



Serving Learners, Families, and the Community

Cecil County Special Education Staffing Plan
School Fiscal Year 2025

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Cecil County Public Schools

Process for Developing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Special Education Staffing Plan

Background

This document describes the process Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) used to meet Federal and State requirements for the annual development, review and evaluation of a staffing plan for special education. Annually, CCPS will utilize this process to determine the needs for special education staffing to monitor its implementation and make adjustments as needed and to evaluate its effectiveness. The Maryland State Department of Education provides written guidance and a rubric for the development of this plan

Overview

Cecil County Public School's provide inclusive educational opportunities for all students regardless of the disability. Students with disabilities are educated in the neighborhood school with non-disabled peers as appropriate based on their IEP. In accordance with Federal and State requirements, students identified as having a disability are provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The CCPS census LRE Data, as of October 2023, indicates that 88% of students received special education services in the general education setting 80% or more of their school day. In order to support students with more significant behavioral/emotional needs, RISE classrooms (formerly Behavior Support Classrooms (BSC)) were created, at the elementary school in addition to a partnership with SESI Schools to develop In District Classrooms at two elementary schools, one at the middle school and one at the High School level. The RISE Classrooms are intended to be a forty-five-day placement with return to the GE setting. Two RISE Communication Classrooms were also created to support students at with significant communication/behavioral needs one RISE Communication Classroom form elementary students and one at the middle school level. Both the RISE and In District Classrooms provide intensive support with opportunity for inclusion in the general education setting. Staffing plans for the county and schools are formulated based on the data regarding the services and supports needed to implement the IEP for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The county has embraced the Membership, Partnership and Learning Committee (MPL) to facilitate the inclusion of students with significant profound disabilities in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible. Every school in the county is supporting one or more students in the process.

A key element in the provision of a FAPE for students with disabilities is the availability of appropriately trained personnel to implement each student's IEP and access to appropriate and timely professional learning to train special education and general education staff working with students with disabilities. The Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) staffing plan is a vehicle to ensure the appropriate personnel are available to deliver the services required to fully implement IEPs. Professional learning for school personnel and others in the district addresses the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), as well as ongoing activities to promote development of evidence based instructionally appropriate practices.

Professional Learning is provided for two days for all new staff to CCPS. In addition to the three days, the Special Education Department provides professional learning to all new related services personnel, psychologists and special education teachers for an additional day addressing IEP development, Schoology, Maryland On Line IEP, Transition, Medical assistance and CCPS inclusive philosophy. The Superintendent of Schools welcomes the Special Education staff and provides information about CCPS.

Professional Learning provided during the 2023-2024 school year included: IEP development, embedded specially designed instruction (SDI), Reading Mastery, Corrective Reading, Wilson Reading, Bookworms Intensive, Foundations, Targeted Math Instruction, Crisis Prevention and Intervention, RBI Routines Based Interview Training, Family Coaching, Pyramid Model, Trauma and Evidenced Based Practices, and Transition.

All special education teachers participate in County Based professional development provided by Core Content area coaches and Instructional Coordinators. The PD occurs in the beginning of the school year and one or more days throughout the year to ensure that special educators have a firm understanding of the core curriculum and how to embed SDI.

In addition to professional learning, the Special Education Department has a comprehensive Tool Kit for teachers in Schoology and a shared Google Drive. The Tool Kit houses multiple resources for general education and special education teachers, i.e. Educating Students with Disabilities: A Guiding Document for General and Special Education Teachers, Sample Planning Tools, Creating Effective Compliant IEPs and Adapting Toys and Books.

Budget Process and Timeline

The school system follows the budget requirements for local school systems within the State of Maryland as specified by state law. Our local Charter Government requires the Board of Education to submit a budget request to the County Executive. The County Executive may modify the Board's request included in the total county budget submitted to the County Council.

