



# Special Education

## Staffing Plan

2022-2023 School Year

# Special Education Staffing Plan

Harford County Public Schools

2022-2023 School Year

Reviewed and Approved:



10/24/2022

Colleen Sasdelli

Date

Director of Special Education

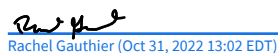
  
Sean Bulson (Oct 25, 2022 10:30 EDT)

Oct 25, 2022

Dr. Sean Bulson

Date

Superintendent of Schools

  
Rachel Gauthier (Oct 31, 2022 13:02 EDT)

Oct 31, 2022

Rachel Gauthier

Date

President, Board of Education

## **Introduction**

The Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) system is required to submit an annual staffing plan for special education to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The plan is a component of the Local Application for federal funds and addresses specific elements as required by MSDE. When developing the plan, consideration is made for the following:

- Evidence of public input,
- Evidence of maintenance of effort,
- Staffing patterns of service providers of special education and related services, including support staff,
- The number and type of service providers needed to provide FAPE to each student with a disability in the LRE,
- Use of the staffing plan in monitoring the assignment of personnel to ensure the provision of FAPE to each student with a disability in the LRE,
- The number of vacancies by positions reported within the jurisdiction and how FAPE is provided when vacancies occur, and
- The evaluative process the system will use to assess the effectiveness of efforts to drive system change and to improve student outcomes.

## **Assurance**

Providing a Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students identified as eligible to receive special education services is a consistent priority of HCPS. Sufficient staffing to meet the needs of these students must be available. HCPS personnel, including school administrators, psychologists, school counselors, general educators, special educators, central office staff, teacher specialists, related service providers, social workers, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Transition Resource Itinerants and special education support staff are responsible for ensuring that FAPE is provided to all students with disabilities receiving services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

### **FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION**

- **IN GENERAL** – A free, appropriate public education is available to all children with disabilities residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21, including children with disabilities who have been suspended from school or awaiting a placement.
- **LIMITATION** – The obligation to make a free, appropriate public education available to all children with disabilities does not apply with respect to children –
  - aged 3 through 5 and 18 through 21 in a State to the extent that its application to those children would be inconsistent with State law or practice, or the order of any court, respecting the provision of public education to children in those age ranges; and

- aged 18 through 21 to the extent that State law does not require that special education and related services under this part be provided to children with disabilities who, in the education placement prior to their incarceration in an adult correctional facility
    - were not actually identified as being a child with a disability under 20 U.S.C. 1401; or
    - did not have an individualized education program under this part.
- Authority: Federal IDEA 20 U.S.C. 1414 (a)(1)(A) State COMAR 13A.05.01.01

## **Vision, Mission, and Core Values**

### **Vision**

The HCPS Department of Special Education believes that individuals with disabilities achieve their full potential in a comprehensive and coordinated birth to 21 system of services emphasizing high expectations for all.

### **Mission**

The HCPS Department of Special Education provides leadership, accountability, and support for all stakeholders by way of a seamless, comprehensive system of coordinated services to children and students with disabilities, birth to 21, and their families.

### **Core Values**

The HCPS Department of Special Education maintains a commitment to meeting the needs of all students with disabilities by continuously striving to:

- Work collaboratively with district and community partners to identify barriers to, and increase participation in, equitable, age-appropriate, authentic, and inclusive educational settings for children with disabilities, birth through age 5.
- Use resources effectively to determine the impact of special education supports and services with respect to gap reduction and participation in the least restrictive environment.
- Collaborate with district partners to identify and cultivate the use of embedded supports, accessibility tools and accommodations to increase access and achievement of general education curricular standards.
- Provide county-wide and on-site support to schools for the implementation of Blueprint, NorthStar and College & Career Standards through the use of Specially Designed Instruction and evidence-based practices to communicate district expectations for the success of children, students and youth with disabilities, birth through age 21.
- Establish family and community partnerships that promote student success and independence.

- Promote high-quality, evidence-based models of transition services and activities that include data-informed decision-making focused on increased attainment of post-secondary goals, economic independence, and meaningful community participation for youth with disabilities.

