

# Charles County Public Schools



# Special Education Strategic Plan

**Learning - Leading - Delivering**  
2025-2028



Charles County Public Schools



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# Message from the Director of Special Education

Dear Families, Staff, and Community Partners,

It is my honor to present the Charles County Public Schools Special Education Strategic Plan (2025–2028). This plan reflects our shared belief that every student deserves a high-quality education, meaningful access to learning opportunities, and the supports necessary to thrive.

Over the next three years, we will strengthen instructional excellence, expand inclusive practices, and invest deeply in our staff and families. The priorities outlined in this plan are not just goals on paper — they represent our collective responsibility to create environments where students with disabilities are supported, valued, and empowered to reach their fullest potential.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to our students. Together, we will ensure that Charles County remains a community where every learner can succeed.

Sincerely,  
Larry W. Johnson, M.Ed.  
Director of Special Education

## Introduction

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is dedicated to ensuring every student with a disability has the supports, services, and opportunities needed to thrive. The Special Education Strategic Plan (2025–2028) provides a clear roadmap to strengthen instructional quality, advance inclusive practices, and ensure equitable access across the district.

### Aligned Priorities

#### **Student Learning and Achievement**

Improve outcomes through targeted instruction, progress monitoring, and evidence-based practices.

#### **Access and Opportunities**

Expand inclusive programs and remove barriers to equity.

#### **Culture and Climate**

Foster safe, supportive, and collaborative environments for students, families, and staff.

#### **Talent Development and Retention**

Invest in professional learning, coaching, and leadership development to recruit and retain high-quality staff.

### Our Commitment

This plan is a call to action. It reflects CCPS's commitment to high expectations, equity, and shared responsibility for the success of students with disabilities.



# Who We Are

## Mission

The mission of the CCPS Department of Special Education is to provide equitable, individualized, and high-quality educational services that empower students with disabilities to achieve academic excellence, develop independence, and thrive as contributing members of society.

## Vision

CCPS envisions a fully inclusive educational system where students with disabilities are valued, supported, and provided with the resources and opportunities necessary to reach their highest potential.

## Core Services

The Department of Special Education provides:

- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): Development and implementation of specially designed instruction and services.
- Specialized Programs: SOAR, ACHIEVE, ACE, EA, and Early Childhood Special Education.
- Related Services: Speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychological services, counseling, and behavioral supports.
- Family & Community Engagement: Parent Resource Center, SECAC, family training, and collaborative planning.
- Professional Learning & Support: Ongoing training, coaching, and resources for teachers, administrators, and instructional assistants.

