



SB 868 Regional Inclusive Services (RIS)

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Regional Inclusive Services

- The Regional Inclusive Services program was established in 1982 to ensure equitable funding and services for children and students, ages birth-21, with low-incidence, high-cost disabilities.
- Low-incidence disabilities occur in the general population at such a low rate that it is difficult for individual districts to employ specialized staff and provide a full range of related services needed for these students.
- The regionalized model addresses inequities in service levels across geographic areas, disability groups, age differences, eligibility requirements, delivery patterns, and program funding and administration.
- Providing these services on a regional basis is both cost effective and assures that the students receive programs and services from qualified staff related to their specific needs.

Disability Categories Served by RIS

In 2023-2024, RIS provided support for 14,653 children and students with primary or secondary eligibilities in the following low incidence disability categories:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder: 11,602
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing: 1,580
- Visually Impaired: 822
- Deafblind: 83
- Orthopedic Impairment: 1132
- Traumatic Brain Injury: 225

Portrait of a Student



For example, consider this **fictional** student, Ella. Ella is a first grader who is hard of hearing.

Regional Inclusive Services provides:

- audiological services
- sign language interpretive support, and
- support and consultation from a teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing.

Senate Bill 53 (2021)

[Senate Bill 53](#) (2021) required the ODE to conduct a study on special education programs provided on a local, county or regional basis.

The study was to address:

- a) How special education currently is provided on a local, county or regional basis;
- b) Changes in law or practice that would improve how special education is provided on a local, county or regional basis; and
- c) Efficient and effective funding methods for providing special education on a local, county or regional basis.

Call for a New Funding Formula

- As highlighted in the 2007 Oregon Efficiency Study, “the major concern with the regional formula is that while it may have made sense at the time it was conceived, it has become outdated in the current era, especially in light of the substantially rising number of [children and] students in the State with ASD.”
- Since that time, K-12 leaders, RIS contractors, and families emphasize the need for a stable funding formula for vulnerable children with low-incidence disabilities.
- Current funding challenges impact student identification, service delivery, and long-term sustainability.
- The lack of stable and adequate funding threatens RIS’s ability to meet IDEA service obligations.

Primary Funding Barriers (SB 53)

Rising Population Without Matching Funding:

- The number of students eligible for RIS services is increasing significantly.
- Overall, RIS-served student population has risen by 40% (2009-2023) and continues to grow, but funding mechanisms do not keep pace with these changes.

Limitations of Current Service Level (CSL) Calculation:

- CSL funding is based only on inflation and does not account for changes in student volume or service costs.
- Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) prohibits adjustments for increased usage, further limiting funding flexibility.

Geographic Cost Variations:

- Service costs vary widely across Oregon, with rural and remote regions facing higher expenses.
- Current funding models fail to account for these geographic differences.

Dependency on Discretionary Funding:

- RIS increasingly relies on discretionary funds, which are unsustainable as they compete with other IDEA initiatives.

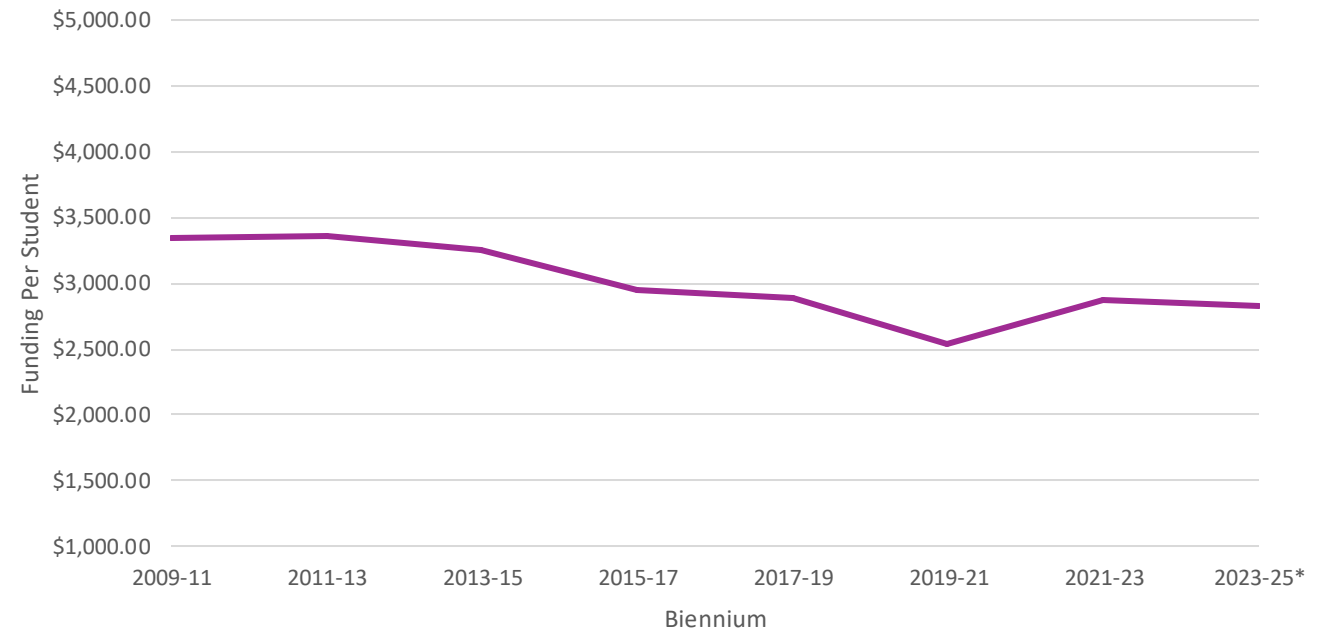
Funding Gaps:

