

Staff Response to the 2019-20 Recommendations

Committee Charge for 2019-20

The School Board tasked this committee to examine current FCPS practices regarding the communication and dissemination of information to parents related to supports and services provided to students with disabilities. The ACSD was asked to make recommendations designed to improve and strengthen the relationship between parents of students with disabilities and FCPS school staff and central office staff. This committee believes that FCPS will building trust with parents by improving communications.

Recommendations:

Ensure that the ACSD brochure is updated annually and available in multiple languages. Print copies of the brochure should be consistently available in every school and center and offered to parents at IEP meetings.

The Office of Special Education Instruction will continue to collaborate with the ACSD to ensure that the ACSD brochure is updated annually and available in multiple languages. The Director of Special Education Instruction, serving as staff liaison to the ACSD will work directly with the ACSD chair to incorporate revisions and additions to the brochure. The Department of Special Services will continue to provide print copies of the ACSD brochure to all FCPS schools and center programs for parent access.

Continue to support an ACSD presence at FCPS conferences and events.

The Director of Special Education Instruction, serving as staff liaison to the ACSD, will continue to collaborate with the executive board of the ACSD to ensure presence at FCPS conferences and events.

Continue to support ACSD outreach events, including Meet and Greets, held throughout the school year.

The Director of Special Education Instruction, serving as staff liaison to the ACSD, will continue to collaborate with the executive board of the ACSD to schedule outreach events, including Meet and Greets, held throughout the school year.

Provide opportunities for integrated public preschool.

FCPS's PreK program is designed to enroll 10% of their students as students with disabilities. Each spring, there is a coordinated effort between the PreK program and the Early Childhood Special Education program to recruit students enrolled as early childhood special education students for the following school year. If the early childhood special education students meet the eligibility requirements for the PreK program they become concurrently enrolled in both programs. For school year 2020-21, 148 of 1528 PreK students were also enrolled in early childhood special education.

Early childhood special education teachers are also assigned to support students with disabilities in their natural environment, such as child care programs, including Fairfax County Head Start programs and other early childhood experiences. Partnerships with several private, non-profit preschool programs also have

early childhood special education teachers from FCPS embedded for a portion of their work within the center, offering special education services to students with disabilities alongside students without disabilities.

Offer and promote standardized preschool screening at local elementary schools on designated days/events.

Dynamic assessment is considered a best practice in the screening and evaluation processes of very young children. Dynamic Assessment Methods Include *Graduated Prompting, Testing Limits, and Test-Teach-Retest*. Dynamic Assessment can be used with any type of task to examine potential for learning / growth. Dynamic Assessment is considered:

- Statistically better than testing for distinguishing difference from disorder
- Sensitivity and specificity have been documented up to 100%
- May be used as part of the data collection for identifying students

These methods can help identify learning potential and eliminate bias for students with cultural and linguistic differences or socio-economic risk factors. (Virginia Department of Education, 2013). The Early Childhood Identification and Services program within FCPS is moving toward the use of Dynamic Assessment to replace developmental screenings. The Early Childhood Identification and Services program will work in collaboration with any school to provide Dynamic Assessment to preschoolers in the community.

Team Taught Elementary School Settings should be available across FCPS schools.

In FCPS, teachers provide special education services to students across a continuum of delivery options, ranging from the least to most restrictive learning environments in the following areas

:

- Consultation with general education teachers/employers to include co-teaching with the general education teacher
- Individual and small-group support within general education classroom
- Individual and small-group pull-out services outside of the general education classroom
- Small-group self-contained classes within a general education school
- Special education schools co-located within general education sites
- Separate special education schools

OSEI has developed a course that consists of four modules designed for elementary and secondary teachers who participate in co-teaching. The course provides an overview of the co-teaching instructional model, explores the benefits of this instructional model, examines the importance of relationship building in co-teaching partnerships, and provides teachers with an increased understanding of the effective practices around co-planning, co-instructing, and co-assessing in a co-teaching environment. OSEI staff provide job-embedded coaching and consultation to co-teachers and work with school teams to ensure that special education services are provided to students across a continuum of delivery options, including co-teaching classrooms.

