

**BOARD MEMO**

Date: November 16, 2020

For ACTION

For INFORMATION

Board Agenda: Yes

No

**FROM:** Terri H. Mozingo, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership  
Theresa A. Werner, M.Ed., J.D, Executive Director of Specialized Instruction

**THROUGH:** Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**TO:** The Honorable Cindy M. Anderson, Chair, and  
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

**TOPIC:** Special Education Disproportionality and Coordinated Early Intervening Services

**ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN EQUITY FOR ALL**

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

**SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA**

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

Focus Area 5: Academic Disparities

**FY 2021 BUDGET PRIORITY**

Specialized Instruction Audit Implementation

**SUMMARY**

Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) are services provided to Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment. These activities and services are designed to prevent referrals for special education services and address students' disproportional identification as disabled.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. §1413(f)(2)) and its regulations (34 CFR §300.226(b)) identify the activities that may be included as CEIS: (1) professional development for teachers and other school staff to enable such personnel to deliver scientifically-based academic and behavioral interventions, including scientifically based literacy instruction, and, where appropriate, instruction on the use of adaptive and instructional software; and (2) providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including scientifically based literacy instruction. ACPS determines which students need additional support. This decision-making process considers factors such as performance on reading or math assessments, disciplinary referrals, or suspension and expulsions. If ACPS chooses to use CEIS funds to support school-wide interventions, ACPS must be able to provide documentation that CEIS funds were used to provide services only to students in need of

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additional support and that other funds were used to fund the school-wide intervention for special education students and students who do not need additional supports.

### **BACKGROUND**

ACPS was deemed to disproportionately identify black students as Emotionally Disabled. The data analysis supporting this determination is addressed in the school board PowerPoint presentation. Accordingly, ACPS must set aside fifteen percent of IDEA grant funds (\$551,545.95) to provide CEIS to address this issue. A plan to provide those services was developed and approved by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).

Supports and services funded by the CEIS funds and outlined in the plan include the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Tier 1-3 interventions for students to include both academic and behavioral interventions provided small group and individual counseling sessions as well implementation of Social Emotional and Academic Learning (SEAL) Ruler curriculum. Academic supports are provided during targeted intervention blocks. A Clinical Specialist (LCSW) and Behavior Specialist will provide professional development to school-based student support teams (SST) and collaborate with teams to direct student support through counseling groups and therapeutic interventions.

Additionally, the LCSW will provide professional development and consultation to school-based teams addressing intervention strategies implementation, coaching, and modeling interventions to support the implementation of positive strategies to support student growth. Extensive research supports the use of direct consultation and counseling services by highly skilled licensed clinical practitioners when addressing students' needs experiencing behavior challenges in the school environment. ACPS relies upon the clinical practitioner to determine the most appropriate evidence-based practice to formulate services for a particular student or group. Furthermore, ACPS will constitute a specific team of division-wide evaluators to assess students referred for special education services as Emotionally Disabled, to negate the inherent bias noted in school-based evaluations.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board monitor the implementation of the CEIS programming.

### **IMPACT**

The ACPS CEIS implementation plan is essential to improve outcomes and support instructional programming for students to prevent students' disproportional identification as Emotionally Disabled.

### **ATTACHMENT**

201116\_PowerPoint\_Special\_Education\_Disproportionality\_and\_Coordinated\_Early\_Intervening\_Services

### **CONTACT**

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