The following shows the activities that comprise the overall annual budget process with our County's Charter Government:

1. The annual budget process begins with the annual update of the Board of Education's Long Range *Strategic Plan*.
2. Input from various stakeholder groups is gathered by school staff and department heads early in the process to assist the Board in determining priorities. These stakeholder groups include School Improvement Teams comprised of school faculty and parents, the local Business and Education Partnership Advisory Council (BEPAC), and our local SECAC, to name a few. In addition, we utilize a website survey for our students, parents, and staff to complete providing priorities for the upcoming budget. Public budget work sessions are held during the months of December and January where the Superintendent and Leadership Team members present their respective areas of the budget to the Board and the public. At a final formal public hearing in late January, the Superintendent's budget request is presented.
3. The Board of Education must submit a budget request to the County Executive prior to February 15.
4. The County Executive must submit a complete County budget to the County Council by March 1.
5. Following public hearings, the County Council must approve the budgets by June 30.
6. Based on the annual appropriation amount approved by the County Council, results of labor contract negotiations, and State Legislative actions, the Board of Education must make the appropriate adjustments and adopt a final budget in June.

A budget development calendar is established by the Superintendent in September of the preceding fiscal year. Budget requests received from each school community and department are carefully reviewed by members of the Superintendent's Leadership Team during the process of developing the Superintendent's budget request. Several public meetings are held between the Board of Education and staff in December and January when estimated revenue and expenditures in all budget categories are reviewed and discussed. All requests must align to the goals and objectives in the school system's Strategic Plan. At the conclusion of the hearings, the Board advises the Superintendent and staff of additions and/or revisions to the budget request. The Board of Education takes action to adopt the request at their regular monthly meeting in February.

The Board’s request is then submitted to the County Executive. The County Executive must submit a complete county budget to the County Council by March 1. By law, the county government announces on May 1 a tentative appropriation for the Board of Education for the following fiscal year. A final appropriation is then announced by the county government on June 1.

Fiscal 2025 Budget Development Calendar

Budget documents emailed · Schools · Instructional Coordinators · Departments	October 18, 2023
Budget entered in Munis and completed budget documents due · Principals	November 3, 2023
Budget entered in Munis and completed budget documents due · Instructional Coordinators · Departments	November 17, 2023
Scheduled budget meetings · Instructional Coordinators · Departments	November/December 2023
Superintendent’s parameters/ discussion with BOE	December 13, 2023
Board of Education Budget Work Session	January 24, 2024
Board of Education Public Budget Hearing	February 28, 2024
Submit BOE Approved Budget Requests to the County Executive	February 29, 2024
Action by County County Executive submits Proposed Budget to Council Board of Education presentation to Council Public Hearing on Annual Budget, County Administration Building @ 7:00 PM Council Approval of Budget, County Administration Building @ 7:00 PM	April 1, 2024 May 21, 2024 May 23, 2024 June 4, 2024
Board of Education Approves Budgets	June 12, 2024

Board of Education Members

Diana B. Hawley, President

Diane L. Heath, Vice President

Joseph C. Ferdinando, Member

Tierney F. Davis, Member

Renee S. Dixon, Member

Giselle Griffin, Student Member (PVHS)

Jeffrey A. Lawson, Ed.D. Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Officer of the Board

Superintendent's Leadership Team Members

Jeffrey A. Lawson, Ed.D., Superintendent

Jennifer F. Hammer, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent for Education Services

Robert J. Buckley, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent for Administrative Services

Denise M. Sopa, Chief Financial Officer

Shawn M. Johnson, Ed.D., Executive Director for Elementary Education

David B. Foye, Executive Director for Secondary Education

Theodore L. Boyer, Ed.D., Executive Director for Administrative Services

Maintenance of Effort

Cecil County Public Schools follows Maintenance of Effort guidance provided by MSDE and as outlined under COMAR 13A.02.05. In FY24, state and local unrestricted actual expenditures for special education were \$41,192,067. In FY25, CCPS has budgeted \$ 46,404,670 for special education unrestricted expenditures funded through state and local funds. Our FY25 budget exceeds the FY24 actual expenditures by \$ 5,212,603.