- RIS does not benefit from state funding streams like the EI/ECSE Early Learning Account or Student Success Act funds.

Historical Funding Per Student

| Biennium | Student Count | Funding Per Student |
|----------|---------------|---------------------|
| 2009-11 | 18,576 | \$3,341 |
| 2011-13 | 18,161 | \$3,360 |
| 2013-15 | 18,458 | \$3,247 |
| 2015-17 | 19,717 | \$2,942 |
| 2017-19 | 21,459 | \$2,885 |
| 2019-21 | 24,429 | \$2,542 |
| 2021-23 | 24,160 | \$2,866 |
| 2023-25* | 26,135* | \$2,823* |

Regional Inclusive Services Funding Per Student



*2023-25 student count and funding per student is an estimate

Current Service Level Calculation for 25-27

| Regional Inclusive Services Grant-in-Aid | General Funds | Federal Funds |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| 23-25 Legislative Approved Budget | \$31,225,438 | \$36,719,939 |
| 2025-27 4.2% Standard Inflation | \$1,311,468 | - |
| 2025-2027 Current Service Level | \$32,536,906 | \$39,719,939 |
| 2025-2027 CSL Total | \$69,256,845 | |

| Additional Federal Funds | Discretionary Funds |
|--|---------------------|
| 2025-2027 IDEA Discretionary Funds (approx. 40% of Total) | \$5,840,000 |
| Total (CSL/Discretionary Funds) | \$75,096,906 |

SB 53 Taskforce Funding Charge

Goal: Establish a funding formula and revenue stream that provides adequate and stable funding.

ODE should convene a group to “develop a method for funding the [RIS] programs...in a manner that is consistent with state and federal law” (ORS 343.236(3)(b)) to develop a stable funding formula that:

- Provides an adequate service level for all children and students who qualify for RIS;
- Creates sustainability of staffing and services for programs considering demographics and geography;
- Determines, if and to what degree, EI/ECSE should support the funding of RIS;
- Limits the instability in numbers year-over-year that results from K-12 districts reporting practices in the regionally eligible student count.

Outcome: Make recommendations as to the long-term funding method that would adequately and reliably meet the needs of the funding formula.

SB 53 Task Force Recommendation

Sustainable Funding Model

- **Determine an Accurate Cost per Student:** Establish a baseline cost of **\$3,481 per student** to reflect the true expenses of providing services.
- **Identify a Standard Inflation Rate:** Apply a consistent annual **inflation rate of 4.20%** to account for rising operational costs.
- **Develop a Sustainable Funding Baseline:** Set a starting point for future funding, **2025-2027 \$122,443,496** to ensure long-term program stability.

SB 868

For the purpose of determining the cost of operating and administering a local, county or regional program of special education, the Department of Education shall develop a formula to be used to calculate the cost of efficient and effective funding of the program.

- No later than September 1 of each even-numbered year, the department shall submit a report to the Governor and, in the manner provided by ORS 192.245, to an interim committee The report shall:

For the present biennium, identify:

- Any difference between the amount calculated for the biennium based on the formula developed under paragraph (a) of this subsection and the amount made available for the cost; and
- The reason for any difference, including any difference in the amount of state funding needed and the amount of state funding provided; and

For the next biennium:

- Calculate the amount of state funding needed to operate and administer a local, county or regional program of special education based on the formula developed under paragraph of this subsection.
- The department shall make the report described in paragraph of this subsection available on the website of the department.



Questions