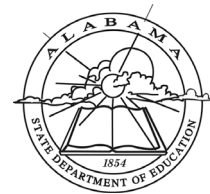




STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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

August 20, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Eric G. Mackey 
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Special Education Services Application for Special Initiatives Grants

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 2027 for Project SEARCH, professional learning for Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC) teachers, parent training and counseling, and efforts to improve educational, developmental, and functional outcomes for preschool children.

The funding options are as follows:

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, IDEA Part B, Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
3. Parent Training and Counseling Support, Fund Source 3290, IDEA Part B, Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services)
4. Preschool Outcomes Initiative, Fund Source 3290, IDEA Part B Preschool, Section 619, CFDA 84.173A

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

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.

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 2027 funds for special initiatives by completing and submitting an electronic application.

Alabama
State Board
of Education

Governor Kay Ivey
President

Jackie Zeigler
District I

Tracie West
District II

Kelly Mooney
District III
Vice President

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV

Tonya S. Chestnut, Ed.D.
District V

Marie Manning
District VI

Allen Long, M.D.
District VII
President Pro Tem

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII

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.

Preschool Outcomes Initiative (POI)

The primary goal of this grant initiative is to improve educational, developmental, and functional outcomes for preschool children with disabilities across the LEA. To support measurable impact and accountability, project activities must directly address at least one of Alabama's State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) indicators for preschool students.

Grant funds should be used to strengthen performance in at least one of the three core preschool indicator areas: Indicator 6 (Preschool Environments), which focuses on increasing the percentage of children with disabilities who receive special education and related services in regular early childhood programs with typically developing peers; Indicator 7 (Preschool Outcomes), which focuses on improving children's growth in positive social skills and relationships, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs; and Indicator 12 (Early Childhood Preschool Transition), which focuses on ensuring a timely and seamless transition from Part C Early Intervention to Part B Preschool Special Education so that each eligible child has an IEP developed and implemented by the child's third birthday.

Approved grants may be fully or partially funded. Several factors will determine the size of the awards: review of submitted applications, potential project scope, projected implementation costs, available funds, and likelihood of positive impact. Multiple awards are expected, with most in the \$50,000.00-\$100,000.00 range. No more than one project per LEA will be funded. These grants can be utilized for materials, supplies, equipment, technology, assistive technology, recruitment/retention, personnel development, and professional development. The preschool grants cannot be used to pay salaries or contract special education or related services, as these are time-limited funds.

Each LEA may apply for one (1) preschool grant at one of the following funding levels:

- \$25,000 LEAs with at least one (1) preschool student with a disability (i.e., ages 3, 4, and 5- not K)
- \$50,000 LEAs with at least 25 preschool students with disabilities (i.e., ages 3, 4, and 5- not K)
- \$100,000 LEAs with at least 50 preschool students with disabilities (i.e., ages 3, 4, and 5- not K)
- \$150,000 LEAs with at least 100 preschool students with disabilities (i.e., ages 3, 4, and 5- not K)

A separate application is required for each option. Awards will be made in rounds based on the following deadlines for submitting applications.

Application Submission Deadlines (Electronic Submission Date By)	
Application Deadline for Rounds 1 and 2 of Special Initiatives Awards:	
- September 11, 2026 - December 4, 2026	
(Note: Additional application submission dates may be added if funds remain after each submission deadline.)	

An electronic application must be submitted by September 11, 2026, to be eligible for Round 1 of the Special Initiatives Awards. The deadline for Round 2 (based on the availability of remaining funds after the first round of applications is received and processed) is December 4, 2026.

These funds are awarded for FY 2027 and are available immediately after approved submissions through September 30, 2027, 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, 2027, 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 2027 funds for special initiatives by completing and submitting an electronic application [Submit Application](#).

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

EGM/ER/SH

Attachment

cc: Special Education Coordinators
Chief School Financial Officers
Mrs. Angela Martin
Mr. Arthur Watts, Jr.
Mrs. Shanthia Washington
Mrs. Nancy Smith
Mr. Brady Vaughn
Mr. Justin Todd
Dr. DaLee Chambers
Mrs. Erika Richburg

FY26-2054

Special Education Services Application

Special Initiatives: Fiscal Year (FY) 2027

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 2027, 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 #H027A260015
2. Temporary Special Education Certificate (TSEC), Fund Source 3290, IDEA, Part B, Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services), PR/Award #H027A260015
3. Parent Training and Counseling Support, Fund Source 3290, IDEA, Part B, Section 611, CFDA 84.027A (Other Student Support Services), PR/Award #H027A260015
4. Preschool Outcomes Initiative, Fund Source 3290, IDEA, Part B Preschool, Section 619, CFDA 84.173A (Other Student Support Services), PR/Award #H173A260088

For consideration in the award allocation of these funds, the LEA must follow all application requirements.

These funds are awarded for FY 2027 and are available immediately after approved submissions through September 30, 2027, 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, 2027, 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, Special Education Services (SES) Section, by email at sesgrants@alsde.edu or by telephone at 334-694-4782.

Application Submission Deadlines (Electronic Submission Date By)
Application Deadlines for Rounds 1 and 2 of Special Initiatives Awards: • September 11, 2026 • December 4, 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 Counseling 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.

