

In updating the Professional Judgment Panel (PJP) results to reflect the 2005-06 school year costs, the Department and APA decided to re-evaluate the weights associated with special needs populations and to recalculate the formulas that are needed to estimate the costs associated with the presence of any number of special needs students in districts of any size. The new bases and weights are displayed in Tables X & Y below. The new bases and weights reflect the changes in costs that result from using updated salaries and non-personnel costs and correcting some calculation errors discovered during the price updating. The evaluation of the base costs and weights are still done separately for the K-8 and K-12 districts. The underlying data, the PJP results, for the work discussed below can be seen in Tables III-4A through III-4D, III-6, III-7A through III-7F and III-8A through III-8B. Table X shows the base and special needs costs and Table Y shows the weights derived from the PJP work.

**TABLE X
BASE AND SPECIAL NEEDS COSTS BASED ON THE PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT PANEL
WORK**

	K-8			K-12		
	Very Small	Small	Small	Moderate	Large	Very Large
<i>Base Cost</i>	10,422	8,166	9,094	8,528	8,465	8,336
<i>Special Education</i>						
Speech	5,974	4,506	5,226	6,483	5,941	6,030
Moderate	18,501	16,220	14,412	15,771	14,203	14,470
Severe	75,560	51,430	35,104	41,804	38,009	38,166
Prek Disabled	26,893	25,895	15,191	23,792	23,792	23,792
Ext. School Yr	4,226	4,062	3,775	3,914	3,432	3,589
<i>At-Risk</i>						
Low	4,413	5,127	4,433	3,954	4,025	4,649
Mod	5,743	5,390	4,329	3,991	4,205	4,335
High					4,208	4,702
V. High						3,364
<i>ELL</i>	8,817	4,463	3,487	3,383	3,526	3,482

TABLE Y
WEIGHTS FOR DISTRICTS BASED ON THE PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT PANEL
WORK

	K-8			K-12		
	Very Small	Small	Small	Moderate	Large	Very Large
<i>Special Education</i>						
Speech	0.57	0.55	0.57	0.76	0.70	0.72
Moderate	1.78	1.99	1.58	1.85	1.68	1.74
Severe	7.25	6.30	3.86	4.90	4.49	4.58
<i>At-Risk</i>						
Low	0.42	0.63	0.49	0.46	0.48	0.56
Mod	0.55	0.66	0.48	0.47	0.50	0.52
High					0.50	0.56
V. High						0.40
ELL	0.85	0.55	0.38	0.40	0.42	0.42

The weights are broken out by type of district, K-8 or K-12, and by size of district within type. The weights are then shown separately for three categories of special education (speech, moderate, and severe), up to four levels of at-risk intensity and English-language learners (ELL). Once the weights are identified, the next step is to determine how they should be applied to all districts. To do this, the weights must be examined within district type to determine if there is variation based on the size of district or level of at-risk concentration.

We first looked at the special education weights for the two different district types and the three different special education categories. When looking at the special education weights, it appears that the weights are generally consistent by category within the district type. Given these consistencies, we decided to simply average the weights across size group for the three categories, considering the two district types separately. The only caveat to this approach was the low number for speech in the small K-12 district. Since this figure was so much lower than the figures in the other three districts, it was left out of the averaging. Using the averaging approach, the special education figures result in K-8 weights of .56 for speech, 1.89 for moderate special education and 6.78 for severe special education. The K-12 weights are .73 for speech, 1.71 for moderate special education, and 4.46 for severe special education.

The cost of at-risk students was analyzed both by size of district, within type, and concentration of at-risk students. No concentration factor was apparent as part of the PJP work; in fact, the cost per-pupil went down in some cases as the concentration increased. There were differences apparent based on the size of district. Within the K-8 districts, the weights for at-risk students were higher in the small district than they were in the very small district. To address this, we took the average weight for the two size groups and created a formula, based on the size of the district, that creates lower weights in small K-8 districts and higher weights as the size of the district grows. The weights are constrained at a low of .49 and a high of .65. The following formula explains the weight for K-8 at-risk students:

$(\text{Students times } .0006) + .3517$, with no district's weight below .49 or above .65

The K-12 districts also show a difference in weights by size, but only when districts begin to reach the size of the very large hypothetical district size. The weight for the districts represented by the small, moderate and large districts is the same, and it was created by using the averages of the at-risk weights for the three sizes. The weight grows in the very large district based on using the average of only the first three weights; the weight for the highest concentration seems to be far below the others and was not used. The formula for the K-12 districts follows:

$(\text{Students times } .00000008) + .4406$, with no district's weight below .48 or above .55

The application of the ELL weights varies by the type of district. The K-8 district weights differed by size and the following formula was created:

$(\text{Students times } -0.0011) + 1.1$, with no district's weight below .55 or above .85

The K-12 district's ELL weights were consistent across the size groups and the average weight of .41 was used.

The weights above are applied to the district size-adjusted base cost for every district in the New Jersey.