

Advisory Commission on Special Education Impact Award

Application Documents

Purpose

To highlight best practices and “what is working” in California for students with disabilities, the California Advisory Commission on Special Education (ACSE) is seeking to recognize exemplary local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, school systems, initiatives, programs, and practices, (hereby referred to as Program), that result in positive outcomes for students with disabilities in the State of California. In partnership with Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Administrators of California and Special Education Administrators of County Offices, the ACSE Impact Award seeks to recognize programs demonstrating strong *Equitable and Inclusive Practices*. Winning programs are recognized with a monetary award of \$8,000, a celebratory lunch with ACSE, a produced video showcasing the program that is shared across the state, and presentations at both an ACSE meeting and a local board meeting.

Guidelines for ACSE Impact Award Applicants

1. Applicant must be a district, charter LEA, county office of education, SELPA, or school initiative, collaboration, program, or practice that meets the following criteria (A–D):
 - A. Innovative, highly effective, and replicable Program that results in demonstrable positive outcomes for students with disabilities.
 - B. Unique, creative, and effective Program to ensure that students with disabilities and their families have full access to and success in the most inclusive, educational environment within one or more of the following areas:
 - Access to and success in the general education curriculum (e.g., instruction in the California Common Core State Standards, assessments, College and Career Standards).
 - High-quality supports and services and specially designed instruction (e.g., use of assistive technology, augmentative communication, instruction in Braille or American Sign Language).

- Student self-determination, social skills instruction, community-based instruction and involvement, transition planning, and career and college learning activities and opportunities.
 - Inclusive and authentic family engagement programs and practices.
- C. Sustainable design that includes implementation, fiscal, and evaluation plans which are clearly established and replicable.
- D. Interconnected approach to serving students with disabilities that includes active engagement with district, county, charter school, SELPA personnel and systems, families, and community interested holders.

2. Application Process

- A. Complete application form.
- B. Attach two testimonial letters or documented stories exemplifying the success of the Program (may submit one testimonial and one story).
- C. Describe the Program (maximum of three typed pages, 12 point font, double spaced) with clear subheadings and information that includes: Brief historical context; Mission and vision; Goals and objectives; Details of innovative, exemplary, evidence-based practices; Engagement of interested holders; Description of implementation, funding, and evaluation (including a student outcome summary and other relevant data); Plans for continued development, sustainability; and Potential for replication. Multi-media components in support of the application are welcomed. (See scoring rubric for reference.)

Please submit application form and supporting documentation no later than 5 p.m. on January 30, 2026, via email to: California ACSE at acse@cde.ca.gov.

ACSE Impact Award Application Form for 2024–25

Program Name:

School(s):

District or County Office of Education:

Superintendent:

Phone:

Lead Person(s) Responsible for Submitting the Application Form:

Name:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Address of Program:

Application Questions:

Please provide a 2-3 sentence summary of the program:

If your program were to win, how would you use the monetary award to advance the program and its goals?

Signature:

ACSE Impact Award Scoring Rubric

(For ACSE Reviewer Use Only)

Criteria: To what extent does the application demonstrate that the Program accomplishes the following?

1. The Program demonstrates success for students with disabilities:
 - a. Goals and outcomes are clearly stated and measurable
 - b. Promotes student achievement (e.g., academic, transition, social, etc.)
 - c. Utilizes inclusive and evidence-based practices
 - d. Demonstrates commitment to effectively serving and providing access to students with disabilities
 - e. Uses ongoing evaluation of program success (e.g., student outcome data, family surveys, other)
2. The Program incorporates innovation or highly effective design elements:
 - a. Design is unique
 - b. Demonstrates use of creative/effective approaches in one or more of the following areas:
 - i. Access and support in general education curriculum
 - ii. Access and support utilizing specially designed instruction
 - iii. Access and support in transition or social goals
 - c. Demonstrates a detailed implementation plan
 - d. Demonstrates use of research-based interventions or design
3. The Program is easily replicable and sustainable:
 - a. Demonstrates success over a significant period of time
 - b. Demonstrates stable source of funding
 - c. Demonstrates administrative, family, and/or community support

- d. Design can be replicated readily in other programs
4. The Program establishes connections with district, county, charter, families, and/or community interested holders:
- a. Demonstrates a clear mission and vision that shows its interconnectedness
 - b. Demonstrates a strategic plan that shows its interconnectedness
 - c. Demonstrates interested holder input in establishing goals, program design, implementation, and/or evaluations
 - d. Collaborates with others to improve services
 - e. Communicates goals and outcomes to interested holders
5. The program seeks to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in a way that is aligned with the ACSE goals:
- a. Community Schools—when implementing community schools, consider and commit to the needs of students with disabilities
 - b. Equity and Inclusion—broaden the application of practices that are equitable and inclusive of every student
 - c. Student and Family Voice—prioritize the perspective and amplify the voices of children and families
 - d. Emotional and Behavioral Health—increase the availability and quality of services related to social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health
 - e. Literacy—boost literacy proficiency of students with disabilities

Total Score: