

OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ADMINISTERING THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACT



The Children's Services Act (CSA, §2.2-2648 et seq) was enacted in 1993 to create a collaborative system of services and funding for at-risk youth and families.

The CSA establishes local multidisciplinary teams responsible to work with families to plan services according to each child's unique strengths and needs and to administer the community's CSA activities.

The Office of Children's Services (OCS) is the administrative entity responsible for ensuring effective and efficient implementation of the CSA across the Commonwealth.

Guiding principles for OCS include:

- Child and family directed care,
- Equitable access to quality services,
- Responsible and effective use of public funds,
- Support for effective, evidence-based practices, and
- Collaborative partnerships across state, local, public, and private stakeholders.



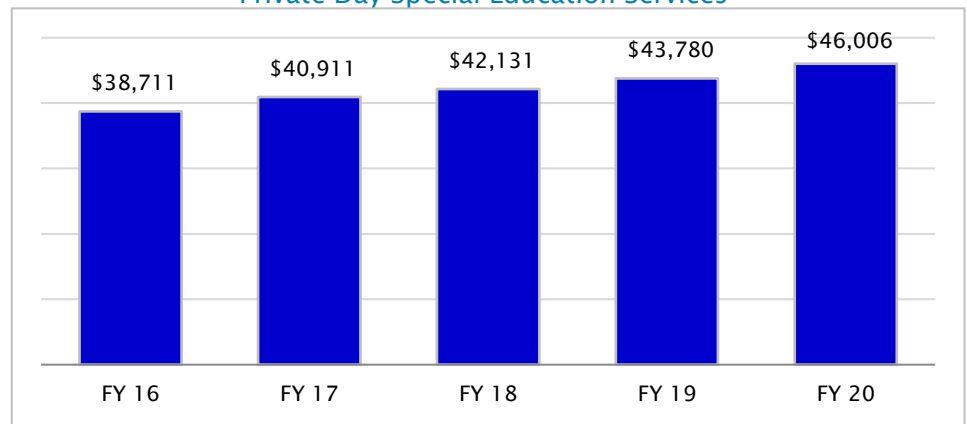
PRIVATE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES UNDER THE CSA

Annual Report to the General Assembly, December 2020

In accordance with the Appropriation Act Chapter 1289 Item 292 (K)(2)

Children and youth with educational disabilities placed due to the student's Individualized Education Programs (IEP) in approved private school educational programs are included in the CSA target population and are eligible for funding (Code of Virginia §2.2-5211; 2.2-5212).

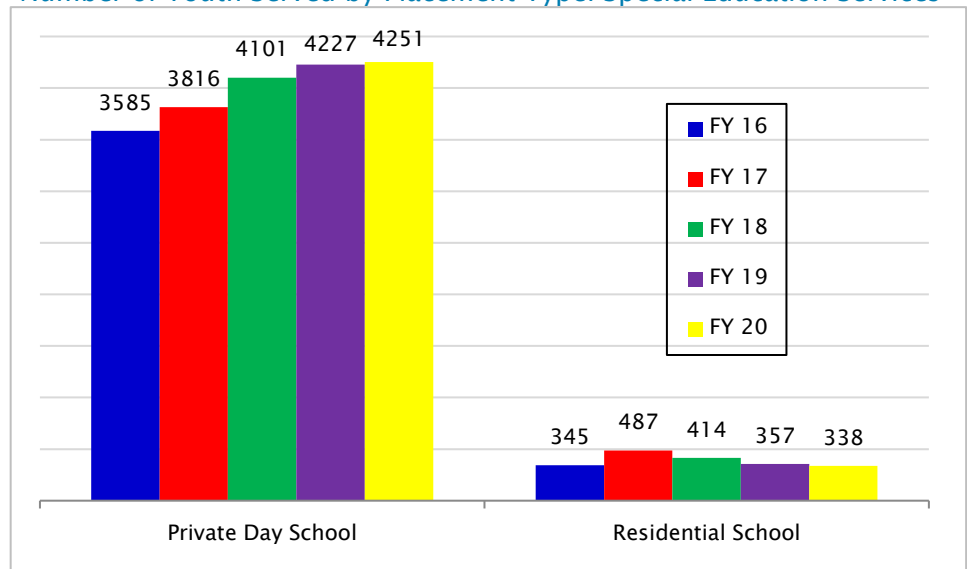
Average Annual CSA Expenditure Per Child
Private Day Special Education Services



