Building Collaborative Partnerships

CCPS Special Education Staffing Plan FY22

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June 2021

Table of Contents

Introduction **3**
- Background 3
- Guiding Principles 3
- Mission 3
- Vision 4

Development of the Plan **5**
- Public Input 5

Budget Process and Maintenance of Effort **7**
- Maintenance of Effort 8

Staffing Patterns for Service Providers **8**
- Key Factors and Considerations to Determine Staffing 8
- Special Education Services and Programs 11
- Service Delivery Models 13

Special Education Caseload Staffing **15**
- Staffing FY 21 (FTE) 15
- Recommended Staffing FY 22 (FTE) 16
- Professional Development 16

Accountability **17**
- **Caseload Monitoring and Adjustment Process** **17**
- **Process for Resolving Staffing Concerns** **17**

Monitoring and Evaluation **18**
- Process for Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Local Staffing Plan FY 2021: 18
- Process for Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Local Staffing Plan FY 2022: 20

Assurances

This Staffing Plan is developed consistent with the procedures provided by the Maryland State Department of Education for the purpose of ensuring that personnel and other resources are available to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each student with a disability in the least restrictive environment (LRE) as determined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. In accordance with The Code of Maryland Regulations, (COMAR) 13.A.05.02.13D this Staffing Plan includes:

- *Evidence of maintenance of effort within the meaning of 34CFR 300.231 and COMAR 13.A.02.05;*
- *Evidence of public input;*
- *Staffing patterns of service providers of special education and related services, including paraprofessionals;*
- *The number and type of service providers needed to provide a FAPE to each student with a disability in the LRE;*
- *How the staffing plan will be used to monitor the assignment of personnel to ensure personnel and other resources are available to provide FAPE to each student with a disability in the LRE;*
- *The number of special education teachers and instructional assistants assigned to schools and the number of vacancies reported and how FAPE is provided when vacancies occur.*

Introduction

Background

This document describes the process Caroline County Public Schools (CCPS) will use 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. In addition, this plan is referenced and utilized to review the Special Education State Performance Plan Self-Assessment and to develop the CCPS Bridge to Excellence Master Plan.

Guiding Principles

The Caroline County Public Schools Special Education staffing plan was developed with the mission and vision of the Special Education Department in mind.

Mission

Caroline County Public School's mission is in partnerships with families and communities, we prepare all students to achieve college, career and life readiness through a challenging and progressive educational experience. 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). These students with special needs recognized as having educational disabilities and needing specially designed instruction are required to have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). IEPs are the educational roadmaps for students with special needs. School teams in conjunction with families develop these plans based on diagnostic assessments and identified needs. The plan includes goals and objectives, services needed to implement the plan, and where the plan will be implemented. Staffing patterns for the district and schools are formulated based on the data regarding the total special education instruction and supports needed to implement the IEPs of the special education students within the least restrictive environment.

Each school plans and implements systemic school improvement efforts and activities to meet their identified goals. The delivery of special education instruction and related services is an integral part of school improvement planning and instructional activities. In making decisions about special education services, school teams must consider each student's needs and the supports and services necessary to provide access and meaningful participation in general education settings and programs. 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. This includes access to appropriate and timely professional development to support special education and general education staff working with students with disabilities. The Caroline 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 development for school personnel and others in the district will address the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), as well as ongoing activities to promote development of instructionally appropriate practices and to reach the goals of the CCPS 's Bridge to Excellence Master Plan and the State Performance Plan for Special Education.

Vision

Every Student will be prepared, empowered, and inspired to thrive in an ever-changing and diverse world. CCPS special education consists of a collaborative team of educators, parents and community organizations that engage and empower our students with special needs to develop their maximum potential in their school and community.

Annually, local school systems must prepare a comprehensive special education staffing plan that describes and projects how special education personnel will be assigned to schools. This plan will report the collection of data, sources of input and the procedures used to determine the numbers and types of service providers in order to provide a free appropriate public education as required by COMAR 13A.05. and IDEA 2004. Certification of staff assigned to provide services as per the IEP is reviewed to ensure that State standards are met. This plan will be evaluated annually as a part of the process for ensuring compliance.

