

Special Education Citizen's Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – 10/17/24

Continuum of Special Education with a look at Least Restrictive Environments (LRE)

10/17/24 @ 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Carroll Community College
Room M157
1601 Washington Road
Westminster, MD 21157

6:00 pm Kristin Hoffman presented the *Continuum of Special Education with a look at Least Restrictive Environments (LRE)*

- LRE is a term that means being in general education classroom where students with and without disabilities are learning together.
- General Outline of IEP Process
 - Eligibility Determination
 - IEP Planning
 - Placement into LRE with IEP meeting
 - Implementation of IEP
 - Progress monitoring
- Placement is not location

6:30 pm Small group discussions to develop questions to ask Special Educator Panel

- Executive committee acted as group leaders.
- Teams discussed parent perspective regarding continuum of special education CCPS

7:00 pm Special Educator Panel

Name	Facility	Program
Brianna Weil	Infants to Toddlers Teacher	Birth to K
Megan Dash	Special Ed Teacher – Shiloh Middle School	SUCCESS*
Tina Baker	Special Ed Teacher – Winfield Elementary	SUCCESS*
Christy Stodulka	Special Ed Teacher – Transitions Connection Academy	TOPS**
Christina Eaves	Special Ed Teacher – Winters Mill High School	SUCCESS*

*SUCCESS = Skill development and Universal design for Children with Communication and Extensive Support needs in School.

**TOPS - Transition Opportunities for Personal Success

Meeting Feedback Form from SECAC members

- 16 people completed Feedback Form
 - 14 people stated they were “very satisfied” or “extremely satisfied”; 2 people were “somewhat satisfied”
 - Highlights from meeting included: networking/discussion with small groups and hearing directly from teachers/ special education staff.
 - Feedback or changes requested:
 - Developing action plan for after meeting
 - Discussing how feedback will be utilized
 - Attention to times on agenda
 - Maintaining attention to topic as some participants dominated or changed the topic of discussion

- 14 people attended the Meeting, 2 respondents did not attend meeting
 - For those who did not attend, one was due to scheduling conflict, one noted feeling district was not responsive to students with disabilities’ needs.

Strengths:

S: What are the strengths of the Continuum of Special Education services within Carroll County Public Schools?

Knowing that the kids education is the primary goal for both parents and CCPS

The idea of including students in more gen ed classes is exciting

The IEP team has been good about accepting accommodations for my son. I needed to have an education degree myself to know what's available though.

There is a place for every student on this continuum.

moving toward more inclusion finally!

individualized/ driven by needs not disability

A variety of options that support most students staying in the county.

taking data to understand where students would be best placed

I do believe that CCPS is doing very well with blending all children into the general education room and setting.

Very student and service focused

The integration of special education students into the general ed classroom is great so they can learn from their peers.

I don't know

A wealth of experience and knowledge

Communication with parents, students, and teachers/staff

Experience:

I have had my child in a small classroom setting in elementary school. Did a hybrid setting in middle school between small and gen Ed. Tried to mainstream in high school only to be back to a small class setting. When I saw him failing classes and mentally struggling, I insisted on making the change.

I do not have any experiences currently

My son is cognitively unaffected, but cognitively very involved. We have experience with all therapists and assistive technology.

I have a child that recently graduated from Gateway, who had an IEP. I also have a second-grade student with a 504 plan. I am a teacher of students in the SUCCESS program following 4 years in the BEST program.

I was taken by surprise when my entering high school freshman was suddenly in gen ed classes without warning. So far, he seems to be doing well with all the changes. My high school junior does not have all the inclusion experiences her younger brother has since they are focusing on incoming freshman. She would really benefit from more inclusion but only gets one mod per day in gen ed while her brother has 2 mods plus advisory.

I am a parent of a child with special needs

Currently have a child in the 4year old preschool prep program.

Still run more like programs than individualized

My son I believe is part of the 80% that spends most of his time in the classroom with peers he does have one on one instruction for some things, but I am very happy and pleased with what we are experiencing

No negative experiences to report. My experiences have been attending IEP meetings for students on my caseload.

