Common School Special Education

Special Education Average Annual Enrollment (HC)
(Age 3-PreK and State Funded Age K-21)
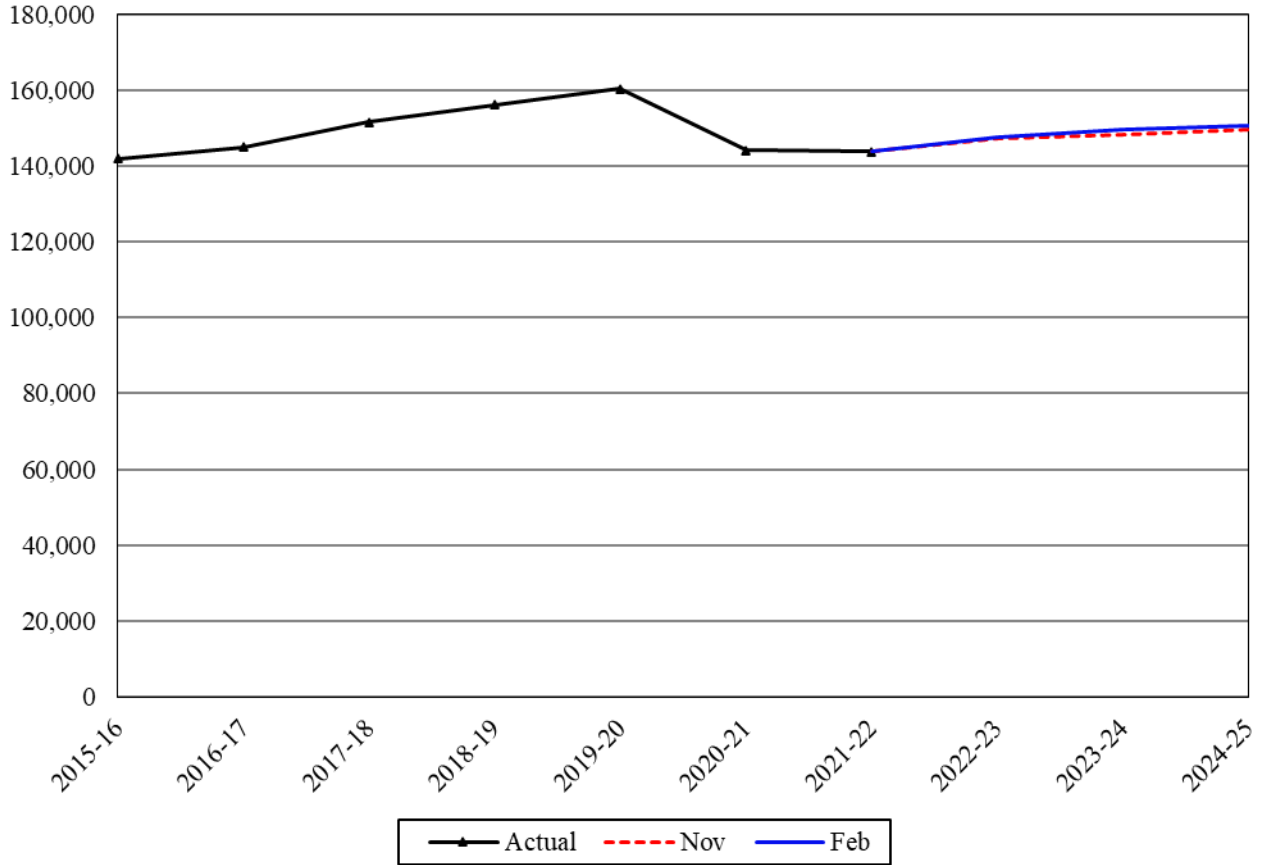
The Common School Special Education forecast consists of two programs: a separately funded Age 3-Pre-Kindergarten program, and the Age K-21 school-based Special Education program, indexed to 13.5 percent of each school district's total full-time equivalent enrollment. Up until the 2020-21 school year, Special Education also included the Age 0-2 Infant and Toddler program.

Forecast Comparisons (Academic Year Averages)

Academic Year	Nov-22 Forecast	Feb-23 Forecast	Nov to Feb Difference	Percent Difference
2022-23	147,118	147,465	347	0.2%
2023-24	148,392	149,620	1,228	0.8%
2024-25	149,609	150,689	1,080	0.7%

Compared to November, the February 2023 forecast is, on average, 347 students or 0.2 percent higher for academic year 2022-23 and 0.8 percent higher for the 2023-25 Biennium.

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Tracking the Current Forecast

	Nov-22 Forecast	Actual	Variance	Percent Variance
Nov-22	151,443	152,379	936	0.6%
Dec-22	152,494	153,503	1,009	0.7%
Jan-23	153,693	154,692	999	0.7%

The reported Special Education enrollment is 0.6 percent higher than the November forecast. However, Special Education 3-PreK enrollment is tracking 0.9 percent below forecast, while the tracking of K-21 is 0.8 percent above forecast. The tracking data is of <u>reported</u> Special Education enrollment. These numbers are slightly different from the forecasted caseload which, for those in the K-21 program, includes only students <u>funded</u> under the Special Education basic funding target.

Academic Year Caseload Change

	Academic Year	Caseload	Change from Prior Year	Percent Change
Actual	2015-16	141,992		
	2016-17	145,006	3,014	2.1%
	2017-18	151,515	6,509	4.5%
	2018-19	156,201	4,686	3.1%
	2019-20	160,361	4,160	2.7%
	2020-21	144,060	-16,301	-10.2%
	2021-22	143,866	-194	-0.1%
Forecast	*2022-23*	*147,465*	*3,598*	*2.5%*
	2023-24	*149,620*	*2,155*	*1.5%*
	2024-25	*150,689*	*1,070*	*0.7%*

The Special Education forecast declined by 10.2 percent in 2020-21 for two reasons. First, the state-funded Birth to Age 2 Special Education program shifted from OSPI to the Early Support for Infant and Toddlers program at DCYF. This reduced the 2020-21 forecast by 10,381. Second, Special Education enrollment declined due to concerns about COVID-19 and remote/hybrid schooling. In 2021-22, the Special Education enrollment declined slightly from the prior year, both in 3-PreK and K-age 21. The Special Education caseload is forecasted to grow 2.5 percent in the 2022-23 year and then an average of 2.2 percent over the 2023-25 biennium. Enrollment is increasing in both PreK and K-21, with the significant year-over-year growth in 3-PreK as it recovers from low pandemic enrollment.

Risks to the Forecast

The risks to the Special Education enrollment forecast are high. Special Education enrollment is subject to the same risks as the Common Schools forecast.