

Guiding Principles

1. Definitions:

Administrative Unit (AU): The AU is the agency (Mt. Pleasant School District) through which the funding passes from the California Department of Education to the districts within the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). The SELPA Annual Budget Plan guides the distribution of funds by the AU. The SELPA also has other fiscal and programmatic responsibilities in implementing the Local Plan for Special Education.

California Department of Education (CDE): The California Department of Education is the agency that calculates the funding for the SELPA and distributes the funds to the County Treasurer for distribution to the SELPA.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): As defined in Federal Law, FAPE means special education and related services that:

- (1) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction and without charge;
- (2) meet any of the standards established by state and federal law
- (3) include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school in California; and
- (4) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program required under state and federal law.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): As defined in Federal law, this term means that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are nondisabled and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily."

Regional Programs: Regional programs are developed on behalf of the SELPA or SELPAs to serve students from a number of school districts within the SELPA. They may be students with low incidence disabilities or of a specific disability. Funding for these programs is determined and agreed to by the SELPA districts.

SELPA: A Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) is a district or group of districts who provide an agreed upon continuum of services for students age birth through twenty-two residing within the geographical area. The SELPA governance structure ensures both fiscal and programmatic support to those educational agencies within the geographical region.

2. It is the responsibility of individual districts within each SELPA to assure a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** for each special education pupil residing within its geographical boundaries. This responsibility shall be met by direct provision of services, establishing an agreement with another public education agency, or contracting with a non-public school or agency.
3. All members of the SELPA will agree upon allocation procedures.
4. The maximum state funding will be fully utilized, according to allocation procedures and the Annual Budget Plan.
5. Changes in allocation of funding will be determined according to designated timelines, so districts and the County Office of Education can make fiscal and personnel decisions.
6. SELPA Annual Budget Plans will be developed in accordance with current law.
7. Districts shall not be financially impacted in a negative way by operating a program for the benefit of the other districts within the SELPA.

8. The principles of **“Free Appropriate Public Education” (FAPE)** and **“Least Restrictive Environment” (LRE)** shall not be compromised by fiscal considerations.
9. Districts shall be accountable for the allocation and reporting of funds in support of programs and services to identified students.
10. Districts will provide all necessary fiscal and programmatic information to the SELPA office in a timely manner in order to allow the SELPA office the required time to submit mandated reports to CDE.