



JBC Staff Comeback Memos

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JBC Staff Comeback

Public Health and Environment

JBC Staff: Kelly Shen, (303-866-5434)

Date: March 17, 2026

R9 Reduce LPHA Distributions

The Department’s R9 request is to reduce Local Public Health Agency (LPHA) distributions by \$3.3 million General Fund. This is comprised of a reduction to:

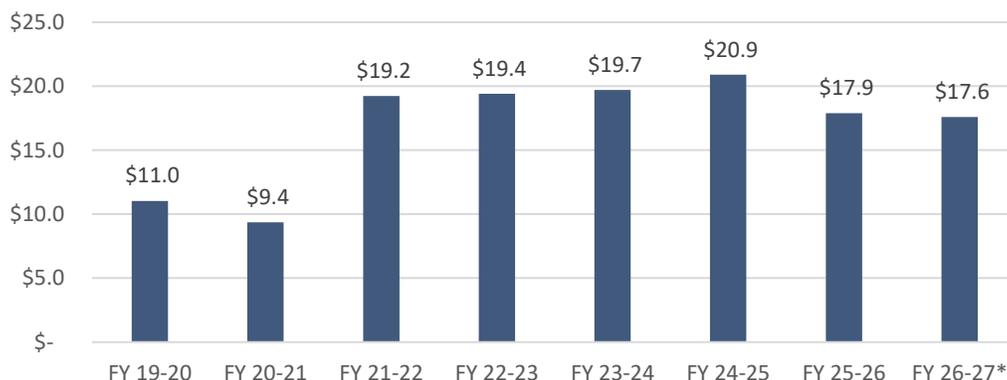
- Local planning and support dollars (LPSD) - \$2,970,000
- Environmental health services (EHS) - \$330,000

During figure setting, the Committee made a motion to approve staff recommendation (the Department’s request) – which failed 3-3. The Committee expressed an interest in revisiting the request when all six members are present. The Committee’s decision on this request will affect the line item detail for the Office of Public Health Practice, Planning, and Local Partnerships (OPHP), which have not yet been set.

The proposed reduction would decrease local planning and support dollar distributions by 14.4 percent and environmental health services distributions by 14.3 percent. Both distributions are also supported by a small amount of Marijuana Tax Cash Fund that is proposed to remain unchanged.

These are the same fund sources that received an additional \$11.0 million in FY 24-25 and ongoing after the expiration of COVID-19 funds from S.B. 21-243. This significantly increased the LPHA distribution from these two sources, as shown in the graph below.

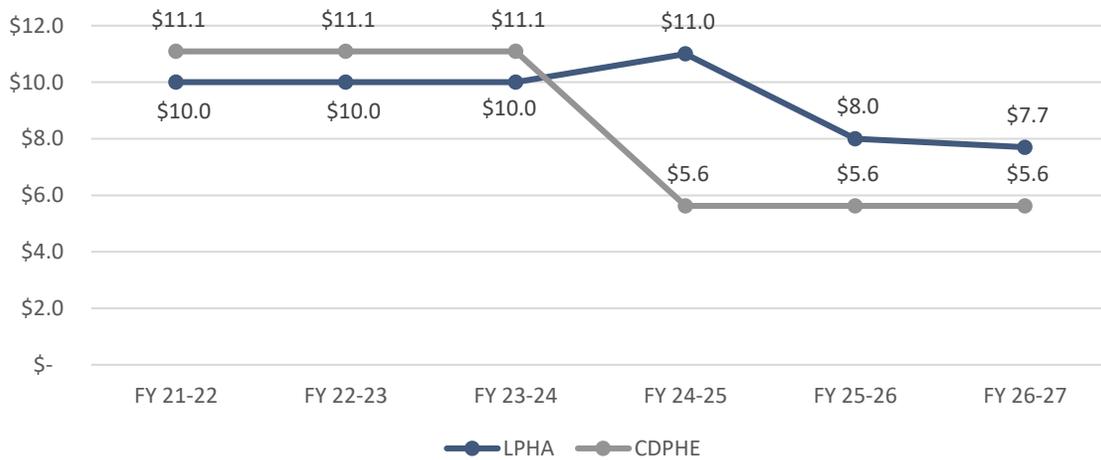
LPHA total from LPSD and EHS (\$ millions)



