November 2026

Unit 5 Special Education Report

Unit 5 Five Year IEP Enrollment Trajectory

Latest U5 IEP Rate (25-26)
19.5% +2.8% vs State

State Average (25-26)
16.7% Illinois Benchmark

Current IEP Students
2,356 of 12,101 total

Academic Year	Total # of U5 Students	# of Students with IEPs	% of Students with IEPs in U5	% State Average
21-22	12,393	2,436	**19.6%**	15.6%
22-23	12,308	2,242	**18.2%**	15.9%
23-24	12,357	2,300	**18.6%**	16.2%
24-25	12,219	2,330	**19.1%**	16.3%
25-26	12,101	2,356	**19.5%**	16.7%

Disability Categories Numerically Represented in Unit 5

Specific Learning Disability 664	Speech Language Impairment 425	Autism 401	Other Health Impairment 398
Developmental Delay 363	Emotional Disability 121	Intellectual Disability 84	Multiple Disabilities 71
Hearing Impairment 8	Orthopedic Impairment 6	Deafness 6	Traumatic Brain Injury 2
Visual Impairment 1	Deaf-blindness 0		

In-District Continuum: General to Specialized Support

01

Consult Services

General Education Classroom (Indirect)

Staff collaborate on progress, modifications, and accommodations without direct student minutes.

02

Resource Support Delivery

General Education & Resource Room

Push-in co-teaching alongside peers or pull-out small-group/1:1 skill remediation.

03

Instructional Program

Self-Contained Classroom (Public School)

Modified-pace core academics in self-contained setting; general education for specials and lunch.

04

Student Support Program (SSP)

Self-Contained Classroom (Public School)

Direct social emotional support in a small setting delivered directly by special education staff.

In-District Continuum: General to Specialized Support

05

Specialized Services (SS 1, 2 or 3)

Self-Contained / Low-Incidence Class

Functional academics, communication systems, daily living skills, and integrated therapies.

06

18–22+ Transition

Community & Vocational Setting, Public Day School

Post-high school vocational training, independent living, and community integration until age 22.

07

Therapeutic Day

Private Day School

Full-day separate facility integrating intensive counseling and behavioral therapy with academics.

08

Residential Placement

24-Hour Live-In Facility

Round-the-clock educational, behavioral, or medical care when day programs are insufficient.

Instructional Program

Modified-pace core academics in self-contained setting; general education for specials and lunch.

Elementary Program

GRADES 2ND – 5TH

Designed for students more than 2 years below grade level peers in 2 or more academic areas:

- Reading
- Writing
- Math

Focus: Foundational Academic Recovery

Secondary Program

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Addresses student deficits identified in academic and/or functional areas of eligibility:

- Courses offered in CORE subject areas to meet graduation requirements; smaller environments
- Participation in general education / co-taught courses as determined by IEP team

Focus: Graduation & Inclusion

Delivery & Setting

DIRECT INSTRUCTION MODEL

Key environment and instructional attributes:

- Students benefit most from a smaller environment with direct instruction
- CORE subjects using grade level curriculum at a pace appropriate for direct student learning

Focus: Personalized Pace & Mastery

PROGRAM LOCATIONS ACROSS UNIT 5 (These students are capped at 13 students max in each classroom)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Fox Creek (3 classrooms), Prairieland (3 classrooms) Cedar Ridge Bilingual (1)

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

CJHS, EJHS, KJHS, PJHS

HIGH SCHOOLS

NCHS, NCWHS

Specialized Services Level 1 (SS1)

Functional academics, communication systems, daily living skills, and integrated therapies.

Student Profile

MODERATE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Students with mild to moderate cognitive delays and/or other identifiable needs requiring moderate curricular modification/accommodation
- May receive occupational, physical, speech therapies, and adapted PE
- Comprehension support using core vocabulary & moderate language needs (daily social & functional communication)
- Support for transitions between classroom activities, tasks, and environments
- General education instructional services determined on individual need

Functional Supports

BEHAVIOR & SENSORY

- Behavior support using incentive/choice boards, visual supports, and calming strategies (intrinsically & extrinsically motivated)
- Mild to moderate supports for independent functioning, self-regulation, and daily living skills
- Modified & specialized curriculum across academic areas with core standard modifications
- Scheduled sensory supports provided throughout the day as needed

Instructional Setting

ENVIRONMENT & DELIVERY

- Whole group instruction within self-contained classroom setting
- Small group targeted instruction for academic and skill development
- Individualized instruction tailored to specific learning needs
- Integration into general education environment as determined by individual IEP needs

SCHOOLS WITH PROGRAM ACROSS UNIT 5 (These students are capped at 13 students max in each classroom)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS Northpoint (4 classrooms), Parkside (3 classrooms), Pepper Ridge Elementary (3 classrooms)
MIDDLE SCHOOLS EJHS (2 classrooms), PJHS (3 classrooms)
HIGH SCHOOLS NCHS (2 classrooms), NCWHS (3 classrooms)

Specialized Services Level 2 (SS2)

Individualized functional academics, communication systems, daily living skills, and integrated therapies.

