developed and supported the widespread use of NIMAS, which sets clear guidelines for converting educational media into a variety of accessible formats for use by publishers, educational agencies, and students with disabilities.

Continuation projects also include \$2.0 million for projects to provide access—through video description and captioning—of television programs that are appropriate for use in the classroom setting and are not otherwise required to be captioned by the Federal Communications Commission. These projects fill in the gaps in Federal accessibility policies to ensure that as many educational television programs as possible are accessible to students with visual or hearing impairments. The current grantee, the DIAGRAM Center (<http://www.diagramcenter.org/>), has developed new standards and open-source software for making digital images accessible for students with disabilities. Images and graphics are considerably more difficult to make accessible than basic text, but this Center's tools make creating and using accessible images easier, faster, and more cost effective. Prior Department investments in this area have made over 1,200 hours of programming accessible per year that would otherwise be unavailable to these students.

The request also includes \$700,000 for ongoing support of activities to improve the accessibility of educational materials. The new software and hardware used to deliver educational content are often not accessible to students with disabilities, even as a greater portion of classroom materials are published digitally.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials

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#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<u>Program Funding:</u>			
<b>Technology:</b>			
Research:			
New	\$1,492	\$1,000	\$3,523
Continuations	<u>10,117</u>	<u>11,640</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>9,171</u>
Subtotal	11,609	12,640	12,694
Technical assistance and dissemination:			
New	0	0	0
Continuations	<u>1,431</u>	<u>1,435</u>	<u>1,435</u>
Subtotal	1,431	1,435	1,435
Projects to address the postsecondary, vocational, technical, and adult education needs of individuals with deafness:			
New	0	0	1,000
Continuations	<u>1,000</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	1,000	1,000	1,000
<b>Subtotal, Technology:</b>			
New	1,492	1,000	4,523
Continuations	<u>12,548</u>	<u>14,075</u>	<u>10,606</u>
Subtotal	14,040	15,075	15,129
<b>Media and Materials:</b>			
Captioned & described accessible media:			
New	0	1,955	1,500
Continuations	<u>3,998</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,955</u>
Subtotal	3,998	3,455	3,455
Books and other instructional materials in accessible formats:			
New	1,218	700	0
Continuations	<u>7,500</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>7,682</u>	<u>8,400</u>
Subtotal	8,718	8,382	8,400

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<sup>1</sup> Approximately \$259 thousand of fiscal year 2014 funds for media services will cover a portion of the continuation costs for this activity in fiscal year 2015.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials

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#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) – Statutory earmark			
New	0	0	\$650
Continuations	<u>\$604</u>	<u>\$649</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	604	649	650
<b>Subtotal, Media and Materials:</b>			
New	1,218	2,655	2,150
Continuations	<u>12,102</u>	<u>9,831</u>	<u>10,355</u>
Subtotal	13,320	12,486	12,505
<b>Other (e.g. program evaluation contracts):</b>			
New	154	0	0
Continuations	<u>454</u>	<u>368</u>	<u>318</u>
<b>Subtotal, Other</b>	608	368	318
<b>Peer review of new award applications:</b>	79	118	95
<b><u>Total Program Funding:</u></b>			
New	2,864	3,655	6,673
Continuations	25,104	24,274	21,279
Peer review	<u>79</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>95</u>
Total	28,047	28,047	28,047

#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

##### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Seven performance measures have been developed for the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program. Three of these measures are annual measures, two are long-term, and the last two are measures of efficiency.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials

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#### Annual Measures

The three annual measures deal with the relevance, quality, and usefulness of products and services provided by the program.

In assessing the performance under each measure, panels of six to eight experts reviewed a sample of products from 28 of the program's projects. Each project submitted a product or multiple products that represents the primary or typical products/services released by that grantee during the prior fiscal year.