Key Considerations

- LPSD and EHS funding are a small portion (15.6 percent) of all distributions that CDPHE makes to LPHAs. However, they are a significant part (67.9 percent) of the total General Fund distributed to LPHAs.
- These two fund sources have been the focus of committee discussions around funding for core public health infrastructure – funds that originated from S.B. 21-243.
- With the additional core infrastructure funding, the Department increased the base funding for every LPHA to \$55,000 with the intent to support at least one FTE at each LPHA. LPHAs indicated that the proposed reduction would have a wide-ranging effect on operations from emergency response to immunizations and maternal and child health – and likely result in reducing staff.
- Both LPHAs and CDPHE received funds through S.B. 21-243. Funding from this bill ended in FY 23-24. Ongoing “243” funds for both entities are shown below. CDPHE’s share of “243” funding supports activities such as the state lab, regional/field epidemiologists, emergency response, and general administration – some of these activities also support LPHAs.

S.B. 21-243 Core Public Infrastructure Funding (\$ millions)



OPHP Line Item Detail

The Department’s R9 request will affect line items in Office of Public Health Practice, Planning, and Local Partnerships (OPHP) and the Division of Environmental Health Services. OPHP line items have not yet been set, and **staff recommends the below line item detail subject to the Committee’s action on the Department’s R9 request.**

Administration and Support, Office of Public Health Practice, Planning and Local Partnerships, Distributions to Local Public Health Agencies

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
FY 2025-26 Appropriation						
SB 25-206 (Long Bill)	\$18,848,358	\$17,082,755	\$1,765,603	\$0	\$0	0.0

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
Other legislation	-2,708,570	-2,708,570	0	0	0	0.0
Total FY 2025-26	\$16,139,788	\$14,374,185	\$1,765,603	\$0	\$0	0.0
FY 2026-27 Recommended Appropriation						
FY 2025-26 Appropriation	\$16,139,788	\$14,374,185	\$1,765,603	\$0	\$0	0.0
Prior year actions	2,708,570	2,708,570	0	0	0	0.0
R9 Reduce LPHA distributions	-2,970,000	-2,970,000	0	0	0	0.0
Total FY 2026-27	\$15,878,358	\$14,112,755	\$1,765,603	\$0	\$0	0.0
Changes from FY 2025-26	-\$261,430	-\$261,430	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0
Percentage Change	-1.6%	-1.8%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
FY 2026-27 Executive Request	\$15,878,358	\$14,112,755	\$1,765,603	\$0	\$0	0.0
Staff Rec. Above/-Below Request	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0

Administration and Support, Office of Public Health Practice, Planning and Local Partnerships, Assessment, Planning, and Support Program

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
FY 2025-26 Appropriation						
SB 25-206 (Long Bill)	\$932,195	\$317,159	\$0	\$0	\$615,036	7.4
Total FY 2025-26	\$932,195	\$317,159	\$0	\$0	\$615,036	7.4
FY 2026-27 Recommended Appropriation						
FY 2025-26 Appropriation	\$932,195	\$317,159	\$0	\$0	\$615,036	7.4
Prior year actions	12,018	12,018	0	0	0	0.0
Total FY 2026-27	\$944,213	\$329,177	\$0	\$0	\$615,036	7.4
Changes from FY 2025-26	\$12,018	\$12,018	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0
Percentage Change	1.3%	3.8%	n/a	n/a	0.0%	0.0%
FY 2026-27 Executive Request	\$944,213	\$329,177	\$0	\$0	\$615,036	7.4
Staff Rec. Above/-Below Request	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0

Syphilis RFI

Staff recommends **CONTINUING** one RFI that was accidentally left out of the figure setting document.

