



# CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## BLUEPRINT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### FINAL 2024 PLAN PARTS I AND II



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## Systemwide Blueprint Implementation Cecil County Public Schools Phase II Part I

### Approach to Change

As a school system committed to equity and student success, we are actively rethinking and redesigning existing policies and practices to ensure that every student has access to high-quality education and support. Cecil County is a unique district, whose demographics and economic landscape influence our approach to improvement. The county's makeup includes a diverse population with varying socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural identities, and learning needs. Our English Learner population has increased by 26% over the last five years and continues to grow. Seventeen languages are spoken in Cecil County, representing 22 countries. Additionally, 18% of our students receive special education services, making Cecil County Public Schools the district with the highest percentage of students identified with disabilities in Maryland. As such, we recognize that we must prioritize responsive instructional strategies and equitable resource allocation to address the needs of all students effectively, ensuring that every student has access to the support and opportunities necessary for academic success.

One crucial aspect of this redesign is addressing disparities in resource allocation among schools. Cecil County ranks 17th out of 24 MD districts in terms of wealth, yet we are 23 out of 24 in overall educational funding. Funding gaps exist due to lack of local funding. In our approach to improvement, we are implementing a funding model that allocates resources based on factors such as student demographics, socioeconomic status, and the academic needs of our pre-K-12 learners. This approach ensures that schools serving students from marginalized communities receive the support necessary to provide equitable opportunities for learning and growth rather than spreading resources equally across the district.

We continue to reevaluate our instructional models to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, ability level, or native language, have access to quality education and support.

Recognizing the diverse needs of our student body, we redesigned our multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model, ensuring that every student receives the individualized attention and assistance they require to thrive academically and socially. Currently, we are researching different models that will allow us to meet the Blueprint statute (75%) of allocating funding categories to the school level of the identified students. Currently, 84% of the CCPS budget is dedicated to staff. The challenge will be to adjust the staffing at schools where the 75% allocation will have the biggest impact on the school budget process, while ensuring an adequate level of services to all schools.

Even though these funding formulas provide CCPS a major challenge, Cecil County Public Schools remains committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment where every student can reach their full potential.

Finally, Cecil County's economic landscape, characterized by a mix of industries including education, manufacturing, trade services, and tourism has informed our approach to college and career readiness and workforce development. By forging new partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships with local businesses and industries, we are improving access to and relevance of our career pathways, apprenticeships, and technical training opportunities. We are aligning students' experiences with the region's economic landscape, aiming to provide students with the skills and experiences needed to pursue meaningful career paths, thrive in the local workforce, and contribute to the continued prosperity of Cecil County.

## District Strategic Plan Alignment to the Blueprint:

In August 2018, Cecil County Public Schools created a five-year strategic plan to serve as a roadmap to the achievement of our long-term goals and objectives. This unifying framework aligned the efforts of all stakeholders toward a common vision: *To educate and empower every Cecil County learner through equitable opportunities to build and strengthen our community.* By assessing past performance and identifying current challenges, this plan enabled the strategic allocation of resources, prioritized initiatives, and addressed areas for improvement.

While the CCPS vision, goals, strategic plan, and system-level initiatives are currently aligned with the Blueprint, the transformational processes necessitated by the Blueprint will be more explicitly outlined in the 2024 District Improvement Plan. The plan is currently being drafted with key performance indicators related to the Blueprint.

Below is a summary of the current district strategic themes as outlined in our strategic plan and local consolidated Elementary Secondary School Act (ESSA) plan, their alignment to the Blueprint, and revisions that are being considered by the CCPS executive leadership team.

### **CCPS Strategic Theme 1: Safe Schools**

Ensuring the safety and security of our schools is paramount for all Cecil County stakeholders. Our commitment extends beyond physical safety measures to encompass mental health, substance abuse awareness, and social-emotional well-being. Success in this endeavor has been measured through various indicators including the physical well-being of our students, staff, and facilities, as well as the promotion of mental health wellness among both staff and students. Additionally, student climate information and emergency preparedness serve as crucial benchmarks for assessing our progress in creating a safe and nurturing learning environment.

CCPS's ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan also addresses safe schools. Federal Entitlement funds (Title Funds) are utilized to support school safety and mental health awareness by providing access to resources such as the Navigate 360 Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) and the Rachel's Challenge Youth Mental Health & Bullying prevention programs. CSTAG is an evidence-based model for schools to use in conducting threat assessments of students. Key staff in each building are trained to use the guidelines and work as a team to assess, problem-solve and intervene to prevent school violence. Rachel's Challenge is a mental health and bullying prevention program for middle schools. In addition to a presentation for all students, staff are provided with activities, lessons, and age-appropriate content selected around the mission of reducing bullying, self-harm, and youth violence. As a follow-up, all middle schools create a "Friends of Rachel" student club that works together to create a culture change that inspires compassion and encourages students to start a chain reaction of kindness. Additionally, the Office of Multilingual Education hosted informational sessions in Spanish to inform families about ALICE (violent critical instance response protocol) and how their children are instructed to respond to incidents of violence.

This strategic theme aligns closely with Pillar 4 of the Blueprint, as it addresses the holistic needs of students and promotes their overall well-being within the school setting. Pillar 4 emphasizes the importance of investing in programs and initiatives that promote mental health and well-being

including providing access to counseling services and mental health resources for students. Additionally, Pillar 4 emphasizes the need for comprehensive approaches to address issues such as bullying, substance abuse, and trauma that can impact school safety. Pillar 4 advocates for the implementation of evidence-based strategies to improve school climate and promote positive behavior among students. By fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment, Pillar 4 aims to create spaces where students feel valued, respected, and safe from harm.

Revisions to this priority area will include developing key performance indicators related to the Blueprint in areas such as: increasing school staffs' understanding of behavioral health needs and how to address them within the school setting; adding additional School Social Workers to support the social and emotional needs of students in schools with high concentrations of poverty; adopting a research-based substance abuse prevention program for students in grades 3-10; and strengthening community partnerships.

### **CCPS Strategic Theme 2: Equitable Rigorous Learning Opportunities**

CCPS has prioritized administering and evaluating an academically rigorous, culturally responsive curriculum by prepared educators. Our aim under this strategic theme is to motivate and assist every student in reaching high academic standards by providing equitable opportunities for success. The Mathematics and English Language Arts offices have begun auditing and revising curricula to align with the criteria of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), including alignment with academic standards, content accuracy, and accessibility for all learners. Additionally, efforts have been made to enhance engagement and relevance, providing materials that captivate students' interest while addressing diverse learning needs. The revisions also incorporate differentiated instructional strategies, ensuring that every student can access the content at the appropriate level. Cultural responsiveness is another key focus, with the curricula reflecting diverse perspectives and experiences. By incorporating evidence-based practices, the Mathematics and English Language Arts offices are committed to delivering curricula that foster deep understanding, critical thinking, and academic success for all students.

CCPS's ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan also addresses equitable rigorous learning opportunities. Title funds are used to support initiatives such as Equal Opportunity Schools, designed to help schools identify underrepresented students who demonstrate potential for success in AP coursework, and to mentor and support those students to meet with success in those rigorous courses. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a K-12 college and career readiness initiative supported in several of our elementary, middle, and high schools. At the secondary level, this includes identifying underrepresented students in the "academic middle" and providing them with an AVID Elective period to explicitly teach study, organization, and collaboration skills necessary for success in college and career.

This strategic theme aligns closely with Pillar 3 and Pillar 4 of the Blueprint as these pillars encourage the development of curricula, experiences, and supplemental supports that prepare students for success in post-secondary education and the workforce, both of which necessitate a rigorous academic foundation and social-emotional readiness.

Revisions to this strategic theme will include developing key performance indicators related to the Blueprint in areas such as: identifying and addressing equity gaps for specific student groups;

strengthening our MTSS framework in elementary and secondary schools for those students who are not “on track” to be college and career ready; bolstering our CTE pathways and apprenticeships through strategic partnerships with institutes of higher education (IHE), the Susquehanna Workforce Development Board, and local businesses. Within this section of our strategic plan, CCPS also plans to specifically develop goals around investing in early childhood education through expanding our PreK programming, along with a focus on developing a Comprehensive Literacy and Mathematics Plan for PreK-12. CCPS is also developing post-CCR Pathway options for students who have earned college and career readiness status, including Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Enrollment and Early College Academy (ECA), CTE industry-recognized credentials, or an apprenticeship. For students not identified as CCR, CCPS is developing a Support Pathway option to allow them to reach CCR status before graduation. Stakeholder committees are meeting to develop these areas further within the plan.

### **CCPS Strategic Theme 3: Recruitment and Retention of a High Quality Workforce**

CCPS has prioritized the recruitment and retention of a top-tier workforce capable of serving the diverse student population represented in our district. Although we engage in many recruitment avenues, recruitment numbers are low overall, including minority candidates. CCPS has strong recruiting partnerships with Maryland institutes of higher education and the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). All job postings are emailed directly to be distributed among their members. In addition to these job announcement distributions, we actively recruit teacher candidates via both on-site and virtual recruitment fairs. CCPS has seen traction with our Grow Your Own programs, and has focused efforts on increasing participation in dual enrollment programs, scholarship opportunities and the Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) program. Since the implementation of Blueprint, CCPS has employed 18 conditionally certified teachers from our Grow Your Own program who did not have traditional education training backgrounds.

To improve educator effectiveness and retention, our staff receive ongoing and pertinent professional learning throughout their career continuum, starting with a new teacher induction program that provides targeted support to teachers in the first three years of their careers. Additionally, content coordinators provide leadership and support with a curriculum that is aligned with the Maryland State College and Career Readiness Standards. Pillar 4 related professional learning, such as Life Space Crisis Intervention and Restorative Practices, is also provided to educators in order to build community in classrooms. Throughout the school year, professional development is created and led by both district and school leadership.

CCPS’s ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan also addresses recruitment and retention. Title II, Part A funds are used to provide all non-tenured teachers with a comprehensive new educator induction program in years 1-3 of their careers. We are also actively building the capacity of newly hired instructional support staff, by providing training on the strategies and tools necessary to support our students that have been identified with diverse learning needs.

Despite our current work’s alignment with Pillar 2 of the Blueprint, we recognize that significant reform must be made in this area to recruit and retain a diverse workforce of educators, building-based leaders, and district-level leaders. Revisions to this strategic theme will include developing key performance indicators and related growth strategies in areas such as: creating a

culture of inclusion that promotes workforce diversity; placing staff with increased intentionality to support the students and schools who require it most; and developing leadership and growth opportunities to develop and sustain a workforce pipeline and career ladder, including National Board Certification.

#### **CCPS Strategic Themes 4 & 5: Communication, Trust, and Community Engagement**

CCPS has prioritized communication, trust, and community engagement to foster transparency throughout the organization, promote a culture founded in mutual respect, and create networks of support throughout our community. Internal and external communication plans encourage dialogue and demonstrate the system's value for everyone's voice and role in the system. Our plans address the unique needs of our community members who are non-English speakers, unhoused, and the families of our earliest learners who are not yet school-aged. For example, the Office of Multilingual Education and the Judy Center began utilizing dual sided ILA Pro by Translate Live. This device supports real-time Speech to Text, Text to Speech, Transcription, and Translation in over 120 languages and dialects. Further details regarding our communication approach and its relationship to Blueprint are outlined as required in the next section.

In summary, our revised strategic plan will provide the roadmap for change and foster accountability and transparency by outlining measurable outcomes and benchmarks for success as they relate to the Blueprint. Ultimately, a revised well-developed strategic plan will empower us to adapt to changing circumstances, innovate, and continuously enhance the quality of education we provide to students.

#### **Communication and Engagement**

CCPS recognizes that implementing large-scale reform necessitates trust, transparency, collaboration, and communication on multiple levels, including policymakers, educators, parents, and students. Our approach to effective communication and engagement has been two pronged. First, we ensure that our stakeholders understand our goals and plans, then we engage our stakeholders in meaningful consultation and solicit actionable feedback.

Our communication strategy takes a top down approach as outlined below.

- **Board of Education-** The board of education and the viewing audience receive regular updates on Blueprint related system topics. Public comment is available to anyone from the community, and the executive leadership team considers the voices expressed when making decisions. Additionally, CCPS staff hold town hall meetings, where public comment and voice is encouraged.
- **Pillar Advisory Councils-** A robust and diverse advisory council, whose members represent all levels of stakeholders, has been established for each pillar area. The councils convene regularly to provide advice, recommendations, and expertise on projects related to each pillar. Their input is used to inform our decision making, ensuring that our goals and approach are representative of the stakeholders most impacted.
- **Educators-** Principal meetings are held monthly. Information impacting the operation of school buildings and opportunities for teachers and leaders are shared during these meetings. Suggested communication strategies are shared with principals so that relevant information is communicated to faculty and staff.

CCPS recognizes that a more robust communication plan must be developed and that connections between district decisions, programs, and the Blueprint must be articulated more explicitly. In the future, CCPS plans to improve communication with families by utilizing the “Did you Know” section of the Superintendent’s Update, a publication that is sent to families bi-weekly. This resource will be leveraged to share Blueprint updates and provide a link for viewers to submit feedback. Additionally, CCPS plans to improve communication directly with educators via the CCPS Post, an internal weekly communication. Currently, we use that medium to share information, but we will also begin actively soliciting digital feedback and explicitly highlighting the information’s relevance to Blueprint. Formal revisions to our district’s Communication Strategic Plan are forthcoming and will explicitly include Blueprint-related indicators.

### **Systemic Changes to Support Blueprint**

CCPS has worked diligently to actualize the development and execution of Blueprint planning while meeting the demands of school system operations in an increasingly difficult educational climate.

Due to time constraints for implementation, planning was completed in silos by those who were closest to the work. While this strategy ensured that essential planning was completed, approaches to change varied among stakeholder groups, which led to inconsistent approaches. During the 23-24 school year, CCPS has restructured its systems and processes to ensure that cross-functional pillar teams engage in a planning and development process that utilizes the same cycle of continuous improvement. Our current planning and implementation processes will ensure that our work is grounded in evidence thus increasing the likelihood of sustained success. In addition to the shift in systemic collaboration and planning, four other systemic shifts have occurred since initial Blueprint plans were submitted.

#### **Removing Barriers to Early Childhood Education**

In CCPS, our early childhood education efforts have been a team approach. Our Judy Center Family Service Coordinators, Early Education Specialist, and Playgroup Providers are providing outreach and programming in communities to increase children's readiness as they enter school at age 5. As part of the Judy Center’s outreach programming they are able to identify young children who need screening and possible assessments to identify potential delays. The Judy Center Playgroup Provider staff implement pop-up playgroups in community locations, which has resulted in community members bringing their youngest children into a social environment to play and socialize. As part of these community based pop-up playgroups, Playgroup Providers are providing caretakers with connection to family service coordination support, experiences to strengthen school readiness, and providing caretakers with information about Pre-Kindergarten programming. Our Judy Center Playgroup Providers and Family Service Coordinators also have been working alongside our school system Pupil Personnel Workers to connect with unhoused families. The approach to support these families and children has been successful in expanding their access to resources.

In addition to enhancing structures for family access to Pre-K information, CCPS central office leadership is currently collaborating with building level leaders to actualize expansion plans. All elementary schools have been evaluated to assess the availability for expansion. With the support of Pre-Kindergarten Expansion grants, CCPS has increased enrolment in four year old classrooms from 27 classrooms with 535 students to 31 classrooms with 641 students. The continued availability of pre-kindergarten expansion grants will allow continued growth to high-quality



programming for the youngest learners in CCPS. CCPS is also thinking creatively about how to leverage high school spaces, such as those that implement TAM programs, for additional space for programming. As a system, we have examined the current process for enrolling and managing Pre-K students, identified challenges with the current system, and are working toward an improved centralized enrollment process to support the mixed-delivery model, including providing services for families who are non-English speaking.

### **Broadening teacher growth and leadership opportunities**

CCPS has made significant progress in broadening growth and leadership opportunities offered to educators. Specifically, we have improved our programming related to National Board Certification (NBC), supporting attainment of advanced degrees, and providing access to content-specific certifications.

The CCPS NBCT Coordinator worked with National Board facilitators to present information about the National Board process at various times during the 22-23 and 23-24 school year, encouraging all teachers, including underrepresented groups, to pursue National Board Certification. NBCT candidates are now provided the opportunity to attend Saturday support sessions to work with experienced NBC teachers, who provide guidance on best practices for each component. Virtual office hour sessions are also provided as needed.

In order to support educators' attainment of advanced degrees in high needs areas, the CCPS Office of Human Resources collaborates with IHE's to improve educator access in a number of ways. First, we established direct pay services so that teachers could minimize their out-of-pocket expenses and streamline the registration process when pursuing a master's degree. In conjunction with other Maryland LEA's, CCPS and the Towson Learning Network (TLN) designed graduate level programs specifically with current teachers in mind. The TLN allowed us to provide discounted coursework for educators in high needs areas such as special education, and areas that are not recognized under National Board Certification. In response to CCPS' challenge with recruiting qualified candidates as school psychologists, we partnered with Towson University to provide coursework for CCPS teachers who aspire to serve and work as school psychologists. This new program allows candidates to maintain their employment with CCPS while pursuing their degree, including their internship. We are working to develop similar programs in additional high need areas with IHE's as we move forward.

Finally, we have provided many opportunities for educators to become certified in content-specific areas aligned with student needs. We have used our FY24 Title II and Title III funding to develop "The Pathway to ESOL Certification," which provides experienced teachers with a solid foundation of theoretical and practical knowledge of the research and best practices for educating English learners. The completion of this program, consisting of three modules and three Praxis preparation coaching sessions, leaves participants prepared to take on ESOL roles and to meet state requirements for passing the ESOL Praxis. We have also scaled up many of our evidence-based literacy training programs for teachers, including LETRS, Science of Reading, Foundations, and Bookworms, allowing teachers greater access to certifications that improve their ability to support student literacy.

## **Removing barriers for students to earn college credit while in high school**

CCPS has also made significant progress in providing students access to college credit in high school. We have achieved this by removing all tuition expenses for students taking dual enrollment courses, adding additional dual enrollment courses in each local school, and adding a Teachers Academy of Maryland program to Elkton High School, our most diverse and economically disadvantaged school. The Early College Academy (ECA) provides students an opportunity to earn an associate's degree and high school diploma through a partnership with Cecil College. Currently, ECA is offered at two high schools, and we are working toward expanding this opportunity to additional high schools, pending funding and staffing availability.

With a reduction in College and Career Readiness funds for the next school year, offering the various course offerings for dual enrollment will be challenging. To address this concern, CCPS has requested additional funds from our county government to support dual enrollment and ECA programming needs. CCPS has also collaborated with Cecil College to develop a list of college course offerings that are most likely to transfer to higher learning institutions and are foundational for post-secondary learning. By leveling the playing field for students who are economically disadvantaged and promoting academic excellence through exposure to the rigors of college-level coursework, we are paving the way for a more affordable and successful transition to higher education for all of our students.

## **Aligning resources to support schools that serve our most vulnerable students**

Finally, CCPS has made systemic changes to the way resources are aligned to support our most vulnerable students. CCPS has staffed full-time Community School Advisors at each designated Community School. These advisors play a vital role in supporting the overall functioning and success of community schools by fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment, promoting student success, and strengthening connections between the school, families, and the broader community.

CCPS has redistributed resources to support our multilingual language learners in a variety of ways. We hired a Multilingual Community School Advisor (MCSA) who screens students for EL services, collects initial demographic data, and supports schools throughout the enrollment process. We are also re-evaluating the English Learner caseloads in all of our schools to ensure they are manageable, equitable, and provide students with an appropriate amount of access to the language instruction educational program. Finally, we have ensured there is dedicated time provided for collaboration between multilingual language teachers and content teachers (e.g., Kid Talk, grade level team meetings) and provided one full day per month to multilingual language teachers for collaboration. Through the use of co-planning, co-teaching, and co-grading all teachers are equipped to share the responsibility for language and literacy development for English learners.

CCPS has also enhanced behavioral health initiatives by increasing the number of certified School Social Workers to support the social and emotional needs of students in schools with high concentrations of poverty. These additional staff members provide individual counseling to students, conduct assessments and interventions to identify students in need of support, respond to students who are in crisis, and collaborate with teachers, administrators, and staff to address the mental health needs of students within the school environment. Furthermore, they connect students and

their families to community resources to address behavioral health needs and provide professional development to school staff on topics related to mental health awareness. CCPS' commitment to data-driven decision-making and equity has driven this realignment of resources, and we will continue to address the needs of vulnerable students to ensure positive outcomes for all.

## Implementation Challenges and Monitoring

### Challenge 1: Funding and Resource Allocation

CCPS has been facing funding challenges for the past three years due to local government funding of education at the minimum maintenance of effort while also implementing the required statutes of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. CCPS was able to leverage COVID-19 relief funds to offset staffing and resource cuts from 2020-2024 in order to maintain staffing to meet the needs of all students. For FY25, the school system faces a "funding cliff" due to the sunset of federal relief funds and a lack of local funding to support all CCPS programs. While the Maryland Blueprint legislation establishes foundational pillars to address educational needs, the funding categories restrict local school system spending outside of the pillar categories revenue of state and local funds. In FY26, local school systems will be required to allocate funds to the areas and schools targeted by Blueprint which result in schools receiving a substantial increase in funds at the same time substantially reducing the allocations for others. The pace of Blueprint expectations has exceeded the pace of revenues to support these efforts.

CCPS will continue to engage with the community to advocate for additional local funding above the local share requirement per the Blueprint Funding formulas. The CCPS Board of Education has approved a budget that maintains all programs, adds additional staff, and meets the Blueprint budgeting requirements. Without the additional funding above the local share, CCPS faces a significant funding gap (\$21 million) which will result in cutting staff, programs, and services provided to students and the community.

The school system will monitor adequate funding allocations through collaboration efforts of the Board of Education, district leadership, and local government as it relates to the budgeting process and timelines. School district leadership will provide for community engagement at monthly meetings as well as engaging the community to speak at local government budget meetings.

### Challenge 2: Staffing and Hiring

CCPS faces the same staffing and hiring challenges of the nationwide teacher shortage. Colleges and Universities are no longer graduating enough students with a teaching degree that supports public school needs. CCPS has increased the hiring of conditionally licensed staff to fill vacancies over the last three years. These conditionally licensed staff not only have the challenge of learning how to teach and manage a classroom of students, but they also have the added burden of meeting licensing requirements. Supporting these conditionally licensed staff members is resource intensive and requires ongoing coaching, collaboration, and professional learning.

CCPS is challenged with establishing a Career Ladder in alignment with the Blueprint. Initial negotiations with the teacher's association regarding the Career Ladder have begun with district leadership. Designing the 60/40 classroom instructional responsibilities requires additional staff to

compensate for the loss of section coverage, a program plan to identify key initiatives, and ensure equity across all schools due to budget restrictions outlined above.

CCPS started a Grow Your Own initiative using funding from the MD Leads grant to assist students (current and graduated) and non-certified staff to enter into an education program to start the process of becoming a teacher. In addition, the human resources department reviews and evaluates current policies and procedures to ensure CCPS is addressing retention and hiring processes to focus on hiring a high-quality and diverse workforce. Advocating for a fully funded budget will allow CCPS to meet the minimum starting teaching salary as well as maintain the workforce across the system.

CCPS will monitor staffing data to ensure the goals of a high quality and diverse workforce are being met.

### **Challenge 3: Academics and Instruction**

CCPS continues to address student achievement in all content areas. Student learning loss during the COVID pandemic has widened the gap of students meeting grade level proficiency. As the instructional landscape changes and High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) are introduced, as well as ensuring compliance with College and Career Readiness Standards, the system must continue to invest in these teaching and learning strategies. CCPS's goal is to ensure that all students are college and career ready by the end of 10th grade. In FY25 funding, there were 625 students identified as CCR. Creating additional support pathways to assist students to meet the CCR standard while also providing these students with post CCR pathway options will be a challenge due to CCR funding incentives. The challenges associated with these changes will be exacerbated with the anticipated reduction of Instructional Coaches and Instructional Content Coordinators across the district as well as larger class sizes. Additionally, investment in curricular products to support HQIM expectations will be challenging when funding is in jeopardy. CCPS is challenged to provide support for our teaching force to ensure that they have the skills and strategies to meet diverse student needs.

Through these budgetary and staffing challenges, we will design and implement robust professional development expectations to support our teachers and students with differentiated instructional strategies and resources. We will establish expectations for when the professional development should occur and focus our work in all content areas on reviewing performance data to improve student outcomes. Likewise, we will utilize our Content Support Teachers (currently called Lead Teachers) to support our Content Coordinators in meeting these expectations across all of our schools. With targeted instruction to meet the needs of our students, the number of CCR students will increase. The new approved CCR measure uses a 3.0 GPA and passing an Algebra I grade of a C or higher will increase the number of students identified as CCR.

Monitoring any challenge begins with ensuring student needs are being met through student data reviews at the school and district level. Data reviews will be aligned to analyze the effectiveness of Blueprint initiatives and identify opportunities for improvement.

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## Pillar 1

### Early Childhood Education

#### 01. Access to High-Quality, Full Day Pre-K

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 1-5, 11-16*

In March 2023, the LEA described how it would **increase access to high-quality, full-day Pre-K** for Tier 1 and 2 students, including students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and Multilingual learners, also known as English learners.

Responses discussed considerations related to facilities, including expansion to new facilities, transformation of existing facilities, opportunities for shared spaces with private providers, strategic communication and outreach, and the development of a common and unified enrollment system to support racially and socioeconomically diverse learning environments.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint outcome to serve all Tier 1 4-year-old children who wish to enroll in Pre-K by SY 2025-2026.

[Data Appendix 1 - Pre K Enrollment](#)

### Progress

A prioritized outcome of the 2023 Blueprint Plan was to increase access to Full-Day Pre-K for Tier I students. During this year, Cecil County Public Schools was able to increase the offerings of Pre-K seats in our community. During the 2022-2023 school year, Cecil County Public Schools enrolled 575 students in our full-day prekindergarten programs; during the 2023-2024 school year CCPS has been able to enroll 640 students, an increase of 11%. Our only private provider has 20 of 28 seats filled at this time. Cecil County Public Schools has had a full-day prekindergarten model for many years. This progress in enrollment is largely due to two new PreK expansion grant classrooms which have added 40 additional seats.

The Tiered enrollment data can be referenced on the Data Appendix [1-Pre K Tiered Enrollment tab](#). The additional seats provided in our new PreK expansion grant classrooms allowed our team to provide access to

many children who meet the expanded Tier I eligibility criteria (185%-300% of Federal Poverty Level). In addition, we were able to offer these seats to schools who demonstrated enrollment increases as well as students with significant needs. The Data Appendix also includes projections for PK4 enrollment demonstrating increased access. It should be noted that these projections align with current MSDE Blueprint/PreK4 expansion grant funding. In the absence of those funds, this expansion would be considerably more challenging to maintain.

In our 2023 Blueprint plan, CCPS also planned to strategically communicate about enrollment opportunities. During the 2023-2024 school year, we have worked to ensure that all families have access to timely information about early childhood programming opportunities. This communication has included networking with other community agencies and service providers as well as traditional methods of advertising for our ECE programs. During this time period, we translated materials in different languages so that our multilingual families had equitable access to information provided in their native language. Through partners who serve on our Homeless Collaboration team and through Judy Center staff who work directly with families in our homeless and transitioning families facilities, CCPS was able to ensure that families experiencing homelessness were aware of the opportunities and services available to their children. Parents of students with disabilities continue to receive information about the opportunities available in ECE through our Infants and Toddlers program. Collaboration opportunities continued between our Early Childhood Education team as well as our office of Multilingual Education, Student Services, and Department of Special Education. Collectively, this partnership has maximized our reach so that the community is aware of the programming opportunities available to their families.

One of the most significant milestones in our progress toward increasing communication and outreach to the community was a significant expansion in the Judy Centers in Cecil County. Late in the summer of 2023, we met with MSDE regarding our Judy Center operations. During this time, MSDE awarded five additional Judy Center grants to our district, taking us from five to ten Judy Centers. This investment has allowed Cecil County Public Schools to significantly increase services and support to our ECE operations. These supports have impacted our community directly as well as our instructional staff in ECE classrooms. This investment has afforded us the opportunity to meet family needs before school begins, including challenges with enrollment. In addition, the birth-age 5 programming availability to our community has expanded tremendously.

Finally, CCPS Judy Center partnerships are expansive and robust with more than 25 community partners who are actively involved and engaged in supporting Cecil County's youngest children and their families. CCPS Judy Center partners attend bi-monthly Steering Committee meetings, contribute to a weekly partner updates publication, and volunteer at Judy Center events, such as our annual School Enrollment Fair. As listed in our first plan, we have been fortunate to have a diverse and supportive group of agencies and groups that assist with ECE initiatives. These partnerships have grown and have afforded us with an opportunity to serve our community in a variety of forums.