**Goal: To promote the development, demonstration, and use of accessible technology and media services to improve results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.**

**Objective:** *Improve the quality of products produced by projects in the Special Education Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program.*

**Measure:** The percentage of Educational Technology, Media, and Materials projects judged to be of high quality.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	97%	97%
2012	97	92
2013	97	94
2014	94	89
2015	94	
2016	94	

**Additional Information:** The quality dimensions measured are (1) Substance – does the product/service description reflect the best of current research and theory or policy guidance, as demonstrated by a scientifically or evidence-based approach, a solid conceptual framework, appropriate citations and other evidence of conceptual soundness?; and (2) Communication – does the product/service description have clarity in its presentation, as evidenced by being free of editorial errors, appropriately formatted, and well organized? All of the selected products are reviewed and scored on whether the product content is evidence-based, valid, complete, and up-to-date. Products and services that receive an average total panel rating of 6 or higher across the two criteria are deemed to be of high quality.

The percentage of products judged to be of high quality decreased and did not meet the target in fiscal year 2014. However, a high percentage of products were still reported to be of high quality. The reviewers judged 25 of the 28 products in the sample to be of high quality. Due to the small number of projects that are eligible for this measure, minor changes in the number of projects that submit acceptable evidence can cause large drops in the reported percentages. As such, the Department plans to reconsider this measure in 2015.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials

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**Measure:** The percentage of Educational Technology, Media, and Materials projects judged to be of high relevance to improving outcomes of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	97%	91%
2012	97	100
2013	98	94
2014	94	93
2015	94	
2016	94	

**Additional information:** All of the selected products were assessed on whether the product content was responsive to priority issues and challenges confronting the target groups and judged on three dimensions of relevance: (1) Need – does the content of the material attempt to solve an important problem or critical issue?; (2) Pertinence – does the content of the material match the problem or issue facing the target group or groups?; and (3) Reach – is the content of the material applicable to diverse populations within the target group? Products and services receiving an average total panel rating of 6 or higher across the three criteria are deemed to be of high relevance.

In fiscal year 2014, the percentage of products judged to be of high relevance for this measure decreased and did not meet the target level. However, the panel found 26 out of the 28 products in the sample to be highly relevant for the intended users. Due to the small number of projects that are eligible for this measure, minor changes in the number of projects that submit acceptable evidence can cause large drops in the reported percentages. As such, the Department plans to reconsider this measure in 2015.

**Measure:** The percentage of Special Education Educational Technology, Media, and Materials projects that produce findings, products, and/or services that contribute to improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	97%	97%
2012	97	92
2013	98	94
2014	94	79
2015	94	
2016	94	

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials

**Additional information:** All selected products were reviewed and scored on whether the product content could be easily and quickly adopted or adapted by the target group and produce the desired result. The products were judged on three dimensions of usefulness: (1) Ease – does the content of the product or service description address a problem or issue in an easily understood way, with directions or guidance regarding how a problem or issue can be addressed?; (2) Replicability – is it likely that the information derived from the product or service will eventually be used by the target group to achieve the benefit intended?; and (3) Sustainability – is it likely that the information derived from the product or service will eventually be used in more than one setting successfully over and over again to achieve the intended benefit? Products and services receiving an average panel rating of 6 or higher across the three criteria are deemed to be of high usefulness.

Performance on this measure declined in fiscal year 2014 and the target was not met. The panel found 22 out of the 28 products in the sample contributed to improving results for children with disabilities. Fiscal year 2015 data should make it more evident whether the 15 percentage point drop is an anomaly or indicative of a larger trend.

#### Long-Term Measures

The following two long-term measures have been developed for the program to provide information about the potential impacts of the projects' products and services on the target population. Evidence about outcomes of the target population may take more than 1 year to become available; therefore, in fiscal year 2011, the Department modified the data collection to every 2 years for both of these measures.

**Objective:** *Investments in the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program will develop and validate current and emerging technologies that incorporate scientifically or evidence-based materials and services.*

**Measure:** The percentage of Special Education Educational Technology, Media, and Materials projects that validate their products and services.

