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Introduction to NDSEC

NDSEC is a joint agreement between nine public school districts in DuPage County. NDSEC assists member districts with the provision of special education instructional and related services. These districts include:

- Bensenville School District #2
- Addison School District #4
- Wood Dale School District #7
- Itasca School District #10
- Medinah School District #11
- Roselle School District #12
- Bloomingdale School District #13
- Fenton High School District #100
- Lake Park High School District #108

NDSEC works in collaboration with its member districts to administer programs for students with autism, multiple disabilities, emotional disabilities, developmental delays, hearing impairments, visual impairments, other health impairments, learning disabilities, and intellectual disabilities.

NDSEC also provides services in psychology, social work, speech, adapted physical education, assistive technology, physical and occupational therapy, music therapy, vocational, nursing, and other related services to eligible students as well as consultation services to district personnel.
VISION STATEMENT:
NDSEC is committed to being a catalyst for educational best practices.

MISSION STATEMENT:
NDSEC is devoted to the promotion of students’ skills that will enable them to become life-long learners, confident, and contributing members of an accepting society.

Executive Director:
Jim Nelson

Assistant Director: Todd Putnam
Director of Business: Reiley Straub

Governor Board Members:
Bob Laudadio
Dave Williams
Marilyn Daniels
Tina O’Neill

Destini Best
Blythe Cammy
Tamara Peterson
Leonel Figueroa
Janice Gatbunton

Operational Board Members:
Dr. James Stelter
John Langton
Dr. John Corbett
Craig Benes

Dr. John Butts
Dr. Mary Henderson
Dr. Jon Bartelt
James Ontengco
Dr. Jeff Feucht

KEY METRICS:
9 Member Districts
15,000 Student Population
183 Students Served
25 Classrooms
170 Employees
18 Board Members
From the Executive Director

As I reflect back on the 2019–20 school year, my mind immediately goes to March 13, 2020. That is the day Governor Pritzker declared mandatory school closures for public and private schools due to the public health emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. That is the day that split the school year in two.

At that time, I don’t think most of us comprehended the length of the battle to combat the spread of the virus. It made itself known as the days, weeks, months went on, as we stayed in remote learning through the end of the school year, and as we were challenged with the task of bringing students back to school safely as the virus stayed an ever-present danger in the next school year.

NDSEC’s theme for 2019–20 was NDSEC UNITED. One of the key initiatives supporting this theme was Navigating NDSEC developed by our Curriculum Committee. It is the nature of a cooperative to have staff members dispersed among the member districts which makes establishing collegiality more challenging. Navigating NDSEC addressed this by organizing after-work networking sessions for teachers and related service providers to share ideas about curriculum in small teacher-led sessions specific to curriculum materials. It has the potential to be a long-lasting framework for supporting the professional development of our staff while simultaneously building their relationships with each other. The benefits flow to our students as programs harmonize their presentation of curriculum.

As we switched to remote learning, I am proud of the way our staff rose to the challenge of figuring out how to do remote instruction on the fly, winnowing through the bombardment of resources that were suddenly coming their way to find the ones that work for their students. More importantly, they emphasized the social-emotional component to help their students cope with a situation none of us had lived through before.

We will not forget the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it had on educating our students. We continue the work of education with all our traditional guideposts removed. It is my hope COVID time will ultimately benefit our students by bringing new flexibility and creativity to instruction that lasts far beyond the current crisis.

I thank the entire NDSEC team for their commitment to the students and I thank the Operational Board and Governing Board for this annual charge. I am honored to lead an educational institution that is doing such good work. Please feel free to contact me for further clarification, questions, or comments regarding the NDSEC annual report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Nelson
Executive Director
Educational Philosophy & Objectives

The Cooperative's educational program will seek to provide an opportunity for each student to develop his or her maximum potential. The objectives for the educational programs:

1. Foster students' self discovery, self awareness, and self-discipline.

2. Develop students' awareness of and appreciation for cultural diversity.

3. Stimulate students' intellectual curiosity and growth.

4. Provide students with fundamental career concepts and skills.

5. Help students develop sensitivity to the needs and values of others and a respect for individual and group differences.

6. Help each student strive for excellence and instill a desire to reach the limit of his or her potential.

7. Encourage students to become life-long learners.

8. Provide an educational climate and culture free of bias.
Program Descriptions

Early Childhood Program (EC)
The Early Childhood Program serves students 3-5 years’ old who are eligible for special education and require an educational environment with individualized interventions to support students across academic, communication, motor, social, social & emotional, and daily living skills domains.

Language and Social Supports Opportunities (LASSO)
This program is for students with academic skills at grade level or approaching grade level who require support with communication, sensory regulation, and social skills. The program provides a highly structured and predictable daily routine and classroom environment with centers-based instruction and discrete trial training – a method of teaching in simplified, structured steps. The goal for all students is to fully mainstream into the general education setting.