## Challenges and Next Steps

### **Adequate Funding**

The most significant and pervasive challenge facing CCPS is adequate funding to support the expected growth of our ECE program. While we remain grateful for support from the state, our local funding sources do not provide us with an adequate amount of funds to implement the needed expansion of our programming. Cecil County Public Schools has received multiple years of Maintenance of Effort funding. As a result, the ability of our district to expand proactively is minimized. We are dependent on PreK expansion grants to meet the requirements of additional programming opportunities. As a result, we have significant concerns related to the sustainability of Prekindergarten expansion efforts. To be clear, this is not the only challenge that we are facing; however, it is a significant challenge that impacts a number of our expansion efforts. As a mitigation technique, we continue to lobby our County Government for adequate funding to support the Blueprint's expansion directive, but have been unsuccessful at this time.

To support growing access to ECE programs, Cecil County Public Schools will need to make adjustments to infrastructure. During this year, we have examined our elementary schools for additional spaces to deliver ECE instruction. While we have been able to identify some potential locations, these spaces will require investment to modify or retrofit the space for the needs of our youngest learners. Additionally, in looking forward to additional PK3 expansion, Cecil County Public Schools will need to consider additional spaces, potentially in our high schools, to meet necessary programming requirements. Investments in our infrastructure to meet these needs remains a priority. However, it must be noted that this is a competing priority with a number of other fiscal challenges that our district is being forced to reconcile.

As we prioritize our expansion of PK3 and PK4 programming, we will continue to pursue additional funding. This will include applying for PreK Expansion grants as well as navigating our local government and advocating for these needs. CCPS is highly motivated to ensure that all students have access to the programs that can support quality outcomes. This year, we will apply for expansion grants to expand our PK4 settings while continuing to plan for PK3 expansion in future years. We will continue to review current infrastructure and determine how to proceed with our ECE program expansion efforts. As we navigate both existing and new construction, we will consider how we might best adapt available spaces to meet the needs of early childhood learners. As spaces become available, we will prioritize retrofitting these spaces to meet the needs of our programming.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

Another significant challenge to the success of ECE programming is the recruitment and retention of high-quality staff. It is difficult to recruit and retain such a workforce given the demand for these staff members across the state. This is further compounded in that teacher preparation programs are producing fewer candidates than the workforce demands. As such, we continue to prioritize opportunities for our own staff to grow in their roles and pursue additional coursework. To date, 18 paraprofessionals are engaged in the coursework required to obtain their Child Development Associates credential, while four have completed the process and successfully earned their credential. Looking ahead, it will remain a priority for the district to recruit ECE staff members to meet the needs of a growing population of early learners. Without a high yield return on our robust and sustained staffing efforts, we will be unable to staff each classroom with a highly-qualified educator.



## **Prioritized Supports**

Another challenge is prioritizing services for the specific student groups who need a strong ECE program the most. This includes English learners, students with disabilities, and students who are economically disadvantaged. To support our English learners, we have prioritized access to information and enrollment assistance. We continue to identify areas of our community that would be better served with multilingual support. Additionally, we are working to ensure equitable access to support for students with disabilities in all settings, including public and private. In order for private providers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, CCPS faces a challenge of increasing staffing and resources to accommodate for student's needs at the location of the private provider. As the potential for private provider expansion increases, this will remain an area of concern for our team.

To support our multilingual learners, we have invested in translation devices for our families ([ILA Devices](#)). These devices remove barriers from families as it relates to both enrollment questions and questions regarding instruction or school-based concerns. Our ten Judy Center locations will have these available to support families with the enrollment process. Our initial roll out has demonstrated a very positive response to these tools and we believe that this will be of benefit to our schools for family engagement and support. Continued efforts will be made to expand the number of devices and to provide training as appropriate.

## **Access to Families**

Another challenge we face is gaining timely access to families who are economically disadvantaged or experiencing homelessness. We continue to rely on support from all of our community agencies as well as the Judy Center in order to facilitate student enrollment in our ECE programs, and we collaborate with providers in student services and other agencies as a part of county-wide efforts to support families with unstable housing. CCPS will increase from four to nine Community Schools during the upcoming school year. The additional resources, such as the community school advisor, in these schools will allow us to ensure a continuity of care and support for all of our learners.

For the 2024-2025 school year, we are also hosting two community-wide enrollment fairs which will include family-friendly activities and support as well as the opportunity to get enrollment questions answered. These events will establish and maintain positive relationships with our stakeholders and ensure that families in our community have a positive first experience with schools and the enrollment process. We will be able to remove barriers from families around common enrollment issues and connect them, as appropriate, with community resources.

## 02. A High-Quality, Mixed Delivery (Public and Private) Pre-K System

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 6-10 and 18*

In March 2023, the LEA described how it would collaborate with private providers to implement a mixed-delivery Pre-K system and ensure every student has access to a high-quality Pre-K program.

Responses included considerations for increasing access as discussed in the previous question as well as sharing data and information, providing comprehensive services, and leveraging shared resources.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

### Progress

Cecil County Public Schools continue to be impacted by a limited number of child care providers who are eligible to serve as a private provider. For a second year we may again be eligible for an exemption waiver for meeting Blueprint's annual target.

Additional progress was made by Cecil County Public Schools as it relates to the delivery of a high-quality mixed delivery system. CCPS continues to nurture and develop a collaborative and comprehensive partnership with our sole private provider. Throughout the 2022-2023 school year CCPS and the private provider participated in quarterly planning and program improvement meetings focused on understanding the required components of the state mandated MOU. As part of this work CCPS dedicated a special educator to provide onsite, in classroom special education support at the private provider location. This support assisted the private provider in enhancing their physical environment and instructional structure to be inclusive of children with disabilities or delays in the mainstream classroom space. The special educator also provided peer coaching and support to assist the private provider educators to understand how to develop and implement accommodations and modifications within their instruction and planned learning activities.

An additional area of progress during the 2022-2023 school year, CCPS and our sole private provider worked to develop and implement a shared enrollment process. CCPS updated the enrollment webpage, school enrollment application, and resource documents for schools and families to include information specific to the private provider. The private provider also worked diligently and effectively to communicate needs and concerns with CCPS so that the team could address concerns and seek solutions for teachers, children and families.

## Challenges and Next Steps

### **Enrollment**

Cecil County continues to be a “Child Care desert.” During the 2022-2023 school year we saw a decline in the number of child care providers who remained licensed and saw the closure of one large child care center. This trend is moving in the wrong direction and alarming Cecil County families. This trend in the direction of less Child Care providers serving our area also decreases our opportunity for private provider partnerships. In response to this crisis, our Cecil County Judy Center works directly with our local workforce advancement representative to share information about the numerous workforce advancement opportunities for child care providers within the state of Maryland. The Cecil County Judy Center also works directly with licensed Child Care providers in Cecil County to learn about their needs, barriers, and to provide opportunities for professional learning. It is the hope that this effort on the part of the Cecil County Judy Center will turn the trend in a positive direction.

In our next steps with our private provider, CCPS will provide both a platform for collecting enrollment applications and have CCPS staff dedicated to vetting applications for the public seats in our private provider location. A shared process will include collection of the application, application verification, and notification to the private provider enrollment specialist. As part of this notification process the application is shared with the private provider along with information about additional supports and services that CCPS will provide for the individual child and family. Teaming and collaboration around a family begins to occur at the point of an accepted enrollment.

### **Providing Required Services**

A continued challenge within our partnership with our private provider still exists around providing required services on-site at the private provider location. It is anticipated that CCPS may see a reduction in teacher workforce due to significant underfunding by our county government. Should CCPS experience a reduction in teacher workforce we may be unable to dedicate one consistent special education teacher to the on-site service delivery model and may have to look at a model in which numerous special educators will be assigned to support the learners at the provider provider who have documented disabilities.

CCPS is also continuing to offer support and guidance to the private provider on how to address the social and emotional needs of young children who present with behavioral challenges within their public seats. Children with chronic trauma, who may come from marginalized communities, and who may display dysregulation outwardly are new challenges for our private provider. CCPS would like to better equip the private provider with the knowledge, skills and tools to support these children from both a prevention and intervention lens.

### 03. Workforce Development and Pipelines for High-Quality Pre-K Staff

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 19-22*

In March 2023, the LEA described its plan to **develop its workforce and build pipelines for teachers and teacher assistants that meet the high-quality requirements.**

Responses addressed providing professional development related to the instructional program and high-quality instructional materials discussed in Pillar 3, using a diverse set of strategies to build the Pre-K teacher and teacher assistant pipelines, supporting teachers and teacher assistants in meeting the credentialing requirements set forth by the Blueprint by the beginning of SY 2027-2028, and communicating opportunities to current and prospective employees.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome of Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants meeting high-quality requirements.

[Data Appendix 3 - Pre K Teacher Credentials](#)

[Data Appendix 3A - Pre K Paraprofessionals](#)

### Progress

To increase the pipeline of certified staff for ECE programs, Cecil County Public Schools has developed a program within the Cecil County School of Technology to provide instruction to juniors and seniors in high school through the Teacher Academy of Maryland. These students have the opportunity to learn in a classroom about teaching and then transition into field experience, where they apply their learning in an authentic context within the school system. To date, the hiring and workforce needs have mostly been met by ECE certified candidates. Twenty-three of our PK4 instructors maintain a current ECE certification. Four of our staff are certified but teaching outside the content area. Only four of our current teachers are conditionally certified for work in ECE classrooms. We have plans in place to support those conditionally certified teachers with obtaining their necessary coursework for licensure. This will support their own professional learning and will ensure that our youngest learners are taught by highly-qualified staff. We will need to continue to partner with our support staff as well as teacher education programs to recruit talent for our PK3 and PK4 expansion. These partnerships, while currently in place, will need to be continued to meet growing needs of the system.

Starting at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, the school system launched the first cohort to work on the Child Development Associate (CDA) program. This program was offered to current paraprofessionals serving in preschool and prekindergarten classrooms. Candidates were given time during the work day as well as access to online coursework and several books in order to complete the learning for the CDA. As the employees completed their coursework, cohort sessions were provided to work through concerns as well as facilitate processes to meet the goal of obtaining a CDA. To date, four staff members have obtained their CDA while several more are scheduled to test and be observed before the completion of the 2023-2024 school year. A second cohort of candidates started in January of 2024.

## Challenges and Next Steps

### Recruitment

While we see many positive things in our system, the challenges are plentiful as well. The most critical challenge is in finding qualified professionals across the board. Our system, like many across the nation, is having difficulty finding certificated and trained teaching staff. While we attend job fairs and actively recruit staff, we still find ourselves in a teacher shortage. In Early Childhood, we currently have two non-certificated teachers serving in classrooms ([Data Appendix 3-Pre K Teacher Credentials](#) and [Data Appendix 3A-Pre K Paraprofessionals](#)). There are many nuances to teaching in an early childhood setting and when the only staff available are not trained teachers this creates a major challenge.

We believe creating a pipeline of new teachers through the Teacher Academy of Maryland is beneficial to the success of our school system. In order to ensure a high quality workforce for years to come, our Teacher Academy of Maryland program will need to develop unique partnerships within the Early Childhood realm to develop our future teachers. As we see needs in early childhood classrooms arise, the high school TAM students who are drawn to early childhood should be provided opportunities to work in these classrooms. The Judy Center Early Learning Hubs could offer opportunities to TAM students in both playgroup and classroom settings. The Judy Center of Cecil County already has a strong network of partnerships that work with our youngest learners and their families so it seems as though a collaboration would come naturally.

This year, Cecil County Public Schools offered students the opportunity to obtain employment during the school day to provide support in early childhood classrooms as their individual schedules allowed. We anticipate the ability to continue this program as it fills a need to provide support at specific times during the day while not being in the position to hire full time employees. Students were able to earn a very modest pay without disrupting an extracurricular schedule.

The shortage of staff does not stop at the classroom; attracting trained and experienced Related Service Providers continues to be a challenge. With Cecil County having the largest percentage of students with a disability, related service providers are essential. Finding and maintaining providers for speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and school psychologists is extremely difficult. We have found the need to contract with providers who deliver services virtually. While this fills a need, we know that students, especially those in early childhood, need to work with providers in a one on one or small group setting, not through a computer screen.

## Training, Development, and Advancement

While funding from the Maryland Family Network has expired, our system has been resourceful in reallocating funds to cover the expenses associated with our early childhood paraprofessionals obtaining their CDA credential. However, it is uncertain whether or not this reallocation of resources is sustainable indefinitely. As we continue to plan for the years to come, our work to develop a knowledgeable and experienced workforce will be key. With the Blueprint requiring paraprofessionals to obtain a CDA by 2027, we will continue to offer staff a cohort learning model so that they have collaborative thought partners from which they can learn together and obtain their credentials. Securing additional funding sources is critical to support this opportunity to train and assist paraprofessionals to earn the required certification.

Finally, we need to continue to provide professional learning opportunities to our early childhood staff. In many of our schools, our Early Education Specialists will be able to offer job-embedded professional learning through a coaching model. The Early Education Specialists were trained through the Instructional Coaching Institute founded by Jim Knight, Ph.D. As we plan for professional development across the system, the Early Education Specialists will be key in having their finger on the pulse of the needs of our early childhood staff and will be important members of our professional development planning.

### 04. Kindergarten Readiness

Discuss the LEA's plans to ensure all students in Pre-K programs, public and private, are ready for kindergarten.

Plans should include strategies for supporting the development and implementation of the instructional program in mixed-delivery settings and using data (e.g., Kindergarten Readiness Assessment) to adapt instruction

Considerations:

- Private provider collaboration
- Selection and use of materials
- Teacher training and professional development
- Resource sharing
- Specific instructional strategies for early learning
- Transition from half-day to full-day Pre-K
- Alignment between Pre-K and K-2
- Transition into Pre-K and from Pre-K to Kindergarten
- Student groups (special education, multilingual learners, students experiencing homelessness)

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome of ensuring all Pre-K students are ready for kindergarten.

[Data Appendix 4 - Kindergarten Readiness](#)

## Data Analysis

As a result of access to high-quality prekindergarten experiences, students will arrive better prepared for the Kindergarten experience. In Cecil County Public Schools, this has been demonstrated through our increasing achievement on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). While this instrument will be replaced, it is important to acknowledge the progress that students in Cecil County have been making, especially since the return of in-person learning post-COVID. These indicators are the result of careful and intentional support on the part of a variety of stakeholders.

During the 2024 administration of the KRA ([Data Appendix 4-Kindergarten Readiness](#)), Cecil County Public Schools noted an increase of students **demonstrating readiness** from 39.4% to 43.1%. This number places our scores very close to our pre-COVID scores. Of particular note in the data, a number of subgroups demonstrated growth this year: two or more races, students with disabilities, English learners, and students who are economically disadvantaged. These findings are encouraging. Based on trend data, we project a similar increase of 3.7%, which would place our population at 46.8% demonstrating readiness .

While our overall student progress is trending positive, Black and Hispanic groups' scores dropped during this administration of the KRA. Noted concerns about the instrument remain an issue and further consideration will need to be given to KRA scores once the state has identified and implemented a new measure of readiness that is free from some of the biases found in the current tool.

## Programming

### Curriculum

Students in PK3 programming utilize “[Children Exploring their World](#)” curriculum. Students in PK4 programming utilize the “[Children Studying their World](#)” curriculum. These curricula provide a common starting point for instruction for all of our early learners. In addition to these core resources, educators in PK4 have started to utilize [Foundations](#) to support early literacy development. These curricula are aligned to the Kindergarten curriculum and to grade level standards as outlined in the [Maryland Early Learning Standards](#). In addition to these supplements, students receive instruction in social/emotional learning and have ample opportunities for play-based learning. Ensuring that these standards are implemented with fidelity is a priority of our ECE staff as well as Judy Center coaches.

### Training and Professional Learning

Through the expansion of our Judy Center sites and services, Cecil County Public Schools has been able to ensure that all ten locations have an Early Education Specialist to provide support. This position allows for sustained, job-embedded professional learning, coaching, and technical assistance to meet the needs of educators in planning, delivering instruction, and managing an early childhood classroom. This support has improved instruction and demonstrated our ongoing commitment to preparing students for success in Kindergarten. Additionally, an ongoing partnership with Infants and Toddlers allows for continuity of services for all children. Through this positive partnership, families are made aware of resources and transitions and are supported with the Infants and Toddlers staff as well as the Judy Center Staff.

### **Student Groups**

Families who are experiencing homelessness also benefit from the support of the Judy Center. Services are provided on-location in our transitional housing facility (Deep Roots) and at a mother/child rehabilitation center. These services allow the Judy Center staff to work with families and determine what, if any, additional supports are required.

### **Coordinated Efforts**

Additional efforts to support family enrichment programs, community based playgroups and community partnerships have been enhanced by the Judy Center expansion. The presence of these teams in our community have provided families with local, accessible, and trusted support. This includes activities within our system and larger community that allow families to interact with staff and receive timely assistance.

The Early Childhood Advisory Council continues to meet and provide ongoing support to Cecil County Kindergarten Readiness efforts. These agencies provide ongoing referrals to the Judy Center and also serve as important points of contacts for families in ensuring school-readiness. Together, this group regularly receives updates, provides feedback, and coordinates efforts to ensure that services are not being duplicated and that families have appropriate, timely access.

### **Transitions**

Transitions between care environments and schools as well as among grade levels are facilitated through the Judy Center and school-based teams. These ongoing relationships allow for positive experiences for families as they navigate a transition to a new school environment or schedule. Ensuring successful transitions is paramount to school readiness.

### **Selection and Use of Materials**

CCPS and the private provider will engage in a crosswalk analysis of our curriculum and assessments. As part of this crosswalk analysis, high leverage curricular components, standards and assessment practices will be highlighted and reinforced to ensure that children regardless of public or private placement will be ready at the start of Kindergarten. As an additional result from a crosswalk analysis, professional development and coaching will be aligned between CCPS and the private provider. Professional development and learning will serve to equal the playing field on resources and instructional delivery across the early childhood settings.



## Pillar 2

### High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders

#### 05. A High-Quality and Diverse Teacher Workforce

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 28-36*

In March 2023, the LEA described how it would **recruit and hire a high-quality and diverse teacher workforce**.

Responses included identifying the most critical hiring needs, strategies for recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce, and how the LEA would partner with institutions of higher education and educator preparation programs to build talent pipelines in response to its needs (e.g., strategic placement and support of teacher candidates, full certification of conditionally certified teachers, grow your own programs, alternative preparation programs, etc.).

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the district's staffing needs and the Blueprint Outcome of recruiting and hiring a high-quality and diverse teacher workforce.

[Data Appendix 5B-Teachers](#)

## Progress

### Recruitment

Teacher shortage is a nationwide concern and CCPS is not immune to this crisis. Our geographic proximity to New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware compounds this issue as we are competing across multiple districts. Additionally, there are very few higher education institutions within reasonable commuting distance of our county. CCPS initially identified special education, secondary math, secondary science, and secondary CTE as areas that have proved to be challenging in the recruitment of certificated teachers. This year proved to be even more difficult in that we have conditional teachers in almost every subject area. In looking at our identified areas for 2023-2024, CCPS continued to experience difficulty in hiring certificated candidates for special education, science, and CTE. To assist in filling these shortage areas with certified candidates, CCPS offered to pay the Praxis fees to support teachers in obtaining an additional licensure credential that allows for the opportunity to transfer into these roles. In analyzing hiring data, 42% of special education staff hired were certified, 25% of science staff hired were certified, and we hired no certified CTE staff. However, CCPS was

able to increase our certified math hiring and 100% of math staff hired for this school year were certified.

To combat this, CCPS has developed multiple alternative recruitment opportunities. CCPS has increased our Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) participation. We are working to diversify the enrollment of the program and expand locations. At this time we have expanded beyond our School of Technology and opened a new cohort for TAM at one of our comprehensive high schools (Elkton High School). Elkton High School is our most diverse high school; therefore, we are hopeful this will continue to diversify our teacher pipeline. This cohort at Elkton High School has enabled us to double the enrollment in the TAM program. All students in the TAM program take the Parapro Praxis in the spring of their senior year. When passed, they meet the requirements of a highly qualified applicant when they apply to paraprofessional vacancies for CCPS. We recruit these students at the annual Cecil County School of Technology recruitment fair to encourage students to start employment as a paraprofessional with CCPS and to continue their education journey with the benefit of tuition reimbursement and direct bill as a CCPS employee.

### **Partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education**

CCPS facilitated the implementation of a partnership with Moreland University to provide conditional certificate holders with condensed educational opportunities for meeting certification requirements. We currently have eleven of our seventy-five conditionally certificated staff participating in the program. This program has served us well in working to provide a flexible schedule and appropriate coursework for our workforce as they aspire to earn their certification while serving in a full-time role. The design of the program supports their lived work experience with CCPS.

Our partnership with TUNE (Towson University North East) for the teacher education program has continued. CCPS supported twelve student teacher placements during the 2023-2024 school year. CCPS was thrilled to have the opportunity to hire six prior student teachers as full time teachers beginning the 2023-2024 school year. This has been our most successful recruitment of certificated staff. CCPS hired a total of 103 teachers for the 2023-2024 school year, 16.5% minority candidates. Of those hired, 60% met certification requirements for Maryland and were certified staff.

Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, CCPS developed a partnership with Towson University's (TU) school psychologist program. In coordination with Towson we developed a grow your own program that allows for employees to participate in TU's program while continuing as a full time employee. This is all done at zero cost to the employee. Our second cohort will complete requirements during the 2025-2026 school year, increasing the net gain of school psychologists by five through this grow-your-own program.

### **Challenges and Next Steps**

While CCPS continues to expand the TAM program within our system, we are also faced with identifying teachers to teach the expanded sections of this program. We are currently facing budget challenges that are requiring us to limit and eliminate course offerings. It is our goal to continue to offer the program at both our School of Technology as well as the expansion program at one of our comprehensive high schools (Elkton High).

CCPS has shown a positive increase in IHE partnerships and program offerings to educators and conditionally certified teachers. This school year, CCPS hired 42 conditionally certified teachers, of which ten have enrolled in the Moreland University certification program. This is the highest percentage of conditional teachers that we

have seen to date begin a program in their first year of teaching. Moving forward, CCPS will need to identify how to increase the enrollment of conditionally certified staff members in this program while facing fiscal uncertainty. Budget challenges and uncertainties around positions for the upcoming fiscal year have created a decrease in enrollment in certification programs until employees are sure they will be returning.

As was shared earlier, our partnership with TUNE (Towson University North East) has served as our most effective recruiting tool. Typically, students enrolled in this program are local and interested in staying close to home (in Cecil County). Unfortunately, the instructors for the teacher education program at TUNE have informed CCPS that enrollment is declining as student interest in the field of education has decreased. CCPS anticipates that we will have no student teachers from TUNE during the 2024-2025 school year. We will continue to offer our schools/teachers as mentors and internship placements in hopes that the interest in the education program at TUNE will increase in the near future.

To address special education shortages, CCPS continues to recruit current employees into special education teaching positions to increase diversity among staff and fill these shortage areas. We continue to work with them through enrolling in alternative teacher preparation programs to work towards certification. Our Special Education Instructional Coordinators also offer one-on-one and group sessions to these conditionally certified special education teachers to provide guidance and support in these new roles. Along with following our current strategies that have provided us with increased diversity and hiring in shortage areas, CCPS will need to identify alternative recruitment strategies as we move forward to continue to increase diversity and hiring in all areas and to prevent the current strategies from depleting all available candidates.

A new strategy that we plan to implement to combat the lack of diversity is to work with the Elkton Alliance to participate in the annual Juneteenth Celebration in our community. The Elkton Alliance has successfully facilitated an event that has various vendors and historical activities to celebrate the holiday. This event is very well attended by community members from within CCPS and beyond. We believe that setting up a vendor table in an effort to recruit candidates for all positions could prove to be beneficial in our recruitment attempts.

The School Psychology cohort has been a successful Grow-Your-Own program for CCPS, increasing our school psychologist FTEs by 5. However, this year we had zero enrollment in the new cohort, due to the time and work requirements of the program and job responsibilities. Employees are required to continue to teach/provide support for 2.5 days a week and the commitment to classes through Towson University the other 2.5 days a week.

## 06. A High-Quality and Diverse Corps of School Leaders

For the March 2024 submission, the LEA must also discuss how it recruits and hires a high-quality and diverse corps of school leaders, including its collaboration with institutions of higher education and other organizations to build leadership pipelines.

Consider the potential impact of the Career Ladder and how the LEA will adapt its plans to address any challenges (e.g., National Board Certification for future school leaders, smaller candidate pools if teachers remain in classrooms, etc.).

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the district's staffing needs and the Blueprint Outcome of recruiting and hiring high-quality and diverse leaders.

### Progress

For each posted position that CCPS conducts interviews, the chairperson is encouraged to develop a diverse team to serve on the committee. This expectation is present for all positions: certificated, non-certificated and leadership positions. Additionally, CCPS shared all external job postings directly with the local branch of the NAACP. We have asked that this group then disseminate the postings to their contacts in hopes to obtain a more diverse candidate pool.

CCPS has identified that it is important to have minority representation at teacher recruitment fairs. While this does not directly address leadership, we are utilizing these teacher recruitment fairs to build our pipeline of minority candidates that will continue to build our leadership pipeline. For the 2023-2024 school year, 50% of new administrators hired were minority. An examination of the demographics of our school leadership indicates that 10.4% of these roles are occupied by employees of color, while 89.6% are held by white candidates. In contrast, our student population comprises 29.1% students of color and 70.9% white students. This disparity underscores an ongoing imperative to enhance diversity in our recruitment and hiring of school leaders (see Data Appendix 6- School Leaders and linked artifact, [2023 Annual Hiring & Diversity Report](#)).

Internally, CCPS has a Grow-Your-Own Leadership Academy for aspiring leaders. This program identifies teachers that are interested in aspiring to be leaders within CCPS and provides professional development surrounding administrative roles. In 2023, we had twenty participants in this program and we were able to grow three into an administrative capacity. We are continuing to encourage our diverse teacher leaders to participate in this program to increase the pipeline of diverse candidates for leadership roles. We also have increased our number of Local Support Teacher roles within our school communities. This position acts in an administrative capacity, provides leadership experience, and creates a pipeline for Assistant Principal candidates. Currently, we have nine employees in this role, 33% of which are minorities. This is an area that CCPS will need to continue to develop and grow upon in order to support this Blueprint initiative.

We have shared with building administrators the Blueprint Diversity Report to demonstrate our need for recruiting and developing a diverse workforce. This document as a whole was presented at a school principal and Division of Education Services meeting. A large group discussion was facilitated as the group studied the

data shared. There was time built into the agenda to allow for schools in each feeder pattern to review and discuss their unique data. They were then asked to develop an action plan on how to address any shortfalls or areas of concern.

CCPS has partnerships with Towson University and McDaniel College to provide direct bill opportunities for Education Leadership programs that lead to an Administrator I certificate in Maryland. This provides employees with an opportunity to pursue an administrative track with little to no cost out of pocket. Additionally, a CCPS retiree serves as the Intern Supervisor for administrative interns at McDaniel College, so we are able to partner with that individual to discuss the needs and expectations of interns in these roles, and to ensure that the internship experience is aligned to needs of the school system for both the student and CCPS.

## Challenges and Next Steps

As we finalize our Career Ladder, CCPS has seen a substantial increase in interest of teachers who are pursuing an NBC. The 2023-2024 school year has brought the largest NBC candidate class in our history (see [data appendix 7-B NBC Candidates](#)). We believe this trend will work to further support the implementation of the Career Ladder over time. We also know that this could create challenges in staffing leadership roles, as it may cause current administrators to return to the classroom given the per diem rates and workload. Currently, 8.6% of our Assistant Principals hold an active National Board Certificate. We believe that this will not be a unique challenge for our school district as others across the state will likely experience the same situation. However, with our current fiscal outlook, if these individuals return to classroom teaching positions, it is possible that their positions do not get replaced.

As recruitment data changes, our career ladder is finalized and implemented, and building level administration and leadership needs become more apparent, CCPS may need to revisit our current IHE partnerships and Grow Your Own Initiatives (Leadership Academy and Local Support Teachers) to meet the evolving needs of our school system. We believe that once we are able to define and finalize the administrative role on the career ladder, and if we continue to create opportunities to develop teachers into leadership roles and provide robust opportunities for professional development and administrative opportunities, those with an NBC will see the greater value in remaining in the Assistant Principal role and others will continue to see the value in pursuing these promotional opportunities.

CCPS has implemented various training opportunities for our employees who are moving into leadership roles. A two-day summer Leadership Academy is facilitated by the Division of Education Services as a way to continue to enhance the support of school and teacher leaders to retain and continue to grow them for promotional opportunities. Additionally, various professional development work groups are scheduled throughout the summer with specific focus on roles and responsibilities that they will be assigned (Human Resources, Technology, Business Services, Student Services). Leaders have the opportunity to sign up for additional sessions that support their professional growth and development.

We continue to encourage open communication between school leaders and central leadership. This allows for leaders in new positions to receive support with new responsibilities. These new leaders also have a mentor assigned to them as a resource.

Other leaders in our school system are currently defined as Content Support Teachers. They function in a lead capacity in all core content areas at all levels (elementary, middle and high). With the expansion of the Career Ladder, we will look to target and support these teachers in their pursuit of an NBC. As the Content Support Teachers are identified, we plan to initiate a meeting with these leaders with our NBC Teacher Facilitator and an Instructional Coordinator, who is a previous NBC holder and mentor, to recruit these individuals to pursue the NBC. These meetings will educate these staff members on the benefits of obtaining NBC as well as the support and resources in place to assist employees through this process. Obtaining an NBC will allow these natural leaders to continue on the Teacher Leadership track of the Career Ladder that will be implemented in the 2025-2026 school year. These teacher leaders will recruit and support other teachers as they begin the process of earning NBC.

