

# **Executive Cabinet Self-Study of Special Education: Components of Current Program and Needs Assessment - Part 2**

**April 29, 2025**

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Educational Services**

# Mission Statement

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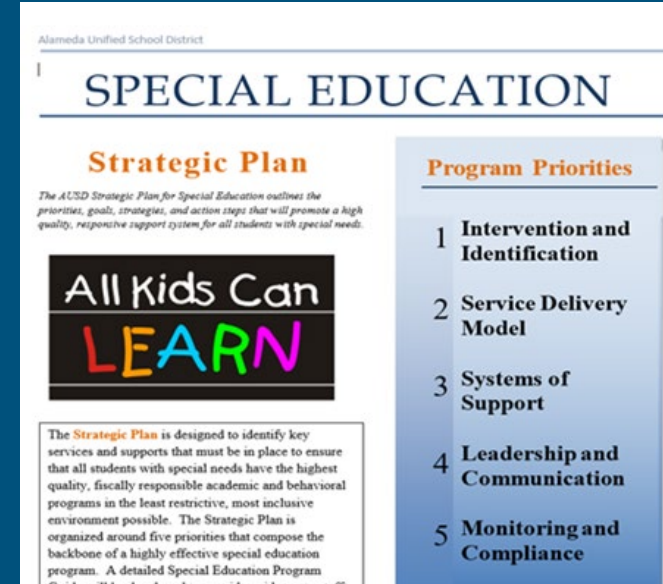
We declare the mission of the Special Education Program in Alameda Unified School District, in partnership with families and the community, is to *support, prepare, and empower* our diverse learners in a least restrictive, most inclusive environment that is **safe, culturally responsive, and academically rigorous**, and that is taught and supported by *highly trained* professionals so that each student can participate meaningfully and excel as contributing members of our community.

# What is the *Strategic Plan for Special Education*?

The AUSD Strategic Plan for Special Education outlines the priorities, goals, strategies, and action steps that will promote a high quality, responsive support system for all students with special needs. The Strategic Plan will help guide and prioritize the next steps identified in our self study.

The 5 priorities are:

1. Intervention and Identification
2. Service Delivery Model
3. Systems of Support
4. Leadership and Communications
5. Monitoring and Compliance



# Why a Year-Long Analysis?

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The challenges we face in special education likely require significant shifts in general education priorities and historical spending patterns if we are to both...

1. Provide effective supports, besides IEP-driven services, more often and earlier in the K-12 continuum, and
2. At the same time find a greater balance of costs

**SPED Strategic Plan Monitoring and Compliance Goal 5:** Establish an accountability and compliance process that ensures fidelity to the Strategic Plan which must be included and prioritized in the multi-year LCAP planning process.

**Strategy 2:** Develop a Special Education Self Review (SESR) process with success criteria that will hold all stakeholders accountable.

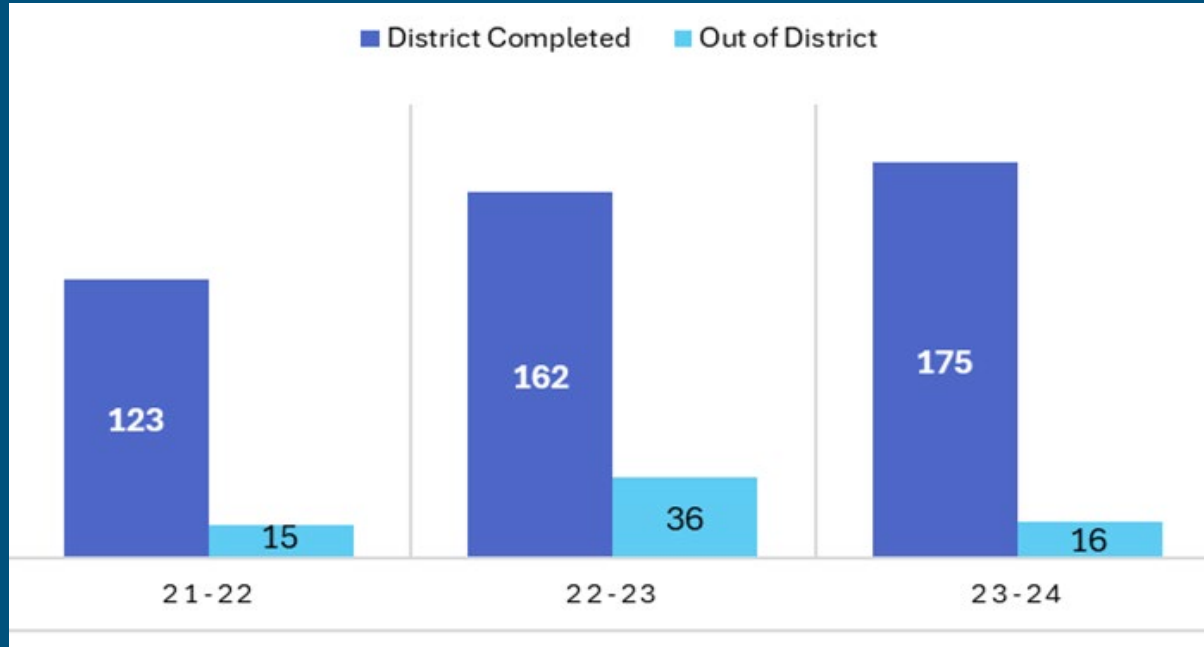
# Special Education Self Study 24-25: Another Area for Potential Collective Impact

