



Special Education Financial Advisory Workgroup

Recommendations for
improving the tuition
reimbursement structure
for school-age providers



Enrollment Flexibility

- Establish a “Utilization” Component to the Rate Methodology (utilization bandwidth)
- Accommodate Reasonable and Explainable Fluctuations in Enrollment to Avoid Significant Swings in Cost Per Enrollment Day
- Replace Actual Enrollment with a Proxy Care-Day Number

The Rate Reconciliation Process

- Eliminate Reconciliation
- Establish “Hold Harmless” parameters and not reconcile if costs are within parameters

The Tuition Waiver Process

- Establish Clear Guidelines/Criteria for Waivers and Appeals and Reasonable Timelines
- The Waiver Process Should Result in Timely Action and Consistent and Predictable Outcomes.
 - This could be achieved by authorizing SED to approve waivers under certain circumstances and within defined parameters.
- Create a “Pass Through” of Certain Fixed Costs

Capital Project Funding

- Create concrete requirements for project applications with reasonable timelines
- Develop expense parameters to ensure proper investment in facility maintenance
- Simplify the Capital Funding Approval Process:
 - Establish strict “need for project” guidelines;
 - Pre-approve and publish a regional per square foot cost;
 - Cost-out all projects in a region using the approved square foot amount;
 - Use the approved per square foot amounts in conjunction with the square footage amounts approved by the Special Education Office;
 - Using the approved square foot amount, DOB approval would then consider the square footage for the project

Authorization to Retain Reserves

- Allow schools to maintain a fund balance with appropriate restrictions and oversight

Incentivizing Shared Service Arrangements and Other Efficiencies

- Allow schools to retain a percentage of savings due to efficiencies and innovation in order to reinvest in programs
- Allow savings in cost-per-care-day in one year without penalty in subsequent years
- Develop initiatives to allow similarly located programs to merge and jointly run like programs
- Develop a collaborative program on a pilot basis that would allow programmatic and rate setting flexibilities to participants if they can demonstrate savings and efficiencies

Program/Regulatory Flexibility

- Establish school-wide class sizes and ratio parameters versus identifying a specific classroom size and ratio for each student
- Count all adults (including related services providers) when determining whether a program is in compliance with staffing ratios
- Provide flexibility to enhance classroom ratios toward reducing the need for 1:1 aides
- Provide flexibility with respect to PPS and behavioral support staff requirements

Program/Regulatory Flexibility

- Extend current procedures for over-enrollment approval to include elementary aged classes
- Redefine the school day and class intervals for alternative learning structures
- Adjust the curriculum and staffing requirements to reflect individual student needs and encourage innovative access to required curriculum and services
- Encourage an Innovative Waiver process and work with providers to eliminate barriers to offering an innovative waiver program model

Other Recommendations

- Opportunity to discuss additional items identified by the group