



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

January 29, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Eric G. Mackey *EGM*
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Special Education Services Application for Special Initiatives

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Special Education Services (SES) Section, is pleased to announce the opportunity to support projects that make a difference for children with disabilities throughout the state of Alabama. Local education agencies (LEAs) are eligible to receive additional funding support for FY 2025 for Project SEARCH, transition outcome-oriented projects, professional learning for Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC) teachers, parent training and counseling, and, by invitation only, for school improvement training support.

The funding options are as follows:

1. Project SEARCH Support, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
2. Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC), Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
3. Transition Outcome-Oriented Projects, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
4. Parent Training and Counseling Support, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
5. School Improvement Training Support (By Invitation Only), Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)

Gift cards, food, and promotional items are not allowable costs under any of the grants.

Any public school system in the state of Alabama that has enrolled a child with a disability determined eligible for special education and related services under existing federal and state law may submit a grant application (see attached) to the ALSDE for financial assistance to support these special initiatives.

The LEAs must comply with all application requirements to be considered for the award allocation of these funds. An LEA may apply to receive FY 2025 funds for special initiatives by completing and submitting an electronic application.

Project SEARCH Support

Project SEARCH is a Transition-to-Work Program, a unique, business-led, one-year employment preparation program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Workplace immersion facilitates classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. The program culminates in individualized job development.

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of Education

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Executive Officer

The ALSDE, SES, accepts applications from LEAs to cover the reimbursement for Project SEARCH licensing fees, materials, supplies, or professional development costs.

- Start-up programs are eligible for Project SEARCH licensing fees (currently \$18,000.00) plus up to \$30,000.00 for materials, supplies, or training expenses, including travel.
- Existing programs are eligible for renewal licensing fees (currently \$350.00) and up to \$15,000.00 for materials, supplies, or training expenses, including travel.
- Existing programs that wish to replicate their program with the same partners at a new host business are eligible for the licensing fee (currently \$12,000.00) plus up to \$30,000.00 for materials and supplies.

All reimbursements are only for Project SEARCH licensing fees and/or materials, supplies, or training expenses to benefit a Project SEARCH program. To be considered for this grant, LEAs must complete the checklist and submit it with the Project SEARCH Application for Support Funding.

Temporary Special Education Teacher Certificate (TSEC)

The collaborative partnership between LEAs that employ TSEC teachers and the ALSDE, SES, will provide valuable financial support to TSEC teachers as they work to empower and educate children with disabilities. The ALSDE, SES, is committed to supporting, increasing, and retaining individuals working through the TSEC alternative approach and will provide participant fees to support the completion of six professional learning sessions per teacher at a rate of \$600.00 per completed session and \$1,400.00 for passing the required Praxis (currently *Special Education Foundational Knowledge*), not exceeding \$5,000.00 per participant to LEAs interested in participating in this opportunity. The TSEC teachers can be reimbursed once only per completed module and once only for passing the required Praxis.

Compensation will be made to TSEC teachers by your LEA and reimbursed to your district by the ALSDE. Participating personnel will: (a) be currently employed by your district as a special education teacher; (b) ensure all requirements for subsequent TSEC applications are completed by the designated deadlines listed on page 4; and (c) complete all professional learning outside of normal work hours.

The district is responsible for verifying the completion of modules on the PowerSchool Professional Learning transcript and/or the passing of the Praxis on the official score report before payment to the TSEC teacher.

Transition Outcome-Oriented Projects

Both the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Rehabilitation Act) require transition services to be made available to students and youth with disabilities as they prepare for and enter postsecondary life. Both laws also make clear that transition services require a coordinated set of activities within an outcome-oriented process that relies upon active student involvement, family engagement, and cooperative implementation of transition activities, as well as coordination and collaboration between the vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency, the state educational agency (SEA), and the LEAs.

