



# Comprehensive Review of Special Education, Pre-K through Grade 12

# Alexandria City Public Schools

# Final Report

## October 2018



PCG | *Education*

Alexandria City Public Schools, Virginia  
*Comprehensive Review of Special Education*  
October 2018

**Acknowledgement**

The PCG team thanks the many individuals who contributed to this review of ACPS's special education services. Their efforts were critical to our ability to obtain a broad and detailed understanding of the system so that we could present the best possible proposals for improving special education and related services for the Division's students. This review would not have been possible without the support of Dr. Lois Berlin, Interim Superintendent, Dr. Terri Mozingo, Chief Academic Officer, the ACPS School Board, and the significant contributions of the ACPS project team: Ms. Theresa Werner, Executive Director of Specialized Instruction; Mr. Clinton Page, Chief Accountability Officer; Dr. Jennifer Whitson, Evaluation Assessment Analyst; and Ms. Jennifer Mursaloglu, Evaluation Assessment Analyst. The project team organized all components of the data collection efforts, provided all the documents and data we needed in order to do our work, and organized all of the logistics for our onsite data collection activities. PCG also thanks the many ACPS staff members with whom we met. Their commitment to the work they do was evident through their comments and earnest feedback. They work passionately to support children with disabilities and ensure the Division serves these students in the best possible manner.

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Public Consulting Group, Inc.

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## I. Introduction and Methodology

### Introduction

Located in Northern Virginia, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest school division in the state, educating over 15,400 students from kindergarten through age 21 years.<sup>1</sup> It serves students in 16 ACPS schools: 12 elementary schools,<sup>2</sup> 1 pre-K-8 school, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school (2 campuses). ACPS also operates three alternative programs: Chance for Change Academy, the T.C. Williams Satellite Campus, or the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center School. The ACPS school community is diverse, with the following demographic composition: Hispanic/Latino (36.5%), White (27.8%), Black/African American (27.5%), Asian (5.1%), Multi-Racial (2.75%), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (0.2%), and Native American (0.2%). ACPS students come from over 118 countries and speak 120 languages. English Learners (EL) represent 30.6% of the population, and 10.6% of students receive special education services. Nearly two thirds (63.2%) of enrolled students are economically disadvantaged.<sup>3</sup>

Alexandria City is part of the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area,<sup>4</sup> and the school division is a member of the Washington Area Boards of Education.<sup>5</sup> Due to its proximity to Washington, D.C., the greater Alexandria area is largely populated by professionals working in the federal civil service, in the U.S. military, or for one of the many private companies that contract to provide services to the federal government. And it is growing. The last recorded population in the 2010 Census was 139,966; however, current estimates expect this number will have grown to over 160,000 in 2017.<sup>6</sup> With this overall population increase in the area comes a subsequent increase to the number of students attending ACPS. FY 2018 enrollment is projected to increase by 2.8%, giving the Division a total of 15,523 students. By FY 2027, ACPS is projected to have enrollment just under a total of 18,000 students.<sup>7</sup> The Division is slated to open a new elementary school and convert a current K-6 school to a K-8 in the 2018-19 school year to accommodate this growth.

The demographic composition of the community at large differs substantially from that of Alexandria City, in that Alexandria at large is 66.1% White, 23.1% Black or African American, 16.8% Hispanic, 6.8% Asian, and 3.2% Multi-Racial, with 8.4% of the population living below the poverty line.<sup>8</sup> As such, Alexandria City is a portrait of contrasts, a city of both urban poverty and affluent upper-class

<sup>1</sup> Fall 2017-18 Membership Data. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/enrollment/fall\\_membership/report\\_data.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/enrollment/fall_membership/report_data.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> One elementary school is in the process of transitioning to a K-8 school.

<sup>3</sup> ACPS Fast Facts. <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Domain/1030>

<sup>4</sup> The Washington–Arlington–Alexandria, DC–VA–MD–WV metropolitan statistical area is used for statistical purposes by the United States Census Bureau and other agencies. Retrieved from: <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US47900-washington-arlington-alexandria-dc-va-md-wv-metro-area/>

<sup>5</sup> The Washington Area Board of Education (WABE), previously known as the Metropolitan Area Boards of Education, was first established in 1971 as a means for area school divisions to share information, study common problems, and enhance cooperation among educational organizations. Each year, the group surveys its members to publish the annual WABE Guide. This guide enables local school systems to learn about each other by reporting comparable information in a standardized format. In addition, the WABE Guide is meant to be used by citizens as a source for consistent, reliable educational data. Retrieved from <https://www.fcps.edu/about/budget/wabe-guide>

<sup>6</sup> United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/alexandriacityvirginiacounty/PST120216>

<sup>7</sup> ACPS FY 18 Budget Book:

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/cms/lib/VA01918616/Centricity/Domain/803/FY%202018%20Final%20Budget%20Book.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Persons identifying as Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and/or Native American each comprise less than 1% of the population.

neighborhoods, with its school system taking on characteristics of city districts as well as exhibiting traits of affluent suburban districts.<sup>9</sup> Historically these extremes have manifested in a segregated system, especially for those students receiving special education services. Through the 1970s and into the 1980s, the Division had a pattern of over-identifying African American students as special needs and using special education as a disciplinary mechanism. While ACPS has made great strides in acknowledging and rectifying these previous practices, remnants of this history still exist today. The Division was recently cited by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for its over-identification practices for African American students with an emotional disability. Knowing this underlying historical context is an important part of understanding how ACPS's special education services exist today and how they can be improved in the future. Given these complexities, ACPS in recent years has taken a proactive approach to building the cultural competency skills of its staff and to building an inclusive culture for all students, including those with disabilities. Several of the goals and objectives in the Division's strategic plan, "ACPS 2020: Every Student Succeeds," center on closing the achievement gap for all subgroups. This work is ongoing, ambitious, and critical to educational equity and the advancement of all students within the school system.

There is a marked sense of urgency in recent years around providing the supports needed for a multi-cultural and linguistically diverse population. Despite this, the achievement gap for students with disabilities in ACPS has persisted. In the 2015-16 school year, 42% of students with disabilities (SWD) passed the Standards of Learning (SOL) in reading, compared to the 73% pass rate of their non-disabled peers. Scores decreased in 2016-17, with 71% of the overall population, and 39% of SWDs, passing the reading SOL.<sup>10</sup> Further, of the 42.4% of all students in 2016-17 graduating with an Advanced Studies Diploma, just 3.6% were SWDs. This is a decrease from the 2015-16 rate in which 6.0% of SWDs graduated with an Advanced Studies Diploma.

ACPS operates under a site-based management model, which has a significant impact on the consistency of programming from school to school Division-wide. As the Division begins to enact the recommendations in this report, serious consideration needs to be given to the level of autonomy schools can and should have when supporting programming for students with disabilities and how Division-wide initiatives will be implemented with fidelity. Achieving these goals for all students will require essential changes to the academic and social-emotional services provided.

In an effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the special education program and to develop an improvement plan that focus on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities, ACPS contracted with Public Consulting Group (PCG) in June 2017 to provide an in-depth analysis of the Division's special education inclusive culture and services, staffing, organizational structure, and processes. This study follows previous special education reviews: a federal monitoring review through VDOE in 2008 and two comprehensive qualitative assessments conducted by the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), one in 2009 and one in 2011.

Over the course of this engagement, PCG conducted a review of ACPS's special education data, held focus groups and interview sessions with a range of stakeholders, and visited all schools to conduct student shadowing and classroom observations. The following report provides an overview of the findings and details recommendations for programmatic improvements designed to drive programmatic efficiency and lead to better outcomes for students and families.

PCG acknowledges the many successes and achievements of ACPS that are detailed throughout this report. The following survey results reflect the high regard respondents have for the Division and its support for students with disabilities:

<sup>9</sup> Reed, D. (2014). *Building the Federal Schoolhouse: Localism and the American Education State*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>10</sup> ACPS SOL scores obtained through: <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:15124976360225>

- 79% of parents agree that their child's school is an inclusive environment.
- 82% of parents agree that the administrators at their children's schools respond to them.
- Of teachers who co-teach, 91% agree that their co-teaching partner treats them with respect.
- 90% of staff agree that their schools try to meet children's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation.
- 95% of staff agree that instructional staff at their schools treat students with disabilities with respect.

Although this report documents areas of concern, they are used to formulate recommendations designed to improve the academic performance and social/emotional outcomes of students with disabilities, who as a group have lagged behind their very high performing peers. PCG's goal is to assist the Division in taking a series of actions that are challenging but intended to help produce a world-class education for *all* of ACPS students.

## Purpose of the Study

This report describes the current state of the special education program in ACPS and is designed to guide the Division toward continuous improvement. It examines the following evaluation questions:

1. *To what extent do the **instructional services** ACPS offers meet the needs of students with disabilities within the Division?*
  - To what extent do the instructional delivery models demonstrate best practices and meet student needs?
  - To what extent does the continuum of services offered by ACPS for students with disabilities address the needs of students? How do these services compare to other divisions?
  - How are inclusionary practices being implemented across schools and educational settings? Are practices aligned to best practices in supporting student academic excellence?
  - To what extent are instructional interventions and strategies meeting the needs of students with disabilities?
  - To what extent are behavioral supports meeting the needs of students with disabilities?
  - To what extent does pre-K-postsecondary transition programming prepare students for life (including life after high school)?
  - To what extent are services for dually identified (EL and SWD) students meeting student needs?
  - To what extent do instructional services for students with disabilities have the capacity to positively impact student outcome data toward meeting performance goals found in the Office of Specialized Instruction Plan (e.g., SOL performance, GPAs, graduation rates, Individual Education Program (IEP) goal progress data, postsecondary outcomes)?
2. *To what extent is ACPS meeting the needs of students with disabilities and their families in the area of **compliance with state and federal regulations**?*
  - How effective is Child Find and Early Childhood Special Education Services at identifying young children suspected of having a developmental delay or disability and providing/getting families access to services?
  - To what extent is the referral and eligibility determination process working in terms of identifying students with disabilities? In identifying dually identified students?
  - To what extent are IEPs being developed in compliance with state and federal regulations (e.g., VDOE special education indicator data)?
  - To what extent are IEPs being implemented as written?
  - To what extent is the IEP reevaluation process being implemented?

3. *To what extent does ACPS utilize its **human capital resources** to provide adequate services for students with disabilities to support student learning outcomes?*
  - How effective is ACPS in recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified and effective staff servicing students with disabilities including teachers, related service providers and paraprofessionals?
  - How do ACPS's caseloads compare to similarly situated divisions and divisions in nearby proximity to ACPS?
  - How efficiently does ACPS allocate staffing to meet the needs of its population of students with disabilities?
  - To what extent does the professional development ACPS provides adequately prepare and continually support school professionals to provide exceptional services to students with disabilities?
4. *To what extent has ACPS's school and division leadership fostered an instructional program and school/division **culture that supports meeting the unique educational needs of students with disabilities?***
  - To what extent are teachers and leaders held accountable for instructional and procedural practices that effectively support students with disabilities and their learning?
  - To what extent do schools foster a climate where students with disabilities and their families are welcomed, supported, feel safe, and are active partners in student education?
  - To what extent does the organizational structure support a culture conducive to supporting students with disabilities and their families?
  - To what extent does ACPS staff demonstrate a belief system that establishes shared ownership of services and outcomes for students with disabilities?
5. *To what extent do ACPS's **internal and external communication practices** foster collaboration among staff and families in support of students with disabilities?*
  - How effective are communication efforts in reaching targeted audiences with pertinent information (e.g. division to school, school to division, division to parent, school to parent, teacher to teacher, case manager to case manager at transition points, etc.)?
  - To what extent are families and community members kept informed about services for students with disabilities (e.g. through the ACPS website, Parent Advisory Committee, Parent Resource, ACPS Express, etc.)?

## Report Structure

The following chart maps the research questions and sub-questions to the most pertinent sections of the report. The report begins with the student-centered focus of teaching/learning, and progresses to examine the ways in which ACPS operates to support this essential function. It is intentionally structured in this manner in order to group interrelated topics together. As such, some answers to research questions are covered across several sections, as noted below.

All areas of the report are focused on improving instructional outcomes and providing an inclusive culture for students with disabilities. Following this Chapter I, there are six chapters (II-VII) and a Recommendations chapter (VIII).

Research Questions/Sub-Questions	Report Chapter					
	II. Characteristics	III. Multi-Tiered System of Supports	IV. Referral and Eligibility	V. Teaching, Learning, and Social Emotional Support for SWD	VI. Support for Teaching and Learning	VII. Collaboration, Communication, and Parent Engagement
<b>1. To what extent do the instructional services ACPS offers meet the needs of students with disabilities within the Division?</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x
• To what extent do the instructional delivery models demonstrate best practices and meet student needs?		x	x	x		
• To what extent does the continuum of services offered by ACPS for students with disabilities address the needs of students? How do these services compare to other divisions?	x	x	x	x		
• How are inclusionary practices being implemented across schools and educational settings? Are practices aligned to best practices in supporting student academic excellence?		x	x	x		x
• To what extent are instructional interventions and strategies meeting the needs of students with disabilities?			x	x	x	x
• To what extent are behavioral supports meeting the needs of students with disabilities?		x	x	x	x	
• To what extent does pre-K-postsecondary transition programming prepare students for life (including life after high school)?				x		x
• To what extent are services for dually identified (EL and SWDs) students meeting student needs?				x	x	
• To what extent do instructional services for students with disabilities have the capacity to positively impact student outcome data toward meeting performance goals found in the Office of Specialized Instruction Plan (e.g., SOL performance, GPAs, graduation rates, IEP goal progress data, postsecondary outcomes, etc.)?	x			x		x
<b>2. To what extent is ACPS meeting the needs of students with disabilities and their families in the area of compliance with state and federal regulations?</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x
• How effective is Child Find and Early Childhood Special Education Services at identifying young children suspected of having a developmental delay or disability and providing/getting families access to services?	x		x			x
• To what extent is the referral and eligibility determination process working in terms of identifying students with disabilities? In identifying dually identified students?	x	x	x			x

Research Questions/Sub-Questions	Report Chapter					
	II. Characteristics	III. Multi-Tiered System of Supports	IV. Referral and Eligibility	V. Teaching, Learning, and Social Emotional Support for SWD	VI. Support for Teaching and Learning	VII. Collaboration, Communication, and Parent Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are IEPs being developed in compliance with state and federal regulations (e.g., VDOE special education indicator data)?</li> <li>To what extent are IEPs being implemented as written?</li> <li>To what extent is the IEP reevaluation process being implemented?</li> </ul>		x	x	x	x	x
<p><b>3. To what extent does ACPS utilize its <u>human capital resources</u> to provide adequate services for students with disabilities to support student learning outcomes?</b></p>				x	x	x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How effective is ACPS in recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified and effective staff servicing students with disabilities including teachers, related service providers and paraprofessionals?</li> <li>How do ACPS's caseloads compare to similarly situated divisions and divisions in nearby proximity to ACPS?</li> <li>How efficiently does ACPS allocate staffing to meet the needs of its population of students with disabilities?</li> <li>To what extent does the professional development ACPS provides adequately prepare and continually support school professionals to provide exceptional services to students with disabilities?</li> </ul>					x	x
<p><b>4. To what extent has ACPS's school and division leadership fostered an instructional program and school/division <u>culture</u> that supports meeting the unique educational needs of students with disabilities?</b></p>		x	x	x	x	x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are teachers and leaders held accountable for instructional and procedural practices that effectively support students with disabilities and their learning?</li> <li>To what extent do schools foster a climate where students with disabilities and their families are welcomed, supported, feel safe, and are active partners in student education?</li> <li>To what extent does the organizational structure support a culture conducive to supporting students with disabilities and their families?</li> </ul>		x	x	x	x	x

Research Questions/Sub-Questions	Report Chapter					
	II. Characteristics	III. Multi-Tiered System of Supports	IV. Referral and Eligibility	V. Teaching, Learning, and Social Emotional Support for SWD	VI. Support for Teaching and Learning	VII. Collaboration, Communication, and Parent Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent does ACPS staff demonstrate a belief system that establishes shared ownership of services and outcomes for students with disabilities?</li> </ul>	x	x	x	x	x	x
<p><b>5. To what extent do ACPS's <u>internal and external communication practices</u> foster collaboration among staff and families in support of students with disabilities?</b></p>		x				x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How effective are communication efforts in reaching targeted audiences with pertinent information (e.g., division to school, school to division, division to parent, school to parent, teacher to teacher, case manager to case manager at transition points.)?</li> </ul>		x				x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are families and community members kept informed about services for students with disabilities (e.g., through the ACPS website, Parent Advisory Committee, Parent Resource Center, ACPS Express.)?</li> </ul>						x

## Methodology

Over the course of the 2017-18 school year, PCG conducted a mixed-methods study of the special education program in ACPS.<sup>11</sup> The findings and recommendations related to programs, policies, and practices resulted from a comprehensive analysis of several data sources. Sources included **1) Data and Document Analysis, 2) Focus Groups and Interviews, 3) Student File Review Focus Groups, 4) School/Classroom Observations, 5) Student Shadowing, 6) Staff and Parent Surveys**. These components drew from **Research and Practice Literature** to inform the findings and recommendations. PCG used publicly available achievement and financial information to compare key ACPS statistics against local division, state, and national data. Details of each data source are included below.