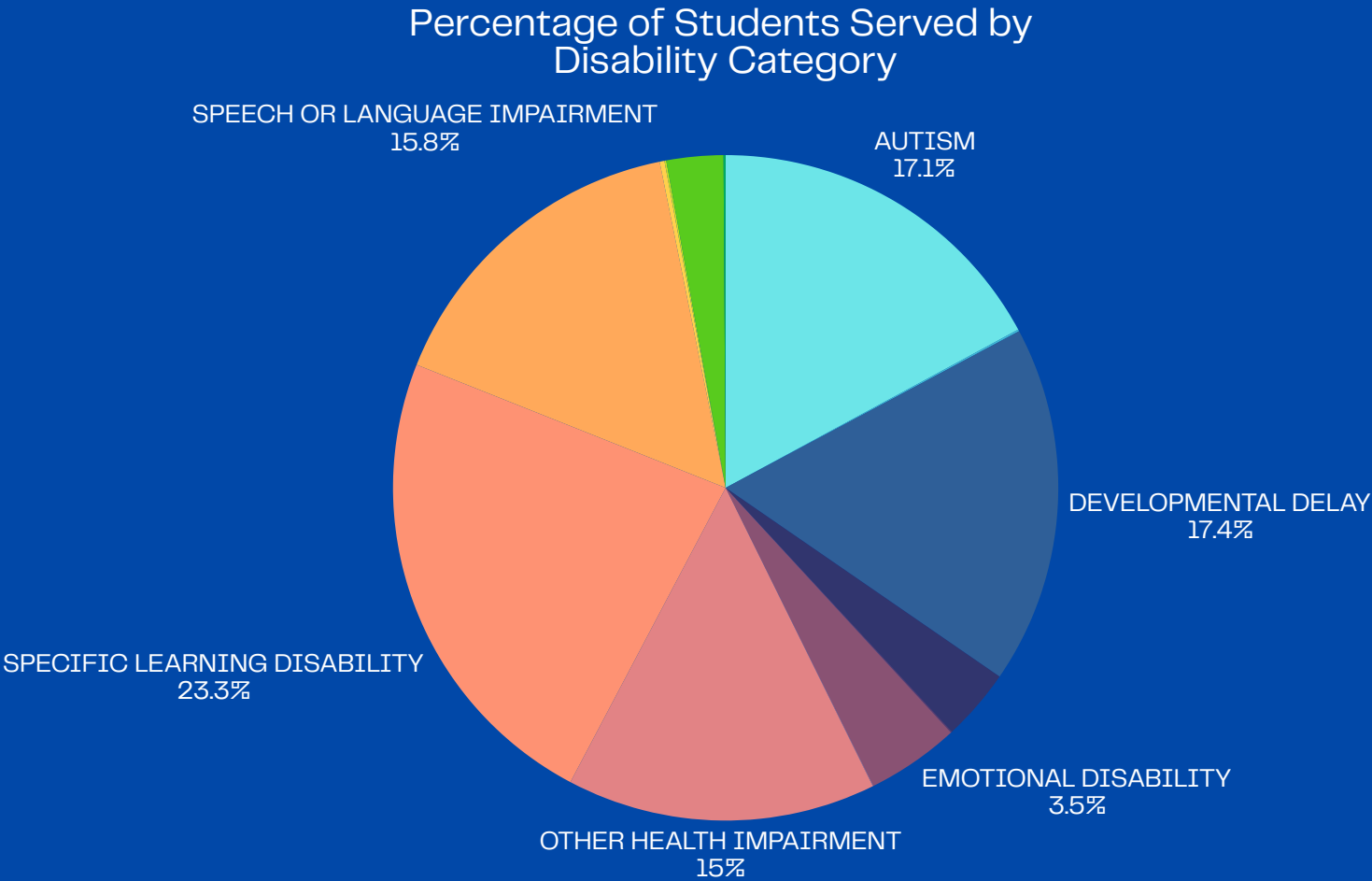
Every student, Every ability, Every day



# About CCPS

CCPS is one of the largest school systems in Southern Maryland, serving approximately 28,162 students across 39 schools and 4 centers. Within this population, CCPS serves more than 3,546 children and students with disabilities from ages 3 through 21, representing about 12.5% of total enrollment.

As of 8/30/2025



# CCPS Special Education Strategic Priorities

2024–2027 Strategic Plan | Learning, Leading, Delivering

## Introduction

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is committed to ensuring that every student with a disability achieves academic excellence, develops independence, and thrives as a valued member of the community. The Special Education Strategic Plan (2024–2027) aligns with the Superintendent's district-wide priorities and centers on four bold commitments that drive our work.

### Goal 1 - Equip Every Student for College, Career, and Beyond

Delivering specially designed instruction that meets students where they are and helps them reach grade-level expectations.

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), & Differentiated Instruction
- Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) with ongoing progress monitoring and data-driven support

### Goal 2 - Safe, Inclusive, Healthy Learning Environments

Building safe, welcoming, and supportive environments for students, families, and staff.

- Positive school and classroom climates
- Strong family and community engagement
- Student dignity, belonging, and advocacy

### Goal 3 - Attract, Develop, and retain a Highly Effective team

Investing in the educators and staff who serve our students every day.

- Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff
- Comprehensive onboarding, mentoring, and PD opportunities
- Recognition and celebration of staff contributions

### Goal 4 - Build Strong Family & Community Partnerships

Strengthening relationships with families and community organizations to support student success.

- Parent engagement events, trainings, and resources
- Collaboration with community partners to expand services and opportunities
- Empowering families as advocates and partners in decision-making

# Goal 1 – Equip Every Student for College, Career, and Beyond

## Metrics

- Percent proficient/advanced on MCAP Reading/ Language Arts
- Percent proficient/advanced in Alt-MSAA Reading/Language Arts
- Percent of students showing academic growth on iReady Assessments (ELA/Math)
- Percent of students with compliant transition plans aligned with indicator 13
- Percent of new and 2<sup>nd</sup> year special educators attending multiple PL sessions across the year
- Percent of schools integrating PL content into School Improvement Plans
- Percent of IEPs randomly audited meeting at least 90% of MSDE High Quality indicators
- Percent of new and conditional special educators receiving at least 4 instructional walkthroughs

## Key Strategies

### Building Instructional Capacity

- Provide ongoing professional learning on UDL, DI, and SDI through district-wide PD, early dismissal, and evening sessions.
- Partner with Content Specialists to embed inclusive practices into curriculum and district-wide offerings.