## 07. National Board Certification

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 37-44, 48, and 51*

In March 2023, the LEA described its plans to **recruit and support diverse candidates through the successful completion of National Board Certification or advanced degrees (if NBC is not available)** to be eligible for the designation of Lead Teacher within the Career Ladder.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome to recruit and support diverse candidates pursuing and achieving National Board Certification or advanced degrees (if NBC is not available).

[Data Appendix 7a-National Board Cert](#)

[Data Appendix 7b - NBC Candidates](#)

## Progress

CCPS continues to offer monthly support sessions (virtual and in-person) for those individuals pursuing an NBC. CCPS provides information sessions in both the spring and fall for staff members interested in learning more about NBC. CCPS initiated a partnership with Stevenson University to provide candidates pursuing NBC access to on-line courses aligned with the individual components of NBC to assist them in pursuing NBC. To

mitigate costs to employees, this partnership was set up to have CCPS billed directly for tuition costs up to negotiated allowances. Additional IHE support for teachers participating in the National Board Certification process have been identified and offered to teachers as an option. These programs offer graduate level courses that are designed with the NBPTS pillars to assist teachers in the completion of each component. Current programs are offered at Towson University, Stevenson University, and Wilmington University. Three additional teachers earned their NBC in December 2023.

NBC Teachers earning \$10,000 salary increase

- 2022-2023: 28 teachers (12 elementary and 16 secondary)
- 2023-2024: 29 teachers (13 elementary and 16 secondary)
- 2024-2025: 31 teachers (12 elementary and 19 secondary)

CCPS continues to recruit eligible teachers for the National Board Certification Process through multiple information sessions in the spring and fall of each school year. Also, the current National Board Certified teachers recruit and inform teachers in their schools about the process and workload of the certification requirements.

National Board Initial Candidates	
School Year	Number of Teachers
2021-2022	4
2022-2023	37
2023-2024	48

NBC teachers who work in a Low Performing School as defined by MSDE (MD Report Card rating of a 1 or 2-star for two out of three consecutive years) earn additional salary increases. In 2023-2024, no schools were identified as Low Performing. In 2024-2025, one school has been identified, and currently has two NBC teachers. MSDE permits LEAs the local flexibility to identify additional low performing schools. CCPS has not identified any local flexibility schools.

**Challenges and Next Steps**

As our cohort size increases, maintaining the personalization of these supports will be a challenge. Initially, we provided three professional leave days for staff members to work on NBC. However, with the increased participation we have had to end this practice due to cost containment. To continue to offer support without the associated cost of professional leave days, we are promoting the IHE programs with our partners as an alternative option outside of the local support of CCPS and a tool for NBC candidates to utilize to assist them through the NBC process. The increased number of candidates with the limited support staff affects the amount of support for the candidates. Enrolling teachers in the IHE programs will lessen the workload on local support and will better meet the needs of all NBC candidates.

Another challenge is increasing the number of minority and male NBC teachers. Our current NBC teachers are predominantly white females which are also the majority of our teaching population. Increasing minorities and males is a challenge and a priority, as only 8% of the CCPS teaching staff is a minority and only 22% are

males. In an effort to address these shortfalls, CCPS plans to identify and understand why these underrepresented groups are not pursuing an NBC. With the use of this information, we will then facilitate small group information sessions to educate and dispel any misconceptions and inaccuracies on the process. Continuing to educate those on the career ladder and the salary incentives connected with obtaining the NBC.

We also face the challenge to increase the number of NBC teachers at low performing schools, as these are generally our Title I schools with our highest population of poverty. We will need to address this either by increasing participation in completing National Board Certification or voluntary transfer to the low performing schools. Identification of low performing schools need to be released earlier to meet the transfer window for staffing.

## 08. Cultivating and Managing Effective Partnerships

How does the LEA cultivate and manage its partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHE) and educator preparation programs (EPP) to ensure the needs of all organizations are met?

Consider the challenges associated with the current labor market and the individual mission and goals of each partner. Discuss how the LEA works with its partners to build relationships and adapt each organization's systems and practices to achieve shared goals.

Considerations:

- Teacher candidate placement and experiences
- Teacher induction and mentorship programs
- Talent pipelines, including alternative pathways to certification, and professional development
- Advanced degree (e.g., in support of dual enrollment expansion, filling critical needs areas, etc.)
- Developing and implementing Post-College and Career Readiness (CCR) pathways and CCR Support pathway
- Regular communication and feedback between LEA and IHE/EPP leadership to strengthen programs and systems

## Plan Considerations

### Teacher Candidate Placement and Experiences

CCPS is committed to working collaboratively with our higher education partners to provide a valuable experience for our interns/student teachers. Our Director of Education serves as a liaison between CCPS and each of the IHE's. Placements of interns are strategically filled to ensure that interns/student teachers are paired with veteran/senior teachers and in schools in which they will have an experience that provides an excellent educational opportunity. Additionally, CCPS strives to ensure that the experience includes the opportunity to work with diverse populations as a way to best prepare the intern/student teacher for future career experiences.

As we have shared earlier in the document, CCPS has had great success with hiring our teacher interns to fill vacancies. To enhance our potential candidate experience, we hire our interns/student teachers as substitute teachers within the system. This role grants them access to curriculum and assessment materials. When the interns/student teachers are not required to be in the schools for their internship, their substitute teacher role



allows them to serve as a substitute for their mentor teacher and or others in the school building or grade level in which they are completing their experience. This allows these potential candidates to have both a greater understanding of the operations of the school and curriculum as well as have a sense of belonging to the school/community.

### **Teacher Induction and mentorship programs**

CCPS works closely with our partner IHE's in placing college students in a variety of placements within the Cecil County Public Schools. The partner IHEs provide the necessary training to support the CCPS mentors in order to provide the best possible intern experience. As stated in question 5, the success of our mentorship program through the IHE partnership has allowed CCPS to fill vacancy positions with a new teacher who we have already trained and this serves as a precursor to our comprehensive new teacher induction program. Once CCPS hires new teachers they are immersed in a new teacher induction program for the first three years with the school system.

### **Talent pipelines, including alternative pathways to certification and professional development**

The nationwide teacher shortage has increased the need for the consideration and identification of talent pipelines. To mitigate these workforce shortages, in addition to the previous responses CCPS has shared in Pillar 2, CCPS is in the beginning stages of developing an alternative pathway to certification/licensure with other local education agencies in the Eastern Shore of Maryland Education Consortium (ESMEC) and Johns Hopkins University. This would develop an in-district pathway with an individual to support the oversight for candidates in the in-district program that would lead to educator licensure/certification. This is still in the very early stages where we are identifying the needs of the districts, certification area shortages, and new COMAR licensure requirements.

### **Advanced degree (e.g., in support of dual enrollment expansion, filling critical needs areas, etc.)**

To increase and aid staff in pursuing advanced degrees, CCPS has established direct bill partnerships with eight IHEs. Among the current partnerships, seven offer CCPS staff opportunities for coursework toward advanced degrees and six offer tuition discounts to CCPS employees. This discounted tuition complements our calendar year and credit maximum allowance for tuition reimbursement, making it more affordable to employees to pursue advanced degrees and requires less out of pocket expenses for the employee. As the demand for advanced degrees persists, we will need to continue to assist CCPS employees in finding graduate programs through our partner IHEs and continue to promote these opportunities to our staff. In the coming years of this plan, we intend to continue to identify partners and enhance current partnerships through yearly meetings to identify increasing needs. We also will consider building upon our compensation advancement opportunities through the negotiations process in order to incentivize and continue to encourage staff to pursue advanced degrees.

### **Developing and implementing Post-College and Career Readiness (CCR) pathways and CCR Support pathway**

CCPS and Cecil College (CC) have partnered for many years in providing juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credits in dual enrollment courses that also meet high school graduation programs. The Blueprint has allowed CCPS and CC to expand on these dual enrollment offerings at both CCPS school sites and on the CC campus. Currently Cecil College is able to meet the staffing needs for the courses that are offered to CCPS students. As more students meet College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards, CCPS and CC will continue to explore other strategies to meet the demand of dual enrollment courses.

In the 2018-2019 school year CCPS and Cecil College established an [Early College Academy](#) (ECA) that allows students to complete an Associate's Degree in general studies by the time the student graduates high school. The ECA program started at one high school with a cohort of 25 students and expanded to include another high school site in 2019-2020. Each of these sites allow students from all five high schools to apply to the ECA program. In the 2023-2024 school year, 175 students in grades 9-12 are enrolled in the ECA.

Both the dual enrollment and ECA programs allow high school students the opportunity to begin their college experience and gain valuable college credits that will apply to their college program of study. In 2022-2023, 299 students completed 1121 courses and in 2023-2024, 343 students completed 1187 courses for college credit.

Students who have not met the CCR standard have been able to still participate in the initial stages of the dual enrollment pathway while receiving support from Cecil College and CCPS. These students are closely monitored by school counselors and Cecil College staff.

### **Regular communication and feedback between LEA and IHE/EPP leadership to strengthen programs and systems**

Currently, CCPS has yearly meetings with the majority of our IHE partners to review our Memorandum of Understanding and discuss any increasing needs or changes in the program offerings to CCPS employees. We have a biweekly meeting currently with Moreland University for our conditional certificate holders to discuss programming, what is working well, what is not working, and to determine next steps for those in this program. Through these meetings, we believe we will continue to cultivate and strengthen our relationships with these partners and the programs that are offered.

### **Challenges and Next Steps**

IHE's continue to see decreased enrollment in teacher prep programs, therefore they experience budgetary decline related to continuing to fund these programs. With decreased enrollment in the teacher preparation programs, CCPS is anticipating less student teacher placements, which has been our greatest pipeline for teacher candidates.

While our partnerships yield positive results, rising tuition costs continue to be a challenge for both CCPS and our employees who are pursuing additional credits.

Even though there are limited local IHE's within a reasonable distance that would be able to offer flexibility in program requirements to accommodate the non-traditional learner (individuals who work full-time and access learning opportunities outside of the work day). The IHE's are developing more options to access learning (hybrid and virtual learning opportunities) to increase options for teacher candidates. For instance, we have had discussions with Towson University in reference to developing a School Psychology cohort model that would offer evening, weekend, and hybrid options to increase the potential for our employees to participate in this program.

## **09. Educator Compensation**

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 52-54*

In March 2023, the LEA discussed how it intended to **meet the requirements set forth in the Blueprint to improve teacher compensation**. The LEA's response was to ensure that teachers receive a minimum starting salary of \$60,000 by July 1, 2026.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome to ensure teachers receive a minimum starting salary of \$60,000 by July 1, 2026.

[Data Appendix 9-Compensation](#)

## Progress

We are in the first year of a 3.75% COLA and will continue with the same COLA through FY27 which will enable us to reach the \$60,000 minimum start salary. Through our discussions with our association, this has remained a priority while addressing the fiscal challenges presented by budgetary constraints. Below are the upcoming minimum negotiated starting salary calculations:

- \$55,821 in FY25
  - \$57,913 in FY26
  - \$60,085 in FY27
- \*these are estimates for illustrative purposes

## Challenges and Next Steps

The challenge is the amount of money necessary to fulfill this commitment. Our fiscal support from county, state, and federal limits our ability to maintain our current workforce and address this fiscal responsibility. Our provisionally certificated teachers currently receive a \$1,000 reduction on the teacher salary scale. As we move forward into FY26, this will not be achievable due to our projected scale having a first step of less than \$61,000.

## Pillar 3

### 10. College and Career Readiness in English Language Arts

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 57-76 and 81*

In March 2023, the LEA described how it would **ensure all Pre-K-5 students are proficient in reading by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and on the path to becoming college and career ready in English language arts.**

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome ensuring all students are proficient in reading by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and on the path to becoming college and career ready in English language arts.

[Data Appendix 10 - English](#)

### Literacy Plan

#### Progress

The Pre K - 5 draft literacy plan was submitted for review on January 15, 2024. We are currently revising the plan based on feedback from the Maryland Initiative for Literacy and Equity (MILE) team and MSDE staff. In collaboration with MILE and MSDE, CCPS scheduled literacy visits and focus groups to observe the current Pre K - 5 program followed by the grades 6 - 12 plan draft that will be submitted on May 1, 2024.

#### Challenges and Next Steps

Next steps include determining alignment of trends and patterns in feedback provided by MSDE Expert Review Team and MILE. This data will be used to inform revisions. Revisions will occur in phases. Phase 1 will include providing information to address the unknown status of indicators. Phase 2 will focus on prioritization and elevation of indicators with similar status. During this phase, we should have access to the literacy visit and focus group data collected by MILE and MSDE. For phase 3, we will begin by categorizing our feedback using an effort to impact the matrix. Using this matrix for each piece of feedback will help us determine whether a

programmatic adjustment would be a quick/easy win, a big bet, an incremental gain, or a fruitless task. Once we have sorted the feedback in this way, we will use a points-based ranking system to prioritize which programmatic adjustments will be addressed in year 1, which will be addressed in future years, and which need to be reconsidered.

## Achievement Projections

### Progress

#### *Elementary*

**Acadience ([Data Appendix 10a - Universal Screener](#)):** CCPS utilizes the Acadience Reading K-6 as a universal screener and progress monitoring tool for foundational reading skills. The screener is administered by teachers at least three times per year in Kindergarten through grade 5 and more frequently between benchmarks for students performing below and well below. The ALL Students group in CCPS elementary schools in grade 1 has seen an 18 percentage-point increase in students demonstrating grade level proficiency from 2022 to 2024. Grade 2 has seen a 14 percentage-point increase in the ALL Students group, and ALL Students in grade 3 has seen a six percentage-point increase. Students in all student groups have also demonstrated improvement, but performance gaps persist, the largest of which are found with Special Education and ML students.

#### **MCAP ([Data Appendix 10 - English](#))**

An important indicator that students have developed foundational reading skills is that they are able to demonstrate proficiency on grade-level reading and writing standards, so results on the grade 3 English/Language Arts (ELA) Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) are an important indicator of success. The percentage of CCPS grade 3 students demonstrating proficiency on the ELA MCAP has remained the same from the pre-pandemic assessment year of 2019. Just over 38% of students earned a proficient score in both 2019 and 2023 with a slight gain of 1% in 2022. Black/African American demonstrated our largest gains from 2019 to 2023 in grade 3. They grew over six percentage points from 2019 to 2023, but they still had a proficiency rate over 10 percentage points below the rate for All Students in 2023. Economically Disadvantaged students also grew six percentage points from 2019 to 2023, though this is over 12 percentage points below that of All Students. Gaps remain for Hispanic/Latino, Students with Disabilities, Multilingual Learners, and Students of Two or More Races.

All Students in grade 4 have grown four percentage points from 2019 to 2023. The MCAP ELA Growth Percentile for grade 4 was 60%. This means that significantly more than half of our students made tremendous growth from grades 3 to 4. Half of our students grew at a rate substantially higher than the state. We don't know the standard deviation. The typical student was within the 60th percentile. Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Students of Two or More Races, Multilingual Learners, Economically Disadvantaged, White, and both Female and Male students experienced gains with Multilingual Learners experiencing a 20 percentage point gain. The MCAP ELA Growth Percentile for grade 5 was 41.5%. While learning gaps persist when looking at our grade 3 and grade 5 student data, our grade 4 and grade 6 student data indicates student progress towards grade 10 CCR and mastery of foundational reading skills continue to be an important goal and benchmark for CCPS.

#### **Secondary:**

In grade 6, we exceeded our 2023 goal for Economically Disadvantaged (ED) and had less Special Education (SE) students score a 1 from 2022 to 2023. Also less Black/African American (B/AA) scored a 1 compared to 2022, and proficiency increased from 21.9% in 2022 to 28% in 2023. However, we did not meet our 2023 goals for English Learners (EL) or Hispanic (H) students.

Grade 6 Student Achievement on MCAP

Year	2022				2023			
Prof. Level	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
ED	23.1%	57.6%	18.3%	<=5%	13.2%	55%	30%	2%
SE	43%	57.6%	<=5%	<=5%	29%	61%	10%	<=5%
B/AA	27.2%	50.9%	21.9%	<=5%	14%	58%	27%	1%
EL	30%	50%	20%	<=5%				5%
H	15.8%	53.9%	30.3%	<=5%	15%	58%	27%	3%

In grade 10, we exceeded our 2023 goals for ED students, B/AA students, and Hispanic students. We had some movement from level 1 to 2 for SE and EL students, but we are not moving those students into the proficiency range.

Grade 10 Student Achievement on MCAP

Year	2022				2023			
Prof. Level	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
ED	8.5%	47%	40.1%	<=5%	4%	42%	49%	5%
SE	20.5%	65.8%	13%	<=5%	16.1%	69.6%	14.3%	<=5%
B/AA	<=5%	53.7%	36.1%	6.5%	4%	42%	50%	4%
EL	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%	<=5%	6.3%	81.3%	12.5%	<=5%
H	8%	51.1%	36.4%	<=5%	<=5%	39.3%	51.6	<=5%

## Challenges and Next Steps

### Elementary

Teachers and tutors are consistently entering benchmark data (93% - 97%). An area of growth is progress monitoring. We understand the challenges of progress monitoring entry using the current platform, Intervention Module, in Performance Matters, and will be investigating other solutions that may provide a more simple process. Revisions to our progress monitoring data entry guiding document and cycle calendars, exploration of Acadience Data Management platform and the ability to interface with our existing platform, Performance Matters, are solutions district leadership will explore in Summer 2024. District level leadership will ensure progress monitoring data entry and data reports are standardized to meet the needs of teacher, administrative, and district level staff.

CCPS will explore the Acadience Reading K-6 data management platform and how the platform interfaces with Performance Matters. We plan to pilot alternatives to MAP administration to determine learning gaps in comprehension: MAZE, curriculum based measure administered through Performance Matters. We will collaborate with Washington County to explore this replacement to measure comprehension and writing.

### Secondary

Our 5th grade scores have been trending below the state average. We increase the number of students scoring proficient by the end of 6th grade, but it is a heavy lift. In addition, teacher survey data for participating First Edition Bookworms schools revealed an opportunity for growth in elementary, teaching writing lessons during the English Language Arts block. The MCAP and survey data suggests that a gap may exist between the elementary and middle school curriculum.

We are working on a 5th grade transition unit that will pre-teach 6th grade skills. In addition, five participants from the MD Writing Project cohort will become trainers this summer to offer writing workshops to other teachers beginning this summer and to continue throughout the school year. We will utilize the MTSS model in middle school to address gaps in reading achievement.

## Professional Learning

### Progress

#### Science of Reading Professional Learning

CCPS continues to provide LETRS training to a cohort of teachers throughout the year. This school year, there are 15 participants in LETRS 1-4 and 28 teachers trained in Early Childhood (EC) LETRS.

All seventeen elementary school administrators participated in a three-hour Science of Reading training during the Summer of 2023.

#### HQIM Training and On-going Professional Learning

CCPS continues to provide curriculum based training and on-going school based professional learning aligned to the science of reading through a collaborative coaching model between coaches employed at The Student Success Center at University of Delaware and CCPS district literacy coaches. This school year, 130 participants participated in curriculum based professional learning across 10 of our 17 elementary schools. The

model includes classroom visits, feedback, and a 90-minute PLC. Multiple rubrics were used to evaluate school-level conditions, levels of teacher efficacy, and self-reported professional learning. The school-based implementation rubric includes four phases of implementation that might occur when a user adopts a new, complex innovation: exploration, preparation, implementation, sustainment. There are two sections to this Figure: Enabling Conditions and School-Level Norms.

Enabling Conditions includes rows for HQIM adoption, curriculum training, instructional time, and time for professional collaboration. Under Enabling Conditions, schools mostly fell within the Implementation and Sustainment ratings. School-Level Norms include rows for collaborative goal setting in PLCs, lesson modeling and simulations (supported practice), coaching visits and feedback, and student work analysis. Under School-Level Norms, schools mostly fell within the Implementation and Sustainment ratings, except “Analysis of Student Work,” where the results were more divided due to differing coach interpretations of the criteria. See [10c-School Implementation Rubric tab](#) in 2023\_BP\_LEA\_07. The results of coaching observations in the eight participating First Edition Bookworms schools revealed patterns of implementation related to the identified areas on the Bookworms Innovation Configuration coaching tool. See [IC tool](#). Results revealed evidence of exploration through sustainment in each category for each grade, grades 1-5. See [10d - Teacher Efficacy data](#). Teacher survey results from the First Edition Bookworms schools indicated a teacher preference of small-group in-person learning.

In all of our elementary schools, 151 participants completed six hours of High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) curriculum training of foundational skills. Pre-K, K, and grade 1 teachers and 24.5% of our elementary special education staff completed the six hour training and 10.5 hours of on-going curriculum based professional development throughout the school year. In addition, all Pre-K and K special educators received training in phonemic awareness from assessment to implementation. All grades 2-5 special educators received training in phonics from assessment to implementation.

### **Train the Trainer for Sustainability**

Two district level coaches are LETRS Facilitators, one district coach is Wilson Certified, and by the end of this year, three Title I Teachers and two District Coaches will receive their Level K and Level 1 Facilitator and Presenter Certification. The Foundations Facilitator and Presenter staff will Foundations Level K and 1 training of new staff. In addition, CCPS continues to support progress toward CCR by continuing to offer professional development focused on writing instruction. Five participants from the MD Writing Project Cohort 1 will become trainers this summer to sustain writing workshop professional development for our teachers during the summer and throughout the school year.

### **Challenges and Next Steps**

LETRS is offered for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and graduate credit. As a result we have a small number of participating teachers. A number of teachers are also completing their NBCT. While CCPS continues to offer a variety of professional learning related to the science of reading, including LETRS for educators, the bridge from research to practice has not been fully realized. The adoption of HQIM at all three tiers of instruction in elementary requires new learning of staff. While CCPS adopted our core elementary curriculum nine years ago, revisions to the core structured literacy programming and adoption of a foundational skills curriculum, requires curriculum based training and on-going curriculum based professional development. LETRS is curricular agnostic. To integrate new learning into practice, teachers must learn each curricular component and make connections to the science of reading provided through LETRS. On-going professional



learning where teachers engage in communities of practice to move from exploration and preparation to implementation and sustainment are required. Grant funds were used to retain CCPS district coaches as well as UD coaches to provide classroom visits and feedback and professional learning communities (PLC). The district coaches and trainers are certified facilitators and presenters for both LETRS and Foundations. CCPS has not yet developed a plan to provide professional learning on the Science of Reading for secondary ELA teachers, and the secondary ELA program will no longer offer instructional coaching after the 2023-2024 school year.

Next steps include braiding and utilizing remaining grant and local funds to retain trainers, coaches, and teacher leaders in positions who can provide training and on-going professional development to support expansion and adoption of the foundational skills curriculum, Foundations Level 2 and Level 3, and First Edition Bookworms. Through collaboration at the district and school level, CCPS will evaluate the need to leverage staff in the buildings funded through Title I as well as content support teachers in each school. In addition, CCPS will commit to prioritizing LETRS and curriculum based coaching and professional learning and cease additional curricular agnostic professional development to prevent competing priorities. CCPS will utilize a new platform to begin developing hybrid professional development modules to meet the needs of all teachers.

To continue developing Tier 2 and 3 programming, CCPS trainers in collaboration with UD trainers from The Student Success Center will train teachers in intervention aligned to our elementary core programming: Foundations Intervention, Differentiated Reading Strategic, and Bookworms Intensive. In addition, district staff will collaborate and align programming recommendations to ensure core programming and tiered supports meet the needs of all students inclusive of multilingual learners and students receiving special education. To begin implementing an MTSS model in middle schools, CCPS will develop science of reading training that supports the implementation of supplemental instruction. District and school leaders will collaborate to ensure this training is prioritized in the professional learning calendar. Furthermore, secondary ELA will implement a professional learning model that is aligned with the National Board Certification process to provide professional learning that is differentiated, builds teacher self-efficacy, and supports teachers who wish to advance along the career ladder.

CCPS is dedicated to not only developing our teaching and support staff, but our administrators who support teachers who provide literacy instruction in each of their schools. The challenges of time continue to impede professional learning opportunities for principals and school administrators. In Spring and Summer of 2024, CCPS will identify professional learning gaps that exist among school leaders and align professional learning to need contextualizing support in curriculum based professional learning. Through continued work at the district and school level, CCPS will continue to work toward alignment between instructional focus identified by school based administrators and district office.

## **Instructional Materials and Interventions**

### **Progress**

To support schools in their decision-making related to Multilingual Learners (MLs), district teams are revising the guidance to support schools with identification of ML students who would benefit from services beyond their high quality, Tier 1 core programming. In addition, scaffolded assessments and a mini-professional

development module was developed to provide support for teachers of MLs as we progress into the new school year.

CCPS continues to scale implementation of HQIM foundational skills in Grades 2 and 3 in phase I of implementation and grades 1 through 5 in the remaining seven elementary schools.

CCPS will continue with revisions to MTSS and enhancing professional learning for students receiving services through an IEP. Classroom teachers and special educators will receive Foundations Intervention training and on-going professional learning as part of our Tier 2 programming. In addition, grade 4-5 teachers will participate in professional learning focused on using screener, diagnostic, and progress monitoring data to customize core instruction of foundational skills (eg., decoding, spelling) and high-level literacy skills (e.g., reading comprehension, written expression) and to provide Tier 2 and 3 supports through differentiated reading strategic and Bookworms Intensive, both supports are in alignment with Tier 1, Bookworms First Edition.

CCPS is exploring MTSS for middle school (screening, diagnosing, progress monitoring, supplemental instruction). We are piloting an assessment program that will support MTSS. We are exploring schedule models that will allow time for supplemental instruction that is evidence-based and aligned with Tier 1 curriculum.

CCPS is using the High-Quality, Content-Rich Instructional Materials to evaluate and expand curriculum for English Language Arts. Lead teachers were introduced to the HQIM framework. We are using the framework to evaluate our curriculum and establish goals for revisions.

### **Challenges and Next Steps**

Three of our nine participating Bookworms First Edition schools reported in preparation in the beginning and middle of the year due to limited time to instruct literacy on early dismissal Wednesdays. Preparation, meaning routines are in place while teachers continue to require support in making connections. The remaining six schools reported implementation and sustainment in the beginning and middle of the year. In the implementation phase, routines are in place and consistent with lesson design. In the sustainment phase, teachers are maintaining and enhancing the routines.

Next steps include developing standardized scheduling options to maximize literacy instruction on early dismissal days. Revisions to scope and sequence for elementary literacy instruction in all three instructional blocks to reflect the time provided in the current school schedule. Provide district level guidance on scheduling options for early dismissal days prioritizing foundational skills in K-3 and genre-based writing in grades 4 and 5. While fidelity rates for completion of universal screener are nearly 100%, progress monitoring between Acadience benchmarks for students below or well below benchmark is an area of focus for professional learning in Summer 2024 and 2024-2025, along with revisions to district guiding documents on how to respond including intensification and fading of tiered supports.

The possible reduction of instructional time and staffing due to budget cuts creates a challenge and Tier 2 and 3 interventions in the current middle school MTSS model are mainly used to address behavior concerns. Interventions for students with disabilities are selected by the special education department. We are exploring MTSS models that address academics. Readbasix does not have a math component, so we may have to keep MAP. This would make Readbasix an additional expense. Teachers will need training to use the assessment in

a manner that drives instruction

Considerations include the implementation of a double block of ELA for identified students to all for supplemental instruction (Tiers I and II), development of Tier II resources to address deficits in fluency and word recognition and the provision of professional learning on using data to provide tiered supports.

## 11. College and Career Readiness in Mathematics

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 82-100 and 105*

In March 2023, the LEA described how it would **ensure all Pre-K-5 students are on the path to becoming college and career ready in mathematics.**

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome ensuring all students are on the path to becoming college and career ready in mathematics.

[Data Appendix 11 - Math](#)

## Progress

During 2023-2024, both elementary and secondary mathematics have continued to work towards the goals detailed in the 2023 Blueprint for Success. Some highlights to date include a newly developed joint vision and mission. Our vision is to provide equitable access, options, and opportunities to all learners so that they are prepared for the rigors of college and their future careers.

Our Mission is to ensure our educators provide comprehensive, differentiated core instruction and scaffolded support to build students' conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic competence, adaptive reasoning, and self-efficacy.

To support our Vision and Mission CCPS is committed to the commitment statements below. These commitments will help guide our work.

- *We believe that all students can learn mathematics at a high level.*
- *We believe that mathematical understanding is the gateway to future opportunities.*

- *We believe that self-reflection and a shared commitment to mathematical excellence are the keys to both educator and student achievement.*
- *We believe that mathematics classrooms are a safe space for students to ask questions, share divergent thinking, and experience success.*

Additionally, we continue to work with our strategic facilitator to assist with the development of our Comprehensive plan due in the fall of the 2024-2025 school year.

### **Comprehensive Math Plan Overview of Work**

The Comprehensive Plan (CMP) for math is underway with a target completion date of June 1, 2024. Our plan will parallel the design of the ELA Comprehensive Plan. To date we have created the Key Components for the CMP, which include:

- Assessment
- Professional Learning
- Instruction and Intervention
- Resources
- Family and Community

Feedback from last year indicated that we needed to provide details on the goals for mathematics and how we would develop the plan. We are working with our strategic facilitator to complete this work by June 1, 2024.