Provide opportunities for elective classes such as Strategies for Success to occur before or after the school day.

Students with disabilities who have IEP goals related to planning, organization, and other executive function skills, have access to the Strategies for Success elective class during the school day. Currently, this elective course is not offered before or after school. Students with goals related to executive functioning can receive services to address their areas of need at other times during the school day. For example, students may receive special education services during the school's intervention block, or in their core content classes. Special education teachers work collaboratively with general education teachers to address IEP goals throughout a student's school day, while allowing them to take elective courses aligned with their areas of strength and interest. Many students choose to take the Strategies for Success course to help build their skills of executive functioning in preparation for post-secondary employment or education.

The 2012 FCPS Restraint and Seclusion Guidelines be converted to FCPS policy, with removal of the numerous "exceptions" to what counts as restraint and seclusion.

The Fairfax County School Board has approved a new policy on Restraint and Seclusion, effective December 17, 2020. The FCPS policy either meets or exceeds the Virginia regulation 8VAC20-750, Regulations Governing the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Virginia.

The policy includes strategies that incorporate positive behavioral interventions and support consistent with the student's rights to be treated with dignity and to be free from abuse, including alternatives to physical restraint and seclusion. Continued use of positive behavioral interventions and support strategies will be used to reduce and prevent the need for the use of physical restraint and seclusion. If behaviors need intervention to keep students and staff safe, the policy dictates that the least restrictive intervention will be used.

Seclusion is prohibited in all FCPS schools except for Burke School, Key Center, and Kilmer Center effective January 1, 2021. Only personnel who have completed advanced training will be permitted to engage in seclusion.

Effective with the start of the 2022-23 school year, seclusion will be prohibited at all FCPS schools.

The Department of Special Services (DSS) must create quarterly reports of restraint and seclusion data.

Included in the Annual Reporting, Review, and Awareness section (Section XI) of the FCPS Policy 2625 regarding Physical Restraint and Seclusion, is the following information regarding annual reporting:

- A. The principal or designee shall, at least annually, submit to the Division Superintendent, through the Assistant Superintendent of Special Services, a report on the use of physical restraint and seclusion in the school based on the individual incident reports completed and submitted to the principal or designee by school personnel. The report will include the following disaggregated by school: frequency of use and student primary disability category, age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

The Division Superintendent shall report on the use of physical restraint and seclusion to the School Board at least once a year prior to the annual submission to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Additionally, the Division Superintendent will report the following regarding physical restraint and seclusion, by school: frequency of use and student age, disability category, gender, and race/ethnicity. Data less than 10 will be suppressed to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the reporting requirements for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

- B. The Division Superintendent shall annually report the frequency of such incidents to the Superintendent of Public Instruction on forms that shall be provided by the Department of Education and shall make such information available to the public.

Ensure training in Ross Greene’s Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) model. Institute mandatory training in the crisis cycle and basic de-escalation, for all teachers and support staff.

FCPS Policy 2625 regarding Physical Restraint and Seclusion requires that all school personnel receive evidenced-based, initial training regarding positive behavior support, conflict prevention, de-escalation, and crisis response. Professional development was provided to school staff through a five module training series that included a *General Overview of Restraint and Seclusion, Policies and Procedures, Safe and Supportive School Environments, Conflict Resolution and De-Escalation, Preventing the Use of Restraint and Seclusion, and Returning the Student to the Learning Environment after Restraint or Seclusion*. All FCPS school personnel were required to complete the five module training series by January 1, 2021.

FCPS is partnering with Dr. Ross Greene to provide professional development on *Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS)*. In April 2021, administrators and select instructional staff from our CSS sites and Public Day Schools, along with central office program leaders, will be meeting with Dr. Greene to learn more about the CPS framework and provide input and feedback that will help inform the development of a more comprehensive training plan for the 2021-22 school year in FCPS.

All teachers should receive training on restorative practices.

Currently Restorative Justice (RJ) practice is a required training for school administrators in FCPS. As with trauma informed practices, the RJ framework has been incorporated into tier one professional development regarding response to behavior incidences. Further professional development in restorative justice is available to instructional staff.