### Strengthening

- Invest in evidence-based programs and data systems to guide instruction and monitor progress.
- Develop and distribute program handbooks with clear expectations and standardized practices.
- Establish MTSS-aligned guidance for SDI and AAC devices, with protocols for progress monitoring and fidelity checks.
- Create a system for capturing endorsements in work readiness, postsecondary education, community involvement, and citizenship for students on the alternative certificate pathway.

### Strategic Staffing & Support

- Implement intentional rostering of regionalized programs to align staffing and resources.
- Hire Transition Support Teachers and Career Navigators to strengthen postsecondary planning for students with disabilities.

### Enhancing Leadership & Oversight

- Improve district accountability through contact logs, shared calendars, and structured follow-up.
- Provide Danielson Framework Extension Guides to support administrator coaching and evaluation.
- Create a district-wide process for monitoring IEP quality to ensure compliance, best practices, and student-focused outcomes.



# Goal 2 - Safe, Inclusive, Healthy Learning Environments

## Metrics

- Percent of students with disabilities spending 80% or more of the day in general education
- Percent of students with disabilities spending less than 40% of the day in general education
- Percent reduction in suspension disproportionality for students with disabilities
- Percent decrease in total suspensions for students with disabilities year-over-year
- Percent decrease in elopement incidents year-over-year
- Percent decrease in restraint incidents for students with disabilities year-over-year
- Number of new or redesigned specialized programs implemented to address identified continuum gaps
- Reduction in out-of-county or nonpublic placements due to increased in-district program capacity

## Key Strategies

### Building Instructional Capacity

- Provide regular professional learning on de-escalation, avoiding power struggles, and ensuring safety.
- Train non-traditional staff (Science Center staff, bus drivers, etc.) to support students with disabilities and manage behavior.
- Train educators to embed student voice and choice within lessons to promote self-advocacy and agency.

### Strengthening Systems & Infrastructure

- Design and implement a district-wide elopement response plan aligned with House Bill 1204.
- Develop programmatic guidelines for structured recess to foster positive peer interaction and minimize behavior challenges.
- Create common protocols for crisis prevention and response that prioritize safety and dignity.
- Establish a district-wide system for monitoring school climate data (suspensions, referrals, restraint/seclusion, attendance) disaggregated by disability and subgroup.

### Strategic Staffing & Support

- Leverage the Coordinator of Specialized Transitions and Program Development to guide schools in building innovative, inclusive program models that address gaps in the continuum of services, while ensuring seamless supports for students with complex needs.

### Enhancing Leadership & Oversight

- Establish a Suspension Disproportionality Committee to analyze data, address inequities, and promote culturally responsive discipline practices.

# Goal 3 - Attract, Develop, and retain a Highly Effective team

## Metrics

- Number of IA and Teacher Recruitment Fairs held annually
- Retention rate of new hires after 2 years
- New teacher satisfaction rate with onboarding and mentorship
- Surveyed staff satisfaction with clarity of communication
- Average number of Goalbook resources/strategies accessed per teacher per quarter
- Percent of special education positions filled before the first day of school
- Percent of first-year teachers showing improvement on Danielson-aligned walkthroughs over the year

## Key Strategies

### Recruitment & Talent Development

- Host ongoing Instructional Assistant (IA) and Teacher Recruitment Fairs to attract high-quality candidates.
- Expand the IA Academy with workshops that build pathways for instructional assistants to become licensed special education teachers.

### Onboarding & Early-Career Support

- Develop a structured onboarding process for mid-year hires, including orientation, mentorship, and access to essential tools and resources.
- Provide Goalbook access and training for all first-year special education teachers to support lesson planning and IEP alignment.
- Support conditional teachers with preparation for eligibility testing and licensure pathways.

### Communication & Connection

- Launch a monthly newsletter to share updates, highlight success stories, and streamline communication across special education teams.

### Operational Systems & Supports

- Establish a Case Manager Workload & Efficiency Committee to identify strategies for caseload balance and time management.
  - Conduct Academic Record Reviews to ensure compliance, accuracy, and IEP alignment.
  - Implement efficiency tools such as a “Copy IEP” button to reduce duplication of work.
  - Explore AI solutions to streamline documentation, progress monitoring, and planning tasks.

# Goal 4 - Build Strong Family & Community Partnerships

## Metrics

- Number of collaborative workshops held with Parent Center, SECAC, and community partners
- Percent of families reporting increased knowledge of resources after attending workshops/events
- Percent of families of students with disabilities completing the MSDE Parent Survey
- Percent increase in family and student participation on advisory committees, SECAC, and district task forces
- Percent decrease in difference between CCPS survey outcomes and the Maryland state average

## Key Strategies

### Family Engagement & Support

- Host transition events for students with disabilities and their families to increase awareness, planning, and access to adult services and postsecondary options.
- Develop and implement a connected series of collaborative workshops with the Parent Center, SECAC, and community partners to strengthen family knowledge and support.
- Expand tailored engagement opportunities that meet families where they are — through flexible scheduling, virtual options, and culturally responsive outreach.
- Provide families with resources, guides, and training to better support student learning at home and during transitions.

