

Special Education

Know Your Rights!

Are there any limits on my caseload?

Yes! The union contract sets limits on caseloads for Special Education Teachers, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teachers, and Speech and Language Pathologists. The contract also guarantees minimum staffing in programs like Visually Impaired, School Psychology, and Adaptive PE. See the back of this document for specific caseload limits and staffing minimums.

What's the Caseload/Workload Committee and why should I care about it?

The Committee includes union members and SDUSD administrators. It works to resolve caseload problems, and meets on a monthly basis. If your caseload is too high, the Committee may review your caseload and may offer solutions such as reassignment, tighter screening practices at schools, readjustment of aide time, and evaluation of student placement. The Committee also works to problem solve any special education workload issues that come from sites that are unable to fix them at the site level. Talk to the Association Representative (AR) at your site about caseload issues and bringing concerns to the Committee.

Special Educator's Workload Rights

In 2010, SDEA members won workload protections specific to Special Educators. The agreement stipulates that caseloads at the site will be distributed evenly by number, but also based on the application of the "Elements of Special Education Workload." These include elements of workload stemming from case management of students, and teacher-specific work, like directing the work of paraprofessionals. Criteria such as SAI hours, numbers of assessments, IEP management responsibilities, preparation time, and any other assignments are also included in determining how evenly work is distributed among the special educators at a site. If a special education department at the site (all the Resource Specialist, or all the Education Specialists, Mild/Moderate, for example) believes there is an uneven distribution of work, then there is a process laid out in Section 29.1.3.4 and Appendix L in the contract for resolution of any disparities.

I'm a General Education Teacher and have an increasing number of Special Education students in my classroom. What rights do I have in this area?

SDUSD should notify you before assigning a student with special needs to your general education classroom, and provide you with their IEP. The union contract says that the principal should assign students with special needs "in such a way as to minimize the impact and equalize student load." In addition, SDEA members won new protections in 2015 that include a support plan for educators with a ratio of students with IEP's that exceeds more than 20% of the overall class size, and the opportunity to attend training tailored to general education teachers assigned to work with students with IEP's.

What about IEP meetings?

New language won in 2015 now sets the limits to the number of IEP meetings that can be held outside of your on-site work day (6 hours and 35 minutes). This right applies to all unit members! No more than three IEP meetings per month can occur between the on-site work day and the 8 hour day. Any meeting scheduled after the 8 hour day now needs administrator's prior approval, and will be compensated at the member's pro-rata rate.

What are the other protections specific to Special Educators?

Adequate and appropriate classroom or work space must be provided for separate setting classrooms, and for itinerant special educators. Safety supplies, and equipment mandated by law, must be provided. A new right from 2015 is that Resource Specialist work is defined as a "teacher who provided instruction and services to students who are assigned to a regular classroom teacher for more than 50% of their school day and [who have an IEP]." If you have any concerns, speak to your site AR immediately!

Special Education Caseloads

Program Type	Number of Students or Caseload
Separate Setting Classes	12
Early Childhood Education Program	16
Education Specialist: Mild/Moderate	20
Education Specialist: Moderate/Severe	12
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	10
Resource Specialist	24
Speech and Language Pathologist: Elementary Level	55 (max of 5 speech improvement cases and 5 RTI cases)
Speech and Language Pathologist: Secondary Level	55
Language, Speech and Hearing: Early Childhood	40 (max of 5 speech improvement cases and 5 RTI cases)

Itinerant Staffing

Itinerant Program Type	Full-Time Equivalency (FTE)
(Minimum Number of Staff assigned to Program)	
Adaptive Physical Education	32.5
Visually Impaired	11.5
Physically Handicapped	8.0
School Psychologists	65.0

Source: Collective Negotiations Contract, July 1, 2014– June 30, 2017 (Sections 11.3; 11.4; Article 29)

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