FCPS does not focus on one approach in the areas of behavior or wellness but does incorporate the research-based work into tier one opportunities for staff. Mandated trainings are not void of RJ type information and the content regarding proactive strategies, implementing de-escalation strategies, and employing reflective practices is covered in the research-based approaches provided as professional development opportunities to all instructional staff.

Increase the number of ABA coaches, ABA site visits, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) and Speech/Language support and teaming.

PreK-12 ABA staff provide ongoing training, embedded coaching, and direct support to school staff to enhance the delivery of services using ABA methodologies in concurrent, virtual, and face-to-face settings. This includes staff support in the development and implementation of individualized instructional curricula and behavioral programs. As part of the professional development, ABA coaches offer school-based and countywide training. Along with offering virtual training during the 2020-21 school year for parents, ABA coaches have developed a number of parent videos on such topics as mask wearing, developing schedules and routines in the home, safe walking in the community environment, and how to prompt to teach a skill. The videos are translated into 7 languages and are located on the [ABA Program website](#).

[ATS](#) uses computers, augmentative communication devices, and adaptive technology peripherals to support the needs of FCPS students with disabilities. ATS staff members work in collaboration with school teams, to ensure that, as needed, technology tools and training are provided to support access to learning. ATS has staff who support every school site. They recommend specific assistive technology (AT) accommodations, complete AT evaluations, and provide training to school teams and students in the use of AT accommodations. Additionally, ATS staff promote the use of inclusive technology tools available to everyone in FCPS through training of staff and students.

ATS resource teachers partner with the Speech and Language Pathologists at all schools, especially when supporting a student using an augmentative communication (AAC) device. Together, school teams work to determine student device implementation to support communication within instructional settings. This process involves the entire school team keeping the student's communication needs as their focus. Training is provided to families and staff members who support the use of an AAC device.

Special education teachers that are either new to FCPS and/or new to the profession must receive a mentor.

Great Beginnings is a comprehensive teacher induction program available to all special education teachers who are new to FCPS or new to the profession. DSS has developed early childhood, elementary, and secondary cohorts for new special education teachers. Special education specific content is provided through the summer institute and monthly professional development cohort meetings. Each special education teacher is provided a school-based mentor who provides ongoing support throughout the school year. DSS staff are assigned to each cohort to provide ongoing coaching and are available to assist teachers in the areas of instructional, behavioral, and procedural best practices for students with disabilities.

Develop a standardized information packet for each parent attending an IEP meeting.

Prior to an IEP meeting, parents are provided a copy of [Your Family's Special Education Rights](#) (Virginia Procedural Safeguards Notice), the IEP Meeting Agenda for Parents (IEP 101), and a Parent Information for IEP (IEP 102) form as enclosures to the Notice of IEP meeting (IEP 202). Included in the Notice of IEP (IEP 202), that invites parents to the meeting, there is a link to [Forms Related to Special Education](#). DSS is considering the creation of a packet for parents that includes more information, including links for frequently needed information such as the Special Education Parent Handbook at the student's first eligibility meeting.

Ensure local schools adequately and routinely use the Central Office resources.

At the beginning of each school year, school staff are provided a list of all central office staff members assigned to assist their schools which is located on the DSS School-Based Support Staff page on the FCPSnet intranet. During regularly scheduled leadership meetings, administrators and teacher leaders or department chairs are provided information about central office resources.

Ensure parents are aware of their rights as a valued member of their children’s individual education plan team.

DSS will seek to enhance training components around parents as collaborative partners in the IEP process for all special education teachers. Case managers will be expected to be familiar with the revised Special Education Handbook for Parents (2021) and to inform parents about the Handbook. Additionally, the [Parent Resource Center](#) (PRC) provides support for parents through workshops and library materials.

The School Board has approved a plan to conduct an independent audit of special education services in FCPS. Parents must be involved in this audit to define unmet needs and problems from their perspective.

The Special Education Comprehensive Review is being independently conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). It is a two-year review. Year one (beginning November 2020) includes the following activities: school administrator and central staff key informant focus groups, document review, extant data review, parent and staff surveys, and review of a sample of IEPs. Year two (September 2021) data collection activities include stakeholder focus groups and school-based observations.