CCPS has developed a set of Guiding Principles to ensure that staff deployment adequately and efficiently support students' needs:

- All students, including those with disabilities, are entitled to a high quality, challenging educational program through access to the general education program and highly qualified staff.
- The specially designed instructional services and supports included in a student's IEP are crucial to their success in school and thus are critical in determining reasonable staff caseloads.
- There must be flexibility in the staffing plan to allow for changes in students' needs, local decision-making, cost effectiveness and unexpected situations that arise during any school year.
- All services and supports must be provided in compliance with state and federal regulations, which include providing a continuum of services in the LRE appropriate to a student's needs.
- CCPS maintains a focus on providing services and supports needed for an individual student to be successful, rather than based on the identified disability or its severity.
- CCPS will continue to demonstrate improvement in all areas identified in the SPP, particularly the monitoring priority: FAPE in LRE.
- CCPS will continue to demonstrate improvement in the monitoring priority: Disproportionality in regards to identification, placement and discipline.

Development of the Plan

Public Input

Input into the special education staffing plan is sought from a wide variety of stakeholders throughout the school year. These stakeholders include staff, parents, and the community.

The Special Education Leadership Team meets to review issues regarding programming, system compliance and planning. The new requirement for quarterly data submission on SPP Indicators provides team members a quarterly review of special education needs and areas of priorities. Special education staffing is one of the standing agenda items. Additional input is included from the following:

- Director of Student Services and Special Programs
- Supervisor of Special Education
- Supervisor of Pupil Services
- Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Director of Assessment and Accountability
- Special Education Teacher Specialists
- Special Education Teachers
- Psychologists
- Speech and Language Pathologists
- Consortium Staff
- Principals
- IEP Chairpersons

The CCPS Special Education Advisory Committee (SECAC) is another group that reviews data on an ongoing basis and provides input into the staffing plan. This group is comprised of school staff, parents, and community members. The plan is then presented to the Caroline County Board of Education members for review at a public work session. Information is also available on the county website and Board Docs. The revised document is presented to Caroline County Board of Education for review and then approval in June of each year.

During the 2021-22 school year, CCPS will continue to gather input from parents through surveys following all initial and annual IEP meetings. Additionally, this information will be collected at the beginning of the school year and again in the spring from students and staff. Also, CCPS will collect data through a parent survey postcard that is distributed after all IEP meetings. This information will inform CCPS IEP teams on how parents feel about their participation in IEP meetings. The Special Education Advisory Committee at their meetings considers all of this information. Additionally, a parent survey was developed by MSDE and disseminated to the parents of Caroline County. Information from this survey is included in the *State Performance Plan Self-Assessment*. Caroline County results from the Parent Survey will be available on the MSDE website as a requirement of the *State Performance Plan*. Also, a survey link is sent to all special education staff. The survey data is collected, analyzed and incorporated in the development of the staffing plan.

Committee	Meeting Dates	Location
Judy Center Advisory Committee	Quarterly	Judy Center, Federalsburg
Special Education Advisory Committee (SECAC)	Quarterly	Board of Education
Local Coordinating Council	Third Wednesday of each month	Human Services Council
Inter-Agency Coordinating Council	First Monday of each month	Human Services Council
Caroline County Board of Education	First Tuesday of each month	Board of Education
School Improvement Teams	Monthly, posted on school website and newsletters	Individual School locations
Individual Student IEP Meetings	Ongoing throughout the school year	Individual School locations

Suggested staffing guidelines consider the following:

- A review of State Performance Plan (SPP) data points
- Severity of student needs and types of support services needed
- Implementation of a full continuum of service delivery models; and
- Compliance with special education legal requirements

Additional considerations must also include:

