



MYTH #1:

Including students with significant cognitive disabilities costs more than educating them in segregated special education programs.

FACT:

Providing flexible services in general education settings is not more expensive. In fact, it enables schools to maximize resources to meet the needs of each and every student.

The Truth Is...

- Schools do not automatically receive more funding for placing students in more restrictive placements.
- Students with significant cognitive disabilities do not always need 1:1 support to be included in general education classrooms.
- Special education funding is connected to student needs and not tied to specific programs nor the percentage of time students with IEPs spend in special education settings.
- Safety net funding (reimbursement for high-cost services) is based on the services in a student's individualized education program (IEP), not the student's placement or program.

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE FACTS:

Keep in Mind:

- Financial resources follow students based on need, not placement decisions.
- WA implemented a tiered multiplier for special education funding in 2020-21, [RCW 28A.150.390 \(2\)\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#).

Supportive Research/Articles:

- Myth: [The High Cost of Inclusion](#)
- TIES Center TIP#1: [How Peers Can Support Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) Use by Students with Significant Communication Needs](#)
- [Economic and Demographic Predictors of Inclusive Education](#)
- Cosier, M. & Causton-Theoharis, J. (2011)

STRATEGIES FOR DISPELLING THE MYTH:

- Examine [system resource decisions/allocations](#). Are they based on research and best practices or beliefs and historical practices?
- Redesign master schedules and resource allocation (staffing, etc.) for inclusive education and supports and to [center family voice in decision making](#).
- Reconsider instruction in special education classrooms: create flex spaces that support all students, with and without disabilities.
- Design and implement systems for providing universal supports in general education settings to foster a culture where advocating for support and services is encouraged. For example, [utilize assistive technology](#) to make the environment accessible for all students (voice to text, a variety of writing tools, books read to students, etc.).