



# Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

## **Special Education Liaison**

1. **Purpose:**

The purpose of the program is to provide support to districts, parents, guardians, educators, and students with disabilities by responding to stakeholder calls and requests for information.

2. **Description of services provided:**

The OSPI Special Education Parent & Community Liaison serves as a neutral guide for families, educators, and community members attempting to understand and navigate the special education process, and includes informing parents and others of formal dispute resolution options as appropriate. The Parent and Community Liaison listens to individual concerns and questions regarding both special education and the public education system. The Liaison responds by providing accurate information, seeking out useful resources, and offering the necessary support to resolve issues and improve relationships throughout the public school system. Some of the key functions of this position include:

- a. Helping parents, educators, and community members better understand and navigate special education processes and regulations;
- b. Helping parents, educators, and community members involved in special education better understand and navigate general education processes and regulations;
- c. Providing training workshops and technical assistance to parents, educators, and community members on special education processes and regulations;
- d. Creating and maintaining online resources and guidance for parents, educators, and community members on special education processes and regulations;
- e. Clarifying the roles of parents, educators, and community members in relation to the delivery of special education services;
- f. Advising parents, educators, and community members about communication strategies that support a team approach to a student's educational program;
- g. Acting as a neutral facilitator between parents, community organizations, and school districts to help solve problems and improve communication;
- h. Acting as a neutral sounding board to explore both formal and informal options for resolving special education related disputes;

- i. Working to prevent individual concerns from being overlooked by the general educational system by directing parents and community members to the appropriate general education process, procedures, and resources;
- j. Participating in the writing, revising, and implementing the Rules for the Provision of Special Education (WAC Chapter 392-172A) process;
- k. Reviewing, analyzing and revising other regulations affecting the state regulations for the provision of special education;
- l. Reviewing and analyzing the legal impact of proposed and adopted legislation and court decisions on the provision of special education within Washington;
- m. Making policy recommendations to OSPI and other stakeholders based upon common issues and patterns of complaints, if patterns emerge;
- n. Serving as a liaison/representative to the Puget Sound Educational Service District 121 on behalf of the special education division at OSPI;
- o. Serving as a resource for disability related information, resources, and referral;
- p. Serving as a resource for general education requests for information, questions, and referral;
- q. Supervising the process of approving and maintaining compliance of nonpublic agencies in providing special education services to eligible students on behalf of school districts.

The Special Education Parent and Community Liaison does not advocate on behalf of any one party or provide legal advice. Rather, the Parent and Community Liaison exists to address individual concerns about bureaucratic educational systems and acts to ensure a fair process is available to all involved.

3. **Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:**

Schools, parents, guardians, educators with questions or concerns may simply call the Special Educator Division of the Office Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Beneficiaries in 2020-21 School Year:**

<b>Number of School Districts:</b>	Possibly all districts and charter schools
<b>Number of Schools:</b>	Possibly all schools
<b>Number of Students:</b>	Possibly all students
<b>Number of Educators:</b>	Possibly all educators
<b>Other:</b> <i>Name other...</i>	Private schools and community organizations

**Number of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs):** 0.4 FTE

**Number of contractors/other staff associated with this funding:** 0

**FY21 Funding: State Appropriation:** \$50,000

**Federal Appropriation:** \$100,000 (biennial appropriation)  
**Other fund sources:** \$0  
**TOTAL (FY21)** \$150,000

4. **Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?**

No

Yes, please explain.

*If state funds are not available, the state will not be eligible...*

5. **State funding history:**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount Funded</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
FY21	\$50,000	\$46,508
FY20	\$50,000	\$48,993
FY19	\$50,000	\$49,878
FY18	\$50,000	\$47,896
FY17	\$50,000	\$50,000
FY16	\$50,000	\$49,381
FY15	\$50,000	\$46,293
FY14	\$50,000	\$47,494
FY13	\$50,000	\$38,638
FY12	\$50,000	\$42,696
FY11	\$50,000	\$43,750
FY10	\$50,000	\$43,763
FY09	\$50,000	\$49,420
FY08	\$50,000	\$45,529

**Federal Funding History:**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount Funded</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
FY20	\$50,000*	\$37,220
FY20	\$50,000*	\$62,780
FY19	\$50,000*	\$44,877
FY18	\$50,000*	\$48,586

\*\$100,000 biennial appropriation

6. **Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of School Districts</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Educators</b>
FY21	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All
FY20	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All
FY19	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All
FY18	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All
FY17	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All	Possibly All

7. **Programmatic changes since inception (if any):**

No programmatic changes since inception.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:**

A high volume of inquiries each year has resulted in the need for an additional liaison to fully meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families across the state. An additional liaison will cut the current response time in half, improving level of service to the special education community.

9. **Major challenges faced by the program:**

The liaison communicates with over 800 unique contacts per year. Approximately 25% of these contacts send inquiries two or more times per year. The response to each inquiry lasts approximately 30-60 minutes. It is currently taking a few weeks for parents to get a response rather than the targeted 48 hours.

10. **Future opportunities:**

An additional liaison will cut response time in half and will have a positive impact on families of students receiving special education services, and in turn a positive impact on schools and districts serving these families and students.

11. **Statutory and/or budget language:**

Budget Proviso: ESSB 5092 Section 1507(11) \$50,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal year 2020, \$50,000 of the general fund-state appropriation for fiscal 2021, and \$100,000 of the general fund-federal appropriation are provided solely for a special education family liaison position with OSPI.

12. **Other relevant information:**

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13. **Schools/districts receiving assistance:**

See [OSPI's Grantee List](#)

14. **Program Contact Information:**

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