Foundations of Special Education

Session One

August 27, 2026

MCSBA

MARIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Supporting Learning for ALL Students

MARIN COUNTY SELPA

Series Overview

- **Session One | Foundation**
  - Focus: Core concepts and building understanding
    - Today - August 27, 2026
- **Session Two | Implementation**
  - Focus: Application and how systems translate
    - Thursday, January 28, 2027
- **Session Three | Finance & Systems Impact**
  - Focus: Funding and governance
    - Thursday, April 29, 2027



Connector: Real or Fake



Session One Outcomes

- Define: What is Special Education
- Overview of Special Education System
    - Federal
    - State
    - Local
- Understanding The Role of a Trustee
- FAQs



WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?



WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

- Specially Designed Instruction
- No Cost to Families
- Access to General Education
- Service - not a place





SPECIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

PROVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

From DC to the CDE to Marin



WASHINGTON, D.C.



SACRAMENTO, CA



MARIN COUNTY

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

IDEIA



SPECIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM



13 Disability Categories



Federal Law

IDEIA



Students Ages 3-22

Guarantees Rights & Protections



IDEIA

Ensures that:

- Children with disabilities have access to special education services
- The rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected;
- Effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities;

and...

Prepares:

- Students for further education, employment, and independent living.

WHY SPECIAL EDUCATION EXISTS



Legal Entitlement

Equity for Students

Access and Outcomes

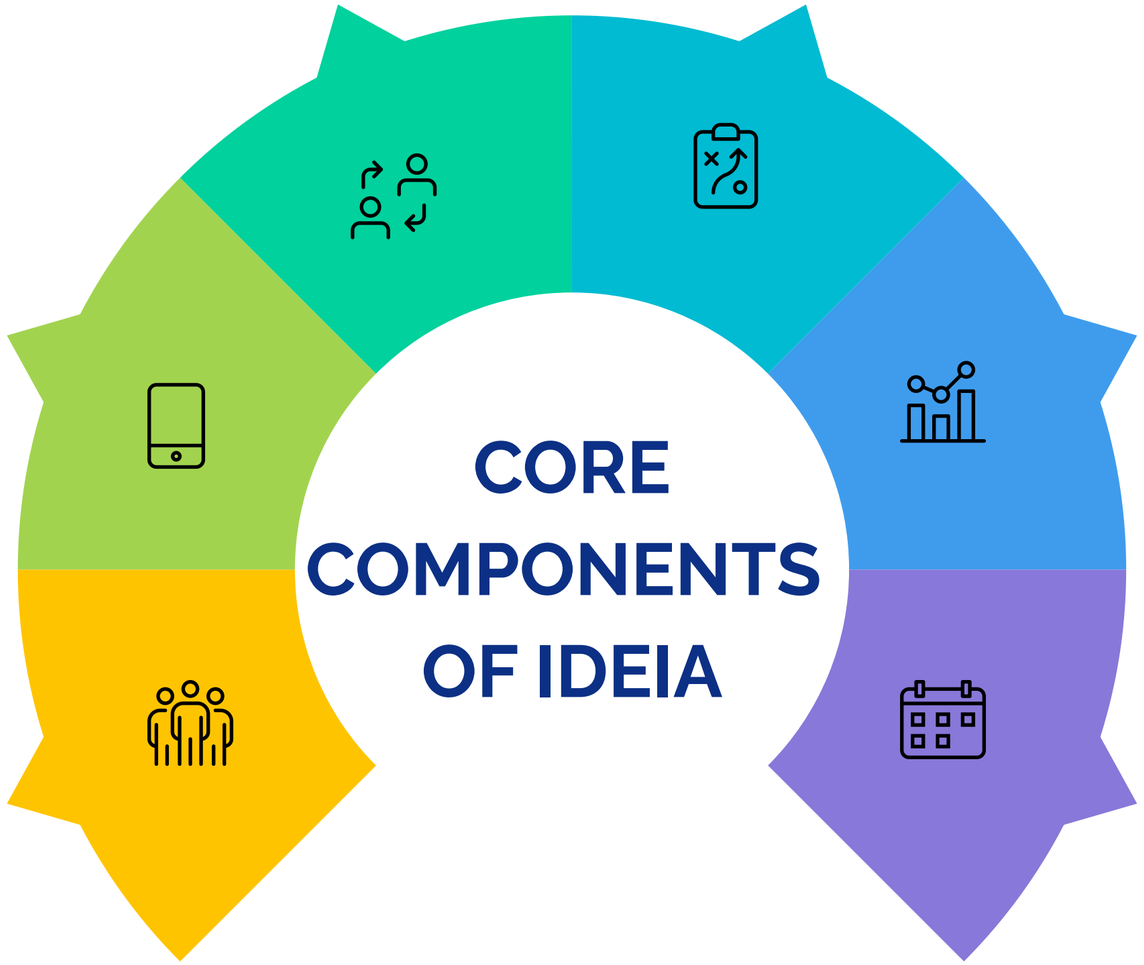
WHY SPECIAL EDUCATION EXISTS

WHAT DO SCHOOL DISTRICTS NEED TO CONSIDER UNDER IDEIA?