### Data and Document Analysis

#### Population Trends, Programs, and Achievement and Outcomes Analysis

As part of this review, PCG analyzed special education population trends, programs, and achievement outcomes. Through analysis of assessment data, educational setting data, suspension data, and other indicators, the team compared student identification rates and outcomes by disability, ethnicity, gender, and other demographic variables. Data included in the report also compare students with IEPs to their nondisabled peers on several indicators.

<sup>11</sup> This study did not include an analysis of programming at Chance for Change Academy, the T.C. Williams Satellite Campus, or the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center School.

Population and program placement trends are significant equity indicators of the extent to which there is overrepresentation of any group in the special education population. They also provide important information about the distribution of the special education population in placements that represent the least restrictive environment. Population trends were analyzed to show, where possible, changes over time by grade level/age, race/ethnicity, disability categories, level of service, and combinations of variables. Student performance data were analyzed to provide a comparative examination of performance by both students with and without disabilities.

### **Staffing Analysis**

In partnership with the Council of the Great City Schools, PCG has compiled special education staffing ratios from approximately 70 school districts (very large to very small) nationwide. The Division's staffing ratios were incorporated into these data to consider ACPS staffing information in a broader context. Staffing comparison data have been used to evaluate the extent to which staff roles, responsibilities, and training are aligned to ACPS's expectations.

### **Document Review**

PCG reviewed nearly 80 documents for information related to division and school structures, programs, policies, and practices. Documents reviewed were in the following general categories:

- Organizational structure, staffing, and resource allocation
- Description of academic programs, services, interventions, and activities
- Documents regarding instruction and professional development
- Division procedures and guides, including improvement plans
- Compliance and due process complaints
- Fiscal information
- VDOE reports
- Measures concerning accountability

### **Focus Groups**

In November 2017, PCG spent two days onsite conducting two sets of focus groups: 1) organizational focus groups/interviews, and 2) student file review focus groups. Over 200 stakeholders participated.

PCG worked closely with ACPS to determine the best outreach and communication methods for focus group and interview participation. PCG provided a sample schedule and list of positions required to participate. Focus groups for special education and general education teaching staff were scheduled after school on a voluntary basis. Student file review focus groups for special education teachers and related service providers were scheduled during the school day. In order to ensure adequate participation in each group, the Division's Department of Accountability sent an internal survey to special education staff requesting their participation. All special education teaching staff who responded to the survey were invited to participate. The Department of Accountability also sent a survey to parents/families inviting them to participate in one of two evening sessions or during a daytime focus group session. The survey was sent to all parents/families of students with disabilities via email. The information was also posted in ACPS Express. Parent/families were offered the opportunity to participate in focus groups in their native language.

Within this report, no focus group or interview participants are personally referred to or quoted directly, although position titles are referenced in some cases when necessary for contextual reasons.

### **Organizational Focus Groups and Interviews**

In order to gain an understanding of how special education programs operate broadly within the Division, organizational focus groups and interviews were designed to include a range of stakeholders. Focus groups generally consisted of 10-12 participants, while interviews ranged from 1-3 participants. Except in rare circumstances, supervisors did not participate in the same focus group or interview sessions with their staff members, in order to give all staff an opportunity to speak candidly and honestly. The vast majority of focus groups occurred in person over a two-day time period in November 2017. Due to scheduling conflicts, some interviews were conducted over the phone or were conducted in person during a subsequent onsite time.

ACPS focus groups and interviews included a variety of central office staff, school-based staff, and family and community organization participants.

Central office staff included representatives from the following departments/offices:

- Office of the Superintendent
- Department of Accountability
- Department of Communications
- Department of Curriculum and Instruction
  - Office of Elementary School Instruction
  - Office of Secondary School Instruction
  - Office of Specialized Instruction
- Department of Finance
- Department of Student Services, Alternative Programs, and Equity
- Department of Human Resources
- Department of Technology
- Department of Transportation

School based staff included representatives from the following groups:

- School-based Administrators
- Special Education Teachers
- General Education Teachers
- Related Service Providers

Family and Community representatives included:

- School Board Members
- Parents/Families
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

### **Student File Review Focus Groups**

PCG conducted a series of student-centered file review focus groups that allowed for conversation about school-based practices, review of a variety of student documents (e.g., MTSS documentation, eligibility forms, IEP records, student progress reports.). Through this records review, PCG addressed a number of themes related to special education management, student identification, programs and services, curriculum and instruction and staffing, while addressing specific process questions about the development of IEPs, their implementation, and documentation. Participants included special education teachers and related service providers and individuals who both knew, and did not know, the student.

Student records were selected at random by PCG and included a wide cross-section of schools, ages, gender, and disability categories. It also included a combination of students with disabilities who were

English Learners and those who were not. ACPS staff printed relevant documents associated with the selected students, including the most recent evaluation, IEP, and progress report, and provided copies for discussion. Approximately 2-3 student records were discussed during each focus group session.

## School Observations

In October 2017 and February 2018, PCG conducted School Observations in ACPS's 16 schools, spending approximately one day per site.<sup>12</sup> PCG worked with the ACPS Department of Accountability to develop a memo to send to school principals several weeks ahead of these visits. The memo listed the date ranges for the schools' visits but did not include the exact days that each school would be visited.

PCG's School Observation protocol was designed to collect qualitative information about the school building as a whole and in individual classrooms. It focused on three key areas: 1) Safe and Accessible Environment, 2) Functions and Elements of Explicit Instruction, and 3) Specially Designed Instruction. On average 8-10 classrooms were observed during each school visit. PCG observed all instructional/service delivery settings (e.g., co-taught classes, pull out support, citywide programs.) across a wide representation of grades. The overall school environment, including non-instructional spaces such as the lunch room, office, and hallways, was also observed. Observations were not evaluative of specific staff; the intent was to document emerging trends both within the school and across schools.

## Student Shadowing Observations

In December 2017 and February/March 2018, PCG conducted Student Shadowing Observations in ACPS's 16 schools, spending roughly one day per site.<sup>13</sup> Approximately 3-5 students with IEPs per school were shadowed across a range of settings. The areas of focus paralleled those of the school observations: Safe and Accessible Environment; Functions and Elements of Explicit Instruction; and Specially Designed Instruction.

The goal of the student shadowing was two-fold:

- To document, for each student, the access that he/she had to high quality instruction, the fidelity of IEP implementation, the continuity of services, and the overall experience as a student receiving special education services.
- To assess the degree to which the student's schedule is followed, how the student receives his/her services, how lessons are differentiated, and how integrated the student is within the larger school environment (e.g., lunchroom, recess, Encore/elective classes.).

Students were selected at random by PCG and included a wide cross-section of grades/ages, gender, and disability categories. The sample also included a combination of students with disabilities who were English Learners and those who were not. Students included in the Student File Review Focus Groups discussion were excluded from the Student Shadowing Observation list. ACPS staff provided electronic copies of each student's most recent evaluation and IEP as well as student's schedules to PCG in advance of each visit.

## Staff and Parent/Family Surveys

An online survey process was implemented to collect data on stakeholder perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of special education services. PCG collaborated with the Division to disseminate two

<sup>12</sup> PCG did not conduct Classroom Observations at Chance for Change Academy, the T.C. Williams Satellite Campus, or the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center School.

<sup>13</sup> PCG did not conduct Student Shadowing Observations at Chance for Change Academy, the T.C. Williams Satellite Campus, or the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center School.

surveys: one to ACPS school staff and one to ACPS parents of students receiving special education services.

### **Survey Items**

Survey items were drawn from the research and practice literature in special education and clustered to acquire data from each stakeholder group regarding the extent to which these groups perceived that policies and practices shown in the literature to support effective programming, parent involvement, and positive results for students with special needs were evident in ACPS. To the extent possible, staff and parents were asked parallel questions to gauge how perceptions about the same topic differed.

The Division reviewed the survey items to verify their relevance and to add items where appropriate. The survey incorporated five-point rating scales, yes/no questions and included open-ended text areas. For reporting purposes, the five-point rating scale was consolidated into three categories: agree (which includes strongly agree and agree); disagree (which includes strongly disagree and disagree); and don't know or not applicable (where this option was provided to respondents).

### **Survey Process**

The Division worked collaboratively with the PCG team to facilitate a survey process that would result in the highest possible rate of return. In order to encourage participation, all potential participants were informed of the purpose of the survey and provided with instructions for accessing the survey online. An invitation letter was drafted, and two reminder emails were sent for the staff and the parent surveys. The parent survey was translated into three additional languages (Spanish, Arabic, and Amharic).

The following outreach methods were used for the parent survey:

- Emails went out to 1,602 emails in a first attempt. In total, 170 bounced or were undeliverable. Of the 170, 30 were able to be corrected.
- Additionally, the Office of Specialized Instruction (OSI) sent an email to the school-based administrators of elementary and middle schools requesting that computers be set up in the library or other appropriate location during parent/teacher conferences so that parents could complete the survey there as needed. (Secondary schools had already had parent conferences by the time the survey was opened.)
- The Parent Resource Center sent out an email and posted on it on their social media outlet.
- Text messages were attempted for 543 parents with one reminder text.

A total of 632 ACPS staff members, out of the 1,770 who received the survey, completed it online, representing a response rate of 36%. A total of 233 parents who received the survey, completed it online, representing a response rate of 16%.

A wide variety of staff were invited to participate in the survey. The following positions were included together to simplify the data reporting:

- Student Support Services – including Social Workers, Psychologists, Nurses, and Counselors
- Special Education Teachers – including Hearing/Visually-Impaired Teachers
- School-based Administrators – including Principals and Assistant Principals
- Related Service Providers – including Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Adaptive Physical Education Teachers, and Speech Therapists
- All Curriculum and Instruction Instructional Staff – including Instructional Specialists and other Coordinators within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction
- General Education Teachers
- All Staff – all of the roles listed above

### **Survey Analysis**

Selected survey responses appear within the main body of the report to support discussion of particular topics. Not all survey responses are included as part of the main discussion, but all results are presented in Appendix I (Staff Survey) and Appendix K (Parent Survey). Additional survey results may be referenced, as appropriate, in the text without data displays and the reader is directed to examine the appendix tables for further information.

## Research and Practice Literature

PCG reviewed recent special education research to highlight best practices on several topics, including:

- Organizational and financial structures, such as interdepartmental coordination procedures and staffing structures, that support effectiveness in large special education programs and school-based budgeting;
- Special education referral and eligibility practices that support districts in identifying students in a timely manner through an appropriate assessment process;
- Instructional practices, including district policies and results, and the use of technology to facilitate maximum access to the general education curriculum; and
- Appropriate progress monitoring to allow districts to identify successes and adjust swiftly when students are not progressing.

PCG also drew upon our own knowledge of other districts' policies and procedures when making recommendations for best practice.

## PCG Foundational Approach

PCG's approach to its work with state, county, and district organizations is as a thought partner. That is, we act as an outside agent, with an objective perspective, who works alongside educational entities to identify challenges and provide recommendations for improvement. We follow a mixed methods Collaborative Program Evaluation model that is systematic, based upon both qualitative and quantitative research methods, and produces credible and valid data that proactively informs program implementation, determines gaps, and offers recommendations for the continued improvement of the program.<sup>14</sup> We value the importance of developing trust, open communication, and fostering collaboration between the review team and program staff.

Our philosophy for guiding the transformation of special education in schools and districts is driven by the U.S. Department of Education's Results Driven Accountability (RDA) framework and rooted in key tenets of the Schoolwide Integrated Framework Transformation (SWIFT) model.

## Results Driven Accountability

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) recognized that the educational outcomes of children and youth with disabilities have not improved as much as expected even with intensive federal regulatory oversight and funding provided to address closing achievement gaps. The Department subsequently announced movement toward prioritizing improvement of outcomes for students with disabilities, from a one-size-fits-all, compliance-focused approach to general supervision to a more balanced system that looks at results and outcomes.<sup>15</sup> This approach is consistent with the IDEA, which requires the primary focus of monitoring to be on improving educational

<sup>14</sup> Donis-Keller, C., Meltzer, J., and Chmielewski, E. (2013). The Power of Collaborative Program Evaluation, A PCG Education White Paper. Available from [http://www.publicconsultinggroup.com/media/1272/pcg\\_collaborative\\_evaluation.pdf](http://www.publicconsultinggroup.com/media/1272/pcg_collaborative_evaluation.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> April 5, 2012, RDA Summary, U.S. Department of Education. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/rda-summary.doc>

results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities, and ensuring that states meet IDEA program requirements. RDA fulfills these requirements by bringing into focus the educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities while balancing those results with the compliance requirements of IDEA.<sup>16</sup> When providing guidance to school districts, PCG offers recommendations that strike this balance as well.

### **Schoolwide Integrated Framework Transformation (SWIFT) Model**

Based on research related to the improvement of achievement and social/emotional outcomes for students with disabilities, the SWIFT model has received recognition by and support from OSEP.<sup>17</sup> SWIFT refocuses existing traditional educational approaches to general and special education and expands inclusiveness for students covered by Title 1, those from low-income backgrounds and English Learners (ELs).

According to researchers and practitioners at the University of Kansas, and as validated by members of the PCG review team's experience working with districts nationally, there are six critical issues facing public schools, especially chronically low-performing schools, which have suppressed academic and social/emotional outcomes for students and must be addressed to reverse this trend: 1) fragmented support "silos" and lack of family partnership with schools; 2) achievement gaps between subgroups of students based on social, language and/or disability characteristics; 3) lack of student engagement and behavior that impedes learning; 4) lack of implementation of both systems level and student-level evidence-based interventions with fidelity; 5) lack of knowledge sharing and resource availability; and 6) lack of sustainability and replication of successful schoolwide models of inclusive education.<sup>18</sup>

SWIFT's five core domains for school and district improvement are backed by research and growing evidence that addressing the above six issues is critical for improving outcomes for SWDs. The domains include a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which provides interventions and support for students at varied levels of intensity and focuses on the importance of good first teaching, and a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) curriculum and instruction. It aims to build school capacity to provide academic and behavioral support to improve outcomes for all students through equity-based inclusion. The domains, in detail, are:

- **Administrative Leadership.** A deeply engaged administrative leadership that is committed to transformative inclusive education.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).** Use of a MTSS where all academic and behavioral instruction is delivered through a schoolwide data-driven system utilizing universal design at all grade levels.
- **Integrated Educational Framework.** A strong and positive school culture creates an atmosphere in which everyone feels like they belong. To the extent possible, all students participate in the general education curriculum instruction and activities of their grade level peers. Schools embrace ways to redefine roles of paraeducators and teaching assistants to support all students.
- **Family/Community Partnerships.** Family and community partnerships are formed, and families are actively engaged in both the organizational makeup of the school as well as their child's education.
- **Inclusive Policy Structure & Practice.** District-level support and integrated policy structure are fully aligned and remove barriers and misconceptions surrounding implementation.

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<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> The SWIFT Center's work was supported by a \$24.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs to support SWIFT implementation in states and school districts across the country and remains one of the leading frameworks for school improvement. See for more information see the SWIFT website at <http://www.swiftschools.org>

<sup>18</sup> Swift Schools. <http://www.swiftschools.org/sites/default/files/SWIFT%20FIT%20Technical%20Adequacy%20Report.pdf>

In addition, PCG emphasizes the need for intentional support that takes into consideration students' linguistic and cultural diversity. Districtwide and schoolwide practices based on these components provide a practitioner-focused, research-based, and federally recognized approach to improving academic/social emotional outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities and other students who have not achieved at or above expected levels of proficiency.

## Terminology

There are several terms used throughout this report that require definition and clarification within the ACPS context. References are made to students receiving special education services. They will also be referred to as students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or students with disabilities (SWDs). The terms are intended to be interchangeable. Additionally, references will be made to parents. A parent is defined as a natural or adoptive parents of a child, a guardian, a parent acting in the place of a parent (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare) or a surrogate parent. The term "parent" is inclusive of families as well.

