

LMSD Special Education Plan DRAFT (2024-2027)

Profile and Plan Essentials

LEA Name		AUN	
Lower Merion SD		123464502	
Address 1			
301 E Montgomery Ave			
Address 2			
City		State	Zip
Ardmore		PA	19003
Director of Special Education Name			
Kimberly Fraser			
Director of Special Education Email			
fraserk@lmsd.org			
Director of Special Education Phone Number		Director of Special Education Ext	
610.645.1933			
Chief Administrator Name			
Dr Steven M Yann			
Chief Administrator Email			
dryanni@lmsd.org			

Special Education Students

Total Number of Students Receiving Special Education 1804

School District Total Student Enrollment 8556

Percent of Students Receiving Special Education 21.1

School District Areas of Improvement and Planning - Indicators

Suspension/Expulsion by Race/Ethnicity (Indicator 4B): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Disproportionate Representation by Race/Ethnicity (Indicator 9): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Disproportionate Representation by Race/Ethnicity/Disability (Indicator 10): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Timely Initial Evaluations (Indicator 11): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Secondary Transition (Indicator 13): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Graduation (Indicator 1): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Drop Out (Indicator 2): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Assessment (Indicator 3): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Education Environments (Indicator 5): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Parent Involvement (Indicator 8): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Early Childhood Transition (Indicator 12): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Post-School Outcomes (Indicator 14): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Resolution Sessions (Indicator 15): Indicator not flagged at this time.

Mediation (Indicator 16): Indicator not flagged at this time.

School District Areas of Improvement and Planning - Monitoring

District has completed all monitoring corrective action/improvement plans.

Identify the District's method for identifying students with specific learning disabilities: Discrepancy Model

Non-Resident Students Oversight

1. **Is your district currently a host district for a 1306 facility?** No

2. **Describe the host's educational oversight to ensure students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment while in the 1306 facility? (If not a host, answer as if you were.)**

Currently, there are no 1306 facilities located within the Lower Merion School District. When the Lower Merion School District serves as a host District for students residing in children's institutions, if the student is a child with a disability or a qualified handicapped student who will be educated in the District, the District endeavors to meet the student's needs through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Service Agreement processes, respectively. The District provides educational programming for the student and ensures the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for students residing in children's institutions through appropriate case management. As a host district, the District works closely with the home district and also interfaces with involved agencies, to the extent allowed by law, to exchange information. As a host district, the District also upholds its "child find" responsibilities for students residing in children's institutions. The District complies with relevant state and Federal law regarding its "child find" responsibilities and the provisions of FAPE in the LRE by adhering to procedural and substantive requirements and collaborating with the home District, parents/guardians and appropriate agencies during the evaluation, IEP and 504 processes.

3. **Describe the district's procedures for communicating with 1306 facilities and how the district ensures a successful transition back to school?**

The Lower Merion School District's Office of Student Services and Special Education works closely with 1306 facilities and continues to be directly involved through students' IEP meetings. This active participation in the ongoing IEP process allows the District to ensure a successful transition back to LMSD when the student is ready.

Incarcerated Students Oversight

1. **Does the district have an adult correctional facility that houses juveniles within its geographical boundaries?** No

2. **Describe the system of oversight the District would implement to ensure that all incarcerated students who may be eligible for special education are located, identified, evaluated and when deemed eligible, are offered a free appropriate public education (FAPE).**

Currently, there are no correctional facilities located within the Lower Merion School District; however, at times, the District has students who are incarcerated or adjudicated delinquent and subsequently placed by courts. The District works with the Intermediate Unit or host district that operates the educational program in the relevant facilities to provide appropriate educational records relating to such students. As the resident District, the District also works collaboratively with the Intermediate Unit or host district to provide a FAPE to the student and remain informed regarding the student's education and possible return to the District.

Least Restrictive Environment

1. Review the district's data for Least Restrictive Environment. Highlight areas of improvement.

Data analyzed from over the last seven years shows a consistent trend toward an increasing number of students receiving the majority of their education (80% or more) within the general education setting. While this is not the appropriate placement for all students, and individual needs must always be the basis for decision making, this trend demonstrates the emphasis placed on consideration of the least restrictive environment to the greatest extent possible. 2016-2017: 62.4% within the general ed setting for 80% or more, 4.5% within the regular education setting for less than 40% 2017-2018: 66.4% within the general ed setting for 80% or more, 4.5% within the regular education setting for less than 40% 2018-2019: 67.6% within the general ed setting for 80% or more, 3.2% within the regular education setting for less than 40% 2019-2020: 67.3% within the general ed setting for 80% or more, 3.0% within the regular education setting for less than 40% 2020-2021: 68.7% within the general ed setting for 80% or more, 2.9% within the regular education setting for less than 40% 2021-2022: 69.9% within the general ed setting for 80% or more, 3.9% within the regular education setting for less than 40% 2022-2023: 72.0% within the general ed setting for 80% or more, 4.0% within the regular education setting for less than 40% (Special Education Data Reporting, PDE; Special Education December 1 Child Count)

2. What universal practices does the district utilize to address the academic and social/emotional needs of all students in need of accommodations to their learning environments?