April-June 2024

- Determine Goals and Strategies for each Component
- Define goals for SY 25-27
- Define goals for SY27-SY30

Full implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will begin in the 2025-2026 school year.

### **Achievement Trends**

Progress - Grade 3 MCAP Performance

<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>2019 % Proficient</b>	<b>2022 % Proficient</b>	<b>2023 % Proficient</b>
All Students	37.7	31.9	34.4
Black/AA	17.3	12.5	18.6
Hispanic	21.1	19.5	17.5
White	41.2	36.4	39.3
2 or more races	40.3	24.7	33.3
EL	18.5	5.1	16.7
ED	21.5	18.0	22.3
SWD	10.9	< = 5.0	9.4

Overall student performance on MCAP continues to climb after the impact of the Covid Pandemic. All student subgroup data is also trending up with the exception of our Hispanic population. Some of this success can be

attributed to Professional Learning (PL) that occurred throughout the 2023-2024 school year related to the state assessment. Teachers participated in PL on the key resources related to the MCAP test, including grade level evidence statements and grade level test blueprints.

Additionally, we continued into our second year using Acadience Math as a universal screening tool for grades K-5 for computation and concepts and applications. Teachers used the benchmark results to inform small group instruction and learning goals. When analyzing the end of the year Acadience Math data, we identified overall regression for students on or above grade level proficiency in grades K, 1 and 2.

**Acadience Math Composite Data Fall to Spring SY 2023-2024**

Grade	At Risk		Below Average		Average		Above Average	
	BOY	EOY	BOY	EOY	BOY	EOY	BOY	EOY
<b>1</b>	88%	9%	6%	8%	1%	5%	0%	75%
<b>2</b>	4%	35%	2%	27%	5%	21%	84%	11%
<b>3</b>	72%	63%	14%	16%	3%	7%	4%	2%
<b>4</b>	62%	45%	21%	24%	5%	15%	8%	12%
<b>5</b>	26%	34%	23%	28%	10%	19%	37%	15%

**Challenges:** Although Cecil County Public Schools MCAP data is trending upward in all subgroups but one, our overall proficiency levels in grades 3-5 are not acceptable, nor are the results of MCAP performance when disaggregated. Challenges that impact student achievement include class sizes and number of additional resources to provide support for students with disabilities or student’s with social emotional difficulties. Additionally, we lack instructional support in each school to support teachers with job embedded professional learning. Teacher workload also continues to be a concern in grades K-2 where elementary teachers are asked to prep for all subjects and all small group instruction.

**Next Steps:** During SY 2024-2025 CCPS will continue to use Acadience Benchmark Data in grades K-5 to inform small group instruction. Additionally, teachers will receive professional learning on the Acadience Progress Monitoring Tool to provide opportunities to measure the progress of targeted small group instruction. Elementary schools were provided an option to specialize their teaching content in grade 2, which will impact the number of daily preps required for them.

***Professional Development***

**Progress**

We continue to provide PD based on student data. Based on last year’s data gathered from Professional Development sessions, we targeted specific training needs such as an understanding of foundational concepts in elementary math, new teacher training and more information on intervention and targeted instruction. We provided those training opportunities as indicated in the table labeled *SY 23-24 Elementary Math PD and Descriptors* . Below demonstrates our growth as represented by Grade 3.

<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>2019 % Proficient</b>	<b>2022 % Proficient</b>	<b>2023 % Proficient</b>
All Students	37.7	31.9	34.4
Black/AA	17.3	12.5	18.6
Hispanic	21.1	19.5	17.5
White	41.2	36.4	39.3
2 or more races	40.3	24.7	33.3
EL	18.5	5.1	16.7
ED	21.5	18.0	22.3
SWD	10.9	< = 5.0	9.4

Based on these results elementary Math has reassessed our Professional Development needs and is in the process of developing our 2024-2025 plans. As part of our plan we intend to explore the use of continuous coaching to observe and provide feedback regarding Tier 1 teaching practices for our elementary schools with the highest teacher turnover rate and greatest student need.

For this model we will contract coaching services from the University of Delaware. Coaches will observe and provide coaching feedback in addition to participating/co-facilitating a formative assessment cycle with students work as the key component. This would be our key focus for Professional Learning. As Ongoing Assessment Project (OGAP) training sessions are being offered by MSDE, we hope our teachers can take advantage of that as well.

In addition we continue to explore the impact of an ML tutor for Hispanic students also classified as ML's. The use of an ML tutor was implemented during the 2023-2024 school year. This effort could be duplicated in other schools with large Hispanic populations.

### **Challenges**

Our 2023 feedback stated that we needed to include a plan to develop systems for tracking, determining the necessary PD for teachers and how to determine if a teacher reached mastery of the PD content. Tracking PD in the data service center was slightly better than paper tracking. This method of tracking allows us to systematically track who completed a specific course. However, it does not move CCPS toward the goal of tracking whether teachers completed all necessary training or if a teacher requires additional training or support. Additionally, funding is a concern as we have only one elementary coach for our 17 schools and zero secondary coaches or specialists to facilitate PD. Overall there is still no formal way for CCPS to assess a teacher's training needs. In the 2024-2025 school year, CCPS will implement a new platform to capture professional learning opportunities.

## Next Steps

One solution for the 2024-2025 school year is to repurpose our current “lead teachers” to provide PD once per month at the secondary level. The PD will be on techniques for analyzing student work in a manner that leads to better use of real-time formative data to guide instruction.

Determine the number of schools participating in Elementary Coaching and PLC’s as described above and set expectations and dates for visits for the entire 2024-2025 school year school year.

Cecil County Public schools will implement a new evaluation and professional learning platform in the 2024-2025 school year. This new platform will also provide CCPS a way to track and assign professional development recommendations and completion for teachers and support staff. CCPS plans to explore the ability in the professional learning system that will allow observers to assign professional development based on observation data which will also be easily accessible. For example, we will explore the notion that a teacher who may struggle with engagement according to their observations may be recommended a module or training covering how to engage students.

## Types of Training Provided

### Progress

Based on 2022-2023 school year feedback, CCPS created a table to describe the professional learning session and its purpose. Table A below provides information for PD that occurred during the 2023-2024 school year.

#### [SY 23-24 Elementary Math PD and Descriptors](#)

Description	Purpose
August New Teacher PD	Provides and orientation to the elementary math block and the curricular resources used by Cecil County Public Schools
New Teacher Mini Conferences (2)	2 Mini conferences held for all new teachers - sessions related to math are typically about small group and Tier 2 instructions
New Teacher classroom visits	Provides new teachers a chance to visit, observe and talk to exemplar teachers that are teaching the same grade
School Based Professional Learning Communities	Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to review student data and work to determine next instructional steps which we call the formative assessment cycle (with coach or school based lead)
OnGoing Assessment Project (OGAP)	OGAP math, foundations in how children develop additive and multiplicative thinking. Teachers use learning trajectories to determine student strengths so they can adjust instruction to meet student needs. This year teachers in grades 3-5 participated in Multiplicative and Fractions.

Do the Math	<p>Do The Math is a supplemental math program for students who require additional practice with high leverage concepts involving all four operations.</p> <p>This online training module is housed on our LMS and is entirely asynchronous. Primary users include tutors and general educators.</p>
MCAP Awareness Training	PD developed and delivered to provide make and takes and strategies to reinforce fluency in grades K-5
All Learners Online Module - Math for all learners	<p>Targeted audience all teachers grades 3-5 and special educators.</p> <p>Math 4 all learners and Specialized instruction were two online courses that teachers completed. These courses provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on whole group and small group teaching.</p>
Formative Assessment Cycle with All Learners Online Coach	Grades 3-5 met three times a year with a coach to review students' work samples and determine next instructional steps. Teachers worked with teammates at the school site while the ALO coach facilitated the thinking through google meet.
Formative Assessment Cycle	Grade 2 met three times a year with the CCPS Instructional coach to review student work samples and determine next steps
County Based Asynchronous PD (Schoology)	We use Schoology to provide asynchronous learning modules to teachers around a variety of topics including both Tier one and Tier two teaching practices.

### Challenges

The lack of coaching support for both secondary and elementary teachers is a challenge. We have no real solution until we have lead teachers in each building. Lead teachers exist at the secondary level but not at the elementary. Our goal is to offer a stipend to compensate teachers to be a content support teacher in their building. This person would work with either a coordinator or instructional coach to deliver county developed professional learning to the teachers in their building.

### Next Steps

The 2024-2025 school year priority will be to continue with the formative assessment cycle for all elementary schools with school based teams leading the discussions. CCPS is currently working on a common protocol to use in all schools so there is a common set of expectations for all teachers. CCPS instructional coordinators and executive directors are working collaboratively to determine instructional priorities and define a school year 2024-2025 instructional calendar with dates, topics and brief descriptions. As previously indicated, we are also exploring using Title I funds or grant money to contract instructional coaches to support our lowest performing



schools. A formal plan of these efforts has not been developed, but is a priority during the spring of 2023-2024. Mastery of 2024-2025 PD will be captured at the end-of-learning survey, which may include content questions as well as feedback on the professional learning experience in addition to the opportunity to provide feedback on future PD sessions.

## ***Fidelity of Implementation***

### **Progress**

Fidelity of curriculum implementation and solid Tier 1 instruction continues to be a focal point. The secondary math coordinator has visited 76% of all math classrooms 6-12 and 90% of MCAP-tested classrooms.

### **Challenges**

A challenge continues to be the lack of non-evaluative walkthroughs or visits. There are no visits from peers or coaches.

### **Next Steps**

An elementary priority in SY 24-25 is to gather a group of stakeholders including teachers and administrators to develop a walk-through tool for Tier 1 instruction in the elementary schools to be used by teachers, coaches and administrators.

## ***High Quality Instructional Materials***

### **Progress**

We made no new changes to the adoption process outlined in last year's plans. However, both secondary and elementary math piloted Illustrative Mathematics, rated all green on EDreports.

### **Challenges**

The cost of our current resource is a strain on the system, so we are exploring a high quality, yet affordable, resource. Until a decision is made, our elementary schools will be using IM or enVision Math 2024, both green on EDreports.

### **Next Steps**

A second year piloting the resource in grades K-5 will provide more data to inform a decision in the 2024-2025 school year. Additionally, elementary school leadership received training during the summer leadership academies on enabling conditions that must be present in school for HQIM to have a maximum impact on student achievement. We are using a rubric based on Dr. Walpole's Rubric for Describing Enabling Conditions and School Level Norms as collaborating with our elementary school leadership to self-reflect using these tools.

## ***Progress Monitoring***

### **Progress**

There are no new changes to the elementary process and tools used for progress monitoring. As indicated, we did use the 2023 Summer Leadership to work with principals on how to pull data and review. However, a potential outcome of those summer sessions provides some anecdotal evidence to indicate that more schools are using the cycle calendar and monitoring student progress. During the 2024-2025 school year the

elementary team will introduce Acadience Progress Monitoring tools for schools as an opt in choice. In addition, the elementary math and ELA coordinators are collaborating with a team of school leaders to determine a systemic way to collect progress monitoring data to be analyzed at the district level. The secondary Math team has met to redesign the MTSS handbook to better address Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction, especially in high school.

### **Challenges**

A challenge in elementary math is collecting progress monitoring data consistently and in the same manner from all 17 schools.

Secondary math - Given the shift in how a student can achieve CCR, we are developing a 3.0 tracker. Unfortunately, MCAP data cannot really be used. As we approach the end of March 2024, we still have not received the data from the Fall 2023 administration.

### **Next Steps**

In the 2024-2025 school year, Elementary Math will select at least one screening tool to pilot. If an MTSS model is in place, use screener data to inform students' placement in Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Summer 2024: development of the progress monitoring tool. 2024-2025 school year: implement selected progress monitoring tool districtwide and use data to differentiate Tier 1 instruction and inform students' placement in Tier 2 and 3 interventions.

## ***High-Quality School Day Tutoring***

### **Progress**

In elementary school no new progress was made with tutors. As funds decline and local funding is minimal we have seen a decline in the number of math tutors across the county.

### **Challenges**

Tutors are often non certificated. The current program used by CCPS tutors is scripted and moves students through a series of lessons for each skill. One challenge with this scripted program is that all students in the group move through the lessons at the same pace and sequence, which does not provide targeted intervention. A second challenge is that the lessons are longer than the time allotted to tutors to teach lessons, so it is taking twice as long to get through a lesson. Accelerated learning is necessary for students to close the gap, this pace is just too slow to see the growth needed for students to move to grade level.

### **Next Steps**

CCPS will continue to investigate high-quality school day tutoring models that are research-based and affordable.

## 12. Algebra Readiness and Success

Describe the LEA's plan to increase student readiness and success in Algebra I at both the middle and high school levels, including specific strategies and supports to intervene with students struggling with math. Discuss related challenges and data as needed.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint outcome of increasing middle and high school students' college and career readiness in mathematics.

[Data Appendix 12-Algebra](#)

### Trends in the Data

CCPS has made some gains in proficiency on MCAP Algebra I from SY22 to SY23. However, it is recognized that the overall data is not at a level congruent to high-level student achievement in algebraic reasoning. Here are some trends and instructional changes for SY25:

- Middle School students are far out-performing the high school students on Algebra I MCAP. CCPS made significant adjustments to the Algebra I curriculum by moving quadratics earlier in the course. This seemed to work for middle school, which had a 65% proficiency rate on the Fall block 2023 Algebra I test compared to 16.6% statewide.
- In the 2023-2024 school year, the high school Algebra I curriculum order was changed to move quadratic functions earlier in the course. The soon-to-be-released MCAP scores will tell us if this improved high school Algebra I achievement. CCPS will analyze the 2024 data when it arrives and make necessary adjustments to the high school scope and sequence.
- In the 2023-2024 school year, the grade 8 curriculum was altered to include more time on essential algebraic skills, such as solving systems of equations and solving equations with variables on both sides. These students will be in Algebra I during the 2024-2025 school year and CCPS will analyze the effectiveness both as measured by grades in their Algebra I and Math Lab courses along with the MCAP 2025 results.
- CCPS created a "Preparing for MCAP Algebra I" mini-book that is in use throughout the county.
- Another trend that we need to address immediately is the performance of our African American students, who are not progressing similar to other groups. Referring back to the [data table](#) in our appendix, African American students are not reaching proficiency at the level of other groups and have a disproportionate number of level 1 scores.
  - In response to this trend in the data, CCPS will:
    - Ensure that African Americans are proportionally represented in accelerated and Algebra I courses in middle school. It is clear from the data that students who take Algebra I in middle school achieve at higher levels.
    - Provide additional interventions through the Math Lab course using Ascend Math. CCPS has devised a Math Lab course for 9th graders in Algebra I beginning in SY25 to provide additional support and assistance in algebraic skills and concepts. Throughout the year, we will monitor this subgroup and make adjustments as necessary. The math content support teacher in each building will meet monthly to discuss this data as articulated in the *Math Professional Learning Calendar 2024-2025* (see page 44).
    - Meet with principals and building administration quarterly to discuss African American achievement in mathematics (grades, NWEA scores, assessment scores) and to discuss

how African American students are placed in mathematics classes. At the first meeting, data points will be used to determine if some African American middle school students should be bumped up to accelerated math in grades 6 or 7.

- For our buildings with very small minority populations, the above strategies will be extended to include subgroups disproportionate in achievement and/or representation in accelerated courses. Each building has been asked to identify these subgroups during our summer leadership academy PD.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, CCPS will shift away from MCAP Algebra I as the sole measure of algebraic readiness and success to the CCR measures of a 3.0 GPA and a C or better in Algebra I. Given that more students in our district were cusp students on MCAP as defined by MSDE than actually pass, the 3.0 and a C or better is a more attainable target than an Algebra I test with less than a 20% pass rate statewide or MCAP grade 8 with less than an 8% proficiency rate statewide. This shift in focus will be displayed in the Math Comprehensive plan for CCPS, which will include MTSS, professional learning for teachers, and curricular support.

### **Analysis of student-level data by specific skills**

Based on grade 8 MCAP scores, only 8% of CCPS students were proficient. An analysis of the data shows that our students were weak in reasoning, modeling, and major content, especially in expressions and equations. While an 8% proficiency rate placed us #10 in the state and above the state average, the fact that 92% are not proficient is alarming. The Math Lab course, as mentioned in other areas, will help us address these needs.

### **Intervention models and progress monitoring**

CCPS uses NWEA (MAP) as our progress monitoring tool, but MAP does not give us the needed progress monitoring for Algebra 1. Looking ahead to the 2024-2025 school year, we will use county-developed formative assessments throughout the Algebra 1 course, both middle and high, as our progress monitoring tool. As gaps are shown, we will use Ascend Math, an online intervention program, along with the reteaching activities available through our primary resource (enVision). Additionally, the new bell schedules for middle and high school students will allow for intervention and flex grouping to occur with the teacher of record outside of the prescribed class time. The new Math Lab course for the 2024-2025 school year will also serve as intervention for some students as needed.

### **Training and professional development**

Teachers will be provided training on the Continuous Classroom Improvement process during August 2024 Professional Development Days. Teachers will learn how to analyze student data to improve performance. A vital part of this process involves the teacher and student meeting to review formative assessment data to develop an individual CCR plan following the PDSA cycle. Below is the CCPS Professional Learning Calendar for the 2024-2025 school year.

### ***CCPS Professional Learning Calendar 2024-2025***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>County or School Planned</b>
June 25, 2024	Central Office and	County-Planned Professional Learning Continuous Improvement Process

	Building-level Administrators/Supervisors	
June 26, 2024	Central Office and Building-level Administrators/Supervisors	County-Planned Professional Learning Continuous Improvement Process
July 10, 2024	Central Office and Building-level Administrators/Supervisors	County-Planned Professional Learning Continuous Improvement Process
July 11, 2024	Central Office and Building-level Administrators/Supervisors	County-Planned Professional Learning Continuous Improvement Process
August 21, 2024	New Teachers	Coordinator-Planned Professional Learning
August 22, 2024	New Teachers	Coordinator-Planned Professional Learning
August 23, 2024	New Teachers	School-Based Professional Learning
August 26, 2024	All Teachers	School-Based Professional Learning
August 27, 2024	All Teachers	Coordinator-Planned Professional Learning
August 28, 2024	All Teachers	Coordinator-Planned Professional Learning
August 29, 2024	All Teachers	School-Based Professional Learning and Parent Engagement
August 30, 2024	All Teachers	School-Based Professional Learning
October 18, 2024	All Teachers	Coordinator-Planned Professional Learning
February 10, 2025	All Teachers	Flexible Day for Virtual Professional Learning
March 14, 2025	All Teachers	School-Based Professional Learning
June 16, 2025**	All Teachers	School-Based Professional Learning Tentative Last Day of School

In addition, to the above CCPS Professional Learning Calendar, teachers assigned to teach Algebra, PreAlgebra, grade 8 Math, and other courses that require algebraic skills will participate in yearlong professional development led by the Mathematics Instructional Coordinator and Content Support Teachers. Professional learning will occur on methods of improving students' ability to reason and model mathematically. This was an area of concern demonstrated by students and will be a point of emphasis next year. The newly released MCAP sample items will assist in this professional learning. Below is the Math Professional Learning Calendar for 2024-2025.

## **Math Professional Learning Calendar 2024-2025**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Professional Learning Topics</b>
September	Math Teachers	MCAP (Reasoning & Modeling)
October	Math Teachers	PDSA
November	Math Teachers	Formative Assessments
December	Math Teachers	Unit Assessments
January	Math Teachers	MCAP (Reasoning & Modeling)
February	Math Teachers	PDSA
March	Math Teachers	SAT
April	Math Teachers	Formative Assessments
May	Math Teachers	Unit Assessments
June	Math Teachers	Plan for SY26

### **High-quality school day tutoring**

Currently, CCPS does not have the funding to have high-quality school day tutoring for our Algebra classes in middle school or in high school. After we decide on the new middle and high school bell schedules, we will explore alternative funding sources for this type of tutoring. Additionally, finding high-quality tutors who can work during the school day has been challenging.

### **Challenges**

Students' ability to reason and model mathematically was a challenging area. To address this concern moving forward, teachers will be provided professional learning on how to instruct students on tackling these types of questions. CCPS also has developed district-wide assessments that include, but are not limited to, questions that assess reasoning and modeling. The plan is to follow a continuous improvement process as it pertains to addressing this challenge.

Another challenge is the amount of time allowed for Algebra I, which is an 86 minute block every other day on an A/B day schedule rotation. To increase the instructional time for students to engage with Algebra content more often, CCPS have created a Math Lab course for the 2024-2025 school year. The Math Lab course will be for first time ninth grade Algebra I students. The curriculum will supplement the Mathematics Algebra I MCCRS, and provide additional skills, competencies and practices for students to be CCR.

### 13. High-Quality School Day Tutoring

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 77 and 101*

In March 2023, the LEA discussed how it **leveraged high-quality school day tutoring to accelerate instruction and provide additional support to students in literacy and math**. Responses included considerations related to the LEA's organization of the school day, collaboration with external partners, and alignment of resources (e.g., Transitional Supplemental Instruction Aid).

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

CCPS remains committed to ensuring that every child is college and career ready (CCR). This work begins in the Pre-K years by developing early literacy and number sense skills that are fundamental to a student's progress towards CCR.

#### **Progress to Date**

During the 2022-2023 school year, five schools contracted with Chapter One to provide high-quality face-to-face tutoring in Kindergarten and Grade 1. As measured by the universal screener, the category of "All Students" in grade 1 demonstrated a growth in proficiency rates of 16 percentage points in the beginning of the school year, 7 percentage points in the middle of the year and 6 percentage points at the end of the year. Economically Disadvantaged Students in Grade 1 demonstrated a growth in proficiency rates of 8 percentage points in the beginning of the school year, 9 percentage points in the middle of the year, and 6 percentage points at the end of the school year. CCPS literacy tutors who supported students in grades 1-5 implemented a Tier 2 reading intervention, Read Live, targeting word recognition, fluency and comprehension. While the percentage of students in the category "All Students" who participated in grades 1-5 demonstrating proficiency on the universal screener increased 7 percentage points from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, the number of test takers increased from 549 students to 867 students.

In the 2024 school year, CCPS expanded Chapter One high-impact tutoring in K and 1 from five schools to all 17 elementary schools. Early Literacy Interventionists (ELI) meet 1:1 with each student and are progress monitored weekly. The ELIs are contracted employees hired and trained through a non-profit organization, Chapter One. The percentage of CCPS All Students Grade 1 demonstrating proficiency on the universal screener has grown by 18 percentage points in the beginning of the year from the 2022 school year to the 2024 school year and Students with Disabilities has grown 10 percentage points. See [10D - High Quality School Day Tutoring ECE](#). In addition to high-impact tutoring, CCPS hires tutors to work with identified students in grades 2- 3 to provide Tier 2 and 3 support. To align supports to our core program, modifications were made to tiered supports. CCPS contracted with The School Success Center at the University of Delaware

to provide training in MTSS to all of the CCPS Literacy Tutors. Training includes a half day monthly training and school visits. Students in grade 2 and 3 receive targeted support through tier 2 and tier 3 instruction: differentiated reading instruction strategic, Bookworms Intensive. A universal screener, Acadience Reading K-6, is administered to all students in Kindergarten through grade 5. Tutoring supports in grades 2 and 3 are informed by the diagnostic administered to students demonstrating below grade level proficiency. The targeted supports include phonological awareness and word recognition, word recognition and fluency, or fluency and comprehension with multisyllabic decoding support. This targeted instruction is provided during the 45-minute Differentiated Reading Instruction literacy block where every student receives 15 minutes of additional targeted instruction to enrich, accelerate, or teach grade level skills. CCPS will continue to utilize the Transitional Supplemental Instruction (TSI) grant to fund high-quality tutoring for Kindergarten and grade 1 contracted through Chapter One as well as CCPS Literacy tutors to provide targeted instructional support in grades 2 and 3. Currently, CCPS does not have a tutor sustainability plan in place but will continue to investigate ways to reorganize the school day when TSI funds are no longer available.

In the area of Mathematics, CCPS utilized funds from TSI and ARP grants for schools to hire tutors in each of the 17 elementary schools for grades 1-5. These tutors worked with elementary students during the school day in 15 -30 minute sessions. Tutors used Do the Math or lessons provided by the general education teacher to work with students performing well below or below grade level. Results of these tutoring services are unclear and vary depending on variables such as the number of tutoring hours students received, the background and subject knowledge of the tutor and the frequency and duration of progress monitoring. During the 2024-2025 school year, ARP funds will end in November, which will reduce the number of math tutors in grades 4 and 5.

### **Comprehensive Plans**

CCPS English Language Arts department developed a [Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#) in coordination with the Blueprint facilitator. Subsequently, the CCPS Mathematics department is in the process of developing a comprehensive mathematics plan.

CCPS has designed a Math Lab course to support identified high school students who are first time Algebra I students. The data from MCAP Algebra I revealed that less than 10% of our Algebra 1 students were proficient on MCAP, which was far below the state average of 19% for SY23. Recognizing that CCPS operates on an alternating A/B block schedule, testing begins early in marking period 4, and students do better with math everyday, CCPS decided to implement a parallel Math Lab course beginning in SY25, subject to staffing. The course objectives include: (1) filling in prerequisite algebraic skills and concepts from grade 8, such as systems; (2) teaching some omitted concepts from the crowded high school Algebra 1 curriculum, such as absolute value functions; (3) reinforcing key 8th grade concepts, such as systems of equations, that appear on Algebra I MCAP; (4) providing more opportunities to interact with online item types, such as inline choice and constructed response using equation editor; and (5) laying a foundation that ensures that students earn a C or better in Algebra I so that all students stay on the road to CCR.

All of the current tutoring models being implemented to date have been incorporated into the regular school schedule. The high school Algebra I/Math Lab model will allow students to access math instruction every day as compared to the every-other-day A/B model.



## **Challenges and Next Steps**

During the school day, providing tutoring can be challenging due to competing priorities. Students often have required classes and interventions that take precedence over additional tutoring sessions. This creates a scheduling conflict, making it difficult to find time for tutoring without interrupting the students' regular academic obligations. To mitigate this concern, at the middle school level, we have restructured the school day to allow for a period of time to be used for tutoring support. At the high school level, schools are creating revisit schedules that allow students to receive tutoring support from classroom teachers during their classroom time. These types of flexible schedules will provide a balance between providing required classes while also offering tutoring services to students.

### ***ELA challenges and next steps***

While CCPS can celebrate overall growth on the universal screener, the district remains focused on ensuring all students are able to master foundational reading skills. In K and 1, learning gaps persist. Multilingual Learners growth for the beginning of the year from the 2022 school year to the 2024 school year remains static and is 20 points below that of All Students for the current school year. A challenge with measuring student growth for grades 2 through 5 is the student profile for the targeted interventions and data entry. In 2022 and 2023, students demonstrating a need in fluency and comprehension were identified for tutoring support provided through a digital platform, Read Live. This year, students identified for word recognition and fluency and fluency and comprehension were identified for tutoring support using curricular resources aligned to Tier 1. Tutors were less familiar with Tier 1 and time to collaborate with classroom teachers and support staff was limited.

Next steps will include training both classroom and special education teachers in Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports aligned to their core instruction. CCPS Literacy Tutors will receive training to support students with access to the student portal provided through Chapter One. The student portal is adapted by Early Literacy Interventionists (ELI) in K and 1 for each student. In addition, the tutors will meet with small groups to support word recognition, fluency and comprehension. Sample lessons for decodable text aligned to our foundational skills curriculum and sample lessons for grade level text aligned to topics or series written by authors featured in our core curriculum will be developed Spring and Summer 2024.

### ***Math challenges and next steps***

- Apply MTSS consistently in all buildings with a focus on solid Tier I and Tier II instructional strategies. We will revise the MTSS handbook to clarify and codify expectations for consistency and rely on building administrators to analyze the fidelity of implementation.
- Maintain funding to support the contracted service and expand these services. Our next steps involve securing the funding to the extent possible.
- Staffing as related to available funding will need to continue to support this model, but we are facing a significant shortfall. Our next steps are outlined in the specific ELA and mathematics comprehensive plans.
- The implementation of Math Lab for first time Algebra I students is currently a challenge because the new high school schedule has not been established. This means that CCPS may or may not have the staffing needed to run a new course for potentially as many as 1,000 students. Our next steps are to design the course and not currently worry about staffing, funding, and the schedule. Given that our high schools are not fluent with the MTSS process for academics, we will also provide PD using the formative assessment cycle to identify specific needs that can be addressed with Tier II support.