### Community Partnerships

- Strengthen partnerships with local businesses, agencies, and higher education institutions to expand internships, mentorships, and community-based learning experiences for students with disabilities.
- Partner with community organizations to provide wraparound supports, mental health resources, and enrichment opportunities for students and families.
- Recognize and celebrate community contributions through service acknowledgments and public recognition events.

### Student & Family Voice in Decision-Making

- Expand opportunities for families and students to serve on advisory committees, focus groups, and district task forces.
- Highlight family and student voices in district communications, newsletters, and events to model shared ownership of outcomes.



# Implementation Plan

The Department of Special Education will implement the Strategic Plan through a phased approach aligned to the **four district priorities**—Student Learning and Achievement, Culture and Climate, Talent Development and Retention, and Family Partnerships—while using new infrastructure to expand resources, communication, and accountability.

## Infrastructure for Implementation

To support consistency and transparency across schools and programs, several new platforms and resources will be launched and scaled during the plan period:

- SharePoint Resource Site: A centralized digital hub for staff to access guidance documents, program expectations, PD resources, and compliance tools.
- Family Engagement Hub: A new public-facing section of the CCPS Special Education website, providing event calendars, transition resources, family guides, and community partner connections.
- Data Dashboards & Logs: Enhanced systems using Synergy Data Analytics and MTSS frameworks to monitor student outcomes, service delivery, support requests, and risk ratios. Central office staff will also maintain accountability logs to ensure timely, consistent services and responsive support to schools.
- Collaborative Workspaces: Dedicated SharePoint team sites and cross-functional committees to ensure co-development and feedback loops for each strategic area.

## Year 1 Focus (Foundation)

- Establish baseline data and monitoring systems.
- Launch SharePoint and Family Engagement Hub.
- Provide staff orientation to tools and expectations.
- Begin family engagement events and advisory groups.
- Address compliance gaps while building trust.

## Year 3 Focus (Continuous Improvement)

- Expand SharePoint with links to previously presented presentations.
- Deepen family partnerships through co-created resources and feedback cycles.
- Use data trends for targeted coaching and school support.
- Show measurable gains in outcomes, equity, and retention.
- Move from compliance-first to innovation-driven practices.

## Continuous Improvement

Implementation will follow Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles, with annual reviews to measure progress, refine tools, and scale effective practices.

# Glossary of Key Terms & Acronyms

This section provides clear definitions of specialized language and commonly used abbreviations found throughout the Strategic Plan. By offering a shared reference, the glossary helps families, staff, and community partners understand key concepts, promotes consistency across schools and programs, and supports meaningful engagement with the priorities and strategies outlined in the plan.

## Key Terms

- **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A legally required plan that outlines specially designed instruction, supports, and related services for students with disabilities.
- **Specially Designed Instruction (SDI):** Instruction tailored to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, ensuring access to the general curriculum.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** A framework that provides multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to support all learners.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS):** A data-driven framework for providing academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support across three tiers of increasing intensity.
- **Transition Plan:** A required component of the IEP beginning no later than age 14, outlining goals and services that prepare students for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Regular assessment of student progress to inform instruction and interventions.
- **Risk Ratio:** A calculation used to monitor equity in discipline, placement, and identification of students with disabilities compared to peers.
- **Family Engagement Hub:** A centralized resource providing parents and guardians with information, events, and supports related to special education.
- **PDSA Cycle (Plan-Do-Study-Act):** A continuous improvement model used to test, refine, and scale strategies over time.

## Acronyms

- **AAC** – Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- **ACE** – Adult Career, Community, Education & Enrichment (ACE) Program
- **ACHIEVE** – Academics Communication and Heightened Independence for Education Vocation and Engagement
- **EA** – Emotional Adjustment program
- **IA** – Instructional Assistant
- **IDEA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- **MCAP** – Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program
- **MSAA** – Maryland State Alternate Assessment
- **MSDE** – Maryland State Department of Education
- **SECAC** – Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee
- **SOAR** – Structured Teaching, Opportunities for Social Inclusion, Active Learning, & Rigor
- **UDL** – Universal Design for Learning
- **SDI** – Specially Designed Instruction
- **MTSS** – Multi-Tiered System of Supports