Most special education funding is distributed through Special Education Local Planning Areas (SELPAs). SELPAs are regional offices that cover school districts within a specific geographical area. Districts and county offices in each SELPA work together to determine how special education funding is allocated.

Federal Funding: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B: Special Education

Federal funding is given to state based on:
- Number of special education students in the state in 1999 (when base grants were calculated), number of low-income students in the state, and total number of students in the state.

State Funding: AB 602

- Base Funding for Special Education
  - Funding is based on: Total number of students in the SELPA's member districts

- Supplemental Funding for Special Education
  - Funding is based on: Number of special education students in the SELPA's member districts and cost of programs (e.g., for residential placements, orthopedic disabilities, etc.)

State Funding: Non-AB 602 Special Education Funding

- Additional funding allocated to special education for one-time or ongoing programs and services; allocation and acceptable uses vary

Learn More

- How is Special Education Organized? - California Legislative Analyst's Office
- How is Special Education Funded? - California Legislative Analyst's Office
- Special Needs: Why Not Teach All Kids Alike? - Ed 100
- California Special Education Local Plan Areas - Administration - California Department of Education
- California Special Education Funding System Study - WestEd