## 14. Supports for Students to Demonstrate College and Career Readiness in High School

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 109-110 and 112-115*

In March 2023, the LEA described the **services and support provided to students identified as not on track to graduate in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and/or not demonstrating college and career readiness (CCR) by the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade.**

Responses included creating and implementing student support pathways, collaborating with institutions of higher education partners, developing individualized CCR plans for each student, and engaging families in supporting student success.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome of providing support to students identified as not on track to graduate in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and/or not demonstrating college and career readiness (CCR) by the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

[Data Appendix 14a-9Th Grade On Track](#)

[Data Appendix 14b-College and Career Readiness](#)

CCPS has recognized the importance of supporting students who may need to be on track to earn College and Career Ready (CCR) status by the end of their sophomore year. In order to address this concern, CCPS has created a set of planned activities that will lead to supporting these students in a Support Pathway. The Support Pathway from the 2023 Blueprint Implementation Plan Submission involved:

- Utilizing MTSS Process
- Providing Tutoring Supports
- Exploring Alternative Options to Obtain CCR Status
- Implementing Flexible Scheduling Options
- Providing Summer School Support
- Partnering with Outside Agencies

By implementing these strategies, CCPS aims to ensure that all students can achieve CCR status before the conclusion of their sophomore year and/or graduation.

## ***Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)***

### **Progress**

A priority identified in the 2023 plan was the implementation of MTSS. Using the fall MAP data, students were grouped based on readiness level. Students who were not on track to meet CCR, as determined by a low MAP score in Reading/Math, were provided with Tier II instruction during their revisit period, which was every day. Note that in grades 5-7, 24%-30% were at or above grade level, according to winter MAP testing. Therefore, 70% of the students were in a Tier II or Tier III intervention. In grades 6-8, 65% of students grew 1 RIT point from fall to winter, 60% grew 2 [RIT](#) points, and 45% grew 3 RIT points. Schools also used Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading (WICOR) strategies, which are a part of Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) to support Tier I instruction and Tier II interventions.

Subsequently, each student had a goal conference with their teachers to develop an action plan. Parents were also a part of this process through ongoing communication about baseline MAPs scores, goal development, and the support in place to help their students. Parents were also sent their students' MCAP scores from the previous year. Students will be tested again for the spring session prior to MCAP.

### **Challenge**

A challenge that was encountered was that several students were identified as needing Tier II support for ELA and Mathematics, which was difficult to schedule during the revisit period. To mitigate this challenge, CCPS rotated content support for students on a biweekly cycle. The implementation of AVID as a support was another challenge because not all teachers were trained in AVID. To mitigate this challenge, instructional coordinators went to AVID training and incorporated some WICOR strategies from AVID into the curriculum.

### **Next Steps**

CCPS is investigating a new schedule for middle schools to accommodate MTSS. CCPS is also exploring ways to build more Tier II interventions for students in ELA. CCPS is also exploring a different universal screener and progress monitoring tools to provide more diagnostic information. For the 2024-2025 school year, CCPS will utilize MTSS strategies to introduce a new course, Algebra I/Math lab, for first-time Algebra I students. The rationale for this change is to intentionally address students' needs in Algebra I by increasing the instructional time and curriculum support with the goal of helping students achieve CCR status. CCPS will also be expanding Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) to include four more schools (two middle and two high schools), which are CSI/TSI schools. Rationale: Expanding AVID in secondary schools is crucial for providing students with the skills and support they need to succeed in their academic and future endeavors. AVID equips students with strategies for critical thinking, organization, and collaboration, which are essential for college and career readiness. By expanding AVID, we aim to increase access to proven academic support structures and resources that will empower students to excel in rigorous coursework and prepare them for post-secondary education and the workforce. This expansion aligns with our commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, ensuring that they have the tools and guidance necessary to achieve their full potential.

## ***After-School Tutoring at Twilight School***

### **Progress**

After-school tutoring was provided to students four days a week, Monday through Thursday. Teachers identified students through Kid Talk meetings and Student Services Team meetings. As a result, students received personalized attention and one-on-one support to help them better understand difficult concepts and improve their academic performance. Teachers provided parents with updates on each student's progress in meeting CCR by the success in their class. This was done through parent conferences, phone calls, IEP meetings, IEP progress reports, intern reports and report cards. After-school tutoring helped to develop better study habits and organizational skills, build confidence, and test preparation services. Below is displayed the number of students by building who participated in Twilight School.

Middle Schools	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
BMMS	36	37	40
CMHS	46	128	79
EMS	53	59	87
NEMS	84	177	137
PVMS	53	47	70
RSMS	24	71	110

High Schools	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
BMHS	96	94	87	66
EHS	274	152	125	95
NEHS	208	171	140	71
PVHS	113	85	63	72
RSHS	113	110	76	33

### **Challenge**

Students and families had expressed concern regarding transportation for after-school activities. To mitigate this challenge, CCPS provided transportation to identified neighborhood hub stops for students participating in after-school tutoring.

### **Next Step**

The plan is to continue with after-school tutoring at Twilight School to support students who are not on track to meet CCR by the end of grade 10 and/or graduation.

## ***Flexibility in Scheduling***

### **Progress**

Another priority addressed in the 2023 plan was creating individualized schedules alongside the student and parent (Question 122). Each student met with a school counselor to develop their schedule for the year, and CCR status was discussed along with options to support them in earning CCR status while starting their post

CCR pathway. Parents were sent a proposed schedule and provided feedback prior to finalizing their student's schedule. Students who were identified as needing support were provided with a study hall course to support them in obtaining CCR status and pathway work. Students with disabilities were scheduled in a Career and Academic Seminar (CAS) course to provide academic assistance.

### **Challenge**

Students may not be interested in taking a study hall course as an option. Some of the post-CCR courses have prerequisites, such as dual enrollment, and students are not eligible to enroll directly into the course without taking the previous course. To mitigate these challenges, students were offered to be AVID tutors in lieu of taking a study hall as well as given the option to take an elective course or a senior option. Students who were not eligible to take a specific dual enrollment course were offered the prerequisite course, and in some cases, an opportunity to test into the course.

### **Next Steps**

The plan is to continue implementing flexibility in scheduling. For the 2024-2025 school year, schools will need to form school-based CCR teams to examine each individual student. The rationale for this addition is to bring a more collaborative approach to supporting the students in obtaining CCR status and starting a post-CCR pathway.

## ***Explore Alternative Ways to Obtain CCR Status***

### **Progress**

Another priority addressed in the 2023 plan was finding alternative ways for students to obtain CCR status. CCPS focused on students earning CCR status by taking the SAT. In preparation for the exam, CCPS offered after-school SAT preparation to students. CCPS paid for all grade 10 students to take the PSAT and all grade 11 students to take the SAT during the school day. There were 861 students who took the PSAT, which was 74% of grade 10 students. There were 869 students who took the SAT, which was 77% of grade 11 students. CCPS also explored using a student's performance in Advanced Placement courses as an option to reach CCR status. CCPS offered 25 Advanced Placement courses for students in grades 9 to 12. There were 817 students enrolled in at least one AP course, which was 17% of CCPS high school students.

### **Challenge**

The challenge is having available funds to support paying for post-CCR pathways. If funding is not sufficient, CCPS will develop a plan using what funds are available to support post-CCR pathways. For the 2023-2024 school year, students taking an Advanced Placement exam were charged a reduced exam fee of \$40 per assessment. Students identified as receiving free and reduced meals were charged an Advanced Placement exam fee of \$20 per exam.

### **Next Steps**

Starting in the 2023-2024 school year, MSDE has approved a new standard for students obtaining CCR status, which includes two different options:

Option 1: Students can meet the CCR Standard by demonstrating both Academic Success and Math Mastery. Academic Success is achieved by earning a high school unweighted Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.00 or higher. Math mastery may be achieved by either earning a final course grade of A, B, or C in Algebra I, OR alternatively by scoring Proficient or above on the Algebra I MCAP assessment.

Option 2: Students can meet the CCR Standard by scoring Proficient or above on BOTH the English 10 MCAP assessment AND the Algebra I MCAP assessment.

Next year, the focus will be on supporting students to obtain CCR status whether it is through Option 1 or Option 2. Rationale: CCPS acknowledges that students who pass Algebra I with a grade of C and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 are better prepared to start post-secondary pathway options. Algebra I provides fundamental mathematical skills necessary for future success, and achieving a minimum grade of C demonstrates proficiency in this essential subject. Maintaining a 3.0 GPA reflects consistent academic achievement across all subjects, showcasing students' ability to excel in their studies. Additionally, CCPS is committed to teaching to mastery using high-quality instructional materials and high-leverage instructional strategies for students to perform at or above the proficient level on the English 10 MCAP and Algebra I MCAP assessments. By setting these standards, students are empowered to master foundational concepts and foster a culture of academic excellence, preparing them for future college and career opportunities.

### ***Academic Literacy and Math Intervention***

#### **Progress**

Another priority addressed in the 2023 plan was that CCPS offered Summer School support to students who did not pass a core class. Summer School was held for two weeks at the conclusion of the school year. Transportation was provided to students at identified hubs throughout the county. Credit recovery modules served as the content used as teachers provided academic literacy and math intervention support to students. There were 231 students who earned credits during Summer School through credit recovery.

#### **Challenge**

Ensuring that students attended Summer School daily was a concern due to the amount of work that needed to be completed in the short window. An additional concern was finding staff willing to work Summer School to provide the needed support to students. To mitigate these challenges, school administrators and pupil personnel workers made daily phone calls and home visits when a student was absent. In an effort to obtain staff for Summer School, CCPS launched the campaign to hire staff starting in March. This allowed for buildings to secure teachers before staff left for the summer break.

#### **Next Steps**

The plan is to continue to update the modules to ensure alignment with curriculum standards with a focus on helping students earn skills and concepts to achieve CCR by the end of 10th grade and graduation.

### ***Partner Institutions***

#### **Progress**

Cecil County Public Schools have successfully partnered with Cecil College and the Susquehanna Workforce Network (SWN) to offer students a variety of programs and resources. Some of these programs include dual enrollment, early college academy programs, career counseling, and CTE certification options. CCPS has an MOU with Cecil College that addresses supporting students who are not CCR with opportunities to take dual enrollment courses. In 2023-2024, there were 343 students who took dual enrollment courses for the fall and spring semesters. Additionally, CCPS has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SWN and Cecil

College to support Career Counseling and CTE programs. There are seven Career Coaches that support students in each of the five high schools, School of Technology, and in six middle schools.

**Challenges**

Hiring all career coaches took some time due to background checks, references, and interest in the position. There is only one career coach supporting all six middle schools. To mitigate this challenge, CCPS continued to keep lines of communication open with SWN and to offer support.

**Next Steps**

The Cecil College and Susquehanna Workforce MOUs will be updated and revised for the next school year. There is a plan to add two additional positions to the SWN MOU to support Career Counseling. Additionally, for the 2024-2025 school year, Susquehanna Workforce Network will provide students an opportunity to take a non-credit certification program through Cecil College. The list of program options is as follows:

Automotive	HVAC/R	Pest Management Technician
Basic Construction	Marine Service Technology	Phlebotomist
Basic Electrical	Medical Administrative Assistant	Physician Professional Coder
Diesel Technology	Medical Assistant Program	Quickbooks Certification
Emergency Medical Technician	Nursing Assistant (CNA/GNA)	Welding

***Individualized College and Career Readiness Plans***

CCPS has implemented Individualized CCR Plans for all students, more specifically special populations (Special Education, Multilingual Learners, and economically disadvantaged), to ensure access and support for becoming CCR. Moving into next year, CCPS will need to closely monitor this process and provide the CCR teams with tools to consistently monitor progress throughout the district. The district CCR team will support schools in this effort by providing guidance on developing individualized college and career readiness plans through collaboration with students, parents and educational stakeholders. This will involve creating a team to explore monitoring templates and establish a unified process.

The CCR team, composed of teachers, counselors, administrators, parents and students, will meet to develop a continuous improvement action plan for students who have not met CCR. This involves the team analyzing student data to pinpoint areas of improvement, followed by the team meeting to review formative assessment data to develop individual CCR action plans following the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. The PDSA cycle allows the team to test out potential improvements, study their effects, and make adjustments, ultimately leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness. This method helps teams to plan a change or test of an idea, carry it out, study the results, and act based on what was learned from the test. PDSA is important because it provides a systematic way to make incremental improvements and to foster a culture of continuous improvement within an organization.

## ***Family Engagement in CCR Success***

Schools have communicated with families and solicited their input on creating a plan to support students in achieving CCR. As a result, parents and students are more aware of their CCR status and the opportunities available to achieve CCR.

### ***Process for Ongoing Communication with Students Not CCR***

The district CCR team will develop and share a systemwide protocol and expectations for meeting with individual students who have not yet achieved CCR status. Expectations for meeting outcomes will be refined and communicated. These expectations for individual student meetings will include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Communication: The school counselor will arrange a meeting for the school CCR team to meet with the students and family to discuss individual CCR plan.
2. Schedule Meeting: The CCR team will set the purpose of the meeting, which may include the following outcomes:
  - Inform and educate families on their student's CCR status
  - Collaborate with families on their student's CCR plan
  - Develop goals for continuous improvement
  - Gain feedback on CCR plan
2. Relevant Data: The CCR team will review MCAP scores, CCR Status, GPA, Algebra I grade, academic progress, attendance records, and behavior reports, and individualized CCR plans.
3. Provide Context: The CCR team will explain the significance of the data and its implications for obtaining CCR status through the support pathway.
4. Goal Development: The team will identify the student's accomplishments and strengths, focusing on education and career development goals, to support the student's pursuit of obtaining CCR status and post-pathway options.
5. Progress Monitoring: The team will establish a checkpoint for progress monitoring using the PDSA cycle. Throughout this process, the school counselor will conference with the student to review progress.
6. Seek Feedback: The district and schools will encourage parents to provide feedback for process improvement through surveys.

In addition, there will be a district-wide deadline of October 17, 2024 for meeting with all 11th and 12th grade students who have not yet achieved CCR. This will not only ensure appropriate programming of support pathways, but also allows for the plan to be revisited later in the school year when staff are discussing course requests for the next school year. The district team will determine and communicate the method by which the school team will document status towards meeting with each identified student by the deadline. The schedule for meeting with students will be reviewed, adjusted, and communicated.



## 15. Access to Post-CCR Pathways

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 118-122 and 128-133*

In March 2023, the LEA discussed how it would **ensure every student has access to post-CCR pathways, including college preparatory programs** (IB Diploma Programme, Cambridge AICE Diploma Program, and Advanced Placement Program), **dual enrollment programs, middle and early college high school programs, and CTE programs that include opportunities for apprenticeships and other industry-recognized credentials.** The LEA's response included descriptions of current offerings and proposed expansion plans if applicable, strategies to recruit students representative of the school system's demographics, and plans to overcome barriers for student enrollment such as transportation, scheduling, entry requirements, or inadequate academic support.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

### ***Advanced Placement Program***

#### **Progress**

Cecil County Public Schools offered a variety of avenues to inform students and families about college preparatory opportunities, which included Advanced Placement courses. This information was made available in the Education Planning Guide (EPG) and shared with students and families during the school day and evening presentations and workshops.

The current practice that leads to increased access to this post-CCR pathway entails not having a prerequisite requirement for AP courses, which can allow a wider range of students to access these advanced classes. This approach promotes inclusivity and provides students with the opportunity to challenge themselves academically, regardless of their previous coursework or educational background. By removing prerequisite requirements, schools can encourage more students to explore AP courses, potentially leading to increased diversity and representation in these higher-level classes. This can also help in identifying talented students who may not have had the opportunity to take specific courses traditionally required as prerequisites. Students in the CCR support pathway will have outlined in their individualized CCR plan the necessary supports identified to succeed in the courses (i.e. support hall, tutoring, AVID).

In three of the five high schools, there was a partnership with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS) that focused on identifying potential students who have been historically underrepresented to take Advanced Placement courses. Programs such as Advanced via Individual Determination (AVID), Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS),

and Early College Academy (ECA) helped to identify, recruit, and support students within different demographics.

CCPS offered college preparatory programs at all comprehensive high schools. Students participated in Advanced Placement courses in grades 9 through 12. CCPS offered 25 Advanced Placement courses within the various comprehensive high schools. Seventeen percent of high school students in grades 9 through 12 were enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement course. Supports were provided to students using flexible scheduling options (i.e. Career and Academic Seminar and Support Hall courses) that were coordinated through individual counseling sessions with the school counselor regarding college preparatory programs.

**Challenge**

Not all Advanced Placement courses were available at every CCPS high school. This was mainly due to the lack of student interest to create a section for the Advanced Placement course. Many students have chosen to be enrolled in the Early College Academy and dual enrollment courses instead of Advanced Placement courses. High schools struggled to offer courses due to smaller student populations and a smaller number of staff. To mitigate these challenges, each high school held a Scheduling/Program Information Night to share the various pathway options that are available to students. In some cases, students were enrolled in a virtual option to accommodate their request for an AP course not offered at their school.

**Next Steps**

The plan is to continue to implement the Maryland AP Option pathway to increase the number of students exposed to college preparatory programming. CCPS will continue to work with middle schools to evaluate how to encourage and support students from an earlier starting point to consider honors and accelerated courses.

**Dual Enrollment Programs**

**Progress**

Cecil County Public Schools, in partnership with Cecil College, offered college courses at no cost to students and families. Through a collaborative effort, CCPS and CC identified college courses that were taught in high schools. The following courses were made available to students for the fall and spring semesters.

Dual Enrollment Courses 2023-2024

Juniors (11th Grade and 12th Grade)	Seniors (12th Grade)
DE English 101 College Composition (placement or successful completion of EGL 093)	DE English 102 Composition & Literature (Prereq EGL 101)
DE Intro to Environmental Science (Coreq EGL 101, MAT 093 or MAT 097) ENV 106	DE Introduction to Creative Writing (Prereq EGL 101, “C” or higher) EGL 215
DE Sociology (Coreq EGL 093) SOC 101	DE Technical Writing (Prereq EGL 101, ‘C’ or higher) EGL 211
DE PreCalculus (Prereq ‘C’ or better in MAT093 or MAT 098, EGL 093) MAT 191	DE Calculus I w/Analytic Geometry (Prereq EGL 093 and ‘C’ or better in MAT 191 PreCalc) MAT 201

	DE Statistics ( Prereq EGL 093, a Grade of C or better in MAT 093 or MAT 097) MAT 127
	DE General Physical Science/lab (Prereq EGL 093, MAT 092, or MAT 097) PSC 105
	DE Chemistry I/lab (Coreqs CHM 113, EGL 101, MAT 191 or MAT 127) CHM 103/CHM 113
	DE Principles of Biology/lab (Coreqs BIO 131 EGL 101, MAT 191 or MAT 127) BIO 130/ BIO 131
	DE Psychology (Prereq EGL 093) PSY 101

These courses were made available to all CCPS juniors and seniors as outlined in the MOU with CCPS and Cecil College. In the 2023-2024 school year, 169 students participated in the dual enrollment program, for a total of 340 courses taken.

Students who have not met CCR status have access to dual enrollment courses that are aligned to their post CCR pathway. Students in the CCR support pathway will have outlined in their individualized CCR plan the necessary supports identified to succeed in the dual enrollment courses (i.e. support hall, tutoring, AVID).

### **Challenges**

Cecil College struggled to provide instructors to teach at the high school for certain courses. To mitigate this challenge, Cecil College offered a limited number of online courses to students. Funding for the dual enrollment courses continues to be a challenge due to the addition of course and book fees in 2023-2024 and a reduction of CCR funding for 2024-2025.

### **Next Steps**

CCPS, in collaboration with Cecil College, plans to continue offering dual enrollment courses to students. Work has started on updating the MOU for next year.

## ***Early College Academy Program***

### **Progress**

Early College Academy (ECA) is a dual enrollment partnership between CCPS and Cecil College. ECA is a four year high school program where students take college courses in conjunction with high school courses. The ECA program is offered at two of the five high schools. To be eligible to apply to the ECA Program, students must have a 3.0 GPA and have taken Algebra or Geometry in eighth grade. Students were selected based on merit. There were 175 students enrolled in the ECA program, which accounted for 836 dual enrollment courses taken through Cecil College. The following schedule is the progression of courses for ECA students:

Grade Level	High School	Cecil College	Seminars
9	English 9 Geometry or Algebra II Government Earth & Environmental Science or Biology Elective (World Language)	Health Fitness (2 courses) Interpersonal Communications	Freshman Seminar
10	English 10 or AP Mathematics (Algebra II or Trig/Functions/Stat) US History Biology or other Science Technology Course Elective (World Language)	Computer Science Sociology Public Speaking Music Appreciation (PVHS) or Art Appreciation (EHS)	
11	Mathematics (Trig/Functions/Stat or Pre-calculus) Elective	Freshman Composition Composition and Literature Concentration Electives (2) World History I & II Physical Science with Lab	Math Competencies
12		College Level Math Concentration Electives (2) Social Science Elective Philosophy/Ethics/HUM Lab Science	

Upon graduation, students earn an Associate’s Degree in General Studies from Cecil College and a diploma from Cecil County Public Schools.

**Challenges**

Due to Cecil College's capacity limits for a cohort, students may not be selected for the ECA program although they meet the minimum qualifications. CCPS received over 100 applications for the ninth-grade cohort of 50 seats. To mitigate this challenge, Cecil College would need to provide additional school cohorts, and CCPS would need to allocate funding to support these students.

**Next Steps**

The plan is to continue to offer students the opportunity to be in the ECA program. CCPS would like to expand upon the general studies associate degree to include a concentrated program of study toward a career path.

## ***Career Technical Education Programs***

### **Progress**

CCPS has worked with MSDE to align Career Technical Education (CTE) offerings to the state programs of study and has refined the CTE offerings to reflect the needs of the local industries. The following is a list of pathways available at Cecil County Public Schools.

<b>Programs at Comprehensive High schools</b>	<b>Programs at the Cecil County School of Technology</b>
Advanced Technology	Academy of Health Professions - CCMA
Business, Management, and Finance	Academy of Health Professions - CNA GNA
Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTMP)	Agricultural Sciences
Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Computer Science	American Culinary Federation Professional
Teacher Academy of Maryland	Automotive Technology
Project Lead the Way - Biomedical Sciences	Career Research and Development
	Commercial Vehicle & Heavy Equipment Repair
	Construction Trades
	Cosmetology
	Electrical Trades
	Fire Science
	Heavy Industrial Maintenance
	Homeland Security
	Interactive Media Production
	IT Networking (CISCO Academy)
	Landscaping & Horticulture Production
	Manual Machining / CNC Programming & Operations
	Manual Machining / CNC Programming & Operations
	Plumbing/HVAC Technology
	Project Lead the Way - Biomedical Sciences
	Project Lead the Way - Pre-Engineering

	Teacher Academy of Maryland
	Welding & Materials Technology

The CTE programs housed at the Cecil County School of Technology are at capacity. Students were informed about CTE programs through individual CCR counseling, scheduling/program awareness nights, and grade-level visits from the School of Technology counselors. These information nights allowed students and parents to ask questions and seek answers about CTE programs at both the technical school and the comprehensive schools.

The current practice for student access to the CTE pathway is open to all students at the comprehensive high schools regardless of CCR status or course prerequisites. This allows for students who are not CCR to have access to these programs of study. Students in the CCR support pathway will have outlined in their individualized CCR plan the necessary supports identified to succeed in the courses (i.e. support hall, tutoring, AVID).

**Challenges**

There is abundant interest in CTE programs at the School of Technology, but there are a limited number of available seats. Students who apply to CCST may not be able to get their first program choice, so they may be given their second choice option or placed on a waitlist. In addition, the School of Technology uses a merit and lottery admission process. The merit process admits students with a certain grade point average while the lottery process allows other students who have met the minimum qualifications to access the programs at the school of technology.

**Next Steps**

Establish a Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) program at Elkton High School, with the Industry Recognized Credentials (IRC) of The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Exam (ASVAB). CCPS will look for competitive grant funding to build innovative programs and to increase available IRCS.

***Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships***

**Progress**

The Career Research and Development Pathway offers a work-based learning experience during the senior year of high school. This program has a 100% placement rate of 16 students in various industries. Steady growth has occurred since the launch of the Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP) in November of 2022. This program has helped our young people to gain valuable skills and experience while still in high school. AMP has expanded across various industries, offering opportunities for students to earn while they learn and to also transition into the workforce.

As the popularity of youth apprenticeships in CCPS grew, so did the recognition of their importance by both industry leaders and CCPS. Recognizing the need to celebrate the successes and contributions of both the industry partners and the youth apprentices, the idea of a youth apprenticeship event emerged. Local business partners agreed to both host and sponsor an event. The first AMP event is scheduled during the first Maryland Youth Apprenticeship Week in May of this school year. The event serves as a platform to honor the

commitment and dedication of industry partners who provide mentorship, training, and employment opportunities to our youth. It also acknowledges the hard work and achievements of the youth apprentices, highlighting their skills, growth, and contribution to their respective fields. Industry leaders share success stories, highlighting the impact of youth apprenticeships on their businesses and the community. The event is also a networking opportunity for industry representatives, educators, and youth advocates to collaborate and exchange ideas on how to expand AMP. Currently, there are fifty companies, thirty students and fifteen graduates to be honored.

### Challenges

CCPS faces a number of challenges in supporting the Youth Apprenticeship Programs, which includes funding for tools and resources, awareness in the community of the AMP opportunity, and the availability of qualified Career Coaches.

### Next Steps

CCPS will seek grants to address needed equipment used to train students and ultimately increase the amount of IRCs available. We plan to make a series of videos to explain available opportunities within AMP. We will present AMP information at events such as: State Chamber of Commerce Conferences, MACTE Conferences, and Route 40 Business Conferences. CCPS will revisit the MOU to increase the number of Career Coaches to allow for more career exploration at the middle school level. We will seek grants to continue the partnership with Utilitrain and to expand the scholarship opportunities to 26 students for FY25. In addition, CCPS plans to create a job fair for high school students and continue the current job fair for the School of Technology.

## Pillar 4

### More Resources to Ensure All Students are Successful

#### 16. Engagement and Communication with Multilingual Learner (ML) Families

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Question 137*

In March 2023, the LEA described how it would **engage and communicate with Multilingual learner (ML) families, also known as English learners (EL), including leveraging the EL family coordinator position.**

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

The 2023 Blueprint Implementation plan identified the following as priority areas as it relates to Multilingual family involvement and communication (previously question 137): increasing multilingual family involvement through the addition of a Multilingual Community Schools Advisor and improving communication through the effective use of iSpeak CCPS Language Access Services. Additionally, CCPS renewed the commitment to using asset-based language by adopting the new and more inclusive name, Office of Multilingual Education, in July 2023 (Recommendation 1 from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners). CCPS fully met the Criteria for Success for questions 137-139 in our 2022-2023 Blueprint Implementation Plan. Below are details related to the progress, challenges, and outcomes of the FY 2023 plan, as well as priorities for future work.

### ***Hire a Multilingual Community Schools Advisor (MCSA)***

The Multilingual Community Schools Advisor (MCSA), under the direction of the Coordinator for Multilingual Education, was hired in July 2023. The MCSA works in collaboration with EL Teachers, Title I Resource Teachers, Community Schools Advisors, school personnel, Judy Center coaches and community partners to identify and address barriers to achievement and provide resources to students and families, including wraparound services that enhance their ability to be successful. This position is what MSDE refers to as the EL Family Coordinator. CCPS reviewed the EL Family Coordinator job description to ensure alignment with the essential job functions of the MCSA and that all components were satisfied by the staff in the Office of Multilingual Education. The narratives below provide details of the essential functions of this new role, challenges encountered, and mitigation strategies to ensure success.

## **Progress, Challenges, and Solutions**

### **Multilingual Family Involvement**

The MCSA collaborates with all schools while acknowledging through intentional planning and practice that more support is needed in Title I schools, Community Schools, secondary schools with large ML populations, and the Judy Center. Communication and collaboration between the Office of Multilingual Education and schools ensures a unified support system is in place for our ML families. Together, they have planned, implemented, and evaluated the following family involvement events and wraparound services:

- CCPS Second Annual ML Family and Community Fair
- School-based ML Family Nights
- EHS Hispanic Festival
- Monthly Food Bank Distribution
- Adult ESOL Classes in collaboration with Cecil College
- Student-led conferences
- Attendance calls and home visits

Additional events hosted by the Office of Multilingual Education and facilitated by the MCSA include:

- School Safety Event (A.L.I.C.E.) for Spanish speaking Families
- Five-part Series on Digital Safety for ML Families
- Access to Post-Secondary Education for ML Families Webinar and Q/A

In 2023-2024, the office of Multilingual Education hosted fourteen family involvement events; this is double the number of events hosted in 2022-2023. Cumulative attendance of adults increased by 171% and attendance of children/youth increased by 121%.



Additionally, the MCSA has improved outreach to families through digital and in-person touchpoints. Examples include a new social media presence for the Office of Multilingual Education, attendance at community functions, such as Elkton High School's Back to School Fair, My Family Matters workshop, and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Hispanic Heritage Festival, and providing translated promotional materials for school and school system events.

**Challenge:**

While there were increases in opportunities and attendance, sustained attendance at some of the multi-part functions, such as the adult ESOL class, were low. Many families shared that they had competing priorities or limited access to child care, which hindered their consistent participation.

**Solution:**

We recognize there is no single solution to this challenge and acknowledge that a sustained effort on our part will improve attendance and family involvement. The new MCSA position creates an opportunity to engage and strengthen our relationships with families, align activities to their unique needs, and instill the belief within the multilingual community that they belong in our schools, in our community, and in spaces where decisions are made.

**Family Support and Community Resources**

The MCSA works to build partnerships with community organizations in order to link families to the resources they need. Some of those partnerships include the League of United Latin American Citizens, Youth Empowerment Sources/My Family Matters, the Paris Foundation, Cecil College, Cecil Housing, West Cecil Health Center, APGFCU, and MD Coalition of Families. A total of 21 community agencies participated in our Second Annual Multilingual Family and Community Fair. Because of these connections, we were able to help families access housing and health services when they needed them most.