Ensure that special education orientation and training includes a parent and older student voice to sensitize staff to work collaboratively with parents/students.

Offices within DSS will work to incorporate and increase parent and student voice into professional development sessions developed for school staff. We will explore ways to include parent and student voice into our Great Beginnings teacher induction program for novice and new to FCPS special education teachers.

Endorse and provide adequate hands-on training for special education staff in high leverage educational practices including selected age-appropriate social skills development and executive function curriculum.

- OSEI will continue to support best practices for teachers of students with disabilities in all content areas as well as social skills and executive function skills. OSEI staff support schools by:
- Providing proactive support, coaching teachers, modeling, and consulting with them related to instructional best practices and materials to improve student behaviors and achievement in the content areas Conducting school-based and district-wide professional development for teachers on evidence-based instructional and behavioral methodologies and programs

- Provide training in 22 high leverage practices included in a publication titled, *High Leverage Practices for Special Education Teachers*, developed by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the CEEDAR Center (Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability and Reform)
- Providing support to school administrators on program evaluation, program modifications and service delivery models
- Sponsoring professional development for school administrators on building foundational literacy knowledge
- Working collaboratively with other staff members from the DSS and the Instructional Services departments (ISD) to support schools
- Collaborating with the FCPS PRC to provide parents with information about the literacy and math programs used in the district, along with current research surrounding best practices for students with disabilities
- Providing access to evidence-based instructional materials and practices in the areas of literacy and mathematics and providing training and support to schools on the selection and use of these materials
- Providing ongoing training and support in social skills and self- advocacy

Train staff about identifying and addressing trauma in students.

FCPS staff are assigned professional development regarding trauma sensitive practices in the classroom setting. Past this initial opportunity there is a continuum of professional opportunities including a FCPS academy class. The division has also adopted this framework as a professional development area for select Title One schools with hopes of expanding this work. The practices of trauma informed or trauma sensitivity are also embedded into the work of the MTSS tier one (core) training, addressing student behavior and the proactive/reactive strategies school staff may take as they view students' behaviors as a form of communication and expression of need. These practices and framework are also a part of social and emotional learning instruction which is also being enhanced by the division to be practiced across the content areas.

FCPS will continue to imbed this framework into professional development opportunities by requiring an introductory course. FCPS will incorporate the latest research-based information regarding trauma informed practices into tier one professional development opportunities, continue working with Title One schools on building knowledge, implementation practices, and continue to offer a continuum of trainings.

Establish a mechanism that allows staff to report suspicions or allegations of violations of policy and procedures; waste, fraud, or abuse, that will be investigated outside of the usual reporting channels without fear of retribution or reprisals.

The Office of the Auditor General is the avenue for staff and the community to report concerns about fraud, waste, and abuse. Reports can be made in person, by phone, by email or online.

Phone: 571-423-1320, Office of Auditor General Email: internalaudit@fcps.edu, e-mail is not anonymous.
Report Online: [Report and Submit Online](#)

Establish a reasonable policy for use of security cameras in classrooms, particularly in classrooms for children with communication disorders.

DSS has shared this recommendation with FCPS division counsel for input and consideration.

Create a media campaign to familiarize families with FCPS staff involved with their children.

DSS will continue to collaborate with the FCPS Office of Communication and Community Relations to increase the school division's efforts to maintain responsive, dynamic, and collaborative communication with parents, staff members, the community, and the media.

Standardize and communicate policies for administrators to allow outside providers access to disabled children during the school day, observations for parents, visits for parents and students to school settings being considered in transition plans, and students to choose electives in middle and high school that reflect their own strengths and interests.

Currently, guidance exists for parental requests for observations of special education classrooms at <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/applied-behavior-analysis-aba-program>.

FCPS practice is to provide parents of transitioning students with a school visit during the IEP placement process. Students are encouraged to attend and participate in their transition IEP to share areas of strength and interests. Students participate in the school counseling program that invites student and parent participation in selection of electives and courses of study.

Widely disseminate best practices and templates for daily communication and data-sharing with parents.