There are resources available to all students in the district with regard to academic and social/emotional supports. The professional staff is highly qualified and knowledgeable in their provision of evidenced based instruction; however, additional resources are available to students when academic benchmarks are not met. Achievement teams, consisting of building administrators, guidance counselors, instructional support coordinators, psychologists, and regular education teachers, as well as reading and math specialists meet weekly to review student data and determine if intervention is necessary for a student within the general education setting. School counselors are critical to supporting the social/emotional health of all learners. This support is provided through whole group instructional lessons in research-based curriculum to promote the social-emotional development, safety, and well-being of children, as well as small group

and individual time with students who may need that support. The General Education setting is always the first option for all students with disabilities that require specially designed instruction and support. The teams make sure that inclusion is the priority when it comes to decision making for services and placement, as well as scheduling the student's classes. When a student is identified with a disability, the team reviews the evaluation report and the present educational levels to determine the need for supports on the goals and objectives of the IEP. The IEP team takes a backward mapping approach to placement for the children in district. With the general education teacher present at the IEP meeting, the focus begins with the general education classroom ensuring that the supports are in place within that setting and that the data collection will support success for that child. The team then identifies the student's needs and determines where those needs can best be supported including supplementary aids and services that can be utilized to allow meaningful access to the learning environment. Guiding questions provided on the IEP that address supports in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible are used as a checklist to assure the team is making the appropriate placement choices for the student. Each of these guiding questions addresses supports in the general education setting and will determine what the team needs to consider for success in that setting. The IEP process ensures that the least restrictive environment is fully considered. Teams evaluate the use of supplementary aids and services in all aspects of student access (Collaborative, Instructional, Physical and Social-Behavioral) when developing the IEP for each individual student. In some cases, the team needs an additional resource to consider ways to mitigate significant barriers to student access. In such cases, the Supplementary Aids and Services (SAS) Toolkit is a valuable resource used by our IEP teams to guide this discussion. The SAS Toolkit requires the entire IEP team participate in a four-step process to analyze the instructional, physical, and social environment of the general education classroom from the perspective of an individual student. The formal process takes several days to complete and is guided by a facilitator. Each of our Special Education Coordinators (4) have been trained to facilitate the SAS Tool Kit process.

3. Describe the academic programming and training efforts the LEA utilizes to ensure meaningful participation of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum.

The resources the district offers to all children in the district are extensive. The teachers and paraprofessionals are trained in how to support the curriculum needs of our students with special education needs within the general education setting. All students are provided academic instruction to meet grade-level standards, unless the IEP team determines the student meets eligibility for instruction towards alternate standards. All students have access to summer programming through the District's regular education programming as offered, while some students in special education may also qualify for Extended School Year (ESY). The related services provided to children in the district also play a large role in the success of our students. Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists as well as the Board-Certified Behavioral Analysts push into the classrooms to ensure the students are generalizing skills acquired after group or individual sessions and support carryover of skills through consultation within the general

education setting. Ongoing consultation to facilitate collaboration of the team to support the student is an essential component to IEP implementation across the educational environment. Professional learning sessions and workshops are offered by providers as well to all team members in order to better understand how to support these students in their classes. Additionally, LMSD has many trained paraprofessionals within the district that support the students in the special education classes as well as in the general education setting. When new students enter the district with existing eligibility, the Special Education Supervisor works with the family and school team to implement appropriate services to meet the needs of the student. The School Age Transition Team (SATT) works directly with students transitioning from Early Intervention services in preparation for entry into Kindergarten. With the support of the Supervisor of Special Education for Early Intervention-3rd grade, as well as the SATT Coordinator, each transitioning student has a team assigned to evaluate the student and develop an IEP which would provide an appropriate special education program in the least restrictive environment. The IEP team carefully reviews the needs of the students and how the child can be supported within the general education setting before there is a discussion of pulling the child for support in a more restrictive setting. We look first at Universal Design and what is good practice for all children in the classroom. The district has approximately 210 paraprofessionals (instructional assistants, behavior aides, and job coaches) to support students across settings, frequently within the general education setting. These paraprofessionals receive extensive training throughout the school year to further develop their skills in supporting students within the least restrictive setting. The district uses the SETT process (Student Environment Tools and Tasks) to determine the level of Assistive Technology needed to meet an individual student's needs. The process is facilitated by the IEP team with support from the District's Assistive Technology Coordinator when necessary. Supplementary aids and services used in the general education setting may include but are certainly not limited to: eBooks, oral reporting of an assignment or a presentation, a scribe for note taking in the classroom, copy of the notes taken during the lecture, computer access for note taking with guided notes/skeleton notes to fill in during lecture time, graphic organizers, quiet space provided in the room for test or quizzes taken, worksheets with fewer math problems to help with focus and organization, extended time on tests, oral and picture presentation of directions, timers set for time management, computer access for all students, instruction in keyboarding, etc. All students are provided academic instruction to meet grade-level standards, unless the IEP team determines the student meets eligibility for instruction towards alternate standards. Support for student's education will span a variety of environments during the day. Opportunities for instruction, practice and mastery of the skills looks very different for each child. General education classrooms, special education classrooms with smaller instructional groups, during transitions, in cafeteria, on playgrounds, in sensory rooms, and in community settings are just a few examples where education takes place for our students. For students working to improve social skills, particular emphasis can be placed on the generalization of these skills to natural environments. Teams consider ways which work best within a particular school environment, such as facilitated recess, lunch bunch,