## **Public Input: The Budgetary Process in HCPS**

The development of the annual operating budget for HCPS is an on-going process. Citizens are offered several opportunities throughout the year to offer input regarding the overall budget as well as specific special education programming in HCPS.

The Special Education Citizen Advisory Committee (SECAC) works in conjunction with the requirements of the Individual Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in supporting an advisory council for parents of students with disabilities (SWD) and with the Board of Education as one of their Advisory Committees.

Annually, the SECAC board presents a summary for the current school year of recommendations, focus areas, accomplishments, and highlights. The focus of SECAC continues to be *advocacy*. In addition, SECAC does promote the continuum of programming for students with disabilities in HCPS as well as the funding of a full-time Partners for Success position. SECAC meetings, whether in person or virtual, are supportive in nature. SECAC encourages advocacy, collaboration, and support to members with the local school system. Communication is key between SECAC, Special Education and parents/guardians.

We believe our initiatives align with the Mission Statement of SECAC:

*To enhance partnerships of students, families, community leaders, organizations, educators, and administrators through discussions that focus on the enrichment of services and opportunities for students with disabilities and their families.*

SECAC continued with virtual meetings for the 2021-22 school year. In January 2022, the SECAC Board discussed the in-person option; however, to maintain safety during the pandemic upticks in positivity rates, continued to hold virtual meetings. SECAC has been surveying members to determine the meeting platform preference for the 2022-23 school year.

SECAC virtual meetings have increased the access to all members: parents/guardians, school educators and administrators, and community members. The 2021-22 school year meeting topics were primarily focused on understanding the IEP, the process, and parental rights. The monthly topics of discussion were as follows:

- Back to School Emotions and Anxiety
- Social Opportunities in the Community
- Discovering Learning Disabilities: Difficulty in Reading, Writing and Math

- Understanding & Interpreting the Assessments - Psychological & Educational Evaluations
- Assessments Completed. Now What?
- Understanding the Related Services Assessments - (OT, PT, SLP)
- IEP Transition Planning in the IEP
- Parental Rights (Maryland Procedural Safeguard Notice)
- Mental Health in School-Aged Students
- Mindfulness for Families!

During SECAC meetings, all members have the opportunity to pose questions or present concerns. These questions and concerns can be expressed during the Meet/Greet (network time); presentation or the Question/Answer portion of each meeting. Members are connected with the appropriate school staff for assistance if not answered during the meeting.

Current SECAC officers include:

Jeanne Erdley, Chairperson  
 Angelique McKoy, Co-Chairperson  
 Kara Stone, Secretary/Treasurer

## **Highlights**

SECAC is proud of their accomplishments for the 2021-2022 school year:

- IEP meeting topics to assist parents and educators to better understand the IEP process and parental rights.
- Meeting attendance averaged 27 members participating per meeting. With some after school/evening programming resuming in the schools, SECAC has seen a slight decrease which is typical in non-COVID impacted school years.
- Virtual meetings still allow flexibility for ease of attendance and networking with school staff; SECAC members can become connected to community resources.
- Participation by Special Education staff and school-based administration continues to increase.
- Meeting giveaways of Special Education advocacy books and sensory items are appreciated by participants.
- Continued collaboration with Partners for Success creates additional avenues for parent and families.
- In-person community events resumed in April/May: Including Youth & Family Festival and various elementary wellness events.

- Advertisement of meetings by HCPS Office of Special Education email blasts, SECAC Facebook group and SECAC email.
- Continued use, when appropriate, of virtual platform to hold breakout rooms to support smaller group conversations.
- Question & Answer section of the SECAC meeting continues to promote and respond to parental concerns that are addressed by staff from the special education.

### **Maintenance of Effort**

In November of each year, the Director of Special Education provides program budget narratives and staffing standards to the Business Services Office to assist in the preparation of baseline costs of doing business. This information is then given to the Superintendent and his Leadership Team for review. In January, the proposed budget is submitted to the Board of Education. Throughout the months of December and January, additional public comment is elicited during budget workshops, town meetings, and the public comment portion of the monthly Board of Education meetings.