OSEI Specialists and Curriculum Resource Teachers are assigned to every school in FCPS. They work directly with teachers and administrators to provide proactive support and consultation related to instructional best practices. This includes information related to data collection and student progress monitoring for parents. OSEPS has developed training specific to IEP goal data collection and PSLs support school teams with best practices for student data collection and data-sharing with parents.

Ensure all Special Education Leads and Chairs are aware of and make efforts to promote systemwide events.

Information is disseminated from DSS and other central offices to elementary lead teachers and secondary department chairs during county-wide meetings that occur throughout the school year. PSLs regularly meet with the elementary lead teachers and department chairs to share information.

Use low-tech means to communicate important school or program information.

FCPS schools use a variety of methods to communicate and disseminate information to families. Examples of the variety of methods used include information on school websites, email, weekly newsletters, phone calls, flyers sent home with students, home visits, parent meetings, and individual notes sent home with students.

Highlighted COVID-19 Recommendations:

Develop assessments to evaluate the need for compensatory services for the general and adaptive curriculum as well as for related services once school resumes.

All FCPS schools were provided training on a guidance document titled, *[FCPS Guidance Document for IEP Teams for COVID Recovery Services](#)*, that included possible data sources to use for assessing student's eligibility for COVID-19 recovery services during Summer/Fall 2020. Recovery Services are designed to address student needs that developed as a result of the pandemic.

Provide an explanation sheet to all parents of special education students on what compensatory services are.

A guidance document for COVID-19 recovery services titled, *[FCPS Guidance Document for IEP Teams for COVID Recovery Services](#)*, was developed and made available to parents. School staff have participated in numerous trainings regarding Recovery Services and the difference between Recovery and Compensatory services as well as Extended School Year.

Provide a handout on how to request compensatory services to all parents of special education students.

Special education case managers were responsible for reviewing the performance of all special education students on their caseload. Case managers continue to be in communication with parents in order to consider whether students require Recovery Services and/or Extended School Year.

Provide information on how to appeal a denial for a request for compensatory services.

Information pertaining to dispute resolution can be found in the Special Education Handbook for Parents and in the document Your Family's Special Education Rights (Virginia Procedural Safeguards Notice). If a parent/guardian needs assistance understanding this document or has questions, they can contact the PSL for their school of the Office of Due Process and Eligibility at 571-423-4470 or email dpehelp@fcps.edu.

FCPS should use the ACSD to provide feedback on issues that will greatly affect the provision of special education services for its students.

Consistent with Virginia Special Education Regulation 8 VAC 20-81-230 D, FCPS will continue to seek input and feedback regarding the following functions of the ACSD:

1. Advise the local school division of needs in the education of children with disabilities;
2. Participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities;

3. Submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of children with disabilities to the division superintendent for transmission to the local school board;
4. Assist the local school division in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities for educational services;
5. Review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education and related services prior to submission to the local school board; and
6. Participate in the review of the local school division's annual plan.

Provide a detailed plan for remediation of students with disabilities under a variety of scenarios including continued remote learning plans, phased re-entry to direct instruction and use of “hybrid” models, as well as opportunities for “year-round” school, to be reviewed by the ACSD.

FCPS has developed a [Return to School](#) webpage that includes current information related to instructional programming for students, health and safety updates, technology support for families, supports for students with disabilities, resources for families, and frequently asked questions.

Reconsider deployment of staff and resources to comport with IDEA more consistently.

Special education teachers and related service providers continue to provide instruction in small groups and during one-on-one sessions as appropriate for students’ individualized needs and goals. Students receiving in-person instruction will have any related services scheduled as part of one of their days in school. The service may be provided individually or as part of a small group. In some cases, in-person services may be supplemented by virtual services during asynchronous instruction days. Students participating in full-time online learning will receive their services through the online format either in small group or one-on-one as appropriate for the students’ needs. Schools may offer in-person related services to students in the online environment on Mondays during intervention time as determined by the IEP team.

Ensure that all students have access to internet and devices to access services remotely.

All FCPS students have been provided access to internet and devices to access instruction and special education services virtually, when appropriate. A [Technology Support for Families](#) webpage is available that includes technology videos and technology resources to help students in the virtual learning environment.