friendship club, lunch and learn, unified sports, Best Buddies, etc. While these supports may look different depending on the particular environment or student needs, they are all implemented with the same goal in mind.

4. **Describe the supplementary aids and services the LEA utilizes to ensure meaningful participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities.**

Learning is not a place as much as it is an opportunity to provide meaningful practice of the targeted skill to enable success in that area of need. This would occur in any and all settings as appropriate for each child. Within the Lower Merion School District, we utilize every opportunity for teaching in a broad definition of "classroom". Supports that enable a student to access the curriculum are provided for students when participating in extracurricular activities. All students in the District are afforded the same opportunities to participate in academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities. The District has provided paraprofessional support and nursing services as needed for children who are participating in school plays or concerts, athletic teams/events, and for evening activities and competitions across the district. We are very sensitive to the needs of our students and support is provided for them to be active members of their school community. Special Education teachers help support students as needed to identify areas of interest or activities that are available. These teachers attend the Activities Fair with students in order to guide them to connect to activities of interest. The Best Buddies Program has been a very successful program that has helped students make friends with same age peers as well as helping the peers understand the needs of the children with disabilities. Best Buddies is an organization dedicated to establishing a volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development and inclusive living for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At the school level, students involved in Best Buddies participate in a variety of activities that support inclusion and foster belonging for all students through friendship. This has helped to encourage participation in extracurricular activities to build school community. We are a very community-based district which is evident within our Strategic Plan for the district.

5. **Describe the District procedures, which ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities placed in private institutions are educated with non-disabled children and have the opportunity to participate in district lead extracurricular activities?**

Lower Merion takes pride in the fact that the district has a full continuum of services in order to maintain the students in their home school to the greatest extent possible. Students within the low incidence population, in particular Autistic Support and Life Skills Support, are located in one of the buildings in the district. There is a Life Skills program in one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. There is an Emotional Support program with one full time teacher at one elementary school and an Emotional Support program at each middle and high school with at least two full time Emotional Support teachers per program. In all elementary schools, there are Emotional Support services provided, so in only rare cases would student needs rise to the level of support in which

placement in the Emotional Support Program would be necessary. Similarly, the District has Autistic Support teachers in every school with some schools having as many as 3-5 teachers to support the extensive services offered. There is a program for students with complex needs who may need placement in our Autistic Support Program. There are 3 elementary teachers, 3 middle school teachers, and 5 high school teachers that work in one designated building at each level to support these small groups of students. Even within these programs, students access the general education environment to the greatest extent possible. When necessary, the IEP team, with support of the administration, may determine that a student needs a placement not available within in-district resources. This is an on-going process that evolves through continued efforts by the IEP team to reconsider and examine services and supports available within the District. When the team has exhausted District resources and determined that an out of district placement is needed, the Supervisor of Special Education works in collaboration with the family to identify the most appropriate placement. While this is not common, this is a necessary step for a small number of students for whom this level of support is required. At this time, less than 3% of the students receiving special education supports and services receive these services at an out of district placement (Special Education December 1 Child Count 2023). The IEP is reviewed at least annually to revisit placement decisions to ensure LRE is reconsidered in the best interest of the student. Our District is proud of the continuum of services offered for our students with disabilities. Students who are placed within out of district placements have access to extracurricular activities within their home school with appropriate supports as needed (ex: 1:1, nursing, etc.).

