St. Mary's County Public Schools
Department of Special Education
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Director

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LEA Provision of Proportionate Share Services

To: Private/Parochial School Representatives in St. Mary's County, Maryland
From: Mrs. Audrey Ellis, Director of Special Education
Date: July15, 2025
Re: Provision of Speech Therapy Services to Parentally Placed Private/Parochial School Students

St. Mary's County Public Schools ("SMCPS") has engaged in consultative processes with officials of private/parochial schools and representatives of parents of children with disabilities who are placed in private/parochial settings. These consultations have addressed the operational procedures for the provision of services throughout the academic year to ensure that children identified through the SMCPS Child Find process with disabilities can participate meaningfully in the district's special education programs and related services.

The scope of the consultation included, but was not limited to:

- The methods, locations, and responsible personnel for the delivery of special education and related services to parentally-placed private/parochial school children with disabilities;
- The timing and manner in which such determinations will be made;
- The current grant allotment from the Maryland Department of Education; and
- The number of private/parochial school students with disabilities currently enrolled.

As a result of these consultations, SMCPS has determined to provide speech and language services to private/parochial school students in grades PreK-5 who are identified as requiring such services. These services will be delivered through a service provider model, on-site at the student's current school of enrollment, with individual sessions not to exceed thirty (30) minutes per week. In instances where staffing shortages prevent in-person service delivery, a combination of virtual services and services at the student's designated SMCPS school will be implemented. By providing speech and language services, SMCPS ensures that early communication skills are supported, which are critical for academic success and social development during these formative years.

Funding for these services is subject to the availability of the federal proportionality share. Once the allocated funds are exhausted, service provision will cease. It is acknowledged that students enrolled in private or religious schools are not entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education ("FAPE") under federal law. SMCPS shall continue to

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conduct Child Find activities, including the identification, location, evaluation, and reevaluation of children with disabilities who may require special education services. Private/parochial school students are not eligible for Extended School Year (“ESY”) services.

SMCPS invites and values stakeholder input. During the annual meeting convened with private/parochial school officials, participants provided input regarding the provision of services.

At this meeting, information was provided concerning updates to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”), copies of the Procedural Safeguards - Parental Rights document were shared, and descriptions of available services and programs within St. Mary’s County were provided. Participants’ questions regarding special education services were addressed. Please contact the designated district representative should additional inquiries arise. Thank you for your participation in this annual consultative process.

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