August 28, 2024	September 18, 2024	October 2, 2024	November 20, 2024	January 22, 2025	February 26, 2025	March –May 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic Enrollment Data</li> <li>Pre-referral Interventions and supports</li> <li>Referral and Particular Services by Site data</li> <li>Eligibility Types</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Related services</li> <li>Outside placement rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal Costs</li> <li>Legal Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative analysis and preliminary recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public discussion with Board of Education and Community Engagement</li> </ul>

\* Self-study meetings through February will include Executive Cabinet team, directors, Special Ed leadership; March through May will feature wider staff engagement and public discussions with the Board of Education.

# Initial Qualifications 21-22, 22-23, and 23-24

## Total Initial IEP Qualifications

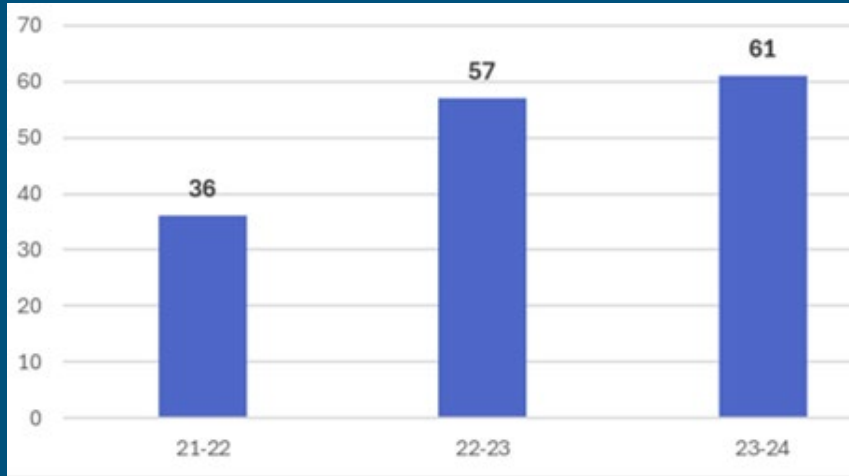


Each year we have students transfer into the district the same academic year they qualify for Special Education