Social Support Program (SSP)
This program serves students of diverse academic, social, and emotional needs in a classroom with a higher staff to student ratio. The program provides individualized interventions to support emotional regulation, executive functioning, and academic growth. Student success is supported through a positive behavioral reinforcement system, direct social/emotional instruction, various levels of general education integration, and collaboration with family and outside service providers.
Program Descriptions

**Academic Life Skills Program (ALSP)**

This program is for students identified with cognitive, physical, or multiple impairments and uses a trans-disciplinary team model to support the needs of students with developmental difficulties. Our focus is on nurturing the growth of the whole child by fostering independence throughout the learning process.

**Lincoln Academy**

Lincoln Academy is a public day school that provides a high level of therapeutic support and interventions to support academic growth, emotional-behavioral regulation, and making positive choices that are consistent with personal goals. Student success is supported through a positive behavioral reinforcement system, direct social/emotional instruction, and collaboration with family and outside service providers.

**Transition Program**

The Transition Program serves students who are between the ages of 18-21 years old (after completing 4 years of high school) as they prepare to be contributing members of a community. Independence and life skills are the primary objectives of this special education program. To meet the needs of our young adults, the Transition Learning Center staff works as a team to provide a continuum of programs and training to support young adult learners at all levels of functioning to maximize student success.
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

The hearing teachers work with students to learn the type of loss they have, what sounds they might miss and how to adjust for those situations, how hearing is tested, and how to be a true owner of their hearing loss by receiving the assistance and support they need to be successful.

Vision Impairments Program

Our teacher of the visually impaired collaborates with various staff in the member districts to meet the needs of the low vision and blind students. The common goal is access to the school curriculum at the relevant grade level.

Adapted Physical Education

NDSEC’s adapted physical education teachers work in collaboration with a student’s IEP team and the general education physical education teacher so the student receives the state standard of physical education.

School Nurses

The major focus of school health services is the prevention of illness and disability, and the early detection and correction of health problems. The school nurse is especially prepared and uniquely qualified in preventive health, health assessment, and referral procedures.

Physical Therapists

Physical Therapists assess the motor development of children. They have the expertise to determine the appropriate treatment for physical limitations or functional impairments. Their goals include improving a child’s functional skills and preventing or limiting the effects of a disability in a variety of developmental areas.

Occupational Therapists

Occupational Therapists are trained and licensed health care professionals who can make a complete evaluation of the impact of the disease on the activities of an individual at school and in work situations.
Support Services

**Assistive Technology (AT)**
NDSEC’s AT Consultant works with teams to assess a student's needs for communication systems, reading and writing supports, and access to computers and web based technology. Additionally, NDSEC’s AT Consultant acquires equipment and programs for AT trials and provides staff training on the communication systems and AT academic supports.

**Psychologists**
School Psychologists have specialized training in both psychology and education. They use their training and skills to team with educators, parents, and other mental health professionals to ensure that every child learns in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment.

**Social Workers**
School Social Workers are a vital part of the educational team and focus on identifying the social and developmental factors that influence a student’s opportunity to benefit from the general instructional program within the school. Their unique graduate level training enables them to understand and interpret the student’s response to school, home, and community environments.

**Speech-Language Pathologists**
The major focus of school health services is the prevention of illness and disability, and the early detection and correction of health problems. The school nurse is especially prepared and uniquely qualified in preventive health, health assessment, and referral procedures. Speech-language pathologists collaborate with members of the trans-disciplinary team to support increased communicative competencies of students in school, home, and community settings.

**Intervention Strategies Team (IST)**
IST members provide support to educators, students, and families across member districts and NDSEC programs. Primary responsibilities include supporting problem-solving teams through staff development and providing recommendations to support the academic, social, emotional, sensory, and behavioral needs of individual student referrals.
Member District Enrollment
2019-2020 School Year

Total member district special education enrollment increased from 2,098 (18-19 school year) to 2,160 (19-20 school year).

Total member district enrollment decreased from 15,037 (18-19 school year) to 15,002 (19-20 school year).

Member district special education population average is 14.4%. This is .04% less than the state average of 14.8% according to the Illinois School Report Card.
Historical NDSEC Enrollment

Five Year Snapshot

Total NDSEC enrollment increased 33% over the past five years from 138 students (2015-16 school year) to 183 students (2019-20 school year).

NDSEC opened the early childhood program in the 2017-18 school year.

- Early Childhood
- LASSO
- SSP
- ALSP
- Lincoln
- Transition
Professional Development

Annual Connections Conference

The Connections Conference was hosted on February 28, 2020 & featured the following high quality sessions:

- **Sarah Ward**: Executive Functioning Skills: Strategies to Support Students in the Classroom and at Home
- **Monica Genta**: Teaching Strategies that Engage and Motivate All Kids
- **NDSEC Administration**: Paraprofessionals ROCK! Building Skills to Provide the Best Support for Students in the Classroom

805 registered in 2020, that’s a 49% increase from the 540 registered in 2018!