On February 14, 2022, the FY2023 proposed budget was submitted to the Board of Education. A budget workshop was held on January 28, 2022. The proposed budget was presented to the County Executive on February 28, 2022. Additional public input was elicited through the County Council's office in open forums held in May of 2022.

A commitment of funding from the County Council is provided to the Board of Education by the middle of June, or earlier, in accordance with local legislation. Board approval of a balanced budget, using the approved county funding levels and final funding allocated from MSDE, occurs no later than the end of June, or earlier, depending upon the release of local funding allocations. When balancing the final budget, the Board of Education considers all feedback received from SECAC, as well as from all other public comment, both verbal and written.

The HCPS Department of Special Education provides a continuum of services to meet the needs of SWD. The HCPS Business Services Office and Department of Special Education ensure that Part B funds are used to supplement and increase special education services and that they are not used to displace state or federal funds. Local and state funds expended for the current year are at least equal to or greater than those of the most recent year for which expenditure reports are available. The chart on the following page summarizes the Board of Education funds allocated to Special Education.

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Special Education Budget Allocation</b>
FY 2023	\$64,408,698
FY 2022	\$53,263,528
FY 2021	\$49,143,811
FY 2020	\$46,664,283
FY 2019	\$44,683,083
FY 2018	\$42,445,974

**Staffing Patterns of Service Providers**

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act and COMAR, HCPS provides a continuum of supports and services determined by Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Accommodations, direct instruction, case management, and the provision of related services are delivered in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and within the home school, whenever possible. Students in the 55 Harford County Public Schools receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) through the continuum of services offered in home schools and regional programs. The co-teaching model is utilized extensively, in conjunction with appropriate pull-out services, which enables HCPS to have a majority of the special education population served in the general education setting. The co-teaching model fosters an inclusive culture in all schools.

The Department of Special Education collaborates with all school-based administrators to establish effective and responsive IEP teams. All IEP meetings are chaired by a qualified school representative, who can efficiently and effectively allocate school-based resources to implement IEPs that are designed to address the needs of students. If the needs of a student go beyond the resources that are available at a school, the school-based IEP team refers the case to the Central IEP team for further review.

**Schools**

<b>Elementary Schools</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Middle Schools</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>High Schools</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Virtual School</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Alternative Middle/High School</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Public Separate Day School</b>	<b>1</b>



## Continuum of Services

Programs and Services	Location
Inclusive Special Education Programs	All Elementary Schools All Middle Schools All High Schools HCPS Virtual School
<b>CSP</b> – Classroom Support Programs	Aberdeen Middle School Church Creek Elementary School Jarrettsville Elementary School Joppatowne Elementary School Magnolia Middle School North Harford Middle School Prospect Mill Elementary School Red Pump Elementary School
<b>STRIVE</b> – Structured Teaching and Reinforcement in a Visual Environment  <i>Autism Service Continuum</i>	C. Milton Wright High School Darlington Elementary School Fallston High School Fallston Middle School Forest Hill Elementary School Forest Lakes Elementary School Hickory Elementary School John Archer School Patterson Mill Middle School Roye-Williams Elementary School William S. James Elementary School
Specialized Preschool Programs	<b>Edgewood Elementary School</b> (Early Learner Preschool Program, Learning Together Preschool Program, Co-Taught Prekindergarten Program) <b>Homestead Wakefield Elementary School</b> (Early Learner Preschool Program, Learning Together Preschool Program, Co-Taught Prekindergarten Program) <b>Havre de Grace Elementary School</b> (Early Learner Preschool Program, Learning Together Preschool Program) <b>Meadowvale Elementary School</b> (Early Learner Preschool Program, Learning Together Preschool Program, Co-Taught Prekindergarten Program) <b>North Bend Elementary School</b> (Early Learner Preschool Program, Learning Together Preschool Program, Co-Taught Prekindergarten Program) <b>Youth’s Benefit Elementary School</b>

	(Early Learner Preschool Program, Learning Together Preschool Program)
Vision Support Programs	C. Milton Wright High School Fountain Green Elementary School Southampton Middle School
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support	All Elementary, Middle and High Schools, HCPS Virtual School
Post-Secondary – <i>Future Links</i>	Bel Air Armory Campus Harford Community College Campus
Public Separate Day School	Harford Academy

This year, HCPS added several programs to expand the continuum of services for students with their general education peers. Programs include the addition of a Classroom Support Program at Church Creek Elementary School, a STRIVE program at Abingdon Elementary School, an Early Learner, Learning Together, Co-Taught Pre-K continuum supporting our youngest students with autism. Last year, the system also applied to MSDE and were granted permission to open a virtual school (Swan Creek), in addition to face-to-face instruction, to service students and families that are seeking an option to the comprehensive school due to the pandemic, and some will now continue. The Swan Creek School is an alternative serving HCPS students with a variety of educational programming. A fully virtual, e-Learning grade 1-12 program allows for students to work through remotely live, daily, synchronous instructional lessons. All courses and grade levels are taught by HCPS teachers during a bell-to-bell schedule. A 6-12 hybrid program is also available providing student flexibility with both in-person and remote learning. Students are taught on assigned days and work remotely on opposite days. Cohorts are intentionally kept at a low ratio to allow for more personalized learning opportunities.

The Office of Special Education collaborates with general education stakeholders to implement IEPs, aligned to general education content standards, to ensure the provision of FAPE for identified SWD in the least restrictive environment. School performance data is regularly analyzed by the Central Leadership School Performance Team, which consists of Elementary and Secondary Education Services, Executive Directors, Special Education and Student Services Directors, and Supervisors from Title 1 and Curriculum and Instruction and Assessment. School-based performance data is analyzed in preparation for annual Superintendent site visits and is used to evaluate the effectiveness of building improvement plans and initiatives related to the Blueprint for Education and NorthStar initiatives.

## Number and Type of Service Providers

### General Education Partners/Service Providers

HCPS has established an inclusive culture within the schools. All personnel may be involved in supporting the inclusive practices with the implementation of FAPE or student participation in extracurricular activities.

Staff	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
<b>School Administrators</b>	73 (comprehensive) 2 (Harford Academy)	29.5	36	142.5
<b>General Educators*</b>	880.2	386.6	427.5	1694.3
<b>School Counselors</b>	46	35	39	120
<b>School Psychologists</b>	-	-	-	44.8
<b>Special Area Teachers</b>	157.8 (comprehensive) 3.6 (Harford Academy)	121.5	205.3	478.2
<b>Swan Creek School (Virtual)</b>	-	-	-	40.5
<b>The CEO at Swan Creek School(Blended)</b>	-	-	-	15.0
<b>Reading Specialists</b>	35	0	0	35

**High School General Educators** include English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages.

**Special Area Teachers** include Technical Education, Trades, Physical Education, Health, Music, Art, Media Specialists, ESOL and Business.

## Special Education and Related Services Descriptions and Staffing

Service Providers	Descriptions	# of Positions FY22
Special Education Teachers	Special Education teachers work directly with students in a multitude of settings. They provide IEP designated services and case management as well as oversee support staff.	396
Vision Teachers/Therapists	Vision Teachers/Therapists are itinerant staff providing direct service to students with Visual impairment and consultative service to parents, teachers, and administrators. These teachers assist with assessment, interpreting vision and medical reports, adapting and developing curriculum, implementing specialized equipment, and Braille instruction.	2.8
Braille Technicians	Braille Technicians assist teachers in the instructional program and coordinate activities for students with visual impairments.	3.0
Adapted Physical Education Teachers	Adapted PE teachers are itinerant specialist staff providing services to students with disabilities as designated by the IEP. For most students, direct service is provided by the physical education teacher assigned to the school. The itinerant staff supports these teachers and also provides consultation and/or direct service as indicated by the IEP.	5.0
Interpreters	Interpreters provide interpretation of the spoken word by means of sign language to facilitate communication for students who are hard of hearing or deaf. An interpreter is responsible for implementing and overseeing communication through cued speech techniques for identified hearing impaired students.	8.0