Department of Public Health and Environment, Office of HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and STI's – The Department is requested to provide a report related to the congenital syphilis prevention program with the following information to the Joint Budget Committee by November 1st of each fiscal year:

- Number of participants who receive a syphilis screening while detained in local county jails;
- Number of participants who receive a syphilis screening from community sites;

- Number of participants who receive a positive screen who receive syphilis treatment prior to release from detention at a local county jail;
- Number of participants who receive a positive screen who receive syphilis treatment from community sites;
- Number of participants who receive referrals for supportive services; and
- Number of participants who test positive for syphilis and are pregnant.

Comment: This RFI provides information about outcomes related to the congenital syphilis county prevention project, which received funding through FY 23-24 and FY 24-25 budget requests.

JBC Staff Comeback

Tobacco Revenue

JBC Staff: Kelly Shen, (303-866-5434)

Date: March 17, 2026

Update to Tobacco RFI

Staff recommends an update to the already approved Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement RFI. The update would add the Department of Law to the existing RFI that reports on actual expenditures and program activities.

- 1 Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Indigent Care Program, Children's Basic Health Plan Medical and Dental Costs; Department of Higher Education, Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Special Purpose, Lease Purchase Payments and Capital-related Outlays, University of Colorado Lease Purchase of Academic Facilities at Fitzsimons; Governing Boards, Regents of the University of Colorado; Department of Human Services, Division of Community Programs, Tony Grampas Youth Services Program; Department of Early Childhood, Community and Family Support, Home Visiting; **Department of Law**; Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Division of Veterans Affairs, Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund Expenditures; Department of Personnel, Division of Human Resources, Employee Benefits Services, H.B. 07-1335 Supplemental State Contribution Fund; Department of Public Health and Environment, Disease Control and Public Health Response; Office of HIV, Viral Hepatitis and STI's; Prevention Services Division – **Each Department is requested to provide the following information to the Joint Budget Committee by October 1 of each year for each program funded with Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement money: the name of the program; the amount of Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement money received and expended by the program for the preceding fiscal year; a description of the program including the actual number of persons served and the services provided through the program; information evaluating the operation of the program, including the effectiveness of the program in achieving its stated goals.**

JBC Staff Comeback

Department Education – School Finance

JBC Staff: Andrea Uhl, (303-866-4956)

Date: March 17, 2026

R2/BA2 Categorical Program Funding, Including Line Item Detail for School District Operations Subdivision (B)

Request

The required Amendment 23 increase for R2/BA2 based on CY 2025 inflation of 2.3 percent is \$12.9 million. The Department requested this amount from the State Education Fund, spread across all eight categorical program lines.

R2/BA2 Requested Increases in State Funding for Categorical Programs

Long Bill Line Item	FY 2025-26 Appropriation	FY 2026-27 Request	Change in State Funding	Percent Change
Special Education - Children with Disabilities	\$388,694,798	\$397,634,778	\$8,939,980	2.3%
English Language Proficiency Program	35,866,264	36,476,231	609,967	1.7%
Public School Transportation	72,973,821	74,992,834	2,019,013	2.8%
Career and Technical Education Programs	32,689,057	33,644,645	955,588	2.9%
Special Education - Gifted and Talented Children	16,793,762	17,124,141	330,379	2.0%
Expelled and At-risk Student Services Grant Program	9,473,039	9,477,647	4,608	0.0%
Small Attendance Center Aid	1,606,548	1,607,114	566	0.0%
Comprehensive Health Education	1,115,829	1,117,631	1,802	0.2%
Total	\$559,213,118	\$572,075,021	\$12,861,903	2.3%

The request also proposes a legislative change “to clarify that satisfaction of the constitutionally required inflationary increase to the state share of categorical funding in the aggregate in each fiscal year would also satisfy the corresponding statutory requirement. This will allow the General Assembly to preserve flexibility to increase special education in the excess of the inflationary increase required under Amendment 23, but not mandate it”. Simply put, the request proposes undoing the inflationary requirements specific to special education funding for children with disabilities created by Senate Bill 22-127 (Special Education Funding).

