

**Appendix F**

**HCPS Special Education Initiatives  
Intervention Programs  
Least Restrictive Environment and the IDEA**

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### HCPS Special Education Initiatives Intervention Programs

Through the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process and School Improvement Plan process the needs of students are identified. In Harford County, the school improvement plans parallel the format and content of the 2009 Annual Update to the Master Plan format established by the Maryland State Department of Education. Each school is required to review the assessment data for all subgroups and to identify strategies/interventions to support all individuals and /or subgroups that are not being successful. Schools must also identify the implementation plan, methods for measuring progress, and persons responsible for implementation. The School Improvement Plans are completed and submitted by August 15. Schools complete a midyear progress report in January.

The HCPS Intervention Team was created to study the status of K-12 intervention programs in Harford County Public Schools, assist in the implementation of systemwide interventions, and provide technical support to designated schools in the efforts to improve student achievement for those students targeted for the interventions. The Intervention Committee initiative is a joint effort on the part of the Offices of Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, and Accountability. The Intervention Committee is continuing to identify intervention programs and strategies that are research-based for schools to implement as they strive to meet the learning needs of all students.

Various reading intervention programs have been implemented in the Harford County Public Schools. At the elementary level, the Harcourt Reading series is utilized in the classroom with students having mild reading difficulties. The Wilson Reading Program, Wilson – Foundations K-2, and Soar to Success are intervention programs being utilized in various schools throughout the county. Harford County Public Schools has employed reading specialists to work in all of the elementary schools in order to provide support for the implementation of the Harcourt Reading program as well as reading interventions.

At the middle school level, reading intervention programs are in place. The Fast Track Reading Intervention Program has been adopted by all middle schools, while Corrective Reading is being piloted in specific middle schools.

Corrective Reading is being implemented in all schools for those 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students who are significantly delayed in reading. Additionally, Strategic Reading is an intervention program in schools throughout the county for struggling readers in grade 9.

The Coordinator of Reading Intervention Programs, in collaboration with the Supervisor of Reading and Language Arts, the Intervention Coordinator, and the Supervisor of Special Education, will monitor and support ongoing evaluation of the various intervention programs being utilized.

Across the nation and throughout the state, there have only been a limited number of mathematics intervention programs identified. There have been no recommendations regarding mathematics that parallel the recommendations of *Reading First*. However, Harford County has moved forward with providing a comprehensive mathematics program, preK-12, to support all students including those students requiring specific interventions. Throughout the county, various schools are also utilizing the

services of a math specialist to assist teachers in providing intervention for those students who are in need of additional assistance.

At the elementary level, the implementation of the mathematics program, *Everyday Mathematics*, in conjunction with a teacher professional development plan for this program delivered during the year prior to implementation and ongoing professional development opportunities delivered through county-wide meetings and site-based mentoring provides a cohesive and uniform mathematics curriculum for all elementary students in Harford County Public Schools. This program includes remediation activities and suggestions to meet the needs of those students requiring differentiated instruction. The *Everyday Mathematics* program has been utilized countywide since the 2006-2007 school year. In addition to this program, struggling students in several Title I schools receive an intervention program based on the *Math Recovery* model. Another remediation program, *Knowing Mathematics*, is approved for use in grades 4 and 5.

At the middle school level, there are common system-wide textbooks for each course. A variety of approaches are being utilized to provide mathematics interventions. In Harford County, several schools are utilizing the *Knowing Mathematics* program for students who are two or more years below grade level proficiency. Additionally, all ten middle schools have received materials to implement *Mathematics Navigator*, and three of the middle schools have implemented a remediation and extension period of time to provide interventions for students who are not being successful. The schools will review student mathematics scores and plan interventions to support the identified needs of those students not meeting success. The HCPS middle school model also provides a common team planning time which supports teacher collaboration and planning for interventions. In addition, several middle schools were able to implement summer programs.

At the high school level, the algebra Cognitive Tutor Program and Ramp Up to Algebra are major initiatives for providing intervention for students not being successful in algebra.

The Coordinator of Mathematics Intervention Programs, in collaboration with the Supervisor of Mathematics, the Intervention Coordinator, and the Supervisor of Special Education, monitors and supports ongoing evaluations of the various intervention strategies identified. The mathematics department also provides professional development opportunities for the primary and intermediate mathematics facilitators. The facilitators are classroom teachers who have a high interest in mathematics and work with teachers in their schools in the areas of content and teaching strategies.

In addition to the intervention initiatives noted above, the Office of Special Education has developed a comprehensive professional development plan for 2009-10 to address the state priorities for effectively meeting the needs of special education students.

## Least Restrictive Environment and the IDEA

Most students receive special education services in their home schools. During the past 10 years funding has been allocated to employ special education teachers to support the Collaborative/Cooperative (CC) inclusion model, K-12, which is defined as special education teachers and classroom teachers working in a collaborative and cooperative format. This model serves students who are at high risk and need additional supports who otherwise would be identified if the supports were not available. In 2009-2010, programs continue to incorporate the C/C model at three schools for Pre K students with disabilities. Harford County Public Schools provides extensive support and training to CC. Each newly hired HCPS teacher receives “Co-teach” by Marilyn Friend and participates in related staff development.

Early intervening services are provided under the “Student Services Team”. The team is a joint initiative with the offices of special education and student services. The new process of early identification is student focused with emphasis on student outcomes and identifying interventions before the student is referred to the IEP Team. The goal is to provide early interventions to have all children achieve and to decrease the number of students requiring special education services.

During the 2008-09 school year, community based early childhood interventionists provided direct services to SWD in community preschool programs. This program has been expanded with the addition of a teacher further enhancing HCPS ability to provide EIS and increase preschool participation in LRE.

In addition to the early intervening services, K-12 system-wide intervention supports are provided by HCPS through the services of the Intervention Committee. This committee provides teachers and staff the professional development and technical supports to implement appropriate interventions in order to provide students with the necessary strategies and tools for successful learning.

To address HCPS suspension rates of students with disabilities, fourteen schools will be utilizing the PBIS approach to elicit desired behaviors, thereby decreasing suspensions and time spent out of the classroom. Statewide professional development is being supported and incentives for students are being provided. On-going professional development has been provided to administrators in understanding social, emotional and behavioral issues and reducing the number of students with disabilities that are suspended.

Approximately \$2.7 million has been allocated to support HCPS interventions and the Intervention Committee initiatives by providing the staffing, professional development, transportation, and supplies and materials to implement programs and strategies to address the identified needs of all students. HCPS has developed a comprehensive professional development plan, aligned to state priorities that will provide a continuum of effective special education services/supports necessary to meet the needs of all SWD in the LRE.

Early intervening services are a priority of the Office of Special Education in an on-going effort to reduce the disproportionate referral and placement of African-American students in special education. To provide public access to information, HCPS' efforts to address disproportionality and the related data are highlighted on the Office of Special Education HCPS public web-site. Monitoring of referrals to IEP team and student placement decisions are scheduled quarterly. Staff development emphasizing the learning styles and preferences of diverse populations is a continued focus area for the 2009-10 school year.

Additional information about special education, intervention programs, and the Intervention Committee can be found throughout the annual review sections and in the HCPS Programs & Initiatives document included in the 2009 update.