6. **Discuss the district's need to build capacity and expand programs and services in an effort to provide a continuum of services. (Consider the out of district placement chart)**

LMSD continually monitors student needs and develop programming as needs arise including services within Learning Support, Emotional Support, and Autistic Support. LMSD is committed to ensuring that we are always re-thinking and re-visiting our programming to ensure that a vast continuum of services is offered to our students with disabilities. With regard to out of district placements, data trends over the last 7 years indicate a consistent effort to consider programming and supports available within LMSD to the greatest extent possible. 2016-2017: 3.1% 2017-2018: 3.2% 2018-2019: 2.6% 2019-2020: 3.2% 2020-2021: 2.7% 2021-2022: 2.5% 2022-2023: 2.8% (Special Education Data Reporting, PDE; Special Education December 1 Child Count)

Out of District Placements

Facility Name	Facility Type	Other	Operated By	Service Type	Number of Students Placed
Vanguard School	Approved Private School (APS)		Vanguard School	Autistic Support	3
CCIU Career & Child Development Center	Other	IU Program	Chester County Intermediate Unit	Emotional Support	4
CCIU CHAMP Program	Other	IU Program	Chester County Intermediate Unit	Autistic Support	2
HMS School	Approved Private School (APS)		HMS School	Multiple Disabilities Support	3
Overbrook School for the Blind	Approved Private School (APS)		Overbrook School for the Blind	Blind and Visually Impaired Support	1
CCIU TEACH Program	Other	IU Program	Chester County Intermediate Unit	Emotional Support	2
Devereux	Approved Private School (APS)		Devereux	Autistic Support	2
The Pathway School	Approved Private School (APS)		The Pathway School	Autistic Support	1
CCIU Technical College High School	Other	IU Program	Chester County Intermediate Unit	Learning Support	2
Melmark School	Approved Private School (APS)		Melmark School	Autistic Support	2
Camphill School	Approved Private School (APS)		Camphill School	Life Skills Support	4
Lifeworks School	Licensed Private Academic		Lifeworks School	Emotional Support	2
Timothy School	Approved Private School (APS)		Timothy School	Autistic Support	2
CCIU Career Academy	Other	IU Program	Chester County Intermediate Unit	Autistic Support	3

CCIU Career & Child Development Center	Other	IU Program	Chester County Intermediate Unit	Multiple Disabilities Support	1
Lakeside School	Licensed Private Academic		Lakeside Educational Network	Emotional Support	2
CCIU Career & Child Development Center	Other	IU Program	Chester County Intermediate Unit	Autistic Support	2
CADES	Approved Private School (APS)		CADES	Blind and Visually Impaired Support	4
Devereux	Approved Private School (APS)		Devereux	Emotional Support	1
Pathway School	Approved Private School (APS)		Pathway School	Emotional Support	2
MCIU Anderson/Explorations	Other	IU Program	MCIU	Emotional Support	3
Fairwald Academy	Approved Private School (APS)		Fairwald Academy	Emotional Support	1
DCIU	Other	IU Program	DCIU	Learning Support	2
CCIU Gateway	Other	IU Program	CCIU	Emotional Support	2
MCIU Hearing Program	Other	IU Program	MCIU	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support	1

Positive Behavior Support

Date of Approval

2012-06-29

Uploaded Files

LMSD_Policy_P236.pdf

1. How does the district support the emotional, social needs of students with disabilities?

The Lower Merion School District's Positive Behavior Support (PBS) practices address all the components listed in 22 Pa. Code 14.133 regarding Behavior Support for Children with IEPs (LMSD Policy 236). The District recognizes that it has the primary responsibility for ensuring that PBS programs are in accordance with 22 Pa. Code Chapter 14, including the training of personnel for the use of specific procedures, methods, and techniques, and for having a written policy and procedure on the use of PBS techniques and obtaining parental consent prior to the use of restraints or intrusive procedures as provided in 22 Pa. Code 14.133(c).

2. Describe training provided to staff in the use of positive behavior supports, de-escalation techniques and responses to behavior that may require immediate intervention.

The District's Positive Behavior Support (PBS) practices include personnel training on the use of PBS, de-escalation techniques, and emergency response including restraints. Prior to the beginning of each school year, the Director of Student Services and Special Education establishes a plan for this training to be facilitated by professionals properly certified or otherwise qualified in the area of behavior management. The Lower Merion School District considers the services offered by PaTTAN and Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU). The Lower Merion School District contracts Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) services through MCIU and the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) to provide services to the staff and students, including personnel training. A BCBA is assigned to each building to support on an on-going basis. This support and individualized professional learning are provided to staff on site on a weekly basis, as needed. The District utilizes the Crisis Prevention Institute Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training Program and Safety-Care Behavior Safety Training Program by QBS (Quality Behavioral Solutions) for staff training. Identified special education teachers, administrators, and support staff are trained and re-certified on an annual basis. Preventative practices training provided through the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Program and Safety-Care Behavior Safety Training Program emphasis strategies used to de-escalate students who may become anxious, self-injurious, or injurious to others through both verbal de-escalation and physical intervention in extreme situations to reduce the risk of injury to staff and students. Each district school has qualified trained professionals (i.e., Safety Response Teams) that can be deployed in an emergency situation. The District provides training to all staff who support students with regulating their emotional and behavioral responses throughout the school day and when participating in extracurricular activities. In accordance with LMSD Policy and Administrative Regulations 236, there are four stages of behavioral support and intervention that progress from least to most restrictive. All staff start with positive, non-intrusive strategies that support all students by having clear classroom and school rules and expectations; consistent monitoring and recording of behaviors; redirecting of inappropriate behaviors; modeling appropriate behavior; systematic reinforcing of prosocial behavior; self-esteem enhancing activities;

problem solving instruction and parent/guardian involvement. “K-4 Behavioral Supports and De-Escalation Strategies” is a training designed and provided for all staff working within our elementary schools. This training is facilitated by BCBA’s and Special Education Coordinators with the purpose of defining social and emotional behaviors within the school setting, identifying the possible reasons for the behavior(s), and applying the most appropriate strategy and intervention to the behavior(s) of concern. For staff working directly with our special education students, preventative practices training may be necessary based on the staff member’s current role within the District. This training is designed for staff that are supporting students within both the general education and special education settings. Staff are identified based on their current assignment and how they will be supporting students(s) within their assigned school. This training is facilitated by a BCBA and is done annually with a focus on positive reinforcement, verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques, and strategies. For students that are in need of additional behavioral support, Stage II strategies are utilized. The strategies within Stage II are positive and present little intrusion as they are designed to be proactive to support a student’s behavior and may include the following: All strategies within Stage I; environmental modification; extended time to complete tests and tasks; curriculum adaptations and modifications; systematic reward policy; specified use of technology; student and parent/guardian contracts and multi-sensory instruction. Written documentation is necessary within Stage II so that the IEP team is properly informed and prepared to implement the Goals and Objectives and/or Specially Designed Instruction. Crisis Preventative Intervention (CPI) is a research-based training provided to staff working within both general education and special education settings with Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) strategies and techniques to de-escalate behavior in a nonrestrictive manner. Staff are identified based on their current assignment and who/how they will be supporting within their assigned building. This training is facilitated by trained BCBA’s annually. If Stages I and Stage II do not produce the level of support necessary for the student to be able to regulate their behavioral responses within the school setting, a Positive Behavioral Support Plan (PBSP) is developed and implemented in accordance with Stage III. The team completes a comprehensive review of the target behavior(s) through the use of a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). The FBA identifies and defines the behavior(s) that are interrupting the student’s social, emotional, and/or academic progress within the school environment and determines if the student’s behavior(s) rise to the level of requiring a Positive Behavioral Support Plan (PBSP). Should a PBSP be necessary, the IEP team develops a Plan that supports the student across all school environments and includes specific techniques, strategies, and interventions that all staff are expected to follow. Specific training for all staff working with the student is provided by the BCBA to ensure consistent follow through and implementation. Parents/guardians are critical members of the IEP team in developing the PBSP and may also be provided training and support the BCBA and identified members of the IEP team. Safety-Care Core Curriculum Training is research-based training that provides the skills and competencies necessary to effectively prevent, minimize, and manage behavioral challenges with dignity and safety. Effective strategies and components of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) are embedded within this training program. Safety-Care reinforces the development

of new skills while maintaining safety and reducing or eliminating restrictive interventions such as a restraint. Staff are identified based on their current assignment and who/how they will be supporting within their assigned building. Safety-Care Advanced Skills Training is also a research-based training that provides an expanded toolbox of additional skills and strategies for those certified in the Safety-Care Core Curriculum. It is designed for staff who support students with the potential of extremely dangerous behavior and may require peer intervention, object management, transitions and floor holds. This training is provided annually with a certification and recertification requirement and is facilitated by trained BCBA's. Only staff that are Safety-Care trained serve on a crisis management team and apply restraint to a student during a crisis situation. Crisis management procedures make up Stage IV and is considered as a last resort. These strategies are utilized when a student is acting in a manner that is determined to be a clear and present danger of imminent physical harm to himself/herself/themselves or others and only when less restrictive measures and techniques are exhausted. Only staff trained on specific research-based crisis management techniques that include verbal and physical de-escalation techniques are permitted to engage in a restraint. The strategies utilized are defined within a student's Crisis Management Plan, which is embedded within a PBSP.

3. Describe the district positive school wide support programs.

The Lower Merion School District employs Positive Behavior Support as the primary method of addressing student behavior. The District recognizes that Positive Behavior Support is comprised of a wide array of evidence-based techniques and procedures and is an integral part of effective educational programming. The use of effective strategies for preventing and reducing inappropriate student behavior and teaching and strengthening pro-social replacement behaviors enhances educational success for students. Each school implements components of Responsive Classroom. At the elementary level, Morning Meeting is a critical part of every student's day and at the secondary level students participate in grade-level advisory. Our elementary schools use the Second Step Curriculum that is research-based to support students in fostering the skills for learning empathy, emotion management, and problem solving. Our 8th graders participate in Peer Mentor programs that support new to middle school students by having a peer assigned to help ease the transition to a new place and environment. Our staff and students have been trained on the three principles of Restorative Practices (Respect, Responsibility, and Relationships). At the secondary level, the students and staff have built the Best Buddies Chapter to one of the largest chapters within the county.

4. Describe the district school-based behavior health services.

The Lower Merion School District has many highly qualified professionals who provide services to meet the behavioral-health needs of students, including thirteen doctoral level certified school psychologists, thirty-one certified school counselors, seven school social workers, and twenty emotional support teachers. The District also has mental health counselors at the high school level to further support the needs of students. The District has a broad continuum of counseling services available to address the varying types and

levels of support needed by students. The District is committed to supporting students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs and to recognizing when a student may be at risk. The District utilizes the PREPaRE School Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training Curriculum, which is a research-based crisis prevention and response program that provides evidence-based resources and consultation related to school crisis preparedness. The District has trained Crisis Response Team members within each school and a District-level Crisis Response Team. Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) is another evidence-based model utilized by the District for use in conducting threat assessments of students. The CSTAG model of threat assessment is an approach to violence prevention that emphasizes early attention to problems such as bullying, teasing, and other forms of student conflict before they escalate into violent behavior. School staff members are encouraged to adopt a flexible, problem-solving approach, as distinguished from a more punitive, zero tolerance approach to student misbehavior. As a result of this training, the model is intended to generate broader changes in the nature of staff-student interactions around disciplinary matters and to encourage a more positive school climate in which students feel treated with fairness and respect. The guidelines follow a five-step decision-tree. Threat assessment includes the identification, assessment, and management of threats with the goal of resolving conflicts or problems before they escalate into violence. This model allows school-based teams to follow a decision-tree process to resolve less serious, transient threats quickly while focusing greater attention on more serious, substantive threats. All special education teachers/case managers are trained to provide positive behavioral support. These special education team members often serve as the first staff member to intervene when a student with a disability needs immediate support. Emotional support teachers have been trained to provide more intensive support to students. Enduring professional learning has focused on the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Framework, which fosters knowledge, skills and attitude across five areas of social and emotional competence. These teachers meet with individual students on a regular basis to provide direct instruction in strategies related to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These supports and services are provided to students as indicated on their IEP where there is an identified need. The District's school social workers meet with individual students requiring a higher level of behavioral support and co-facilitate counseling groups for students in the Emotional Support programs at the secondary level. Social workers also serve as a liaison between families and community-based counseling services, mental health/behavioral health institutions, the court system and the District. Social workers attend transition meetings at behavioral health settings and hospitals to assist in the transition of students returning to a District educational program from those behavioral health settings and hospitals in an effort to facilitate a smooth transition. Social workers continue to provide support to students and families upon the student's return to the District. The District's psychologists provide counseling services in conjunction with the school counselor and/or school social worker for students who are presenting with the highest level of need in the areas of mental health. Psychologists meet with individual students, co-facilitate groups for students receiving Emotional Support services at all levels, and conduct risk

assessments. All related services, including psychological counseling services, are included in a student's IEP and are provided at no cost to parents. The District has a long standing partnership with multiple community-based providers. Some examples include the Montgomery County Base Service Unit (Lower Merion Counseling Services); Montgomery County Mobile Crisis; Carson Valley Children's Aide; mental /behavioral health agencies via the Interagency process; local hospitals for assessment and treatment of immediate, high risk behaviors; mental health/behavioral health treatment centers; and individual providers. A referral system is in place for students who may require a psychiatric assessment. The District maintains a list of community based licensed psychologists and psychiatrists for distribution to parents/guardians seeking services for behavioral health needs manifested at home or in the community. When a student is receiving counseling outside of the school setting, the school-based team attempts to obtain written consent from the parents/guardians and the student (if a child is 14 years of age or older) to collaborate with the outside service provider. With appropriate consent secured, the school counselor, social worker, and/or school psychologist maintains contact with the community-based provider regarding the student's status and continuing counseling needs. These professional interagency relationships help students with a level of support that extends from home to school. District administrators including the Director of Student Services & Special Education, Lead Supervisor of Clinical Services, Lead Supervisor of Special Education, and the District's Home School Visitor/Lead Social Worker participate in a bi-weekly meeting with community agencies to collaborate on how to best support families residing within the District.