Individualized Education Program - IEP

Least Restrictive Environment - LRE



CORE COMPONENTS OF IDEIA

Evaluation

Free and Appropriate Public Education - FAPE

Parent/Guardian Participation

Procedural Safeguards

Parent/Guardian Participation



Evaluation

- Identify Needs
- Multiple Measures
- Team-Based Decision



Individualized Education Program

IEP



Individualized Education Program

IEP



Legal Document



Defines Services



Drives all Decisions

Least Restrictive Environment

LRE



Least Restrictive Environment

LRE

- Educate with Peers
- General Education First
- Removal Only if Needed

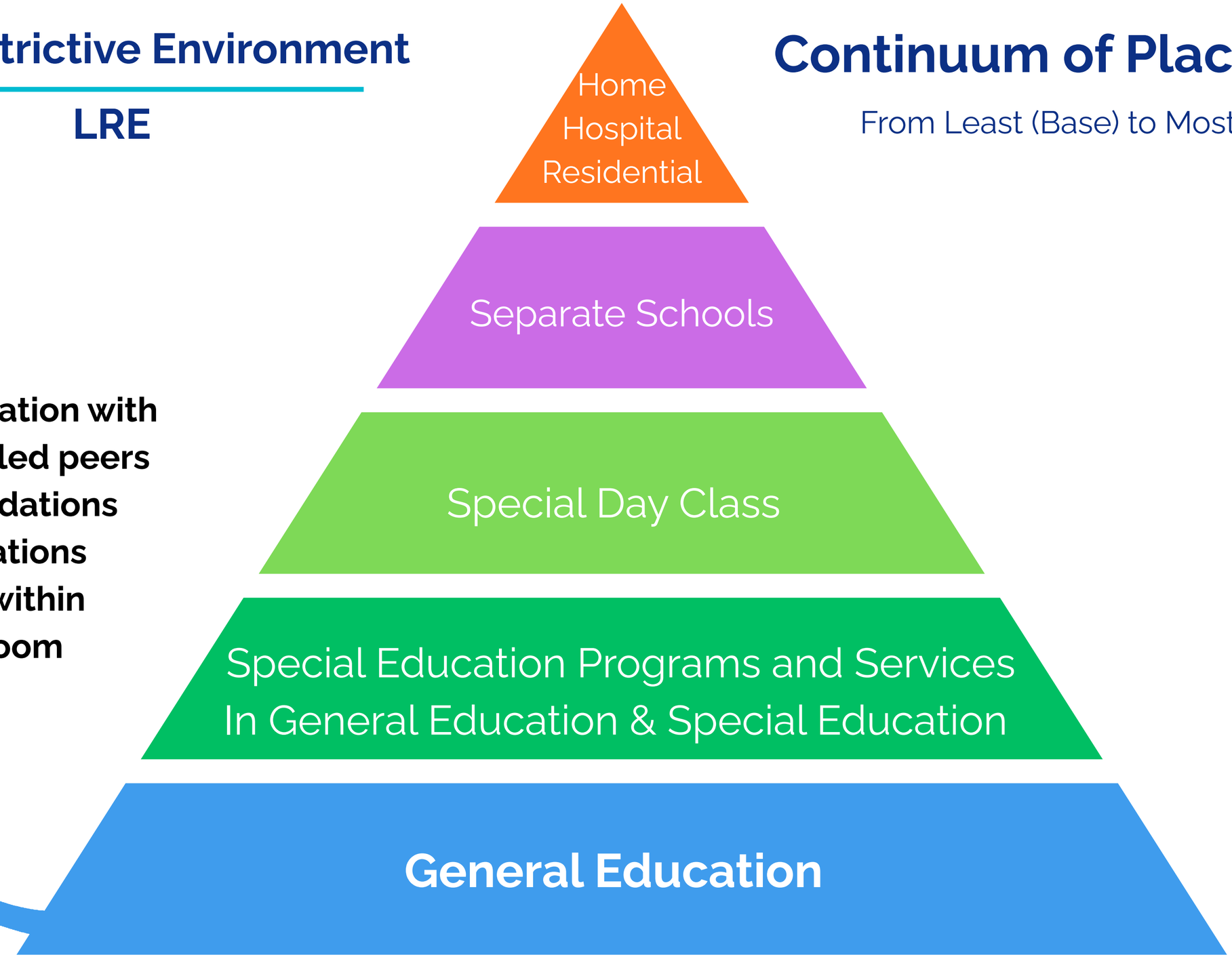


Least Restrictive Environment

LRE

Continuum of Placements

From Least (Base) to Most Restrictive



- **Full integration with non-disabled peers**
- **Accommodations & modifications provided within the classroom**