Revised Recommendation

Staff’s revised recommendation is shown in *Table A* on page 6. The revised recommendation is \$4.2 million lower than the original figure setting recommendation due to actual December 2025 special education counts coming in lower than estimated. The recommendation exceeds the required Amendment 23 increase by \$2.5 million in order to provided increases for some other categorical program lines in addition to Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities.

This memo includes a brief description of the recommendation for each categorical line and includes additional information requested by the Committee where applicable.

Proposed Legislation – Recommendation Unchanged

Senate Bill 22-127 (Special Education Funding) created inflationary requirements specific to special education starting with the 2024-25 budget year and declared the General Assembly’s intent to fully fund special education services each year¹. Specifically, the per pupil funding provided to Tier A students was increased to \$1,750 and increases annually by inflation. A series of bills provided additional appropriations totaling \$109.0 million between FY 2013-14 and FY 2023-24 with the intention of funding Tier B pupils at or near the maximum \$6,000 per student. The \$109.0 million is also subject to annual inflationary increases. Because these calculations are tied to the number of students receiving special education services, the annual increase required to comply with special education statutes does not equal the total special education line item appropriation multiplied by the inflation rate, which OSPB has used as the basis for its request the last three years.

Staff does not recommend the requested legislation to effectively repeal special education inflationary requirements.

Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities – Revised Recommendation

The statutorily required inflationary increase specific to Special Education is \$11.49 million, down from an estimate of \$15.69 million in figure setting. This is due to the actual December 2025 special education counts coming in lower than the Department’s estimate. Tier A and Tier B counts increased by 1.6% and 4.4% from the prior year, respectively. The required increase to fulfill the General Assembly’s intent to fully fund Special Education is \$21.4 million. Under the revised staff recommendation shown in Table A on the following page, Tier B funding would be prorated at \$5,650 per pupil as opposed to the maximum of \$6,000.

The request also includes federally funded salary increases totaling \$319,972. Staff recommends that component of the request.

English Language Proficiency Program - Recommendation Unchanged

Staff recommends an increase of \$650,995 based on the model that allocates the Amendment 23 increase based on each line’s share of the gap between state/federal funds and local district expenditures. As shown in *Table B*, state and federal funds accounted for 57 percent of total district expenditures if funding provided through the English Language Learner (ELL) factor in the school finance formula is included. That figure drops to 25 percent if only categorical funding is counted. *Table C* shows that for categorical funding only, state funds are providing 20 percent of the maximum state funding allowed under statute. The new school finance formula increases the ELL factor from 0.08 to 0.25. The ELL factor accounted for 0.6 percent of total formula funding in FY 2024-25 under the old formula. When the new formula is fully implemented, the ELL factor is estimated to account for 1.6 percent of formula funding.

The request also includes federally funded salary increases totaling \$19,341. Staff recommends that component of the request.

¹ Section 22-20-114, C.R.S. (1)(c)(III) and (1.3)

Public School Transportation - Recommendation Unchanged

Staff recommends an increase of \$2,154,816 based on the model that allocates the Amendment 23 increase based on each line's share of the gap between state/federal funds and local district expenditures. As shown in *Table B*, state funds accounted for only 24 percent of total district expenditures. The General Assembly recently examined the adequacy of public school transportation funding through S.B. 23-094 (School Transportation Task Force). The task force made a series of recommendations that includes providing additional funding for this category.