5. Describe the district restraint procedure.

The use of restraints may be included in a student's IEP only when the following conditions apply: 1) The restraint is utilized with specific component elements of positive behavior support, 2) The restraint is used in conjunction with the teaching of socially acceptable alternative skills to replace the problem behavior, 3) Staff are authorized to use the procedure and have received the necessary training required, and 4) There is a plan in place for eliminating the use of restraint through the application of positive behavior support. The District utilizes the Crisis Prevention Institute Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training Program and Safety-Care Behavioral Safety Training Program (by QBS) to train staff. The Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Program and Safety Care Behavioral Safety Training Program is used to de-escalate students that may become anxious, self-injurious, or injurious to others through both verbal de-escalation and physical intervention in extreme situations to reduce the risk of injury to staff and students. The Positive Behavior Support Policy highlights a hierarchy of interventions and uses a restraint as the last measure implemented (Stage 4). There is careful planning regarding the elimination of restraints used with students by the IEP team. The student's PBSP includes a focus specifically on teaching appropriate coping, anger management, and social skills to empower the student to interact successfully without the need for restraints. Pursuant to District Policy and Administrative Regulations 236, restraints to control acute or episodic aggressive self-injurious behavior are used only when the student is acting in a manner as to be a clear and present danger of imminent physical harm to himself/herself or others

and only when less restrictive measures and techniques have proven to be or are less effective. Prone restraints are considered an aversive, dehumanizing, and dangerous technique for handling behavior, and are considered inappropriate at all phases of intervention, and are prohibited pursuant to District Policy. The nurse is contacted either during or following a restraint and the student and staff are assessed for any injury. All nurse assessments are followed in accordance with district practice and documentation is maintained within a student's confidential health records. When the use of a restraint to control the aggressive behavior occurs, the school team notifies, that day if possible, but at least within one school day, the student's parents/guardians of the use of restraint. Following the use of a restraint, a meeting of the IEP team occurs within 10 school days of the inappropriate behavior causing the restraint unless the parent/guardian, after being provided written notice, agrees in writing to waive the meeting. At the IEP meeting the team considers whether the student needs a functional behavioral assessment, reevaluation, a new or revised positive behavior support plan, or a change in placement to address the inappropriate behavior. All data pertaining to restraints used in the Lower Merion School District are maintained and documented by the building principal or designee. The data is collected and reported to the state on a regular basis as required. Following every restraint, a designated administrator reports the incident to the Bureau of Special Education via an online reporting system as required by PDE. For District students educated in out of district programs, the appropriate Special Education Supervisor and Coordinator work with the families and their school team. The District is responsible to ensure that the school team is applying the stages of behavioral supports to the best degree possible. All restraint procedures are expected to be addressed pursuant to Policy and Administrative Regulations 236 and the Special Education Supervisor follows the same procedures for reporting to the BSE and ensuring that an IEP meeting is scheduled within 10 school days of the restraint. In the event that a student is referred to law enforcement by the District, the IEP team convenes to review the IEP, including the Positive Behavior Support Plan. The team determines if an FBA needs to be developed or revised with a subsequent development/revision of the PBSP. The team also determines if a need exists for additional assessments by the District. If additional assessment is required, the District issues a Permission to Reevaluate and upon completion of the updated reevaluation, the IEP team reconvenes to review all updated information and revise the IEP and PBSP as appropriate.

Intensive Interagency

Please address any areas of concern with students who are placed on Instruction Conducted in the Home or who are at a substantial risk of waiting more than 30 days for an appropriate educational placement.

The District continues to successfully ensure FAPE for individual students and for all disability categories included within the IDEA. LMSD has not experienced significant difficulties with ensuring FAPE for hard to place students. This fact is directly attributed to the District's established and successful procedure for evaluating students and providing programs and related services within the least restrictive setting appropriate for the individual. Additionally, our strong collaboration with parents, non-district staff, and community-based agencies working with individuals who have mental health concerns or who are cognitively challenged have contributed to success in placing students appropriately. This collaboration begins long before a referral for an out of District placement. The District continues to expand emotional support services and autistic support services. Program expansion and development, personnel training, and expansion of behavioral supports is ongoing as the District continues to work diligently to ensure a continuum of services can be provided within the least restrictive environment at all grade levels.

Special Education Support Services

1

Special Education Support Services	Numerical Value	Primary Location	Contractor or District
Director of Special Education	1	District Wide	District
Other	4 (Supervisor)	District Wide	District
Other	4 (Coordinator)	District Wide	District
School Psychologist	13	District Wide	District
Physical Therapist	2	District Wide	Contractor
Occupational Therapist	7	District Wide	Contractor
Social Worker	7	District Wide	District
Behavior Specialist	5	District Wide	Contractor
Guidance Counselor	31	District Wide	District
Paraprofessionals	210	District Wide	District
Other	19 (Speech Therapist)	District Wide	District
Other	1 (Hearing Therapist)	District Wide	Contractor
Other	1 (Vision Therapist)	District Wide	Contractor

Other	1 (O&M Therapist)	District Wide	Contractor
-------	-------------------	---------------	------------

Special Education Personnel Development

Autism

Description of Training			
Understanding learner variability within the general education classroom			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education and Curriculum & Instruction Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	6	District Intermediate Unit	General Education Teachers Paraprofessionals

Description of Training			
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education and Curriculum & Instruction Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	6	District Intermediate Unit	General Education Teachers Paraprofessionals Special Education Teachers

