



# Special Education Staffing Plan

2025-2026 School Year

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Harford County Public Schools

2025-2026 School Year

Reviewed and Approved:




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10/24/25

Date



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10/27/25

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10/31/25

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## **Introduction**

The Harford County Public School (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. The Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Special Education Staffing Plan for 2025-2026 is aligned to the procedures provided by MSDE for the purpose of ensuring that personnel and other resources are available to provide a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) to each student with a disability in the least restrictive environment as determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. In accordance with The Code of Maryland Regulations, COMAR 13A.05.02.13D, 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 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 the 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 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 a 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 to the allocation of resources to address the needs of students receiving special education services.

SECAC leadership serve for a two-year term. A new SECAC board was elected during the May 2025 and September 2025 meetings. Current SECAC officers include:

Katie York, Chairperson  
Kristy Gryzinski, Co-Chairperson  
Dannie Keith, Secretary/Treasurer

From July through December, the Superintendent holds a variety of stakeholder input sessions to begin developing a budget for the following school year. 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.

During the months of February through June, the Harford County Executive and County Council typically conduct a series of budget input sessions and dialogue with community members before finalizing the county budget on or before June 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. In accordance with local legislation, a commitment of funding from the County Council is provided to the Board of Education by this date. 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, including input received from the Director of Special Education and SECAC, as well as from all other public comments, both verbal and written.

Development and approval of the FY26 Budget included a Budget Work Session which was held on January 13, 2025. On January 27, 2025, the FY26 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 the Spring. On June 16, 2025, the Board of Education approved the FY26 Budget.

## Maintenance of Effort

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 for the past five budgeted years.

School Year	Special Education Budget Allocation
FY 2026	\$82,037,776
FY 2025	\$76,679,672
FY 2024	\$71,295,562
FY 2023	\$64,908,698
FY 2022	\$53,263,528

## 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 each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Accommodation, direct instruction, case management, and the provision of related services are delivered in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and within the student's school of residence, whenever possible.

HCPS Schools	
Elementary Schools	33
Middle Schools	9
High Schools	10
Virtual School/grades 2-12	1
Alternative Middle/High School – Blended in person and virtual instruction	1
Public Separate Day School	1

Students in the 55 Harford County Public Schools receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) through the continuum of services offered in comprehensive schools and regional programs. The co-teaching model is utilized, in conjunction with services delivered in individual or small group settings inside and outside of general education. To ensure that all IEP's are implemented with fidelity, school administrators are afforded the autonomy to adapt the existing co-teaching model to meet the individual needs of students enrolled in their school. To this end, several secondary schools within HCPS have begun to pilot a more targeted service delivery model aimed at the delivery of small group instruction aligned to the frequency and duration of IEP services. This model enables HCPS to deliver high quality specially designed instruction aligned to the individual needs of students while maintaining a commitment 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 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 makes a referral to the Central IEP team for consideration of placement along the continuum of regional and separate day school options.

### HCPS Continuum of SE Services

Programs and Services	Location
<b>Inclusive Special Education Programs</b>	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>Classroom Support Program (CSP)</b>  <i>CSP is a Harford County Public School regional, therapeutic, behavioral support program. At all levels, the CSP classrooms provide structured, supportive settings with embedded behavioral support for a student having behavioral and social/emotional needs which cannot be met in a less restrictive environment. In addition, the CSP can serve as a less restrictive environment for a student returning from a non-public setting. In the CSP, a student's program and schedule are individualized according to his/her respective social-emotional and self-management needs. Special educators and mental health professionals (school psychologists, counselors, and social workers) address the needs of the student in this environment which supports access to non-disabled peers and the general education curriculum.</i>	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>Structured Teaching and Reinforcement in a Visual Environment (STRIVE)</b>  <i>STRIVE offers a full continuum of support and placements to meet the needs of students on the autism spectrum with significant communication, behavioral, and academic needs. Students attending STRIVE present with distinctive learner characteristics and require Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to shape desired behaviors. Students in traditional STRIVE classrooms require intensive instruction with errorless teaching procedures, functional life skills training, and communication support. Transitional STRIVE classrooms are utilized for students who do not require errorless teaching procedures yet require extensive communication and behavioral support. Instruction in all STRIVE classrooms is aligned with the Maryland Core Content Connectors according to the College and Career-Ready Standards.</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
<b>Specialized Preschool Programs</b>  <i>Learning Together is an inclusive preschool program where 3 and 4-year-old children, with and without disabilities, learn, play, and grow alongside one another. The program promotes social skills, communication, early literacy, and early math literacy skill development for all children. An MSDE approved early childhood curriculum (Creative Curriculum) aligned with Maryland College and Career Ready standards is taught by a preschool special educator and supported by a paraprofessional. Children with disabilities attend two or three half-days per</i>	Edgewood Elementary School Emmorton Elementary School Homestead Wakefield Elementary Havre de Grace Elementary School Meadowvale Elementary School North Bend Elementary School Youth's Benefit Elementary School