Transfer to the Department of Higher Education for Distribution of State Assistance for Career and Technical Education - Recommendation Unchanged, New Information

Staff does not recommend an increase for this line item. Similar to the request, the model discussed above would yield an increase of approximately \$1.0 million. The Department of Higher Education uses this funding as the state match (maintenance of effort) for federal Career and Technical Education Perkins funding. The Department of Education has indicated that cutting this line or failing to keep up with federal increases could negatively impact federal Perkins funding. However, recent increases to this line item have substantially outpaced federal increases and the Department of Higher Education has confirmed that a \$0 increase for FY 2026-27 will not be detrimental.

The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education is responsible for approving career and technical education programs, as well as distributing state funds to school districts with students enrolled in approved programs. The state funds are distributed to school districts to partially reimburse costs related to personnel, books and supplies, and equipment for approved programs. Specifically, state funding is available to a district if its approved program cost per full-time equivalent student exceeds 70 percent of the district's per pupil operating revenues for the same fiscal year. A district is eligible to receive reimbursement for 80 percent of the first \$1,250 in "excess costs" incurred, and 50 percent of any excess costs above \$1,250. If the appropriation is insufficient to fully fund the amount districts are eligible to receive, the Department of Higher Education prorates distributions accordingly. As shown in *Table B*, state and federal funds accounted for just 25 percent of school district expenditures for this category.

Career and technical education (CTE) programs are offered in secondary school facilities (such as school district technical campuses), post-secondary institutions (community colleges) and hybrid facilities serving both secondary and postsecondary (area technical colleges such as Emily Griffith or Pickens Technical College). A high school student taking a CTE course at a community college may be counted as "concurrently enrolled" in a high school and college course. CTE funding for high school and middle school students is primarily from government sources, including "per pupil operating revenue" provided to school districts, state support provided through Career and Technical Education Act categorical distributions, and federal Perkins grant funding. CTE funding for postsecondary students is provided through a combination of state and federal support and tuition and fees. Low-income students with a high school diploma or GED may receive federal and state grants that offset their tuition and fees, but if they are ineligible or do not receive sufficient support, they must cover these costs themselves. The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education is responsible for overseeing the distribution of state CTE funds, and all state and federal funding for CTE is consolidated in the Higher Education Budget.

The Committee asked how CTE relates to “big blur” programs in S.B. 25-315 (Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness Programs). S.B. 25-315 will distribute funding based on multiple workforce readiness-related factors, not solely traditional career and technical education activities or expenses. The State Board of Education hasn't yet worked out the distribution formula for those dollars. It won't be cost-based, although districts will likely need to demonstrate that they use the funds for allowable purposes. The big blur programs are broader than CTE.

Special Education Programs for Gifted and Talented Children- Recommendation Unchanged, New Information

The request includes \$330,379 related to the expenditure gap model as well as an increase of \$1,058,115 for the third of five annual increases required by S.B. 23-287 (Public School Finance) for universal screening. Staff recommends only the \$1.1 million for universal screening, which counts toward the Amendment 23 increase.

S.B. 23-287 requires the General Assembly to “appropriate from the State Education Fund the amount necessary each budget year to provide by the 2027-28 budget year full universal screening of enrolled students no later than second grade to identify gifted children and a second screening of gifted children in conjunction with the creation of each child’s individual career and academic plan, and qualified personnel necessary to provide the screenings.” At the direction of a JBC request for information due on November 1st, 2022, the Department worked with stakeholders to develop a multiyear plan to fully fund universal screening for the gifted and talented program. The cost of the plan was calculated at \$1,058,115 per year for five years. This amount was used for the S.B. 23-287 Fiscal Note. *Because appropriations for this purpose are required by statute, the Committee would need to repeal that provision in order to stop providing the \$1.1 million increase.*

Expelled and At-risk Student Services Grant Program- Recommendation Unchanged, New Information

Staff does not recommend an increase for this line, which is a grant program and yields very small increases from the expenditure gap model. The Committee requested additional information about this program, noting that there is a statutorily required annual report.

