

**FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM  
191 S East Street  
Frederick, Maryland 21701**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFFING PLAN  
FY 2019**

## Table of Contents

ASSURANCE.....	3
EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC INPUT .....	3
EVIDENCE OF MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.....	3
STAFFING PATTERNS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS.....	4
Special Education in System Wide Plans.....	4
Staffing Guidelines .....	4
Caseload-Based Staffing Model for Special Education Teaching Staff .....	5
Special Education Services K-12.....	5
Specialized Program Staffing .....	6
Special Education Instructional Assistants.....	7
Child Find .....	7
Non Public Placements .....	8
School Psychologists .....	8
Related Service Providers .....	9
The Augmentative Communication and Technology (ACT) Team.....	9
Behavioral Specialists.....	9
Interpreting Services (sign language).....	9
Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.....	9
Occupational (OT) and physical therapy (PT) services.....	10
School Therapists.....	10
Speech Language Pathologists.....	10
Building Administrators .....	12
Special Educators .....	12
General Educators.....	12
Vacancies by Position.....	12
504 Plans.....	13
EVALUATION OF STAFFING PLAN.....	13

## **ASSURANCE**

The Frederick County Public School (FCPS) system Special Education Staffing Plan is consistent with procedures outlined by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for the purpose of ensuring a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all students with disabilities. The following Required Elements of a Staffing Plan are included:

- Evidence of public input
- Evidence of maintenance of effort within the meaning of 34 CFR §300.231 Maintenance of Effort, and COMAR 13A.02.05, Maintenance of Effort
- Staffing patterns of service providers of early intervention, special education and related services, including paraprofessionals
- The number and type of service providers needed to ensure FAPE to each student with a disability in the least restrictive environment (LRE) or natural environment
- The ways in which the public agency will use the staffing plan to monitor the assignment of personnel to ensure personnel and other resources are available to provide FAPE for each student with a disability in the LRE
- The number of current vacancies by positions reported within the jurisdiction and how FAPE is provided when vacancies occur.

<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Students with Disabilities</b>
67	43,135	4,604

## **EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC INPUT**

The FCPS budget represents a sincere effort to reflect the desires of the community. In prioritizing funding allocations, the Board of Education (BOE) considers feedback received at public budget forums in February and June and via written or e-mail communication.

The public had an opportunity to express their views on the BOE operating budget to the BOE on February 14, 2018, as well as an additional opportunity to express their opinions to the County Council during a public hearing on April 16, 2018.

Public input for the Special Education Staffing Plan was also sought through the use of the following:

- Publication of the Staffing Plan on the FCPS Special Education website for the 2017-2018 year
- Review with SECAC, April and May, 2018

## **EVIDENCE OF MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT**

The Executive Director of Accelerating Achievement and Equity (AAE), Dr. Keith Harris, and the Accounting Services Office ensure that Part B Special Education funds are used to supplement and increase special education services to students with disabilities and are not used to displace State or local funds. These two offices also ensure that local and State funds expended for the current year are at least equal to or greater than those of the most recent year for which expenditure reports are available. Maintenance of Effort is documented in the expenditure summary.

When developing the operating budget, the BOE and FCPS staff carefully consider the following:

- Recruitment and retention of highly qualified employees
- Strategies to improve academic achievement for all students
- Increased enrollment impact
- Technology needs
- Efficient use of resources
- Areas of need as identified through the FCPS Master Plan
- LRE and expansion of existing programs that have proven to be successful

## **STAFFING PATTERNS OF SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **Special Education in System Wide Plans**

Using the FCPS Master Plan and the Department of Special Education and Psychological Services vision as the framework, FCPS develops an action plan with goals and objectives as the working document to ensure that the department reaches its annual goals.

The departmental vision states:

**“Through ongoing collaboration with our local and state stakeholders, including parents, staff and students, the Department of Special Education and Psychological Services serves FCPS by supporting systematic instructional programming focusing on eliminating the achievement gap, developing social competencies, nurturing independence, and preparing students with disabilities to become contributing members of a global society.”**

In an effort to implement ongoing progress monitoring, FCPS uses the Monitoring for Continuous Improvement and Results (MCIR) guide to conduct annual audits in which individual student files are randomly selected and reviewed for specific compliance issues. School-based staff is directed to use an Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Feedback (M&E) form to self-monitor the implementation of the IEP process for all identified students.