Additionally, there are two terms used that are specific to the local context. The federal data reporting category of "emotional disturbance" is known as "emotional disability" in Virginia. The term "emotional disability," even when data exhibits include national comparative data, is used throughout the report. Additionally, the term "school division" is used when referring to school entities within Virginia. In cases where references are made to national best practices or comparisons are made to entities outside of Virginia however, the terms "school district" or "district" are used.

An index of acronyms used throughout this report is provided below, and also in Appendix E.

**ADA** Americans With Disabilities Act

**ACPS** Alexandria City Public Schools (or Division)

**SEAC** Special Education Advisory Committee

**AT** Assistive Technology

**CCEIS** Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervention Services

**CST** Child Study Team

**DD** Developmental Delay (disability)

**ED** Emotional Disability

**ED** U.S. Department of Education

**EI** Early Intervention

**EL** English Learner

**ELA** English Language Arts

**ECSE** Early Childhood Special Education

**ESSA** Every Student Succeeds Act

**FAPE** Free Appropriate Public Education

**FERPA** Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

**ID** Intellectual Disability

**IDEA** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**IEP** Individualized Education Program

**LEA** Local Education Agency

**LRE** Least Restrictive Environment

**MTSS** Multi-Tiered System of Supports

**OCR** Office for Civil Rights

**OSEP** Office of Special Education Programs

**OSI** Office of Specialized Instruction

**OHI** Other Health Impairment (disability)

**PBIS** Positive Behavior Intervention Support

**PD** Professional Development

**PRC** Parent Resource Center

**PCG** Public Consulting Group

**RDA** Results Driven Accountability

**RtI** Response to Intervention

**Section 504** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

**SIS** Student Information System

**SLI** Speech/language Impairment disability

**SLD** Specific Learning Disability

**SOL** Virginia Standards of Learning

**SBM** Site-based Management

**SOPM** Standard Operating Procedures Manual

**SPP** State Performance Plan

**SST** Student Support Team

**SWD** Students with Disabilities

**VASS** Virginia Association of School Superintendents

**VDOE** Virginia Department of Education

**UDL** Universal Design for Learning

**WABE** Washington Area Boards of Education

## Members of the PCG Team

**PCG's team members include:**

- Dr. Jennifer Meller, Project Director. Former Director in Specialized Services for the School District of Philadelphia.
- Will Gordillo, Subject Matter Expert. Former Executive Director of Exceptional Student Services in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach County School Districts.
- Anna D'Entremont, Subject Matter Expert. Former COO of a Boston, MA charter school and program officer for an organization supporting 85 new small high schools across New York City.
- Dr. Christine Donis-Keller, Research and Evaluation Specialist.
- Matthew Scott, Project/research support.

## II. Characteristics of Students with Disabilities

### Key Strengths

- **Inclusive Settings.** ACPS students with disabilities are educated more frequently in an inclusive general education setting and less frequently in a separate setting.
- **Separate Settings.** ACPS consistently was below the state target for students educated less than 40% in the general education setting.
- **Dropout and Graduation Rates.** ACPS had a lower dropout rate than other comparable divisions and the state average. In 2017, ACPS graduated a slightly higher percentage of students with an IEP than the state average.

### Opportunities for Improvement

- **Annual Determination.** ACPS received an overall “Needs Assistance” determination from VDOE for both 2014-15 and 2015-16.
- **Significant Disproportionality.** VDOE determined that ACPS has significant disproportionality in the area of African American students with an emotional disability.
- **Achievement Gaps.** There are significant achievement gaps between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers in reading/ELA and math.

This section provides context for special education programming by reporting special education prevalence rates based on various subgroups of students, including analysis by disability type, race/ethnicity, and gender. Specifically, it addresses data pertaining to the overall percentage of students with IEPs based on total student enrollment and disability area, comparisons to state and national data, and composition by race/ethnicity. This information provides an overall background for understanding the disparate characteristics of students who receive special education services. Data from the State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators are also presented to benchmark ACPS against state and national averages in specific areas.

Throughout the report, PCG has used the most current data available. All national data are from the 2015-16 school year, which is the most up-to-date publicly available data set. In cases where comparisons are made to national data, 2015-16 ACPS and state data are used. When comparisons are made between ACPS and other Virginia school divisions, publicly accessible 2016-17 data from the VDOE website are used. For data displays that only include ACPS information, 2016-17 data are used. These data were provided to PCG in July 2017. Comparable school divisions were selected based on similar demographics and size to ACPS.

### State Performance Plan (SPP) and Results Driven Accountability (RDA)

The United States Department of Education (ED), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has established State Performance Plan (SPP) requirements that include 17 indicators. Based on requirements set by OSEP, each state is required to develop annual targets and monitor Local Education Agency (LEA) performance on each special education indicator. The state must report annually to the public on its overall performance and on the performance of each of its LEAs according to the targets in its SPP. Both states and LEAs receive one of the following “determinations” annually: 1) meets the

requirements and purposes of the IDEA, 2) needs assistance in implementing the requirements of IDEA, 3) needs intervention in implementing the requirements of IDEA, 4) needs substantial intervention in implementing the requirements of the IDEA. Annual determinations dictate the amount of oversight or monitoring a state or LEA may receive the following year. ACPS received a “Needs Assistance” determination for both 2014-15 and 2015-16.<sup>19</sup>

OSEP has been criticized in past years that the SPP indicators are heavily focused on compliance, and have limited focus on results for students with disabilities. As a result, in 2013, the Department announced its intention to change this practice and to include test scores, graduation rates, and post-school outcomes as the basis of the new Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) structure. The intent of RDA is to strike a balance between the focus on improved results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities, while still adhering to the compliance requirements of IDEA. RDA is designed to be transparent and understandable and to drive the improved academic and functional achievement for students with IEPs. The SPP indicator data collected takes on additional importance now that OSEP has moved to the RDA framework, as there are points associated with both a “Part B Compliance Matrix” and a “Part B Results Driven Accountability Matrix.” Taken together, these scores constitute an RDA Determination and conclude whether districts and, ultimately states, meet IDEA requirements. The Division has received an RDA determination of “Meets Requirements” for 2013-14 with an 87.5% score. For the past two years the Division received an RDA determination of “Needs Assistance” with a 73% score for both 2014-15 and 2015-16.

### IDEA Part B Indicators

- Indicator 1: Graduation Rate
- Indicator 2: Dropout Rate
- Indicator 3: Assessment (Participation and Performance)
- Indicator 4: Rates of Suspension
- Indicator 5: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Age 6-21
- Indicator 6: Preschool LRE, Age 3-5
- Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes
- Indicator 8: Parent Involvement
- Indicators 9, 10: Disproportionate Representation Due to Inappropriate Identification
- Indicator 11: Timely Initial Evaluations
- Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition
- Indicator 13: Secondary Transition
- Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes
- Indicators 15, 16: Dispute Resolution
- Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan

In the following sections, longitudinal SPP data are presented, alongside state targets, for select indicators. Additional data are presented in these three categories:

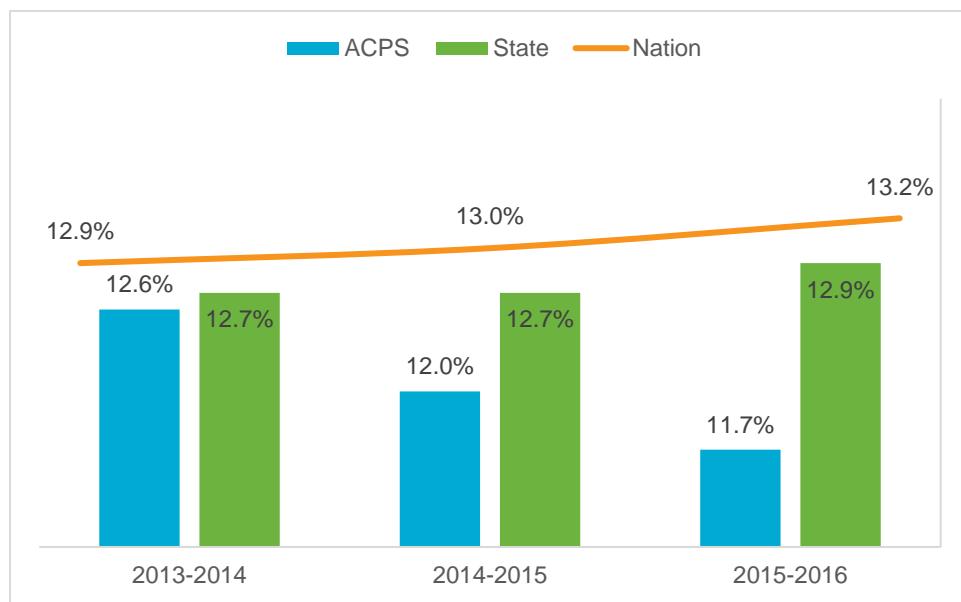
- Special Education Demographics
- Achievement Data for Students with IEPs
- Educational Setting Data for Students with IEPs

## Special Education Demographics

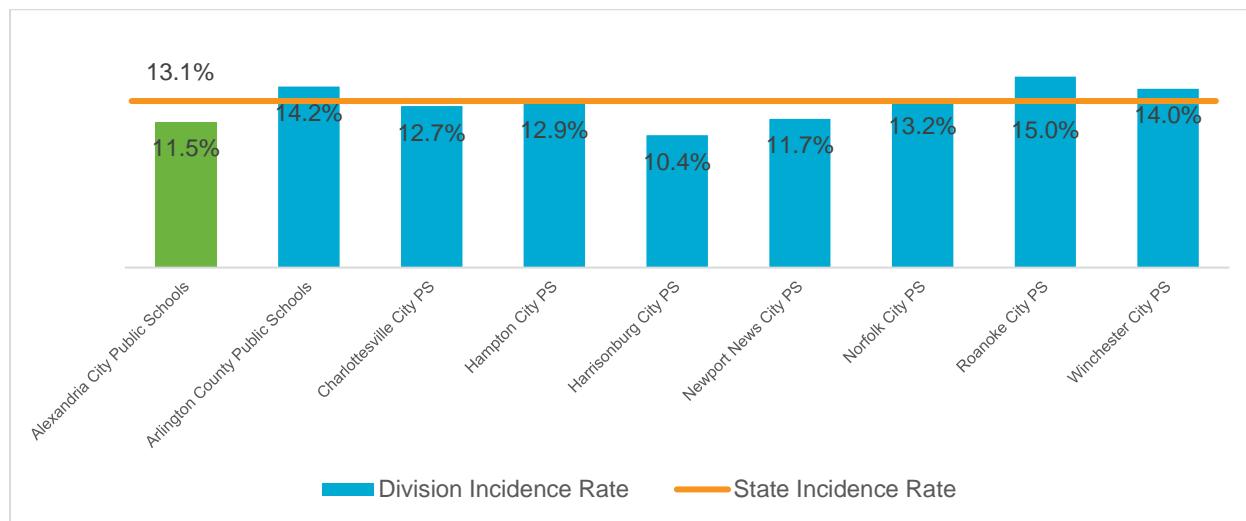
### Overall Rates for Students with Disabilities

As reflected in the figure below, the percentage of ACPS students with IEPs ages 3-21 has decreased from 12.6% in 2013-14 to 11.7% in 2015-16. These rates have trended below the statewide and national averages for these three years.

<sup>19</sup> 2015-16 is the most currently available data.

**Exhibit 1. Percentage of ACPS Students with IEPs Compared to State and Nation, 2013-14 to 2015-16****ACPS and Comparable Division Incidence Rates**

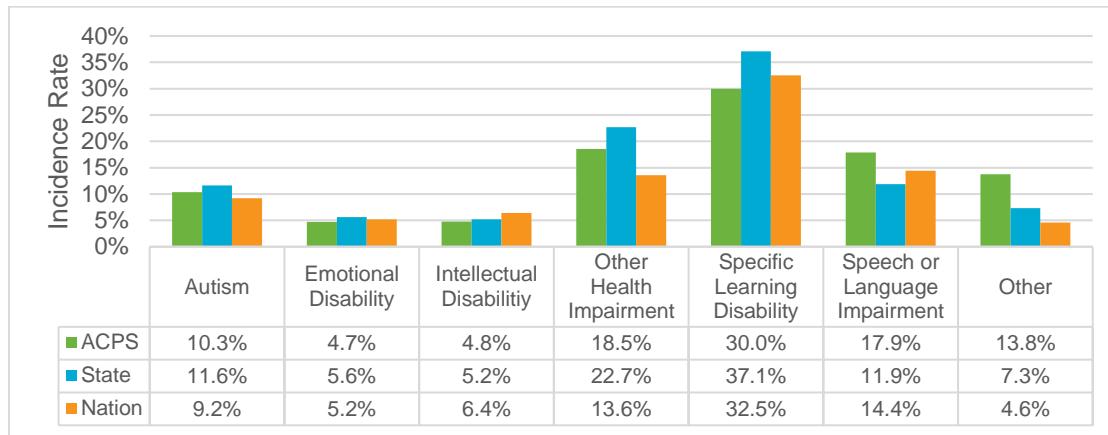
ACPS's 2016-17 incidence rate was 11.5%, which is lower than the rates for the following divisions: Arlington (14.2%), Charlottesville City (12.7%), Hampton City (12.9%), Newport News City (11.7%), Norfolk City (13.2%), Roanoke City (15.0%), and Winchester City (14.0%). Harrisonburg City had an incidence rate of 10.4%, which is lower than ACPS's rate.

**Exhibit 2. ACPS IEP Rates Compared to Other Virginia School Divisions and State (ages 3-21), 2016-17****Overall Incidence Rates by Primary Disability Area**

As reflected in the figure below, ACPS had a higher rate of students with autism (10.3%) compared to the nation (9.2%), but lower than the state average (11.6%). ACPS had a higher rate of students with other health impairments (18.5%) compared to the nation (13.6%), but a lower rate than the state average.

(22.7%). The Division's rate of speech or language impairments (17.9%) was higher than the national average of 14.4% and higher than the state average of 11.9%. ACPS's incidence rates for emotional disability, intellectual disability, and specific learning disability were below the state and national averages.

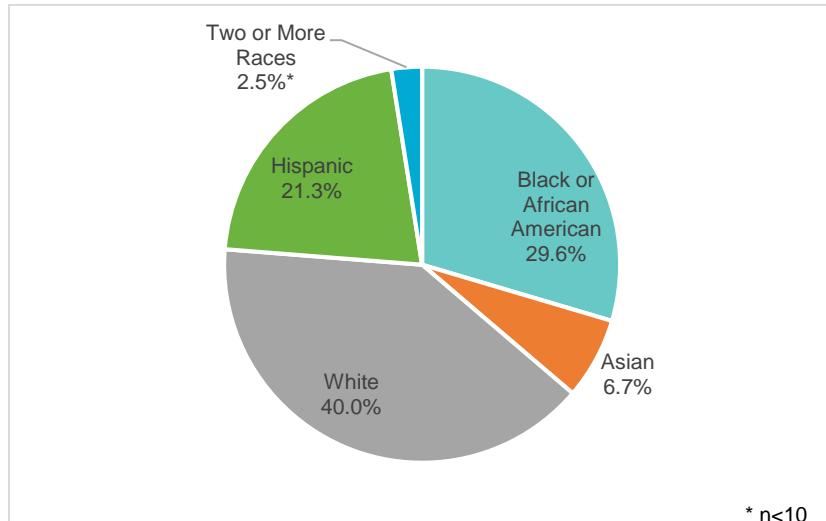
**Exhibit 3. Percentage of ACPS SWDs by Disability Area Compared to State and Nation (ages 3-21), 2015-16<sup>20</sup>**



## Overall Incidence Rates by Race/Ethnicity

The information below reflects data for ACPS students who received special education services, by race/ethnicity, to consider the extent to which there was disproportionality.

