



In order to meet state standards, the revised special education plan is structured to improve instruction and service delivery to students with disabilities at ACPS schools. The plan aims to provide meaningful opportunities contributing to increased progress in the general education curriculum.

What Is Specially Designed Instruction?



Specially designed instruction (SDI) means adapting content, methodology, and/or delivery of instruction to (i) address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and (ii) to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum to better meet state standards.

Reference: 34 C.F.R. section 300.39(b)(3)

Revised Leadership Structure

We reorganized the structure of division-level special education leadership to maximize areas of expertise and specialized supports across content areas in order to more powerfully impact services to students with disabilities and their progress with meeting standards set forth by the Virginia Department of Education.

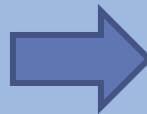
How Are We Currently Impacting This Goal Area?

- Realigning the objectives and responsibilities of the Executive Director and Assistant Director for increased focus on specialized instruction
- Consolidating special programs and procedural responsibilities under the Director of Compliance and Special Programs
- Defining roles and responsibilities of specialists according to content area instructional focus

Revised Leadership Structure

Previous

- Executive Director of Special Education
- Assistant Director of Special Education
- Inclusion Specialists
- Special Education Literacy Specialists



New

- Executive Director of Specialized Instruction
- Assistant Director of Specialized Instruction
- Director of Compliance and Special Programs
- Cross-Curricular Specialists in science, social studies, and math in addition to literacy

Organizational realignment reflects renewed emphasis on instruction and structural alignment with curriculum content areas for the improved teaching and learning of students with disabilities.

Vision


We are committed to creating high quality teaching and learning environments to meet the needs of students with disabilities as equal members of an inclusive learning community.

Professional Learning

We are improving professional learning opportunities for special education teachers, general education teachers, and paraprofessionals to ensure students with disabilities increased opportunities to progress in the general education curriculum.

How Are We Currently Impacting This Goal Area?

- Developing training on **Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)** for special education teachers
- Expanding the **Co-Teaching Cadre** for 1st-year and 2nd-year participants to raise standards for co-teaching
- Developing **training modules** on instructional strategies to prepare general education teachers who support students with disabilities across the curriculum (including Encore and elective classes)
- **Customizing professional learning** for administrators to promote consistent accountability of special education requirements across the school division
- **Co-planning and co-presenting** with Curriculum Instructional Specialists and ELL Instructional Specialists including Summer Content Academies for teachers and Co-teaching Cadre in SY '15-'16
- Prioritizing **paraprofessional competencies** to develop a 3-year professional learning plan and developing a needs assessment to identify additional professional learning opportunities

Professional Learning	
Previous	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators/designees from schools invited to attend quarterly special education administrator meetings; turn around training at the school-level • On-demand training of strategies (as needed or requested) and semester-long cohort learning • Lack of training for general education classroom teachers, including encore/elective teachers, in supports for SWD • Paraprofessional training topics determined based on general observations by central office staff and through informal conversations with paraprofessionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized training for all administrators to ensure consistent procedural compliance and specialized instructional service delivery • Systematic training of specialized strategies for co-teaching teams and special education teachers • Specific training developed for general education teachers, including encore/elective teachers • Paraprofessional training topics prioritized based on ACPS standards and needs assessment
	
<p>Changes in the quality, implementation, and focus of professional learning objectives impacts service delivery throughout the continuum of services and promotes consistent practice across the division.</p>	

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Multi-Tiered

System of Support (MTSS)



Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Staff in the Office of Specialized Instruction is supporting implementation of the **Multi-Tiered System of Support** Division Guidelines by developing progress monitoring protocols and data analysis tools. Using data, staff will support teachers with implementing evidence/research-based practices and interventions for students who require the most intensive levels of support.

How Are We Currently Impacting This Goal Area?

- Developing training and protocols for **systematic progress monitoring** of students with disabilities for school-based stakeholders
- Creating exemplars of **IEP Data Binders** as models for data collection and annual goal-monitoring, as well as providing a “How-To” training for special education teachers
- Structuring the work of Special Education Cross-Curricular Instructional Specialists and Autism and Behavioral Support Specialists to **support the academic and behavioral needs** of students with disabilities
- Creating **SOL analysis tools** from VDOE data for use in data discussions beginning Fall 2015

Multi-Tiered System of Support	
Previous	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on progress monitoring and data systems during spring semester • On-demand tutorial on IEP Data Binders and example binders provided per request of school staff • Overlapping of specialists’ assignments for behavior and academic support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and protocols will be provided for data discussions at the beginning of the school year and emphasized throughout the year • Each school will have an exemplar IEP Data Binder and training will be offered to all special education teachers • Increased coordination of behavior and academic support to increase student outcomes and staff efficiency
<p>Greater focus on progress monitoring and data analysis within and beyond the MTSS helps ensure more accurate initial identification of students with disabilities and proactive deployment of resources to support student success.</p>	

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Communication and Parent Engagement


We are exploring sustainable and efficient communication systems for outreach to parents of students with disabilities.

How Are We Currently Impacting This Goal Area?

- Analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.) as communicated to the Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer and by various stakeholder groups to **inform actionable steps towards improvement**

Trends and Highlights from June 2015	
<p>Strengths What are the strengths of the Office of Special Education Services? What does the staff in the Office of Special Education Services do well? What strengths have been communicated to you from ACPS staff, students or families?</p> <p>Weaknesses What are areas of improvement for the Office of Special Education Services? What gaps do you see in support to schools, staff, families and students? What current support needs improvement or fine tuning?</p> <p>Opportunities How can the strengths of the Office of Special Education Services be turned into opportunities? What additional resources or supports from the Office of Special Education could provide opportunities to schools, staff, families and students?</p> <p>Threats/Barriers What are the threats/barriers to improvement in the Office of Special Education Services? What are some things that might get in the way of the greatest success?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance Support for co-teaching teams Support and resources for students with Autism Lack of communication Successful implementation of inclusive practices Lack of content-specific training for special educators Build skillset of paraprofessionals to maximize support Use a protocol for addressing concerns and issues Dedicated staff to support the ED Program No continuum of services Lack of consistency Lack of academic focus
<p>Note: Full report and analysis in progress</p>	

- Hiring **additional full-time staff** for the Parent Resource Center (PRC)
- Including **parent input** in the hiring processes for Executive Director of Specialized Instruction and Director of Compliance and Special Programs

Communication and Parent Engagement	
Previous	New
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual and triennial revision of department goals and objectives with Executive Director by participants focused on inclusive practices and Autism Spectrum Disorder One full-time parent educator at the Parent Resource Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematic SWOT Analysis for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats completed with Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer by stakeholder groups Two full-time staff at PRC = One full-time parent educator and one full-time special educator
	
<p>Expanded systems allow input from a wider population and facilitate improved communication and outreach.</p>	