



Arizona Department of Education

Exceptional Student Services

Memorandum

To: Public Education Agency Administrators

From: Exceptional Student Services (ESS)

Date: July 8, 2021

Re: Changes Relating to the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind for Fiscal Year 2022

Due to the passage of [HB 2863](#) during the Spring 2021 legislative session, the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) is now considered an local education agency (LEA) for the provision of free and appropriate public education (FAPE), for the submission of data and other required reports, and for the provision of courses of study that lead to graduation with a regular high school diploma for all students enrolled in their campus locations. This status change began July 1, 2021 (fiscal year 2022). This memorandum addresses specific areas of responsibility that will impact both ASDB and public education agencies (PEAs) that place eligible students at ASDB through the IEP and voucher process.

Special Education Services

HB 2863 outlines a role for ASDB as an LEA that serves as a district of responsibility (DOR) for the students enrolled at its Phoenix and Tucson campuses along with any locations ASDB leases to operate educational space.¹ This means that ASDB is responsible for the provision of general and special education services, including the provision of FAPE (i.e., procedural safeguards, complaint procedures, implementation of **all** aspects of individualized education programs (IEPs) and all components of assessments, reevaluations, etc.).

¹ ASDB operates several locations as part of its leased operational space, including specific building space at the Foundation for Blind Children (private school locations) and Simonton Elementary (public school) in the J.O. Combs Unified School District.



Kathy Hoffman, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Vouchers

ASDB currently receives funding through an institutional voucher for students attending its campus locations, as well as through students attending public schools but receiving services through a regional cooperative. This will continue into fiscal year (FY) 2022 with the passage of HB 2863. Note that ASDB vouchered students are still excluded from generating normal state aid through Average Daily Membership (ADM), even with the passage of HB 2863.

Enrollment in ASDB Phoenix and Tucson campuses, in addition to any locations that ASDB leases to operate educational space, occurs following an IEP team placement, as required by A.R.S. §15-1342. The voucher is used to hand off the enrollment of the student into ASDB and, once completed, will make ASDB the DOR for all education of the enrolled student. Continuous enrollment still requires current IEP documentation for campus-based students, which is now expected to be provided by ASDB, acting as the LEA. The home school district (HSD) will still be required to approve voucher applications for the funding to continue. The uploading of MET/Evaluation and IEP documentation into the Voucher Application will follow similarly, with the HSD uploading documentation for initially placed students and ASDB uploading documentation for continuously placed students. Note that ASDB is not the DOR in cases in which a voucher is issued and the student is not attending one of the campuses or leased locations mentioned previously.

ASDB Voucher vs. Approved Private Day Placement

In cases where ASDB shares educational environment space with an ADE-approved private day school, the PEA must determine through the IEP process whether the child will be placed into ASDB or into the private day school. This determination will govern whether an institutional voucher must be pursued or if it falls under the requirements of an approved private day school placement.

- Students placed by the IEP team into an ADE-approved private day school without involvement from the institution (ASDB) remain the responsibility of the PEA.
- Students placed through the IEP team into the institution (ASDB), with ASDB's involvement in that process, who are then provided services in the common space that ASDB shares with the private day school, will be considered the responsibility of ASDB.

Data Reporting

Beginning in FY 2022, ASDB will be responsible for reporting all data for students attending its campus or leased space programs. PEAs will no longer report these students. However, PEAs **will** continue to report students attending their own public schools and receiving services from ASDB through a regional cooperative. Any student on an institutional voucher must be reported with a **tuition payer code of 7** to ensure that payments continue accurately. Note that ASDB will report with this tuition payer code for students attending its campus or leased space programs, and PEAs will continue to report students receiving services from ASDB through a regional cooperative with this tuition payer code.

In locations where ASDB leases space within a public or private school, ASDB has a version of the site that will be used for student reporting. This entity is separate from the public or private school entity to ensure accurate reporting between ASDB and the public or private schools.

The ASDB student reporting document located on the [ESS Data Management website](#) will be updated by July 31, 2021, to clarify reporting responsibility in greater detail. Another notification will be disseminated and made available online when this document is completed.

Special Considerations for Enrollment

The HSD that completed the voucher will remain a resource for the IEP team to support transition into a less restrictive environment for students enrolled at ASDB's Phoenix and Tucson campuses, along with any locations ASDB leases to operate educational space.

If ASDB is no longer considered the appropriate placement for a student with a disability, then the institutional voucher is no longer valid, and the student would be reenrolled normally back into the original HSD. The HSD would then be required to determine an appropriate placement through the IEP team process to provide FAPE. This accounts for scenarios such as placements into residential treatment centers and ADE-approved private day schools.

If a parent or legal guardian of a child directly or independently refers a child to ASDB, ASDB will notify the chief administrative official of the school district or accommodation school within the boundaries in which the child resides of the referral to the institution. HB 2863 does not change the referral or voucher process for students being placed into ASDB as the LRE through an IEP team decision.

Guidance and Support

- For questions on data reporting, please contact ESS Data Management at ESSDataMgmt@azed.gov.
- For any items pertaining to the institutional voucher, please contact the ESS Vouchers Unit at VouchersUnit@azed.gov.
- For questions on the special education placement process, please contact your PEA's specialist within ESS [Program Support & Monitoring](#).