- Specially designed instruction
    - Includes direct instruction to meet the individual needs of students related to IEP goals/objectives
    - Includes indirect service, such as consultation with general education teachers, modifications/adaptation of curriculum, demonstration teaching, planning with related service staff, etc.
- Preparation time
    - This is time provided within the instructional day to prepare instruction and includes finding materials related to students' needs, devising/creating specific materials, etc.
- Directing the work of paraprofessionals
    - Program/resource paraprofessionals require supervision, training, and regular planning time.
- IEP management responsibilities
    - IEP management includes all aspects of program development and coordination of services, parent communication related to the IEP, annual review, progress monitoring, progress reporting, functional behavioral assessments, manifestation determinations, and behavior intervention plans.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA) focuses on each state's accountability on State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators defined by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) which, in turn, determines the levels of intervention needed by OSEP. The four levels of determination are: Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention, or Needs Substantial Intervention. The MSDE, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, use a results-based rubric on specific indicators to rate each public agency's performance in meeting the State's targets as defined by the SPP for Part B and Part C. Based on the available data, as well as information obtained through monitoring and state complaint investigations, Caroline County Public Schools received the results from the data of the SPP indicators from 2019-2020 status has been determined that CCPS is in the ***Meets Requirements*** status.

During the school year, administrators contact the Supervisor of Special Education regarding special education staffing concerns. The Supervisor of Special Education or designee investigates the situation, examines relative data, and meets with the school principal and/or the special education team to provide assistance with the utilization of staff in order to implement a student's IEP. If resolution of the matter requires the allocation of additional staff or the reassignment of current staff from one school building to another, involvement and approval is required by the Director of Special Programs. Otherwise, consideration is given for future planning. Additional staff, specifically instructional assistants, are assigned based on individual student needs. Additional instructional assistants are not assigned as additional adult support without the implementation of a structured fade plan to encourage gradual independence for students.

Final Special Education Staffing Plan Approval

The special education staffing plan is projected to be presented to the Board of Education at its scheduled meeting June 22, 2021. The approval of the special education staffing plan will be noted in the Local Application for Federal Funds submitted to the Maryland State Department of Education within required timelines.

Budget Process and Maintenance of Effort

Considerable planning, discussion and brainstorming of ideas takes place prior to the development of the school system's annual operating budget. Information gathered through the public input activities described above, as well as data on student achievement, is used to inform the budget needs assessment. All budget items are carefully considered then prioritized based on priority initiatives linked to the district's Bridge to Excellence Master Plan, the School Improvement Plans and the Special Education State Performance Plan Self-Assessment, including areas such as student achievement, discipline, inclusion and collaborative teaching efforts.

The steps in the CCPS budget process are:

1. In the Fall of each school year, the budget process for the following school year begins. Needs are assessed through data collection and analysis, surveys and progress toward meeting goals outlined in the State Performance Plan Self-Assessment and Bridge to Excellence Master Plan. Draft budgets are developed based on this data, which include staffing, materials, equipment and services. School improvement teams, including parents, review this information.

2. Budget priority discussions continue throughout the Fall and Winter with parent participation and community input. Staffing needs are updated and clarified on an ongoing basis.
3. Special education student data are collected, and reported on three times a year. This data includes the number of students served, the number of hours of service, the number of students per class and the number of staff provided with consultation on a regular basis. Additionally, quarterly data required for the SPP Indicators provide verification of data submitted by case managers. Input regarding student needs is also obtained from parents and other staff during IEP meetings and parent conferences.
4. Special Education staff is provided a survey to gather additional input.
5. Public hearings are held throughout the Winter to gather community input on the proposed budget.
6. The budget is submitted to the County Commissioners for approval.
7. Once approved, the Board of Education adopts a final budget for the next fiscal year.

Maintenance of Effort

Maintenance of Effort is demonstrated annually in the school budget as required by 34 C.F.R.300.231 and COMAR 13A.02.05.
The chart below demonstrates that maintenance of effort requirements have been met.

Fiscal Year	State & Local Funds
2013	$6,116,037
2014	$6,117,987
2015	$6,218,037
2016	$6,417,015
2017	$6,877,853
2018	$7,143,312
2019	$7,412,001
2020	$7,718,575
2021	TBD

Staffing Patterns for Service Providers

Key Factors and Considerations to Determine Staffing

Staffing patterns are determined so that CCPS is able to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all eligible students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. A wide array of

programs and services are designed to meet the individual needs of the students. Special education staff and related service providers are assigned to schools based on these needs and from the direct and indirect hours outlined in students' Individualized Education Programs. In addition to hours of service, the following are considered in determining staffing allocations:

- Planning time for co-teaching with general educators
- Data collection, observation and assessment
- Consultation and IEP planning with general educators
- IEP management, data collection, and report preparation
- IEP team meetings and meetings with parents
- For itinerant personnel, travel time is taken into consideration. At the beginning of each year, the Supervisor of Special Education works with itinerant personnel to develop schedules that minimize travel times and ensure that all students receive the services required in their IEPs. This is an ongoing effort to maintain minimal travel time and maximum service delivery.

Services are configured to ensure that students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate, based on IEPs. In preparing the staffing plan, consideration is given to general enrollment projections as well as projections specific to the movement of special education students as a group. In addition, a great deal of emphasis is placed on providing ongoing services for intensive support students who are expected to transition into different school buildings.

Special education program evaluations are conducted annually in conjunction with the Local Application for Federal Funds (LAFF). The primary focus is on improving educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities. Three performance indicators focus on the provision of special education services in the LRE (see chart below for the percentage of students, ages 6-21, by the LRE code). For each indicator, MSDE has set a measurable and rigorous target to be met:
FY 19 Targets

- ≥ 70.90% of students with disabilities, ages 6-21, receive special education services inside the regular education classroom 80% or more of the day (LRE A);
- ≤ 10.76% of students with disabilities, ages 6-21, receive special education services inside the regular education classroom < 40% of the day (LRE C);
- ≤ 5.44% students with disabilities, ages 6-21, receive special education services in public or private separate day schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital services.

Percent of Special Education Students (6 through 21) by LRE

LRE Environment		FY17	FY18	FY19
A	Inside Gen Ed. 80% or >	78.37%	80.70%	81.11%
B	Inside Gen Ed. 40-79%	8.34%	6.63%	3.73%
C	Inside Gen Ed. < 40%	11.31%	11.31%	10.19%
	Separate Facilities = Home, Hospital, Public Separate Day, Private Separate Day, Public Separate Residential, Private Separate Residential	1.98%	1.36%	1.48%

The LRE data for CCPS demonstrate the ability to successfully provide a continuum of special education and related services based on individual students' needs as indicated in their IEPs. While the percentages have varied over the years, the data indicate that CCPS is well above/below the corresponding state targets.

Ratios act only as a guide in determining caseloads and staffing patterns. The most significant factor is the severity of the needs of the students. Teacher schedules are reviewed on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that they have sufficient time to plan, evaluate student progress, conference with general education teachers and parents, conduct educational assessments and complete the written documentation required by Federal and State regulations.
The Special Services Information System (SSIS) enables the Supervisor of Special Education to track hours of service and environments. Collected SSIS information, along with data submitted by case managers, is analyzed and used as part of the decision-making process in determining what, if any, changes need to be implemented. The same procedure is used for determining related service staffing. At the building level, special education representatives are part of the School Improvement Teams and provide input regarding the need to increase/decrease services and any additional budgetary items required at the school.

Professionals may be providing services concurrently with general education within an inclusive service delivery continuum. Caseloads will be adjusted accordingly based upon equivalent assignments and other factors. Other factors that must be considered are the nature of the student's disability, including their need for supervision and attention to physical assistance. These factors cannot be looked at quantitatively. This speaks directly to why the following are to be used as guidelines and not formulas. Individual student needs must be considered within each building in order to provide sufficient staffing and support for all children, which will enable them to participate fully in the least restrictive environment.

Special Education Services and Programs

Decisions for how students are to receive the services are made by an IEP team and are based on the services needed to implement the students' IEPs in the LRE. The annual special education staffing plan will include a chart of projected programs and services, students and staffing by school.

