



NC'S EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS: OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS

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WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

- **Federal Law**
 - Regulatory requirements for identification, services and funding process
- **State Statute –Section 115-C**
 - Aligns with Federal law
 - Establishes state funding formula
- **Original Federal Law**
 - 1975-Enacted by 1977; Last reauthorization-2004
- **NC-State Statute**
 - Established the Exceptional Children Division at NCDPI in 1948;
 - Funding in the 1949-50 SY



FEDERAL LAW: INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) 2004

- IDEA Establishes
 - Eligibility guidelines/criteria
 - Categories of Disability Determination
 - Service delivery
 - Foundational Criteria
 - Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
 - Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

- Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a student through content, methodology, or delivery of instruction and ensure access to the general curriculum.
 - Academics
 - Social-Emotional Needs
 - Behavior
 - Speech/Communication
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Audiology
 - Transportation



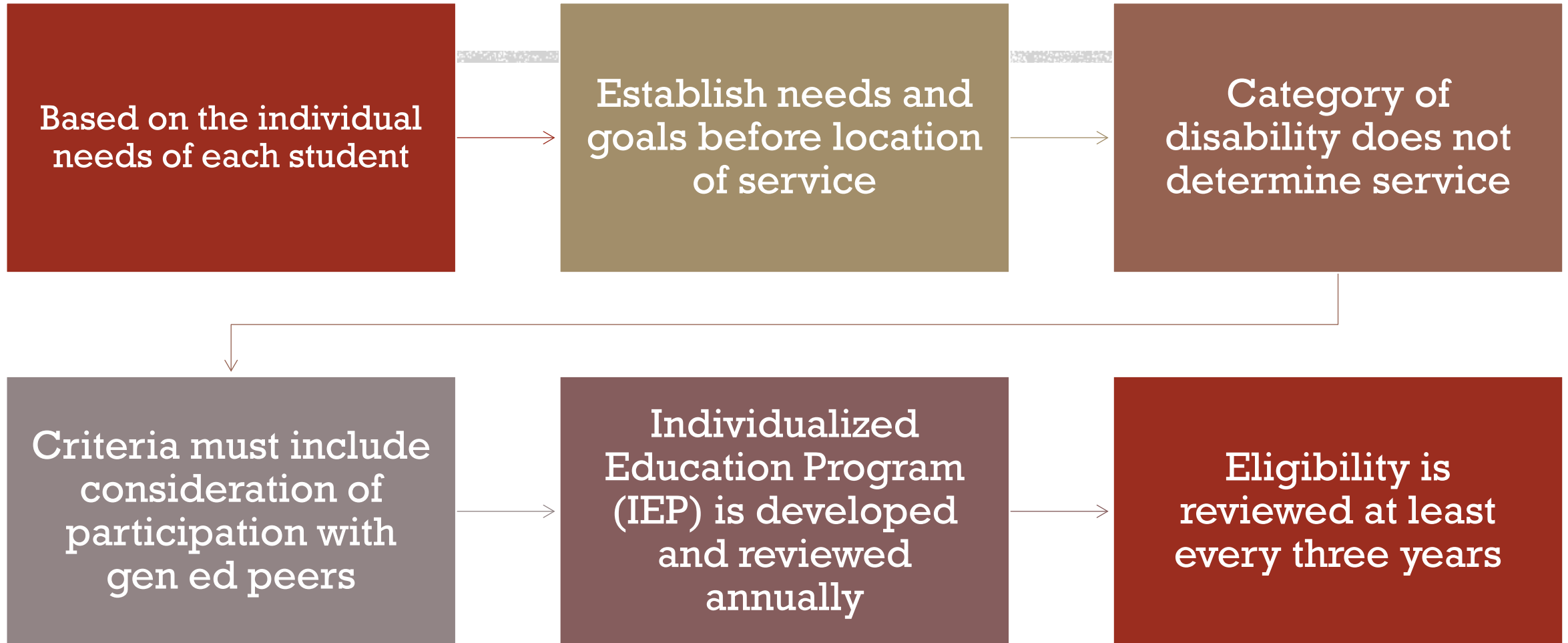
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS ARE ALSO GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENTS FIRST!



80% of special ed
students are in
general ed the
majority of the day



BASICS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES



WHAT ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS?

- Trained in strategies, techniques, and methods to support student needs
- Develop and implement individualized education programs (IEPs) for each student
- Collaborate with other teachers, therapists, other school staff and families, to ensure all services are delivered.



LOCAL SUPPORT STRUCTURE

- Special Ed teachers/service providers are assigned by schools
- Each Local Education Agency (LEA) has a Director of Special Education
- District Level supports such as curriculum, speech, occupational therapy, etc.
- Staff from NC DPI, Office of Exceptional Children support the LEAs by region or by specialty



GOVERNANCE & SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

- ❖ Department of Education
 - ❖ Office of Special Education Programs
- ❖ NC Department of Health & Human Services
 - ❖ Part C-Birth to 3 years old
- ❖ NC Department of Public Instruction
 - ❖ Part B-3-5 yr.- Preschool
 - ❖ Part B-6 up to 22 yr. -School Aged



**WHAT DOES
FUNDING LOOK
LIKE?**

2024-25FY

**Federal Formula Grant Awards–NC
Base on Child Count**

**Part C-Birth – 3
\$16 M**

**Part B-Preschool
\$12.5 M**

**Part B-School Age
\$415.4M**

**Covers Approximately 14% of per pupil cost
K-12**



WHAT DOES FUNDING LOOK LIKE?

2024-25FY

NC State Level Funding

- Based on child count
- Flat funding-does not differentiate on level of service
- \$5300/special ed student
- Up to 13% of each local district average daily membership





**WHAT DOES
FUNDING LOOK
LIKE?**

**Varies by
County/City system**

**Some LEAs receive
substantial funding**

**Others receive no
local funds**

IMPACT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION GRADUATION RATES

	All Students	Special Ed Students 4 yr .cohort	Special Ed Students 5 yr. cohort
2015	85.6%	67.3%	N/A
2024	87%	71.6%	74.0



HOW CAN YOU ADVOCATE FOR STUDENTS?

Teacher

Counselor

Building
Administrator

Local EC
Department

Local EC
Director

State Level-
Office of
Exceptional
Children



PROPOSAL FOR CHANGE IN STATE FUNDING

Legislature is considering a Weighted Funding Model

- Begin with a flat base for all Special education students
- Base funding tiers on amount/level of services
- Most involved students would receive larger funding

Why is this important?

- With flat funding, high service students are not fully covered by current funding model



QUESTIONS?