### **Staffing Guidelines**

Staffing allocations are determined to ensure that FCPS is able to provide FAPE to the students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. FCPS continually strives to include general education in the collaborative provision of instruction to students. As of October 2017, the official child count date, FCPS supported 4,604 students with disabilities. This count is used to determine federal funding; however, the count changes daily due to factors such as student mobility, students initially determined eligible for services and students who are exited from services for a variety of reasons. Additionally, the Frederick County Infants and Toddlers Program provides services for 106 children between the ages of birth through three who receive special education services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The total number of children on an IFSP in FY18' (7/1/17-6/30/18) is 649 and 106 on an extended IFSP.

It is important to note that FCPS must be sensitive to existing caseloads and work expectations in order to maintain the high quality of service that is provided to our students. Teachers and related service providers must work to balance instruction and compliance responsibilities. A substantial amount of time is required for staff to develop meaningful, comprehensive and compliant Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), Section 300.130 through 300.144 and FCPS Regulation 400-69, FCPS special education teachers and related service providers support parentally placed students in private school locations who have been determined eligible for services through an Individualized Service Plan (ISP). Just as they do for FCPS enrolled students with IEPs, school based special education staff must provide services and supports for student with ISPs. FCPS currently serves 42 students with ISPs.

FCPS uses a caseload-based model to determine staffing allocations each fiscal year. Other factors considered in these allocations include the number of students at each location with more severe disabilities.

### **Caseload-Based Staffing Model for Special Education Teaching Staff**

#### **Special Education Services K-12**

Currently, 240.00 FTEs have been allocated to special education teachers in order to ensure FAPE for all students during the 2018-2019 school year.

Projected staffing allocations for special education services K-12 for SY 2018-2019:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Anticipated Caseload</b>
Elementary Schools	1 teacher	15*-CF
Middle Schools	1 teacher	20*-CF
High Schools	1 teacher	20*-CF

\*On average, caseload of each teacher

Based on individualized student needs, staffing allocations are determined to provide FAPE in the least restrictive environment. A wide array of programs is provided along this LRE continuum, which are specifically designed to meet the needs of all student populations.

## Specialized Program Staffing

### Projected staffing allocations for specialized program staff for SY 2018-2019

Program	Staffing (as indicated per class or program) SEIA= special education instructional assistant	Recommended/Projected Number of Students
Infants and Toddlers Program	5.0 FTEs; 1 program assistant	106
Child Find	2.0 SLP Teacher Specialists (11 month) 1.0 SLP-CF assessments 1.0 SLP-PPPS 2.0 Special Educators 1.1 Psychologists	see table below for trend data
Non Public Schools	1.0 Special Education Teacher Specialist 0.3 School psychologist	
Pre-kindergarten-CF all staff student ratios for all programs  <u>Inclusive 3-5 Year-Old Program:</u> 31 classes	1 teacher, 2.0 SEIAs (AM session for 3 year-old students)  1 teacher, 2.0 SEIAs (PM session supporting 4/5 year-old students)	5 students with disabilities and 5 typically developing peers  7 students with disabilities
<u>Challenges I, II, III, &amp; IV:</u> 10 primary/elementary classes 2 middle school class 2 high school classes	1 teacher, 3 SEIAs	Elementary: 7-9 Middle: 7-9 High: 7-9
<u>Pyramid:</u> 10 elementary classes 6 middle school classes 9 high school classes	1 teacher, 2 SEIAs 2 therapists per program location • 3 therapists in 1 Ele. program  1 Behavior Support Specialist per program  2 SEIAs in Support room at Ele. Level	Elementary: 9-11 Middle: 10-12 High: 10-12
<u>Learning for Life:</u> 4 elementary classes 5 middle school classes 10 high school classes	Elementary: 1 teacher, 2 SEIAs Middle: 1 teacher, 2 SEIAs High: 1 teacher, 3 SEIAs	Elementary: 9-12 Middle: 10-13 High: 12-15

<b>Heather Ridge School</b>	3 teachers, 1 teacher specialist, 3 therapists .2 SLPs 3 SEIAs .5 School Psychologist 1 Administrator	23 HS 14 MS <u>23</u> Twilight 60 total - 35 w/IEPs
<b>Rock Creek School</b>	13.0 teachers 2.4 SLPs 1.0 therapist 37 SEIAs .33 School Psychologist 2 Administrators	75
<b>Program</b>	<b>Staffing (as indicated per class or program) SEIA= special education instructional assistant</b>	<b>Recommended/Projected Number of Students</b>
<b>SUCCESS Program</b>	1 Coordinator, 4 teachers .7 SLP 23 SEIAs	43
<b>Career &amp; Technology Center</b>	1 teacher, 5 SEIAs	122