Data Source: SEIS

# ECE & Elementary Initial IEPs by School: 21-22, 22-23, and 23-24

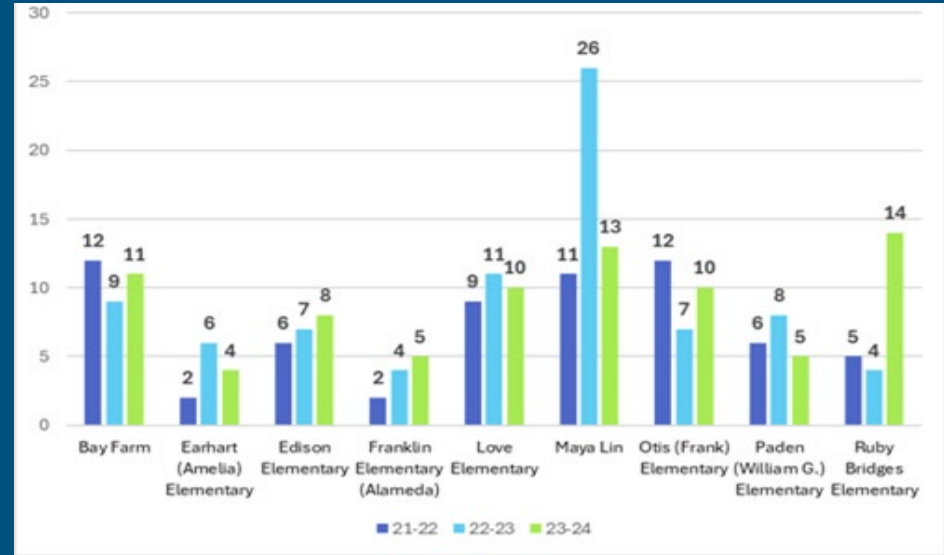
## Initial Qualifications ECE



There were more requests for early childhood assessments than our ECE staff could complete in 22-23 & 23-24. Last year there were **171** requests for preschool assessments. This year, we are at **115** so far. Of the 115, 83 were listed as Autism being the primary suspected disability.

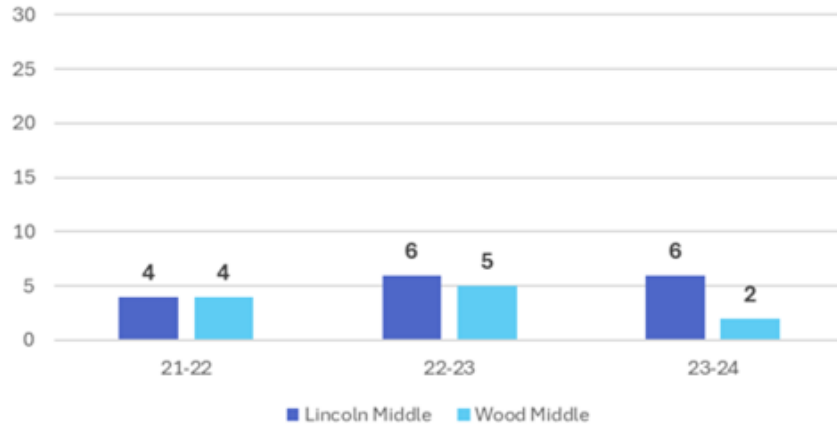
Data Source: SEIS

## Elementary Initial IEP Qualifications



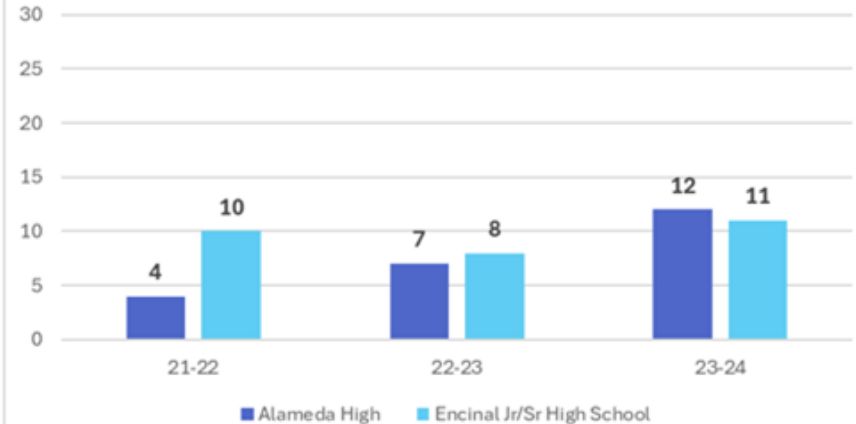
# Secondary Initial IEPs by School 21-22, 22-23, and 23-24