**Exhibit 4. Percentage of ACPS Students with IEPs (ages 3-5) by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17<sup>21</sup>**



Of the total number of students ages 3-5 with an IEP:

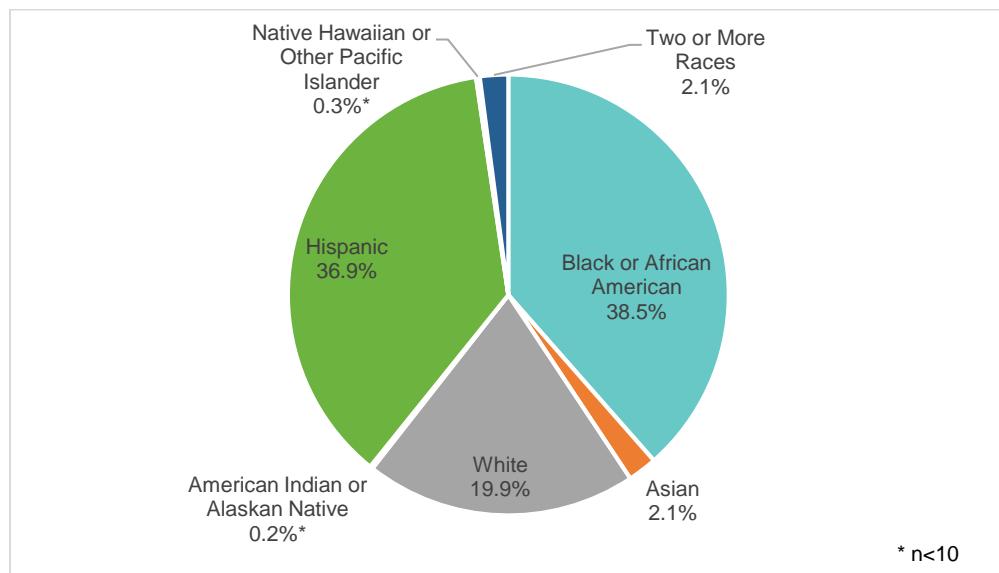
- 40.0% were White
- 29.6% were Black or African American
- 21.3% were Hispanic

<sup>20</sup> The area of "other" incorporates the following disability areas: sensory, physical, neurological, and multiple disabilities.

<sup>21</sup> Data for Race/Ethnicity charts is from ACPS End of Year 2017 student level data, provided to PCG in June 2017.

- 6.7% were Asian
- 2.5% were Two or More Races
- There were no students ages 3-5 enrolled with an IEP with the following race/ethnicities: Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaskan Native.

**Exhibit 5. Percent of ACPS Students with IEPs (ages 6-21) by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17<sup>22</sup>**

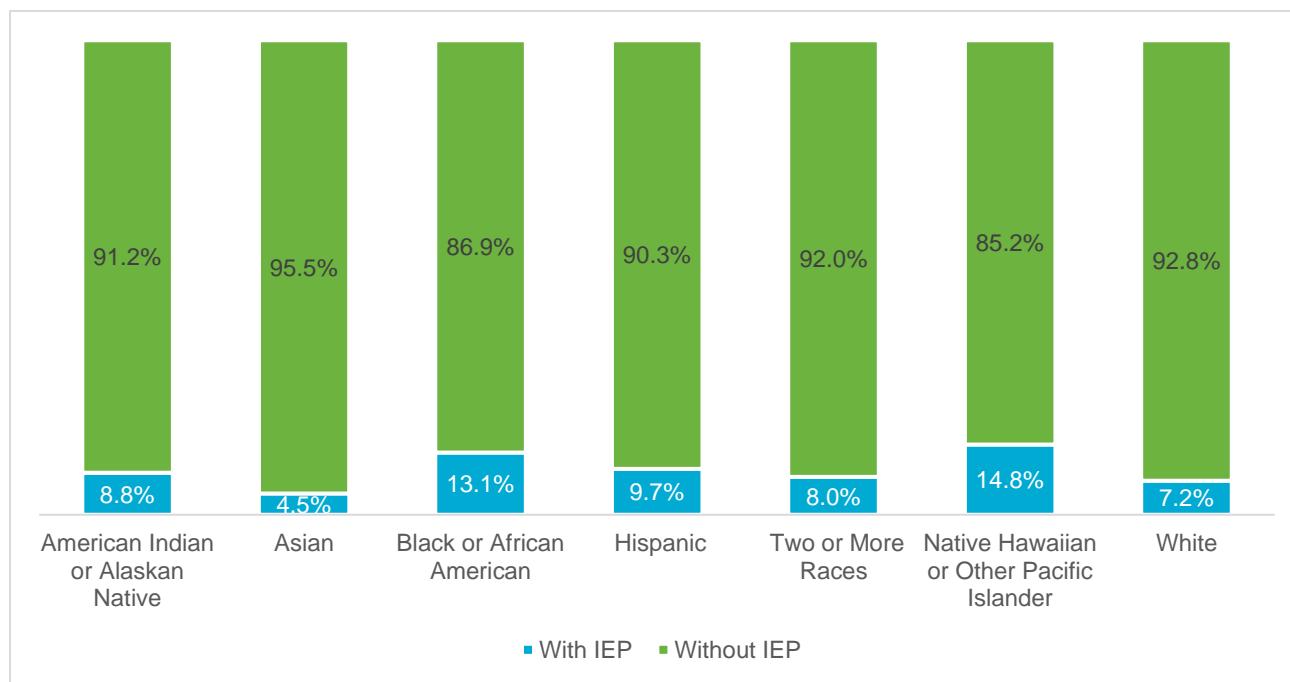


Of the total number of students ages 6-21 with an IEP:

- 38.5% were Black or African American
- 36.9% were Hispanic
- 19.9% were White
- 2.1% were Two or More Races
- 2.1% were Asian
- 0.3% were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 0.2% were American Indian or Alaskan Native

As points of comparison: Black or African American students accounted for 28.5% of the total student population, White students accounted for 27% of the total student population, and Hispanic students account for 36.9% of the total student population.

<sup>22</sup> Data for Race/Ethnicity charts is from ACPS End of Year 2017 student level data, provided to PCG in June 2017.

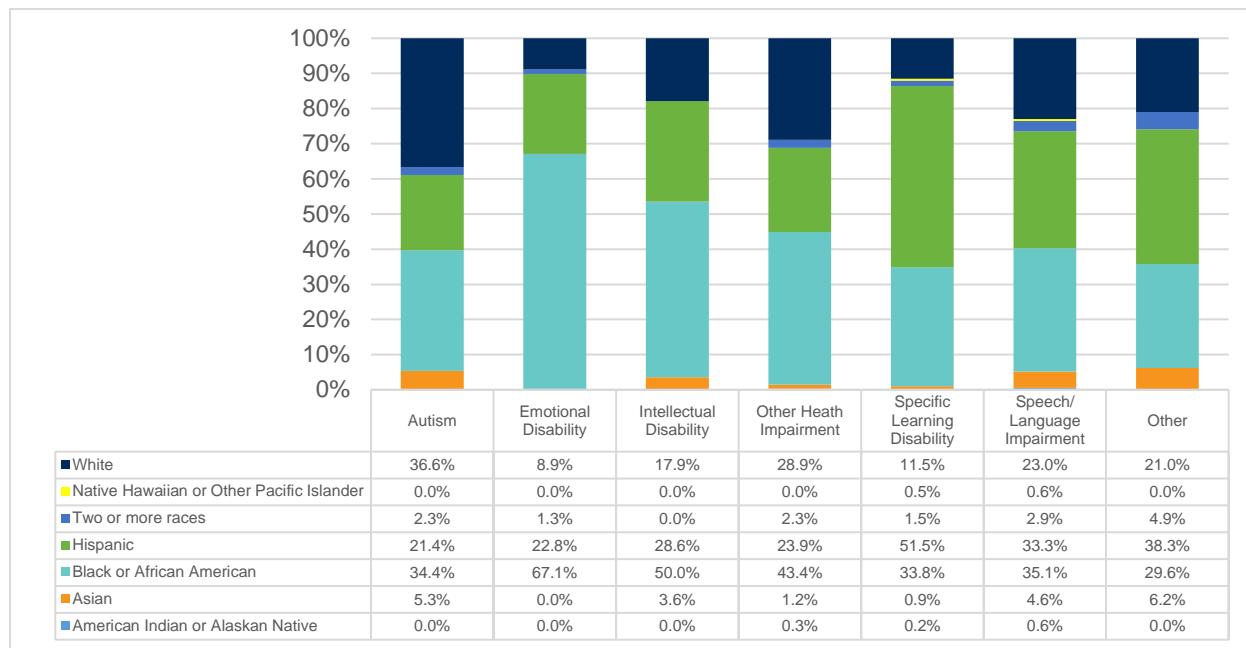
**Exhibit 6. Percentage of ACPS Students with and without IEPs (ages 6-21) by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17<sup>2324</sup>**

Of all students who were:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native students, 8.8% had IEPs.
- Asian, 4.5% had IEPs.
- Black or African American students, 13.1% had IEPs.
- Hispanic, 9.7% had IEPs.
- Two or More Races, 8.0% had IEPs.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 14.8% had IEPs.
- White, 7.2% had IEPs.

<sup>23</sup> Data for Race/Ethnicity charts is from ACPS End of Year 2017 student level data, provided to PCG in June 2017.

<sup>24</sup> n<10 for American Indian or Alaskan Native and for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

Exhibit 7. Percentage of ACPS Students (ages 6-21) by Disability Area and Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17<sup>25</sup>

In many cases, the prevalence of disability types varies by race. Key differences, displayed in the graph above, include:

- White students represented 36.6% of students with autism but only 17.9% of those with intellectual disabilities and 11.5% of those with specific learning disabilities. White students were more often identified with autism (36.6%) or under the category other health impairment (28.9%) than other race/ethnic groups.
- Black or African American students were more often identified with emotional (67.1%) or intellectual disability (50.0%).
- Over 51% of students classified with a specific learning disability are Hispanic. Additionally, over 38% of Hispanic students had either a sensory, physical, neurological, or multiple disabilities.

## Disproportionate Representation in Special Education by Race/Ethnicity

Racial/ethnic disproportionality in special education has been an important topic of concern for many years. According to a review in *Exceptional Children*: “the disproportionate representation of minority children is among the most critical and enduring problems in the field of special education.”<sup>26</sup>

Disproportionality refers to a group’s representation in a particular category that exceeds expectations for that group, or differs substantially from the representation of others in that category. Students from some certain racial/ethnic groups, particularly Black or African American students, have historically been disproportionately identified as in need of special education, placed in more restrictive settings, and subjected to higher rates of exclusionary disciplinary practices, such as suspension and expulsion.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The area of “other” incorporates the following disability areas: sensory, physical, neurological, and multiple disabilities. n<10 for American Indian or Alaskan Native and for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

<sup>26</sup> Skiba et al., 2008, p. 264.

<sup>27</sup> NASP Position Statement: Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality in Education, 2013.

Disproportionality can exist in various forms:

- National, state and district levels over-identification of students as disabled, or under identified as gifted/talented.
- Over-representation in classification, placement and suspension.
- Under-representation in intervention services, resources, access to programs and rigorous curriculum and instruction.
- Higher incidence rates for certain populations in specific special education categories, such as cognitively impaired or emotionally handicapped.
- Excessive incidence, duration, and types of disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions experienced by minority students.<sup>28</sup>

Researchers have recognized that disproportionality produces inequitable opportunities to learn. While special education services can provide access to additional educational opportunities, they can also serve to “stigmatize children and marginalize them from general education... [and there is] ample evidence indicating that groups who are disproportionately represented in special education are negatively affected by factors such as stigmatization, lowered expectations, fewer opportunities to learn, substandard instruction, and isolation from the general education environment.”<sup>29</sup> Lower expectations can lead to diminished academic and post-secondary opportunities for students with disabilities.

### **Significant Disproportionality Indicators**

States must collect and examine data for each of their districts annually to determine if significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity is occurring with respect to:

- the identification of children as children with disabilities, including identification of children with particular disabilities;
- the placement of children in particular educational environments; and
- the incidence, duration, and type of disciplinary actions, including suspensions/expulsions.

These data are collected and reported under Indicators 4, 9, and 10 of the State Performance Plan (SPP). If significant disproportionality is identified, states must: (1) provide for the review and, if appropriate, revision of policies, procedures, and practices; (2) require the district to reserve the maximum amount of funds (15%) to be used for comprehensive coordinated early intervening services (CCEIS); and (3) require the district to publicly report on the revision of policies, procedures, and practices.<sup>30</sup>

In prior years, ACPS was found to be in compliance with Indicators 4, 9 and 10<sup>31</sup>; however, the Division received notification from VDOE in February 2018 that it has been identified as having significant disproportionality in the area of African American students with an emotional disability and is required to set aside 15% of its 2018-19 Part B grant award for the provision of Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS).

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<sup>28</sup> Effectively Utilizing Data To Inform Decision-Making (Disproportionality), LRE Training Module Office of Special Education New Jersey Department of Education 2015/2016 School Year.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> IDEA Data Center (May, 2014). Methods for Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education: A Technical Assistance Guide (Revised), Westat, Rockville, MD, Julie Bollmer, Jim Bethel, Tom Munk, and Amy Bitterman.

<sup>31</sup> Retrieved from the VDOE's 2014 State Performance Plan Revision.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/reports\\_plans\\_stats/state\\_performance\\_plan/2014\\_revision.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/state_performance_plan/2014_revision.pdf)

## Risk Ratios by Race/Ethnicity and Disability

One of the most useful, informative, and proactive methods used to calculate disproportionality "is the risk ratio, which compares one racial/ethnic group's risk of receiving special education and related services to that of all other students."<sup>32</sup> The risk ratio can be used to calculate disproportionality at both the state and district levels. The risk ratio tool tells school personnel how the risk for one racial/ethnic group compares to the risk for a comparison group.<sup>33</sup> It can be used to assess:

- What the likelihood is that a student from a particular racial or ethnic group will be classified as disabled, be given a specific disability classification, or placed in a most restrictive environment
- What the likelihood is that a student with a disability from a particular racial or ethnic group will be suspended for more than 10 days

As a concept, "risk" looks at the general enrollment data for each racial group along with the number of students from that group who were identified for a specified category and calculates the likelihood that a student from that racial group would be found in that particular category. The general risk equation is as follows:

$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Number of children from racial/ethnic group in disability category}}{\text{Number of enrolled children from racial/ethnic group}} \times 100$$

As shown in the exhibit below, a risk ratio greater than 2.0 or a racial/ethnic group indicates over-representation, while a risk ratio less than 1.0 indicates under-representation.

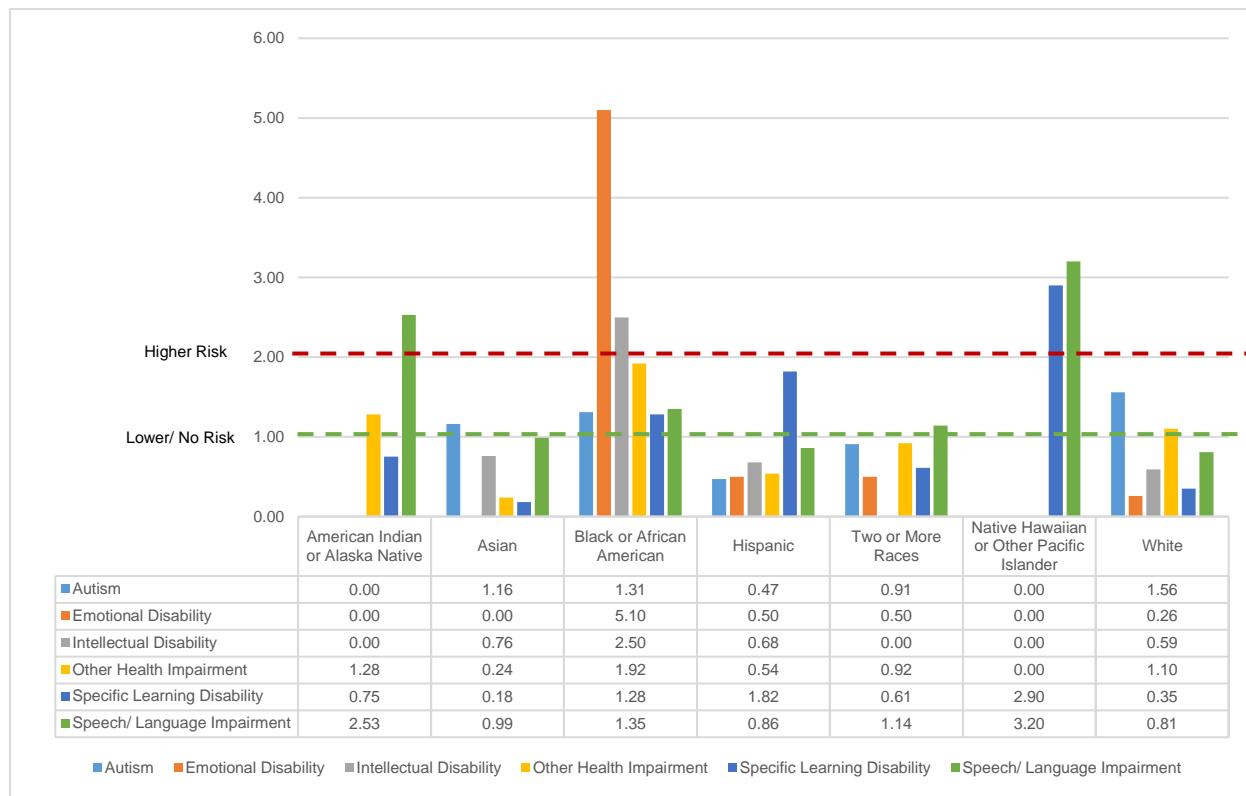
PCG conducted a risk ratio analysis of ACPS data to identify areas where disproportionate over-identification of students with disabilities based on disability, race, and discipline may be occurring. This tool can be used to inform ongoing analysis and monitoring.