The Executive Summary of the FY 2024-25 Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant Program Annual Evaluation Report provides the following highlights:

The Expelled and At-Risk Student Services (EARSS) grant program provides funding to improve outcomes related to student attendance and behavior and reduce disciplinary incidents. Grantees use funds to provide direct services to students, build consistent attendance and discipline practices, and develop alternatives to suspension and expulsion. The goal of the grant is to keep more students in school, improve students’ regular attendance, and support students’ progress toward graduation.

In 2024-2025, the Colorado General Assembly appropriated \$9,499,542 for the EARSS program. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) awarded funds to 45 grantees; 38 grantees provided direct services and seven grantees in a planning period for attendance or discipline/behavior programs that will be implemented across multiple schools.

Overall, students supported by the EARSS grant program experienced positive outcomes at the end of the school year, with 93.3 percent of the students having remained in school, received a diploma

(graduating) or completed school. In addition, many grantee sites demonstrated overall progress including:

- Almost half of grantee schools met their performance objectives.
- Nearly half made improvements greater than the state’s improvement in reducing the dropout rate.
- Just over one-third improved attendance greater than the state’s rate.

A total of 6,323 students received direct support with most of those students enrolled in secondary schools and a majority of students identified as Hispanic or Latino. This included:

- The majority of students served (88.4 percent) were in sixth through twelfth grade; however, all grades, K-12, were served across grantee sites.
- Just over half of the students served were Hispanic or Latino students (52.4 percent), which was greater than the overall state enrollment (36.5 percent).
- More than half of the students were served due to attendance concerns (59.4 percent of students served) with the rest served for expulsions or risk of expulsion which includes detrimental and defiant behavior.

In addition to direct student support, more than 4,100 parents and guardians received support services to assist in their children’s learning, positive engagement and academic development.

Evaluation results demonstrate that the statutorily defined goals of the EARSS program to prevent expulsions, suspensions and truancy were met. Grantees reported that, while being served by the EARSS program during the current school year, 91.8 percent of at-risk students did not receive an out-of-school suspension and 91.8 percent did not receive an in-school suspension after receiving EARSS services. Of the students at-risk for truancy or chronic absenteeism, 98.2 percent did not have a truancy petition filed in court.

Comprehensive Health Education - Recommendation Unchanged

Staff does not recommend an increase for this line, which is a grant program and yields very small increases from the expenditure gap model.

Small Attendance Center Aid - Recommendation Unchanged

Staff does not recommend an increase for this line, which is currently funded at 96 percent of its statutory maximum.

Table A: REVISED Staff R2/BA2 Recommendation for FY 2026-27

Line Item	Dept. Amend 23 Request	SB 23-287 Annualization	Total Dept. Request	Original Staff Rec.	Revised Staff Rec. [1]	Staff Rec. for Inflation Bill [2]
Special education programs for children with disabilities [3]	\$8,939,980	\$0	\$8,939,980	\$15,690,794	\$11,486,206	\$11,832,931
English language proficiency programs	\$609,967	\$0	\$609,967	\$650,995	\$650,995	\$650,995
Public school transportation	2,019,013	0	2,019,013	2,154,816	2,154,816	1,808,092
Career and technical education	955,588	0	955,588	0	0	0
Special education programs for gifted & talented children	330,379	1,058,115	1,388,494	1,058,115	1,058,115	1,058,115
Expelled and at-risk student services grant program	4,608	0	4,608	0	0	0
Small attendance center aid	566	0	566	0	0	0
Comprehensive health education	1,802	0	1,802	0	0	0
Subtotal: Everything but special education for children with disabilities	\$3,921,923	\$1,058,115	\$4,980,038	\$3,863,926	\$3,863,926	\$3,517,202
Total Increase, All Categoricals	\$12,861,903	\$1,058,115	\$13,920,018	\$19,554,720	\$15,350,132	\$15,350,132

[1] Revised staff recommendation exceeds the requested Amendment 23 increase by \$2.5 million. If the Committee does not wish to exceed the Amendment 23 increase, then increases for Special education programs for children with disabilities and gifted & talented children would be required as shown, and \$317,582 would be available for other categories.