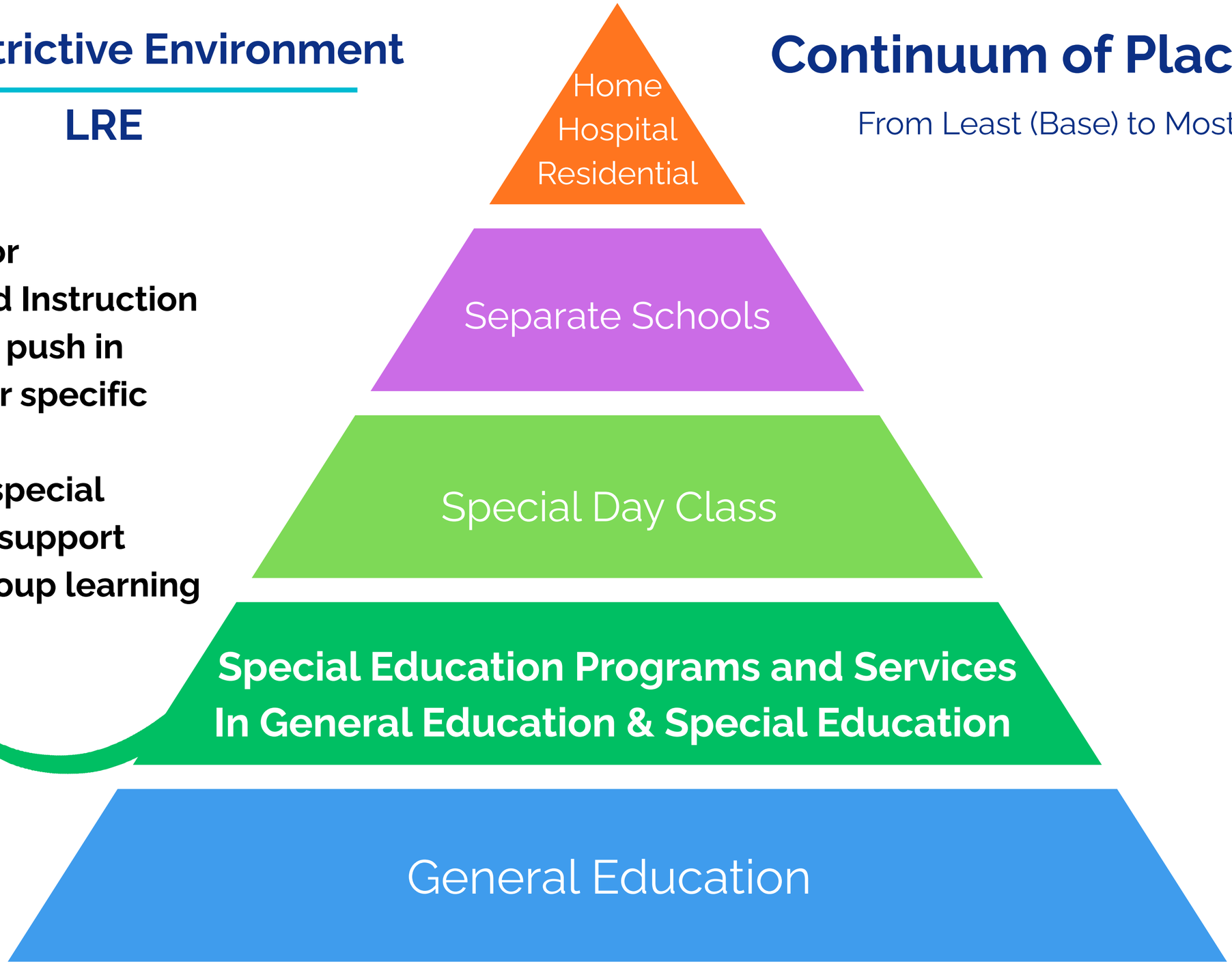
Least Restrictive Environment

LRE

- **Resource or Specialized Instruction**
- **Pull-out or push in services for specific subjects**
- **Part-time special education support**
- **Smaller group learning**

Continuum of Placements

From Least (Base) to Most Restrictive



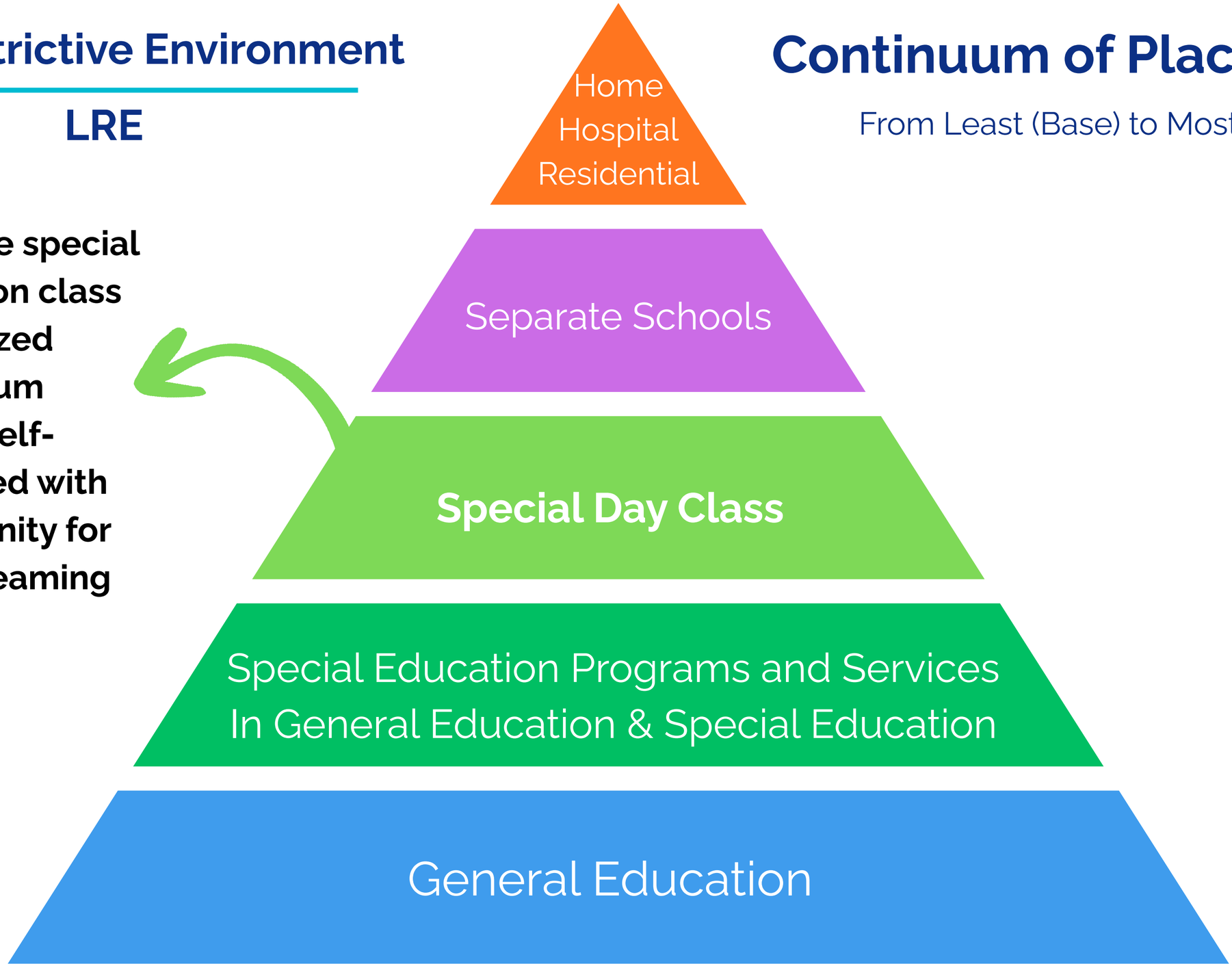
Least Restrictive Environment

LRE

- **Full-time special education class**
- **Specialized curriculum**
- **Mostly self-contained with opportunity for mainstreaming**