Net CSA Expenditures by Placement Type - Special Education Services

	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020
Private Day School	\$ 173,441,219	\$ 185,866,635	\$ 193,404,469
Private Residential School	\$ 15,290,636	\$ 11,720,397	\$ 12,004,699
Total	\$ 188,731,855	\$ 197,154,732	\$ 205,49,168

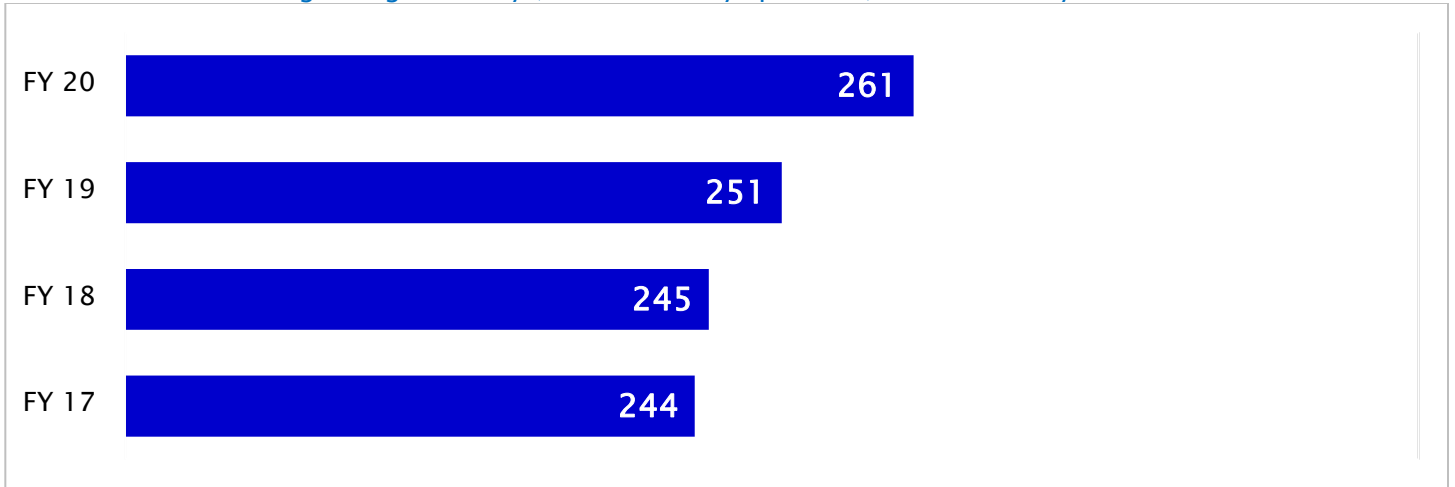
Number of Youth Served by Placement Type: Special Education Services



