



Morgan receives special education services due to his autism, cognitive delay, or emotional disabilities which limit his capacity to learn in the same way and at the same pace as his peers.

What is the most cost effective means to address the full complexity of Morgan’s specialized needs? Public School Programs or specialists in a State-Approved Private Special Education Program?



According to a recent Cost Study completed by Heinfeld, Meech, & Co., the cost to educate Morgan is less expensive in a State-Approved Private Special Education Program.

Public vs. Private Costs for Identical Program Models

TIER 1 COSTS

Public School Costs Per Year
\$31,066

Private School Costs Per Year
\$30,600

Savings per year
\$466.00*

Target Population: 6-12th grade students with Severe Emotional Disabilities (ED-P)

TIER 2 COSTS

Public School Costs Per Year
\$39,684

Private School Costs Per Year
\$36,900

Savings per year
\$2,784.00*

Target Population: K-5th grade students with Severe Emotional Disabilities (ED-P), Mild to Moderate Intellectual Disabilities (MIID/MOIID) or Autism (A)

TIER 3 COSTS

Public School Costs Per Year
\$58,310

Private School Costs Per Year
\$43,920

Savings per year
\$14,390.00*

Target Population: K-12 Students with Moderate to Severe Multiple Disabilities (MD) with additional vision or hearing disability (MDSSI), Severe Intellectual Disability (SID) or severe Autism (A)

***Cost Savings may actually be greater than what’s reported as Heinfeld, Meech & Co were not able to calculate the full amount of specific Public Program Costs; however, the tuition rates of state approved Private Special Education Schools include all costs.**

Previous independent studies in Massachusetts and New Jersey indicated that having specialists in private schools serve students with the most severe disabilities was less expensive than sending those students to public school programs. This recent independent Arizona study reached the same conclusion.

Who are these very special children?

The study examined students in grades K-12 with severe emotional disabilities, autism, and multiple disabilities, many who presented with behaviors which were imminently dangerous to themselves or others. Frequently, the students are so dangerous that it may be unsafe to serve them on a comprehensive school campus. The students often exhibit behaviors such as continuous and unprovoked levels of physical aggression toward other students or staff, bringing weapons to school, and engaging in self-harm (self-mutilation, elopement, and property destruction). Their behavior effects EVERYONE!

Can these students be effectively remediated?

YES, even though almost all of these students have permanent disabilities, they can be taught the skills and strategies to be safely and successfully reintegrated into a public school system's least restrictive environment.



What services do these students need?

These students respond to highly structured and therapeutic programming. Special education teachers provide individualized instruction and behavioral remediation. Speech and language pathologists, counselors, occupational therapists, behavior interventionists, physical therapists and psychologists provide targeted therapy.

TIER 1 MODEL (RATIO 4:1)

- Grades 6-12 Severe Emotional Disabilities
- 10-12 students per class
- 1.0 FTE Certified SPED Teacher
- .25 FTE Certified Specialist Teacher
- 1.0 FTE Teacher Assistant
- 1.3 FTE Behavior Coach
- 30 min/wk Cognitive/Behavioral Therapy
- 30 min/wk OT, PT, Speech or Behaviorist

TIER 2 MODEL (RATIO 3:1)

- 8-10 students per class
- 1.0 FTE Certified SPED Teacher
- .25 FTE Certified Specialist Teacher
- 1.5 FTE Teacher Assistant
- 1.3 FTE Behavior Coach
- 45 min/wk Cognitive/Behavioral Therapy
- 45 min/wk OT, PT, Speech or Behaviorist

TIER 3 MODEL (RATIO 2:1)

- 6-8 students per class
- 1.5 FTE Certified SPED Teacher
- .25 FTE Certified Specialist Teacher
- 2.0 Teacher Assistants
- 1.5 FTE Behavior Coach
- .16 FTE LPN or equivalent
- 60 min/wk Cognitive/Behavioral Therapy
- 60 min/wk OT,PT, Speech or Behaviorist

Why was Heinfeld Meech chosen to conduct this independent study?

Heinfeld Meech is the accounting firm that most school districts utilize to conduct their audits. Heinfeld Meech conducted the last independent analysis of special education costs for Arizona.