Continuum of Placements

From Least (Base) to Most Restrictive



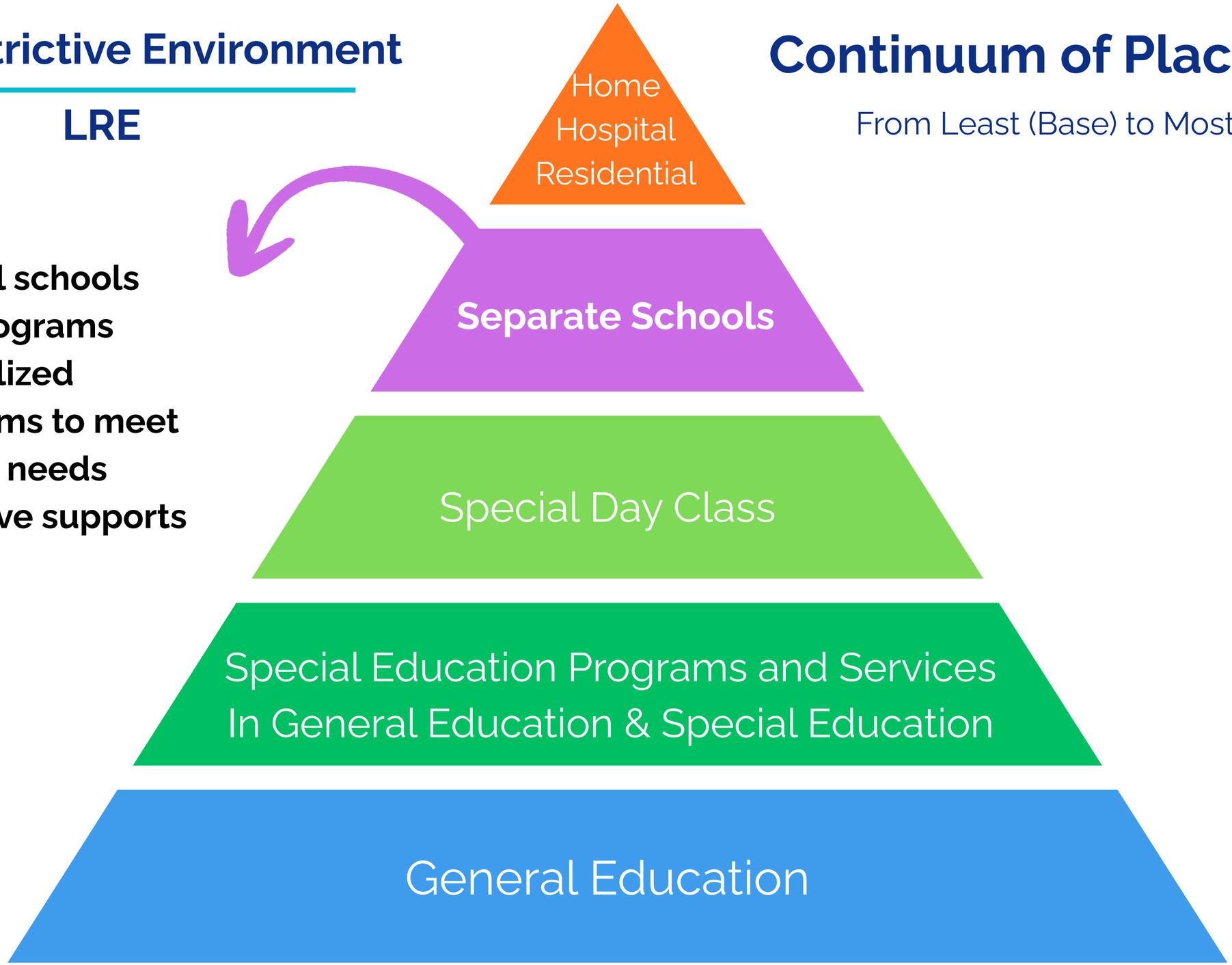
Least Restrictive Environment

LRE

Continuum of Placements

From Least (Base) to Most Restrictive

- **Special schools and programs**
- **Specialized programs to meet unique needs**
- **Intensive supports**