The ALSDE, SES, is committed to helping LEAs increase the graduation rate, decrease the drop-out rate, and improve the post-school outcomes of students and youth by supporting the system's change efforts in transition. To support meaningful transition Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) with measurable goals, services, and courses based on appropriate transition assessments, the ALSDE, SES, will make available a total of \$1,500,000.00 for one-time grant awards to further this effort. Grant applications up to \$25,000.00 per project will be accepted from LEAs for initiatives that seek to improve transition outcomes. These grants can be used for materials (e.g., evidence-based transition curriculum), supplies, equipment (less than \$5,000.00 per piece of equipment, e.g., items needed to set up a work-based enterprise), local transition team costs, technology, assistive technology, recruitment/retention, personnel development, and professional development. These transition grants cannot be used to pay salaries or contract special education or related services, as they are time-limited funds. No more than two projects per LEA will be funded.

Parent Training and Counseling Support

The ALSDE, SES is committed to improving and increasing student outcomes by promoting positive parent-school partnerships. To help foster positive relationships between parents/guardians of school-age children with disabilities and LEAs, the ALSDE, SES, will make funds available for grant awards to further this effort.

The parent counseling and training supported by these funds will assist parents in understanding the special needs of their child, provide parents with information about child development, and/or help parents acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP.

Grant applications up to \$20,000.00 per project will be accepted from LEAs for parent training and counseling support, with the option to reapply after expending all or most of a previous grant award if funds remain available.

Training

LEAs should consider universal training opportunities for all parents and guardians of children with disabilities and offer targeted and focused-training for specific parents and guardians, as needed. When offering targeted and focused-training, it may be appropriate and necessary to include it in the child's IEP.

The support available for parent and guardian training includes:

- Participant fees for district-sponsored or district-approved training to be paid by the LEA directly to parents and guardians of children with disabilities for participating in training with the following stipulations:
 - Up to \$200.00 for training that lasts between one and two hours.
 - Up to \$400.00 for training that lasts at least three hours.
 - Up to \$600.00 for training that lasts at least six hours.
- Registration fees for parents and guardians of children with disabilities.
- Presenter fees for training for parents and guardians of children with disabilities.
- In-state travel and per diem according to state rules and regulations for students with disabilities, parents, and guardians of children with disabilities (to allow for student, parent, and guardian participation in state conferences that encourage and advance self-determination and advocacy or other pertinent skills).

Counseling

Counseling should be offered to families for the parents or guardians of a child with a disability to receive counseling if a child's IEP Team determines that it is necessary for the child to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The support available for counseling includes counseling costs for parents or guardians to participate in counseling and transportation/mileage reimbursement.

The goal of the Parent Training and Counseling Support is for parents or guardians of children with disabilities to receive high-quality, relevant, and useful training and/or counseling to help improve outcomes for their children.

School Improvement Training Support (By Invitation Only)

The school improvement training support is for LEAs that have school(s) designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI). The training support covers specified training sessions and implementation planning meetings. The training support available includes registration costs, participant fees, substitute teacher reimbursement, in-state travel, and per diem according to state rules and regulations. The participant fees are for personnel not on contract during summer training and implementation planning meetings up to \$200.00 per day (or equivalent to Board policy, whichever is less) and employer's benefits and/or substitute teacher reimbursement and benefits for training sessions and implementation planning meetings up to \$150.00 per day (or equivalent to Board policy, whichever is less). Each training support opportunity is by invitation only and will include a specific number of days for which LEAs can apply.

A separate application is required for each option. Awards will be made in rounds based on the following deadlines for submitting applications:

Application Submission Deadlines (Electronic Submission Date By)
Application Deadlines for Rounds 1 and 2 of Special Initiatives Awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• February 14, 2025• March 7, 2025
Additional application submission dates may be added if funds remain after each submission deadline.

January 29, 2025

An electronic application must be submitted by January 31, 2025, to be eligible for Round 1. The deadline for Round 2 (based on the availability of remaining funds after the first round of applications is received and processed) is February 28, 2025.

These funds are awarded for FY 2025 and are available immediately after approved submissions through September 30, 2025, with the official effective date designated upon award. Applications for supplemental funds must be submitted and approved prior to expenditures. Upon receipt of a signed, itemized claim with supporting documentation, reimbursement to the LEA will be made. All funds awarded must be expended by September 30, 2025, and are not automatically awarded in subsequent years.