<p>Speech Language Pathologists</p> <p>Speech Language Assistants</p>	<p>SLPs provide intervention services to students with disabilities who have met criteria for intervention. Services are delivered in a variety of methods including collaboration, consultation, modeling, coaching within the classroom setting, team teaching, and individual/small group therapy sessions. Speech Language Assistants work under the supervision of a certified SLP. Agency staff is utilized as needed to fill vacancies.</p>	<p>69.9</p> <p>4.6</p>
<p>Occupational Therapists</p>	<p>OTs provide activities in the areas of perceptual fine motor, sensory motor, oral motor, and self-help skills. The therapists design programs to facilitate normal movement patterns and to use adaptive materials/equipment, as needed. They may provide demonstration and instruction necessary to assist a child with coordinating visual and motor ability as it relates to fine motor and classroom tasks. Agency staff is utilized as needed to fill vacancies.</p>	<p>15.2</p>
<p>Audiologists/Teachers of the Hearing Impaired</p>	<p>Audiologists and Teachers of the Hearing Impaired are itinerant staff providing special education/therapy services to students documented as hearing impaired or deaf. They act as consultants to teachers, parents, and administrators, interpret audiograms and other diagnostic hearing tests/reports as related to educational environments, assist school personnel in modifying the learning environment, monitor student's hearing aids and FM systems, and provide direct instruction to students. Audiologists identify students with hearing loss and recommend appropriate intervention services.</p>	<p>.4</p> <p>2.0</p>

Paraeducators	Special Education Paraeducators provide instructional follow-up or reinforcement activities to individuals or small groups of students. They prepare instructional materials, implement instructional plans, provide clerical assistance, confer with teachers during the planning process, and work under the direction of the special education teacher.	416
Teacher Specialists	Teacher Specialists (TS) are members of the special education leadership team. They support general education and special education staff. They demonstrate and provide training on effective inclusive practices, curriculum modifications, learning opportunities, and child-focused instructional strategies. The TS coach special and general educators with curriculum implementation and adaptation and assist with data collection for instructional decision-making.	27
Special Education Evaluators	Special Education Evaluators are itinerant staff involved in the identification of students with disabilities through the IEP team process. These special educators conduct educational assessments for initial assessment and/or reevaluation. Clarification of special education policies and procedures, recommendations for general education and special education, and professional development are some of their duties.	12.44
Physical Therapists	Physical Therapists are agency employees assisting students with disabilities with identified needs relating to gross motor skills, mobility, building accessibility, posture, or functioning within a school setting. Agency staff is utilized as needed to fill vacancies.	6.8 2.0 contracted

Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	Board Certified Behavior Analysts assist schools on working with students with disabilities exhibiting significant behavioral concerns. They serve as a resource in the development and implementation of specialized behavior plans.	1
Assistive Technology Augmentative Communication Teachers and Technicians	These resource teachers provide support services to parents, school staff, and students with disabilities. They assist IEP teams, provide recommendations, professional development, and assistance with AT implementation. They also provide assistance to students, special educators, general educators, therapists and other support staff in the use and application of augmentative devices and strategies necessary to meet the needs of students with significant disabilities in the area of communication.	1.0 2.0 3.0 Augmentative communication
Social Workers with the Classroom Support Program	The Social Workers are the connection between home and school for students in the Classroom Support Program (CSP) in order to support the students' behavioral program across settings. They provide ongoing counseling to the students to assist with learning valuable strategies that support self-management, social interactions, and social/emotional deficits.	17.5
Other Support Staff	Inclusion Helpers assist special educators by providing individual supports and assistance to students with severe disabilities. Their assistance to students focuses on affording the student the ability to participate as independently as possible in the LRE. They may provide follow-up or reinforcement activities, prepare instructional materials, provide individual assistance in addressing the unique needs of the student including physical/behavioral, functional/independent living, and academic. Inclusion Helpers attend staff development and IEP meetings as appropriate.	117

Transition Resource Itinerants	Transition Resource Itinerant Teachers facilitate the coordination of activities and experiences needed to prepare students for post-graduation employment or study. They are involved with the screening and development of post-secondary goals and assist special educators in the development of activities that are aligned with the student's identified goals. Transition Resource Itinerants coordinate and facilitate work experiences for students with disabilities.	11
Orientation and Mobility Providers	Orientation and Mobility Providers assist students with vision impairments navigate their respective community. These positions are filled through a partnership with Maryland School for the Blind.	contracted
Special Education Central Office	The Central Office Special Education personnel supervise all Harford County Public Schools special education services and programs. These staff members ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations affecting SWD. They evaluate services and conduct professional development for HCPS stakeholders. <i>Administrators for the public separate day school are included in this category.</i>	17