Year	Target	Actual
2012	70%	70%
2014	72	100
2016	72	

**Additional information:** Panelists individually assess the strength of the evidence supporting the case that each grantee's products and services have resulted in improving outcomes of interest for children with disabilities on a 4-point scale defined differently for research grants and technology utilization and technical assistance grants. Grants receiving an average panel score of 2 or higher are determined as having validated their products and services.

For research grants, the scale is 3, signifying Superior (one or more well-designed randomized controlled trials, quasi-experiment, or single-subject research studies conducted by the project that support the case that the project's products and services result in improving the outcomes of interest); 2, signifying Acceptable (any of the types of evidence described above with limitations that prevent a rating of 3); 1, signifying Low (any of the types of evidence described

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials

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above, but with weaknesses of a substantial degree that result in an unconvincing case that the product or service results in improving the outcomes of interest); and 0, signifying Unacceptable (little or no evidence of results in improving the outcomes of interest).

For technical assistance and service grants, to receive a rating of 3, the project must meet one or more of the following standards: (a) a review of high-quality research that clearly applies to the project's products and services and supports its efficacy in improving the outcomes of interest; (b) an evaluation study and/or qualitative study providing evidence that the project's products and services result in improving the outcome of interest; (c) ratings of the project's product and services obtained from users, focus groups, review panel, etc., when used in combination with a type of evidence such as (a) or (b) above; or (d) expert opinion derived from strong findings or theories in related areas and/or expert opinion buttressed by direct evidence. Additionally, the evidence must be of high technical quality and make a convincing case that the project's products and services result in improving the outcomes of interest. For a rating of 2, the project may demonstrate any of the types of evidence described above with limitations that prevent a rating of 3. For a rating of 1, a project may demonstrate any of the types of evidence described above, but with weaknesses of a substantial degree that result in an unconvincing case that the product or service results in improving the outcomes of interest. For a rating of 0, a project demonstrates little or no evidence of results in improving the outcomes of interest.

This measure only includes projects that have entered the dissemination phase of their grants or completed the final year of their grants and submitted a final report. Each of the four projects that were rated in the 2014 data collection submitted acceptable evidence of validity.

**Objective:** *Investments in the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program will make validated, evidence-based technologies to improve results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities available for widespread use.*

**Measure:** The percentage of Special Education Educational Technology, Media, and Materials projects that make validated technology products and services available for widespread use.

Year	Target	Actual
2012	100%	83%
2014	95	50
2016	95	

**Additional information:** This measure evaluates the extent to which each project rated in the measure above as "validated" has submitted evidence of the availability of, and customer support for, their technology-based products and services. In fiscal year 2014, the panel reviewed evidence from four centers that entered the dissemination phase of their projects or completed the final year of their grants and submitted a final report. Two centers that were rated as "validated" submitted sufficient evidence of the availability of their products or services to the target population. By comparison, five of the six centers reviewed in 2012 were rated as "validated." Due to the small number of projects that are eligible for this measure, minor changes in the number of projects that submit acceptable evidence can cause large drops in the reported percentages. As such, the Department plans to reconsider this measure in 2015.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials

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#### Efficiency Measures

The Department has established two efficiency measures for the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program. The two measures provide data on accessible book distribution and on video captioning and description projects, respectively. The Department recently eliminated a measure on the efficiency of research projects due to concerns about the transparency and validity of the measure's calculation methodology.

**Measure:** The Federal cost per download from the accessible educational materials production and distribution project funded by the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		\$7.0
2012		5.5
2013	\$5.5	5.0
2014	5.0	4.1
2015	5.0	
2016	5.0	