### Special Education Instructional Assistants

FCPS employs approximately 689.10 benefited/non-benefited Special Education Instructional Assistants (SEIAs) to support the needs of students with disabilities; including those with IEPs or 504 Plans. SEIAs support the needs of school based programs in their entirety and often implement a variety of interventions for both general and special education students. (551.60 FTE of benefited SEIAs and 137.50 FTE of non-benefited SEIAs)

### Child Find

Child Find staffing consists of:

- 2 Special Education Teacher Specialists
- 2 SLP Teacher Specialists
- 1 Itinerant Child Find SLP for assessments
- 1 contractor special educator for assessments
- 1.1 School Psychologist
- 1 contractor SLP providing services to Parentally Placed Private School Students

	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>Number of referrals</b>	524	467	489	514	672

<b>Number of meetings scheduled</b>	762	753	800	780	900
<b>Number of meetings held</b>	595	641	656	665	775

**Non Public Placements**

For students requiring more comprehensive services and supports that are unable to be provided by FCPS’ current continuum of services, non-public placements may be considered. FCPS supports 116 students in non-public placements. Funding is provided for FCPS students who require supports offered through Maryland School for the Blind (MSB), Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD), as well as other locations such as the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents-Baltimore (RICA).

**School Psychologists**

There is strong research linking mental illness, trauma and behavioral difficulties with poor academic achievement and negative school behavior. School psychologists work diligently to respond to and support ongoing challenges and complexities attributed to increased mental health needs, trauma, behavioral, academic and crisis intervention needs of students. They work with both general education and special education students.

FCPS does not currently have a staffing model for school psychologists that allocates positions based on the number of schools assigned to them or the psychologist to student ratio. In addition, there is currently no mechanism that increases staffing for school psychologists when a new school opens or when student enrollment increases. This results in constantly increasing caseloads as well as significant challenges in providing needed psychological services to students, families and staff.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) recommends a psychologist to student ratio of 1:500 - 1:700.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Psychologist Staffing</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Evaluations</b>	<b>Psychologist to Student Ratio</b>
Comprehensive Schools	26.1	43,135	67	1579	1:1659
Child Find	1.1	703		103	
Non Public Schools	.3	116	34	12	

## **Related Service Providers**

Students in FCPS have specific needs requiring a variety of services ranging from consultative to those provided in self-contained settings outside of the student's community school. Special education coordinators, teacher specialists, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and itinerant service providers work closely with school IEP teams to assist them in developing programs in community schools to meet the needs of students. Schools are provided adequate staff to ensure that all students are able to access the general education curriculum and receive services in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to the maximum extent appropriate.

## **The Augmentative Communication and Technology (ACT) Team**

The ACT Team supports students in the areas of communication, written language, computer access, reading, math, activities of daily living, mobility, environmental control, vision, hearing, and optimum positioning. Special education teachers and speech language pathologists are assigned to this team. This team supports instructional technologies and augmentative communication devices utilized by students to develop communicative competency and technology skills required for our 21st Century learners.

## **Behavioral Specialists**

Behavioral Specialists work with both general education and special education staff to support the development of behavioral intervention plans for students with significant behaviors impacting their ability to access their instructional programs. In addition, they provide crisis intervention for students. Behavioral specialists will assist with planning for instruction and ongoing progress monitoring for students. Opportunities to provide collaborative, systemic professional development will be implemented on an ongoing basis. There are 4.0 FTEs for Behavior Intervention Teacher Specialists.

## **Interpreting Services (sign language)**

Interpreting Services are offered to any FCPS student who requires this service to access his/her educational day. Additionally this service is available to faculty, staff, students' family members or community stakeholders, also known as consumers, who attend a school-related event and require this service to fully participate in that event. There are 34 FTEs for Educational Interpreters and 1.0 FTE for Coordinator of Interpreting Services, 4.0 FTE are vacant at this time. These vacancies are filled currently with 1.0 long-term substitute and 2.0 contracted services. The existing Educational Interpreters are supporting the 1.0 vacancy. Compensatory services are being documented through the IEP process.

