

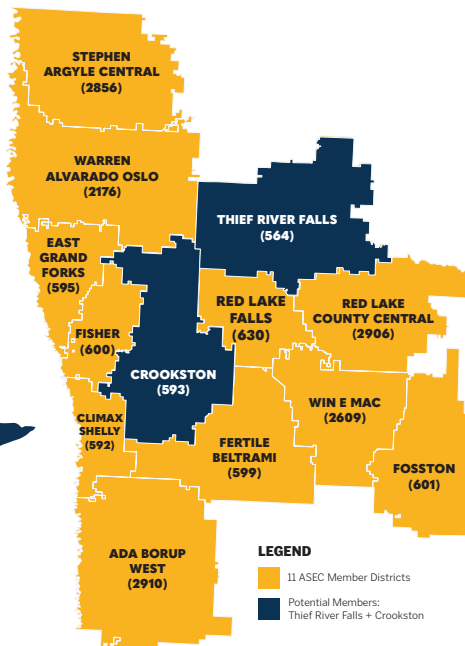


# AREA SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE FAST FACTS

HF3757 and SF3790 (2026)

## ABOUT US

The Area Special Education Cooperative (ASEC), established in 1969, takes pride in supporting 11 member school districts in northwestern Minnesota. The Cooperative's mission is to deliver comprehensive special education services to children and youth facing significant learning challenges due to disability or developmental delay. Through a cooperative alliance, our member school districts can enhance their ability to offer students educational opportunities more effectively. We seek your support in funding a Setting IV Educational Learning Center, strategically positioned to serve a broad region in Northwest Minnesota.



## STATISTICS

Our cooperative covers 3,300 square miles.

Over the last six years, there has been a 18.25% rise in the number of special education students, whereas the overall student enrollment has only seen an increase of 2.3%.

Over 18% of the students in our region have a disability and would benefit from the educational learning center.

## OUR CHALLENGES

### COST

The estimated expense for each district to independently implement these programs is around \$90,000, excluding curriculum, programming, and equipment costs. As a result, our districts are currently facing financial challenges in offering these essential services to students in need.

### NEED FOR INTENSIVE SUPPORT

Schools currently face limitations in sufficiently addressing the requirements of students with severe mental health challenges and high behavioral needs, necessitating a more intensive level of support, such as implementing therapeutic interventions, specialized instruction, and providing suitable educational settings.

### STAFFING

The districts are unable to find and retain qualified staff to work with these high needs students.

### SPACE

We have access to 11 school districts, but we need more suitable learning spaces and staffing resources for our students. The existing educational settings, such as mainstream classrooms and resource rooms, have limitations in effectively addressing the intricate needs of these students. Students in Special Education often encounter educational hurdles within traditional classroom environments. These challenges include sensory processing, communication, social interaction, academic performance, and more.

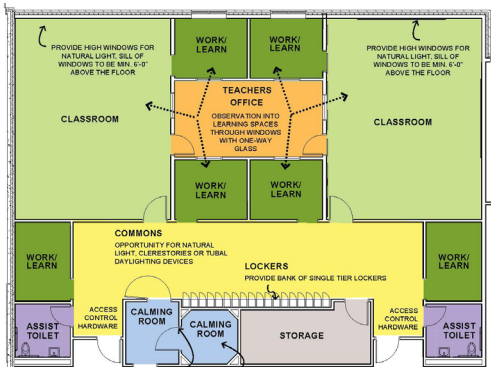
### EQUITABLE

Students with exceptionally high special needs in our rural cooperative deserve the fundamental right to access education within a safe and supportive environment, similar to their counterparts in the metropolitan area of Minnesota.

# THE PLAN

Individuals enrolled in a Setting IV program bear diagnoses of severe learning disabilities, including conditions like Autism Spectrum Disorder, DCD: Severe to Profound, DCD: Mild to Moderate, and Severely Multiply Impaired, among others. Some students may also face behavioral challenges in their home school district. These conditions hinder their ability to receive education safely within a mainstream school setting. The Setting IV program is specifically designed to address the unique requirements of special education, encompassing not only academics but also social-emotional learning. This comprehensive approach involves classroom instruction facilitated by licensed professionals tailored to the specific educational needs of each student.

PROJECT DETAILS	
Location	Centrally located in Crookston, Minnesota
Estimated Cost of Construction	\$9.5 million
Legislative Request	\$6.5 million
Square Footage	15,000 SF



# PROGRAMS OFFERED

The Setting IV Educational Learning Center will provide specialized programs customized to address the diverse needs of students aged from birth to 22. These offerings encompass intensive behavior intervention programs, life skills training, therapeutic services, personalized academic instruction, transition opportunities, and a dedicated home visiting center.

# THE IMPACT

The educational and support experiences during childhood play a crucial role in shaping an individual's opportunities and quality of life. By ensuring special education students have access to a secure and suitable educational environment, we are investing in their future success and empowerment as active contributors to society. Establishing a Setting IV Educational Learning Center would enhance the quality of special education services across Northwest Minnesota, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community for individuals with disabilities.

# PUBLIC ENROLLMENT

11 ASEC Member Districts	11 ASEC Member Districts including Thief River Falls + Crookston
<p><b>Students</b></p> <p><b>6,577</b></p> <p><b>Students Receiving Special Education Services</b></p> <p><b>1,167</b> (resident students)</p> <p><b>1,328</b> (resident plus open enrolled students)</p>	<p><b>Students</b></p> <p><b>9,928</b></p> <p><b>Students Receiving Special Education Services</b></p> <p><b>1,867</b></p>

The allocation of \$65 per pupil cooperative facilities lease levy provides an estimated \$3 million construction project for our member districts to be paid over a 20-year term. Unfortunately, this funding mechanism falls short of the \$8.8 million required to construct a new facility to serve our students effectively.



# CONTACT US

Tiffany Litman  
 Executive Director  
 tlitman@asec.net  
 218.390.3276

[asec.net](http://asec.net)  
[@areaspecialeducationcooperative](https://www.facebook.com/areaspecialeducationcooperative)