**Middle School Initial IEP Qualifications**



**Encinal includes both middle school & high school numbers.**

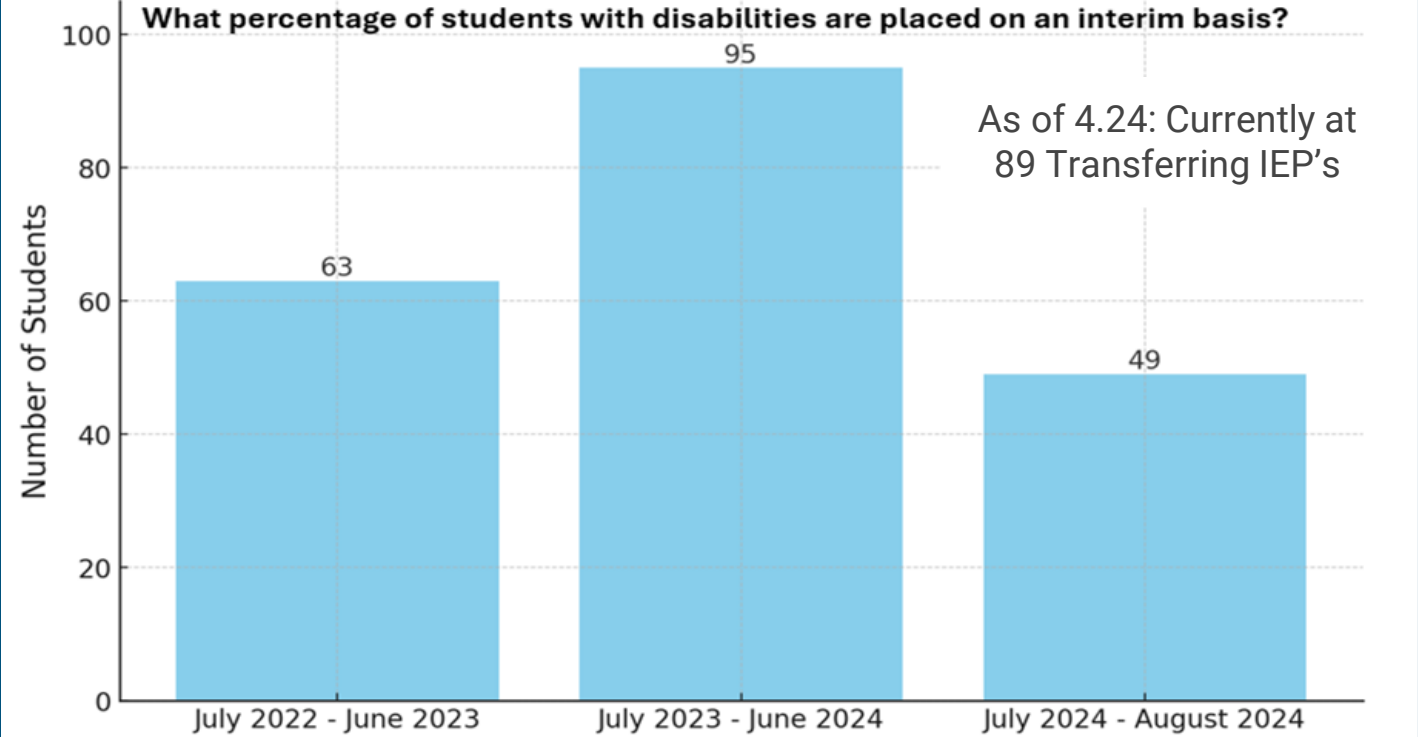
**High School Initial IEP Qualifications**



*Data Source: SEIS*



# Number of Students with Active IEPs Transferring into AUSD



Data Source: SEIS

# How has the % of Students w/Disabilities Changed Over Time? 5-6 Year Trends?

	Multiyear Trend of Sp Ed Enrollment by Disability		
	22-23	23-24	24-25
Autism (AUT)	250	282	297
Deaf-Blindness (DB)	0	2	1
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	74	76	74
Established Medical Disability (EMD)	4	5	4
Hard of Hearing (HH)	20	17	16
Intellectual Disability (ID)	37	32	36
Multiple Disabilities (MD)	8	8	7
Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	12	12	11
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	182	196	173
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	342	345	360
Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)	204	217	235
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	2	2	2
Visual Impairment (VI)	5	5	4
<b>Total Sp Ed Enrollment</b>	<b>1140</b>	<b>1199</b>	<b>1220</b>
<b>District Enrollment</b>	<b>8988</b>	<b>9249</b>	<b>9236</b>

Data Source: SEIS/Data Quest

# Increased Services

Types of Services	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
436 - Health and Nursing: Other Services	6	5	14
415 - Language and Speech	581	584	764
450 - Occupational Therapy	175	174	184
460 - Physical Therapy	22	30	42
435 - Specialized Physical Health Care Services	3	3	9
515 - Counseling and guidance	71	77	112
510 - Individual Counseling	134	129	165
520 - Parent Counseling	26	35	63
530 - Psychological Services	2	4	1
545 - Residential Treatment Services	2	2	4
525 - Social Work Services	0	1	4