Student

SIGNIFICANT SUPPORTS

- Students with moderate cognitive delays and/or other needs requiring significant curricular modification or functional supports
- Needs additional instruction to generalize skills across settings, people, etc.
- Require significant adult support for transitions within and without the SS classroom, safety (e.g. elopement, unaware of dangerous environmental situations, etc.), independent functioning (e.g. toileting, grooming, eating, arrival/departure routines, life skills, etc.), and behavior management.
- Students may attend lunch, recess, art, music, and IMC with general education peers
- Moderate to severe communication needs including daily social and functional support, Augmentative communication
- Related services common: OT, PT, SLP, APE

Functional Supports

BEHAVIOR & DAILY LIVING

- Behavior (use of incentive/choice board, visual support, calming strategies etc.) *Mostly extrinsically motivated
- Daily Living Skills- may require support for feeding, toileting, etc.
- Independent Functioning (transition support, comprehension support by using CORE based vocabulary, significant support in specials to complete tasks, follow directions, & implement behavior supports, lunch/recess and daily living)
- Structured sensory diet scheduled daily

Environment

INSTRUCTION & CURRICULUM

- Whole group, small group, and individualized instruction.
- Specialized curriculum including Unique, F&P leveled readers, and individualized curriculum based on Essential Elements standards and IEP goals/objectives.
- Community based instruction

SCHOOLS WITH PROGRAM ACROSS UNIT 5 (These students are capped at 13 students max in each classroom)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS Colene Hoose (5 classrooms), Pepper Ridge Elementary (4 classrooms)
MIDDLE SCHOOLS PJHS (3 classrooms)
HIGH SCHOOLS NCWHS (2 classrooms)

Specialized Services Level 3 (SS 3)

Intensive, Individualized functional academics, communication systems, daily living skills, and integrated therapies.

Student Profile

EXTENSIVE SUPPORTS (potential)

- Multiple Disabilities
- Severe/Profound Cognitive Disability
- Non-verbal / intense communication needs
- Augmentative communication support

Functional Supports

BEHAVIOR & DAILY LIVING (potential)

- Functional Performance focus: Behavior, Daily Living Skills, and Independent Functioning
- Classroom nurse support
- Intensive individual instruction and limited small group instruction

Environment

INSTRUCTION & THERAPY (Potential)

- Students receive therapy directly in the classroom (Speech, OT, and PT)
- Dedicated classroom nurse availability
- Tailored intensive individual and small group environment

SCHOOLS WITH PROGRAM ACROSS UNIT 5 (These students are capped at 13 students max in each classroom)

Sugar Creek Pre-K ECSE (1 pm classroom)

Parkside Elementary K-5 (1 classroom)
MIDDLE SCHOOLS PJHS (1 classroom)
OTHER / HIGH SCHOOL WEST (1 classroom)

Student Support Program (SSP)

Direct social emotional support in a small setting delivered directly by special education staff.

Student Profile

BEHAVIORAL & SENSORY NEEDS

- Significant challenging behavior that impedes learning (internalizing or externalizing behaviors)
- FBA/BIP updated annually; requires daily teaching & ongoing reinforcement for expected behaviors
- Scheduled and unscheduled breaks/opportunities to meet emotional/sensory needs

Environment

SETTING & INSTRUCTION

- Smaller environment with direct social-emotional/behavioral instruction
- Small group and individualized instruction tailored to student needs
- Staff specially trained in de escalation strategies

Focus

CURRICULUM & INCLUSION

- Grade level curriculum with significant social-emotional/behavioral accommodations
- IEP team considers general education classes with support as positive behaviors develop

SCHOOLS WITH PROGRAM ACROSS UNIT 5 (These programs are capped at 13 students maximum in each classroom)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS Colene Hoose (5 classrooms)
MIDDLE SCHOOLS CJHS (3 classrooms)
HIGH SCHOOLS NCHS (3 classrooms), NCWHS (2 classrooms)

18-22 Secondary Services Program (Field)

Post-high school vocational training, independent living, and community integration until age 22.

