



# ECSE Administrative Staffing Decision Matrix

## Guidance for Reasonable and Necessary Administrative Costs

**Purpose:** To help SAUs determine whether proposed administrative staffing levels for ECSE are reasonable and necessary based on projected allocation, student count, and observed expenditure patterns.

**Note:** Administrative costs are a subset of ECSE funding and should generally fall within the **10%–20% administrative planning band**, with most SAUs expected to remain closer to the lower end.

### Step 1: Identify Projected Inputs

- **Projected ECSE Allocation:** Based on state allocation model (informational only)
- **Projected Student Count:** Current + anticipated ECSE students
- **Administrative Band Reference:** 10%–20% of total ECSE allocation

### Step 2: Use the Matrix Below

Projected ECSE Allocation	Approx. Student Count	Admin Band (10–20%)	Reasonable Admin \$ Range	Recommended Administrative Model	Audit Risk Indicator
<\$500,000	1–15 students	10–15%	\$50,000–\$75,000	Partial FTE only; embedded in existing role; shared across SAUs	<b>High</b> if full-time admin
\$500,000–\$1M	15–30 students	10–15%	\$50,000–\$150,000	Partial FTE; shared or hybrid role; no ECSE-only admin	<b>Moderate</b>
\$1M–\$2M	30–60 students	10–18%	\$100,000–\$360,000	Partial to limited full-time role with mixed duties	<b>Moderate</b>
\$2M–\$3M	60–90 students	12–18%	\$240,000–\$540,000	Possible full-time role if duties are mixed and justified	<b>Low–Moderate</b>
>\$3M	90+ students	12–20%	Case-specific	Full-time role may be reasonable with documentation	<b>Low</b>

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### **Step 3: Apply Guardrails**

Before approving an administrative position funded with ECSE dollars, SAUs should confirm:

- The proposed cost falls within the administrative band relative to the total ECSE allocation
  - The role is not exclusively administrative unless the size and complexity of the program clearly justify it
  - ECSE funds support only the proportion of time attributable to ECSE work
  - The position does not reduce funding available for direct services below reasonable levels
  - The role is shared, embedded, or hybridized where feasible
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### **High-Risk Scenarios (Likely to Trigger Review)**

- Full-time ECSE-only administrative positions in SAUs with small student counts
  - Administrative costs exceeding 20% of the ECSE allocation
  - Positions justified primarily by transition management, rather than ongoing IEP implementation
  - ECSE funds used to supplant general education or districtwide administrative functions
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### **Preferred Cost-Effective Approaches**

- Shared administrative positions across multiple SAUs
  - Embedded ECSE oversight within existing special education, student services, or business office roles
  - Hybrid roles combining administration and service coordination
  - Leveraging CDS Support and Service Hubs and Maine DOE technical assistance to reduce administrative load
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### **Key Reminder**

ECSE funding is intended primarily to support direct services to children. Administrative staffing should be proportionate, documented, and defensible as reasonable and necessary to implement IEPs and provide FAPE.