



**SPECTRUM
ACADEMY FY28
EXPANSION -
RULE R277-479-3
ISSUES**



BACKGROUND

In 2006, a group of parents frustrated with the educational opportunities available for students with autism took it upon themselves to ensure the academic success of their children. After years of hard work, sacrifice, and sheer determination, they opened the doors of the first charter school in Utah dedicated solely to the academic, behavioral, and social success of students with 'high-functioning autism'.

The same vision that motivated these early parents still drives the parents, educators, and staff today. Spectrum Academy is committed to providing exceptional learning opportunities that inspire creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong success for neurodiverse learners.

At Spectrum Academy, we believe that education is a transformative journey that begins with nurturing a love for learning. Our dedicated team of educators, administrators, and staff is passionate about creating a supportive and inclusive environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.



MISSION STATEMENT

Spectrum Academy is the premier charter school in Utah for students with autism and other neurodiversities who would benefit from our unique learning environment.

We provide small class sizes, with individualized instruction and an innovative social skills curriculum. We help students reach their fullest potential academically, socially, and emotionally, leading to productive and successful futures.



FACTS

Spectrum Academy has been approved for a FY2028 expansion into St. George

As Rule R277-479-3 stands today, expanding will force our SPED Add-On WPU's to be reduced from **3,564 to 1,863.**



FACTS

This reduction in WPU's reduces our SPED Add-On Funding by a total of **\$8,240,600.**

An \$8 Million reduction equates to a **20%** overall reduction in our FY2028 Budget.



FACTS

Over 80% of our budget covers salaries and benefits. Taking a 20% budget cut in SPED Add-On will force us to reduce our Related Services staff, our paraprofessional staff, and even our teacher staff.



DATA

Related Services Staffing (including anticipated staff for STG)

- 30 Behavior Staff @ \$43,000 average salary
- 7 Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant (COTA) Staff @ \$40,000 average salary
- 8 mental health Staff @ \$45K average salary
- 3 Nurses @ \$60,000 average salary
- 10 Occupational Therapists (OT) staff @ \$85,000 average salary
- 15 Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) staff @ \$70,000 average salary
- 8 Speech Language Technicians (SLT) staff @ \$50,000 average salary
- 300 Paraprofessionals @ \$30,000 average salary

FACTS

Cutting one-third (127 employees) of our Related Services Staff would only cut expenses by **\$5,500,000** (including benefits).

Cuts would have to include either 50 teachers (23% reduction) to make up for the rest of the shortfall (\$2,500,000), forcing much larger classroom sizes or an additional 83 paraprofessionals, leaving only 127 paraprofessionals from the original 300 paraprofessionals we currently staff.



EFFECT

We will not be able to cover the required IEP minutes for our student population.

Our classroom sizes would increase while our paraprofessional support decreases. And we will be operating with a much smaller behavior support team on staff.



BOTTOM LINE

There is no scenario where Spectrum Academy would be able to continue operations if forced to take a 20% SPED Add-On Funding Hit.

If Rule R277-479-3 stays as it is, we will never be able to expand, even though the need is great.



SOLUTION

Charter Schools with a SPED prevalence rate higher than 60% need to be exempted under the expanding scenario also.



THANK YOU

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