

Understanding

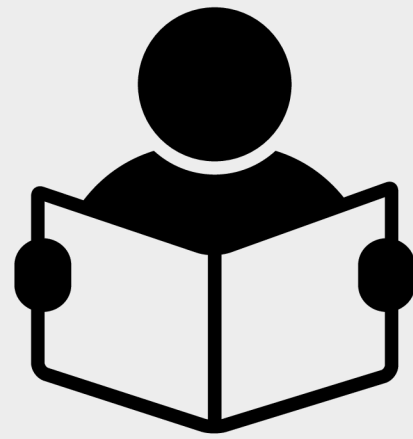
Out of District Placement and Funding in MA



1. The Child

It all starts with the student:

- Needs are identified
- A plan (IEP) is developed
- Services are determined

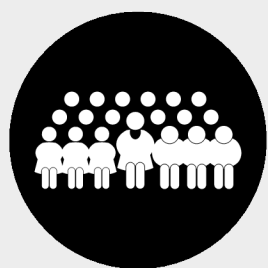


The Team considers all aspects of the student's proposed IEP and determines the appropriate placement to provide the services

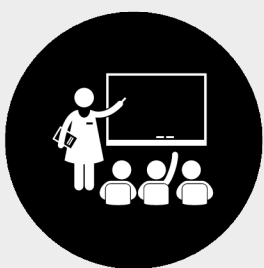
Their decision must be based on:

- the student's IEP, including the types of related services,
- the types of settings where those services are to be provided,
- the types of service providers,
- and the location where those services are to be provided

2. The Continuum



General Education Classroom



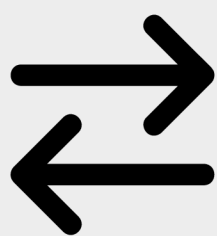
Special Education Classroom



Approved Special Education School or Collaborative



Approved Residential Special Education School



The Continuum of Special Education Placement

If an in-district program cannot provide the services on the IEP, the placement Team will identify an out-of-district placement.

*"Placement options are fluid... Further, placements can change over time based on factors such as changes in a student's progress or needs. For some students, **the general education classroom is not necessarily the least restrictive setting.**"*

-Vanderbilt University Iris Center

3. The Commonwealth

The decision to place a child in the setting that is most appropriate for their needs should be **based on the IEP, not the cost.**



When an approved special education school is determined to be the least restrictive environment for a student, Massachusetts helps districts protect the integrity of the IEP process. Students with significant special needs are **not just the responsibility of one school district**, but rather the collective responsibility of the Commonwealth, so the Commonwealth increases their reimbursement to school districts for these students. (The Special Education Circuit Breaker)

4. The Circuit Breaker

In 2004, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created the groundbreaking **Special Education Circuit Breaker** account, which significantly reimburses school districts for the cost of out-of-district special education schooling.



Districts pay a baseline cost for all students (the per-pupil cost). When a student attends an approved special education school, **the Commonwealth increases its reimbursement** to the school district for that student's education.

Circuit Breaker assumes that the baseline cost for educating a student with special needs is more than for a general education student. Currently, through CIRCUIT BREAKER, **the state reimburses 75%** of costs school districts pay above that baseline.

Districts also receive \$ from Chapter 70 funds.

5. The Call to Action

Each year, to ensure that districts are reimbursed from the Special Education Circuit Breaker, the state legislature has to approve funds for the account in the state budget. **This funding is not guaranteed, and significant advocacy needs to be done to ensure that students receive the services they need, and districts are supported.**



JOIN THE ACTION NETWORK at maaps.org to advocate for these important funds