To further support our ML families, a monthly newsletter is distributed via email, social media, and Talking Points. Content includes reminders about iSpeak CCPS language access services, tutorials for online translation features, accessing student grades, attendance policies, important dates/events, and easy-to-implement-at-home strategies to support student learning. The average number of views each month is 101. We will continue this practice moving forward.

**Identification of Multilingual Learners**

The MCSA screens newly enrolled students to determine eligibility for EL services following federal and state guidelines, assists families with enrollment, and communicates with families about the American school system. These services aim to create a positive initial school experience for multilingual families. Bilingual support during the intake process helps to set expectations, clear up misconceptions, and demonstrate our belief in equity and that we value languages and cultures as resources to be leveraged for academic success. The MCSA screened 158 new students resulting in 130 newly identified MLs since September 2023.

**Challenge:**

Some families wait until the first day of school to enroll their children. This poses challenges to strategically scheduling students where their needs can best be met.

**Solutions:**

- Use various communication tools to inform families of registration dates.
- Attend training to support ECE and ML families at the Spring Enrollment Fairs. Training will include defining terminology, walking through the process from the family lens, and then taking the steps required to complete the enrollment process.

## ***Improve and increase the use of Language Access Services***

### **Progress, Challenges, and Solutions**

#### **LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES - iSpeak CCPS**

Cecil County Public Schools uses a multifaceted approach to facilitate equitable communication between the school system and multilingual families. Our goal is to create an environment in which multilingual families feel they, their preferred language and their culture are welcome and valued. In addition to the resources described below, we have added the families' Home Language next to the student's photo and identification number in our student information system. In doing so, we increase the likelihood that communication is initiated in the language the family knows and understands. The MCSA disseminates iSpeak CCPS resources to families and schools to raise awareness and increase access to services to which they are entitled. To ensure success, the Multilingual Community Schools Advisor provided training in the use of telephonic interpretation to administrative secretaries and front office staff. Below, you will find detailed explanations for each resource, practice and/or process.

#### **Telephonic Interpretation**

CCPS contracts with Language Line Solutions to provide interpretation services; this resource is available to all staff. Posters are now visible in school offices for families to select their language and directions are posted next to each phone to support front office staff. Additionally, when families register, they are provided with an iSpeak CCPS language identification card. They may present this card to share the need for an interpreter; however, the card is not necessary to receive language access services. Language Line training was provided to Lead Secretaries, Guidance Secretaries, and 10-month Office Assistants in March 2024. Included in that training was an overview of the laws related to the steps LEAs must take to provide effective language assistance to parents and guardians, potential compliance issues, a demonstration, and a review of best practices. The total number of calls using Language Line services between September and March of the current year was 977.

#### **Challenge**

Language Line Solutions has been a component of our Language Access Services for more than 10 years. Changes in staffing, particularly with secretarial staff and 10-month assistants, as well as a range of experiences in working with multilingual families, create space for improvement in our use of this resource. Additionally, the growth of our ML population increases the demand for services and, as a result, the necessary funding to provide consistent, equitable communication with families.

#### **Solution**

The MCSA will continue to advocate for ML families by communicating their needs and concerns to schools and providing annual Language Line training for CCPS employees, including, but not limited to, front office staff and school counselors.

The Office of Multilingual Education will assess the CCPS suite of language access services by evaluating cost-effectiveness, quality, and scalability to optimize our resources while ensuring efficient allocation of funds.

### **In-person Interpreters**

For special events or circumstances where an in-person interpreter is needed, schools and offices may contact the Office of Multilingual Education to make arrangements for interpreters using contracted services.

### **Challenge**

In-person interpreters are extremely expensive. Some circumstances require an in-person interpreter; however, finding qualified and affordable interpreters is a challenge. Further, there are times when another option could fulfill the need.

### **Solution**

The Office of Multilingual Education purchased the ILA Pro (see below) this year and will continue to pilot its use to determine if it is a viable resource for schools.

### **Challenge**

CCPS has a comprehensive suite of language access services; however, we recognized that resources were available for small groups and one-to-one interpretation, but we lacked a resource for large-scale events where families from different home languages were present and a portable resource for use when meeting with new families and screening potential ELs whose languages are other than English or Spanish.

### **Solution**

This year, the Office of Multilingual Education and the Judy Center purchased the dual-sided ILA Pro. This device allows users to speak, spell out loud, or type, and the entire conversation is immediately communicated to the other party in their chosen language. The device supports real-time Speech to Text, Text to Speech, Transcription, and Translation in over 120 languages and dialects. The device can also be used for large events where the speaker broadcasts in multiple languages directly to a phone or other portable device. The Office of Multilingual Education uses this device with our immigrant families as they enroll in CCPS, during family involvement activities, and when meeting with new students prior to screening for Title III/English Language Development services. The Judy Center purchased ten devices for use to support family involvement during playgroups.

### **Translation Services**

A two-way messaging application is used with CCPS multilingual families. Staff members communicate via phone or computer to send messages in English. The recipients receive and respond to messages in the home language they identify at the time of registration. This communication application is available to ML staff, school-based administrators, school counselors, home-school liaisons, Title I resource Teachers, Community Schools Advisors, and student services resource personnel. Since September 2023, 54,050 messages and 484 announcements have been sent via Talking Points. Notably, 2,561 messages were initiated by families; this underscores the benefit of this two-way translation communication resource.

The Office of Multilingual Education coordinates translation services for the school system. The documents translated include, but are not limited to vital documents from the central office disseminated to the schools for parent communication and notices within a specific school sent out to the entire school community. For other translation requests, staff should contact the Instructional/Program Coordinator responsible for the written

communication to begin the request. Instructional Coordinators may contact the Office of Multilingual Education for assistance, giving two weeks advance notice for all translation requests. If we are unable to process a request, staff may use the Important Information Notice. This notice is to be attached to the document(s) that go home. If families need assistance with understanding the information, they would complete the Important Notice form and send it back to the school. At that point, schools can use Language Line to call and provide an oral translation of the information.

### Challenge

Updating and maintaining translations year after year presents several challenges. Among them is maintaining consistency, ensuring that when forms/documents are updated in English, they are also updated in the translations. This is time-consuming and resource-intensive as managing version control can be complex.

### Solution

Ensuring that all translated versions reflect the latest changes accurately requires an effective process. The Office of Multilingual Education will collaborate with other offices to develop a process and explore the possibility of an internal website where all translations can be made available for school/system access.

## 17. Supporting Multilingual Learners and Increasing Language Acquisition

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Questions 138-139*

In March 2023, the LEA described how it would **support Multilingual learners (ML), also known as English learners (EL), and implement the recommendations of the ML workgroup to increase English proficiency for ML students**. Responses included strategies to increase language acquisition and ensure the alignment and investment of resources.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome of increasing English proficiency for Multilingual learner students.

- [CCPS Report Card 2023](#)
- [17- English Language Proficiency](#)
  - [Percentage Proficient as measured by English Language Proficiency Assessment](#)
  - [2023 MCAP ELP Results by Grade Level](#)

- [2023 MCAP ELP Results by Language Domain](#)
- [Accountability ESSA Results](#)

In 2023, questions 138-139 of the Multilingual Education sections in Pillar 4 of the CCPS Blueprint Implementation Plan included:

- English Language Development curriculum design, revisions, and instructional Look-Fors
- Scaffolded content assessments for MLs
- Exploring the use of support programs for MLs not meeting with success
- Providing high-quality, school day and extended day tutoring for students identified as Long-term English Learners (LTELs) or those at risk of becoming LTELs
- Improving collaboration between content offices, teachers, and other stakeholders
- Leveraging existing resources to provide professional learning for all teachers of MLs
- Exploring middle school schedule options to provide designated courses for MLs
- Increasing the number of certified ML teachers

The narratives below provide evidence of progress as well as challenges, mitigation strategies, the focus of future work, and an analysis of our English Language Proficiency Data.

### ***Provide High-Quality Instructional Resources to Increase Language Acquisition***

#### **Progress, Challenges, and Solutions**

##### **Curriculum Development**

(Recommendation 3c from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners)

The English Language Development (or ELD) program takes different approaches based on an individual student's proficiency, grade level, and academic needs. Students who qualify for English language development services receive language support in one or more of the following models: push-in instruction where the teacher may co-teach or work with students in small groups, pull-out for English language specific instruction, or English language development classes. CCPS created English Language Development curricula designed to accelerate the acquisition of academic language proficiency. These curricula use content area knowledge and skills as the context for language and literacy development. The curricula provide methods for making meaning comprehensible, require critical thinking, and include strategies for interaction to foster language development.

In 2022-2023, CCPS developed WIDA-aligned curricula for grade level clusters K, 1, and 2-3 and revised the English Language Development II course for high school. In 2023-2024, we expanded the middle school curriculum to include a greater focus on expressive and receptive language expectations and explored the feasibility of offering AVID Excel, now titled AVID Emerge, for middle school students identified as LTELs. After careful review of the program and our existing middle school schedules, we have determined it best to continue implementing our current curriculum for middle school while enhancing it with AVID strategies.

## **Challenge**

With only 14 EL teachers across K-12, we have a limited pool of curriculum writers available and limited time to train writers on all the components of an asset-based, culturally responsive curriculum that is rigorous, relevant, and aligned to state and national standards.

## **Solution**

In 2023-2024, we added an additional step to our curriculum writing process to include summative assessment anchor responses. The purpose is twofold, to guide educators in backward mapping instruction with language expectations in mind and to begin the lesson planning process with an asset-based mindset that will propel students to use language with greater automaticity at the next proficiency level. The instructional design continued to include research-based practices for making meaning comprehensible, engaging students in critical thinking, and utilizing strategies for interaction.

To provide effective educator support, the ML Instructional Coach enhances the curriculum with AVID strategies and Ellevation activities that leverage students' linguistic and cultural assets. The Ellevation activities provide practical ways to differentiate instruction based on their specific Multilingual learners' data and provide videos and downloads to support implementation. Through the use of these activities, teachers improve their practice while increasing the number of MLs making progress toward attaining English language proficiency. We will continue to expand and update our English language development curricula to align expectations with that of WIDA's Framework for ELD and mirror the ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

## **Scaffolded Content Assessments**

In previous years, the Office of Multilingual Education collaborated with Science and Social Studies to co-creating scaffolded formative and summative assessments for MLs. Expanding on this work in 2023-2024 the elementary and secondary English Language Arts Coordinators began the process of creating scaffolded assessments for selected ELA grade levels and courses. After reflecting on the process used with the other content areas, we have elected to add review and feedback sessions with ELA teachers prior to implementation. (Recommendation 4a from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners)

## ***Sustain Improvements through Collaboration and Professional Learning***

### **Progress, Challenges, and Solutions**

## **Data Literacy**

Educators, support personnel, and administrators attended school-based professional development provided by ML teachers that focused on understanding their MLs proficiency levels, goals, and expected growth targets for the school year. This serves as the teachers' first look at students' ML Plans and the necessary scaffolds and supports needed in the content classroom for MLs to achieve academic success. Follow-up support was provided via collaborative planning - individually, in grade level teams, and/or in departments.

Each school-based administrative team was invited to schedule an individualized meeting to review their MCAP English Language Proficiency (ELP) scores at a granular level with the Coordinator for Multilingual Education. In 2023-2024, 13 of 29 schools engaged in a review and analysis of their data with guidance from the Office of ML Education. Data analysis included:

- Growth-to-Target model
- Overall school performance for MCAP ELP
- Baseline scores and students' growth year over year.

- Students making progress and those who did not meet their growth target.
- Long-term EL (LTEL) data
- Additional services, schedule adjustments, and supports for both at-risk and exited MLs

In some instances, the data analysis meetings resulted in making adjustments to student schedules that facilitated greater collaboration between the content teachers and the ML teacher and/or a second look at additional data to consider MLs for the Gifted and Talented program. (Recommendation 4b from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners)

### **Challenge**

MCAP English Language Proficiency data is complex as it uses a baseline score from the students' first WIDA ACCESS assessment to determine their growth year over year. That means their first year score could be as far back as seven years ago or as recent as last year. Additionally, there are two different ways a student can meet their target. This calculation is also complex and school system staff often want support in understanding the Growth-to-Target Model to which their students and their schools are held accountable so that they can plan for improved outcomes. Student level data is not provided by MSDE until later in the subsequent school year; therefore, we create a preliminary report to demonstrate students' progress and whether or not they met their target/growth expectation.

### **Solution**

Moving forward, we will continue to offer these individualized data analysis sessions with school leadership teams. Future data analysis topics will include comparing ELP level to MCAP ELA and Math scores.

### **Collaboration & Professional Learning**

(Recommendation 5a from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners)

CCPS recognizes that collaboration is the cornerstone of effective school systems. It ensures alignment of goals, resources, and strategies enabling cohesive decision making and sustained improvement. For MLs, in particular, it cultivates a shared responsibility leading to improved student outcomes.

At the central office level, the Office of Multilingual Education collaborated with the Early Childhood Education and English Language Arts Coordinators to develop the CCPS Literacy Plan. This collaborative approach facilitated the creation of a comprehensive and inclusive plan that ensures equitable access to quality education for MLs, improved communication with families, and paves the way for all learners to thrive in the classroom.

At the school level, teachers engaged in job-embedded professional learning as they co-planned, co-taught, and co-graded; thereby preparing all teachers to share the responsibility for the content, language and literacy development of their Multilingual learners. CCPS' English language development program supported this collaborative approach, particularly for LTELs, who may have received EL services via the push-in model. When EL teachers entered the content classroom as language acquisition experts, they provided effective models for making content accessible through the intentional use of scaffolds and supports that facilitated comprehensible input, critical thinking, and interaction. Additional collaboration time occurred during grade level team meetings and/or Kid Talk.

Collaboration within the Office of Multilingual Education was expanded in 2023-2024 in the following ways:

1. Providing additional time for ML teachers to collaborate and co-plan lessons.

2. Creating an Instructional Cabinet (iCab) to seek solutions to existing challenges, plan for future initiatives, and create resources that support teachers and students.

Teachers who are new to the Office of Multilingual Education work directly with the ML Instructional Coach. Their work focuses on pedagogical structures for second language acquisition, asset-based approaches, and delivering language focused services in the content classroom. Using a Plan, Do, Study, Act model, the Instructional Coach and teachers collaboratively set an instructional goal, co-plan a push-in lesson that the coach models, reflect on evidence of effectiveness, co-plan a second lesson to be implemented by the ML teacher and once again engage in reflective conversations to improve teacher practice and student learning. All coaching is based on collaborative goal setting focused on student performance, experience, or outcome. This ensures the coach and the teachers know where they are headed, have clarity to avoid distractions, and are able to prioritize their time together.

In 2023-2024, we provided professional learning to improve ML teacher expertise in serving Newcomers using asset-based approaches to deliver grade-level instruction. The intended outcome was to equip teachers and MLs with the skills needed to engage with complex language and academic content and fully participate in the learning environment. Additionally, all CCPS staff were provided access to professional learning through WIDA's self-paced online modules.

### **Challenge**

Due to time constraints, we were not able to implement two activities identified in our 2023 Blueprint Implementation Plan. Those activities included:

- Improve and expand strategies specifically designed for MLs within the Bookworms curriculum and provide PD to support teachers in leveraging these routines and practices.
- Provide instructional Look Fors for English Language Development instruction and content instruction for MLs.

### **Solution**

As we move forward with the CCPS Literacy Plan, we anticipate that all professional learning related to the science of reading will include strategies that are necessary for MLs and beneficial for all learners. (Recommendation 3b from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners)

The ML iCab will continue to meet quarterly and revisit the idea of developing instructional Look Fors.

### **Pathway to ESOL Certification**

(Recommendation 5c from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners)

CCPS is increasing investments in resources that support MLs' academic achievement and progress toward attaining English language proficiency. This includes providing incentives and support for experienced content teachers to become certified in ESOL via pathways to ESOL certification and professional development for those looking to better serve the MLs they teach. The Pathway to ESOL Certification program, funded by Title II and III, provides teachers with a solid foundation of theoretical and practical knowledge of the research and best practices for educating MLs.

At the conclusion of the first cohort in 2022-2023, 10 teachers earned their ESOL certification. 100% of teachers who took the Praxis assessment met the certification requirements. Two of the 19 teachers are now full time ML Teachers.



In 2023-2024, we revised the program to create a more customized experience by linking professional learning strategies to their students' data in Ellevation. Participants engaged in this blended professional learning through an asynchronous learning pathway built in Ellevation followed by synchronous collaborative sessions at the conclusion of each module, and concluded with synchronous coaching sessions to address topics covered on the ESOL Praxis.

## **Provide Supports that Improve Equity and Access for Multilingual Learners**

### **Progress, Challenges, and Solutions**

#### **High Quality, School Day Tutoring**

(Recommendation 7 from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners)

Utilizing Title III funding, the Office of Multilingual Education provides ML Tutors who work with individual students and small groups to support language and content development in the content classroom. In the 2023-2024 school year, three ML coaches tutored 30 students across three schools. Many students identified for this supplemental service are Long-term ELs (LTELs), at risk of becoming LTELs, or Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). Tutors are typically retired ML teachers/coordinators, content teachers, or undergraduate education majors. The Instructional Coordinator and/or Coach for Multilingual Education provides professional learning for ML Tutors; the content of which includes:

- Understanding ML students' English proficiency levels, what they can do, and what is expected of them at the next level
- Providing appropriate scaffolds and supports for listening, reading, speaking, and writing
- Making content comprehensible
- Engaging MLs in critical thinking and interaction to improve oral language proficiency

Each marking period, tutors analyze their students' grades to determine if support should be continued as is or adjusted to meet their needs in other or additional content classes. In some instances, students requested tutoring for another class.

At the secondary level, report card data indicate that all MLs who received tutoring in marking period (MP) 3, earned a B- or higher in the classes where tutor support was available. Using performance data to redirect tutor support for the third marking period to classes where MLs exhibited the greatest needs resulted in an average improvement of two letter grades. Further analysis shows that students were able to maintain or improve their grades in courses where they are no longer receiving tutor support during the third marking period. This suggests they have created the habits needed to maintain passing grades in those courses.

At the elementary level, the tutor worked with 4th and 5th grade students four days a week during the third marking period supporting MLs in math and reading classes.

- In math, 66% of 4th grade MLs improved by one letter grade and 33% maintained the B that they had previously earned. 75% of these students scored an A or B in math and 80% earned an A or B in both reading and math.
- In 5th grade, 66% of MLs improved by one letter grade and 33% maintained their current grade of a C.

The student performance data speaks to the quality and expertise of the ML Tutors; all of whom sit hip-to-hip with students, leveraging language development strategies and cultural understanding to create a supportive

learning environment. They develop positive relationships and motivate students to strive for success.

### **Challenge**

Evidence suggests that our ML Tutoring services are effective; however, with limited funds available, we are not able to offer this service in more schools.

### **Solution**

Explore additional funding opportunities to expand ML Tutoring services.

### **MTSS**

The office of Multilingual Education contributed to the development of the CCPS Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Handbook. The handbook guides teams to gather and analyze a wider range of data to develop appropriate instruction, interventions, and assessments for MLs who are not performing as expected during core instruction. Additionally, it directs staff to use MSDE's Guidelines for Reading Instruction for MLs to inform their decision making. In 2023-2024, the Office of Multilingual Education collaborated with the Office of Special Education to review the guidelines, specifically, the flowchart to support decision-making using additional student data beyond the overall/composite English language proficiency score. We anticipate continued collaboration between these offices and English Language Arts to support schools, teachers, and students.

### **Focus of Future Work**

- In collaboration with the Coordinators for English Language Arts, provide professional learning related to the science of reading to include strategies that are necessary for MLs and beneficial for all learners.
- Organize a club, specifically for Newcomer MLs, to assist students as they transition to an American school. Activities will include using AVID organizational strategies and CCPS online instructional resources, routinely reviewing attendance and grades, planning for career and college, and utilizing ACCESS for ELLs aligned tutorials to supplement English Language Development instruction.
- Goal setting instills a sense of discipline and determination. It keeps students focused on achievable targets and has the potential to boost self-confidence. They become more aware of their progress and, when language goals are visited regularly with specific and measurable criteria, they learn what they can do to move to the next level of language proficiency. Therefore, all English learners will set, monitor, and evaluate individual language development goals with their ML teachers via a series of lessons designed specifically for this purpose and embedded into the English language development curriculum. Formative and summative assessments that are scored with both student-facing rubrics and teacher-administered, WIDA aligned rubrics provide actionable data for students to measure incremental progress toward meeting their goals, engage in reflective conversations and/or journal writing to identify the language and learning needed to meet their goals.

## **Multilingual Learner Demographic Overview and Data Analysis**

CCPS serves 413 Multilingual Learners representing 18 different languages and 29 countries. They are enrolled across 29 schools where they receive English Language Development services from one of our 14 certified ML teachers. Among our currently enrolled MLs, 71% are economically disadvantaged, 57% are Hispanic, 27% are Caucasian, and 13% are students with disabilities. Additionally, we have 57 Reclassified

MLs currently being monitored for two years and 26 students for whom their families have refused services for the 2023-2024 school year. The ML enrollment breakdown by grade level bands is as follows:

- Grades K-2 is 124 (30%)
- Grades 3-5 is 103 (25%)
- Grades 6-8 is 74 (18%)
- Grades 9-12 is 112 (27%)

According to the Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA), Multilingual Learners (MLs) must demonstrate progress in attaining English Language Proficiency. Maryland employs a proficiency level growth-to-target model to measure their progress. The growth-to-target model is based on the students' overall proficiency earned on *ACCESS for ELLs*, Maryland's English Language Proficiency Assessment that is part of their Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP ELP). MLs are considered to have met the target if their overall proficiency level shows growth by 1) meeting the annual growth target based on their initial year proficiency level, 2) meeting the minimum growth expectation, and/or 3) exiting the program with a proficiency score of 4.5 or higher. The expectation is that students will exit the program within a specified timeframe based on their initial year proficiency level with the maximum number of years being six if the student's first score is between a 1.0 and 1.9. In 2023, 9.1% of MLs exited services. This is above the Maryland average of 7.8% and ranks 7th in the state. Less than 1% of MLs tested were Students with Disabilities of which <=5% scored proficiency in 2023 ([17- English Language Proficiency](#)). While the number of students achieving proficiency is important, research tells us it takes 5-7 years to achieve Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP); therefore, it is also important to analyze where students are on the trajectory toward English language proficiency and whether or not they are meeting their annual progress targets. This is especially important as it is the data MSDE uses for the [Accountability ESSA Results](#). Annually, the Office of Multilingual Education, English Language Development teachers and tutors review student progress and set future goals for the department as well as each student. Their goals are identified in their Multilingual Learner Plan, shared with all staff, and reviewed quarterly. Further, student goal setting uses the same data in addition to WIDA's Proficiency Level Descriptors and rubrics to identify, track, and assess progress throughout the year.

CCPS assessed 353 students MLs in 2023; 82 of them were first time test-takers. 50% of those students were in Kindergarten through grade two and 18% were in grade nine. The remaining students were fairly evenly distributed across all other grades up to eleventh grade. Elementary schools achieved greater success than Middle and High with 69% making progress as compared to 25% and 36% respectively. Among the 271 MLs with two MCAP English Language Proficiency scores, 52.3% met their annual target proficiency level or expected growth for 2023. Our elementary learners demonstrate that they are more likely to meet or exceed their growth target and/or score a 4.5 or higher overall; thereby, exiting the program. Most notably, 97% of our fourth grade MLs with two or more *ACCESS for ELLs* scores met their target/growth expectation and/or exited the program. Additionally, grades four and five had the highest number of MLs scoring 4.5 overall or higher accounting for 62.5% of students exiting the program ([2023 MCAP ELP Results by Grade Level](#)). At the elementary level, CCPS will promote collaboration between English language development (ELD) teachers and content teachers and provide professional development to ELD teachers related to effective collaborative teaching approaches. Pending funding, we will increase the number of ML Tutors at the elementary level and monitor the success of the program by reviewing student grades and MCAP ELP scores. Additionally, content coordinators, particularly English Language Arts and Multilingual Education Coordinators, will collaborate to ensure all professional learning includes critical components for MLs. When analyzing English Language Proficiency scores by language domain, it is clear that our students demonstrate high levels of success in listening; however, our areas of greatest need are reading and speaking. 65.6% of MLs scored at levels 1 or 2

in reading and 47.8% did the same in speaking ([MCAP ELP Results by Language Domain](#)). As we move forward with the CCPS Literacy Plan, we anticipate that all professional learning related to the science of reading will include strategies that are necessary for MLs and beneficial for all learners (Recommendation 3b from the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on Multilingual Learners). As referenced in the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup on English Learners, there is a strong need to focus on oral language proficiency and the meaning of words through the use of visual, verbal, and contextual supports to positively affect literacy outcomes for MLs. We will monitor the impact of these initiatives by analyzing the use of scaffolded content assessments, student grades and ML subgroup data on MCAP ELA. In addition to the work with our ELA team, the Office of Multilingual Education will focus on structured academic conversations to effectuate gains in speaking performance on MCAP ELP.

Despite the high achievement among our fourth and fifth grade MLs, students in grade 6 demonstrated the least amount of growth or were more likely to demonstrate no growth resulting in some being classified as Long Term MLs. In some cases, this includes dual identified students - children who have an ML Plan and an IEP. The offices of Multilingual Education and Special Education routinely collaborate to develop processes and strategies aimed at improving outcomes for our students. For example, we implement MTSS, RTI<sup>2</sup>, and use a decision-making tool to identify MLs for reading interventions. The initial thought is that the transition from elementary to middle school and the developmental stage of that age group contribute to the lower performance. Out of the six middle schools in CCPS, Elkton Middle has the highest number of MLs and Cherry Hill Middle School was identified as TSI for the ML Subgroup. Moving forward, we will continue to provide English Language Development classes at Elkton Middle as opposed to using the push-in/pull-out model implemented at other middle schools. We will investigate how the social and emotional health of students at this age group might be influencing their academic performance and explore strategies to address these challenges through our English language development program. We will continue to provide tutoring to MLs during the school day at Cherry Hill Middle and monitor student success by analyzing student grades and MCAP ELP scores. During our data Literacy meeting that includes the Instructional Coordinator for Multilingual Education and school-based administrators, we will develop a plan for improving outcomes for MLs that includes professional learning for content teachers working with Long Term MLs and monitoring ML progress through Cherry Hill Middle's existing data analysis protocols. Although our middle school MLs as a whole did not meet the system's accountability target of 43.59%, they rank fourth in the state for the percentage of MLs scoring proficient as measured by MCAP English Language Arts.

At the high school level, CCPS ranked third in Maryland for MLs making progress toward English language proficiency and first in the state with 18.2% of MLs scoring proficient on the MCAP English Language Arts assessment. Most notably, ninth grade MLs demonstrated the most success among all secondary learners with 60% meeting their growth target/expectation. This age group also has the largest number of first time test takers, some of whom enter with limited or interrupted education. As mentioned earlier in this plan, our Multilingual Community Schools Advisor will collaborate with the ML teacher at the school with the largest number of Newcomers to provide supplemental support that we anticipate will lay the foundation for improved outcomes for secondary MLs. We will continue to assess our native Spanish speakers' language proficiency to place them in an appropriate learning environment that will not only improve their primary language proficiency, but will also accelerate their progress toward English language proficiency. CCPS was among the first seven school systems to participate in Maryland's Seal of Biliteracy and MLs account for 20% of its recipients. As we enter into our ninth year offering the opportunity to earn this prestigious award, we will provide the MSDE approved Seal of Biliteracy assessment, at no cost to the students, to ensure they have an opportunity to showcase their language assets through the Maryland Seal of Biliteracy.

Long-term Multilingual Learner (LTML) data show that 38 students between grades six and twelve have a baseline score from 2017; that number represents 10.7% of our total ML population. Another 28 students between grades five and eleven have baseline scores from 2018; 64% of those students are in grades five and six. These students are considered at risk of becoming LTMLs. Among the students whose baseline score is from 2019, the majority, or 66%, are in grades four and five. Overall, the percentage of students who have been identified as LTMLs or those at risk of becoming LTMLs remains somewhat low; nevertheless, we will continue to monitor and provide supplemental tutoring for this particular ML subgroup making adjustments, when necessary, to ensure student success.

As we continue to build toward more equitable and inclusive learning environments, we will prioritize family involvement, collaboration, supplemental services, data literacy & goal setting, and professional learning for teachers of MLs to meet their diverse needs and ensure their academic success.

## 18. Improve Education for Students with Disabilities

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Question 140-142*

In March 2023, the LEA described how it would improve education for students with disabilities. Responses addressed supporting general and special education teachers in the implementation of effective classroom instructional practices and increasing and aligning investments in talent, time, and resources.

Considerations included:

- Strategic staffing to implement a co-teaching model that allows for two teachers to share all responsibilities for a single classroom.
- Professional development to support all teachers in differentiating instruction effectively.
- Scheduling models to support collaboration and co-planning between general and special education teachers.

Based on implementation of the LEA's plans over the last year, discuss the district's progress in transforming its systems and practices and achieving the intended outcomes of the Blueprint. Responses must address the following questions.