## **Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are offered to eligible students aged 3-21 years who require specialized instruction as a result of blindness, visual impairment(s), deafness, or hard of hearing. Direct or consultative services from these highly skilled staff may be provided to students while ongoing consultation between them and general education teachers and special education case managers occurs. Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) provide direct service for visually impaired students. COMS provide instruction to individuals who are blind or visually impaired in safe and effective travel

through their environment. There are 4.0 FTEs allocated to support students who are blind or have vision impairments and 1.0 FTE to support these students in their orientation and mobility skills. There is a 1.0 Braille Transcription Specialist allocated to support Braille transcription in the school system. There are currently 2.0 vacancies for teachers of the visually impaired.. These vacancies are filled with a long-term substitute and a contracted employee to ensure FAPE is provided for students who are blind or visually impaired. There are 4.0 FTEs to support students who are deaf or hard of hearing. There is currently a 1.0 FTE vacancy for teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. We are seeking to fill the position. In the meantime, staff is covering the student services and documenting the need to provide compensatory services.

### **Occupational (OT) and physical therapy (PT) services**

Occupational (OT) and physical therapy (PT) services are provided to FCPS students via contracted services through the Frederick County Developmental Center (FCDC). There are 13.25 FTEs allocated to provide OT services during the 10-month school year. There are 5.57 PT FTEs that support students throughout the 10-month school year. Factors such as increased student population, increased assessment and workload requirements and compliance with State Performance Plan indicators are considered when staffing adjustments are recommended.

### **School Therapists**

School Therapists support students with significant emotional and behavioral needs in the seven FCPS Pyramid Programs (K-12), Heather Ridge, Heather Ridge Twilight and Rock Creek Schools. Licensed clinical social workers and licensed clinical professional counselors serve as school therapists and provide crisis intervention and direct counseling services to students as outlined in their IEPs. School therapists collaborate with families and private professionals to better serve the mental health needs of students. FCPS employs 19 therapists, 15 of whom support the emotional, behavioral and academic needs of students in the Pyramid Program. Additionally, a 1.0 therapist supports students with significant cognitive disabilities at Rock Creek School. The remaining 3.0 therapists support the needs of general education and special education students at the Heather Ridge Alternative School.

### **Speech Language Pathologists**

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) support students with speech and language impairments in all FCPS schools. There are 71.8 FTEs allocated to support these services during the 10-month school year, although 2.0 FTEs from the 71.8 are allocated for SLP Teacher Specialists, and 2.6 SLPs from the 71.8 are itinerant positions that provide support for Child Find assessments, bilingual assessments and services to some students in Head Start programs. **In total, there are 67.4 remaining FTE SLPs who provide speech/language services to identified students in all 66 FCPS schools in FCPS.** Information regarding speech language caseloads is collected yearly and reviewed monthly and quarterly to make decisions regarding staffing allocations for speech language pathologists. Various factors are taken into consideration when allocating staff. These include caseload numbers, student services hours, overall workload, specialized program needs, and additional indirect responsibilities. This information is collected using the OIEP system and a Caseload/Workload summary. There are

currently 4 partial FTEs and 1 1.0 FTEs that are either vacant or filled by contractor SLPs. Currently there are schools with significant increases in identified students for speech/language services that exceed the expected caseload numbers (and subsequently FTE) for the SLPs at these affected schools. Speech/Language services for both of these situations are being partially provided by current FCPS SLPs who are working above their FTEs or by FCPS itinerant SLPs who have had to partially vacate their positions of testing for Child Find and bilingual assessments in order to provide FAPE for students in schools. Ongoing hiring for direct hires and procurement of contract SLPs continues to meet this significant need.

**Projected staffing allocations for related service providers for SY 2018-2019:**

Related Service Provider	Staffing
Augmentative Communication and Technology (ACT) Team	5.5 Team Leaders 2 technology user support specialists 2 technology SEIAs
Behavior Intervention Teacher Specialist	4.0 FTEs 1.0 FTE- Coordinator of Behavior Intervention Services
Hearing Interpreting Services (Sign Language)	4.0 FTEs 1.0 FTE- Coordinator of Interpreting Services 34 FTE- Educational Interpreters
Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy	Contracted services provided through Frederick County Health Department
School Therapists/Social Workers	19.0 FTEs
Speech/Language Therapy	71.8 FTEs
Travel Training (Orientation and Mobility)	1.0 FTEs
Vision	5.0 FTEs (inclusive of O&M specialist services) and 1.0 Braille Transcriber

**Use of staffing plan to monitor the assignment of personnel/resources to provide FAPE:**

Departments engage in ongoing monitoring of student data for numbers of identified students, services provided, etc, and changes to staffing are determined based on that updated data. The Department of Special Education has reviewed staffing ratios and instructional delivery models, in accordance with Board directives, to determine how best to serve increased numbers of students in the LRE. Staffing needs for the 2018-2019 School Year were addressed in the budget request submitted by the Department of Special Education.