<p><i>week, based on the IEP team determination. Typical developing peers are approved through an application process and attend on the same schedule as the identified students with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>Early Learners' classrooms utilize highly effective, research-based teaching strategies, including Applied Behavior Analysis, with a focus on Verbal Behavior, to promote communication and social skill development and to reduce or replace maladaptive behaviors. The Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP), along with the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards provides the basis for instructional planning and decision-making relative to each individual student. This program has an enhanced staff to student ratio to motivate and engage students. Children typically attend four half-days per week. One day per week is designated for the special education staff to make home or caregiver visits and conduct parent workshops to promote collaboration and consistency across the child's home or daycare and school environments.</i></p>	
<b>Vision Support Program</b>	Patterson Mill High School Patterson Mill Middle School Fountain Green Elementary School Services available at all HCPS schools
<b>Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support</b>	Services available at all HCPS schools
<b>Post-Secondary – Future Link</b>  <i>The Future Link program is a post-secondary program for identified students working toward a Maryland Certificate of Program Completion (MCOPC) in their final two years of school. It focuses on building independence through intensive community-based instruction and supported work experiences.</i>	Harford Technical High School Harford Community College Campus
<b>Public Separate Day School</b>	Harford Academy

Seamless expansion of programs to address the growing population of students with disabilities requiring extensive support is a priority for HCPS. This year, HCPS added additional STRIVE classrooms to Deerfield, and Ring Factory elementary schools. Expansion of programming for preschool-aged children was achieved with the addition of pre-kindergarten programs throughout the county. The HCPS CSP continuum was also expanded with the addition of a classroom in the high school CSP program at Bel Air High 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. Staffing adjustments to address the changing population at Swan Creek are an on-going consideration for the department. Beginning in March 2025, HCPS contracted with Specialized Education Services, Inc. (SESI) for an In District Classroom (IDC) which is located at the Swan Creek School. The IDC offers an interim educational setting for up to 18 elementary aged students requiring extensive behavioral and social emotional support. Through this partnership, students who are awaiting a non-public placement can be placed in a more supportive environment with highly trained staff to address needs that supersede the resources available in their home school. The IDC staff work in collaboration with the administrative team at Swan Creek School to ensure that student needs are met in a safe and supportive environment. This partnership also offers a



safe and supportive environment while allowing the system to address unique circumstances requiring an interim placement.

During the 24-25 school year, HCPS engaged in a strategic partnership, supported by an AIB grant, aimed at evaluating and enhancing resource allocation to improve student outcomes. Through this process, Project Evident, our resource allocation consultant, has guided HCPS in a comprehensive review and analysis of student performance data as it aligns with IEP service requirements and current staffing allocations. Through this partnership, Project Evident has assisted HCPS by providing robust tools to model various staffing and service delivery allocations tied to the actual service minutes identified in a student IEP. This analysis has led to valuable insights into the relationship between staffing allocations and student performance. While this work is ongoing, initial plans for the reallocation of staff for the FY 26 budget included a reduction in paraeducators, Educational Evaluators, and Transition Resource Itinerants which allowed for an additional 17 special education teachers and 5 special education teacher specialists to be hired for the 25-26 school year. Four newly hired teacher specialists are part of a pilot to evaluate the impact of a building-based teacher specialist at 4 HCPS schools. This pilot is part of a larger plan for reallocation to ensure that all schools are equipped with a building-based instructional leader who has knowledge and expertise in the field of Special Education. Additional plans are in development for FY27 to reallocate staffing and other resources to effect improved outcomes for struggling learners with a focus on literacy instruction in grades pre-k to 2.