- What progress has been made in implementation related to both planned activities and anticipated outcomes? If progress has been limited, what challenges has the LEA encountered? Consider, identify, and refer to available data as needed to demonstrate progress.
- How is the LEA adapting its plans to mitigate challenges and/or ensure continued progress and future success? Which strategies are not working that the LEA will no longer implement, and which new strategies does the LEA intend to implement? Include the rationale for adjustments.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome of improving education for students with disabilities.

[Maryland Report Card](#)

## **Data Analysis**

The Special Education Department is looking forward to comparing special education student outcomes from the 2024 administration of the ELA and math MCAP assessments for students in grades 3 through 5 at Bainbridge Elementary School where co-teaching models are occurring this school year. When comparing data for students with disabilities performance on grades 5 and 6 MCAP ELA and math scores from 2023, the data indicates that students with disabilities who are leaning in co-taught models appear to perform better on these state assessments. Assessment data from 2023 indicates that students with disabilities in grade 5 have a 5% proficiency rate in both math and ELA; however, students with disabilities in grade 6 have a 9.7% proficiency rate in the area of ELA and a 5% proficiency rate in mathematics. One contributing factor to the difference in student proficiency between grade levels for students with disabilities may be that students with disabilities are more likely to be taught in a co-taught ELA class in 6th grade compared to 5th grade where a service delivery model is being implemented.

## **Progress, Challenges, and Solutions**

### **Teaching Models**

The co-teaching models have been implemented in middle and high schools within Cecil County Public Schools. The system continues to work on providing professional development regarding shared responsibilities within a co-taught classroom as well as models for instruction. The elementary schools have been successful in implementing a co-teaching model in one specific school which was given additional staffing through School Improvement grant funds, and a second school is beginning the process. Bainbridge Elementary School was provided with an additional staff member resulting in the opportunity for special education teachers to provide support and services in a co-teaching model by grade level for core content areas. Co-taught classrooms are occurring in grades 2 through 5, with one special education teacher servicing and instructing per grade level. However, in the Early Childhood classrooms, there is still one teacher responsible for providing services across PreKindergarten, Kindergarten and 1st grade. At Bay View Elementary, special education teachers were departmentalized and are providing instruction in the general education setting while co-teaching in reading and mathematics.

The challenge to implementing co-teaching models within the elementary schools is connected to a lack of appropriate staffing. Despite the staffing issues, a possible solution is to departmentalize special education content services and examine the master schedule at the elementary school level.

### **Professional Development**

Special education teachers have been provided with professional development to support differentiated instruction for students with disabilities. The focus has been on accommodating general education lessons to allow access for all students. Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education provided training to teachers on co-teaching models with adaptations to support individual student needs. In addition, targeted professional development has been provided to individual elementary schools based on needs assessments and teacher surveys.

One challenge in providing professional development for teachers is the varied skill level among staff. CCPS has employed conditionally certified teachers during the teacher shortage, which has increased this challenge. A proposed solution is to provide targeted, differentiated professional development based on a school needs assessments.

## Scheduling Models

Scheduling models that allow for collaboration and co-planning.

Scheduling is often impacted by IEP meetings and school based pd that takes place during teacher planning. Also with the lack of substitutes, teachers are often utilized to cover classrooms which impacts scheduling. A solution for this is a change in the secondary schedules for middle and high school in 2024-2025. At the elementary level, Wednesday afternoons and grade level team meetings provide opportunity for collaborative communication.

Moving forward, progress related to implementation and student outcomes will be monitored on a quarterly basis during the Special Education Department team meetings. Through discussion during these meetings, Special Education Coordinators will share Special Education Teacher schedules within their buildings to ensure implementation of a co-taught model with embedded specialized instruction is occurring throughout all grade levels, where staffing allows. Additionally, through the teacher observation process, implementation of embedded specialized instruction within a co-taught model can be observed and constructive feedback can be provided where appropriate. Analysis of observation data and discussion during Department Meetings will identify future professional development needs.

Student outcomes will be monitored through the Special Education Department's Strategic Plan review. The Special Education Department's Strategic Plan identified the following as a Key Performance Indicator: **Improve student outcomes by increasing embedded specialized instruction within the general education setting for students with disabilities at the elementary level.** Progress monitoring of student outcomes will include review of student Acadience Data, MCAP data, NWEA MAPS scores, and student performance on curriculum-based summative assessments and progress on IEP goals. This data will be reviewed quarterly during a Special Education Department Meeting.

### 19. Disproportionate Identification and Disciplinary Practices

Discuss the LEA's plan **to improve education for students with disabilities through accurate screening and disciplinary practices.** Provide an analysis of current data related to both the under- and over-identification of students with disabilities and disproportionality of student discipline during the pre-referral process or once identified as a student with a disability.

Identify affected student groups and areas of disproportionality, the root causes for the disproportionality(ies), and the specific strategies the LEA uses or intends to use to mitigate and eliminate such occurrences at individual schools and across its system of schools.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint Outcome to mitigate disproportionate identification and disciplinary practices.

[Data Appendix 19-Disproportionate ID](#)

[Data Appendix 19A-Success Gaps Priority Setting Tool](#)

## Discipline Disproportionality Progress

For the 2022-2023 school year, CCPS was identified as being disproportionate in the suspension for 10 or more days of Black students with a disability ([Data Appendix 19-Disproportionate ID](#)). As a result of the disproportionality, a hypothesis was made that there was a lack of understanding among building-level administrators and IEP teams of ways to address student behavior, which violates the student code of conduct, through the IEP process. A Corrective Action Plan was written, identifying action items to reduce the disproportionality. For the 2023-2024 school year, the following actions were taken to address the disproportionality:

1. Professional Development was provided to all Assistant Principals where the Student Code of Conduct was reviewed by the Student Services Coordinator and Coordinator for Behavior and Mental Health Services. Additionally, information was provided to the Assistant Principals on ways to address behavior through the provision of IEP services for students with disabilities in order to prevent having to use suspension. For example, information was provided on supplementary aids and services, specially designed instruction and Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans.
2. Student Services Department team members have scheduled monthly meetings to review county-wide suspension data.

## Discipline Disproportionality Challenges and Next Steps

### Challenges

1. The availability for key stakeholders to meet and prioritize time to study school data regarding student suspension data
2. The availability of social and emotional resources and supports to provide to schools where there may be trends in suspension data and student discipline

### Next Steps

1. Consider having Executive Leadership lead a District Improvement Team where discipline data and trends are analyzed and interventions and supports for the system can be developed
2. Grant funds are being used to increase Tier I, Tier II and Tier III supports to address social and emotional needs of students. These include the addition of School Social Workers, a Behavior Coach, and an MTSS Coordinator for Behavior. The School Social Workers are able to provide support at all three Tiers including professional development for staff and crisis management, as well as the provision of small group instruction and individualized counseling. The Behavior Coach will be able to support school-based teams with creating individualized plans to support student social and emotional needs.

## Identification Disproportionality Progress

The Root Cause analysis team met to analyze the significant disproportionality in the identification of multi-race students as having an Emotional Disability (ED). The team consisted of the following members: Director for Special Education, Director for School and Student Safety, Coordinator for Behavior and Mental Health Services, Instructional Coordinator for Special Education, Coordinator for Student Services, Program Coordinator for Early Childhood, and Supervising School Psychologist. The team began by completing the Success Gaps Rubric to identify the root cause for the disproportionate identification of multi-race students as



ED. The Success Gaps Rubric focuses on five different areas: (1) data-based decision making, (2) cultural responsiveness, (3) core instructional program, (4) assessment- universal screening and progress monitoring, and (5) interventions and supports.

Through completion of the tool, the team identified the following areas as in the “planning” stage. Explanations of each indicator may be found in the Success Gaps Priority Setting Tool: 1b (District or School regularly disaggregates and analyzes data to compare the progress of the group experiencing the success gap with all other groups of children) and 2a (Staff use culturally responsive instructional interventions and teaching strategies to support children throughout the district or school, including the group experiencing the success gap). Indicators assessed to be in the “partially implemented” stage were: 1a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3e, 4a, 4b, 4c, 5a, 5b, and 5c, and the following indicators were assessed to be “Implemented”: 3b, 3c, 3d. None of the factors were rated as “exemplary”. After completing the rating tool, the [Success Gaps Priority Setting Tool](#) was completed, which indicated that 1a, 1b, 3e, and 4b were assessed to be medium level priorities; whereas 5a was assessed to be high priority. From this process, the team decided to prioritize the expanded development of interventions and supports in the areas of behavior, progress monitoring of behavior supports, and system wide data review with a focus on the performance of various subgroups.

Cecil County Public Schools strives to serve equitably through positive relationships as a safe, collaborative community. Ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge, skills, and qualities to be responsible, caring, and ethical citizens must include their social, emotional, and behavioral skill development. As a school system, we believe this priority is best addressed through the implementation of an *Integrated Student Services Framework*.

- Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) is a multi-tiered framework for implementing evidence-based and culturally relevant practices to increase the success of all students. These practices should emphasize prosocial skills and learning expectations by teaching and acknowledging appropriate student behavior. The PBIS framework has been in place in our buildings for well over a decade, so it can be tempting to assume that students and staff ‘should just know’ how to behave in school but this could not be further from the truth. The communities in our buildings are always evolving and changing, and this fact necessitates that school staff intentionally and proactively support students as the school year begins and throughout the year.
- Restorative Practices are collaborative strategies used by school staff to proactively develop community, repair relationships when harm is caused, and allow for the development of students’ social and emotional skills. School-wide RP implementation fosters safer, more caring, more inclusive environments leading to more effective teaching and learning. As members of an RP community students will have deeper personal bonds and relationships, a greater understanding of the impact of their actions, increased accountability, and more strategies to repair harm.
- LSCI is a brain-based, trauma-informed, relationship-building verbal strategy that turns crisis situations into learning opportunities for young people who exhibit challenging behaviors. LSCI believes that the process of helping involves having the ability to listen deeply to the personal stories of young people and to recognize that their message often is not in their words, but in their underlying thoughts and feelings. A core strength of the LSCI program is its emphasis on modeling and practicing specific interviewing techniques to help adults de-escalate and debrief a problem situation or critical event.
- CPI is a nonviolent crisis intervention training designed to teach best practices for managing difficult situations and disruptive behaviors, including a series of recognizable behavior levels that occur in an escalating crisis, and the approaches staff can take at each of those levels to prevent or de-escalate

the situation. There are four levels of an integrated experience focused on the continuum of behaviors and the continuum of intervention strategies, ranging from the least restrictive all the way to restraint as a last resort. Certified trained staff learn decision-making skills to match the level of the response to the risk of the crisis, focusing on the least-restrictive response to ensure the *Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security* of those in your care. This includes recognizing the stages of an escalating crisis and learning evidence-based techniques to appropriately de-escalate.

- The SEFEL Pyramid Model for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework designed for early childhood educators in order to promote the social and emotional development of young children and prevent and address challenging behaviors in early childhood settings. The Pyramid Model is founded upon evidence-based practices that provide for a tiered approach to supporting young children socially, emotionally, and behaviorally as they grow and develop. The Pyramid Model represents an organized system of supports represented in a Three-Tier framework. Through the use of targeted and specific promotion, prevention, and intervention practices young children develop positive social-emotional competencies and experience a decrease in challenging behaviors.

Currently, all Cecil County schools receive support utilizing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Practices (RP), which serve as the foundation for the MTSS interventions available. PBIS primarily serves as the foundation for Tier 1 practices in a majority of schools and Second Step lessons are being used in our elementary and middle schools to provide SEL instruction for all students. All CCPS staff have received RP training and ongoing coaching support to utilize RP as a Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 intervention. Finally, Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) training was provided to all staff as a Tier 1 intervention and to Principals, Assistant Principals, School Counselors, and School Psychologists as a Tier 2 intervention. While CCPS does have a strong foundation of Tier I supports, we still do not have a universal screener in place for all students, and we have limited Tier II and Tier III interventions. Furthermore, while we do have a comprehensive MTSS Handbook and Integrated Student Services Framework Implementation Guide, there is not a standardized process for implementation and there is minimal oversight and accountability for school teams to demonstrate fidelity of implementation of a MTSS.

### **Pre-Referral focus on Academics (Differentiated Instruction and Interventions)**

Cecil County Public Schools delivers Core Instruction to all students at the Tier I level. It focuses on the implementation of the school system's Core Curriculum and is aligned with the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards. This instruction should be aligned with the standards, evidence based, culturally responsive, and student-centered. This instruction should be aligned with the standards, evidence based, culturally responsive, and student-centered. It should include approximately 80% of the student population performing at the expected grade level and being supported by teachers trained in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), universal screening, diagnostic assessments, the formative assessment process, explicit teaching of behavior expectations, and differentiated instruction.

Tiers II & III contain evidence-based supplemental instruction aligned to student needs and based on ongoing data, including screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessment. Individual student instruction should be modified based upon ongoing data analysis, including screening data, progress monitoring data, and diagnostic data. These Tiers are for students whose difficulties require additional, targeted systematic instruction.

Students in Tiers II & III should also remain in Tier I (Core) instruction. Students can move between Tiers based upon ongoing data analysis. Tier II includes approximately 15% of the student population and consists of students who are performing below grade level and require systematic supplemental instruction aligned to the data of their needs. It includes ongoing data collection, including progress monitoring. Tier II students should also remain in Tier I, Core Instruction. Tier III comprises approximately 5% of the student population and represents those students who require intensive, systematic, instruction. It includes ongoing data collection, including progress monitoring and may include targeted one-on-one intervention. Tier III students should also remain in Tier I, Core Instruction.(See CCPS MTSS Handbook, 23-24 Edition)

By implementing tiered strategies with fidelity, CCPS believes there will be a reduction in the number of students being referred to receive Special Education services.

Cecil County Public Schools currently has nine multi-race students who qualify for special education services as having an Emotional Disability, which is a reduction of five students from the previous year. Due to the low number of students who fit this category, the Root Cause Analysis Team was able to look at individual student data to determine potential root causes for the disproportionate identification of multi-race students who qualify for special education services as having an Emotional Disability. After looking at initial eligibility data, there were no concerning patterns in implementing special education processes or procedures. However, the following was noted regarding student data: eight of nine students currently qualify for Free or Reduced Meals, all 9 students have endured Adverse Childhood Experiences, five of the nine students were identified as having an Emotional Disability.

While the disproportionality data indicating the need for the 2024-2025 plan is based on information from the 2022-2023 school year, the current data indicates that Cecil County has reduced their disproportionality rate from 2.47 during the 2022-2023 school year to 1.48 for the 2023-2024 school year, indicating that efforts made from the previous year's plan may have made an impact. When reviewing this data with the Root Cause Analysis team, along with information from the root causes analysis tool and individual student data, the following were identified as priorities to continue efforts moving forward: School Social Worker positions at two high schools and one middle school; the addition of an MTSS Behavior Coach to support the fidelity of implementation of the MTSS process, including data collection for individual student supports in identified schools, and an MTSS Coordinator to oversee Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) MTSS activities and fidelity of implementation.

## Identification Disproportionality Challenges and Next Steps

### Challenges

1. There is not a systemwide, standardized process for the implementation of Tiered supports to address student behavior or mental health, which may lead to increased referrals for special education screening for consideration of an Emotional Disability
2. There is a lack of Tiered support to address student's social and emotional needs.
3. There is minimal oversight for the fidelity of implementation of a multi-Tiered system of supports at the school level
4. Minimal ongoing professional development for classroom teachers on Tier I strategies to address social and emotional learning

## Next Steps

1. Creation of an MTSS Coordinator position who will work to standardize the MTSS process for behavior to bring consistency to the implementation of the process. Additionally, this person can assist with resource management and development for Tiered supports in the area of behavior.
2. Continue to expand the resources and training around behavior interventions for students, including growing the number of School Social Workers to provide Tiered interventions.
3. Creation of an MTSS Coordinator who will collaborate with school-based MTSS teams to provide professional development and work with schools to assess the fidelity of implementation of MTSS within their building.
4. Provide ongoing professional development to school-based teams on implementation of Tier I supports in the area of behavior and social and emotional learning. This support may need to be contracted in order to bring an expert in the area to provide the PD depending on the topic.

## 20. Effective Community Partnerships

How does the LEA support students attending community schools where there is a higher concentration of poverty by supporting their community schools through a collective impact approach?

Describe how the LEA ensures its schools align partnerships to their needs assessments and collaborate with partners to share leadership, establish goals, and increase accountability for achieving intended outcomes in service of a specific community and its students.

**Note:** This question is only required for LEAs with schools designated as community schools receiving concentration of poverty grants.

## Current Status

### Community Schools receiving Concentration of Poverty Grants

- 2022-2023, 2023-2024
  - Gilpin Manor Elementary
  - Holly Hall Elementary
  - Thomson Estates Elementary
  - Elkton Middle School
- 2024-2025
  - Gilpin Manor Elementary
  - Holly Hall Elementary
  - Thomson Estates Elementary
  - Elkton Middle School
  - Bainbridge Elementary
  - Bay View Elementary
  - Cecilton Elementary
  - Cecil Manor Elementary
  - North East Elementary

Community Schools work in collaboration with community partners to identify and address barriers to achievement and provide resources to students and families through wraparound services that enhance students' ability to be successful. Through a comprehensive needs assessment, the schools identify the needs of their students and families which may include behavioral health resources, clothing, food, and methods of strengthening school-community relationships. Wraparound services and programs and family engagement events provide extended learning and enrichment opportunities beyond the school day. Also, each Community School has a Community School Advisor (responsible for the creation, integration, alignment, and coordination of the community school strategy to be implemented at the assigned school and coordinates the partnerships, programs, services, and resources for children and families which directly address the barriers that interfere with students' academic performance) and a school nurse (Registered Nurse).

The Community School Advisors meet each month with the Director of Student & School Safety to serve as a workgroup to discuss use of funds to support Community School initiatives.

### **Collaboration**

The community schools strategy transforms a school into a place where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy development, and all students flourish in thriving school communities. As partners, they organize in and out of school resources, supports, and opportunities, so that all students thrive. The school community, led by the community school advisor, will utilize systems of continuous improvement with clear goals to create expanded and enriched learning opportunities; develop strategic partnerships to create integrated systems of support; provide professional learning opportunities to create a culture of belonging, safety, and care; build a positive culture around data and data systems to develop rigorous community connected classroom instruction; utilize shared governance structures to create collaborative leadership, and shared power and voice; and develop a shared bank of sustainable resources to provide powerful student and family engagement. This delivery of services and implementation of progress monitoring will serve as the vehicle to create, develop, and implement a vision and goals for the school, student and family well-being, and student learning. This shared vision along with actionable data, inclusive decision-making, and trusting relationships, will enable school staff, community partners, and youth and families, to participate in creating an environment and culture where all students flourish in thriving school communities.

The utilization of collective impact is of paramount importance as all relevant community partners and stakeholders participate in providing feedback through the needs assessment process. The use of this process will permit all community partners and stakeholders to have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint or collaborative approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. Data is collected and measured consistently to ensure that all community partners and stakeholders remain aligned with the shared vision. Consistent and open communication will allow all community partners and stakeholders to build trust, and assure that their mutual objectives remain in sight.

Each Community School partners with community organizations to provide students with access to services such as academic support, health care, eyeglasses, and mental health services. They also offer parent education classes on topics such as parenting, child development and health, with the goal of raising awareness of the resources that are available to students, parents and families. Each school is committed to providing all students with the resources that they need to succeed.

Schools recognize there are gaps in their ability to address all student needs. Therefore, schools work with community agencies and organizations to develop partnerships to mitigate these gaps. The benefits to developing and solidifying these partnerships with community agencies and organizations are significant. They provide students with access to a wider range of resources and services. Partnerships enable the schools to build relationships within the school community and create a more supportive learning environment for all students. They improve student outcomes by providing students with the extra support they need to succeed and remain successful. Each Community School plans to hold a stakeholder meeting where an opportunity to come together and discuss student needs is realized. This meeting also allows for the development of a plan to address these needs, builds collaboration between school and community, and improves the communication and builds trust necessary between stakeholders.

There are a number of strategies that each Community School will use to solidify the partnerships with community agencies and organizations. These strategies include:

- Plan together from the start to conduct joint planning, visioning, and problem solving
- Clarify the vision to have a shared sense of purpose
- Invest time to get to know one another to prevent later misunderstandings
- Set ground rules to clarify guidelines and procedures
- Start small and build gradually to integrate community partner resources and capacities
- Involve parents as partners to bring unique insights and perspectives
- Clarify roles and responsibilities that outline basic elements of the partnership
- Share decision-making to get input and feedback from multiple perspectives
- Prepare team members to work together
- Remain flexible while remembering that all sides of a partnership experience change and deal with new mandates
- Keep nurturing the relationships by recognizing that team building is not a one-time event, and requires continued examination and daily investment.
- Be strategic by assessing what the school system can bring to the collaboration through programming, human, and financial resources; and offering to make available resources to community partners as appropriate.

**Areas of need from Cecil County Public School’s COP Needs Assessments**

Most Frequent Need	Partnerships to address needs
Childcare	Boys and Girls Club, Judy Center, YMCA
Food/Clothing	MD Food Bank, The Help Center, Donations, Food/Clothing Pantry
Healthcare	Medical Resources, Dental Services, Vision Services, Local School Health Council, Cecil County Dept. of Community Services, Cecil County Health Dept.
Housing	Cecil County Dept. of Social Services, Cecil County Housing Agency, Elkton Housing Authority

Immunizations	Cecil County Health Dept., School Nurse Collaboration
Mental Health	Advantage Psychiatric Services, Cecil County Health Dept. Core Service Agency, Chesapeake Behavioral Health, Key Point Health Services, Union Hospital Behavioral Health, Upper Bay Counseling and Support Services

**Challenges and Next Steps**

**Challenges:**

1. Ensuring that school communities understand the scope and impact of the Community Schools Model.
2. Being prepared with a bank of agencies and organizations that can provide resources and services to multiple schools.
3. Seek additional resources from other funding sources to enhance the Community Schools Model.
4. Address the attendance issues that we have since the COVID 19 Pandemic.
5. How to move the Community Schools Model forward in CCPS as more schools are added.
6. Community Schools will require additional funding outside of the COP Personnel Grant to meet the needs within the school community.
7. Community Schools need extra personnel to manage behavior in the classroom setting.
8. CCPS will eventually need a full-time Community Schools Supervisor position as the number of Community Schools in the county grows.

**Next Steps:**

1. Develop and communicate a shared vision of community schools in order for school communities to understand the focus of COP funding and its targeted uses.
2. With the COP Personnel Grant, expand current school partnerships and cultivate new ones to provide additional wraparound services as more COP schools are added.
3. Leverage the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports to enhance local services to students and families in school communities.
4. Collaboration with school administrators to reduce chronically absent and habitually truant students by utilizing COP Personnel Grant funds to fund Student Services Resource Teacher positions at COP schools to provide more targeted intervention.
5. As the COP qualification lowers and additional schools qualify, collaboration from staff, families, students, and community partners in each school community is essential in the development of needs

assessments and implementation plans so that proper services are available in every school community.

6. As COP schools continue to follow their implementation plans, they will utilize the COP Per Pupil Grant to consider and devise more ways to add staff to provide additional behavioral and emotional support to students in classrooms.
7. Any additional positions would be allocated based on the individual school needs assessment. These positions would provide supportive interventions and resources for students.
8. As the number of COP schools continues to grow in Cecil County, CCPS will explore funding sources to support hiring a Community Schools Supervisor.

## 21. Expanding Behavioral Health Support

Discuss how the LEA will enhance and expand behavioral health support for students, including how it leverages the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports to provide services to students and communities.

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint outcome to enhance and expand behavioral health support for students.

**Data Analysis:** Cecil County Public Schools does not complete a universal behavioral health or mental health screener or needs assessment; however, Cecil County Government did conduct surveys assessing community health needs which included behavioral health. In 2022, a [Community Health Needs Assessment](#) was completed which indicated the following as prioritized needs: cancer, behavioral health, and childhood trauma. Additionally, CCPS students completed the [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey \(YRBS\)](#) in the 2021-2022 school year.

### Expand and Enhance Behavioral Health Services

Cecil County Public Schools, after reviewing the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey and the Community Health Needs Assessment, have prioritized the following areas of need related to student behavioral health to be addressed through the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports:

1. Expansion of Substance Use Prevention and Education
2. Family Navigator for case management of resources and supports for families
3. Before and After School Programming with free transportation - focus on Recreation/Leisure, Mental Health Awareness, and Academic Supports/Interventions
4. Parent Education with free transportation - Strengthening Families Program, Chicago Parenting Program, etc.
5. Tier II and Tier III student supports with a focus on bereavement and trauma-informed interventions

CCPS is partnering with five service providers (Upper Bay Counseling and Support Services, Advantage Psychiatric Services, Cecil County Department of Community Services, Youth Empowerment Source, and LIVEFORTHOMAS Foundation) to provide services to CCPS students and families through the Consortium for behavioral health and mental health services aligned with priorities. We are in the process of creating MOUs



with each of the five service providers outlining the services which will be provided. These services include individual counseling, small group interventions, substance use prevention programming, parent and student access to information related to mental health, and a family navigator for students referred to the Local Care Team due to student crisis or risk behavior.

## Challenges

1. CCPS does not formally evaluate behavioral health needs of students through an internal mechanism or team, so it can be challenging to identify specific areas of need as well as operationalize plans to support student behavioral health.
2. CCPS is concerned with implementing a behavioral health or mental health screening because of the lack of resources available to address behavioral health and mental health needs in response to the universal screening results.
3. Funding for an increase in mental health provider positions such as School Social Workers

## Next Steps

1. Create a Behavioral Health Improvement Team, which could be a sub-committee of another team, to analyze student behavioral health data and determine interventions and supports to address student behavioral health needs.
2. Explore funding mechanisms for expansion of behavioral health resources, including human resources such as School Social Workers. While the Consortium is one way to provide support to students and families, it is not sustainable after funding wanes.
3. Explore funding mechanisms for expansion of behavioral health resources, including human resources such as School Social Workers. While the Consortium is one way to provide support to students and families, it is not sustainable after funding wanes.

## Pillar 5

### Governance and Accountability

#### 22. Stakeholder Engagement

*Initial Blueprint Implementation Plan Reference: Question 161*

In March 2023, the LEA discussed how it would **engage and represent the voices of stakeholders in the development and implementation of its Blueprint Implementation Plan**, an essential element for the 2024 submission as well.

Discuss the LEA's strategy or framework for successfully engaging multiple stakeholder groups for varied purposes during this process, including empowering stakeholders to provide meaningful input into developing and implementing its Blueprint Implementation Plan. Describe how the LEA determines success in this area, including lessons learned and adjustments needed.

Provide specific examples of where stakeholder input has been incorporated into the plan and explain why stakeholder input was critical for each example.

## Key Stakeholders

With any major education reform such as the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, there are different stages of implementation. The 2022-2023 school year focused on providing information about the Blueprint to the school community. CCPS used a variety of methods to achieve this first phase through Board of Education meetings, Leadership Team meetings, principal meetings, parent advocacy groups meetings and any other time a meeting agenda allowed at stakeholder group meetings. The school principals are tasked with providing important Blueprint information with the staff, students and parents of their school community.

CCPS established Blueprint pillar committees in the 2022-2023 school year. Each pillar committee is led by staff from the Leadership Team or Superintendent's cabinet with additional members from different stakeholder groups. Each committee is charged with developing plans to meet the Blueprint guidance as well as reviewing data, measuring progress and making adjustments to the plan as needed. These committees meet quarterly to review goals, activities and progress. The committees report on progress to the Blueprint Implementation Coordinator and the Superintendent of schools.

In 2023-24, the Blueprint plan and legislation was thoroughly discussed with a number of stakeholder groups as it pertains to the budget process. The restricted nature of the Blueprint funding has created a hardship for CCPS due to the maintenance of effort contributions of the local government over the last three years. The requirements of the Blueprint was a hot topic in the FY25 budget negotiations which allowed various stakeholders to voice their positive opinions of support or negative opinions against the legislation. Moving forward, CCPS will be able to engage in robust conversations with the local government and community about the benefits of the Blueprint legislation and continue to develop a plan that meets the needs of the Cecil County communities. Unfortunately, the discourse over the budget overshadowed the Blueprint Implementation Plan and the importance of how this plan will provide for students and families over the next ten years.

In 2024-25, CCPS and the Strategic Facilitator will prioritize a plan to increase the stakeholder engagement as part of the Strategic Facilitator grant. In addition, CCPS will leverage the AIBs Strategic Partner Grant to review and develop a Resource Allocation plan.

CCPS has not received much feedback from anyone other than employees. During the 2022-2023 initial Blueprint plan phase, CCPS created an email [blueprint@ccps.org](mailto:blueprint@ccps.org) to capture feedback and questions from the community. Since CCPS has not received any feedback through this email, we will further investigate other possible solutions to increase community feedback about the Blueprint plan. Including ways to gather community interest in serving on committees to learn more about the Blueprint Plan other than just trying to read a document. One group that has led the way with this kind of work is the business partner group with the Apprenticeship Program that has tremendously grown the apprenticeship opportunities for CCPS students.

The table reflects some of the changes from the first two phases of the Blueprint implementation.