I have had both good and bad experiences with my child's participation in the general ed classroom. The experiences were good or bad based on the educators involved. The educators who were very supportive, willing to put in the effort to adhere to the IEP, and case managers who understand what can be done and are creative to make things work in the general ed environment results in great success! Other educators who do NOT believe in, nor want to try, supporting a child with learning disabilities in a general ed classroom, or case managers who really do not understand what resources they have available to them, or how to best support children with learning disabilities result in disaster (and I am not exaggerating).

Transitions from Infants and Toddlers all the way to DORS in high school. Alternative framework decision making tool.

This is my first experience. So far so good.

My son has an IEP. He's currently in 11th grade and received the IEP in 4th grade.

I have experience in some LRE settings across CCPS

Challenges:

Expectations of stakeholder....parents and CCPS

Ensuring instructors and students moving to gen ed classes are supported.

Inclusion on playgrounds.

Disjointed performance between the same program at different schools; ex, PREP looks different at Robert Moton than at ____ Elementary

General educators at the high school level in particular seem overwhelmed and undertrained at times with the new inclusion programming. They need more supports and seem to struggle at times with modifying instruction, assignments, and assessments. There also needs to be more training for close adult support staff in regards to implementing their student's IEP and BIP.

number of teachers, they are already overworked/underpaid

More opportunities for purposeful inclusion of younger students.

Still treated more like programs than individualized. General education teachers not properly prepared to teach students with high level of learning support.

I guess improvement wise if parents are communicated with or even see what it actually does for the child to be put in the setting over another setting it would help

Ensuring the best services are provided for each student and keeping open communication

Getting buy in by general educators, and ensuring that the culture of each school is inclusive and doesn't treat special education children as problems. Also ways to ensure case managers understand the resources and supports they have available for their children.

not sure

Breaking preconceived notions

While communication with parents is good, it could be better. I only receive communication from the special education team at the end of every quarter. Having more frequent updates would be beneficial to making sure students are on track, meeting expectations, and receiving additional help in time.

not many opportunities for LRE at age 3

Ask:

A: What questions do you have regarding the Continuum of Special Education services within Carroll County Public Schools?

None

None at this time

Questions about accessibility of playgrounds

no lingering questions

Can a list of program/placement options be made available to parents for reference?

none at this time

None at this time

How can general education teachers be better prepared to teach students with high levels of support in their classrooms.

How can outside providers recommendations be considered at time?

No questions.

How can you change the culture of some schools, and educators who are not agreeing with an inclusive environment?

none

None at this moment

I have heard that some schools are under-staffed in the special education department, is there a plan to hire more special educators and if so, when?

how much information are parents being given to discuss how, when, and how long it would take to move LRE placements

Comment:

C: As a member of SECAC my comment or feedback regarding the Continuum of Special Education services within Carroll County Public Schools is....

Hoping it is heard and used to the betterment of the program.

No comment at this time

Inclusion means including students of all abilities.

I appreciated having the time to dive into this with parents and other educators, to discuss meaningful LRE work for each student.

I am glad CCPS is finally moving in the right direction regarding inclusion, particularly at the high school level. This is definitely a work in progress, and CCPS needs to strive for proper implementation with adequate supports in place for both teachers and students so everyone can be successful.

look forward to more discussions

I think that in order to continue to provide students with more inclusion opportunities, more special education staff is necessary

We should have a continuum of services but how do we move to a space where service delivery is truly individualized and IEPs are not being written to fit programs/school scheduling/old ways of thinking?

The county is doing well with LRE in my personal situation.

None at this time

this is extremely important and must continue to successfully be executed in all CC schools. However, CC must be willing and prepared to do what it takes to obtain buy in and shift cultures in some schools.

I know the team are all very qualified and value their input and guidance.

Well received

While the special education services in Carroll County public schools is much better than in other counties, there is always room for improvement. Overall, I am happy with the services my son is and has been receiving. It would be my hope that this continues.

