What is College Effort?

Background

DSPS programs receive state funds based on the number of students served and types of disabilities these students have. These state funds are intended to cover the costs for providing academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, services and/or instruction. Absent DSPS funds, the costs of providing and arranging for these services shift to the college/district. This means that the college/district is required to cover those expenses for provision of services if the DSPS allocation cannot meet the demand.

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The DSPS allocation formula is based on several components, including College Effort. Currently in 2015-16, after the Chancellor’s Office is finished setting aside funds for contracts, COLA and growth adjustments, the remaining DSPS funds are split 90% allocation, 10% College Effort. The 10% is distributed proportionately to the colleges in districts that show College Effort for the prior year. The allowable and non-allowable costs described in Sections 56064 and 56068 of Title 5 determine what is counted as College Effort so it is important to understand these Title 5 sections.

Some college/districts provide a substantial amount of funds to support DSPS activities, others, very little to none. Because so many colleges contributed so much total college effort, the 10% of total statewide DSPS funding the Chancellor’s Office is authorized to use to reimburse colleges/districts for their college effort resulted in proportional reimbursement of about 41 cents per dollar in 2015/16.

What College Effort is not...

It is not a match of the DSPS allocation. At this time, only the DHH funds have a match requirement in DSPS for specific costs related to services for students that are deaf. While other categorical programs have a match requirement (SSSP, Student Equity, EOPS, etc.), there is none required for the DSPS allocation.

It is not the FTES funds that your special classes (educational assistance classes) generate. FTES funds are considered unrestricted college general funds, but
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Section 56070 of Title 5 requires those funds to be spent on students with disabilities and they are counted as DSPS revenue which must be spent.

How does this work?

Do you know why the college paying for an Adapted Physical Education instructor is College Effort yet paying to clean the DSPS offices is not?

Think of all the things that you obtain for your program from an LD Specialist's salary, an upgraded T1 line for remote interpreting and new computers in the HTC. Now, if you or the college paid for any of those things with unrestricted college general funds, we have examples of College Effort. On the other hand, when the college builds a new stadium with many accessible seats it does not count as College Effort, because it is the college's responsibility under Section 504 to provide access to activities.

So, bottom line, College Effort is the total amount of unrestricted college general funds spent to pay for DSPS allowable expenses.

Many times it will take a lots of work by coordinators and directors to ensure the college/district understands that if DSPS runs out of funds that does not mean that DSPS allowable services stop. There is no cap on services. Under the ADAA and Section 504 accommodations must be provided to qualified student with disabilities.

Last words

Since the inception of DSPS funds, college effort of 10% has been part of the DSPS allocation. Now, as part of the allocations work group efforts, it is proposed to increase this 10% figure to 20% thereby giving back to the colleges 80-90 cents on the dollar to encourage colleges/districts to contribute more unrestricted college general fund dollars to the overall DSPS funding.