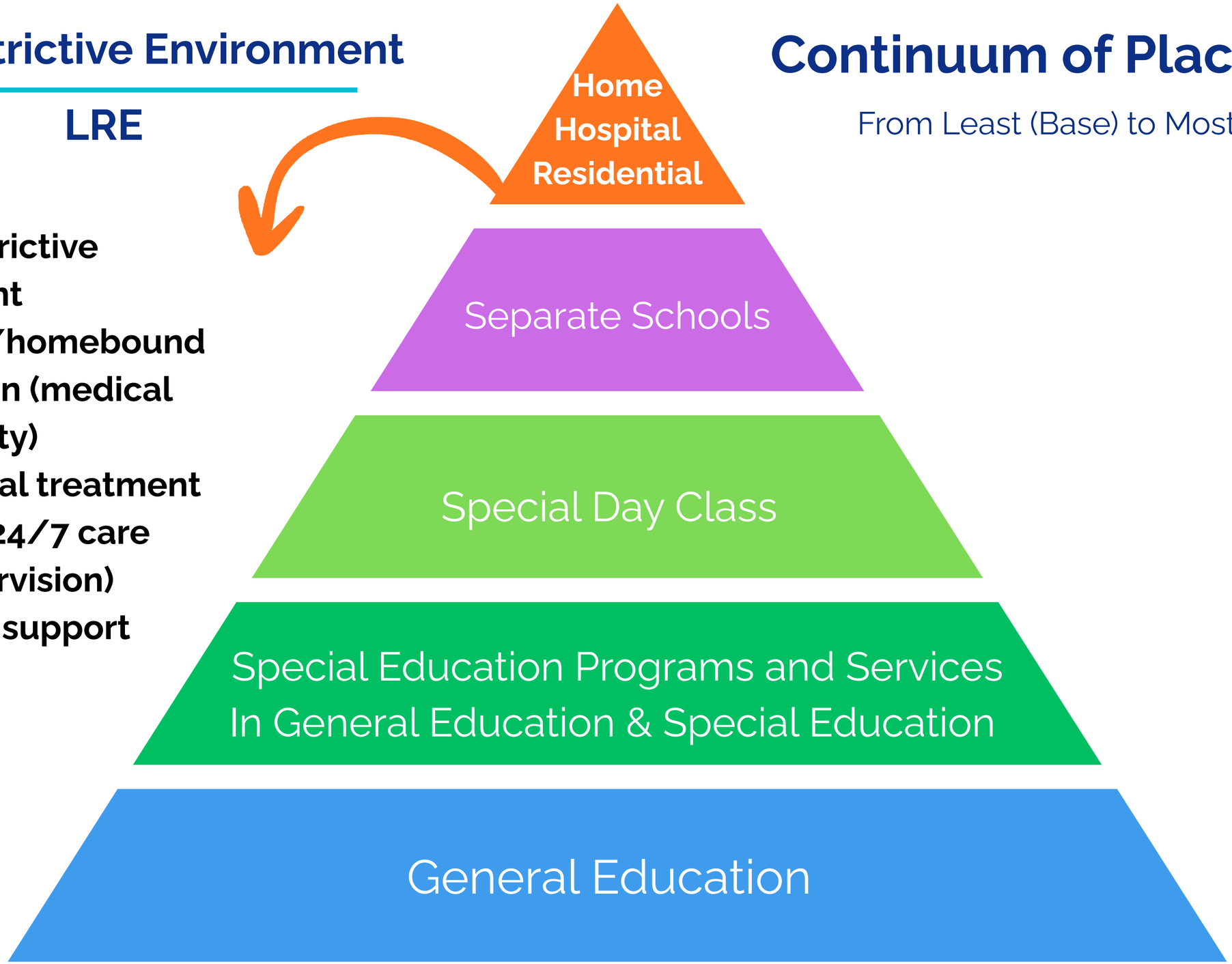
Least Restrictive Environment

LRE

- **Most restrictive placement**
- **Hospital/homebound instruction (medical necessicity)**
- **Residential treatment centers (24/7 care and supervision)**
- **Intensive support**

Continuum of Placements

From Least (Base) to Most Restrictive



Free and Appropriate Public Education

FAPE









WHAT IT IS ....

WHAT IT IS

Free and Appropriate Public Education

FAPE

- At no cost to parents or guardians
- Appropriately Designed to Meet Individual Needs
- Public Schools
- Education to Students Ages 3 - 22



Free and Appropriate Public Education

FAPE

REQUIREMENTS

- IEP with Goals
- Progress Monitoring
- Services to meet needs



Free and Appropriate Public Education

FAPE



WHAT IT IS NOT ...

WHAT IT IS NOT

- Maximizing Potential
- Identical Services
- Optional

Free and Appropriate Public Education

FAPE



Procedural Safeguards

- Notice
- Consent
- Dispute Rights
- Record Access



Turn & Talk

Share the continuum of programs in your district with the person sitting next to you.

California Department of Education

CDE



CDE Role



State Oversight



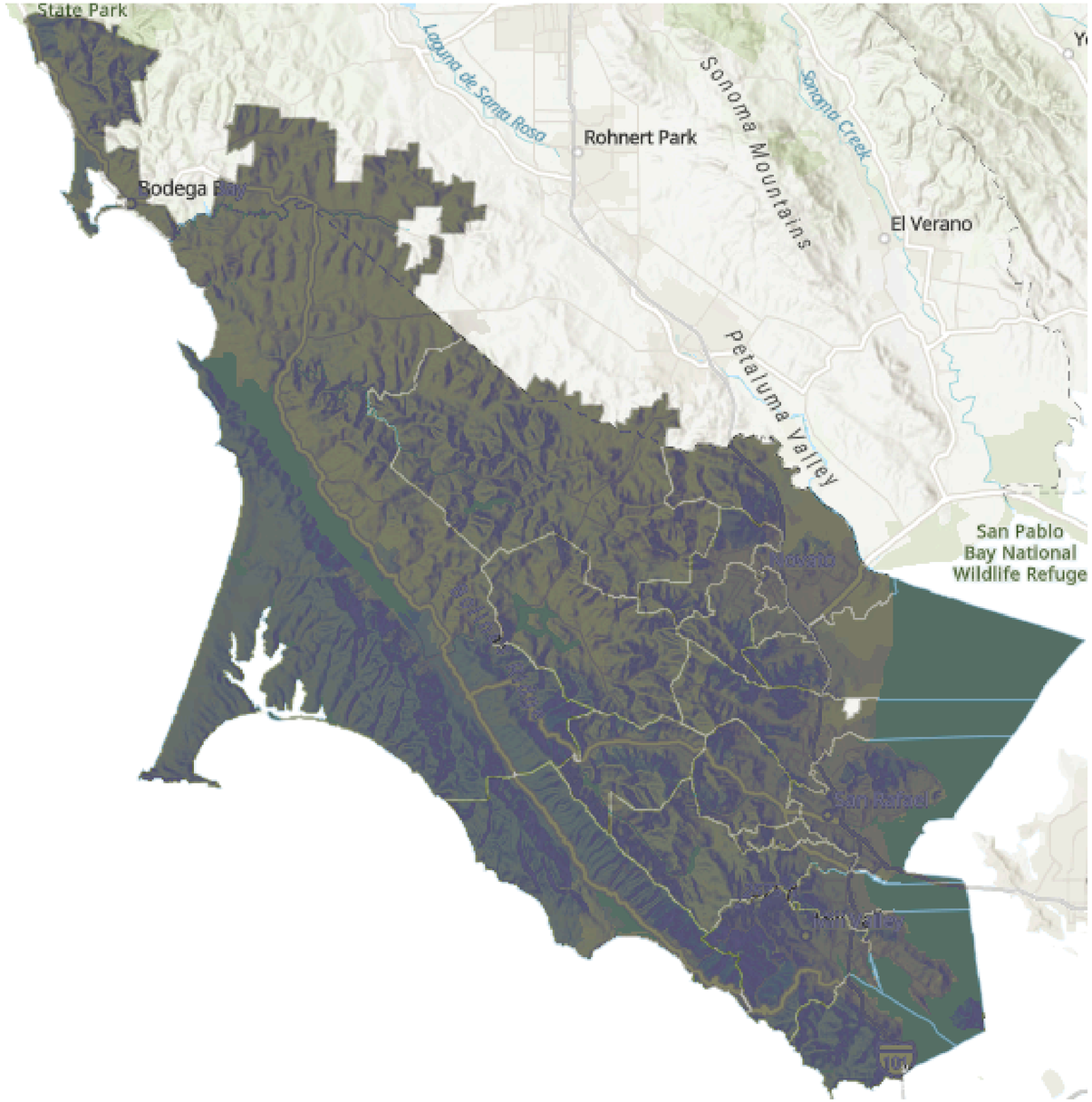
Compliance Monitoring



Complaint Handling

Special Education Local Plan Area

SELPA



MARIN COUNTY SELPA

Districts/LEAs

Bolinas-Stinson Union School District

KENTFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT
Academic Excellence in a Caring Community

