



ALIGNMENT OF THE AREA EDUCATION AGENCIES (AEA):

What You Need to Know as a Parent of a Student with a Disability

All students with disabilities in Iowa deserve a world-class education experience that meets their needs, inspires them, and prepares them for bright futures.

What are the goals?

- **Improve the quality** of services supporting students with disabilities.
- **Target resources** to providing services to students with disabilities.
- Ensure decisions are made by **those closest to students** with disabilities.

Why is this needed?

- According to the Nation's Report Card, all Iowa students rank 15th in the nation in 4th grade reading, while **Iowa students with disabilities rank 40th**.
- Across NAEP testing cycles in 2017, 2019, and 2022, **Iowa's students with disabilities ranked 30th** or worse on 10 of 12 assessments, and the 2023 Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP) **results show a 44% proficiency gap for students with disabilities** as compared to overall student results.
- Iowa's students with disabilities deserve the very best and they must receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). In partnership with AEAs, districts, schools, educators, and parents, we will **improve the quality and effectiveness of services and supports** provided to students with disabilities.

What will happen?

- **Not a single dollar** will be taken away from special education funding. Local school boards and districts will have **control over 100% of their special education funding** for the first time in over 50 years.

- Local school boards and districts will be able to:
 - 1. Opt-out:** Choose to receive all special education funding intended for your child to directly serve your child,
 - 2. Hybrid:** Contract with an AEA and send a portion of the special education funding intended for your child to an AEA to help support your child, or
 - 3. Opt-in:** Choose to fully participate in the AEA system and send all special education funds intended for your child currently received by the AEA to the AEA to serve your child in partnership with an AEA.

How will it impact my child?

- All students with disabilities will receive a **FAPE and the special education services and supports articulated in their Individualized Education Program (IEP)**.
- Special education services and supports will be steeped in **evidence-based best practices**, including academic, social, and physical inclusion to the greatest extent possible.
- **All decisions regarding your child will be made by the IEP team**, including you and those individuals with knowledge of your children and expertise in serving them.
- Now, all funds and resources intended to serve students with disabilities will be directed to **improving education opportunities** and meeting their needs.