The FCP uses general and special educators, related service personnel, paraprofessionals, contractual service providers, building administrators, and central office staff members to provide special education and related services to students with disabilities.

The roles and responsibilities for the provision of FAPE with respect to school-based staff members are described below:

### **Building Administrators**

Responsible for providing general supervision of special education in the school, chairing IEP team meetings, and overseeing the instructional program for all students in the building. The administrator assumes responsibility for staff assignments and responsibilities and is involved in pre-referral meetings. In their role as the IEP team chairperson, principals have the authority to allocate school system resources.

### **Special Educators**

Provide specially designed instruction and case management to students with disabilities. Special educators also participate in IEP meetings, conduct educational assessments, provide input for the development of IEPs, and ensure that regulatory requirements are met for their students. Special educators provide direct instruction, instructional accommodations, and testing accommodations.

### **General Educators**

Participate in Response to Intervention and pre-referral meetings. General educators provide direct instruction; implement universal design for learning strategies, differentiated instruction, instructional accommodations, and testing accommodations. They attend IEP meetings, as appropriate, and team with special educators to provide co-taught instructional services.

### **Vacancies by Position**

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>	<b>Provision of FAPE</b>
<b>School Psychologist</b>	.5	0.4 Contracted School psychologist
<b>Interpreters</b>	4.0 FTE	1.0 long term substitute interpreter, 2.0 contracted service interpreter, the existing Educational interpreters are supporting the remaining 1.0 vacancy, compensatory services are being documented through the IEP process
<b>Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing(TD/HH)</b>	1.0 FTE	Documenting compensatory services via IEP process

<b>Teacher of the Visually Impaired(TVI)</b>	2.0 FTE	.25 Long term substitute TVI, 1.0 contract TVI from MSB, 1.0 contract O&M specialist from MSB, documenting compensatory services via IEP process
<b>Speech Language Pathologist</b>	1.0 FTE RCS, .2 DCES, .5 POD, .4 OES, .4 RCS, .5 YSES  3.0 FTE	All services being provided by contractor SLPs with the exception of .4 RCS. This is being partially supported by SLP currently at RCS. Other services to be made up.
<b>Special Education Teachers</b>	5.0 FTE	All positions being supported by long term substitutes

**504 Plans**

504 Plans provide for instructional/access accommodations for students in the general education environment based on substantial limitations in major life activities indicated by their disability. Based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, no individual with a disability shall be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination within his or her educational program. Implementation of this civil rights law is unfunded by the federal government and wholly funded by the FCPS Department of Special Education and Psychological Services. Support of student 504 plans may include consultation and collaboration, ongoing progress monitoring and provision of specialized equipment and/or materials of instruction for students to provide access to their instructional program. FCPS has 2087 students with 504 plans.

**EVALUATION OF STAFFING PLAN**

The 2017-2018 Special Education Staffing Plan was shared with the Special Education Citizens’ Advisory Committee (SECAC) on April and May 2018. Members of the SECAC include school-based staff, parents and representatives from community agencies. The SECAC reviews the Staffing Plan annually. The plan is posted on the FCPS website and is monitored on an ongoing basis by the Supervisors of Special Education, with a request for feedback and input to be considered.

Special education staffing is evaluated at multiple levels within the school system to ensure that systemic needs are identified and addressed. The Department of Special Education and Psychological Services is supervised by the Executive Director of Accelerated Achievement and Equity who meets regularly with special education staff and instructional directors. In addition, weekly meetings are held for the purpose of collaboration among divisions, including elementary, secondary, and curriculum and technology. Each forum provides an opportunity to identify needs and assign appropriate resources.

**The ultimate goal of the Special Education Department is to provide supports, resources and specialized instruction to educate students with disabilities in their least restrictive environment. Ongoing and effective collaboration between general and special education teachers, consistent analysis of available resources, and allocation of supports are critical to achieving this goal.**