



OSPI Randy I. Dorn, State Superintendent

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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Special Education Safety Net Survey

2016

Authorizing legislation: RCW 28A.150.392(3)

(<http://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.392>)

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Executive Summary

Safety Net funds are available to districts that need more special education funding than provided by state and federal government. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) ask districts to apply for Safety Net funding yearly.

In 2015–16, the Safety Net committee approved awards for 105 local education agencies (LEA), including:

- An Educational Service Agency
- Washington State School for the Blind
- Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss

The committee awarded 2,299 high-need individual student applications and seven community impact applications. The total amount awarded in 2015–16 was \$41,719,412.

OSPI must survey districts about the Safety Net application each year to improve the process. OSPI sent the survey to 425 administrators in the 113 districts that got Safety Net funding in 2015–16.

The survey had 10 questions. This year all 10 questions had an 85 percent agreement rate. This is an increase from previous years when 9 of the 10 questions had an 80 percent or higher agreement rate.

Ninety-eight people from 75 districts took the survey. This was 23 percent of the survey pool and over sixty percent of the applicant districts. Thirty-one people (7 percent of the survey pool) commented. Responses to the survey increased, but comments decreased this year.

Background

Safety Net has been available in some form since the 1996–97 school year. Since its beginning, the Safety Net Oversight Committee has awarded over \$453 million in state and federal Safety Net funding. [For a more complete background of the program see the 2014–15 Safety Net Survey Report.](#)

Update Status

Participants answered 10 questions about the Safety Net process. Survey takers recorded agreement at 85 percent or higher to all the survey questions. This is an increase from previous years where survey takers recorded agreement at 80 percent or higher for only nine of the ten survey questions.

As in previous years, a majority of responses:

- Thought the Safety Net bulletin was clear and the OSPI staff, training, and website were helpful.
- Believed that the process was fair and that they received good feedback if their application was not funded.
- Thought the IEP Review Form tool was helpful and found that their IEPs improved because of the Safety Net process.

Multiple respondents said that the process could be improved by:

- Providing clearer instructions and notifying districts when forms change.
- Providing more training on forms required for submission.
- Making the application completely electronic.
- Improving consistency in the reviews from year to year.

Complete survey results are available online (www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2016documents/2016-12-SafetyNetSurvey-AppendixA.pdf).

Conclusion and Next Steps

Safety Net Survey results are used to improve the Safety Net process for the 2016–17 school year. The Safety Net bulletin released October 10, 2016 outlines the process for the 2016–17 school year.

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