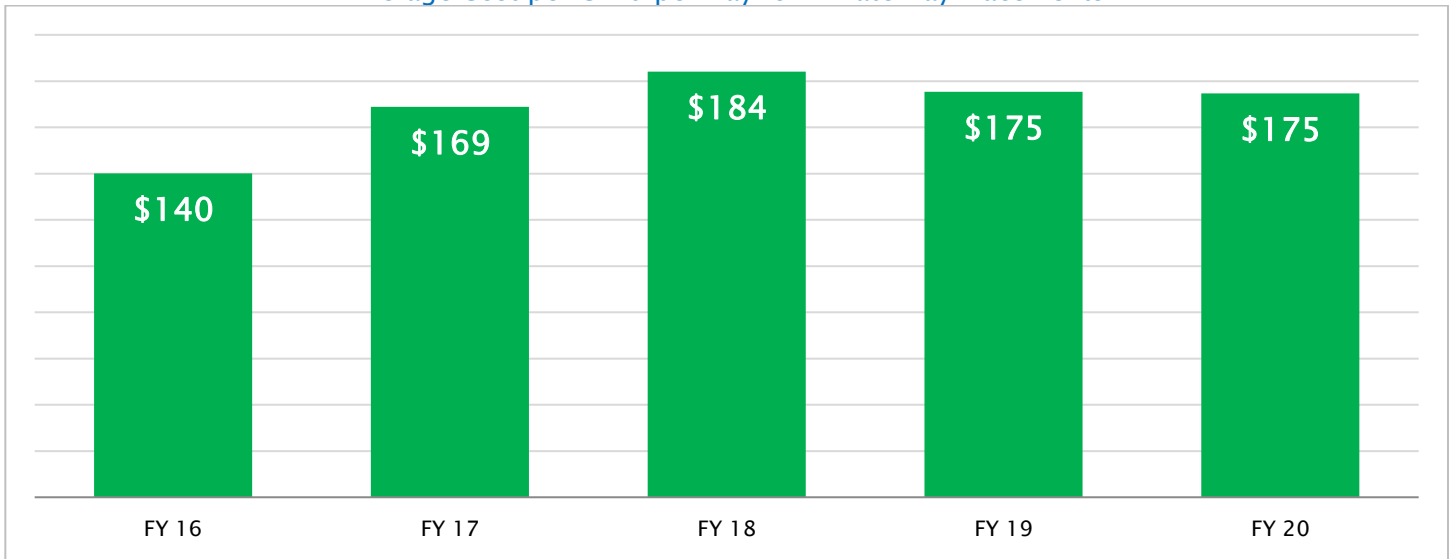
FY2020 unduplicated count of youth who received services resulting from an Individualized Education Program (IEP) requiring private school placement = 4,475

Private Special Education Services Funded under the Children's Services Act

Average Length of Stay (Number of Days per Year) for Private Day Placements



Average Cost per Child per Day for Private Day Placements



Discussion

The growth in private special education placements, especially private day schools, has received extensive attention over the past several years. Children's Services Act (CSA) expenditures for private special education day placements account for 72% of overall CSA growth (combined state and local expenditures) from FY2015 – FY2020. Over this period, the number of students served in these placements, required by their Individualized Education Programs (IEP), rose 24% from 3,416 to 4,251. In FY2020, growth in this one service area accounted for \$8.0 million in net CSA expenditure growth. In FY2020 (as compared to FY2019), the rate of growth slowed to 4.3% from 7.1% and the number of children placed in private day schools increased by 24, as compared to 126 from FY2018 to FY2019. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of the schools beginning in mid-March 2020, had some unquantified, yet meaningful impact on the FY2020 data.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) completed its study of the CSA, including a specific focus on the issues addressed in this report. The JLARC report, issued on November 16, 2020, included the following recommendations:

- Allow CSA funds to be used to pay for special education services and supports delivered in the public school setting, either to prevent children from being placed in more restrictive settings or to transition back to public school from more restrictive settings.
- Transfer administration of funding for special education private day programs, required by a student's IEP, to the Virginia Department of Education.
- Providers of private day special education programs should be required to annually report on their costs and revenues to provide transparency in the expenditure of public dollars.
- The Department of Education should annually collect and publish performance data on private day schools that is similar to or the same data collected and published for public schools.
- The Board of Education should develop and promulgate new regulations on the use of seclusion and restraint in private day schools that mirror those for public schools.

Action on these recommendations is now at discretion of the General Assembly.