Special education and general education teachers work together to provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities. Direct instruction may be provided by a general educator with the special educator providing consultation or modification of materials when appropriate. Groups of students may be assigned to a general education teacher or may rotate between general and special education teachers to access specially designed instruction. Models of co-teaching may be implemented or a student may work at teaching stations developed and/or directed by general and/or special educators. Instructional Assistants may work under the direction of a general educator or special educator to support student learning across a variety of settings.

Programs for Students Birth to Kindergarten

Services in the Natural Environment

- Working in collaboration with families, Caroline County Public Schools (CCPS) provides specially designed instruction and related services in a coaching model in the home, childcare centers, or at Head Start centers. Coaching and direct services focuses on meeting child outcomes described in the student's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Itinerant Services

- Parents bring their child to their neighborhood school to receive services such as speech and language therapy.

Services at Head Start

- Children who attend Head Start receive services at their program sites. Children with more intensive needs can receive transportation to attend a half-day program at Head Start and a half-day program at the inclusive preschool classroom in each of the five elementary schools.

Services in Prek3, Prek-4 or Kindergarten

- CCPS students in general education pre-k 3 and 4 or kindergarten programs receive specially designed instruction and/or related services during the school day. IEP goals and objectives become part of daily classroom routines and instruction. Services are provided inside or outside the general education classroom, in accordance with each child's IEP.

Programs for Students Ages 6-21

Services in Grades 1-12

- CCPS students in general education programs receive specially designed instruction and/or related services during the school day. IEP goals and objectives become part of daily classroom routines and instruction. Services are provided in or outside the general education classroom, in accordance with each child's IEP.

Related Services

- In a county with only 9 schools and a Career and Technology Center and approximately 575 students with special needs, related service providers are typically assigned to several buildings. Every effort is made so that staff is assigned to only one or two schools per day. The Mid-Shore Special Education Consortium provides assignment of staff for the following services: occupational therapy, physical therapy, teachers of the visually impaired (including orientation and mobility), teachers of the hearing impaired, and an audiologist.

- According to the guidelines of the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) speech therapists should not have caseloads that exceed a ratio of 1:60. CCPS agrees with these parameters, but because of travel between schools needed in a rural county, our goal is to keep case management to a 1:50 level. Related services such as counseling, school health, parent counseling and training, and social work services are assigned on an as need basis. Psychologists are recommended to have no more than 200 students for the purposes of assessment services and a 1:15 ratio for the purposes of counseling services.

Behavior Support Program- High Road Program

- The behavior support program is designed to provide academic, behavioral, social, and structured therapeutic support to increase students' availability for learning by enhancing coping skills. Key features of the program include a small structured therapeutic learning environment with individualized behavioral supports including individual or group therapy by a social worker.

The Transition Center

- *Caroline* County Public Schools, in conjunction with North Caroline High School, Colonel Richardson High School and Caroline County Technology Center, offers a comprehensive transition program for students with disabilities: Community Work Experience (CWE). The Transition Center provides secondary and post-secondary (18-21) students, who are eligible for special education services, a variety of activities that are geared toward future employability and independence. Within the Transition Center, CCPS utilizes a Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES). A PAES Lab is a work development lab where students become employees and teachers become employers. This lab assesses a student's competitive work potential and interest level, while simultaneously exploring various jobs, using real tools, and developing proper work behaviors in the following five areas:

- Computer Technology
- Construction/Industrial
- Processing/Production
- Consumer/Service
- Business/Marketing

A Job coach is utilized while the student is developing job skills and independence. This level of support is faded as the student demonstrates a level of independence that does not require a job coach. The job coach assists the student in developing appropriate work behaviors and interpersonal communication skills. Many of our business partners hire our students at the end of the experience.

Nonpublic Schools

- For the limited number of students whose needs exceed the services and programs provided by CCPS, the IEP team or another agency may recommend a nonpublic school approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The nature and severity of the student's disability, which has a significant impact on education performance may necessitate more intensive resources and may require a more therapeutic segregated setting for a student to receive an appropriate educational program.