Option 4: Preschool Outcomes Initiative

The ALSDE, SES, will provide funding to assist LEAs in improving educational, developmental, and functional outcomes for preschool children with disabilities ages 3, 4, and 5 who are not enrolled in kindergarten. To be eligible, project activities must directly address at least one of Alabama's SPP/APR indicators: Indicator 6, Preschool Environments; Indicator 7, Preschool Outcomes; or Indicator 12, Early Childhood Preschool Transition. A maximum of one award per LEA (projects may be fully or partially funded). Award amounts will range from \$25,000.00 to \$150,000.00 and will be determined by the application's quality, scope, cost, and potential impact. Allowed Uses: Materials, supplies, equipment, technology, assistive technology, recruitment/retention, personnel development, and professional development. Prohibited Uses: Because these are time-limited funds, they cannot be used for salaries or contracted special education/related services. Funding Tiers by LEA Size: LEAs may apply for one of the following grant amounts based on their preschool student population (ages 3, 4, and 5-not K) with disabilities: Funding Level Minimum: \$25,000 - At least 1 eligible student; \$50,000 - At least 25 eligible students; \$100,000 - At least 50 eligible students; \$150,000 - At least 100 eligible students.

Special Initiatives: Fiscal Year (FY) 2027

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**
- ☐ **Option 4: Preschool Outcomes Initiative**

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: 2026-2027

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: • 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.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		
21.		
22.		
23.		
24.		
25.		
26.		
27.		
28.		
29.		
30.		

*Attach additional pages with additional names if necessary.

Parent Training and Counseling/Preschool Outcomes

SECTION 2:

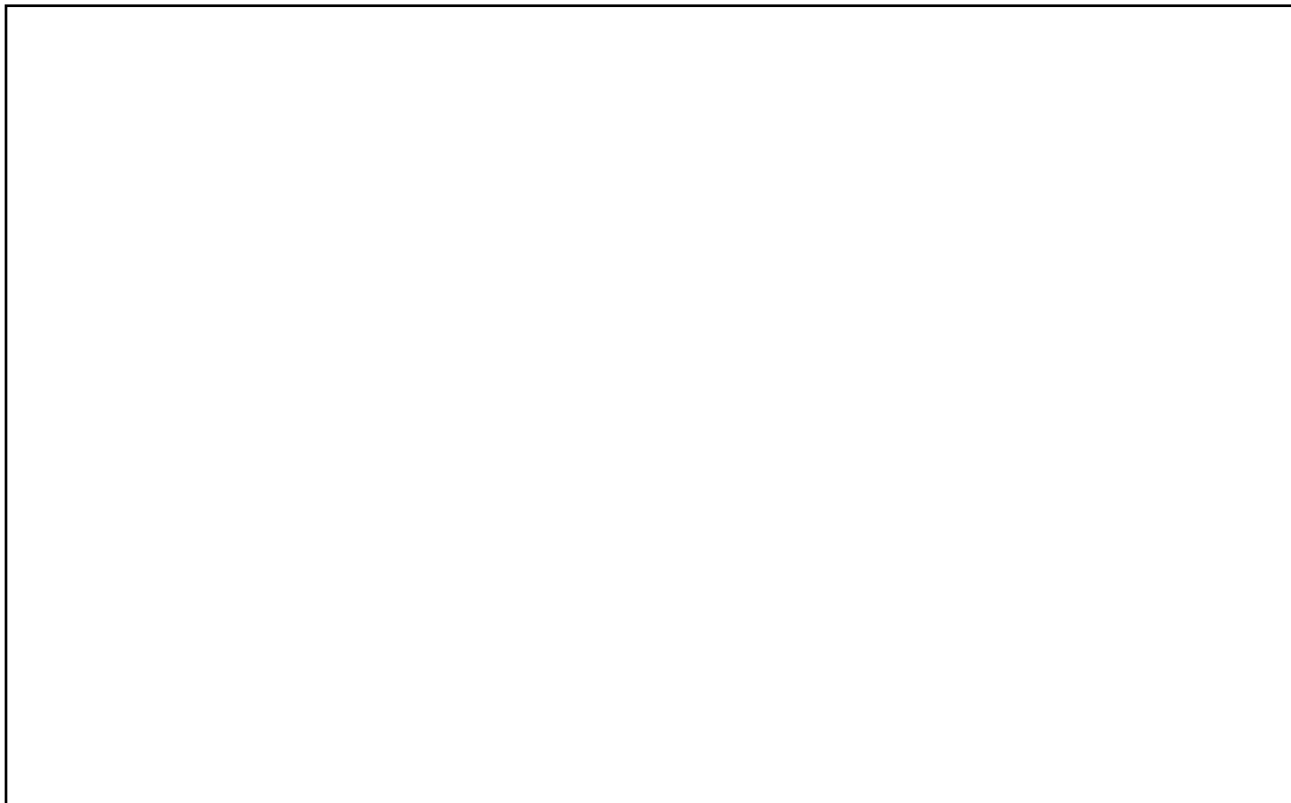
1. In the spaces below, provide a description of the proposed project.
2. Complete the Budget Information (Section 3).

Executive Summary:

Proposed timeframe for implementation:

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

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, & 4

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	\$