# Some Observations Through the Process

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- The number of students with Autism as a primary disability has increased over the last 5 years and is associated with higher levels of related services such as SLP, OT, individual counseling, followed by SLD, OHI, ID.
- The number of pre school requests for assessment have increased over the last 5 years.
- ED is the disability that requires the highest rate of related services - supports in counseling and guidance, individual counseling, parent counseling.
- Individual counseling has increased for ED and Autism.
- There is an upward trend in the need for related services for Speech & Language for most disability categories.
- The need for family wrap-around services has increased for students who qualify under ED, OHI, and Autism.

# A Set of Questions for All of Us to Consider

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- If we are contributing nearly \$29 million in general funds annually to meet special education needs and costs, what portion of that could/should be directed towards or invested in more intensive, *pre-referral*, general education services and supports earlier in the PK-3 pathway?
- Would all needs be better served if we had more options in between classroom supports and requests for an IEP?
- Are we funding services and positions currently that need to be redirected or repurposed toward more intensive, consistent, and direct support for students in the early grades?

# Theory of Action: Strengthening MTSS by Centering Early Intervention and Inclusion

If we prioritize early, proactive interventions and embed inclusive, equity-driven practices at every level of our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS),

**then** we will reduce barriers to learning, prevent the need for more intensive supports, and ensure that every student—particularly those historically and currently underserved—thrives academically, socially, and emotionally within a welcoming and inclusive school environment.

## Guiding Commitments:

- **Prevention Over Reaction:** Focus on identifying and supporting student needs early, before challenges escalate
- **Inclusion as a Core Principle:** Provide the majority of supports within general education settings, ensuring students remain with their peers
- **Whole-Child Focus:** Address academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development through integrated supports
- **Data-Informed Equity:** Use disaggregated data to identify disproportionalities and ensure access to high-quality supports for all

# What We Believe are CORE Conditions for Success

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- A unified district and site-wide belief that all students belong and can succeed in the tier I classroom
- Collaborative teams representing general and special education, SEL, ELL
- All focused goals include special education as part of their thinking
- Timely and accessible formative assessment tools to identify student needs early
- Ongoing professional learning on inclusive instruction, equity, and early intervention
- Aligned systems and schedules that allow time for collaboration, intervention, and progress monitoring

# What We Would Like to Strengthen


Tier 1 – Universal Prevention and Inclusion	Tier 2 – Targeted Early Intervention	Tier 3 – Intensive, Individualized Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Implement high-quality, <b>culturally and linguistically responsive instruction</b> for all learners</li><li>● Use <b>Universal Design for Learning (UDL)</b> to create accessible learning environments from the start</li><li>● Integrate <b>Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)</b> and trauma-informed practices into daily classroom life</li><li>● Regularly review universal screeners and classroom data to catch early signs of need</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Develop <b>short-term, skill-based interventions</b> that are closely monitored and integrated into the school day</li><li>● Ensure interventions are <b>flexible, inclusive, and responsive to students' identities and backgrounds</b></li><li>● Use <b>intervention tracking systems</b> to ensure timely, data-based adjustments</li><li>● Provide <b>professional learning</b> for educators on differentiating support without removing students from the learning community</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Design <b>wraparound services</b> that honor student voice and family input</li><li>● Maintain a <b>least restrictive mindset</b>, providing intensive support within inclusive settings whenever possible</li><li>● Align IEP and 504 plans with MTSS processes to ensure coherence and consistency</li><li>● Use <b>progress monitoring tools</b> that are strengths-based and culturally affirming</li></ul>



# We Have a Plan and Have Made Progress

Strategy 2: Infuse supports and embedded services (SLP, OT, Behaviorist, Psych) throughout general education Tier 1, 2, and 3 programs)

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## Student Intervention and Identification

**Goal:**  
All students will access an articulated, systematic intervention system that provides multiple tiers of universal, targeted, effective support that is communicated clearly to staff and families.

**Strategy 1:** Fully develop and implement a multi-tiered academic and behavioral system of support.

**Action Step 1:** Identify and ensure the use of research-based core instructional strategies that are responsive, proactive, evidence-based, and implemented with fidelity.