Personnel from the Department of Special Education review the staffing plan throughout the school year. Coordinators monitor the caseload counts per service provider as well as caseload counts per special educator within each school building. School administrators work with Department of Special Education personnel to schedule staff effectively. Adjustments are made, as needed, to facilitate IEP service delivery. The Office of Special Education works collaboratively with the Human Resources Department to fill vacancies in a timely manner. This year, HCPS added several programs to expand the continuum of services for students with their general education peers. Programs include the addition of a Classroom Support Program at Church Creek Elementary School, a STRIVE program at Abingdon Elementary School and an expansion of the continuum of services at Meadowvale Elementary School to include Early Learners, Learning Together and Co-taught services. The system also applied to MSDE and was granted permission to open a virtual school to service students and families that are seeking an option to the comprehensive school setting for a variety of reasons. The system is continuing the program open to all students across the county.



## **Process for Monitoring Caseloads to Ensure Implementation of IEP to Address Concerns/Adjustments**

The Director of Special Education prioritizes staffing needs and provides program and staffing allocations to each of the 55 HCPS schools using the following guidelines, with the input of school-based administrators and Coordinators of Special Education:

- Hours of service necessary to implement FAPE for all identified SWD through a continuum of services, in the least restrictive environment, implemented by a highly qualified workforce.
- Incremental changes to staff occur, as needed, based on a continuous review of caseload information and students' needs.
- Itinerant service provider assignments aligned to the needs of the special education staff and students with disabilities.
- Services are provided within the school of residence to the maximum extent possible.
- Additional staff is allocated to regional programs as required by program design.
- Allocation and scheduling of special education staff within a building, correlates to each building's Master Schedule and individual school improvement plan, based on student needs outlined in the IEP.
- Systematic administration and review of the Student Assistance Needs Summary (SANS) to identify students who may need additional adult supports in order to access general education curriculum and to monitor the implementation of fading plans.
- Consideration is given to the following staffing ratios outlined on the table entitled Staffing Ratios:

## Staffing Ratios

Programs and Services	County-wide Staffing Ratios
Specialized Preschool Programs	<p><b>Early Learner Preschool Program</b> 3- and 4-year-old children 1 teacher, 4 paraeducators (1:1 ratio)</p> <p><b>Learning Together Preschool Program</b> 3- and 4-year-old children 1 teacher, 2 paras, 10-12 students</p> <p><b>Co-taught Prekindergarten</b> Up to 20 4-year-old children 1 general educator, 1 special educator, and 1 paraeducator</p>
Kindergarten/Prekindergarten	14:1
Elementary	14:1
Middle	16:1
High	16:1
Regional/Cluster Programs	8:1
<p>CSP Elementary Programs <b>with</b> Kindergarten CSP</p> <p>Elementary Programs <b>without</b> Kindergarten CSP</p> <p>Middle School</p>	<p>Grades K-1: 4-6 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff Grades 2-3: 6-8 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff Grades 4-5: 6-8 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff 4 additional support staff per CSP school for crisis intervention and to support inclusion in general education curriculum</p> <p>Grades 1-2: 6-8 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff Grades 3-5: 6-8 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff</p> <p>Grades 6-8: 8-10 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff</p>
Regional Program (STRIVE) K to 2	5:1 teacher, 4 paraeducators
Regional Program (STRIVE) 3 to 12	6:1 teacher, 4 paraeducators

Public Separate Day School	7:1
Post-Secondary (Future Link)	12:1, 2 support staff per teacher
Speech Language Therapy	45:1
Occupational Therapy	35:1
Physical Therapy	40:1
Vision Services	15:1
Hearing Services	15:1

The provision of specially designed instruction, in the least restrictive environment, requires a commitment from all stakeholders, including our general education teachers. Students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum within their LRE. General educators work with special educators and related service providers to deliver direct instruction. Special educators attend curriculum-based professional development with their grade or core subject colleagues to enhance the opportunities for SWD. Each school’s Student Services Team collaborates with general and special educators to identify and implement appropriate interventions to address the needs of all students prior to the IEP referral process. All stakeholders continue to work together to provide specially designed instruction to identified SWD, as appropriate.