Service Delivery Models

To meet the needs of students with disabilities, Caroline County Public Schools provides a continuum of services and programs. The Individualized Education Program, (IEP) team, which includes the parent(s), determines the appropriate specially designed instruction and/or related services that are required to meet the needs of the individual student in the least restrictive environment.

Consultation (Indirect) Services

- Provide the general educator with guidance from the special education teacher and/or related service provider on appropriate strategies for instruction, behavior management, data collection, observation, and feedback in the general education setting.
- Facilitate service delivery through ongoing communication between general and special educators and related service providers.
- Assist in completing functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and developing a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) to address areas of concern.

Direct Services

Inside the general education setting:

- Direct special education instruction within the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom through co-teaching and collaborative instructional models.
- Direct support for individual students by the special education teacher, general

educator and/or education assistant providing accommodations and/or modifications to the general education curriculum.

- Individualized or small group instruction to meet the academic and behavioral needs of the student, either within the general education classroom or with pull-out services for specific skill development and interventions.

Outside the general education setting:

- Direct intensive or multi-sensory instruction utilizing specialized strategies and techniques in a small group, intensive support environment with an alternative curriculum when necessary.
- More specific skill training in remediation of academic skill deficits or in the social, emotional, and behavioral areas.
- Supports that address behavioral difficulties that interfere with the student's learning or the learning of other students.

Special Education Caseload Staffing

Staffing FY 21 (FTE)

School Psychologists:	5.0
Special Education Teachers:	57 (Includes (1) I & T Teacher)
Speech/Language Pathologists:	8.0 (7.6 FTE)
Speech/Language Pathologist Assistant	1.0
Instructional Assistants:	55
Secondary Transition Specialist	1.5
Director of Special Programs	1.0
Supervisor of Special Education	1.0 (Not filled FY 21)
Coordinator of Special Education	2.0
Special Education Teacher Specialists	4.0 (1 Not filled FY 21)
MTSS Teacher Specialist	1.0
Special Education Data Manager:	1.0 (required data for Part B and Part C)
Sp. Ed. Secretary/MA Billing Data Manager	1.0 (required data for Part B and Part C)
Special Education Secretaries	6.5 (GES funds an additional Sp.Sec.(1.0))
Nurse	1.0
Nurse Assistant	1.0

Note: the Mid-Shore Special Education Consortium provides Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Audiologist, and Teacher of the Hearing Impaired.

Recommended Staffing FY 22 (FTE)

School Psychologists:	5.0
Special Education Teachers:	57 (Includes (1) I & T Teacher)
Speech/Language Pathologists:	8.0 (7.4 FTE)
Speech/Language Pathologist Assistant	1.0
Instructional Assistants:	53
Secondary Transition Specialist	1.5
Director of Special Programs	1.0
Supervisor of Special Education	1.0
Coordinator of Special Education	2.0 (1 position on hold)
Special Education Teacher Specialists	4.0
MTSS Teacher Specialist	1.0
Special Education Data Manager:	1.0 (required data for Part B and Part C)
Sp. Ed. Secretary/MA Billing Data Manager	1.0 (required data for Part B and Part C)
Related Service Secretaries	6.0
Nurse	1.0
Nurse Assistant	1.0

Note: the Mid-Shore Special Education Consortium provides Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Audiologist, and Teacher of the Hearing Impaired.

Professional Development

In order to provide individual programs of high quality, CCPS acknowledges the need for extensive professional development in specially designed instruction and in the various models of effective co-teaching, differentiation, and collaboration. To the degree possible, time is built into staff schedules to allow for joint planning activities between general education and special education staff to occur in schools on a regular basis. In an effort to build a deeper understanding of content, special education teachers join general education teachers on countywide professional development days. Shared knowledge is only possible by exposing all educators to the same content information.

Accountability

Caseload Monitoring and Adjustment Process

Several methods are used to monitor the staff schedules and the provision of services to ensure FAPE for students. A record review is conducted annually and a minimum of two records per case manager is reviewed using MSDE's record review forms. Additionally, at least one record is reviewed for compliance and/or data collection and/or supplementary aides logs during each teacher observation of all special education teachers. Plus the Special Education Leadership Team completes an audit review in the Spring of at least two records per case manager. This information is shared with principals and case managers. Monthly training is provided for teachers who do not meet the target. Prior to the beginning of each school year each case manager, and related service provider is provided a list of students on their caseload requiring re-assessment. This allows for long term planning.

