



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

Alabama
State Board
of Education

March 16, 2026

MEMORANDUM

Governor Kay Ivey
President

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

Jackie Zeigler
District I

FROM: Eric G. Mackey *EGM*
State Superintendent of Education

Tracie West
District II

RE: Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Special Education Services Application for Special Initiatives Grants

Kelly Mooney
District III
President Pro Tem

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Special Education Services (SES) Section, is pleased to announce the opportunity to support projects that make a difference for children and youth with disabilities throughout the state of Alabama. Local education agencies (LEAs) are eligible to receive additional funding support for FY 2026 for Project SEARCH, professional learning for Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC) teachers, and parent training and counseling.

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV

The funding options are as follows:

Tonya S. Chestnut, Ed.D.
District V

1. Project SEARCH Support, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
2. Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC), Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
3. Parent Training and Counseling Support, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)

Marie Manning
District VI
Vice President

Gift cards, food, and promotional items are not allowable costs under any of the grants.

Allen Long, M.D.
District VII

Any public school system in the state of Alabama that has enrolled a child or youth with a disability determined eligible for special education and related services under existing federal and state law may submit a grant application (see attached) to the ALSDE for financial assistance to support these special initiatives.

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII

The LEAs must comply with all application requirements to be considered for the award allocation of these funds. An LEA may apply to receive FY 2026 funds for special initiatives by completing and submitting an electronic application.

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
Secretary and
Executive Officer

Project SEARCH Support

Project SEARCH is a Transition-to-Work Program, a unique, business-led, one-year employment preparation program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Workplace immersion facilitates classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. The program culminates in individualized job development.

The ALSDE, SES, accepts applications from LEAs to cover the reimbursement for Project SEARCH licensing fees, materials, supplies, or professional development costs.

- Start-up programs are eligible for Project SEARCH licensing fees (currently \$18,000.00) plus up to \$30,000.00 for materials, supplies, or training expenses, including travel.
- Existing programs are eligible for renewal licensing fees (currently \$350.00) and up to \$15,000.00 for materials, supplies, or training expenses, including travel.
- Existing programs that wish to replicate their program with the same partners at a new host business are eligible for the licensing fee (currently \$12,000.00) plus up to \$30,000.00 for materials and supplies.

All reimbursements are only for Project SEARCH licensing fees and/or materials, supplies, or training expenses to benefit a Project SEARCH program. To be considered for this grant, LEAs must complete the checklist and submit it with the Project SEARCH Application for Support Funding.

Temporary Special Education Teacher Certificate (TSEC)

The collaborative partnership between LEAs that employ TSEC teachers and the ALSDE, SES, will provide valuable financial support to TSEC teachers as they work to empower and educate children with disabilities. The ALSDE, SES, is committed to supporting, increasing, and retaining individuals working through the TSEC alternative approach and will provide participant fees to support the completion of six professional learning sessions per teacher at a rate of \$600.00 per completed session and \$1,400.00 for passing the required Praxis (currently *Special Education Foundational Knowledge*), not exceeding \$5,000.00 per participant to LEAs interested in participating in this opportunity. The TSEC teachers can be reimbursed once only per completed module and once only for passing the required Praxis.

Compensation will be made to TSEC teachers by your LEA and reimbursed to your district by the ALSDE. Participating personnel will: (a) be currently employed by your district as a special education teacher; (b) ensure all requirements for subsequent TSEC applications are completed by the designated deadlines listed on page 3; and (c) complete all professional learning outside of normal work hours.

The district is responsible for verifying the completion of modules on the PowerSchool Professional Learning transcript and/or the passing of the Praxis on the official score report before payment to the TSEC teacher.

Parent Training and Counseling Support

The ALSDE, SES, is committed to improving and increasing student outcomes by promoting positive parent-school partnerships. To help foster positive relationships between parents/guardians of school-age children with disabilities and LEAs, the ALSDE, SES, will make funds available for grant awards to further this effort.

The parent counseling and training supported by these funds will assist parents in understanding the special needs of their child, provide parents with information about child development, and/or help parents acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Grant applications up to \$20,000.00 per project will be accepted from LEAs for parent training and counseling support.