For consideration in the award allocation of these funds, it is imperative that the LEAs comply with all application requirements. An LEA may apply to receive FY 2025 special education state-appropriated funds by completing and submitting an electronic application [here](#).

If you have questions or need clarification, please contact the ALSDE, SES, by email at sesgrants@alsde.edu or by telephone at 334-694-4782.

EGM/DC/SWR

Attachment

cc: Special Education Coordinators
Chief School Financial Officers
Mrs. Angela Martin
Mr. Arthur Watts, Jr.
Mrs. Shanthia Washington
Dr. DaLee Chambers
Mrs. Erika Richburg
Mrs. Patrice Harvill
Mrs. Tiffany Moore
Mrs. Elizabeth Greene

FY25-2018

Special Education Services Application

Special Initiatives: Fiscal Year (FY) 2025

Financial assistance is available to any public school system in the state of Alabama that has enrolled an exceptional child with disabilities determined eligible for special education, and related services under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). Local education agencies (LEAs) may submit grant applications to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) for financial assistance for Special Initiatives.

For FY 2025, there are five special initiatives for financial assistance options:

1. Project SEARCH Support, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
2. Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC), Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
3. Transition Outcome-Oriented Projects, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
4. Parent Training and Counseling Support, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
5. School Improvement Training Support (By Invitation Only), Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)

For consideration in the award allocation of these funds, it is imperative that the LEA follows all application requirements.

These funds are awarded for FY 2025 and are available immediately after approved submissions through September 30, 2025, with the official effective date designated upon award. Applications for special initiatives must be submitted and approved prior to expenditures. All funds awarded must be expended by September 30, 2025, and are not automatically awarded in subsequent years.

Gift cards, food, and promotional items are not allowable costs under any of the grants.

If you have questions or need clarification, please contact the ALSDE, SES, by email at sesgrants@alsde.edu or by telephone at 334-694-4782.

Application Submission Deadlines (Electronic Submission Date By)
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Application Deadlines for Rounds 1 and 2 of Special Initiatives Awards:
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- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• February 14, 2025• March 7, 2025 |
|---|

Option 1: Project SEARCH Support

The ALSDE is accepting applications from LEAs to cover reimbursement for Project SEARCH licensing fees (currently \$18,000.00) plus up to \$30,000.00 for materials and supplies or training expenses, including travel, for start-up programs. Project SEARCH programs that are being renewed are eligible for reimbursement for the renewal licensing fees (currently \$385.00) and up to \$15,000.00 for materials and supplies or training expenses, including travel. ([Project SEARCH Frequently Asked Questions](#))

Option 2: Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC)

The ALSDE, SES, is committed to supporting, increasing, and retaining individuals working through the TSEC alternative approach and will provide participant fees to support the completion of six professional learning sessions per teacher at a rate of \$600.00 per completed session and \$1,400.00 for passing the required Praxis (currently *Special Education Foundational Knowledge*), not exceeding \$5,000.00 per participant to LEAs interested in participating in this opportunity. The TSEC teachers can be reimbursed once only per completed module and once only for passing the required Praxis. The district is responsible for verifying completion of requirements before payment to the TSEC teacher.

Option 3: Transition Outcome-Oriented Projects

Grant applications up to \$25,000.00 per project will be accepted from LEAs for initiatives that seek to improve transition outcomes. These grants can be used for materials (e.g., evidence-based transition curriculum), supplies, equipment (less than \$5,000.00 per piece of equipment, e.g., items needed to set up a work-based enterprise), local transition team costs, technology, assistive technology, recruitment/retention, personnel development, and professional development. These transition grants cannot be used to pay salaries or contract special education or related services, as they are time-limited funds. No more than two projects per LEA will be funded.

Option 4: Parent Training and Support

The parent counseling and training supported by these funds will assist parents in understanding the special needs of their child, provide parents with information about child development, and/or help parents acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP. Grant applications up to \$20,000.00 per project will be accepted from LEAs for parent training and counseling support, with the option to reapply after expending all or most of a previous grant award if funds remain available.