LAGUNITAS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

LAGUNA JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT
LAGUNA LIONS

LARKSPUR-CORTE MADERA SCHOOL DISTRICT

MILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

MILLER CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Nicasio School
Since 1862

NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Reed Union School District
Nurture • Teach • Inspire

ROSS SCHOOL
HEART-MIND-ACTION

HIDDEN VALLEY • MANOR • WADE THOMAS • WHITE HILL • BROOKSIDE
RVSD
ROSS VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COLLABORATE · LEARN · INSPIRE · MENTOR · BELIEVE

SR SAN RAFAEL CITY SCHOOLS

Sausalito Marin City School District

SHORELINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
TOMALES, CALIFORNIA

TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

MARIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Supporting Learning for ALL Students

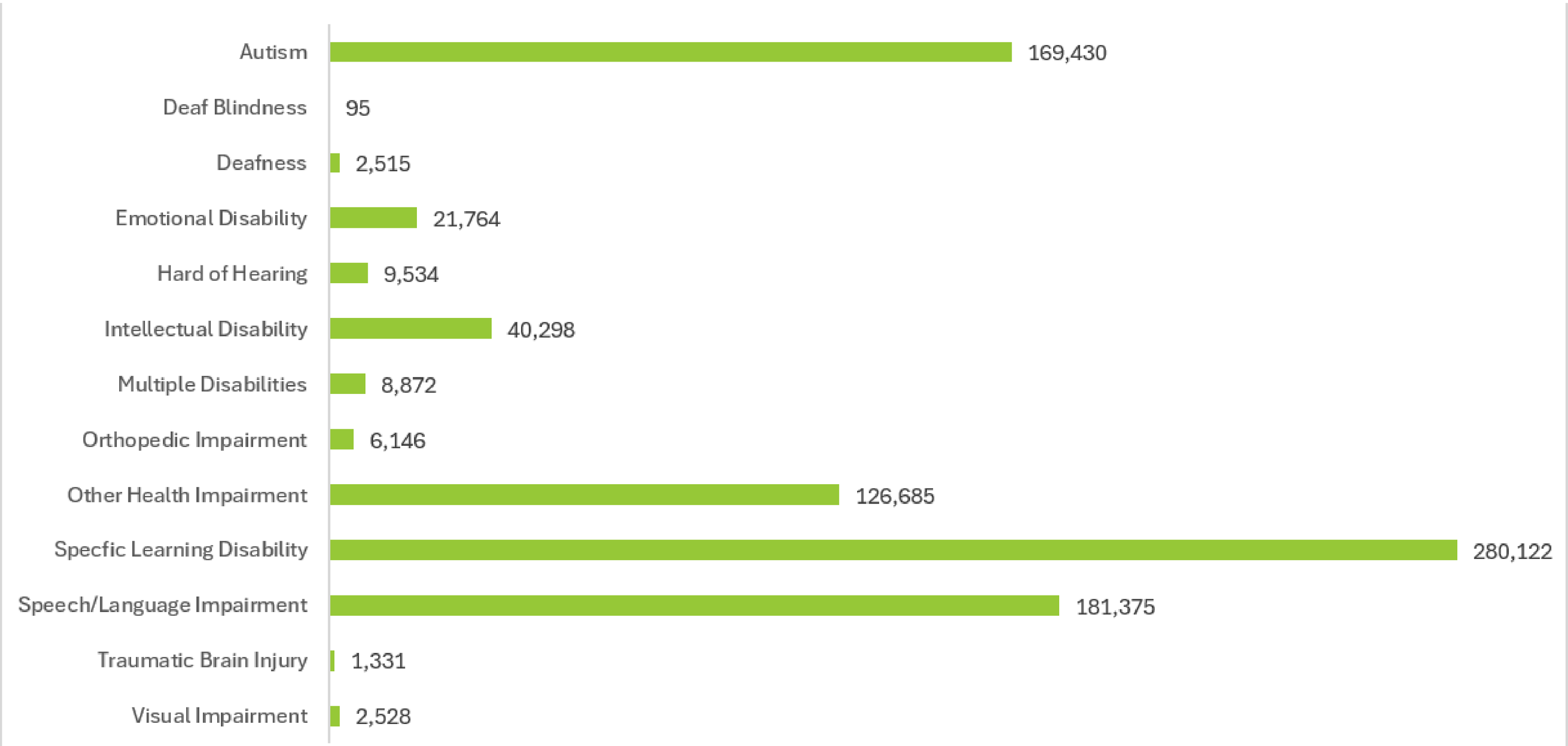
By the Numbers



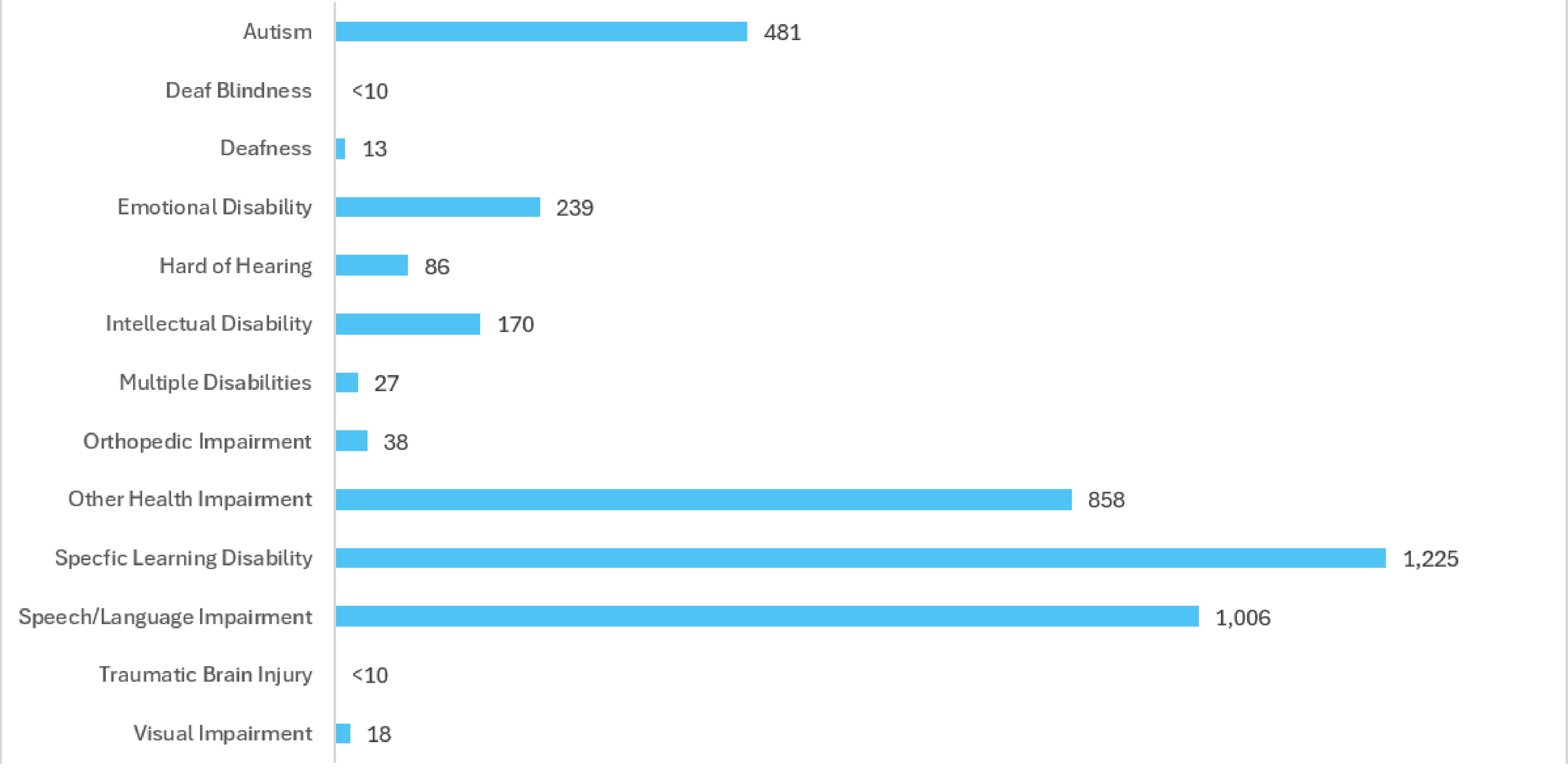
13 Conditions for Eligibility

1. AUTISM
2. DEAF BLINDNESS
3. DEAFNESS
4. EMOTIONAL DISABILITY
5. HEARING IMPAIRMENT
6. INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY
7. MULTIPLE DISABILITIES
8. ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT
9. OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT
10. SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY
11. SPEECH / LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT
12. TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY
13. VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

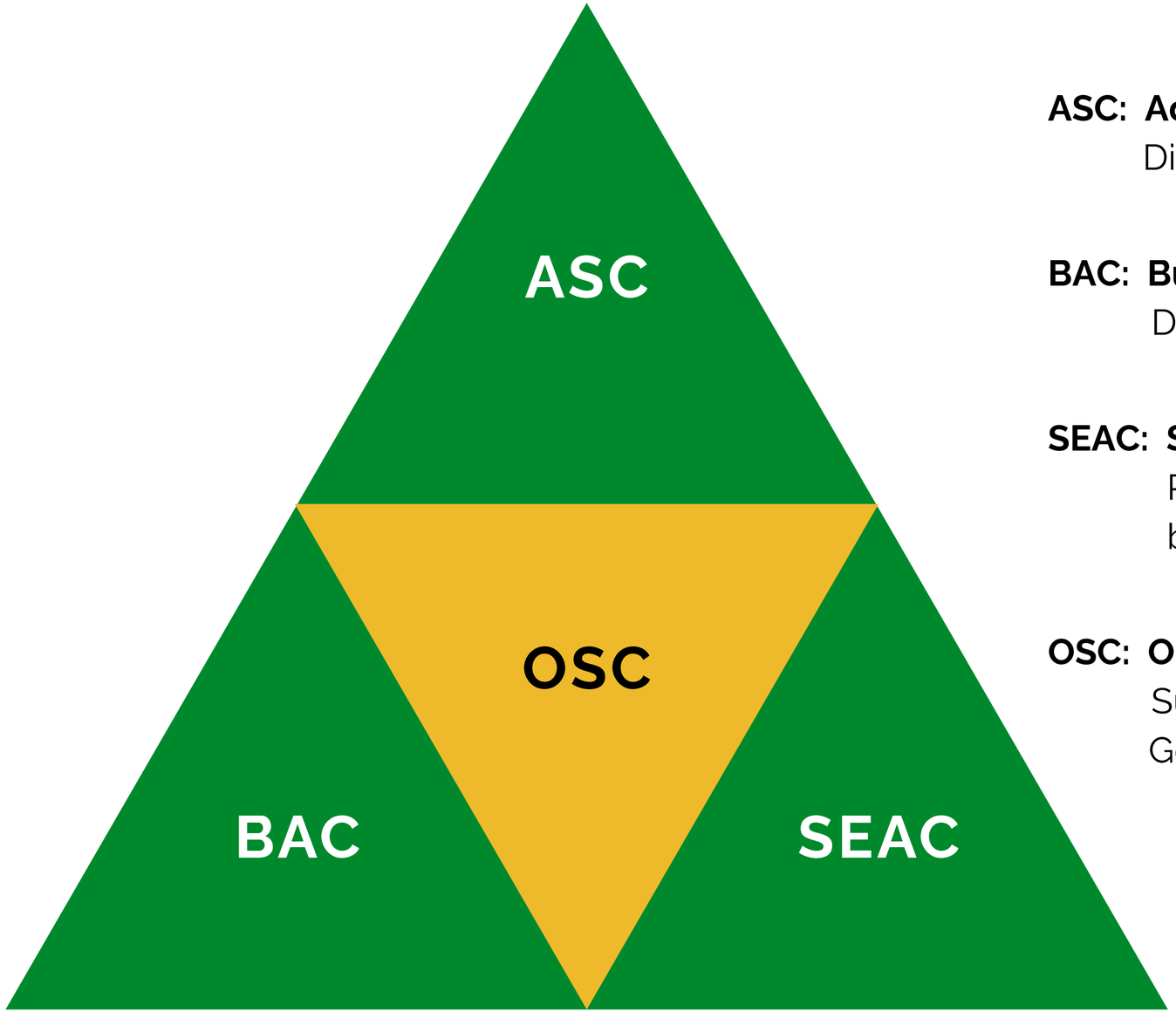
Students Identified as Eligible for Special Education in California 2025-2026