Professional development provided during the 2019–2020 school year

- 26 sessions provided to NDSEC member districts
- 23 sessions provided to NDSEC staff
- 13 targeted professional development sessions provided by Intervention Strategies Team (IST) during COVID-19 school closure
Employee Recognition

We're proud to recognize these amazing educators

Emily Durkin & Julie Kroll
Innovation & Creativity

Emily & Julie consistently find new ways to overcome obstacles, seek out new initiatives, motivate others to become invested in change, constantly experiment, and find solutions to difficult problems.

Angela Albrigo & Patryk Szwankowski
Outstanding Practices

Patrick & Angela demonstrate excellent enhancement of their current practices and future initiatives. They constantly evaluate their own skills in order to improve their abilities. These professionals reach out to their credible professionals and research materials that will improve their abilities.

Kathleen Meyers & Iwona Domlewski
Loyalty & Commitment

Kathleen & Iwona demonstrate excellent commitment to the NDSEC mission and vision through their actions and words. They constantly present a positive description of others. They always support and encourage others throughout their years of service.

Janine Sabal & Adriene Sonnenschein
Works Well Under Pressure

When Janine & Adriene are found in a time of pressure, they remain calm and professional. They encourage others to critique their current practices in order to improve. These professionals are organized and confident in their abilities.

Mindy Alston & Cristina Valenzuela
Superb Communicator

Mindy & Cristina demonstrate excellent communication skills when working with other professionals. They reach out to new members of NDSEC and build lasting relationships with seasoned professionals. These employees are always organized and take the initiative to lead meetings.
Parent Connections

Parent Driven Initiative

Parent Connections is a support group and training initiative to serve the parents of students in NDSEC programs and parents of students receiving special education services in NDSEC member districts.

Support Group

Parent Connections provides opportunities for parents to network with one another while also providing valuable educational opportunities and information about available community resources.

Topics and presenters are based upon parent input

These are a few of our favorite topics:

- Facilitating Communication in the Home Environment
- Understanding IEP’s and Your Rights as a Parent
- Accessing State-Funded Services and Community Resource
Parent Survey
How do parents feel about the quality of NDSEC services?

Question:
Are you pleased with your child's progress in the NDSEC program?
100% of parents answered YES to this question.

Question:
Did school personnel communicate clearly at your child's IEP meeting?
100% of parents answered YES to this question.

Question:
Were your opinions appropriately considered by school personnel at your child's IEP meeting?
100% of parents answered YES to this question.

Question:
Are you pleased with your child's progress in the NDSEC program?
97% of parents answered YES to this question.
**Funding**
Where does funding come from & where does it go?

**Expenditure Categories**
- Instruction: 67.0%
- Professional Development: 1.3%
- Payments to Districts: 29.3%
- Transportation: 1.8%
- Building & Grounds: 0.6%

**Sources of Revenue**
- Tuition: 68%
- Federal: 26%
- State: 6%
# Funding

A historical perspective & our financial philosophy

## Historical Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Salaries</th>
<th>Employee Benefits</th>
<th>Purchased Services</th>
<th>Supplies &amp; Materials</th>
<th>Capital Outlay</th>
<th>Payments to Districts</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>$6,502,616</td>
<td>$1,430,888</td>
<td>$1,301,096</td>
<td>$197,843</td>
<td>$493,118</td>
<td>$4,919,379</td>
<td>$20,589</td>
<td>$14,865,528</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>$6,039,968</td>
<td>$1,498,497</td>
<td>$1,361,907</td>
<td>$196,202</td>
<td>$42,299</td>
<td>$5,116,768</td>
<td>$4,308</td>
<td>$14,259,949</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>$6,437,938</td>
<td>$1,694,456</td>
<td>$1,240,527</td>
<td>$226,351</td>
<td>$11,822</td>
<td>$4,654,648</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>$7,090,553</td>
<td>$1,868,745</td>
<td>$1,236,611</td>
<td>$248,806</td>
<td>$54,166</td>
<td>$5,213,966</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>$7,309,099</td>
<td>$1,959,294</td>
<td>$1,400,283</td>
<td>$276,953</td>
<td>$128,159</td>
<td>$4,579,724</td>
<td>$3,432</td>
<td>$15,656,945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Historical Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>$8,691,716</td>
<td>$4,159,673</td>
<td>$850,842</td>
<td>$13,702,230</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>$8,742,557</td>
<td>$4,055,430</td>
<td>$657,200</td>
<td>$13,455,187</td>
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<td>2017-18</td>
<td>$9,659,070</td>
<td>$4,720,872</td>
<td>$1,290,835</td>
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<td>2018-19</td>
<td>$10,175,418</td>
<td>$3,460,451</td>
<td>$861,723</td>
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<td>2019-20</td>
<td>$10,918,870</td>
<td>$4,168,174</td>
<td>$908,706</td>
<td>$15,995,750</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## 2019-20 Highlights

**Revenue:** $15,995,750

**Expenditures:** $15,656,945

**Fund balance:** $2,427,716

## Financial Philosophy

- **Revenue** generated by NDSEC flows back to the member districts.
- **Equitable**, transparent, & understandable fiscal management.
- $1,136,763 of NDSEC generated revenue paid back to member districts during the 2019–20 school year.
CONTACT US

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