[2] The Committee authorized a bill draft for a one-time change to the inflation calculation, which will find that CY 2025 inflation was 2.4% instead of 2.3%. If the provisions of that bill apply to inflation used to calculate the Amendment 23 increase, then the total required increase for categorical programs would increase by \$559,212 , for a total of \$13,421,115. The revised staff recommendation of \$15.35 million would still exceed the Amendment 23 increase in that scenario, but the increase for special education programs for children with disabilities would be required to increase by an additional \$346,724. Staff recommends a corresponding decrease in public school transportation to offset that amount. The Committee can adjust for the inflation change either preemptively in the Long Bill or through adjustments made in an appropriation clause in the inflation bill. In the latter case, staff still needs direction on how the adjustments should be allocated.

Table B: Categorical Program Revenues and Expenditures: FY 2023-24 [Unchanged]

Line Item	State Funds	Federal Funds	Total State and Federal Funds	Total District Expenditures	State/Federal Share of Expenditures	Local Share of Expenditures
Special Education - Children with Disabilities [1]	\$363,628,010	\$205,798,519	\$569,426,529	\$1,534,954,188	37%	\$965,527,659
English Language Proficiency Program [2]	83,586,158	10,957,262	94,543,419	166,989,267	57%	72,445,848
Public School Transportation	74,404,441	0	74,404,441	\$314,202,702	24%	239,798,261
Career and Technical Education	30,409,006	6,616,339	37,025,345	150,520,529	25%	113,495,184
Gifted and Talented	14,143,575	0	14,143,575	53,382,701	26%	39,239,126
Expelled and At-risk Student Services Grant Program	8,261,044	0	8,261,044	8,808,280	94%	547,236
Small Attendance Center Aid	1,599,991	0	1,599,991	1,667,001	96%	67,010
Comprehensive Health Education	666,041	0	666,041	880,101	76%	214,060
Total	\$576,698,266	\$223,372,119	\$800,070,386	\$2,231,404,770		\$1,431,334,384

[1] Includes \$22.8 million in funding provided for Universal Pre-K through CDEC.

[2] State funds include \$52.3 million distributed through the English Language Learner factor in the school finance formula.

Table C: Maximum Amount of State Funds Districts Were Statutorily Eligible to Receive [Unchanged]

Line Item	Description of What Determines Maximum State Funding	State Funds	Maximum State Funding	Percent of Max Covered by State	Estimated Increase to Fund Statutory Max
Special Education - Children with Disabilities [1] [2]	Number of students eligible for Tier A and Tier B funding, inflationary adjustments, max of \$6,000 per Tier B student	\$388,694,798	\$414,256,671	93.8%	\$25,561,873
English Language Proficiency Program [1] [2]	Number of eligible students and statewide average per pupil operating revenue	35,865,832	179,717,555	20.0%	143,851,723
Public School Transportation [3]	Total miles traveled and total transportation-related costs (excluding capital outlay expenses)	75,629,969	126,687,570	59.7%	51,057,602
Colorado Vocational Distributions Act [4]	Number of students participating in vocational education programs and cost of services per FTE in relation to each district's per pupil operating revenue	31,993,182	43,139,202	74.2%	11,146,020
Small Attendance Center Aid [4]	Number of eligible schools, those schools' enrollment, and eligible districts' per pupil funding	1,604,359	1,667,001	96.2%	62,642
Total					\$231,679,859

[1] State funds based on FY 2025-26 appropriation and estimated statutorily calculated maximum estimated for FY 2026-27.

[2] State funds only reflects categorical program funding and does not include amounts attributable to related factors received through the school finance formula.

[3] State funds and maximum state funding based on FY 2023-24 appropriations and statutorily calculated maximum.

[4] State funds and maximum state funding based on FY 2024-25 appropriations and statutorily calculated maximum.