

# FY26 Tennessee IDEA State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement Overview

## *2025-26 School Year*

### Purpose

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B funds are awarded to each state educational agency (SEA). IDEA, Part B funds are used to help provide special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities.

### Definition

IDEA, Part B State Set-Aside funds, 34 CFR § 300.704(b)(4), are reserved for the SEA to support state-level activities, including the following categories:

- Monitoring, enforcement, and complaint investigation
- Establish and implement the mediation process, including costs of mediators and support personnel
- Support and direct services
- Technical assistance
- Personnel preparation
- Professional development and training
- Paperwork-reduction activities
- Help local education agencies (LEAs) provide positive behavioral interventions and support, and mental health services for children with disabilities
- Support and improve the use of technology for children with disabilities
- Develop and implement transition programs
- Help LEAs meet personnel shortages
- Support capacity-building activities and improve the delivery of services by LEAs
- Alternative programming for children with disabilities who have been expelled from school
- Provide services in correctional facilities, state-operated or state-supported

- schools, and charter schools
- Support developing and providing accommodations or alternate assessments

The **Fiscal Year (FY) 26, School Year (SY) 2025-26**, Tennessee IDEA State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement Request is budgeted under the IDEA, Part B category:

*Alternative programming for children with disabilities who have been expelled from school, and services for children with disabilities in correctional facilities, children enrolled in state-operated or state-supported schools, and children with disabilities in charter schools.*

## State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement Request 2025-26

State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement Request amounts **vary annually** based on funding availability, LEA flow-through, discretionary carry-over, and other funding sources made available to LEAs.

Through surveys and conversations with LEAs, the Tennessee Department of Education (department) obtains input into how IDEA, Part B State Set-Aside funds are utilized. This information is considered when planning the budget.

The disbursement of IDEA State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement Requests will be reimbursed as funding is available. For the **2025-26** school year, the department will reimburse approved requests at a percentage until funds are exhausted. This reimbursement request is not considered IDEA High Cost. **If an individual student reimbursement request meets the federal definition of IDEA High Cost, the LEA should utilize that reimbursement application.** If requesting reimbursement, the LEA must choose either the IDEA State Special School Transportation Reimbursement Request or IDEA, Part B High-Cost Reimbursement Request for the special needs student, with assurances that only one application is being utilized for **SY 2025-26**.

IDEA State Special School Transportation Reimbursements for these general-purpose special education expenditures **will affect LEA maintenance of effort** and must be

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considered by the LEA before applying. The LEA will need to ensure they have enough special education expenditures for **SY 2025-26** without the application's expenditure amount.

The ePlan Data and Information application for IDEA State Special School Transportation Reimbursement Request will open for **SY 2025-26** submissions on **July 1, 2026**.

## Eligible Category Defined

The Tennessee State Special Schools are the West Tennessee School for the Deaf in Jackson, the Tennessee School for the Blind in Nashville, and the Tennessee School for the Deaf locations. Students attend State Special Schools by placement via Individual Education Program (IEP) team decisions. The LEA is responsible for the cost of transportation for the student to attend these schools. These costs may include bus transportation, transportation by parent, and associated costs of transportation by general purpose funds and not already paid for by an existing TDOE contract.

The percentage of reimbursement for IDEA State Special School Transportation will be determined based on the available money in the state set-aside discretionary pool for the respective school year and the total amount approved by all LEAs for this request. Approval will be determined after a review of the IEP(s) and the required supporting documentation for eligible transportation expenditures.

When applying for State Special Schools Transportation reimbursement, LEAs will utilize the application in ePlan and provide all documentation to support the reimbursement request.

*Allowable expenditures for determining reimbursement for State Special Schools Transportation must be found in the IEP for the school year date range:*

- Special transportation to/from a Tennessee State Special School for special education services provided during the year and/or IEP team determined Extended School Year (ESY) services.
- ESY services and ESY transportation must be an IEP team decision and included in the IEP.

Extended School Year (ESY) is a special education service provided to students.

Considerations for determining a student's need for ESY include, but are not limited to:

- Regression of skills during school breaks and the time needed to recoup skills
- Regression of behavior to level that could require a change of least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Insufficient data to determine if the student does regress, or if regression requires significant time to recoup
- A break from routine results in harmful behavior to self or others
- Student's physical health requires continuous intervention and services

*Non-allowable expenditures for the FY26 State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement Request:*

- Expenditures for expenses other than those related to transportation costs for special education services provided during the year and/or IEP team determined ESY services.
- Summer Learning Camp is not considered ESY.

Summer Learning Camp is considered a general education program and not a special education service. LEAs that extend invitations to students with disabilities to participate in Summer Learning Camp must ensure that these students have access to the program. LEAs are obligated to take appropriate measures to provide students with disabilities with an equal opportunity to participate in summer learning. Therefore, if a student requires special transportation to access the summer program, the LEA is obligated to provide it.

It is important to note that Summer Learning Camp is not a special education service, and it should not be documented in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), nor are the costs associated with summer learning reimbursable with IDEA funds.

ePlan *State Special Schools Reimbursement Request Application* Page:

For each student, provide:

- State Student ID (7-digit number)
- Student date of birth
- State Special School
- Documentation of total general-purpose expenditures incurred by the LEA
  - Service types

- Service (transportation) type
- Service frequency
- Service date range
- Service expenditure
- ePlan auto-calculates the total student expenditure for each student.

ePlan ***Related Documents*** Page:

For each student, submit the following:

- One (1) PDF document for IEP Documentation to include all of the following, in this order:
  - IEP cover page - State Student ID included
  - IEP services pages - covering the entire school year; State Student ID included on each page; if there are multiple IEPs, include them in chronological order
- One (1) document utilizing the IDEA Reimbursement Request Supporting Document Template provided:
  - One template per student must be provided with the summary of the general purpose direct expenditures found in the financial supporting documentation.
- One (1) PDF document for Supporting Documentation to include:
  - Financial supporting documentation with State Student ID included on each page.
- Documents should be saved as
  - ***[Student's Initials][State Student ID number][School Year][IEP]***  
*Example: "BP 1234567 2025-2026 IEP"*
  - ***[Student's Initials][State Student ID number][School Year][SUMMARY]***  
*Example: "BP 1234567 2025-2026 SUMMARY"*
  - ***[Student's Initials][State Student ID number][School Year][SUPDOC]***  
*Example: "BP 1234567 2025-2026 SUPDOC"*

# State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement Submission and Disbursement Process

On **July 1, 2026**, the IDEA State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement instrument will open in ePlan. LEAs must submit the IDEA State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement application with supporting documentation before it closes on **Aug. 17, 2026**. The school year **2025-26** IDEA State Special Schools Transportation Reimbursement application can be accessed through the Tennessee Department of Education's online grants management platform, [ePlan.tn.gov](http://ePlan.tn.gov). When the instrument closes, a cross-collaborative department IDEA team will review all submitted documentation for approval. The department will determine award amounts and provide notification of award to the superintendent and IDEA director. Notification of award disbursement will be made as soon as possible, but no later than **Jan. 28 of each fiscal year**. If a completion extension is required due to ESY services, please notify [Jerri.Nave@tn.gov](mailto:Jerri.Nave@tn.gov).

For additional support, a technical guide, training opportunities, and office hours will be available. For additional information, please contact [Jerri.Nave@tn.gov](mailto:Jerri.Nave@tn.gov).

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