



**SPECIAL EDUCATION
LITIGATION COSTS
FISCAL YEAR 2008**

As of June 30, 2008

**REPORT
TO THE
LEGISLATURE**

**As required by
Minnesota Statute, Section
125A.75, Subd. 9**

COMMISSIONER:

Alice Seagren

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Minnesota Statute, Section
125A.75, Subd. 9**

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Upon request, this report can be made available in alternative formats.

ESTIMATED COST OF PREPARING THIS REPORT

This report provides information that the Minnesota Department of Education already collects as part of its normal business functions. The cost information reported below does not include the cost of gathering and analyzing the data but rather is limited to the estimated cost of actually preparing this report document.

Special funding was not appropriated for the costs of preparing this report.

The estimated cost incurred by the Minnesota Department of Education in preparing this report is \$124.

SPECIAL EDUCATION LITIGATION COST REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2008

Minnesota Statutes, 2008, Section 125A.75, Subd. 9, states:

(a) By November 30 of each year, a school district must annually report the district's special education litigation costs, including attorney fees and costs of due process hearings, to the commissioner of education, consistent with the Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards.

(b) By January 15 of each year, the commissioner shall report school district special education litigation costs to the house of representatives and the senate committees having jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education finance.

This report is notification to legislative committees based upon data compiled on January 12, 2009.

Introduction

In response to the statutory requirement, the department created a new Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting (UFARS) code to monitor special education litigation costs. Entities reporting financial data to the department of education are requested to use object code 306 for special education litigation costs. The definitions of the account code in the UFARS manual is as follows:

Include all Special Education expenditures incurred for time spent by legal counsel in consideration of litigation, during litigation and in post-litigation work, including appeals and discussions regarding potential appeals. Costs should include the legal fees associated with a request for a due process hearing whether or not it settles the issue, and any expense incurred when seeking counsel in consideration of filing.

Fiscal Year 2008 was the initial year of this UFARS code for Special Education Litigation Costs.

Special Education Litigation Cost Summary

Table One shows at the time of this report (January 12, 2009) that 21 districts, 1 charter school and 1 special education cooperative reported a total special education litigation cost of \$514,392. After further review of the data provided by the entities it was determined that 2 districts had incorrectly reported litigation costs under the wrong category. Therefore, the litigation costs were reduced by \$71,832. The adjusted total special education litigation costs totaled \$442,561 for Fiscal Year 2008 (as January 12, 2009).

Table One: Special Education Litigation Cost Summary as of January 12, 2009

DST	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
6	3	SOUTH ST. PAUL P	960.00
11	1	ANOKA-HENNEPIN P	32,232.44
13	1	COLUMBIA HEIGHTS	2,404.35
22	1	DETROIT LAKES PU	6,549.50
112	1	DISTRICT 112	37,892.14
115	1	CASS LAKE-BENA P	27,478.42
253	1	GOODHUE PUBLIC S	84.00
299	1	CALEDONIA PUBLIC	17,823.38
347	1	WILLMAR PUBLIC S	86,970.53
466	1	DASSEL-COKATO PU	6,300.00
709	1	DULUTH PUBLIC SC	10,707.23
717	1	JORDAN PUBLIC SC	520.00
719	1	PRIOR LAKE-SAVAG	8,062.05
720	1	SHAKOPEE PUBLIC	17,514.50
761	1	OWATONNA PUBLIC	25,182.90
831	1	FOREST LAKE PUBL	44,353.22
833	1	SOUTH WASHINGTON	73,830.45
881	1	MAPLE LAKE PUBLI	75,543.77
885	1	ST. MICHAEL-ALBE	10,232.25
938	52	MEEKER & WRIGHT	14,592.43
2165	1	HINCKLEY-FINLAYS	1,336.78
2198	1	FILLMORE CENTRAL	84.01
4011	7	NEW VISIONS CHAR	<u>13,738.00</u>
TOTAL SPECIAL EDUCATION LITIGATION COST AS REPORTED			<u><u>514,392.35</u></u>
RECONCILING ITEMS PER THE DISTRICT CODED AS SPECIAL ED LITIGATION COSTS IN ERROR			
831	1	FOREST LAKE PUBL	44,353.22
115	1	CASS LAKE-BENA P	<u>27,478.42</u>
TOTAL ADJUSTED SPECIAL EDUCATION LITIGATION COSTS			<u><u>442,560.71</u></u>