Training

LEAs should consider universal training opportunities for all parents and guardians of children with disabilities and offer targeted and focused training for specific parents and guardians, as needed. When offering targeted and focused training, it may be appropriate and necessary to include it in the child's IEP.

The support available for parent and guardian training includes:

- Participant fees for district-sponsored or district-approved training to be paid by the LEA directly to parents and guardians of children with disabilities for participating in training with the following stipulations:
 - Up to \$200.00 for training that lasts between one and two hours.
 - Up to \$400.00 for training that lasts at least three hours.
 - Up to \$600.00 for training that lasts at least six hours.
- Registration fees for parents and guardians of children with disabilities.
- Presenter fees for training for parents and guardians of children with disabilities.
- In-state travel and per diem according to state rules and regulations for students with disabilities, parents, and guardians of children with disabilities (to allow for student, parent, and guardian participation in state conferences that encourage and advance self-determination and advocacy or other pertinent skills).

Counseling

Counseling should be offered to families for the parents or guardians of a child with a disability to receive counseling if a child’s IEP Team determines that it is necessary for the child to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The support available for counseling includes counseling costs for parents or guardians to participate in counseling and transportation/mileage reimbursement.

The goal of the Parent Training and Counseling Support is for parents or guardians of children with disabilities to receive high-quality, relevant, and useful training and/or counseling to help improve outcomes for their children.

A separate application is required for each option.

Application Submission Deadlines (Electronic Submission Date By)
Application Deadline for FY 2026 Special Initiatives Awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• March 27, 2026
Additional application submission dates may be added if funds remain after the submission deadline.

An electronic application must be submitted by March 27, 2026, to be eligible for FY 2026 Special Initiatives Grant awards.

These funds are awarded for FY 2026 and are available immediately after approved submissions through September 30, 2026, with the official effective date designated upon award. Applications for supplemental funds must be submitted and approved prior to expenditures. Upon receipt of a signed, itemized claim with supporting documentation, reimbursement to the LEA will be made. All funds awarded must be expended by September 30, 2026, and are not automatically awarded in subsequent years.

For consideration in the award allocation of these funds, the LEAs must comply with all application requirements. An LEA may apply to receive FY 2026 funds for special initiatives by completing and submitting an electronic application [here](#).

If you have questions or need clarification, please contact the ALSDE, SES, by email at sesgrants@alsde.edu or by telephone at 334-694-4782.

EGM/DC/DAP

Attachment

- cc: Special Education Coordinators
Chief School Financial Officers
Mrs. Angela Martin
Mr. Arthur Watts, Jr.
Mrs. Shanthia Washington
Dr. DaLee Chambers
Mrs. Erika Richburg
Mrs. Latasha Kendrick

FY26-2026

Special Education Services Application

Special Initiatives: Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

Financial assistance is available to any public school system in the state of Alabama that has enrolled an exceptional child or youth with disabilities determined eligible for special education, and related services under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). Local education agencies (LEAs) may submit grant applications to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) for financial assistance for Special Initiatives.

For FY 2026, there are three special initiatives for financial assistance options:

1. Project SEARCH Support, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services), PR/Award #H027A250015
2. Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC), Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services), PR/Award #H027A250015
3. Parent Training and Counseling Support, Fund Source 3290, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Part B-Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services), PR/Award #H027A250015

For consideration in the award allocation of these funds, it is imperative that the LEA follow all application requirements.

These funds are awarded for FY 2026 and are available immediately after approved submissions through September 30, 2026, with the official effective date designated upon award. Applications for special initiatives must be submitted and approved before expenditures can be made. All funds awarded must be expended by September 30, 2026, and are not automatically awarded in subsequent years.

Gift cards, food, and promotional items are not allowable costs under any of the grants.

If you have questions or need clarification, please contact the ALSDE, SES, by email at sesgrants@alsde.edu or by telephone at 334-694-4782.

Application Submission Deadlines (Electronic Submission Date By)
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Application Deadlines for FY 2026 Special Initiatives Awards:
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- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• March 27, 2026 |
|--|

Option 1: Project SEARCH Support

The ALSDE is accepting applications from LEAs to cover reimbursement for Project SEARCH licensing fees (currently \$18,000.00) plus up to \$30,000.00 for materials and supplies or training expenses, including travel, for start-up programs. Project SEARCH programs that are being renewed are eligible for reimbursement for the renewal licensing fees (currently \$385.00) and up to \$15,000.00 for materials and supplies or training expenses, including travel.

Option 2: Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC)

The ALSDE, SES, is committed to supporting, increasing, and retaining individuals working through the TSEC alternative approach and will provide participant fees to support the completion of six professional learning sessions per teacher at a rate of \$600.00 per completed session and \$1,400.00 for passing the required Praxis (currently *Special Education Foundational Knowledge*), not exceeding \$5,000.00 per participant to LEAs interested in participating in this opportunity. The TSEC teachers can be reimbursed once only per completed module and once only for passing the required Praxis. The district is responsible for verifying completion of requirements before payment to the TSEC teacher.

Option 3: Parent Training and Support

The parent counseling and training supported by these funds will assist parents in understanding the special needs of their child, provide parents with information about child development, and/or help parents acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP. Grant applications up to \$20,000.00 per project will be accepted from LEAs for parent training and counseling support, with the option to reapply after expending all or most of a previous grant award if funds remain available.

Special Initiatives: Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

Select **one option** per application:

- Option 1: Project SEARCH Support**
- Option 2: Temporary Special Education Teacher Certificate (TSEC)**
- Option 3: Parent Training and Counseling Support**

The subject matter of this application (please select):

_____ Previously funded _____ Previously submitted, but not funded _____ New application

Indicate Previous Grant Number: _____

Special Education Services Application for Special Initiatives

SECTION 1: LEA APPLICANT INFORMATION

School Year: 2025-2026

LEA: _____

LEA Code: _____

LEA Mailing Address: _____

Superintendent: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Special Education Coordinator: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Chief School Financial Officer: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Signature of Superintendent

Date

Signature of Special Education Coordinator

Date

Signature of Chief School Financial Officer

Date

Project SEARCH Support (PSS)

SECTION 2: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST & PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Complete the Program Requirements Checklist.
2. Complete the Plan for Implementation.
3. Complete the Budget Information (Section 3).

It is ideal to have one year for the planning team to work together for a successful implementation. The process of planning and implementation takes about nine months. Project SEARCH programs follow the local school calendar and begin operation in late August, so a planning team should start meeting by January of the year they want to begin. It is suggested that you identify a Steering/Planning Team that meets at least monthly. All partner organizations should be represented (especially the host business once they are committed). The team may also include a young adult with a disability, a family member, a disability agency, and other community members such as the Workforce Investment Board, University Center for Excellence, etc.

Please complete the checklist and submit it with the Project SEARCH Application for License Funding.

Project SEARCH Program Requirements	
Program Partners:	
	Education: Local school district, career technical school, educational service center, and/or collaboration of neighboring school districts.
	Vocational Rehabilitation: Both local counselor and area supervisor, if possible.
	Community Rehabilitation Partner (CRP): Provider of skills training and job development. In states where the skills trainer is hired directly by vocational rehabilitation (VR), this agency is not required unless it is a long-term support agency.
	State or County Developmental Disabilities (DD) Agency, Managed Care Agency, or Mental Health Provider: Long-term follow-along services.
	Host Business: The planning process can begin before a host business is identified but should include them as soon as they are secured.
	Workforce Investment Board/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Agencies in your community.
	Representation: A disability advocacy organization for families.
	Complete the Project SEARCH licensing agreement and contract for on-site technical assistance. For more information, contact the Project SEARCH business office at ProjectSEARCHbusinessoffice@cchmc.org .
	Develop a work plan for program planning and implementation.
	Evidence all local partners (proposed host business leaders and managers) have been educated with an in-depth program overview. This includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with the development of high-quality internship sites at the selected business and offer disability awareness/education for the staff who will be involved in the internships and other aspects of the Project SEARCH program. • Provide learning about other components of the Project SEARCH model, including student intern recruitment and selection, employability skills curriculum, creation of the Business Advisory Committee, and development of an employment search process. • Deliver Project SEARCH trainings that assist with the implementation of a successful Project SEARCH site, such as Teaching and Training for Success, Aspirational Job Development, etc. Provide additional individualized training depending on the needs of the host business site and partners.
	Project SEARCH Application for support funding submitted to the ALSDE, SES.

PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In the space below, explain the plan for implementing a Project SEARCH program, including any barriers to successful implementation.

Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC)

SECTION 2:

The number of TSEC teachers to receive participant fees: _____

	Name of Teacher	ALSDE ID Number
1.		
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*Attach additional pages with additional names if necessary.

Parent Training and Counseling Support (PTCS)

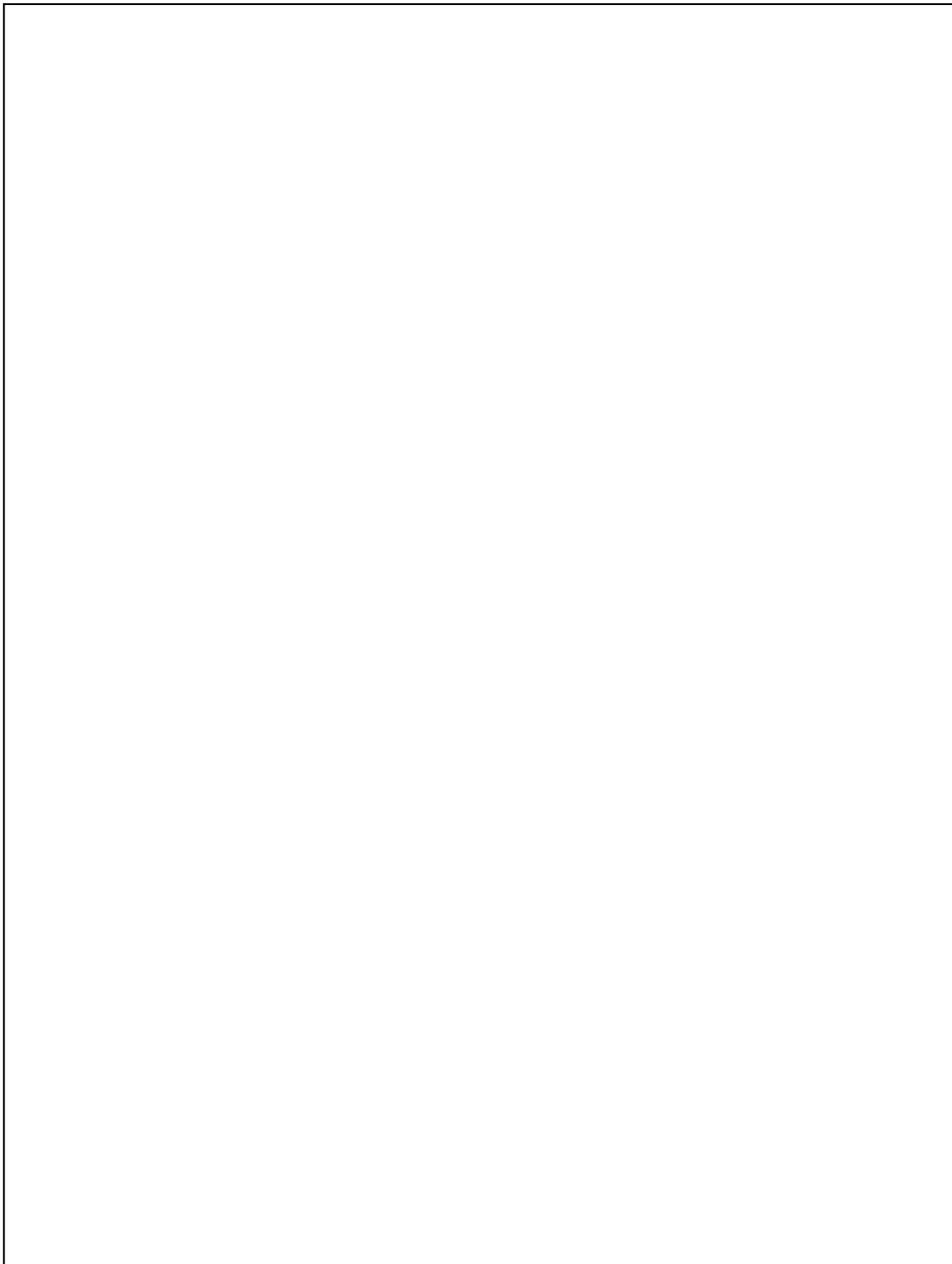
SECTION 2:

1. In the spaces below, provide a description of the proposed project.
2. Complete the Budget Information (Section 3).

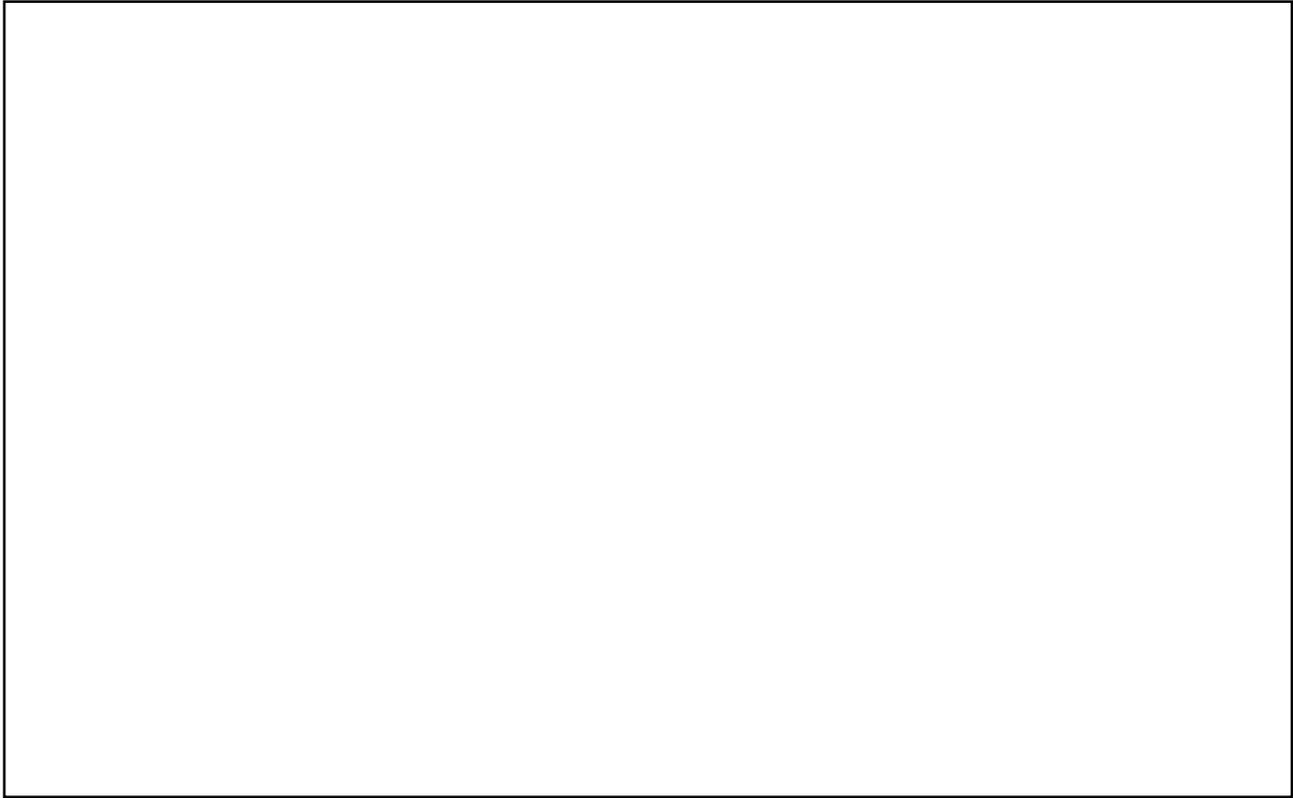
Executive Summary:

Proposed timeframe for implementation:

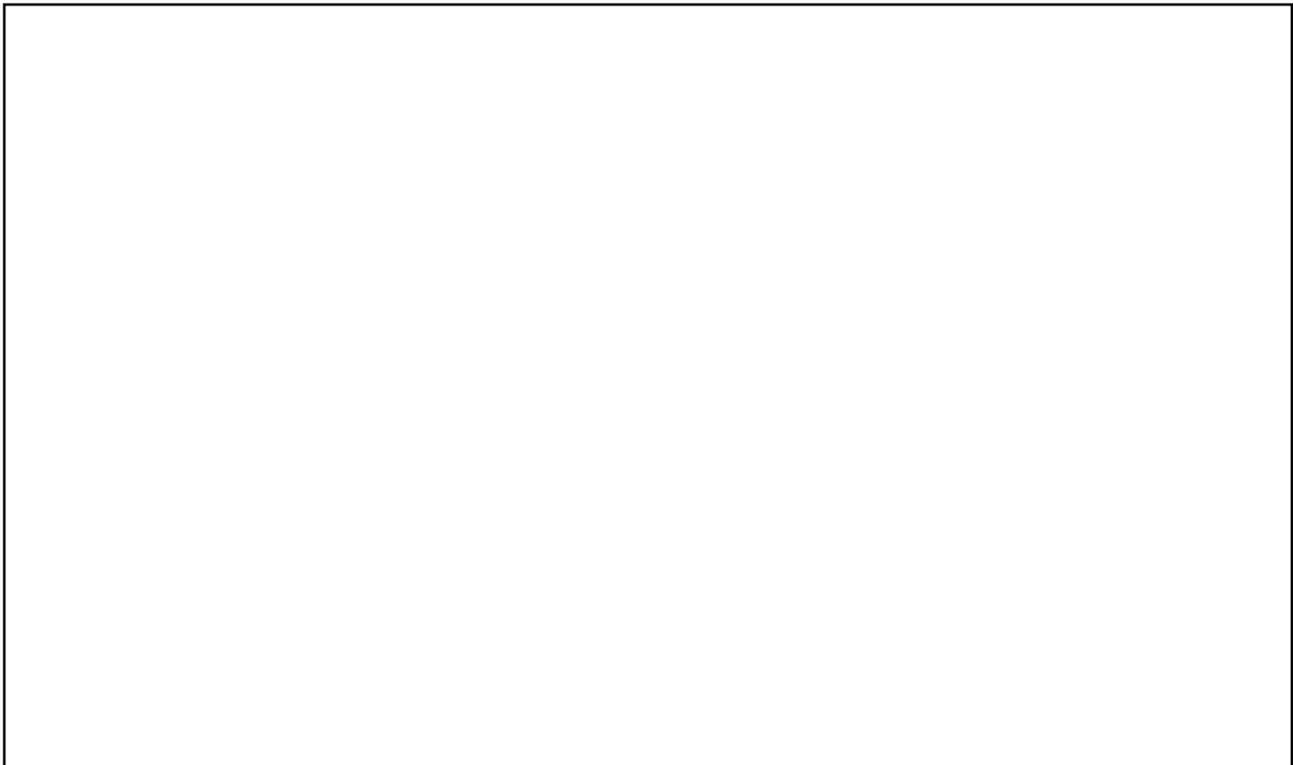
Detailed description of the scope and plan for implementation of the proposed project:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for a detailed description of the project's scope and implementation plan.

How the project is expected to favorably affect children with disabilities:



How any expected progress or success resulting from the project will be measured at the completion of the project:



Budget Information

SECTION 3: BUDGET INFORMATION - REQUIRED FOR OPTIONS 1 & 3

Provide a detailed proposed budget, including the proposed budget amount(s), the category of expenditure(s), a brief description of expenditure(s), and an account code(s) for the **total amount of the requested funding** indicated. Local prorated amounts, when applicable, should be used for the proposed expenditures where services provided are for multiple students.

Gift cards, food, and promotional items are not allowable costs under any of the grants.

Description of Expenditure	Account Code	Proposed Budget Amount
	Total	\$