



# Special Education Staffing Plan

2024-2025 School Year

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Harford County Public Schools

2024-2025 School Year

Reviewed and Approved:



Colleen Sasdelli

Director of Special Education

10/24/24

Date



Sean Bulson (Oct 25, 2024 08:17 EDT)

Dr. Sean Bulson

Superintendent of Schools

Oct 25, 2024

Date



Aaron Poynton (Nov 22, 2024 10:52 EST)

Dr. Aaron Poynton

President, Board of Education

Nov 22, 2024

Date

## **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 least restrictive environment (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 special education and related services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

**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 are awaiting 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 21.
- 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 Ready standards with 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 instruction and 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 special education programming in HCPS.

The Special Education Citizen Advisory Committee (SECAC) serves the HCPS Board of Education and the Department of Special Education as an advisory council for parents and community members with an interest in the education of students with disabilities (SWD). SECAC holds monthly meetings that are advertised through a variety of media outlets. Participation in SECAC has steadily increased in the past several years with an average of 40 participants in most meetings. Through discussion, surveys, and other engagement activities, SECAC serves as a valuable resource for parental and community perspectives. Monthly meetings provide citizens with an interest in special education with the opportunity to engage in discussions with parents, community members, and district personnel. Surveys taken during SECAC meetings provide additional insight into the views of the community with regards to special education in Harford County.

The mission 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*, aligns with the mission and vision of the HCPS Department of Special Education. SECAC meetings, whether held in person or virtual, are supportive in nature and encourage advocacy, collaboration, and partnership with the local school system. During SECAC meetings, all members can pose questions or present concerns. With the support of district personnel who attend each SECAC meeting, members are connected with the appropriate school staff for assistance if the question or concern cannot be answered during the meeting. Annually, the SECAC board presents a summary for the current school year consisting of recommendations, focus areas, accomplishments, and highlights offering the Director of Special Education and the HCPS Board of Education input into the allocation of resources to address the needs of students receiving special education services.

Current SECAC officers include:

Jeanne Erdley, Chairperson  
Suzanne Oshinsky, Co-Chairperson  
Kara Stone, Secretary/Treasurer

## **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.

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 comments, both verbal and written.

Development and approval of the FY25 Budget included a Budget Public Input Session which was held on January 18, 2024. On February 12, 2024, the FY25 Proposed Budget was submitted to the Board of Education. The proposed budget was then presented to the County Executive for his consideration and allocation of local funds. Additional public input was elicited through the County Council's office in a variety of open forums held throughout May. The Board of Education held an additional Budget Work Session on May 23, 2004. On June 13, 2024, the Board of Education approved the FY25 Budget.

The HCPS Department of Special Education provides a continuum of services to meet the needs of students with an IEP. 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 2025	\$76,679,672
FY 2024	\$71,295,562
FY 2023	\$64,908,698
FY 2022	\$53,263,528
FY 2021	\$49,143,811

### **Staffing Patterns of Service Providers**

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act and COMAR, HCPS provides a continuum of support and services determined by Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Accommodation, direct instruction, case management, and the provision of related services are delivered in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and within the student's 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. This model enables HCPS to have the majority of the special education population served within the general education setting fostering 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 individual 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 and consideration for placement in the LRE.

## 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/grades 2-12</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Alternative Middle/High School – Blended in person and virtual instruction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Public Separate Day School</b>	<b>1</b>

## Continuum of Services

<b>Programs and Services</b>	<b>Location</b>
Inclusive Special Education Programs	All Elementary Schools All Middle Schools All High Schools HCPS Virtual School (Swan Creek School) HCPS Alternate Middle/High School (Swan Creek School - Blended)
<b>CSP</b> – Classroom Support Programs	Bel Air High School Aberdeen Middle School Magnolia Middle School North Harford Middle School Church Creek Elementary School Jarrettsville Elementary School Joppatowne Elementary 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>	Abingdon Elementary School Darlington Elementary School Deerfield Elementary School Forest Hill Elementary School

	Forest Lakes Elementary School Hickory Elementary School Ring Factory Elementary School Riverside Elementary School Roye-Williams Elementary School William S. James Elementary School Fallston Middle School Patterson Mill Middle School Southampton Middle School C. Milton Wright High School Fallston High School Harford Academy
Specialized Preschool Programs	<b>Edgewood Elementary School</b> (Early Learner Preschool Program, Learning Together Preschool Program, Co-Taught Prekindergarten Program) <b>Emmorton Elementary School</b> (Early Learner Preschool Program, Learning Together Preschool 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 Southampton Middle School Fountain Green Elementary School
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support	All Elementary, Middle and High Schools, HCPS Virtual and Alternative School
Post-Secondary – <i>Future Links</i>	Bel Air Armory Campus Harford Community College Campus
Public Separate Day School	Harford Academy



Seamless expansion of various programs to address the growing population of students with disabilities requiring extensive support is a priority for HCPS Special Education leadership. This year, HCPS added additional STRIVE classrooms to Deerfield Elementary, Southampton Middle, and Fallston Middle schools. Expansion of programming for preschool-aged children was achieved with the addition of Early Learners and Learning Together at Emmorton Elementary School. The HCPS CSP continuum was also expanded with the addition of a high school program at Bel Air High School. To ensure fidelity of each program, HCPS also added 3.6 speech language pathologists and 2 occupational therapists, as well as a teacher specialist and a board-certified behavior analyst to support the growing needs within our regional programs. In addition, HCPS continues to make staffing adjustments to address the changing population at Swan Creek, the HCPS all virtual and blended alternate school. The Swan Creek School is an alternative school offering a fully virtual, e-Learning grade 2-12 program which allows students to work through remote live, daily, synchronous instructional lessons taught by HCPS teachers during a bell-to-bell schedule. A grade 6-12 hybrid program is also available providing students with flexibility to engage in both in-person and remote learning. Students in the blended program at Swan Creek 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. Special Education programming is available for all students whose parent/guardian seeks enrollment at Swan Creek, if the student's IEP can be implemented in a virtual environment.