			Other
--	--	--	-------

Positive Behavior Support

Description of Training			
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (Providing multiple means of engagement and representation)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education and Curriculum & Instruction Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	3	District Intermediate Unit	Building Administrators General Education Teachers Special Education Teachers

Description of Training	
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (Coaching multiple means of engagement and representation)	
Lead Person/Position	Year of Training
Special Education and Curriculum & Instruction Supervisors	2024 2025 2026 2027

Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	2	District Intermediate Unit	Building Administrators Central Office Administrators

Description of Training			
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (Supporting multiple means of engagement and representation)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education and Curriculum & Instruction Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	3	Intermediate Unit	Paraprofessionals

Description of Training			
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (Providing multiple means of expression and action)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education and Curriculum & Instruction Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience

1	3	District Intermediate Unit	Building Administrators General Education Teachers Paraprofessionals Special Education Teachers
---	---	----------------------------	--

Description of Training			
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (Coaching multiple means of expression and action)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education and Curriculum & Instruction Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	1	District Intermediate Unit	Building Administrators Central Office Administrators

Description of Training			
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (Supporting multiple means of expression and action)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education and Curriculum & Instruction Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience

1	3	District Intermediate Unit	Building Administrators General Education Teachers Paraprofessionals Special Education Teachers
---	---	----------------------------	--

Paraprofessional

Description of Training			
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (Supporting multiple means of engagement and representation)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	1	District Intermediate Unit	Paraprofessionals

Description of Training	
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) (Supporting multiple means of expression and action)	
Lead Person/Position	Year of Training
Special Education Supervisors	2024 2025 2026

		2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	1	District Intermediate Unit	Paraprofessionals

Description of Training			
The Role of Paraprofessionals in Inclusion (Supporting Students within the Least Restrictive Environment)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	3	District	Paraprofessionals

Description of Training			
The Role of Paraprofessionals in Inclusion (Creating Belonging within the Classroom)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2025	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	3	District	Paraprofessionals

Description of Training			
The Role of Paraprofessionals in Inclusion (Prompt Hierarchy)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2026	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	3	District	Paraprofessionals

Description of Training			
The Role of Paraprofessionals in Inclusion (Facilitating Meaningful Peer Connections)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	3	District	Paraprofessionals

Transition

Description of Training	
Focused topics in Transition Planning: Pathway to Community and Adult Services	
Lead Person/Position	Year of Training

Special Education Supervisors & Transition Coordinator		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	2	District	Building Administrators Parents Special Education Teachers Other

Description of Training			
Evidence Based Practices in transition planning for students with disabilities ages 14-18 and low incidence disabilities ages 18-22			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors & Transition Coordinator		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	3	District	Special Education Teachers

Description of Training	
School counselor's role in transition planning for students with disabilities ages 14-22	
Lead Person/Position	Year of Training
Special Education Supervisors & Transition Coordinator	2024 2025

		2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	1	District	Other

Description of Training			
Focused topics in Transition Planning for Families: Pathway to Community and Adult Services			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors & Transition Coordinator		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	3	District	Parents

Science of Literacy

Description of Training	
Evidence based practices in literacy and Universal Design for Learning within a Multi-Tiered System of Support (includes science of reading training; Tier I instruction and resources, including universal screening, data, assessment of literacy skills; Tier II and III intervention and resources)	
Lead Person/Position	Year of Training
Curriculum/Instruction Supervisors	2024 2025 2026

		2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
3	1	District Intermediate Unit	General Education Teachers Special Education Teachers

Parent Training

Description of Training			
Focused topics in Transition Planning for Families: Pathway to Community and Adult Services			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors & Transition Coordinator		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	3	District	Parents

Description of Training	
Navigating the IEP Process: Initial Evaluations and Best Practices in IEP Development	
Lead Person/Position	Year of Training
Lead Supervisor of Student Services and Special Education Supervisors	2024 2025 2026 2027

Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	1	District	Parents

Description of Training			
Navigating the IEP Process: Re-Evaluations and IEP Development			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Lead Supervisor of Student Services and Special Education Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	1	District	Parents

Description of Training			
Changes over Time at the Elementary, Middle, and High School Levels to Special Education Supports and Services			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.5	1	District	Parents

Description of Training			
Understanding Supplementary Aids and Services to support meaningful inclusion both within the school setting and beyond			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1.0	2	District	Parents

IEP Development

Description of Training			
Best practices in IEP development (District practice; evaluation/re-evaluation process; IEP process; IEP writing; Progress Monitoring; Transition; ESY)			
Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2024 2025 2026 2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	5	District	Special Education Teachers

Description of Training
Best practices in IEP development to support meaningful inclusion during the school day and within extracurricular activities

Lead Person/Position		Year of Training	
Special Education Supervisors		2024	
		2025	
		2026	
		2027	
Hours Per Training	Number of Sessions	Provider	Audience
1	5	District	Special Education Teachers

DRAFT