The Office of Special Education collaborates with general education stakeholders to ensure the provision of FAPE for identified students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. School performance data is regularly analyzed by a variety of stakeholders including School Performance and Achievement (SPA) teams, directors and supervisors across a variety of departments, including Education Services, Student Support Services, Curriculum and Instruction and Accountability. School and district level performance data is captured in a variety of dashboards which offer staff easy access to a wide range of data. Information is analyzed and reviewed during site visits hosted by Education Services, the Office of Accountability and Curriculum and Instruction, and is used to evaluate the effectiveness of SPA plans and goals related to the Blueprint 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 implementation of the IEP in the least restrictive environment, including shared responsibility for the provision of FAPE and supporting student access to and participation in extracurricular activities with non-disabled peers.

Staff	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
<b>School Administrators</b>	74.0 (comprehensive)  2.0 Harford Academy  1.0 Swan Creek	33.5 (comprehensive)  1.0 Swan Creek Virtual & the CEO @ Swan Creek Blended	35.5 (comprehensive)  1.0 Swan Creek Virtual & the CEO @ Swan Creek Blended	148.0

<b>General Educators*</b>	773.0	363.0	370.5	1,506.5
<b>School Counselors</b>	41.0 (comprehensive)  1.0 Harford Academy	25.0 (comprehensive)	38.0 (comprehensive)  2.0 Swan Creek Virtual & CEO @ Swan Creek Blended	107.0
<b>School Psychologists</b>	-	-	-	45.2
<b>Special Area Teachers*</b>	249.2 (comprehensive)  4.1 Harford Academy	137.5 (comprehensive)	214.1 (comprehensive)	604.9
<b>Swan Creek School (Virtual)</b>	-	-	-	30.7
<b>Swan Creek School (Blended)</b>	-	-	-	16.1
<b>Reading Specialists</b>	36.1	0	0	36.1

\***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, and Business.

## Special Education and Related Services Descriptions and Staffing

<b>Service Providers</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b># of Positions FY25</b>	<b># of Positions FY26</b>
Special Education Teachers	Special Education teachers work directly with students in a multitude of settings. They provide IEP designated services, support the implementation of accommodations and supplementary aides, services, and supports, and provide case management to ensure compliance with State and federal mandates. Special Education teachers also provide support and oversight to support staff.	410	427
Teachers of the Visually Impaired	Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) are itinerant staff who provide direct service to students with vision impairment and consultative service to parents, teachers, and administrators. These teachers assist with assessment, interpreting vision and medical reports, adapting	3.8	3.8

	and developing curriculum, implementing specialized equipment, and Braille instruction.		
Orientation and Mobility Teacher	Orientation and Mobility teachers assist students with vision impairments navigate their respective community. They work in collaboration with the TVIs to assess students orientation and mobility needs and to provide direct service to students in both the school and community settings.	1.0	1.0
Braille Technicians	Braille Technicians assist teachers in the instructional program and coordinate activities for students with visual impairments.	3.0	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. These itinerant staff support PE teachers and provide consultation and/or direct service as indicated by the IEP.	4.4	3.4
Interpreters	Interpreters provide interpretation of the spoken word by means of sign language to facilitate communication for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. An interpreter is responsible for implementing and overseeing communication through cued speech techniques for identified students. Agency staff is utilized as needed to fill short- and long-term vacancies.	6.0	6.0
Speech Language Pathologists	Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) provide intervention services to students with disabilities who have been identified as needing speech or language therapy. 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 short- and long-term vacancies.	79.7	79.7
Speech Language Assistants		3.0	3.0
Occupational Therapists	Occupational Therapists (Ots) provide activities in the areas of perceptual fine motor, sensory motor, oral motor, and self-help skills. The therapists design programs to facilitate age and developmentally appropriate movement patterns and to use adaptive materials/equipment, as	18.4	18.4
Occupational Therapy Assistants		1.0	1.0

	needed. OT's may provide demonstration and instruction necessary to assist a child with coordinating visual and motor skills as they relate to fine motor and classroom tasks. Agency staff is utilized as needed to fill short- and long-term vacancies.		
Audiologists	Audiologists and Teachers of the Hearing Impaired are itinerant staff providing special education services to students identified as deaf or hearing impaired. 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	.6
Teachers of the Hearing Impaired		2.0	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. Paraeducators are utilized in HCPS regional programs to support the delivery of small group and individualized instruction and to ensure fidelity of program requirements. In cases where staff vacancies compromise the safety of students in regional program placements, agency staff are utilized as needed to fill short- and long-term vacancies.	495.0	482.0
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.	24.0	29.0

