

BOARD MEMO

Date: June 1, 2023

For ACTION

For INFORMATION

Board Agenda: Yes

No

FROM: Theresa A. Werner, M.Ed., J.D, Executive Director of Specialized Instruction

THROUGH: Wendy González, Ed.D., Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership
Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Meagan Alderton, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Special Education Update: Disproportionality and Comprehensive
Coordinating Early Intervening Services

ACPS 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:

Goal 2: Instructional Excellence

Goal 3: Student Accessibility and Support

SY 2022-2023 FOCUS AREA:

Social Emotional and Academic Learning Recovery

Implementation of Student with Disabilities Plan

FY 2023 BUDGET PRIORITY:

Special Instruction Evaluation Implementation as a part of the Strategic Plan

Social and Emotional Supports for Students

Expand Access and Improve Quality of Out of School Learning

SUMMARY:

ACPS data indicates disproportional practices in the identification of students for special education services. Comprehensive Coordinating Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) are services provided to 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 the disproportional identification of students as disabled.

The 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

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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 as well as social-emotional needs.

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 (approx. \$560,000) to provide CCEIS to address this issue. A plan to provide those services is developed yearly and approved by VDOE.

Supports and services funded by the CEIS funds and outlined in the plan include MTSS Tier 2-3 interventions for students to include both academic and behavioral interventions provided small group and individual counseling sessions as well implementation of SEAL Ruler curriculum. Academic supports are provided during targeted intervention blocks. ACPS developed a team of targeted professionals, the Behavior Intervention Support and Assessment Team (BISAT), including a Clinical Specialist (LCSW) Clinical Psychologist, and Diagnostician, who work in conjunction with targeted Student Service team members to provide professional development to school-based SST teams 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 of 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 the needs of students experiencing social-emotional challenges in the school environment. ACPS relies upon clinical practitioners to determine the most appropriate evidence-based practice to formulate services for a particular student or group. Furthermore, ACPS designated BISAT as the specific team of division-wide evaluators to assess students referred for special education services as Emotionally Disabled in order to negate the inherent bias noted in school-based evaluations.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information in this memo and monitor the disproportionality data, professional development, and implementation of the CCEIS programming.

IMPACT:

The ACPS CCEIS implementation plan is essential to improve outcomes and support instructional programming for students to prevent disproportional identification practices.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. 230601_Board_Presentation_Specialized_Education_Update_v1

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