



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 2025

**TO:** Intermediate School District Directors of Special Education

**FROM:** Nichole Northern, Financial Manager, Program Finance  
Office of Special Education

**SUBJECT:** Validation of Section 53a Pupils for the February 2025  
Pupil Count Date, 2024-25 school year

Section 53a of the State School Aid Act provides 100 percent reimbursement of the added cost for eligible pupils who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) are to coordinate the process of determining which pupils within their ISD and constituent local education agencies or districts are eligible.

Eligible pupils are defined as follows in §388.1653a of the State Aid Act:

1. Pupils assigned to a district or an intermediate district through the courts or a state agency, if the pupil was a resident of another intermediate district at the time the pupil came under the jurisdiction of the court or a state agency.
2. Pupils who are residents of institutions operated by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
3. Pupils who are former residents of DHHS institutions for the developmentally disabled who are placed in community settings other than the pupil's home.
4. Pupils enrolled in a department-approved on-grounds educational program longer than 180 days, but not longer than 233 days, at a residential childcare institution, if the childcare institution offered in 1991-92 an on-grounds educational program longer than 180 days but not longer than 233 days.
5. Pupils placed in a district by a parent for the purpose of seeking a suitable home, if the parent does not reside in the same intermediate district as the district in which the pupil is placed.

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If applicable a verified student list was sent via LEAPFILE of Section 53a pupils validated by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for the October 2024 Count.

The process for validating Section 53a pupils for the February 2025 Pupil Count is as follows:

1. If applicable compare your October 2024 list of validated Section 53a pupils with your 2024-25 February Section 53a pupil enrollment as reported on the DS-4061, State Aid FTE Count – Worksheet A.
2. Make any deletions or corrections in red on the October 2024 list of pupils. If no deletions or corrections are necessary, please indicate so on the list and return the list to the Department.
3. For any new pupils **not** on the October 2024 list, complete the form “New Section 53a Pupils” found at: [Section 53a](#), and submit the following documentation to the department:
  - a. **NOTE:** Pupils must be eligible for membership to be claimed as Section 53a on the February 2025 Pupil Count Date **and not in a program with a federally funded teacher under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).**
  - b. The name, age, and special education FTE for each pupil.
  - c. For court or state agency placed pupils, submit either court or state agency documents verifying the pupil was placed by the agency and the pupil lived in another ISD when coming under the jurisdiction of the court or state agency.
  - d. For pupils who were former residents of DHHS Institutions for the Developmentally Disabled placed in community settings, submit written verification from DHHS that the pupil was a resident of a DHHS institution and the dates, both beginning and ending, that the pupil was institutionalized.
  - e. For parent placed pupils, submit the parents’ address and school district of residence at the time of placement and a statement signed by the parent indicating the placement was made for the purpose of providing a suitable home.
  - f. For pupils residing in DHHS institutions, submit copies of Worksheet A from the DS-4061 form.
  - g. Reminder: pupils submitted for Section 53a eligibility must also have an IEP on file. The IEP does not have to be submitted to the Office of Special Education.

- h. Reminder: resident ISD for court placed, state agency placed, and parent placed pupils must be different from their attending ISD to qualify under Section 53a. This does not apply for pupils residing in DHHS Institutions.

Return the October 2024 list with or without changes, the necessary required documentation, and **copies of your DS-4061 A worksheets for all pupils** via LEAPFILE by April 25, 2025:

To send Section 53a student information electronically:

**LEAPFILE** link: [LEAPFILE](#)

Send to: [MDE-OSEProgramfinance@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-OSEProgramfinance@michigan.gov)

If you have questions regarding this notification, please contact Alejandro Trevino, Financial Analyst, by email at [TrevinoA3@michigan.gov](mailto:TrevinoA3@michigan.gov), or by calling the Office of Special Education, Program Finance at 517-599-9013.

#### **Department of Education – Section 53a Website**

- [Criteria and Procedures for Determining Eligibility for Counting Pupils for Section 53a Funding \(PDF\)](#)
- [Worksheets A & B \(Updated September 2016\) \(PDF\)](#)