

KJZZ: The criteria for school letter grades includes how many students graduate in four years, and there's a breakout category for students in special education. Does that impact the decision-making process here, VERY GENERALLY SPEAKING?

PXU: No, the determination of services that a student receives is based on a collaborative process. The Individualized Education Plan team makes decisions in partnership with our families. In Phoenix Union, we do not value our state label above the services individual students receive. We make decisions based on what is best for each student and their circumstances.

KJZZ: And ditto for staffing for students in special education programs. Does that impact the decision-making process here, VERY GENERALLY SPEAKING?

PXU: Arizona has a teacher workforce shortage. Like all other educational institutions, Phoenix Union has openings in teaching positions across the board. Our Exceptional Student Services (ESS) staff are tremendous and work diligently to give all students the best opportunity to succeed in college, career, and life. IEP determinations for students and ensuring compliance with FAPE are not impacted by staffing shortages.

It is important to add the work that we do with our 18+ students with IEPs. The Upward and Onward program allows students to learn real-life skills and pursue job placement upon graduation. Our Transitioning Learners to College program through Phoenix College assists students with disabilities in college readiness, executive functioning, and transition planning. Our students who have not met the criteria to terminate FAPE participate in this program, which has a proven track record of success.

PXU offers a robust continuum of services for students entering the 9th grade through graduation. For students whose IEP teams determine they

need continued FAPE beyond four years, the IEP teams make individual programmatic decisions to support student needs. We offer a variety of programs for students who require more intensive services up through age 22 as the law requires, with IEP Teams engaging students, parents, school personnel, and outside agencies after gaining informed written parental consent to make annual decisions about what termination of FAPE means and looks like for students, without any regard to funding, letter grades, or race.