

## **Financing Special Education in New Jersey**

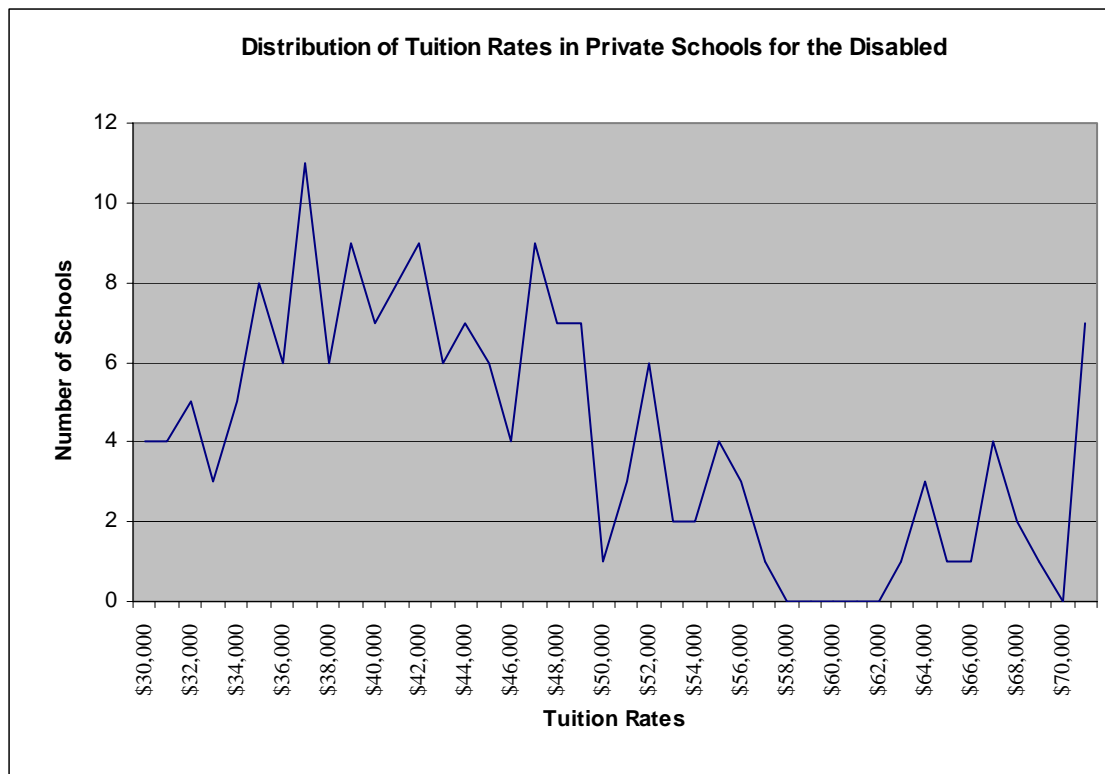
New Jersey School Boards Association

September 2007

### **Out-of-District Placements in Receiving Schools**

Receiving schools are governed by state administrative code (*N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7*). They include the following: the nine educational services commissions (ESC) that conduct special education programs (in all, there are 11 ESCs statewide); eight special services school districts (SSSD); three jointure commissions; 11 regional day schools (RDS) that fall under the aegis of the state Department of Education and are generally operated by ESCs, SSSDs or local school districts through agreement with the state; five college-operated programs; 13 regional day schools functioning operated by the Department of Health and Human Services (RDS-DHHS); and 163 private schools for the disabled.

Within an individual county, there is either a Special Services School District or an Educational Services Commission. The services provided by these units may be shared or offered across county lines, however. SSSDs are governed by boards of education appointed by the county freeholders. They are specifically designed to provide special education services. ESCs are county-wide consortiums, governed by boards of trustees, most members of which are selected by the participating school districts. ESCs may run special education programs and/or provide other shared services, such as transportation, purchasing and nonpublic school services. The regional day schools were started by the New Jersey State Department of Education in the mid-seventies as a way to share programs for low-incidence disabled students. In the eighties, their operation was transferred to districts or county ESCs or SSSDs. Shortly thereafter, the Department of Health and Human Services renamed their programs regional day schools as well for students under their jurisdiction.



### Tuition Calculation

- The tuition for ESCs, jointures, SSSDs and the Regional Day Schools is based on the total program cost for instruction, undistributed costs, benefits and equipment; the tuition is adjusted for any county taxes, non-resident fees (not to exceed the county appropriation) and other aids.
- Colleges set the tuition at their programs.
- The budgets for approved private schools for the disabled are governed by state regulation. Fifty-five percent of their budgets must be devoted to instruction, with no more than 25% going towards administration. The remaining 20% goes for maintenance of their facilities and other services. Private schools are allowed to pay up to the maximum salaries for similar positions in the county in which they are located. At the end of the year, private schools must return any unspent tuition or bill districts for expenses that were not covered by tuition.
- The Department of Health and Human Services sets the tuition for their regional day schools.

Researchers conducted a telephone survey of several receiving schools to approximate the tuition in various types of receiving schools. *Not all receiving schools responded, so the information should be taken as preliminary.* The actual 2005 tuition for private

schools for the disabled was used. The average tuition rates differ by receiving school type and the nature of their programs:

<b>Receiving School Type</b>	<b>Average Tuition</b>	<b>Preliminary Data on Tuition Ranges</b>	<b>Integrated*</b>	<b>Separate School **</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>
Educational Services Commission	\$33,100	\$35,000-\$49,500	204	614	818
Special Services School District	\$28,500	\$20,000-\$78,000	396	3,736	4,132
Jointure Commission	\$42,400	\$26000-\$67,800	101	488	589
Regional Day Schools (DOE)	\$33,800	\$29,400-\$51,500	0	779	779
College Operated Programs	NA	NA	0	254	254
Regional Day Schools (DHHS)	NA	NA	260	56	316
Private School for the Disabled	\$44,000	\$35,000-\$49,000	909	9,474	10,383

\* Integrated programs are located in facilities that also serve students without disabilities.

\*\* Separate School programs only serve students with disabilities.