

Gov. Wolf: \$20 Million to Help Schools Provide Services to Students with Special Needs



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Harrisburg, Pa. – Governor Tom Wolf is dedicating approximately \$20 million to help 678 local education agencies, including school districts, to provide education services for students with disabilities who may have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 mitigation efforts and may face additional challenges through the new academic year. The funding includes \$15 million from Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund and \$5 million from the Department of Education’s (PDE) federal funding through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

“While COVID-19 impacted all students this year, it was particularly hard on our children with special needs, who often require additional support and services to assist their learning,” said Gov. Wolf. “This funding will help schools as they put structures in place to help these students while we work to mitigate the spread of this pandemic.”

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act authorizes governors to determine the educational use of Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funds.

The Special Education COVID-19 Impact Mitigation Grant (SECIM) will provide \$15 million in financial support (\$10M GEER; \$5M IDEA) to local education agencies (LEA) to:

- Provide enhanced synchronous (real-time) instruction to bolster remote services and supports for students with complex needs; and
- Provide services and supports to students with disabilities who experienced a loss in skills and behavior and/or a lack of progress due to the mandatory school closures

An additional \$5 million in GEER grant funding will be available to Preschool Early Intervention programs to provide compensatory educational services.

“While LEAs transition to implementing reopening plans for the 2020-21 school year, they continue to face challenges in delivering free appropriate public education (FAPE) and providing services to students with disabilities,” said Secretary of Education Pedro A. Rivera. “This critical funding will help schools as they work with their students with special needs to rebuild skills and behaviors that were diminished during the COVID-19 shutdown.”

Grant amounts were calculated using an allocation formula based on the number of students with complex special education needs within each LEA. Distribution of funds to Preschool early intervention programs will be made based on identified needs.

[Grant recipients](#) will receive direct communication from PDE with eGrant application instructions.

To date, the Wolf Administration has awarded \$70.5 million in GEER funding to help keep students and educators safe, and meet the unique challenges of COVID-19. In addition to the \$15 million for special education, the Wolf Administration has directed \$28 million to postsecondary institutions and adult basic education providers, \$14 million to K-12 schools to support equity in continuity of education, \$10.5 million to Career and Technical Education Centers and \$3 million for Preschool Early Intervention Programs.

For more information about Pennsylvania’s education policies and programs please visit the [Department of Education’s website](#) or follow PDE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Pinterest](#).

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