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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

December 10, 2024

Mr. Eric Thomas, Legislative Auditor
Joint legislative Audit and Review Committee
106 11th Ave. SW
Olympia, WA 98504-0910

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response on behalf of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) report, "Performance Audit of Special Education: Service Delivery and Access."

OSPI concurs with the recommendation for the Legislature to establish a policy position related to inclusion goals. OSPI recommends this be accomplished through a dedicated state set-aside fund, similar to the federal set-aside established through the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A dedicated set-aside is essential for Washington to continue its progress toward creating a more inclusive and equitable education system.

While the state has made significant strides, such as increasing the number of students with disabilities accessing general education settings, persistent gaps remain—particularly for Black students with disabilities and students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Addressing these gaps requires long-term, coordinated efforts to dismantle systemic inequities and promote meaningful inclusion.

State set-aside funds would provide stable, ongoing resources to be responsive to the needs of communities across Washington by providing robust support through the statewide Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network (IPTN), which focuses on supporting students who face the highest levels of exclusion. These funds would also allow the state to implement innovative solutions such as a statewide online Individualized Education Program (IEP) system, designed to streamline services for students, families, and educators.

State set-aside funds would ensure continued progress by supporting key priorities identified by the Legislature, including:

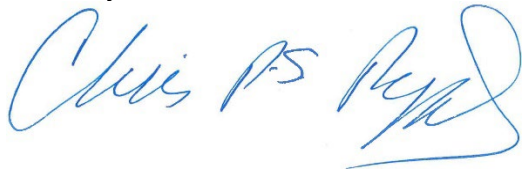
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- Expanding Inclusionary Practices: Increasing meaningful participation in general education for students with disabilities.
- Professional Development: Equipping educators, including education leaders, with the skills needed to support diverse learners effectively.
- Recruitment and Retention: Addressing the shortage of highly qualified special education teachers.
- Social-Emotional and Mental Health Supports: Providing resources for students and families to engage in school and receive the supports they need to thrive.

Investing in state set-aside funds aligns with Washington's commitment to equity and educational justice. It enables a coordinated and collaborative approach to improve outcomes for all students while addressing the needs of those who have been most excluded. This is not just an investment in students with disabilities—it strengthens the entire educational system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on your final recommendations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with additional questions.

Sincerely,



Chris Reykdal
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

cc: Casey Radostitz, Research Analyst
Vivien Chen, Research Analyst
Francisco Santamarina, Research Analyst
Stephanie Hoffman, Deputy Legislative Auditor