



**JOY HOFMEISTER**  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Superintendents, Special Education Directors, Federal Program Officers, and Other Interested Parties

**FROM:** Matt Holder, Chief Operations Officer

**DATE:** June 24, 2015

**SUBJECT: Guidance for Determining Weights for Special Education State Funding**

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) wishes to provide information about the 2015-2016 State Aid Funding Formula, regarding Special Education weights. Funds are generated to local education agencies (LEA) based on the total number of weighted students enrolled in the district. The Special Education weights per Oklahoma Statute (70 O.S. §18-201.1) in building the first nine weeks weighted average daily membership will use the same calculation method as in FY 2015.

Each eligible student **must have a Primary Disability category**, as shown on the Multidisciplinary Evaluation and Eligibility Group Summary (MEEGS) form and have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) in place. Along with a Primary Disability, a student may have a Secondary Disability (recorded on the MEEGS form) and/or related service (documented on the IEP), qualifying for student category weights in the State Aid calculation.

The MEEGS and IEP teams will make all decisions regarding the selection of the appropriate disability category and Related Services based on student need, according to data collected through the special education evaluation process. Guidance regarding the evaluation process and categorical placement of students with disabilities may be found in Special Education Policies, The Special Education Handbook, The Special Education Process Guide, and other related resources posted on the OSDE website at <[ok.gov/sde/documents-forms](http://ok.gov/sde/documents-forms)>.

Every student will receive the weight of their Primary Disability listed on the MEEGS report. In the event that the Primary Disability is Development Delay (DD), the student receives the weight of the suspected disability. Categories are listed below:

**Primary/Secondary Disability Weights Table 1**

<b>Primary/Secondary Disability</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Primary/Secondary Disability</b>	<b>Weight</b>
3-Hearing Impairment including Deafness (HI)	2.90	11-Deaf-Blindness (DB)	3.80
5-Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)	0.05	12-Multiple Disabilities (MD)	2.40
6-Visual Impairment including Blindness (VI)	3.80	13-Autism (AU)	2.40
7-Emotional Disturbance (ED)	2.50	14-Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	3.80
8-Orthopedic Impairment (OI)	1.20	15-Developmental Delay (DD)	Suspected Disability
9-Other Health Impairment (OHI)	1.20	16-Intellectual Disability (ID)	1.30
10-Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	0.40	Special Education Summer Program	1.20

✓ **The Student has a Primary Disability:**

**Example: Student 1**

Primary Disability = Specific Learning Disability (0.4)

**Example: Student 2**

Primary Disability = Developmental Delay

Suspected Disability = Specific Learning Disability (0.4)

✓ **The Student has a Primary and a Secondary Disability Category:**

In addition to the Primary Disability, a student may also have one of twelve possible Secondary Disabilities, which should also be recorded on the MEEGS form. Often students will not have a Secondary Disability. If the student has a Secondary Disability category, it cannot be the same as the Primary or Suspected Disability (e.g. a student cannot have a Primary Disability of Emotional Disturbance (ED) and a Secondary Disability of ED). Developmental Delay is the only disability category that is not listed for Secondary Disability, but is included in the list of Primary Disabilities. Developmental Delay will require a Suspected Disability from the Primary Disability category. Secondary Disability weights are the same as Primary Disability weights.

**Example: Student 3**

Primary Disability = Visual Impairment (3.80)

Secondary Disability = Emotional Disturbance (2.50)

Total Special Education Weight = 3.80 + 2.50 = 6.30

✓ **The Student has a Primary Disability, a Secondary Disability, and Related Services:**

Finally, a student may have Related Services. Often students will not have any Related Services, but if Related Services are listed on the student’s IEP, the services must relate to either the Primary or Secondary Disability categories. The Special Education division will collect additional Related Services from the LEA through data reports, but State Aid calculations will continue to reflect the same five (5) Related Services as in FY2015 for funding purposes.

In other words, the sum of the Primary Disability weight and either the Secondary or Related Services weight (whichever is greater) will be used to calculate the Special Education Weight. Five (5) of these services carry a weight for the State Aid funding formula as shown below:

**Related Service Mapping for Weights – Table 2**

<b>Related Service</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Primary/Secondary Disability Category</b>
(3) Audiology		(3) Hearing Impairment including Deafness
(5) Speech Language Therapy		(5) Speech or Language Impairment
(6) Orientation and Mobility		(6) Visual Impairment including Blindness
(7) Counseling		(7) Emotional Disturbance
(8) Occupational/Physical Therapy		(8) Orthopedic Impairments

Although the purpose of this memorandum is to assist the LEA with understanding the financial aspect of special education weights for State Aid funding, it is important to note that a student may receive more than one related service according to the IEP. IDEA requires Special Education Services to collect a detailed description of all special education and related services provided at the student level; however, only the five (5) related services listed in Table 2 above actually carry a fiscal weight at this time.

If a student has a Primary Disability, Secondary Disability, and Related Services that fall into one of the five (5) categories above, the student will **first** receive the weight of the Primary Disability. **Next**, the State will review the Secondary Disability and the reported Related Service to determine which of the two entries has a higher weight. The category with the higher weight will be added to the Primary Disability weight. For funding purposes, only 2 weights or descriptors will be counted for funding.

**Example: Student 4**

Primary Disability = Autism (2.40)

Secondary Disability = Orthopedic Impairment (1.20)

Related Service = Speech/Language Therapy (0.05)

Total Special Education Weight =  $2.40 + 1.20 = 3.60$

In Example 4, the Primary Disability weight was added to the Secondary Disability weight, since the Secondary Disability weight was greater than the Related Service weight.

**Example: Student 5**

Primary Disability = Other Health Impairment (1.20)

Secondary Disability = Speech/Language Impairment (0.05)

Related Service = Physical Therapy (1.20)

Total Special Education Weight =  $1.20 + 1.20 = 2.40$

In Example 5, the Primary Disability weight was added to the Related Service weight, since the Related Service weight was greater than the Secondary Disability weight.

**Example: Student 6**

Primary Disability = Hearing Impairment (2.90)

Secondary Disability = Emotional Disturbance (2.50)

Related Service = Counseling (2.50)

Total Special Education Weight =  $2.90 + 2.50 = 5.40$

In Example 6, the Secondary Disability and Related Service weights were the same, so the weight was added once to the Primary Disability weight.

If the district enters disability data into the system for matching disability codes related to the same student (e.g. the student's Primary Disability is Emotional Disturbance and the student's Related Service is Counseling, which is mapped to Emotional Disturbance), then the LEA will only receive the weight of that disability one time, because expenses for counseling are covered under the Emotional Disturbance category.

**Example: Student 7**

Primary Disability = Emotional Disturbance (2.50)

Secondary Disability = Orthopedic Impairment (1.20)

Related Service = Counseling (2.50)

Total Special Education Weight =  $2.50 + 1.20 = 3.70$

In Example 7, The Primary Disability and Related Service, in this case, are mapped to the same disability category. Expenses for counseling are covered under Emotional Disturbance. The category weight can only be used one time per student. The Primary Disability and Secondary Disability weights are totaled to determine the total disability weight.

If you have additional questions or concerns about funding for students with disabilities through, please contact Anita Eccard, (405) 521-4865.

cc: Lance Nelson, Chief of Staff  
Dr. Rene Axtell, Assistant State Superintendent, Special Education Services  
Renee McWaters, Executive Director of State Aid