Option 5: School Improvement Training Support (By Invitation Only)

The training support available includes registration costs, participant fees, substitute teacher reimbursement, in-state travel, and per diem according to state rules and regulations. The participant fees are for personnel not on contract during summer training and implementation planning meetings up to \$200.00 per day (or equivalent to Board policy, whichever is less) and employer's benefits and/or substitute teacher reimbursement and benefits for training sessions and implementation planning meetings up to \$150.00 per day (or equivalent to Board policy, whichever is less). Each training support opportunity is by invitation only and will include a specific number of days for which LEAs can apply. (By Invitation Only)

Special Initiatives: Fiscal Year (FY) 2025

The LEA may choose to complete multiple applications for each option. LEAs are eligible for up to two awards under Option 2. Each application shall be submitted for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025.

Select **one option** per application:

- Option 1: Project SEARCH Support**
- Option 2: Temporary Special Education Teacher Certificate (TSEC)**
- Option 3: Transition Outcome-Oriented Projects**
- Option 4: Parent Training and Counseling Support**
- Option 5: School Improvement Training Support (By Invitation Only)**

The subject matter of this application (please select):

_____ Previously funded _____ Previously submitted, but not funded _____ New application

Indicate Previous Grant Number: _____

Special Education Services Application for Special Initiatives

SECTION 1: LEA APPLICANT INFORMATION

School Year: 2024-2025

LEA: _____

LEA Code: _____

LEA Mailing Address: _____

Superintendent: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Special Education Coordinator: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Chief School Financial Officer: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Signature of Superintendent

Date

Signature of Special Education Coordinator

Date

Signature of Chief School Financial Officer

Date

Project SEARCH Support

SECTION 2: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST & PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Complete the Program Requirements Checklist.
2. Complete the Plan for Implementation.
3. Complete the Budget Information (Section 3).

It is ideal to have one year for the planning team to work together for a successful implementation. The process of planning and implementation takes about nine months. Project SEARCH programs follow the local school calendar and begin operation in late August, so a planning team should start meeting, by January of the year they want to begin. It is suggested that you identify a Steering/Planning Team that meets at least monthly. All partner organizations should be represented (especially the host business once they are committed). The team may also include a young adult with a disability, a family member, a disability agency, and other community members such as the Workforce Investment Board, University Center for Excellence, etc.

Please complete the checklist and submit it with Project SEARCH Application for License Funding.

Project SEARCH Program Requirements	
Program Partners:	
	Education: Local school district, career technical school, educational service center, and/or collaboration of neighboring school districts.
	Vocational Rehabilitation: Both local counselor and area supervisor, if possible.
	Community Rehabilitation Partner (CRP): Provider of skills training and job development. In states where the skills trainer is hired directly by vocational rehabilitation (VR), this agency is not required unless it is a long-term support agency.
	State or County Developmental Disabilities (DD) Agency, Managed Care Agency, or Mental Health Provider: Long-term follow-along services.
	Host Business: The planning process can begin before a host business is identified but should include them as soon as they are secured.
	Workforce Investment Board/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Agencies in your community.
	Representation: A disability advocacy organization for families.
	Complete the Project SEARCH licensing agreement and contract for on-site technical assistance. For more information, contact the Project SEARCH business office at ProjectSEARCHbusinessoffice@cchmc.org .
	Develop a work plan for program planning and implementation.
	Evidence all local partners (proposed host business leaders and managers) have been educated with an in-depth program overview. This includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with the development of high-quality internship sites at the selected business and offer disability awareness/education for the staff who will be involved in the internships and other aspects of the Project SEARCH program. • Provide learning about other components of the Project SEARCH model, including student intern recruitment and selection, employability skills curriculum, creation of the Business Advisory Committee, and development of an employment search process. • Deliver Project SEARCH trainings that assist with the implementation of a successful Project SEARCH site, such as Teaching and Training for Success, Aspirational Job Development, etc. Provide additional individualized training depending on the needs of the host business site and partners.
	Project SEARCH Application for support funding submitted to the ALSDE, SES.

PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In the space below, explain the plan for implementing a Project SEARCH program, including any barriers to successful implementation.

Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC)

SECTION 2:

The number of TSEC teachers to receive participant fees: _____

	Name of Teacher	ALSDE ID Number
1.		
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29.		
30.		

*Attach additional pages with additional names if necessary.

Transition/Parents/School Improvement

SECTION 2:

1. In the spaces below, provide a description of the proposed project.
2. Complete the Budget Information (Section 3).

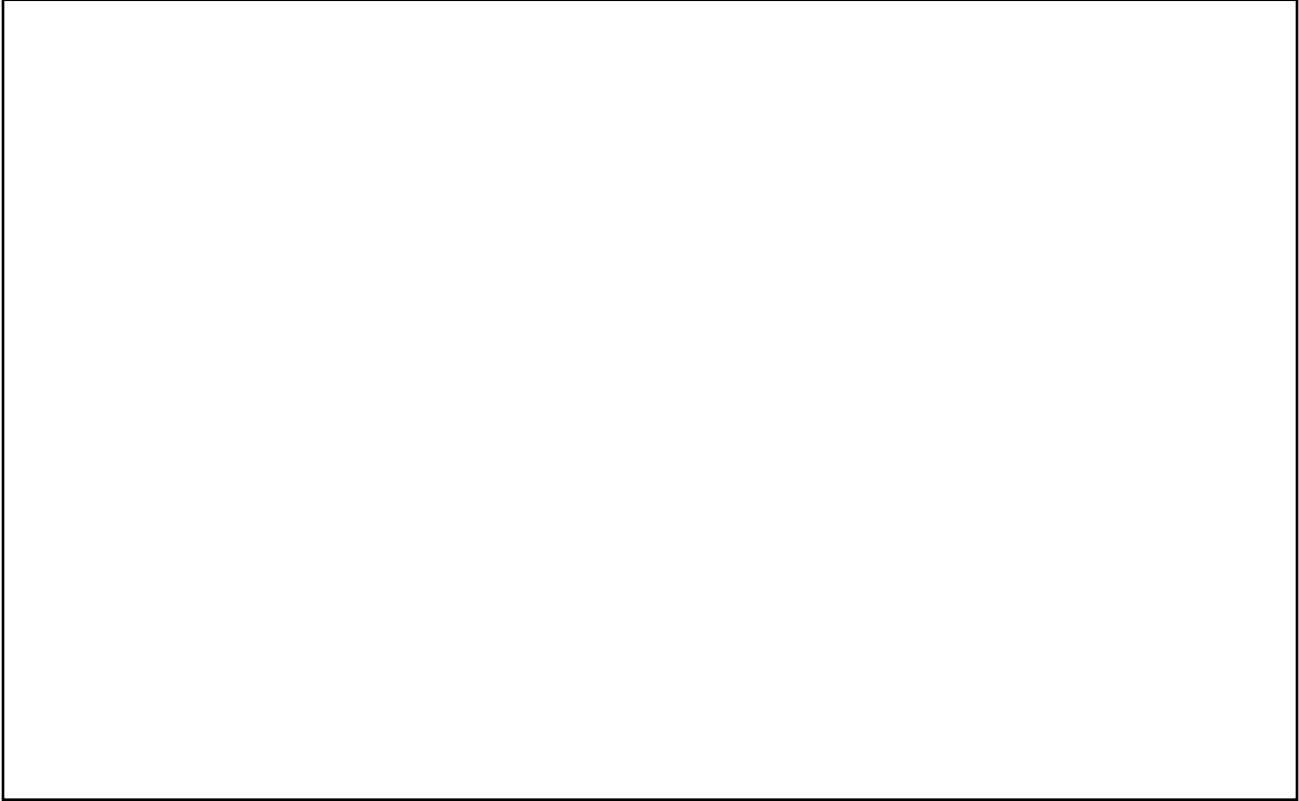
Executive Summary:

Proposed timeframe for implementation:

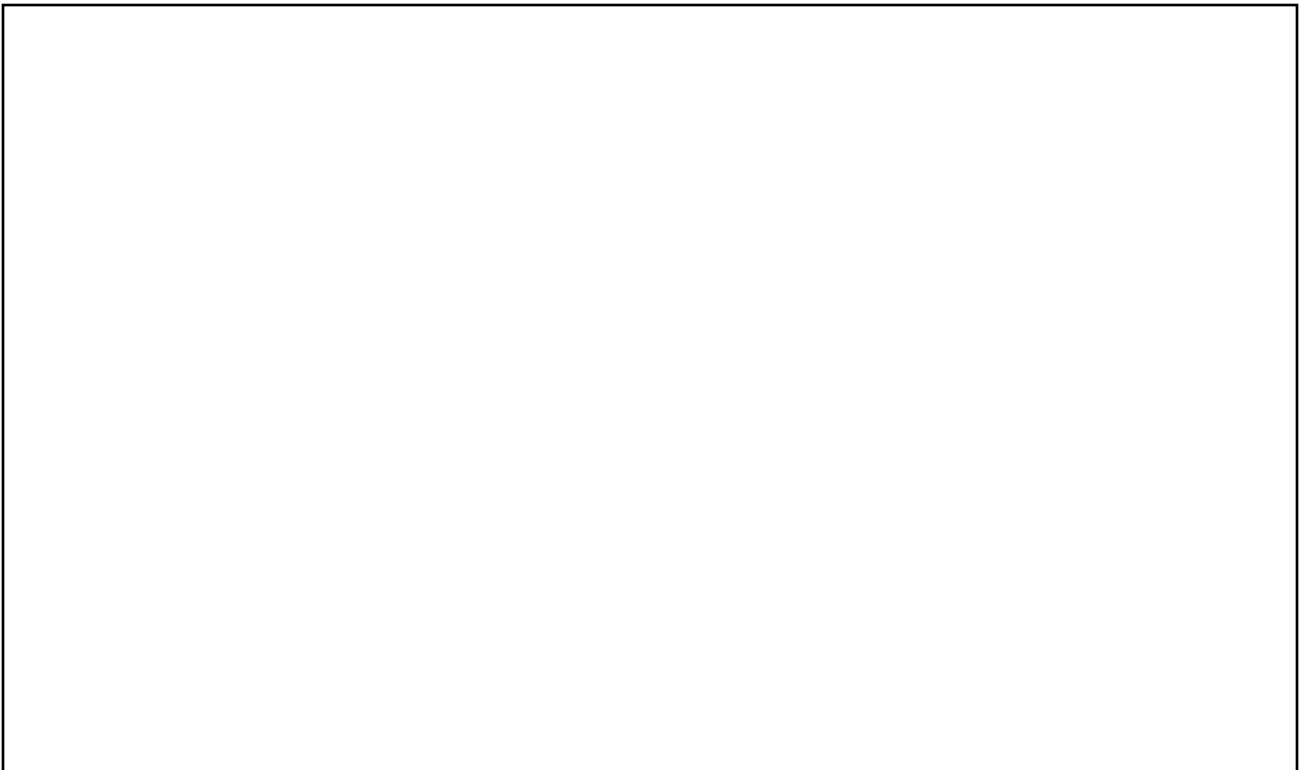
Detailed description of the scope and plan for implementation of the proposed project:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for a detailed description of the project scope and implementation plan.

How the project is expected to favorably affect children with disabilities:



How any expected progress or success resulting from the project will be measured at the completion of the project:



Budget Information

SECTION 3: BUDGET INFORMATION - REQUIRED FOR OPTIONS 1, 3, 4, & 5

Provide a detailed proposed budget, including the proposed budget amount(s), the category of expenditure(s), a brief description of expenditure(s), and an account code(s) for the **total amount of the requested funding** indicated. Local prorated amounts, when applicable, should be used for the proposed expenditures where services provided are for multiple students.

Gift cards, food, and promotional items are not allowable costs under any of the grants.

Description of Expenditure	Account Code	Proposed Budget Amount
	Total	\$