**Additional Information:** One of the major activities supported by this program is the development, production, and distribution of educational books and materials in accessible formats to students with visual impairments and other print disabilities. The current grantee performing activities under the Department's accessible educational materials priority is Bookshare, Inc. This measure, new in 2011, is calculated as the annual amount of Federal funding for the project divided by the number of files downloaded from the project by eligible students or teachers and sponsors on behalf of eligible students (In 2013:  $\$6,500,000 / 1,600,985 = \$4.10$ ). After downloading these files, eligible students can access the content in specialized formats, such as audiobooks or braille. Bookshare is the most widely used accessible book producer and distributor in the country. This project works in conjunction with other Department-funded projects, such as the National Instructional Materials Access Center, to ensure that eligible students have appropriate materials needed to access the general curriculum. The Department established targets for 2014 through 2016 in fiscal year 2014.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### National activities: Educational technology, media, and materials

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**Measure:** The Federal cost per hour of video description funded by the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		\$2,258
2012		1,962
2013		2,442
2014	\$1,669	2,548
2015	1,669	
2016	1,669	

**Additional information:** The educational media measure is calculated as the total amount of funding provided for description activities (\$2,499,516 in 2014) divided by the total number of hours of accessible described media produced (981 hours in 2014). The cost of an hour of media description increased from fiscal years 2013 to 2014. Recent advances in technology have increased automation in the descriptioning process; however, costs increased in 2014 because of the shift from closed captioning projects to video descriptioning projects, which are more time intensive. No target is shown for 2013 because the target in that year was based on incorrectly reported data. Targets in 2014 and subsequent years are based on corrected data

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

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### Special Olympics education programs

(Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004, section 3(a))

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0<sup>1</sup>

Budget Authority:

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$7,583	\$7,583	0

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<sup>1</sup> The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011; continued funding is proposed for this program in FY 2016 through appropriations language.

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004 authorizes the Departments of Education, State, and Health and Human Services to make discretionary grant awards to the Special Olympics to support activities in a number of areas related to the Special Olympics. The Department of Education is authorized to make awards for:

- 1) Activities to promote the expansion of Special Olympics, including activities to increase the participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities within the United States; and
- 2) The design and implementation of Special Olympics education programs, including character education and volunteer programs that support the purposes of the Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004, that can be integrated into classroom instruction and are consistent with academic content standards.

In addition to funds appropriated under this authority, Special Olympics has received over \$5 million in non-competitive grant awards from the Department since fiscal year 1999, including funds for national and world games and affiliated programs.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011.....	\$8,079
2012.....	8,000
2013.....	7,583
2014.....	7,583
2015.....	7,583

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Special Olympics education programs

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#### FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$7.6 million for Special Olympics education programs, the same as the fiscal year 2015 level. The Administration's request would support efforts to promote the expansion of Special Olympics and the design and implementation of Special Olympics education programs, specifically, the Special Olympics National Youth Activation Demonstration Project (Project UNIFY).

Project UNIFY, a national youth sports demonstration program, is the major activity funded by this direct appropriation. In addition to sports and physical education in integrated settings, this project also provides opportunities for youth to participate in leadership development, service learning, and structured interpersonal communication and socialization activities. The activities supported under this program assist individuals with intellectual disabilities in becoming productive members of their communities by dispelling negative stereotypes and promoting positive and inclusive learning environments.

#### PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

<u>Measures</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
<b>Project UNIFY</b>			
Number of funded State programs	38	38	38
Number of schools participating	2,400	2,500	2,600

#### PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

##### Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

**Objective:** *The Special Olympics will increase the inclusion and awareness of students with intellectual disabilities.*

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Special Olympics education programs

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**Measure:** The percent of school liaisons who report that Project UNIFY helps raise awareness about students with intellectual disabilities.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		66%
2012		65
2013		66
2014	67%	
2015	67	
2016	67	

**Measure:** The percent of school liaisons who report that Project UNIFY increases opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to be involved in school activities.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		52%
2012		58
2013		60
2014	61%	
2015	61	
2016	61	

**Additional information:** Data were reported for these measures starting in 2011. To collect the data, Special Olympics engaged external evaluators to survey school liaisons at the end of the program year. School liaisons are volunteers, typically teachers, who administer Special Olympics programming at the school level. Their perceptions are not direct indicators of programmatic outcomes. However, they are informed by close experience with participating students and the Special Olympics organization. These annual measures provide perspectives on the level of success that the Special Olympics achieves in promoting positive and inclusive learning environments. The data indicate the program is improving the awareness of and opportunities for students with disabilities.