		Original Projection - 4/14/15										Current Data - 9/10/15							
School	Grade	Orig Proj	Speech	Current	Speech	BC	# TEACHER	Total PP	1:1 PP	PER TEACHER	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Total PP	1:1 PP	Change	PER TEACHER	
		IEPs	Only	Count	Only						+/- BC	Total BC	+/- Teacher	Total Teacher			+/- para		
Bainbridge						1.00	4.00	3.00	1.00	13.25	-0.50	0.50	1.50	5.50	2.00	0.00	-1.00	8.55	
	92	5	3	7	4														
1 transfer	91	6	6	5	4														
	1	9	4	8	6														
	2	12	1	8	4														
	3	14	5	14	0														
	4	12	2	15	4														
	5	20	4	14	2														
	TOTAL	78	25	71	24														
Bay View						1.00	8.00	9.00	5.00	11.14	0.00	1.00	1.00	9.00	7.00	4.00	-2.00	8.88	
	92	32	10	16	6	** 1 Preschool: 1 Teacher / 6 students removed from teacher/student ratio													
2 transfers	91	16	9	12	9														
	1	12	4	16	8														
	2	10	2	17	5														
	3	16	1	14	2														
	4	16	2	19	1														
	5	23	1	17	3														
	TOTAL	125	29	111	34														
Calvert						1.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	10.20	-0.50	0.50	0.50	5.50	4.00	3.00	0.00	9.45	
	92	11	6	4	2														
	91	11	5	10	4														
	1	12	9	9	4														
	2	11	3	16	8														
	3	15	3	13	3														
	4	10	1	15	3														
	5	8	0	10	1														
	TOTAL	78	27	77	25														

Suggested Special Education Caseload Staffing

Throughout the summer special education teachers and related service provider allocations were analyzed. Teacher student ratios are used to guide allocations however complexity of student needs is at the forefront of the decision. Recommended ratios include, Elementary 1-10, Middle 1-12 and High School 1-15. In addition, complexity of need and services were considered. The goal is that students with disabilities should receive supports and services through the most qualified staff members. In addition, CCPS employs a Teacher for the Visually Impaired, a Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and 2 Interpreters to provide support to students in multiple schools. Students with significant physical and cognitive delays continue to require the support of paraprofessionals.

CCPS believes that students with disabilities should be educated with non-disabled peers in their neighborhood schools to the greatest extent possible. In a county with twenty-eight schools and almost 2600 students with disabilities, scheduling related service providers is a herculean task. Recommended ratios based on National Organizations recommendations are used as a guide when staffing schools. Each year we are forced to contract through agencies for speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, school psychologists, nurses, and ASL Interpreters.