**Action Step 2:** Create and implement a research-based system to address the social-emotional needs of students, including continued implementation of PBIS with fidelity across all schools.

**Action Step 6:** Implement the Coordination of Services Team (COST) process consistently in all schools to proactively direct academic and behavioral, social-emotional interventions for students based on data collection and formative assessment.

**Action Step 7:** Identify and ensure the use of research-based Tier 1 supports and interventions across all schools and content areas that provide student support in varied settings (i.e., in-class, pull-out, small group, computer-based).

**Action Step 2:** Analyze current caseloads and workloads to allow for more Tier 1, 2, and 3 support that is both efficient and cost effective and develop an implementation plan based upon the analysis.

**Action Step 3:** Provide co-teaching and planning time between General Education and Special Education staff.

**Action Step 4:** Establish a referral protocol for Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy services accessed via the COST process.

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## Systems of Support

**Goal:**  
An articulated and consistent system of support is available equitably across the district to ensure the Strategic Plan for Special Education is successful.

**Strategy 1:** Develop and implement effective procedures and protocols with fidelity.

**Action Step 1:** Create and continuously update a procedural manual for implementing all aspects of the Special Education program and ensure that it is accessible to all staff.

**Action Step 2:** Create a parent-friendly procedural manual for community access, complete with program descriptions.

**Strategy 2:** Implement a staffing plan that will ensure the Special Education services delivered are successful.

**Strategy 3:** Collaboration and support will be prioritized across the district.

**Action Step 1:** Collaboration between general education and special education staff will be scheduled at sites and between sites at least 4 times per year.

**Action Step 2:** Utilize district coaching to improve instructional practices at all sites across the district.

**Strategy 4:** Ensure the financial resources are allocated efficiently and equitably to support student success.

**Action Step 3:** With assistance of the Maintenance and Technology Departments, perform a comprehensive inventory of special education resources at every school to identify current status of furniture, curriculum materials, supplies, and storage spaces and develop a plan to ensure equity across sites and programs.

**Action Step 4:** Identify (including a cost analysis) and provide technology infrastructure to ensure that the Special Education delivery model is fully supported.

Strategy 3: Collaboration and support will be prioritized.  
Action step 1: Collaboration between general education and special education staff will be scheduled at sites and between sites at least 4 times a year.

# What Is The Ask ?

- Direct behavior supports in the early grades.
- Expanded and direct behavior and psychologist supports to general ed students in early grades.
- Expanded and direct literacy and reading supports in the early grades.
- Additional bandwidth to support principals in managing intense behaviors and interactions.
- Speech and language services for general education students prior to referral.

What	Cost
Increase in Behavior specialist FTE for GE - 1 FTE	\$180,000
Increase in SLP for GE - 1 FTE	\$160,000
TSA to support reading intervention and implementation 2 FTE	\$320,000

# Implications for Funding

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- We understand that there are immediate fiscal implications in expanding general education support to our early grades.
- By billing the CYBHI Fee Schedule, we can offset some of these costs.
  - Behavioral health support can be billed to the fee schedule as long as it is not written into a student's IEP.
- Staff that have a bachelor's degree can register as a Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) to be an eligible provider. Current AUSD roles eligible for CWC certification include Behaviorists, Intervention Leads, Scholar Staff Advisors, Principals, and other student support positions.

# Next Steps

This is the **NORTHSTAR** and where we want to improve...

The **HOW** we do this needs to include the thinking, collaboration and partnership of all the practitioners who work as part of this system.

- Broaden our elementary inclusion working group with more teachers from both general education and special education to discuss the technical adjustments, professional learning, and support needed to implement more inclusion
- Start a working group of secondary teachers (General Ed and Special Ed) to expand and calibrate across sites the secondary continuum of supports.
- Expand the MTSS working group to better align Tier 1 through 3 services which include Speech, OT, mental health, behavioral health, reading and math interventions which can be accessed whether you have an IEP or not
- Ensure all adoptions look at tier 1 through 3 materials and are aligned with special education materials
- Prioritize collaboration between special education teachers and general education teachers
- Look at foundational structures in our secondary schools to allow for students to have access to intervention and support without missing tier 1 instruction
- Ensure that Mild/Moderate SDC and practical students have a seat in general education classrooms