**Objective:** *The Special Olympics will promote the expansion of opportunities provided by Special Olympics programs for students with intellectual disabilities to participate in service learning, character education, and structured interpersonal communication and socialization activities that can be integrated into classroom instruction and are consistent with academic content standards.*

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Special Olympics education programs

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**Measure:** The number of schools participating in Project UNIFY.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		2,025
2012		2,150
2013		2,310
2014	2,400	
2015	2,500	
2016	2,600	

**Measure:** The number of schools participating in a Project UNIFY High Activation Program.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		810
2012		924
2013		987
2014	1,056	
2015	1,150	
2016	1,200	

**Additional information:** Special Olympics has aggressively expanded the reach of Project UNIFY during recent years to more than 2,310 locations in 38 states. There were 718 elementary schools, 481 middle schools, and 1,028 high schools, and 83 other schools participating in Project UNIFY in 2012. Schools typically offer programming at one of two intensity levels: High Activation or Building Bridges. High Activation schools feature a higher intensity and variety of activities, and, therefore, are likely to have a larger impact on participating students. Building Bridges schools offer fewer activities and generally include schools new to the program. Schools with High Activation programs also generally require a greater commitment of resources. In 2013, 43 percent of all participating schools were in the High Activation category, the same as 2012.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Special Olympics education programs

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**Objective:** *The Special Olympics will develop efficient programs at the national, State, and school level.*

**Measure:** The average total Federal cost per school.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		\$3,997
2012		3,758
2013		3,463
2014	\$3,160	
2015	3,033	
2016	3,033	

**Measure:** The percent of Federal funds spent on administration.

Year	Target	Actual
2011		33%
2012		25
2013		22
2014	20%	
2015	20	
2016	20	

**Additional information:** These two measures provide basic information on the efficiency of the program. The decrease in the cost per school reflects an increase in the number of participating schools and a slight decline in the Federal appropriation for this program since fiscal year 2013. The measure on administrative costs includes administrative expenses at the State level and national level charged to the Federal grant. These administrative expenses pay for management, oversight, and coordination functions that make possible the ongoing implementation of programming in schools. Administrative costs vary among the Department's grants with respect to the type of entity, activity performed, structure of the grantee, and the efficiency of the project's operations. This program has continued to decrease the percentage of funds spent on administration every year since 2011.

### Other Performance Information

Project reports indicate that State and local coordinators were given significant latitude in developing programs. This flexibility has resulted in significant differences in the approaches taken to achieving Project UNIFY's goals and presented challenges for evaluating success. For example, the intensity of services offered varied substantially among participating schools.

Project UNIFY has engaged external evaluators from the University of Massachusetts to conduct a formative evaluation. Data from surveys of school liaisons in 954 schools indicated

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that Project UNIFY had an inconclusive impact on the attitudes and behaviors of participating students toward individuals with intellectual disabilities. The evaluators commented that the effect of Project UNIFY may be limited by the self-selection into the program by students who already had positive attitudes and behaviors. It is difficult to avoid this self-selection effect because participation in Special Olympics activities is voluntary and non-random. The project's impact on academic outcomes was not measured because improving academic achievement was not the primary goal of this program.

The formative evaluation also found that the majority of school staff involved with the project believed that Project UNIFY helped raise awareness about students with intellectual disabilities, increased interaction between students with and without intellectual disabilities, and increased the confidence of students with intellectual disabilities. Surveys showed that most participating schools have hosted both inclusive sports programs and youth leadership/activation activities. Schools with the highest levels of involvement generally featured extra-curricular clubs that provided a venue for students with and without intellectual disabilities to participate in sports and social activities that promote inclusive school environments. The evaluators concluded that these clubs are a best practice that can provide a model for other participating schools.