Special Education Staffing FY 25

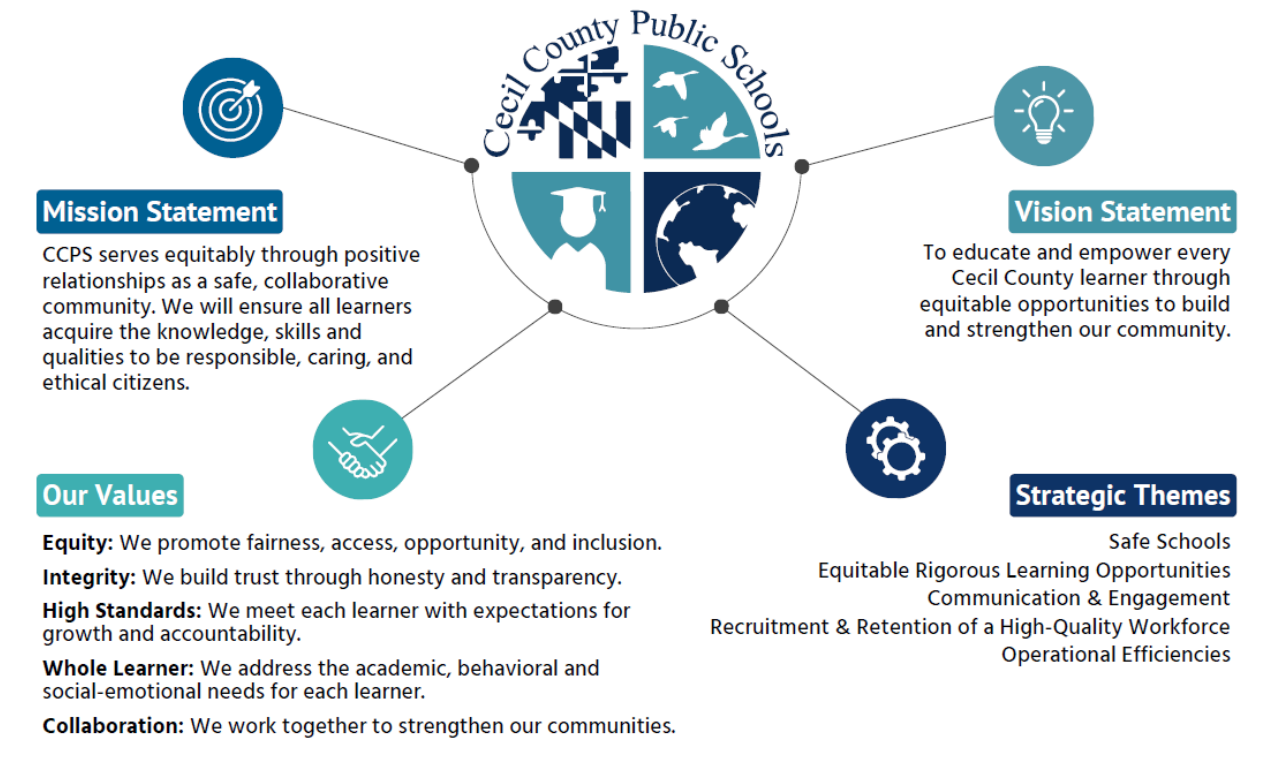
Job Title	Count (FTE)
Director of Special Education	1
Instructional Coordinator	5
Nonpublic Liaison	1
Instructional Coach	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Administrative Secretary	1
Supervising School Psychologist	2
School Psychologist	13.5
Teacher	252
Building Coordinator	25.4
Hearing/Vision	2
Infants & Toddlers Program	6
Grades PS-PK	24
Grades K-12	194.6
Paraprofessional	169
Interpreter Tutor	4
Occupational Therapist	10
Occupational Therapist Assistant	4
Physical Therapist	5
Physical Therapist Assistant	1
Speech Pathologist	20
Total	490.5

The Special Education Department and the Student Services Department work collaboratively to support ALL students. The multi-tier system of support requires schools to have data analysis teams, problem-solving teams and student services teams to address student behavior at all three tiers and ensure that students have access to tiered behavior supports.

During the 2019 summer, CCPS developed a strategic plan that supports high expectations for all to support student achievement. This plan was given a new look in the summer of 2024. All teachers both regular and special education are responsible for educating all students within their classrooms. Building Principals have the responsibility of ensuring that all students have access to high quality Tier 1 instruction. Director, Instructional Coordinators are members of multiple decision making committees to include Superintendent’s Cabinet, Teacher Evaluation, Intervention, Code of Conduct, Curriculum Review, Grading and Reporting, Instructional Coordinators, Bridge to Excellence, Education Leadership, Instructional Leadership Teams, Budget and Early Childhood Committees. As members, special education’s voice is in the forefront.

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Accountability

Caseload Monitoring and Adjustment Process

Several methods are used to monitor the staff schedules and the provision of services to ensure supports and services to students with disabilities. At the beginning of the year teachers provide their schedule to Program Facilitator and Instructional Coordinator to include the number of students served in each classroom and type of service provided (inside general education/outside general education).

The caseload of special education staff is monitored on an ongoing basis in each building by the school team, in cooperation with the building principal, building coordinator, Program Facilitator and Instructional Coordinator. This ongoing review includes data collection and analysis through review of IEPs, case management and data collection. Monthly throughout the year, staffing is analyzed at the district level by the Special Education Administrative team. If a need is identified staff reallocation may occur or a request for above budget positions is made.

Instructional Coordinator conduct observations, walk-thrus and evaluation of teachers monthly. The process allows for direct observation of students and discussions with teachers regarding caseloads and or technical assistance to support instruction. Schedules are posted monthly to inform staff when a member of the special education department will be in the school.

Process for Resolving Staffing Concerns

The staffing plan for each school must be monitored throughout the year to ensure sufficient staff to fully implement each student's IEP. If during the school year, there is concern from staff or a parent regarding the level of staffing at a particular school, the following sequential may occur.