In ACPS:

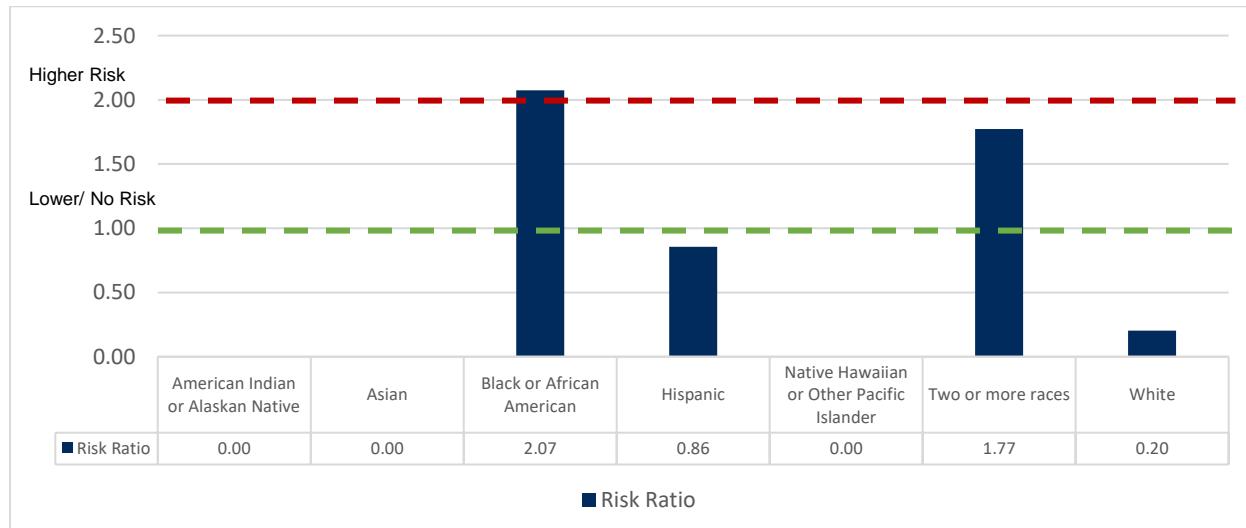
- Black or African Americans were five times more likely to be identified as having an emotional disability, and two and a half times more likely to be identified as having an intellectual disability.
- American Indian or Alaska Native students are two and half times more likely to be identified as having a Speech or Language Impairment.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students were almost three times more likely to be identified as having a specific learning disability, and three times more likely to be identified as having a speech or language impairment.

<sup>32</sup> Bollmer, J. Bethel, et al. (2007). Using the Risk Ratio to Assess Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education at the School-District Level. *The Journal of Special Education*, Vol 41, Issue 3, pp. 186–98.

<sup>33</sup> Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Special Education: A Multi-Year Disproportionality Analysis by State, Analysis Category, and Race/Ethnicity, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, February 2016.

**Exhibit 8. Risk Ratios by Race/Ethnicity and Disability, 2016-17<sup>3435</sup>**

As indicated in the exhibit below, Black or African American students with disabilities were twice as likely to be suspended for 1-10 days when compared to their peers.

**Exhibit 9. Risk Ratios for SWDs Suspended 1-10 days by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17<sup>36</sup>**

<sup>34</sup> Data for Race/Ethnicity charts is from ACPS End of Year 2017 student level data, provided to PCG in June 2017.

<sup>35</sup> n<10 for American Indian or Alaskan Native and for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

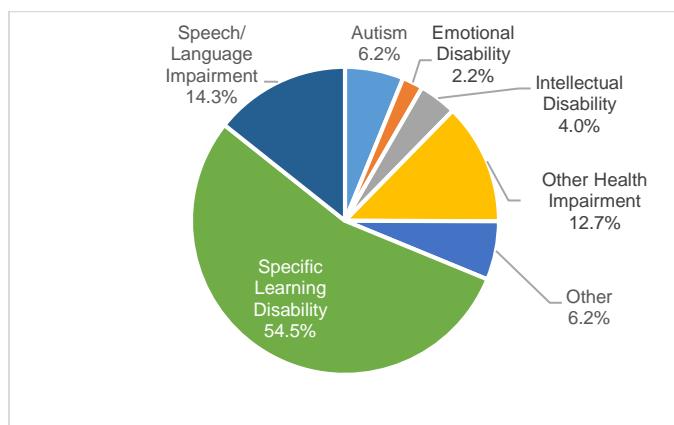
<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

## Overall Incidence Rates for EL Students

According to 2016-17 data, 4,803 students in ACPS ages 6-21 were English Learner (EL) students, representing 32.1% of the overall student population. Of that number, 518 students had an IEP, representing 10.8% of the total EL student population.

According to ACPS 2016-17 data, 1,446 students ages 6-21 had an IEP. EL students accounted for 34.9% of all students with an IEP. The exhibit below reflects the percentage of EL students by disability category. The majority of EL students with IEPs (54.5%) were those with a specific learning disability. Another 14% of this population had a speech/language impairment.

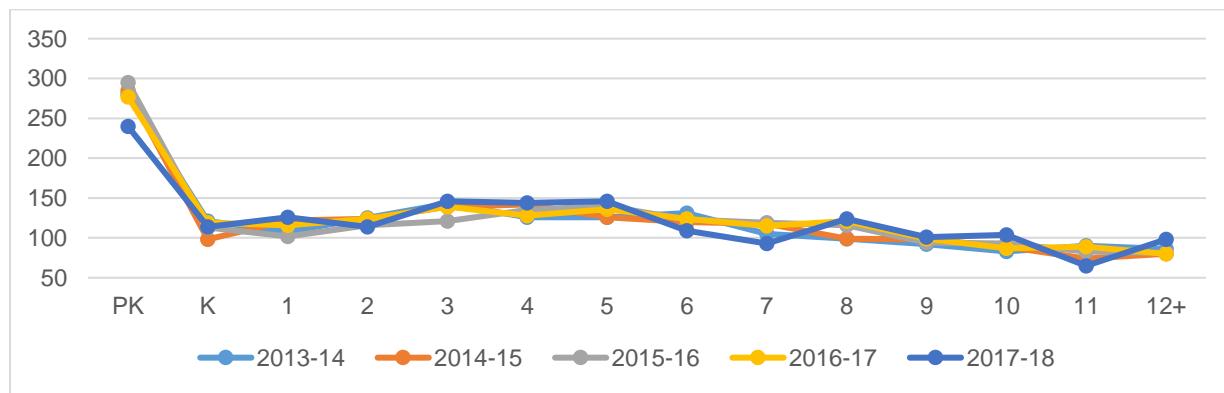
**Exhibit 10. Percentage of EL Students by Disability, 2016-17<sup>37</sup>**



## Overall Incidence Rates by Grade

Over the past five years, the number of students receiving special education services has generally followed the same trends.

**Exhibit 11. Number of Students (ages 3-21) Receiving Special Education Services by Grade, 2013-14 to 2016-17<sup>38</sup>**



<sup>37</sup> ACPS End of Year 2017 student level data, provided to PCG in June 2017.

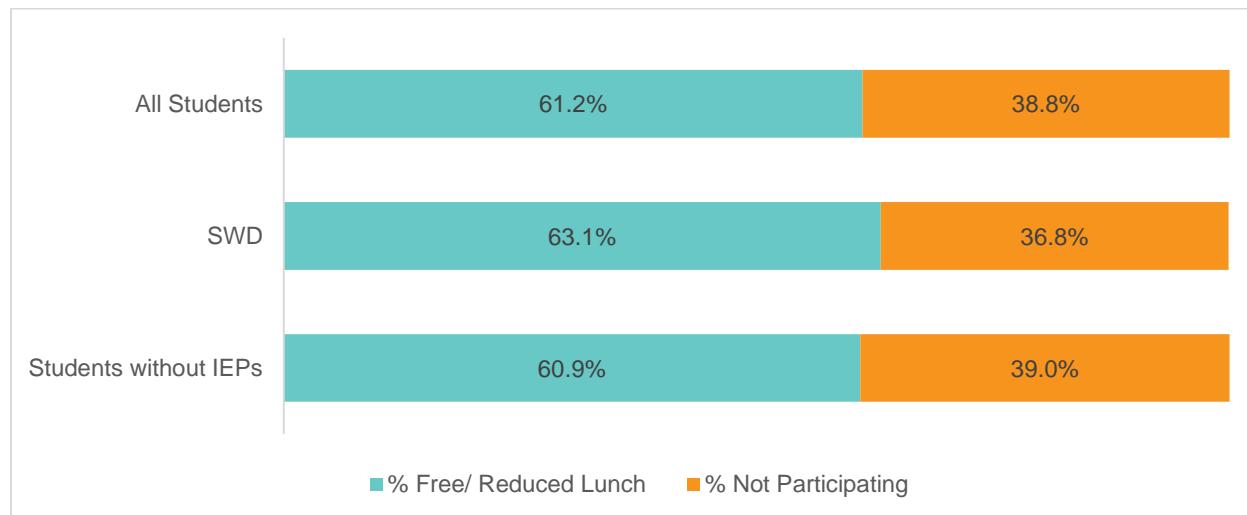
<sup>38</sup> Data for years 2013-14 to 2016-17 obtained through Child Count reports.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/reports\\_plans\\_stats/child\\_count/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/child_count/index.shtml); data for 2017-18 obtained through Fall Membership Report: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/enrollment/fall\\_membership/report\\_data.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/enrollment/fall_membership/report_data.shtml)

## Overall Incidence Rates by Low Income Status

Overall, 61.2% of all students participated in the free and/or reduced lunch program. Similarly, 60.9% of non-disabled students and 63.1% of students with an IEP participated in the free and/or reduced lunch program.

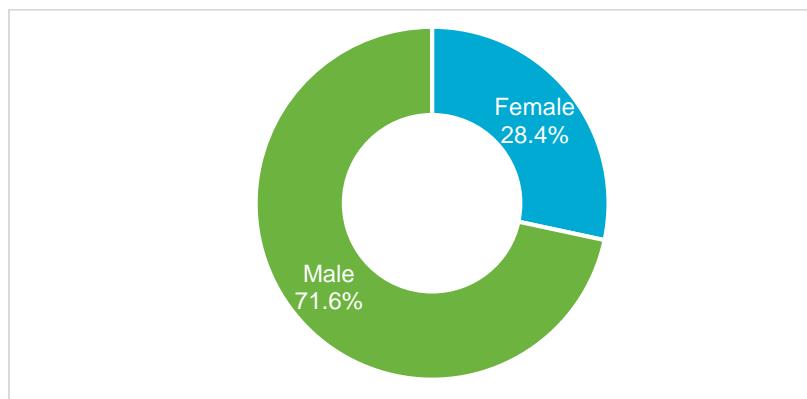
**Exhibit 12. Percentage of SWDs vs. Percent of Students without IEPs Participating in Free and/or Reduced Lunch, 2016-17**



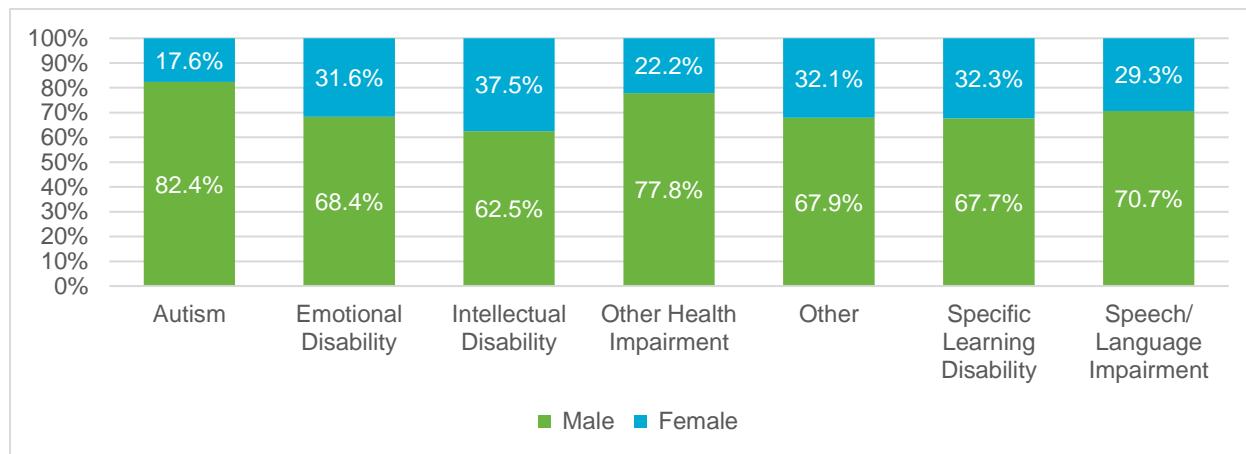
## Overall Incidence Rates by Gender

Overall, 71.6% of all ACPS students with IEPs were male, and 28.4% were female. These percentages are 5 percentage points higher, and 5 percentage points lower, respectively, of the national data, wherein roughly two-thirds of students receiving special education services were male (67%) and one third (33%) were female.<sup>39</sup>

**Exhibit 13. Percentage of ACPS Students with IEPs (ages 6-21) by Gender, 2016-17**



<sup>39</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs, 25th Annual (2003) Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, vol. 1, Washington, D.C., 2005.

**Exhibit 14. Percentage of ACPS Students with IEPs (ages 6-21) by Gender and Disability, 2016-17<sup>40</sup>**

Male students comprised the majority of all disabilities categories. They constituted 82.4% of students with autism, 68.4% of students with an emotional disability, 77.8% of those with a health impairment, and 70.7% of those with a speech/language impairment.

## Achievement Data for Students with IEPs

The Department's Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) vision for RDA was for all accountability components to be aligned to supporting states in improving results for students with disabilities. This approach is consistent with IDEA, which requires that the primary focus of the federal program be on improving educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities, along with meeting IDEA requirements. RDA fulfills these requirements by focusing both on outcomes for students with disabilities and on the compliance portions of the law.<sup>41</sup>

According to its State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR), Virginia is implementing ED's Results Driven Accountability (RDA) priorities by using all indicators (compliance and performance) to make determinations. The state's required State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) focuses on the graduation rates of students with disabilities, specifically those identified with a specific learning disability (SLD), other health impairment (OHI), emotional disability (ED), and/or intellectual disability (ID).

Beginning in 2015, the U.S. Department of Education developed a compliance determination rating based on the RDA described earlier. Two matrices were used for this purpose, with 50 percent of the ratings based on results and 50 percent based on compliance, with districts and states receiving an overall RDA determination.<sup>42</sup> As noted previously, the Division has received an RDA determination of "Meets Requirements" for 2013-14 with an 87.5% score. For the past two years the Division received an RDA determination of "Needs Assistance" with a 73% score for both 2014-15 and 2015-16.

<sup>40</sup> The Other category includes: DB, DD, HI, MD, OI, TBI, VI.

