

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Subject:

ACTION: Spectrum Academy and Special Education Funding Formulas

Agenda item type:

Action Item

Recommended Action:

That the Board seeks a legislative change to create an additional SpEd formula to add 1.5 WPU's per SpEd ADM for LEAs for schools with more than 70% SpEd ADM.

Purpose of Memo:

Staff recommendation

Background:

On February 5, 2026, the Utah Board of Education approved amendments to R277-479 - Funding for Charter School Students with Disabilities on an IEP. The main purpose of the rule change was to cap SPED Add-On Funding for charter schools to per pupil funding levels commensurate with school districts. The rule change exempted from the caps charter schools with more than 60 percent special education students. Spectrum Academy is the only charter school that meets this threshold, with more than 80 percent of its students having an IEP.

The principal reason why Spectrum Academy was exempted from the R277-479 rule change was that the impacts would be many times greater than the impacts for any other charter school.

On February 12, 2025, the State Charter School Board approved the application for Spectrum Academy to add a satellite campus in St. George starting in FY28. This expansion would require USBE, in accordance with R277-479, to revise down Spectrum Academy's SPED Add-On funding in FY28. The purpose of this item is for the LEA to briefly discuss their expansion plans, the possible ramifications of the rule as currently written, and for the committee to discuss possible ways to move forward.

At the April 2026 Finance Committee meeting, the Committee discussed the potential impacts of the current rule structure, Spectrum Academy's expansion plans, and possible options moving forward. The Committee approved a motion directing that the item return to the May Finance Committee meeting as an action item for further consideration.

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Attachments:

1. SPED Add-On Options - High SPED % Schools Analysis 4.24.2026

2. Spectrum Academy - SPED WPU's per ADM Ratios (FY2007-FY2026)
3. Memo - SPED Add-On Funding Formula, Changes to R277-479, and Spectrum Academy
4.17.2026
4. Utah Schools with SPED ADM Greater than 70% - 5.4.2026