1. The parent and/or staff will have an opportunity to meet with the principal to present the concern to determine if it can be resolved at the building level.
2. Building Coordinator and Instructional Coordinator will review and gather relevant data and concerns generated by the teacher's caseload and/or the parent. Special and general education teacher's schedules will be reviewed in an effort to identify and remove any barriers to the delivery of services.
3. Program Facilitator will provide recommendations to the principal on how to resolve the issue. The recommendation may include a description of needed changes or additions to personnel and any realignment of duties.
4. Request for additional staff is reviewed and submitted to the Director for Special Education for consideration

Evaluating of the Local Staffing Plan for Effectiveness

Annually, CCPS will collect data and carry out activities to evaluate the effectiveness of the current staffing plan and to also evaluate the likelihood of the effectiveness of the proposed plan for the following year. CCPS will determine the strengths and areas of need in the current special education staffing plan. The results will be shared with stakeholders through the school improvement processes and the Special Education Citizens Advisory committee. Feedback will be used to develop the updated staffing plan. The effectiveness of the plan will be assessed each spring using a variety of data elements, including SSIS information, school improvement team data analysis, IEP data, surveys, and student achievement data. The Director for Special Education Services will lead the process.

Guiding Factors for the Development and Review of Special Education Staffing

In February of each year school teams meet to review current staffing and the staffing needs for the upcoming school year. Input is gathered from a multitude of staff to include general education, special education, and related services staff. Additionally, input from each school's SIT team and the Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee should be considered by both the school and district level teams. Building Principals submit the requests to the Executive Director. Recommendations for needed changes in staffing, training, materials, and or equipment are sent to the Director for Special Education.

The following questions provide some guidelines for the development of the staffing plan and delivery services in each school.

Structure and Process

- ☞ How will special education programs and services relate to other programs and services in the district, e.g. at-risk programs, Title 1, ML, after school and summer programming etc.?
- ☞ How are general education's programs structured and operated?
- ☞ What are the scheduling roadblocks to the provision of co-teaching with general and special educators in regards to the number of staff needed?
- ☞ What role does instructional staff have in the process of identifying students who might require special education?
- ☞ What are the district's expectations for accommodations and modifications within general education and who participates in the development of the modifications?
- ☞ What related service supports are needed for students to benefit from their special education services in the LRE?

Changes and Vacancies By Position

Cecil County Public Schools has made staffing adjustments due to the vacancies during this past year. Vacancies in the area of related services providers and school psychologists have been contracted. As related service staff and school psychologists are employed by CCPS contracted services are decreased. The national shortage of school psychologists and related service providers is of great concern. Recruitment and retention continue to be of concern.

Evaluation of FY 2024 Plan *(Review the current staffing plan)*

1. Ongoing record reviews and monitoring of the staffing plan indicated that schools were appropriately staffed with teachers. However, teacher shortage because of a reduction in qualified candidates as well as a shortage of substitutes greatly taxed service provision to students. The addition of paraprofessionals to support students with significant disabilities were added. Related Service personnel were adjusted throughout the year to support student needs.
2. Currently, the students who are attending the Public/Private Partnership at the High Road Program are beginning to matriculate to their home schools when appropriate. Staff training and transitioning is needed as students' matriculate from one school to another with these intense needs. Students who are successful in the program are receiving instruction within general education as appropriate on an individual basis. Monitoring of the success and needs will continue in both programs.
3. An analysis of achievement results for students with disabilities on quarterly assessments indicate that they are performing significantly below standards. A focus has been placed on embedded SDI using core curricular materials in order to address the achievement gap.
4. Ensuring access to the general curriculum and evidenced based practices that support meaningful access in the general education classroom is the core of staffing decision-making.
5. Special Education along with the offices of Secondary and Elementary Instruction review state assessment and county benchmark data for all schools. Individual student data is also reviewed. Special Education is working in conjunction with the offices of Elementary and Secondary Instruction to review and expand intervention programs for all students working below grade level. Students receiving interventions will continue to have a seamless transition from elementary to middle and high schools. During the school year, reading interventions, math instruction and evidence based practices were implemented in all grade levels and additional interventions were implemented in the secondary level in the area of reading. CCPS is developing a myriad of reading and math interventions to meet the need of students KN-12.