Student

TRANSITION ELIGIBILITY

- Any student who will be 18 years or older can attend
- IEP team determined a deficit in one or more areas of secondary transition (Education, Vocational, Independent Living Skills)
- Previously participated in specialized services program in high school (**otherwise determined by the IEP team)

Environment

SETTING & WORK SITES

- VTAP work floor, pseudo apartment, kitchen, community work sites, and school-based work sites
- All environments focused on gaining independence within the community

Focus

SKILL ACQUISITION & COMMUNITY

- Obtaining and generalizing transition skills in real-world settings
- Targeted domains: independent living skills, vocational skills, and education/work skills
- Community-based instruction and practical application

SCHOOLS WITH PROGRAM

Eugene Field (currently 75 students attending Field) More high school students also push into Field for VTAP services

Therapeutic Day & Residential Placements

Therapeutic Day Program

07 • PUBLIC OR ISBE-APPROVED NONPUBLIC DAY SCHOOL

Structured Facility

Full-day separate school when public settings cannot safely meet needs.

Clinical Integration

Combines intensive counseling and behavioral therapy with academics.

Residential Placement

08 • 24-HOUR LIVE-IN THERAPEUTIC / EDUCATIONAL FACILITY

Most Restrictive Tier

Reserved for needs exceeding any day program capacity.

Round-the-Clock Care

24-hour supervision, medical support, and structured intervention.

Pre-K Programs (PFA & ECSE)

Comprehensive overview of student profile, environment, and program locations

Preschool for All (PFA / PFAE)

GENERAL PRE-K & AT-RISK

Student Profile

- Students who qualify under the Preschool for All & Preschool for All Expansion grant ("At-Risk")
- Students with IEP; receive services in the classroom when possible

Environment

- Up to 20 students in a class (half-day and full-day option)

Specialized Services - ECSE

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

Student Profile

- Mild to moderate cognitive delays and/or other needs requiring significant curricular modification or functional supports
- Needs additional instruction to generalize skills across settings and people
- Significant adult support for transitions, safety, independent functioning, and behavior management
- Moderate to severe communication needs; related services common: OT, PT, SLP, APE

Environment

- Small class size (~10); Whole group, small group, and individualized instruction based on IEP goals

SCHOOLS WITH PROGRAM ACROSS UNIT 5

PFA / PFAE Brigham (half-day & full day) - 12 (11 half day / 2 full day), **Sugar Creek** (half-day & full day) - 7 (5 half day / 2 full day)

ECSE Brigham, Sugar Creek

Our Fabulous Staff!

Dedicated special education professionals and support team across Unit 5

375

Paraprofessionals
Essential classroom and student support specialists

205

Certified Special Education Teachers
(LBS1 or LBS2)

55

SLPs
Speech-Language Pathologists providing communication support

22

School Social Workers
Social-emotional learning and behavioral supports

16

School Psychologists
Evaluation, intervention, and mental health services

19

Occupational Therapists/Assistants
Fine motor and sensory processing therapy

6

Adapted PE Teachers
Specialized physical education program instruction

4

Physical Therapists/Assistants
Gross motor and physical mobility therapy

Special Education Funding Sources

$3.7M
FEDERAL GRANT

IDEA Consolidate Part B Grant

Federal funds used to supplement state and local funds to provide a free and appropriate public education to students.

$3.2M
FLOW-THROUGH

IDEA Flow-Through

Direct formula grant allocation for eligible special education student support programs.

$308K
EARLY INTERVENTION

IDEA CEIS

Coordinated Early Intervening Services for students needing additional support.

$105.8K
EARLY CHILDHOOD

IDEA Preschool

Targeted grant support for early childhood special education programs (ECSE).

$2.4M
REVENUE REIMBURSEMENT

Medicaid Revenue

Reimbursements for eligible medical, therapy, and specialized transportation services.

TOTAL SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING SUMMARY

Approximately $6.1 Million Combined Revenue & Grant Support

Funding directly supports specialized staff salaries, therapeutic day school tuition, adapted transportation, and early intervention programs across Unit 5.

Unit 5 Special Education Costs

1. Special Education Staff

PERSONNEL & SUPPORT SERVICES

- Certified Special Education Teachers (LBS1 / LBS2)
- Essential classroom & dedicated student paraprofessionals
- Specialized therapy staff (SLPs, Social Workers, Psychologists, OT/PT)

Approximate annual Cost: $41 M salary & benefits

2. Tuition Payments

SPECIALIZED PLACEMENTS

- Therapeutic Day School tuition & programming
- Residential facility placement costs
- Home / Hospital instructional services

Approximate annual Cost: $4 M

3. Special Transportation

ACCESSIBLE BUSING & ROUTING

- Specialized curb to curb transportation services
- Wheelchair lifts & safety adaptive equipment
- Dedicated bus aides and attendant support

Approximate annual Cost: $8.7 M

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

IEP Mandate

Student must have an active IEP.

Special Adaptation or Aide

Student requires specialized accommodations beyond routine busing (e.g., wheelchair lift, safety harness, or dedicated aide).

Same-Day Medical Service Rule

Transportation is billable only on days the student receives another Medicaid-covered medical service at school (e.g., PT, OT, Speech, Nursing).