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, and the Supervisor of Special Education. This ongoing review includes data collection and analysis through review of IEPs during record reviews, case management data collection, teacher schedules, and student assistance team referrals. In addition, caseloads can also be reviewed at any time by teacher request. In reviewing caseloads, teams should consider the following time requirements beyond direct services for each teacher, including the estimated time related to the following responsibilities:

- Assessments to include observations and report writing
- Consultation/Teaming / Training
- Travel time
- Documentation
- Medical Assistance
- Age span of the students
- Supervision of paraprofessionals
- Number of preparations

The team makes recommendations to the principal and the Supervisor of Special Education for needed changes based on the analysis of the data to include the above factors. The same procedure is used for related service personnel.

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 procedures are followed:

1. The parent and/or staff will have an opportunity to meet with the director/supervisor and principal within 10 days. The principal presents the concerns from this meeting to the Special Education Team.
2. The Special Education Leadership Team 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. The Special Education Leadership Team will communicate recommendations within 10 days to the school.
4. The recommendation will include a description of needed changes or additions to personnel and any realignment of duties. Requests for additional staff are reviewed and approved in accordance with CCPS personnel practices that include needed Superintendent and Board approval.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Process for Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Local Staffing Plan FY 2021:

The effectiveness of the 2020-2021 Staffing Plan was assessed by reviewing student achievement data, caseload information and input from school administrators and staff, department of special education staff, and appropriate stakeholders in the community. Information was gathered through the Staff and Parent Survey, SECAC group, principals, IEP teams and parent groups. A specific evaluation of the FY21 Staffing Plan is the responsibility of the Director of Special Programs for CCPS.The staffing plan is evaluated by considering the following:

- Were specific performance indicators analyzed from the local and state level?
- Were substitutes used to fill vacancies long term?
- Were students moved from one school to another due to the unavailability of staff?
- Were staff allowed adequate time for consultation, collaboration, and coaching?
- Did complaints or hearing decisions result in the reallocation of staff?

The Local Staffing Plan was determined effective as evidenced by the services provided. Due to the Global Pandemic the virtual, hybrid and in person instructional models did require CCPS to adjust staff accordingly. 81% of CCPS students were served in the least restrictive environment 80% or more of the day. The average caseload for elementary schools is 8-9 students and 10-11 students for secondary schools. This has been steady for the past three years. A special education secretary is assigned full time to 6 of the 9 buildings. Two buildings share 1 special education secretary and 1 building has a part time special education secretary. These positions support the special education teachers in writing meeting notes, scheduling meetings, sending documents to families and other agencies, and the organization of the students special education file. Special education teacher specialists provide PD, coaching, individual staff support and administration of assessments as needed. The supports provided have helped to increase the amount of time special educators could devote to service delivery. A special education teacher's workload can increase depending

on increased number of student referrals, increased number of reevaluations, and a student's unique educational needs.

During the 20-21 school year:

- No students were denied a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) due to a lack of highly qualified teachers or other service providers. Although compensatory services have been offered to several students, it was due to the closure of schools.
- No students were moved to other classrooms or other schools due to the unavailability of staff in 2020-21.
- Professional development is conducted to provide special educators, general education teachers, and instructional assistants with the skills needed to appropriately serve students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Special education staff is included in general curriculum content professional development activities. Majority of the professional development was delivered through Zoom due to the Global Pandemic.
- Although the 20-21 school year was not typical, the special education leadership team was able to continue supporting the three imperatives, early childhood, access, equity and progress and secondary transition through professional development via Zoom for special education staff. Professional development topics that were delivered during the 20-21 school year.
    - Orton-Gillingham +
    - Goalbook App
    - Wilson Reading Systems
    - After school workshops (specially designed instruction, compliance, assessment)
    - New Teacher after school workshops (assessments, report writing, MD online ect.)
    - Monthly PD to target instruction and compliance
    - IXL Program PD for Highroad Staff
    - Instructional Assistants- working with high needs, data collections, therapeutic behavior management
    - Virtual instructional resources (UPAR, Co-Writer, and Snap & Read)
    - Check-ins for Special Education Teachers and Instructional Assistants
    - Monthly Intensive Support PD
- Many compensatory/recovery conversations with families occurred during the 20-21 school year due to the closures of school. CCPS conducted 936 IEP meetings at the elementary schools and 695 IEP meetings at the secondary schools.