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Department of Education RDA Summary. April 5, 2012. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/rda-summary.doc>

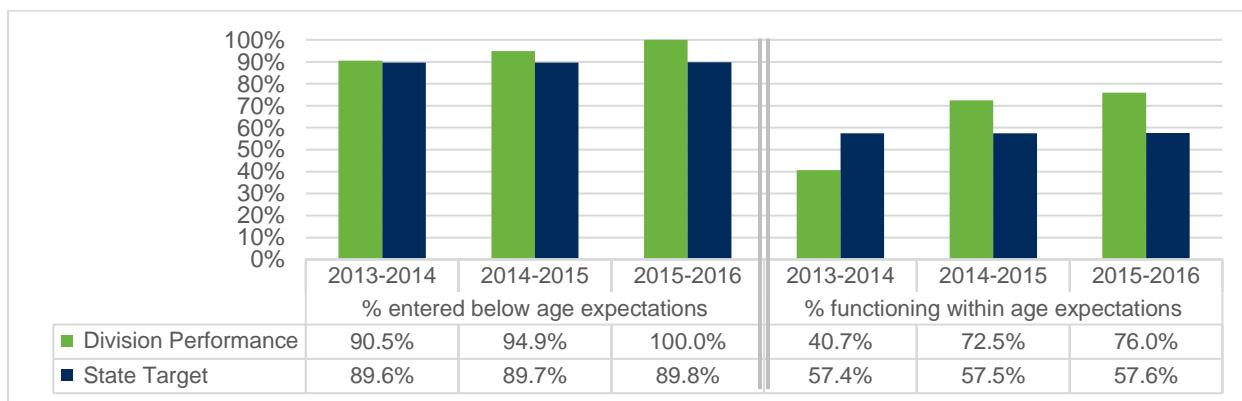
<sup>42</sup> For a full explanation of ED's methodology, see How the Department Made Determinations under Section 616(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2015: Part B <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/partbspap/2015/2015-part-b-how-determinations-made.pdf>

## Achievement Outcomes for Students with IEPs (Ages 3-5)

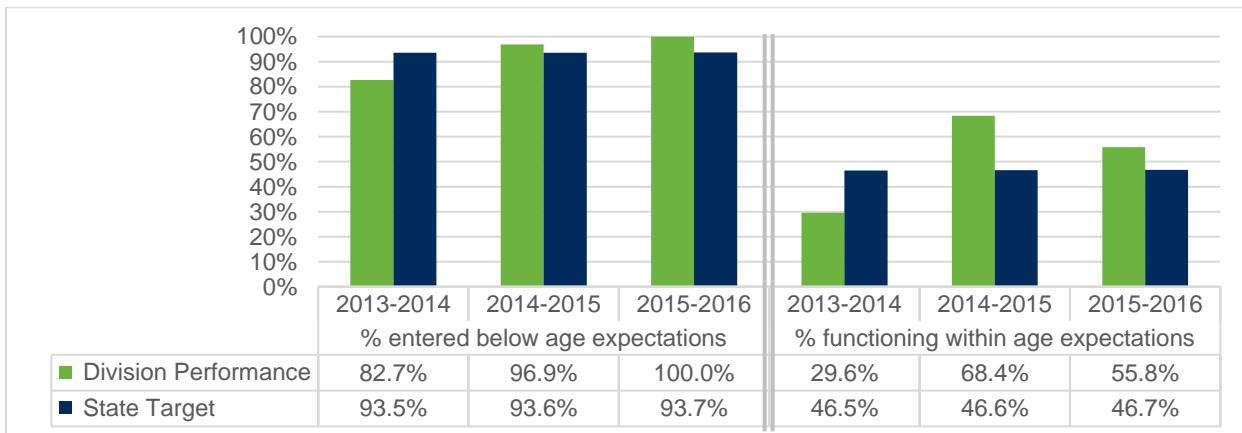
One of the indicators in Virginia's SPP relates to the achievement of young children with disabilities in three areas: 1) appropriate behavior, 2) acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and 3) positive social/emotional skills. In each of these three areas, calculations are made on the percentage of children in the following two areas: (1) children who entered an early childhood program below developmental expectations for their age but who have substantially increased developmentally by age six when they exit a program, and (2) children functioning within expectations by age six or have attained those expectations by the time they exit the program.

Summarized below are the Division's performance ratings in three categories for each of the two areas (substantially increased skills and functioning within standards). The figures show the percentages of children meeting standards and each of the state's targets. An analysis of these data follows the exhibits.

**Exhibit 15. Outcomes for Preschool Students with Disabilities: Indicator 7a- Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships). ACPS and State Targets, 2013-14 to 2015-16<sup>43</sup>**

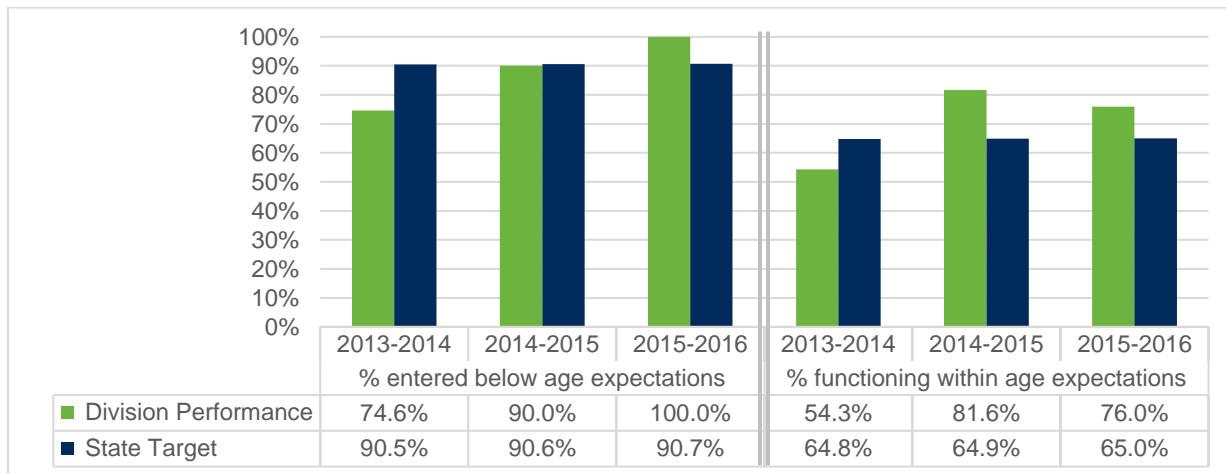


**Exhibit 16. Outcomes for Preschool Students with Disabilities: Indicator 7b- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy). ACPS and State Targets, 2013-14 to 2015-16**



<sup>43</sup> VDOE. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/reports\\_plans\\_stats/special\\_ed\\_performance/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/special_ed_performance/index.shtml)

**Exhibit 17. Outcomes for Preschool Students with Disabilities: Indicator 7c- Use of appropriate behavior to meet their needs. ACPS and State Targets, 2013-14 to 2015-16**



### Substantially Increased Skills

For ACPS children who entered an early childhood program below developmental expectations for their age but who substantially increased developmentally by age six when they exited the program, the following statistics describe 2015-16 rates of ACPS children meeting standards to state targets based on the state's SPP report.

- Positive Social/Emotional Skills.** 100% met standards, which was 10.2 percentage points above the state's target.
- Acquisition/Use of Knowledge/Skills.** 100% met standards, which was 6.3 percentage points above the state's target.
- Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs.** 100% met standards, which was 9.3 percentage points above the state's target.

The Division did not meet the state target in 2013-14 for the following categories: Acquisition/Use of Knowledge/Skills and Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs. For 2014-15 the Division did not meet the state target for Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs.

### Functioning Within Age Expectations

For children who were functioning within expectations by six years of age or had attained those expectations by the time they exited the program, the following data compare the percentages of children in ACPS meeting the standards in 2015-16 to state performance target percentages for that year.

- Positive Social/Emotional Skills.** 76% met standards, which was 18.4 percentage points above the state's target.
- Acquisition/Use of Knowledge/Skills.** 55.8% met standards, which was 9.1 percentage points above the state's target.
- Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs.** 76% met standards, which was 11 percentage points above the state's target.

For the past three years, the Division has consistently met the state target for these categories.

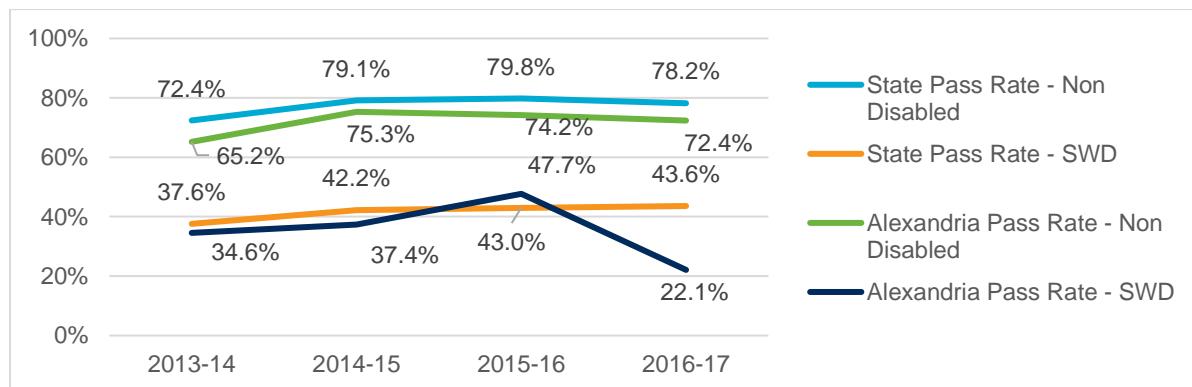
## Achievement Outcomes for Students with IEPs (Ages 6-21)

The first area reviewed pertains to student achievement on the statewide Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments in reading/ELA and in math. The figures compare the performance of ACPS students with IEPs to those without IEPs and the achievement gap over time<sup>44</sup>.

### Reading

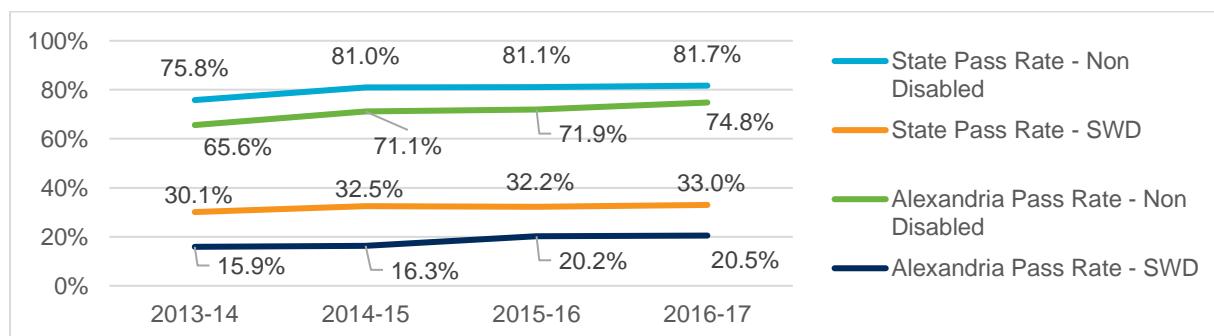
**Grade 3.** Over the past four years, ACPS students without IEPs have performed below the state average for students without disabilities. Except for 2015-16, students with IEPs in ACPS have scored below the state average. In 2016-17, scores for students with IEPs dropped 25.6 percentage points over the prior year. The achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without is evident by the average 30+ percentage point difference for the past four years.

**Exhibit 18. SOL Performance: Grade 3 Reading, 2013-14 to 2016-17**



**Grade 8.** Similar to the Grade 3 trends, ACPS students without IEPs have performed below the state average for students without disabilities over time. Students with IEPs in ACPS have scored on average 13.7 percentage points below the state rates in grade 8. The achievement gap between students with and without IEPs was more pronounced in grade 8. In 2016-17, the achievement gap between ACPS students with disabilities and those without was 54 percentage points.

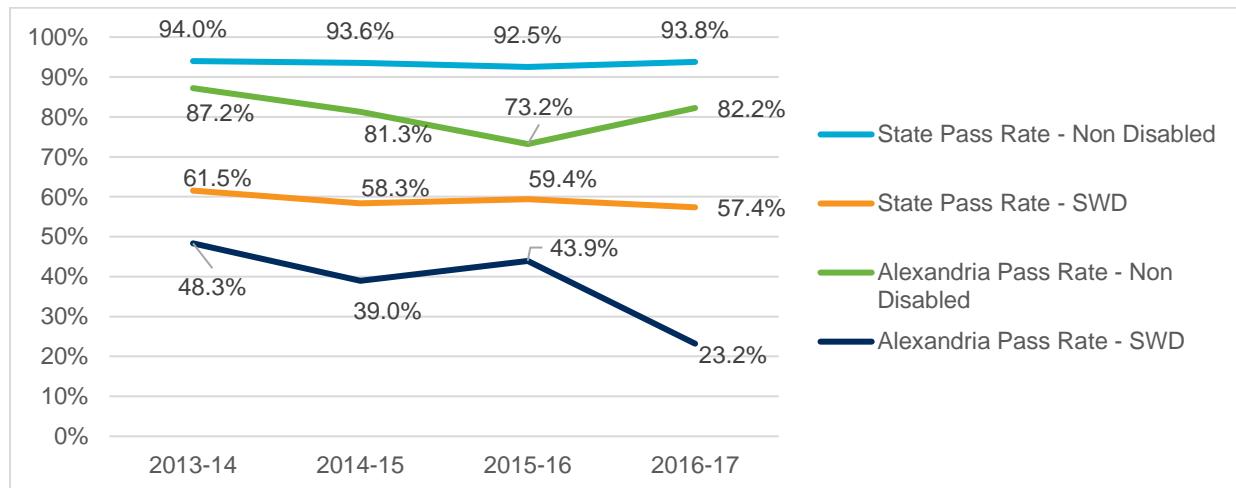
**Exhibit 19. SOL Performance: Grade 8 Reading, 2013-14 to 2016-17**



<sup>44</sup> ACPS SOL scores obtained through: <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:15124976360225>

**Grade 11.** Similar to the Grade 3 and 8 trends, ACPS students without IEPs have performed below the state average for students without disabilities over time. Between 2013-14 to 2015-16 students with IEPs in ACPS have scored on average 16 percentage points below the state rates in grade 11. The sharpest decline in test outcomes for students with disabilities occurred in 2016-17, with a 20.7 percentage point decline from the previous year.

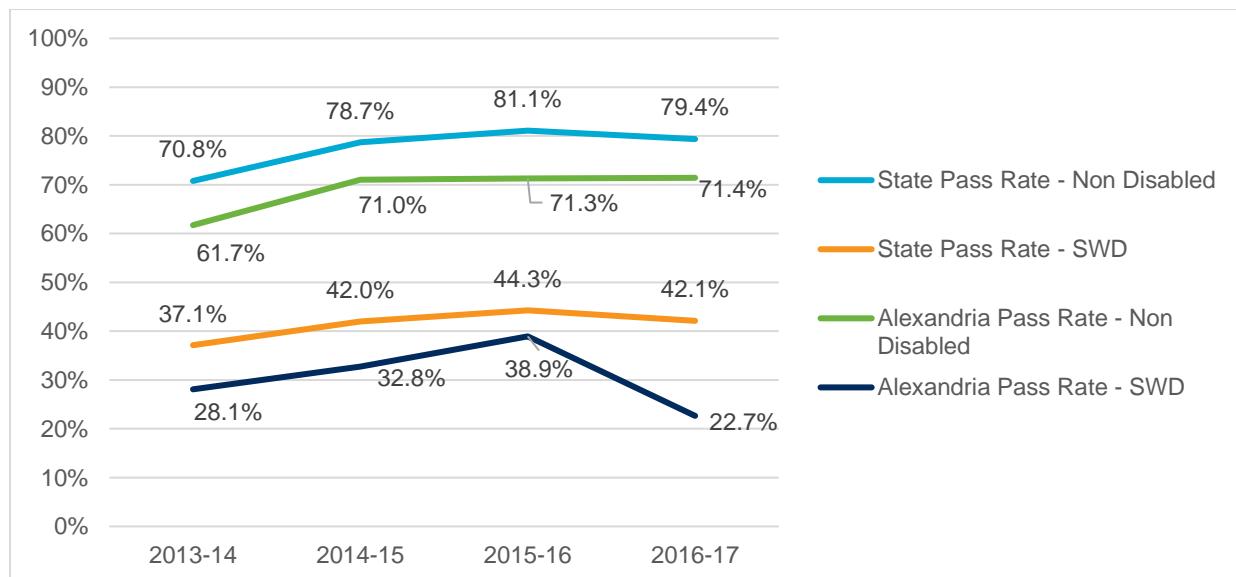
**Exhibit 20. SOL Performance: Grade 11 Reading, 2013-14 to 2016-17**



## Math

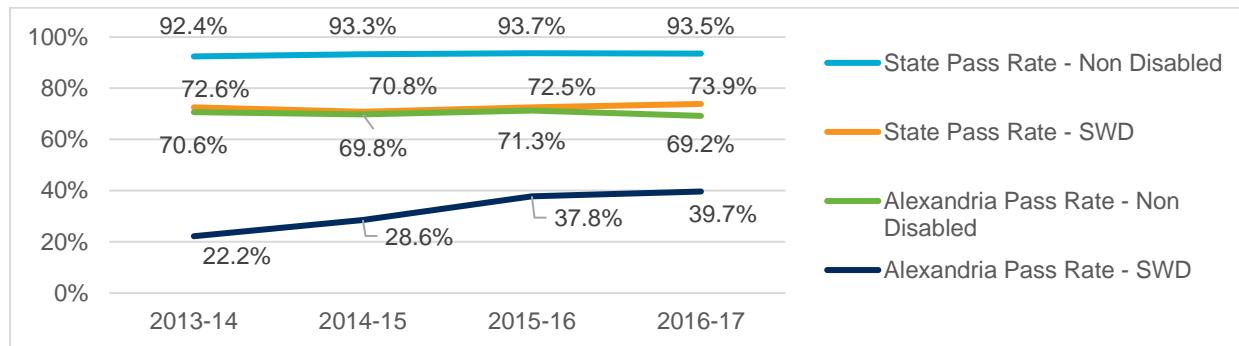
**Grade 3.** Similar to the trends in reading scores, ACPS students without IEPs have performed below the state average for students without disabilities over time. ACPS students with IEPs have consistently scored below the state average, with scores for 2016-17 declining 16.2 percentage points, 19.4 percentage points below the state average. The achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without in ACPS widened, from 33 percentage points in 2013-14 to 48 points in 2016-17.