According to the MSDE FY2021 Report Card data, 84.01% of HCPS students with disabilities, ages 6-21, have an LRE that is greater than or equal to 80% or more in the general education setting. In HCPS, general education teachers are active in the delivery of specially designed instruction for SWD. Through a strong commitment to inclusive practices, which include collaborative planning to support co-teaching partnerships, general educators work in conjunction with the special educators to ensure the implementation of Individualized Education Programs and the provision of FAPE.

To ensure appropriate allocation of staffing resources, caseload data is analyzed several times each year for every service provider within HCPS. In September, data is collected to determine if any staffing deficiencies exist due to unanticipated enrollment changes. Coordinators of Special Education review caseload data and dialogue with building administrators. Trends and areas of concern are reported to the Director. Collaboratively, and in conjunction with school administrators, plans are made to address areas of identified need. Additional staffing may be allocated to schools utilizing school specific caseload information and reviewing the intensity of needs of particular students through the SANS (Student Assistance Needs Review) process.

Throughout the school year, the Department of Special Education leadership team continues to work together to monitor staffing patterns and to dialogue with school administrators. Central office staff members and teacher specialists to monitor schools for implementation of FAPE, compliance, staffing needs and individual concerns of student progress. Supporting school IEP teams, facilitating and chairing central IEP teams, assisting in the observation and evaluation of

teachers, and providing professional growth opportunities for special education teachers and staff are the many functions of the Office of Special Education leadership team consisting of a director, nine coordinators (Birth to Five, Compliance, Training & Technical Assistance, Grants and Federal Programs, Non-Public Placements, Low Incidence, Related Services, Elementary Programs, and Secondary Programs and Transition), and twenty teacher specialists. This year, the Department of Special Education is excited to partner with other departments who have added positions that will assist students, especially those with social/emotional needs, to fully access instruction. These personnel and collaborative opportunities provide another mechanism for caseloads to be closely and accurately monitored which was recommended in the most recent feedback from an MSDE review.

### **Evaluation of the Local Staffing Plan for Effectiveness**

The Special Education Staffing Plan is based, first and foremost, on needs articulated through student IEPs, and through recommendations from supervisory staff, of Office of Special Education leadership, teachers, parents, SECAC, community members, and administrators. Special Education Coordinators, with input from the Special Education Teacher Specialists, closely monitor caseloads throughout the year and make recommendations to the Director of Special Education for adjustments, as necessary. The Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) also provides comments and recommendations throughout the year. Through ongoing review of public and staff input, as well as trends in enrollment data, staffing is carefully monitored. SSIS information generated from Maryland Online IEP is analyzed as a component of this decision-making process.

The strength of special education programming within HCPS is the continuum of services offered to meet the needs of the students. HCPS is proud of the staffing allocations that support the students enrolled in the regional programs and the Harford Academy. The staffing ratios ensure the identified methodology and specially designed instruction is implemented with fidelity for the students with the most complex needs in the least restrictive environment.

Continual evaluation of the staffing plan by all stakeholders ensures full implementation of IEPs. Each year positions are adjusted to meet the needs of the students, deliver SDI, and review data through the IEP process to satisfy all needs related to compensatory/recovery services. As students' needs change, or as students move in and out of the schools or system, staffing is adjusted. No students are denied FAPE in the least restrictive environment due to a lack of staff or service providers. No hearing decisions or complaints directly impacted the staffing plan or overall service delivery. The allocated staffing at each school, combined with the ongoing evaluation of staffing appropriations, enables all employees to fully engage with students, collaborate with peers, communicate with parents, and participate in IEP meetings. The staffing plan is designed to ensure that all students with disabilities in Harford County Public Schools are served in a manner that is likely to contribute to meaningful academic, social, and emotional progress to close the gap.










# Staffing Plan 2022-23 Final

Final Audit Report

2022-10-31

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