The Department of Human Resources reported four vacancies that exceeded three weeks which were filled by a long-term substitute. One of five school psychology positions was filled by Solient Contracting Services. All speech/language pathologist positions were filled by direct hires.

Caroline County Public Schools continue to face staffing challenges. School psychologists are in high demand which has created a shortage. Due to the Global Pandemic, CCPS is now facing shortages with special education teachers and support staff.

As of June 2021, CCPS had one request for mediation. Caroline County will continue to review special education staffing requirements in each school through an ongoing process related to improving student performance, by the special education leadership team that focuses on legal compliance and program effectiveness.

Process for Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Local Staffing Plan FY 2022:

1. The CCPS process for developing and evaluating its special education staffing plan was reviewed and revised to reflect a stronger mission for inclusion and a greater focus on supporting high student achievement. A comprehensive process has been described that provides more detailed guidance within an overall philosophy of inclusiveness. Administrators and staff will receive training in implementing the process.

2. The following issues will also monitor the staffing plan: number of MSDE state complaints filed related to staffing; and the number of requests for mediation/due process hearings directly related to staffing.

3. Staff needs have been verified and included in the proposed 2021-2022 staffing plan and the CCPS proposed budget for FY 2022.

4. The Special Education Leadership Team will receive ongoing training in their roles and responsibilities with regard to staffing plan monitoring. They will develop progress monitoring tools to evaluate student/teacher targets.

5. Several areas of professional development have been identified to support the effective implementation of the staffing plan. These include:
    a. Collaborative teaching/coaching,
    b. Using data to develop, implement and evaluate specially designed instruction and make data-informed decisions,
    c. Determining appropriate instructional/testing accommodations,
    d. Infusing technology effectively into instruction and professional practice,
    e. Increased understanding of Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
    f. Increased understanding of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
    g. In person and virtual delivery of specially designed Instruction.

6. Increasing communication is an ongoing continuous need for our students. This work will be expanded during the 2021-2022 school year to provide continuous professional development to all school staff in consultation with speech language therapists on PODDS (Pragmatic Organization Dynamic Display), PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Systems), Boardmaker (Picture Communication symbol-based boards), switches and assistive technology related to communication (Lamp App). Staff will collaborate on strategies and materials they have developed and have proven successful with their students in partnership with the Assistive Technology Team

7. An identified area of need is to continue narrowing the achievement gap between special education and general education students. During the 21-22 school year:

- **a.** The IEP chairpersons will receive professional development in the special education process/compliance.
- **b.** The special education staff will continue to implement Goalbook App to support standard aligned IEP writing and specially designed instruction in order to support the narrowing of the achievement gap.
- c. The special education teaching staff will continue receiving professional development in reading strategies (Orton Gillingham Methodology).
- **d.** The CCPS Special Education Leadership will create professional development and coaching opportunities (both in person and virtually) for general education and special education teachers to narrow the gap for students with disabilities in all classroom settings.

8. A continued area of need is to increase the preschool outcomes in the area of social emotional and knowledge and skills and behavior. CCPS will continue to build upon professional development from 2020-2021 school year and provide PD from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) using the Conscious Discipline framework to all newly hired PreK general education and special education teachers from inclusive classrooms. A continued model of coaching will be used with staff that have already received the professional development. Collaboration with local daycare provides, head start and early head start will continue. There will be increased knowledge of the Child Outcome Summary Assessment through professional development.