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 to address student needs in general education and special education settings, and professional development are some of their duties.	16.0	13.0
Physical Therapists Physical Therapy Assistants	Physical Therapists assist students with disabilities with identified needs relating to gross motor skills, mobility, building accessibility, posture, or gross motor functioning within a school setting. Agency staff is utilized as needed to fill short- and long-term vacancies.	6.2 3.0 contracted	6.2 2.0 contracted
Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) assist schools with students exhibiting significant behavioral concerns. They serve as a resource in the development and implementation of functional behavior assessment and the development and implementation of behavior intervention plans. HCPS BCBAs provide direct support to staff and students in HCPS regional programs and consultative support for students in comprehensive schools. Agency staff is utilized as needed to fill short- and long-term vacancies.	3.0	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 foster communicative competence and the use of AAC devices and supports.	3.0 3.0	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,	9.0	10.0

	and social/emotional deficits.		
Other Support Staff	Inclusion Helpers assist special educators by providing individual support and assistance to students with 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 health.	171.0	171.0
Transition Resource Itinerants	Transition Resource Itinerant Teachers (TRIs) facilitate the coordination of activities and experiences needed to prepare students for post-graduation employment or study. They are involved with assessing post-secondary aspirations and with the development of post-secondary goals aligned with student interest and need. TRIs also 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 and support school teams with compliance indicators associated with transition planning.	10.0	6.0
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	17.0

Personnel from the Department of Special Education review the staffing needs 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 2025-2026 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 and 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) and Student Levels of Independent Functioning (SLIF) 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 (Student:Teacher)
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, up to 12 children
Kindergarten/Prekindergarten	14:1
Elementary	14:1
Middle	16:1
High	16:1
Classroom Support Program (CSP)	Grades K-5: Up to 8 students per classroom: 1 teacher, 2 support staff  Grades 6-8: Up to 10 students per classroom: 1 teacher, 2 support staff  Grades 9-12: Up to 15 students per classroom: 1 teacher, 3 support staff  1 Social Worker assigned to all schools with CSP programs

	2 additional support staff per CSP school for crisis intervention and to support inclusion in general education curriculum
Structured Teaching and Reinforcement in a Visual Environment (STRIVE)	<p>Grades K-2 Up to 5 students per classroom: 1 teacher, 4 paraeducators</p> <p>Grades 3-12 Up to 6 students per classroom: 1 teacher, 4 paraeducators</p> <p>Transitional STRIVE, K-5 1 teacher, 3 paraeducators</p>
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 commitment from all stakeholders, including our general education partners. 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 instruction aligned to grade level content standards. Special educators attend curriculum-based professional development with their grade or core subject colleagues to build their capacity and content knowledge to enhance opportunities and ensure high quality instruction for students with disabilities. 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 work together to provide specially designed instruction to identified students with disabilities, as appropriate.

According to the MSDE FFY2023 Report Card data, 83.38% 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 high-quality instruction aligned with services outlined in each student's IEP.

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) and Student Levels of Independent Functioning (SLIF) process. Special Educators are required to complete a SLIF for each student requiring adult support in the IEP. The SLIF provides a rubric for independent behavior throughout a student's instructional day. Information from the SLIF is used to identify areas within the student's day where adult support and targeted intervention to promote independence is needed. Data gathered through the SLIF survey is then utilized to develop the student's present level of performance and to develop appropriate goals aligned to student need. Data from SLIFs completed year to year is used to support the fading of adult support as greater levels of independence are achieved.

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 meetings, assisting in the observation and evaluation of teachers, and providing professional growth opportunities for special education teachers and staff are some of the many functions of the Office of Special Education leadership team which consists 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-nine teacher specialists. With the adoption of the Community Schools model and subsequent funding for additional staff to support the health and well-being of students in areas with concentrated poverty, 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. One strength of special education programming within HCPS is the continuum of services offered to meet the needs of individual 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 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 students, deliver SDI, and review data through the IEP process to satisfy all needs related to compensatory/recovery services. As student needs change, or as students move in and out of schools or the system, staffing is adjusted accordingly. No students are denied FAPE in the least restrictive environment due to a lack of staff or service providers. When vacancies occur, plans are made with building administrators to ensure on-going implementation of all IEPs. In cases where the provision of FAPE is in question or not supported by progress monitoring data, the Special Education Coordinators and teacher specialists partner with school teams and parents/guardians to design and implement compensatory services aimed at rectifying any lost instruction. To date, there are no hearing decisions or complaint corrective actions that directly impact the staffing plan or overall delivery of Special Education and related services. 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 and to close achievement gaps between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.