Students Identified as Eligible for Special Education in Marin County 2025-2026



Marin County SELPA Governance Structure



ASC: Advisory Steering Committee
Directors of Special Education from the member LEAs

BAC: Business Advisory Committee
District Business Officials from the member LEAs

SEAC: Special Education Advisory Steering Committee
Parents, Educator and Community Members Nominated by LEAs to support the implementation of the Local Plan

OSC: Operational Steering Committee
Superintendents from the member LEAs, elected annually. Governing Board of the SELPA

SELPA LOCAL PLAN



SELPA



Technical Assistance



Training &
Professional Development



Family Support



Dispute Resolution



QUESTIONS



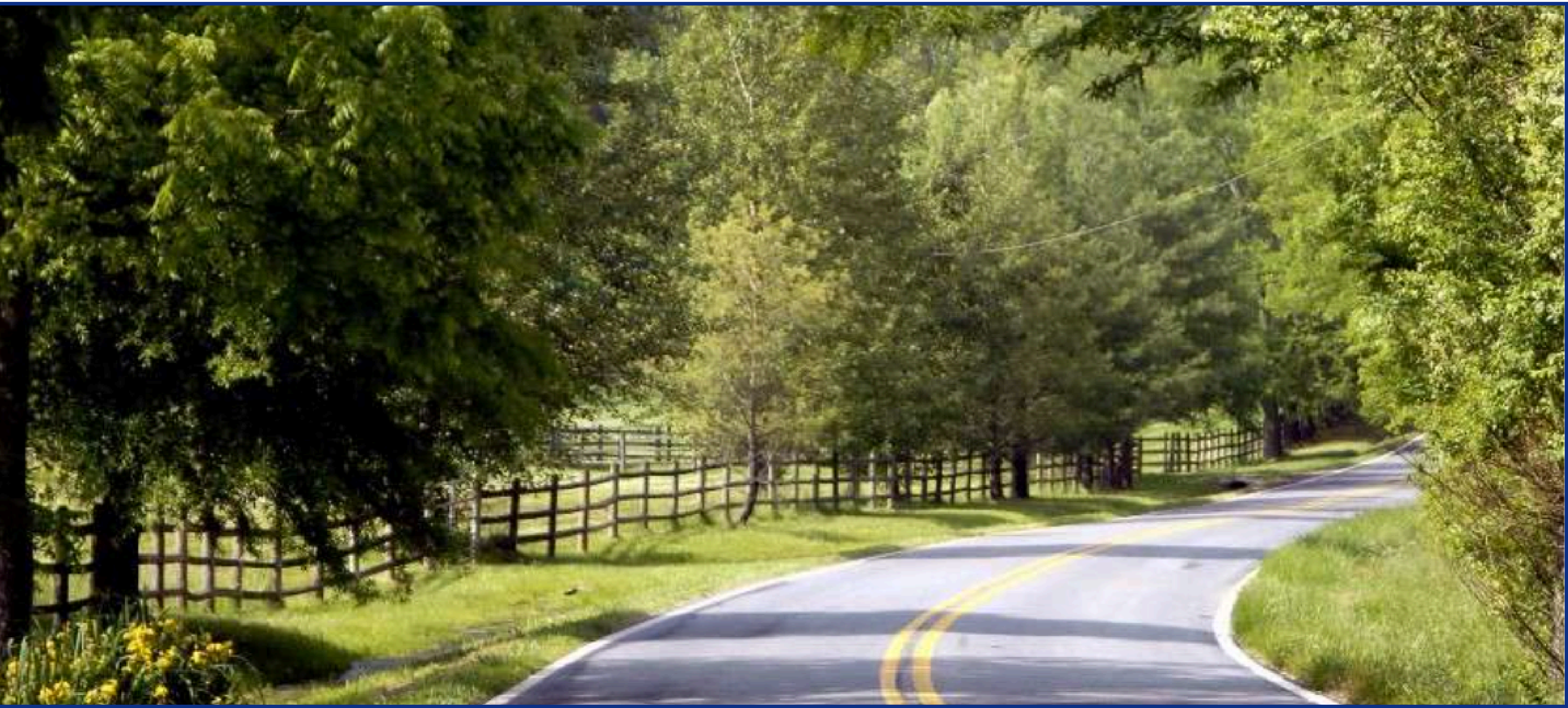
The Role of a District Trustee

The Role of a District Trustee

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

1. **Oversight of Resources/Budget**
2. **Ensure Compliance**
3. **Understand Risk**
4. **Support Equity**

The Role of a Trustee does NOT include:



The Role of a Trustee does NOT include:

- **Making decisions about individual student's IEP**
  - *the IEP team determines outcome goals, services, etc.*
- **Determining whether district complied with IDEIA**
  - *California has a department for the complaint process*
- **Directing special education staff & IEP team**
  - *operational responsibility belongs to superintendent or designee*
- **Acting as case manager or advocate in dispute**
  - *SELPA handles the dispute resolution process*
- **Making individual commitments on behalf of district**
  - *the board must act collectively on behalf of the district at all times*

Share with your table & write on a post-it:

- **new information you learned today**
- **topics you want to learn more about**