**Exhibit 21. SOL Performance: Grade 3 Math, 2013-14 to 2016-17**



**Grade 8.** ACPS students without IEPs have performed below the state average for students without disabilities in Algebra over time. ACPS students with IEPs have consistently scored below the state average, with scores for 2016-17 increasing slightly over previous years, however below the state average. The achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without for eighth graders in ACPS for 2016-17 was 40 percentage points.

**Exhibit 22. SOL Performance: Grade 8 Algebra, 2013-14 to 2016-17**

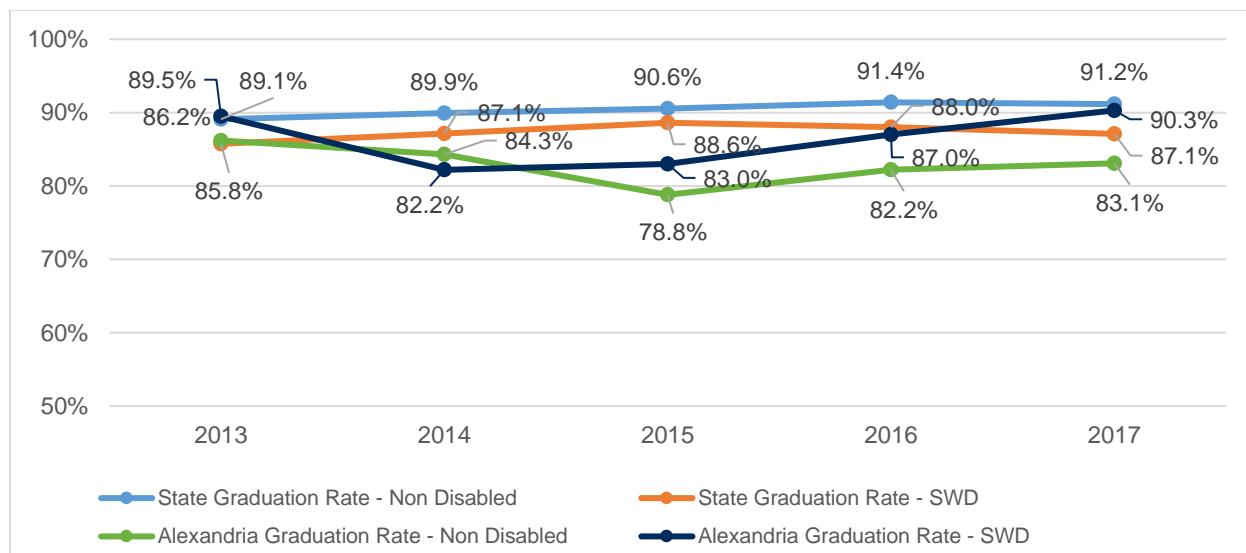


## Graduation and Drop Out Rates

### Graduation Rates of ACPS Students with IEPs and Those Without Compared to State Averages

For the past three school years, ACPS' students with IEPs have had higher graduation rates than their non-disabled peers. In 2017, ACPS's on time graduation rate for students with disabilities was 3.2 percentage points higher than the state average, and only slightly below the state graduation rate for non-disabled students.

**Exhibit 23. Percentage of ACPS and State Students with and without an IEP Graduating from High School in 2013-17<sup>45</sup>**

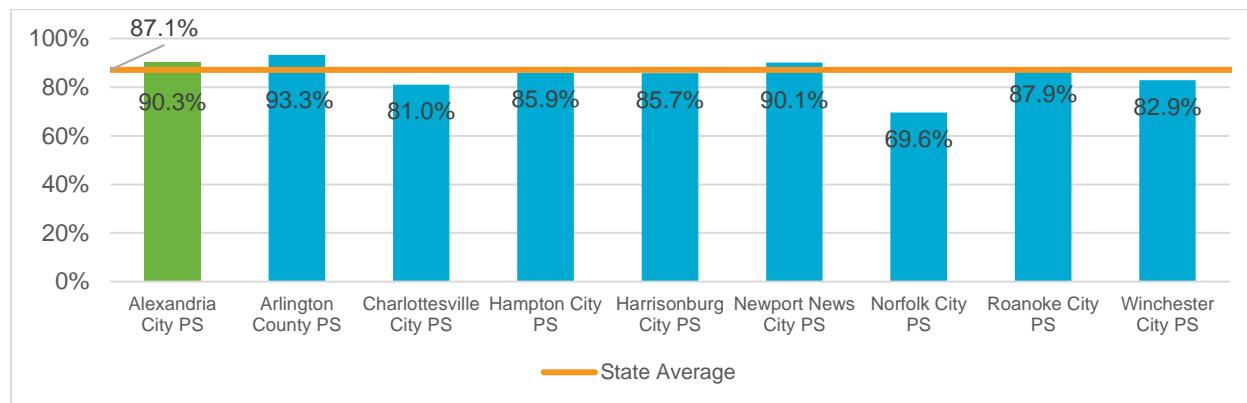


<sup>45</sup> Virginia Cohort Reports: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/index.shtml). Note: The Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate recognizes the achievement of students who earn a diploma approved by the Board of Education (Advanced Studies, Standard, Modified Standard, Special and General Achievement).

### Graduation Rates of ACPS Students with Disabilities Compared to Other Virginia School Divisions

In 2017, ACPS graduated a higher percentage of students with an IEP than the state average. ACPS's rate was higher than the following seven comparable divisions: Charlottesville City (81.0%), Hampton City (85.9%), Harrisonburg City (85.7%), Newport News City (90.1%), Norfolk City (69.6%), Roanoke City (87.9%), and Winchester City (82.9%). Arlington had a higher graduation rate for students with IEPs, three percentage points higher than ACPS's rate.

**Exhibit 24. Percentage of Students with IEPs at ACPS and Comparable Divisions Graduating from High School, 2017<sup>46</sup>**

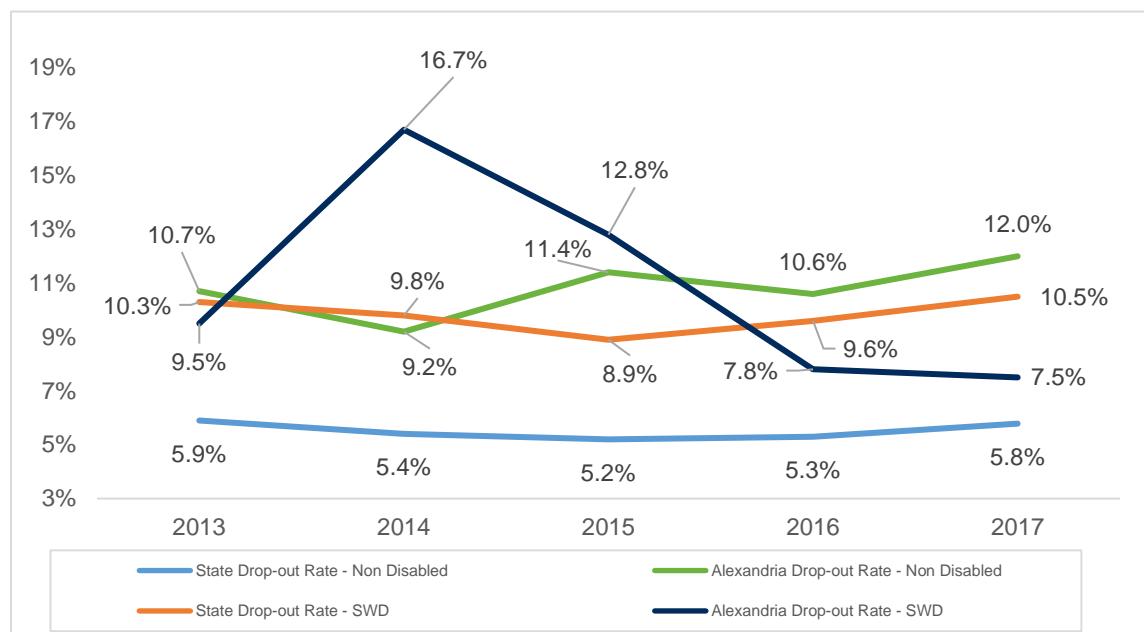


### Dropout Rate of Students with IEPs Compared to Students Without IEPs and State Averages

ACPS's dropout rates for students with disabilities in 2013 was 9.5%, lower than the state average for students with disabilities of 10.3%. The Division's dropout rate for students with disabilities increased seven percentage points in 2014 but decreased in subsequent years. In 2017, the ACPS dropout rate for students with disabilities (7.5%) was lower than the state average for students with disabilities (10.5%).

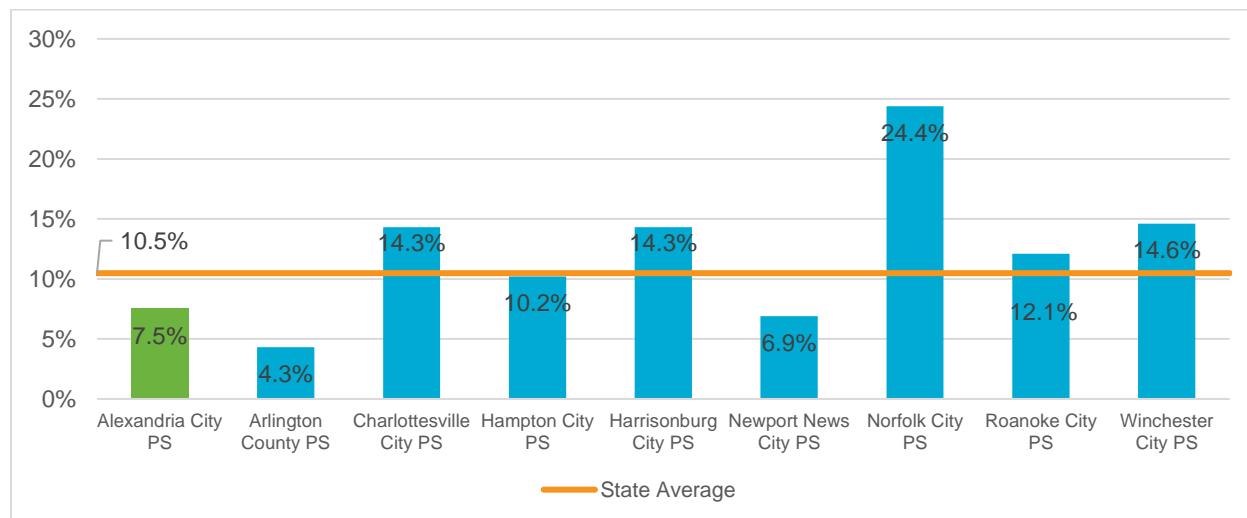
<sup>46</sup> Virginia Cohort Reports: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/index.shtml)

**Exhibit 25. Dropout Rate of Students with IEPs at ACPS Compared to Students without IEPs and State Averages, 2013-17<sup>47</sup>**



Compared to other school divisions, ACPS had a lower dropout rate of 7.5% than the following six comparable divisions: Charlottesville City (14.3%), Hampton City (10.2%), Harrisonburg City (14.3%), Norfolk City (24.4%), Roanoke City (12.1%), and Winchester City (14.6%). ACPS had a higher dropout rate than Arlington County at 4.3% and Newport News City at 6.9%.

**Exhibit 26. Dropout Rate of Students with IEPs at ACPS and Comparable Divisions, 2017<sup>48</sup>**



<sup>47</sup> Virginia Cohort Reports: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/index.shtml)

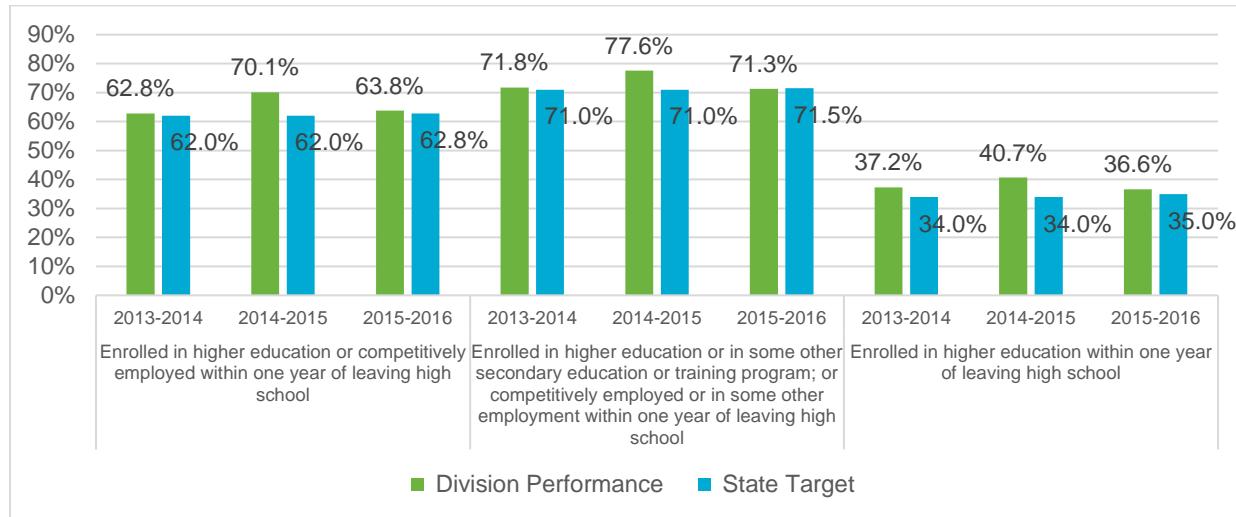
<sup>48</sup> *Id.*

## Postsecondary Outcomes

Indicator 14 has targets for the percentage of former ACPS students with IEPs engaged in three education and/or work activities within one year of leaving high school.

The exhibit below shows Division outcomes of former students compared to SPP targets. The Division has exceeded the state targets in all three categories in 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16.

**Exhibit 27. Indicator 14. Postsecondary Outcomes, 2013-14 to 2015-16**



## Educational Setting Data for Students with IEPs

The data in this section reflect the educational settings of ACPS school-aged students overall, by disability areas, and race/ethnicity. In addition, Division data are compared to state and national data, and State Performance Plan (SPP) targets for the three educational setting categories monitored by ED's Office of Special Education Programs and VDOE for students age 6-21. The department also requires each state to monitor and set targets in their SPP for educational settings in which students with IEPs, age 3-5, are educated. The national indicator for monitoring early childhood (EC) educational settings requires an analysis of data by the extent to which children are in a regular early childhood setting, or placed/receiving services in a separate location.

Analysis related to the instructional implications of placement practices is found in Chapter V. Teaching, Learning, and Social Emotional Support for Students with Disabilities.

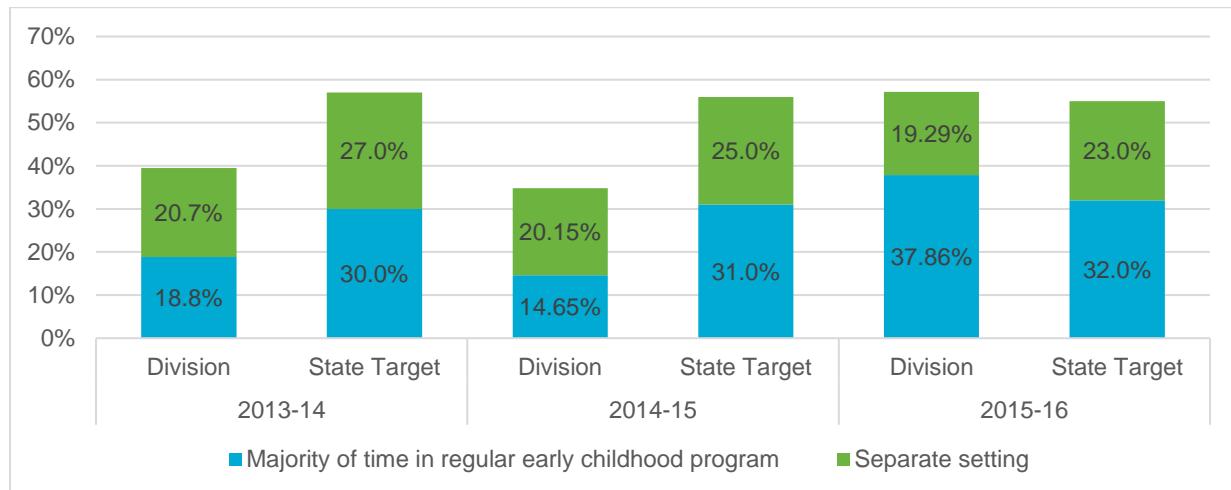
### Overall Educational Setting Data for ACPS and State

Longitudinal data from 2013-14 to 2015-16 indicates ACPS students with disabilities were educated more frequently in an inclusive general education setting and less frequently in a separate setting. Between 2013-14 to 2014-15, ACPS met state targets for educating students in the general education setting more than 80% of the time, and consistently was below the state target for students educated less than 40% in the general education setting.