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 students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. School performance data is regularly analyzed by the Central Instructional Leadership Team, which consists of Elementary and Secondary Education Services, Executive Directors, Special Education and Student Support Services Directors, and Supervisors from Curriculum Instruction and Assessment. School-based performance data is analyzed in preparation for site visits hosted by the Office of Accountability and Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment 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 our 55 schools. All personnel may be involved in supporting the inclusive practices with the implementation of FAPE or student participation in extracurricular activities.

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>School Administrators</b>	74.0 (comprehensive)  2.0 Harford Academy  1.0 Swan Creek	32.5 (comprehensive)	35.5 (comprehensive)  2.0 Swan Creek Virtual & the CEO @ Swan Creek Blended	147.0
<b>General Educators*</b>	827.0	386.0	399.5	1,607.5
<b>School Counselors</b>	43.0 (comprehensive)  1.0 Harford Academy	25.0 (comprehensive)	38.0 (comprehensive)  2.0 Swan Creek Virtual & CEO @ Swan Creek Blended	109.0
<b>School Psychologists</b>	-	-	-	44.2
<b>Special Area Teachers</b>	261.4 (comprehensive)  4.6 Harford Academy	150.9 (comprehensive)	244.6 (comprehensive)	648.9
<b>Swan Creek School (Virtual)</b>	-	-	-	32.2
<b>Swan Creek School(Blended)</b>	-	-	-	17.0
<b>Reading Specialists</b>	36.6	0	0	36.6

**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 FY25
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.	410
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.	3.8
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 provides consultation and/or direct service as indicated by the IEP.	4.4
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.	6.0

Speech Language Pathologists Speech Language Assistants	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.	79.7 3.0
Occupational Therapists Occupational Therapy Assistants	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.	18.4 1.0
Audiologists Teachers of the Hearing Impaired	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.	.6 2.0
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.	495.0
Teacher Specialists	Teacher Specialists (TS) are members of the special education leadership team. They support general	24.0

	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.	
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.	16.0
Physical Therapists Physical Therapy Assistants	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.	6.2  3.0 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.	3.0
Assistive Technology Augmentative Communication Teachers	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 aid 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.	3.0  3.0

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) to support the students' behavioral programming 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.	9.0
Other Support Staff	Inclusion Helpers assist special educators by providing individual support 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.	171.0
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.	10.0
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.	1.0
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>	17.0

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 and to address any unexpected vacancies. The Office of Special Education leadership team works collaboratively with the Human Resources department to fill vacancies in a timely manner. HCPS opened the 2024-2025 school year with full staffing of special education teachers and related service providers. Vacancies in support staff positions are evaluated throughout the school year and contractual providers are used to address the most critical needs.

### **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 are 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, individual school improvement plan, and service needs as outlined in each IEP.
- Systematic administration and review of the Student Assistance Needs Summary (SANS) to identify students who may need additional adult supports to access the general education curriculum and to monitor the implementation of fading plans.
- Consideration is given to the following staffing ratios outlined in the table below:

## Staffing Ratios

Programs and Services	Special Education Staffing Ratios
Specialized Preschool Programs	<b>Early Learner Preschool Program</b> 1 teacher, 4 paraeducators (1:1 ratio)  <b>Learning Together Preschool Program</b> 1 teacher, 2 paras, 10-12 students; 3- and 4-year-olds.  <b>Co-taught Prekindergarten</b> Up to 20 4-year-old students; 1 general educator, 1 special educator and 1 general paraeducator.
Kindergarten/Prekindergarten	14:1
Elementary	14:1
Middle	16:1
High	16:1
Classroom Support Program (CSP) Elementary Programs <b>with</b> Kindergarten CSP  Elementary Programs <b>without</b> Kindergarten CSP  Middle School	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  Grades 1-2: 6-8 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff Grades 3-5: 6-8 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff  Grades 6-8: 8-10 students: 1 teacher, 2 support staff  Grades 9-12: 12-15 students: 1 teacher, 3 support staff  2-3 additional support staff per CSP school for crisis intervention and to support inclusion in general education curriculum
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 students with IEPs. Each school's Student Services Team collaborates with general and special educators to identify and implement appropriate interventions to address the needs of students who are at risk academically or behaviorally. All stakeholders continue to work together to provide specially designed instruction to identified students with disabilities, as appropriate.

According to the MSDE FFY2022 Report Card data, 85.94% 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, and the provision of accommodations, and supplementary aids and services to address the needs of students with IEPs. Through a strong commitment to inclusive practices, HCPS has structures in place to support collaborative planning for co-teaching partnerships, training and coaching in high leverage practices, and general educators working 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 individual 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 leadership and teacher specialists who assist in monitoring 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-four 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 to ensure that appropriate staffing is in place to ensure FAPE for all students receiving special education and related services.

### **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, 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. Established 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 achievement gaps for students with disabilities.