Phase 1	Phase 2 and beyond
Feedback collected on draft plan was limited to a short window of time to meet the submission date	Expand survey questions to reflect the implementation criteria for success that are open throughout the year
Any feedback received was shared with the pillar leads for consideration	Any feedback received will be shared with the pillar leads and reflected in continued plans as modified or rejected with appropriate rationale
CCPS provided information about the Blueprint legislation to staff and community at various times and formats. Creation of the original plan was led by system leaders with targeted stakeholders to address the question format of the implementation plan.	Systemwide and school improvement plans will address key performance indicators aligned to the Blueprint pillars that include a wide-range of stakeholders and data that will reflect progress throughout the school year. The progress will be available to community members and allow for engagement at all levels of the school system.
School/Program Improvement focused on some of the Blueprint indicators	New school/program improvement plans will center on indicators of all Pillars of the Blueprint as appropriate for the grade level. Key Performance Indicators were created and aligned to Blueprint indicators.

Cecil County Public Schools will continue to engage multiple stakeholder groups from a variety of demographics in the development and implementation of the Blueprint. Throughout the year, each of our five feeder patterns will host community meetings to help all stakeholders understand the expectations and implementation of the Blueprint. The feeder pattern design centers around schools feeding into one of our five high schools. Most teams include 6-8 schools. These feeder meetings will include parents, community members, civic organizations, and elected officials. Content for these meetings will be created in collaboration with each community and the leadership in the Division of Education services. The expectation has been established that these meetings should occur at least twice per year to ensure that questions have been addressed and feedback sought. This feedback will be reported to each pillar lead and incorporated into plan development and revision.

Stakeholder feedback was incorporated into the development of the plan as a variety of stakeholders, including administrators and teachers, were included on the pillar teams to support understanding of the law and how those expectations translated into our plan. They represented a variety of content areas, years of experience, and schools to ensure diversity in their perspectives. Throughout the 24-25 school year, we will continue to engage these and other stakeholders to build their understanding of the Blueprint legislation and implementation in our community.

CCPS values feedback about our Blueprint plan. Our plans have been published on our website, and a feedback button has been provided to allow visitors to ask questions or provide their perspectives. Likewise, we have created Blueprint one-pagers that summarize the activities of each pillar. They have been posted on our website and leveraged as we have conducted meetings with the community, parent groups, and civic organizations. These one pagers easily translate the expectations of the Blueprint and how CCPS plans to implement them.

## **Vision building and goal setting**

The learning and informing phase has now moved into strategic planning changes in the 2023-2024 school year. In December of 2023, the strategic facilitator and Blueprint Coordinators led two in-person Blueprint leadership meetings for CCPS district leaders. During the summit, the team developed a system-wide vision for Blueprint implementation; identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to achieving that vision; and planned next steps for program implementation. We developed a program implementation template that will be used across pillars to set programmatic goals, short term and long term outcomes, report on progress, and identify potential threats while planning mitigation strategies.

During that time, we also looked at the existing strategic plan to evaluate alignment to Blueprint. The existing 5-year [strategic plan](#) was developed in 2018, the first year of Superintendent Lawson's tenure. As noted in the Blueprint Response, [Phase I of the 2024 Blueprint plan](#), CCPS has worked with a strategic facilitator to start the process of addressing Blueprint outcomes through revisions to the existing strategic plan. In the 2024-2025 school year, CCPS will revisit the existing strategic plan and revise the plan to include the Blueprint outcomes as driving themes, design strategies for achieving Blueprint-related outcomes, and develop specific measures of success to monitor progress.

## **Communicating to educate and inform about the Blueprint Implementation**

CCPS has a [strategic communication plan](#) that utilizes a variety of communication tools and strategies to reach the Cecil County School's community. The different tools have been used to push out information about the Blueprint and collect questions and feedback from the community. CCPS has created school advocacy teams at each school to help disseminate information about the importance of the Blueprint while also advocating for all school programs and services. Moving forward, CCPS plans to review the strategic communication plan to ensure it aligns with the Blueprint, focusing on opening a two-way communication strategy that will allow more people to be involved in the Blueprint implementation.

Effective implementation of the Blueprint requires a collaboration of state and local governments with the local school system. The school funding calculations provide an equitable source of state revenue for school systems; however, in order to meet full implementation of the Blueprint, an increase in local government revenue will be critical to local school systems. CCPS continues to see little to no increase above the required local share as calculated by the school funding formulas. This has limited the local school system's ability to meet Blueprint legislation requirements and timelines while simultaneously funding daily operations in order to meet the needs of all students in all schools.

CCPS presents the needs and challenges to the Cecil County government and attempts to collaborate on a fiscally responsible budget. This collaborative effort has fallen short of convincing the local government to fund all parts of the school system and not just Blueprint requirements. Student and parent groups have created their own advocacy groups to lobby the local government for full funding of the school budget. These groups support the Blueprint plan, but they are also aware that a school system is unable to provide all programs and services with restricted Blueprint funding categories. These advocacy groups do not speak for the school system, but they do use their voice in an attempt to mitigate inequities that impact their community compared to other counties across the state. This is a testament to the impact of shifting away from marginalization of stakeholders and toward community ownership.

### **Engaging underrepresented groups**

Each year the Blueprint Implementation Committee leads review and assess the diverse representation of the members of the committees. To ensure all voices are represented, additional committee members will be added as others may step away for other commitments. CCPS collaborates with the local employee organizations, parent groups, student organizations, and community to ensure the makeup of the sub committees is reflective of the community that CCPS serves. Considerations for moving forward would include activities with underrepresented groups to increase their awareness and opportunities to be involved with the Blueprint Implementation. For instance, the Multilingual events held throughout the year could include Blueprint information in the families' home language, along with an opportunity to provide feedback.

### **Engaging educators across subject areas**

Even though the Blueprint does not specifically focus on all subject areas, CCPS strategically includes stakeholders from all subject areas to be part of the different pillar teams to provide input and feedback on current goals and activities. This well rounded and diverse group of team members allows CCPS to include a wide perspective of the impact of the Blueprint policies and how these policies affect all stakeholders in the school system.

### **Reporting and sharing progress**

All Blueprint related reports and plans are communicated to the community through the [CCPS website](#). Currently, the website focuses on providing information about the Blueprint and the different phases of the Blueprint plans. Moving forward, CCPS will focus on including strategies in the Strategic Communication Plan to allow for more up-to-date information such as milestone reporting. This can be accomplished through the one-page summary format to expand on the progress of Blueprint goals on a yearly basis and more frequently if needed.

### **Leveraging Strategic Facilitators and Blueprint Coordinators**

CCPS partnered with a Strategic Facilitator during the first phase of the AIB Strategic Facilitator Grant. CCPS and the strategic facilitator drafted a project [plan](#) with five key tasks to support Blueprint implementation. Key tasks in the project plan included: working with the CCPS leadership team to begin district-wide strategic planning, supporting stakeholder engagement throughout the community, reviewing federal grant resource alignment to support Blueprint Implementation, developing a Comprehensive Literacy Plan, and drafting phase II of the CCPS Blueprint Plan. In addition to the initial scope of work, the CCPS mathematics team also requested support from the strategic facilitator, so she also worked with that team to begin constructing their Comprehensive Mathematics Plan. This consistent partnership has increased the cohesion and alignment of Blueprint-related projects across the district. CCPS has requested to continue the partnership for the [2024-2025](#) school year where the strategic facilitator will continue to support the literacy and math teams as well as providing leadership and support to assist CCPS in updating the district-wide Strategic Plan. In addition, CCPS has applied to work with a strategic partner in phase II of the AIB Strategic Partner Grant focusing on budgeting and reallocation of resources.

### 23. Blueprint Funding and Resources

Discuss the process the LEA uses to assess budgetary needs and make critical decisions about the allocation of new resources and the reallocation of existing resources to implement its Blueprint Implementation Plan. Include estimated funding allocations by pillar and program. Provide specific examples and the rationale for the allocation and reallocation of resources.

Considerations:

- Budgeting annually and over multiple years
- Funds following students to their schools (Education Article § 5-234)
- Targeted funds (e.g., Transitional Supplemental Instruction Aid, Concentration of Poverty grants, State Aid Funding for CCR, etc.)

**Required Data Analysis:** Through an analysis of data, discuss progress towards meeting the Blueprint outcome to ensure resources are aligned to meeting student needs at the school level.

CCPS begins the budget process in October of each year. All school and department administrators are responsible for preparing a budget request in our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. During the months of November and December, members of the CCPS Leadership Team and the Blueprint Coordinator meet with each department administrator to discuss the proposed budget. We review the previous year's approved budget vs. the actual expenditures, as well as the Blueprint requirements for each program area, to ensure that the proposed department budget for the upcoming fiscal year is appropriate. This year, we were able to use the state funding formula workbook created by the Chief Financial Officers to predict Blueprint funding a little earlier in the process. This was extremely helpful since the preliminary state numbers aren't released until January. While the numbers were not exact, they were close and minimized big changes later in the process. This is also the first year that department administrators were required to budget at the location level.

Within our ERP system, we are able to budget and track expenses by Blueprint category, down to specific school locations. Over the last year, we have been creating new account numbers to aid in this process by identifying a project number for each portion of the Blueprint Funding. The state and local revenue and the corresponding expenses are budgeted by these project numbers, down to the location level. In Fiscal Year (FY) 23 and 24, we have been identifying expenses by location in preparation for the FY25 budget.

We have created a workbook in which we enter the enrollment for each Blueprint program at each location. This allows us to do the 100% and 75% calculations for each location. We then downloaded the data from our ERP system to compare our actual allocations to the required allocations. This helps us to determine where resources need to be reallocated.

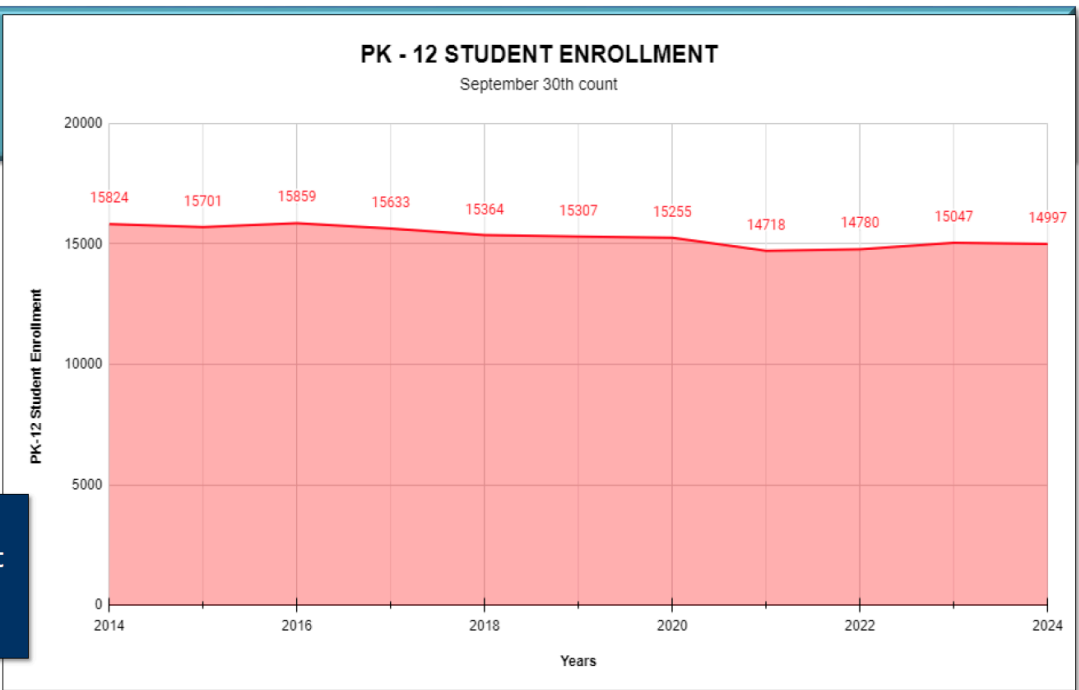
Using this data helps us to make informed decisions regarding staffing changes so that we are shifting staffing to or away from the appropriate locations. With anticipated budget cuts for FY25, this process allows us to identify possible reductions and reallocation of funds. When prioritizing programs and resources, we can focus on the locations to which resources need to be allocated.

			Foundation	Pre-K	Comp Ed	EL	SPED	TSI	CCR	Total
			60300	61100	60400	60800	60900	60500	61000	
<b>LOCATION MSDE Loc School</b>										
01	0704	Bainbridge Elementary	\$ 1,819,580	\$ 214,550	\$ 1,014,796	\$ 26,895	\$ 378,494	\$ 28,188	\$ -	\$ 3,482,501
02	0510	Bay View Elementary	3,207,173	448,604	1,723,452	67,238	698,255	64,206	-	6,208,927
03	0904	Calvert Elementary	2,605,010	234,054	952,434	26,895	456,803	46,980	-	4,322,175
04	0401	Cecil Manor Elementary	2,860,274	419,347	1,559,044	174,818	528,586	64,206	-	5,606,274
05	0104	Cecilton Elementary	1,826,125	175,541	941,096	181,541	287,133	43,848	-	3,455,283
06	0513	Charlestown Elementary	1,976,666	204,797	793,695	26,895	450,277	29,754	-	3,482,084
07	0205	Chesapeake City Elementary	2,434,833	234,054	958,103	47,066	482,906	62,640	-	4,219,602
08	0801	Conowingo Elementary	2,526,467	331,577	1,026,134	6,724	398,071	62,640	-	4,351,612
09	0515	Elk Neck Elementary	2,853,729	360,833	1,133,850	13,448	443,751	67,338	-	4,872,949
10	0310	Gilpin Manor Elementary	2,945,363	438,851	1,774,475	188,265	522,060	67,338	-	5,936,352
11	0311	Holly Hall Elementary	2,919,182	360,833	1,853,845	168,094	541,637	78,300	-	5,921,891
12	0317	Kenmore Elementary	1,747,582	214,550	657,633	40,343	221,876	28,188	-	2,910,170
13	0315	Leeds Elementary	2,101,025	185,293	969,442	20,171	300,185	34,452	-	3,610,568
14	0506	North East Elementary	3,874,788	526,622	2,114,630	60,514	698,255	103,356	-	7,378,165
15	0703	Perryville Elementary	2,775,186	429,099	1,286,920	6,724	482,906	45,414	-	5,026,248
16	0607	Rising Sun Elementary	3,992,603	526,622	1,627,075	87,409	606,895	86,130	-	6,926,732
17	0316	Thomson Estates Elementary	3,108,994	331,577	1,808,491	309,293	619,946	70,470	-	6,248,770
21	0206	Bohemia Manor Middle	2,893,001	-	1,207,550	40,343	404,597	-	-	4,545,490
22	0313	Cherry Hill Middle	2,605,010	-	1,230,227	73,961	541,637	-	-	4,450,835
24	0303	Elkton Middle	3,416,621	-	2,205,338	201,713	672,152	-	-	6,495,824
25	0504	North East Middle	4,935,119	-	2,256,362	67,238	900,554	-	-	8,159,271
26	0701	Perryville Middle	3,508,254	-	1,525,028	20,171	665,627	-	-	5,719,080
27	0606	Rising Sun Middle School	3,992,603	-	1,286,920	53,790	613,421	-	-	5,946,733
31	0204	Bohemia Manor High	3,563,889	-	1,451,328	107,580	456,803	-	93,885	5,673,484
32	0302	Elkton High	6,646,701	-	3,945,798	383,254	1,128,955	-	82,790	12,187,497
33	0514	North East High	6,715,427	-	3,004,703	80,685	1,233,367	-	121,197	11,155,378
34	0705	Perryville High	5,066,024	-	2,341,400	60,514	750,461	-	87,057	8,305,456
35	0905	Rising Sun High	6,224,533	-	2,069,276	134,475	822,245	-	161,312	9,411,840

As a school system, approximately 80% of our total costs are salaries and fixed charges. In the spring of 2024, we have assigned every unrestricted FTE position to a specific location and Blueprint funding source as they currently stand. Using this current data, we can identify how staffing will need to be reallocated to meet Blueprint requirements.

### Foundation

We allocate to every location based on total school enrollment. At least 75% of our foundation funds are allocated to schools for instruction, school level administration, maintenance and operations of the building, as well as filling in the gaps for other funding area shortages.



## CCR

Our Blueprint Coordinator and Executive Director for Secondary Schools collaborate with our Coordinator of Guidance Services and school counselors to identify appropriate courses for CCR eligible students to take aligned with appropriate pathways. They also work together with our local college to identify the college courses that will be made available to them. This data is used to budget for CCR expenditures.

## Compensatory Education

Prior to Blueprint legislation, there was no requirement to allocate funds based on wealth indicators. This will lead to a reallocation of resources as we assign funds to every location based on eligible FaRMS count.

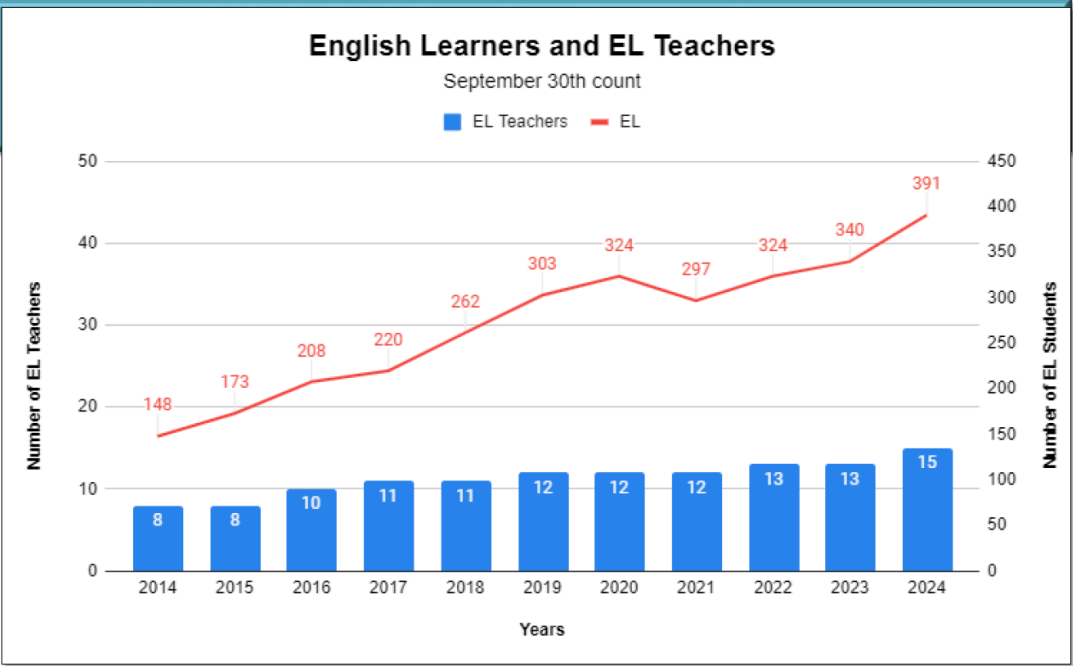
## Concentration of Poverty

These funds are allocated 100% to each identified school. We first budget the cost of the Community School Advisor and the nurse since these are required positions. Then we determine the funds available for wraparound services for each location. Each COP school principal works with his/her School Improvement Team and the Director of School and Student Safety to identify and budget the wraparound services needed.

## Multilingual Learners

CCPS has historically allocated staffing and resources by location based on the level of needs and services required for the identified students in each building. Our MLL population has more than doubled in the last ten years. While our ML staffing has doubled as well, we still need to increase staffing and support in order to meet the minimum 75% allocation to each school. However, this will come at the expense of classroom teachers as our combined state and local funding do not support the staffing we currently have while adding MLL staff.

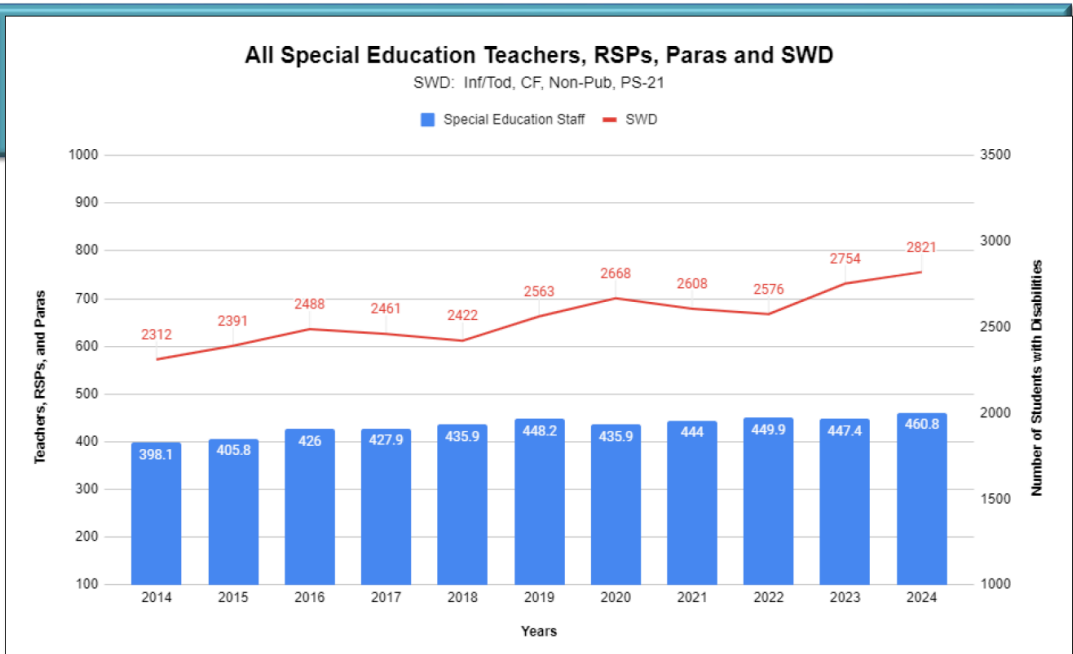




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### Special Education

CCPS has historically allocated special education staffing based on the IEP service hours for each location. This ensures that we allocate sufficient resources to meet students' needs. As we have transitioned to the Blueprint funding model, we are allocating Special Education funding based on the number of students with IEPs at each location. Our special education expenditures far exceed our special education funding because not all students with disabilities require the same level of services. Additional funding (Foundation) for special education is then allocated by location based on the level of need (IEP service hours) at each location.



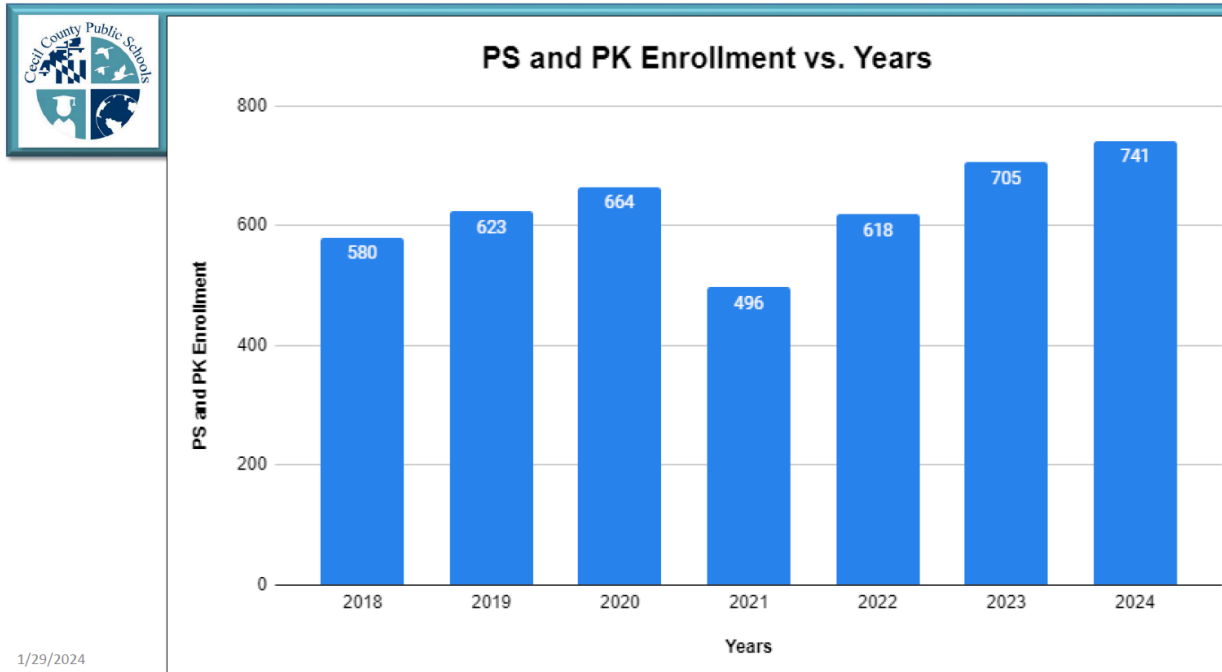
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### Transitional Supplemental Instruction

We've been using these funds to provide tutoring during the school day aligned to literacy learning objectives. We've also funded high dosage tutoring from a contracted service.. Moving into FY25, we're looking to allocate staff members to provide literacy intervention and support.

### Pre-Kindergarten

Prior to implementation of the Blueprint, CCPS had full day PK. The expansion grant has allowed us to open new classrooms; however, absent additional funding from our local funding authorities, we have been unable to expand at the desired rate.



### Career Ladder

When the legislation for the \$60,000 minimum for a first year teacher was passed, we took our teacher scale and determined the increase needed to meet this requirement. Our first year teacher salary in FY22 = \$49,984. We determined that a 3.75% increase for each of the next five years (FY23-27) would ensure a starting salary of \$60,085 by July 1, 2026. We have been intentional about ensuring that this increase is included in our budget each year so we can reach the required minimum of \$60,000 by July 1, 2026.

## Multi-Year Projection by Program

Program Funding	FY24 Approved Budget	FY25 Proposed Budget	FY26 Budget Projection	FY27 Budget Projection
Blueprint Funding (State and Local Funds)				
Foundation	\$ 124,145,182	\$ 125,278,406	\$ 138,390,000	\$ 145,980,000
Guaranteed Tax Base Program	919,668	-	-	-
Blueprint Transition Grant Program	49,060	41,701	-	-
College & Career Readiness	737,100	376,678	492,202	573,000
Transportation	6,901,063	6,910,094	7,048,296	7,189,262
Compensatory Education	56,512,804	59,519,566	61,951,800	62,288,000
Concentration of Poverty	1,091,292	2,775,847	2,762,763	3,052,213
Multilingual Learners	2,946,922	3,505,315	3,715,851	3,933,640
Special Education	20,394,315	22,883,630	24,013,286	27,064,800
Transitional Supplemental Instruction	1,757,120	1,311,264	890,000	-
Pre-Kindergarten	5,101,360	6,837,636	7,236,500	8,032,970
Career Ladder (NBC)	405,000	300,000	428,000	535,000
MOE / Local Share Appropriation exceeding Blueprint	2,365,654	4,000,000	-	-
Other Revenue (Interest, Nonpublic, Miscellaneous, etc.)	1,425,000	1,634,131	1,625,000	1,625,000
Use of Fund Balance	2,068,821	4,000,000	-	-
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$ 226,820,361</b>	<b>\$ 239,374,268</b>	<b>\$ 248,553,698</b>	<b>\$ 260,273,885</b>

Blueprint Pillar	FY25 Proposed Budget	FY26 Budget Projection	FY27 Budget Projection
Pillar I - Early Childhood Education	\$ 10,820,524	\$ 11,145,140	\$ 11,479,494
Pillar II - High Quality & Diverse Teachers & Leaders	57,509,695	59,666,309	61,157,967
Pillar III - College & Career Readiness	2,574,950	1,738,580	1,790,737
Pillar IV - More Resources for Students	102,305,989	106,473,980	110,368,933
Pillar V - Governance Governance & Accountability	845,173	870,528	896,644
Across all Pillars	65,317,937	68,659,161	74,580,110
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$ 239,374,268</b>	<b>\$ 248,553,698</b>	<b>\$ 260,273,885</b>

CCPS still has questions regarding the allocation method for our School of Technology that is not a comprehensive high school. If we prorate enrollment for each high school based on the number of students who attend the School of Technology, we are further reducing funding at our five comprehensive high schools. The reductions to some of those schools is not manageable or sustainable.

We also have questions about the allocation of non-public tuition for students with IEPs who require more specialized placements. This will grossly over inflate our administrative expenses for special education by school, based on the home school of the student in need. In addition, the Blueprint formula does not take into account that not all students with IEPs require the same level of services or amount of resources. Historically, we allocated resources based on IEP service hours or level of need. Allocating by number of students does not take into account the differences in students' needs and the services necessary to meet them.

We are also requesting clarity on allocating county-wide resources such as maintenance and operations. Budgeting these Foundation funds based on enrollment in each building does not address the square footage or age of the building.

We look for further clarification from MSDE and the AIB regarding these processes.

Going forward, Cecil County Public Schools has significant work to do to reallocate funding. In order to meet the Blueprint legislative requirements by location, CCPS will need to increase class sizes and discontinue or charge families for popular programs (i.e. athletics, fine arts, after school clubs, etc.). Current local funding directly and severely impacts our ability to maintain the current level of services while striving to meet Blueprint requirements.