

Exceptional Student Services Staff to Student Ratios for Specialized Programs

[PUSD SPED Program Descriptors 2025/2026](#)

The Governing Board recognizes its responsibility to provide appropriate staffing to ensure the effective implementation of each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The District shall maintain special education teacher–student and staff–student ratios that support student achievement, compliance with federal and state law, and efficient delivery of services.

Student assignments shall be made within available resources and in accordance with the guidelines set forth below. These ratios are program targets and may be adjusted based on individual student needs, IEP team decisions, program requirements, maturity of students, and available funding. Additional staffing support shall be considered based upon IEP determinations and documented student needs.

Program Staffing Guidelines

Resource

Staffing: One (1) teacher

Typical Caseload: Ideal maximum of thirty-five (35) students, scheduled in smaller groups

When a resource caseload reaches twenty-five (25) students, the addition of IEP writing support or a paraprofessional assistance will be discussed. Additional paraprofessional support will be considered for every additional 20 students beyond 25.

Extended Resource

Staffing: One (1) teacher

Typical Caseload: Ideal maximum of eighteen (18) students, scheduled in smaller groups

Support: One (1) classroom paraprofessional

Paperwork caseloads shall be shared with Resource teachers.

STEPS Program

Staffing: One (1) teacher

Typical Caseload: Ideal maximum of fifteen (15) students

Support: Two (2) classroom paraprofessionals

RISE Program

Staffing: One (1) teacher

Typical Caseload: Ideal maximum of eight (8) students
Support: Two (2) classroom paraprofessionals

PATHWAYS – Emotional Disability Program (EDP) – Private School Placement

Staffing: One (1) teacher

Typical Caseload: Ideal maximum of twelve (12) students

Support: Two (2) classroom paraprofessionals

One (1) staff member shall be available for de-escalation. The designated de-escalator may be one of the assigned paraprofessionals or another designated staff member at the school site.

In accordance with Arizona requirements, once enrollment reaches thirteen (13) students, an additional paraprofessional or teacher shall be added based upon student needs. These ratios are program targets and may be adjusted based on individual student needs.

Exceeding Staffing Guidelines

If student enrollment exceeds established program targets, the Superintendent or designee may implement one or more of the following:

1. Addition of a paraprofessional
2. Increase in paraprofessional hours
3. Addition of certified staff
4. Provision of additional IEP writing support or caseload balancing with colleagues
5. Other adjustments deemed appropriate by the Superintendent

The Administrator for Special Education shall make student assignments consistent with this regulation and within available resources.