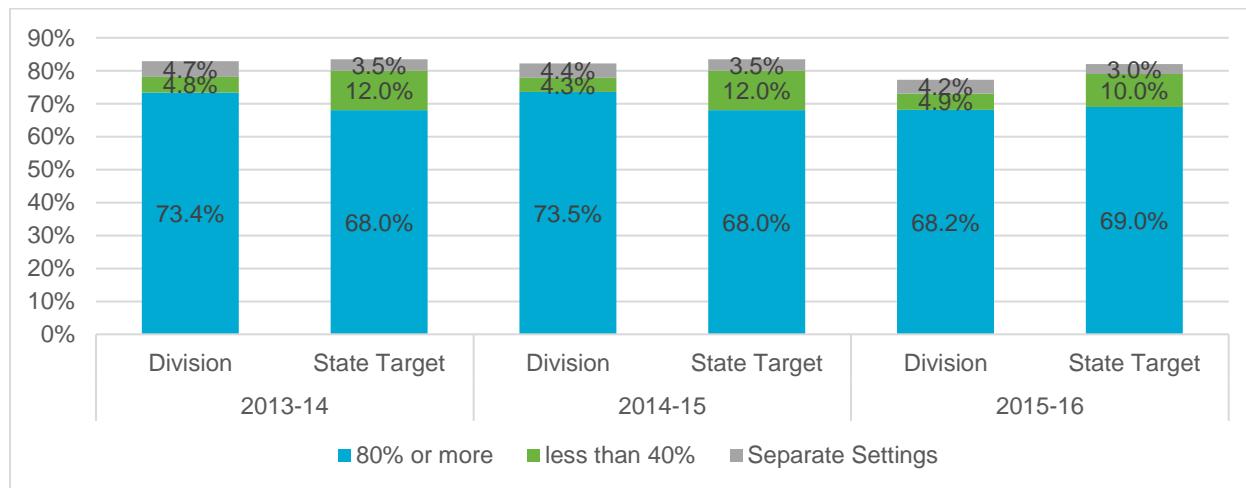
- **General Education Setting more than 80% of the time.** ACPS's 2013-14 rate of 73.4% was above the state target of  $\geq 68.0\%$ , maintaining the same number for 2014-15, however ACPS's average of 68.2% for 2015-16 was slightly lower than the state target of  $\geq 69\%$ .

- **General Education Setting less than 40% of the time.** Since 2013-14, ACPS has consistently had around 4.8% of students being served in general education less than 40% of the time, meeting state targets each of the past three years.
- **Separate Setting.** Over the three-year time period, ACPS's percent of students served in a separate setting has decreased from 4.7% to 4.2%. Though the Division has not met the state target over this time, the decline in number of students served in a separate setting should be noted.

**Exhibit 28. Percentage of Students (age 3-5) by Educational Setting for ACPS & SPP Targets, 2013-14 to 2015-16<sup>49</sup>**



**Exhibit 29. Percentage of Students (ages 6-21) by Educational Setting for ACPS & SPP Targets, 2013-14 to 2015-16<sup>50</sup>**



<sup>49</sup> Data retrieved from State Performance Plan public reports.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/reports\\_plans\\_stats/special\\_ed\\_performance](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/special_ed_performance)

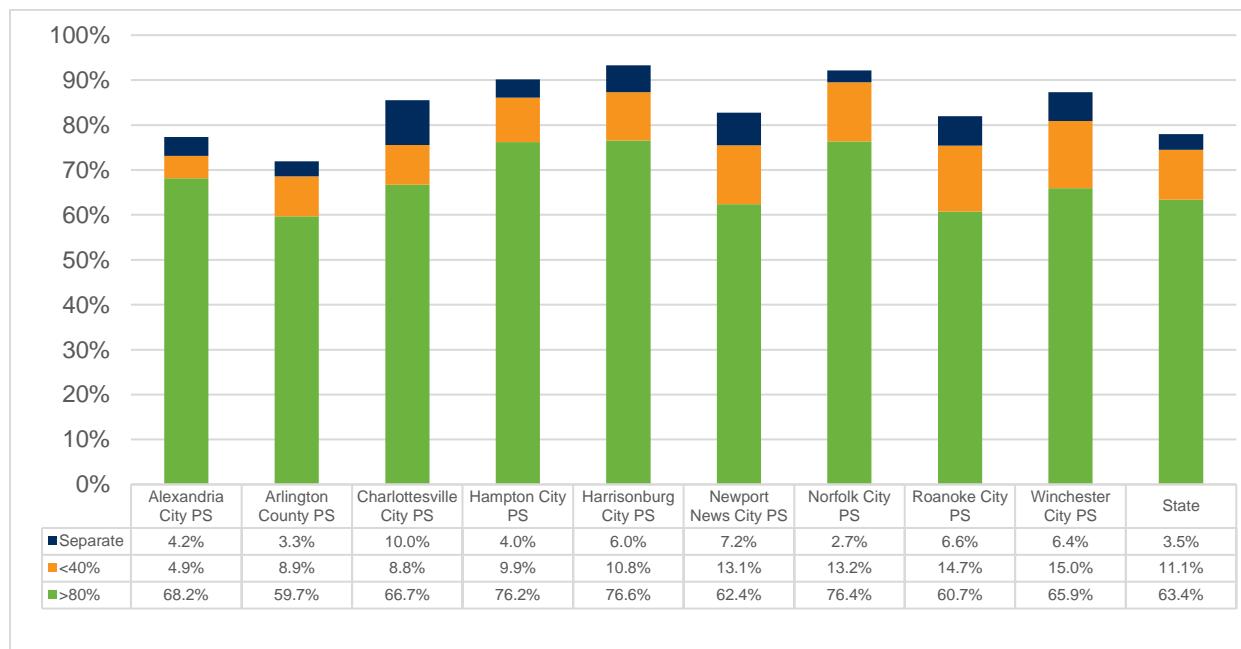
<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

### Comparable School Divisions: Percentage of Students by Educational Settings

The following chart reflects the percent of ACPS students with IEPs, as compared to other divisions, in general education classes by the three monitored educational settings: 1) students with IEPs served in general education more than 80% of time, 2) students with IEPs served in general education less than 40% of the time, and 3) those served in separate settings.

- **General Education Setting more than 80% of the time.** Of the divisions benchmarked, ACPS had a higher percentage of students in this setting (68.2%) than Arlington County (59.7%), Charlottesville City (66.7%), Newport News (62.4%), Roanoke City (60.7%), and Winchester City (65.9%) and exceeded the state target of  $\geq 63.4\%$ .
- **General Education Setting less than 40% of the time.** ACPS had the lowest percentage (4.9%) of students in this setting than all of the comparable divisions. It was also lower than the state target of 11.1%.
- **Separate Setting.** ACPS fell in the middle range of comparable divisions for students served in separate settings. Only two of the 10 comparable divisions had rates less than the state target of 3.5%: Arlington County at 3.3% and Norfolk City at 2.7%.

**Exhibit 30. Percentage of Students by Educational Setting (ages 6-21) for Comparable Divisions, 2015-16<sup>51</sup>**



### Educational Setting by Primary Disability Area

The charts below provides data on the ACPS students by primary disability area and educational setting.

- **General Education Setting more than 80% of the time.** Students with primary disabilities of the following are educated at a higher percentage in the full inclusion setting than the overall ACPS

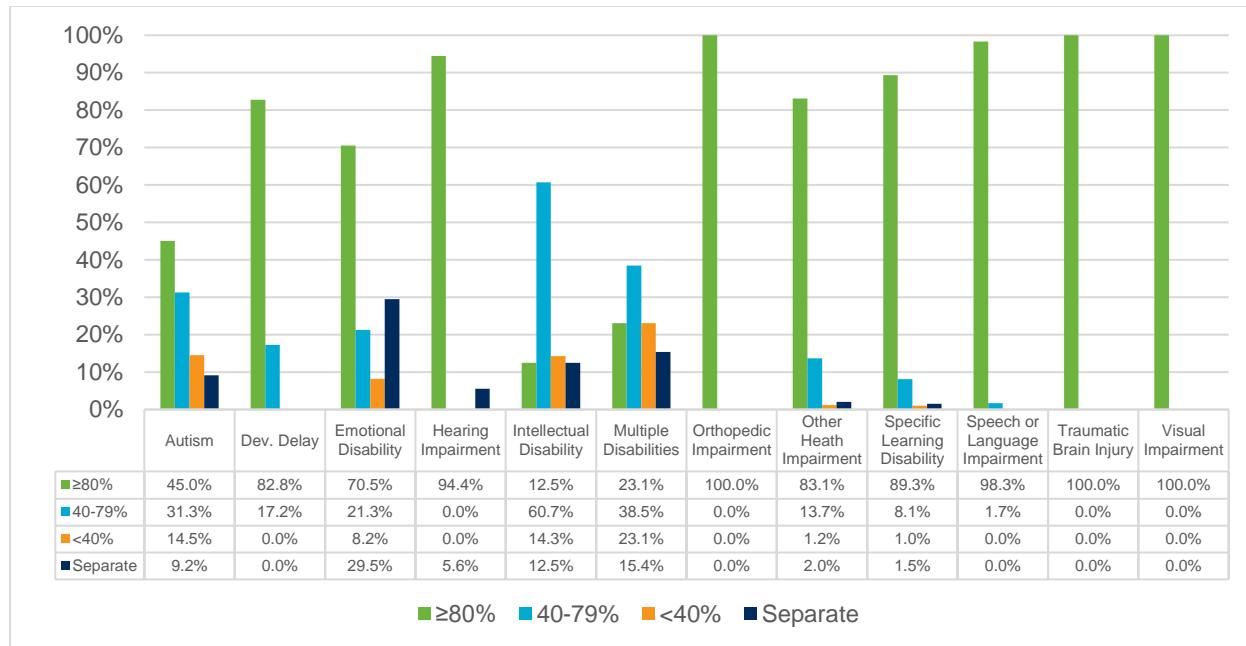
<sup>51</sup> Data retrieved from State Performance Plan public reports.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/reports\\_plans\\_stats/special\\_ed\\_performance/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/special_ed_performance/)

average of 79.3%: hearing impairments (94.4%); orthopedic impairments (100%); other health impairment (33.1%); specific learning disability (89.3%); speech/language impairment (98.3%); traumatic brain injury (100%), and visual impairment (100%). Primary disabilities of autism, emotional disability, intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities had a lower percentage of students educated in this setting than the ACPS average. Only 12.5% of students with an intellectual disability were educated in general education more than 80% of the time. In addition, 45% of students with autism were educated in this full inclusion setting.

- **General Education Setting less than 40% of the time.** Students with multiple disabilities comprised the largest portion of students educated in this setting at 23.1%, followed by students with autism (14.5%), and students with an intellectual disability (60.7%).
- **Separate Setting.** No students at ACPS with an orthopedic impairment, speech/language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment were served in a separate setting. Disability types with the highest percent of students in a separate setting included emotional disability (29.5%), multiple disabilities (15.4%), intellectual disability (12.5%), and autism (9.2%).

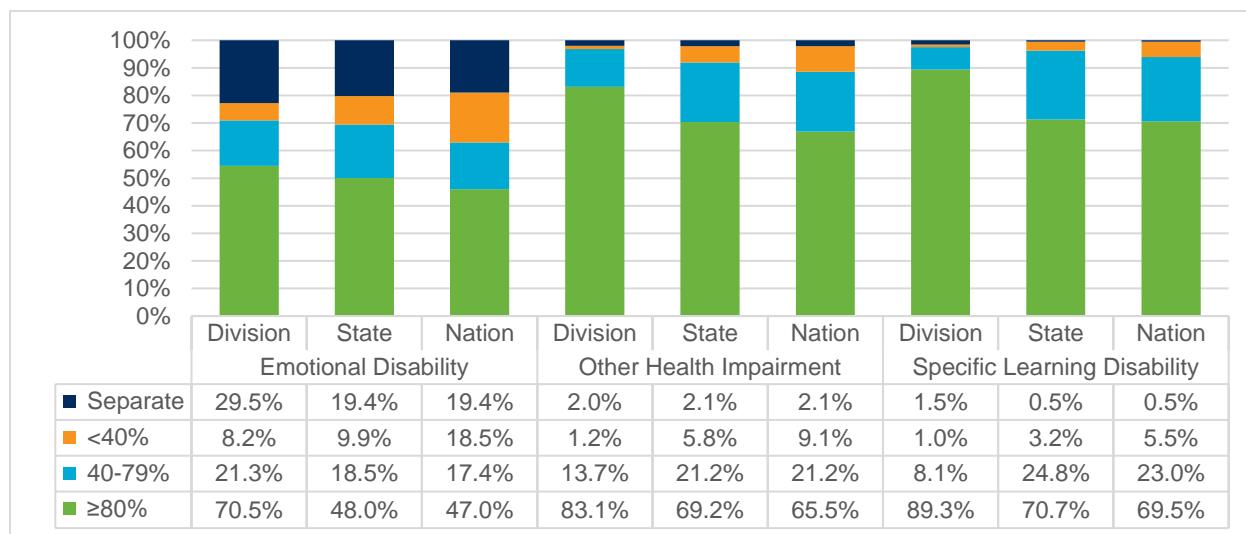
**Exhibit 31. Percentage of ACPS Students (ages 6-21) by Primary Disability Area and Educational Setting, 2016-17<sup>52</sup>**



#### Percentage of Students by Disability Category: Division, State, and Nation Comparisons in Inclusive Settings

The chart below provides data on the ACPS students by disability area and the two most inclusive educational settings: ≥80% and 40-79%.

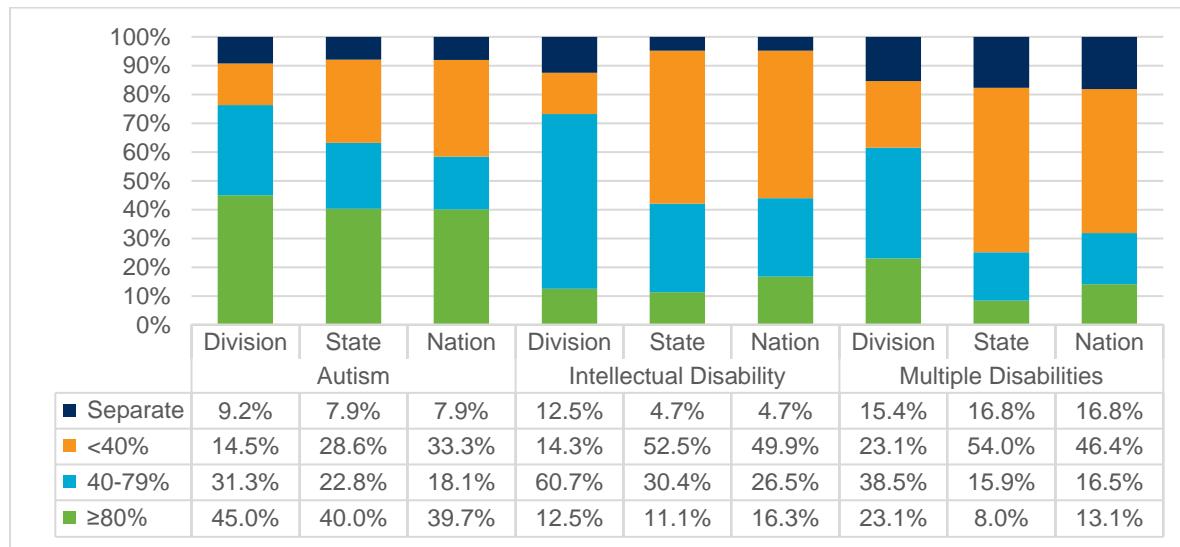
<sup>52</sup> ACPS end of year 2017 student level data provided to PCG in June 2017.

Exhibit 32. Percentage of ACPS Students (ages 6-21) with ED, OHI, and SLD by Educational Setting, 2016-17<sup>53</sup>

- **Emotional Disability.** Compared to the state and national rates, ACPS educated a substantially higher percentage of students with an emotional disability in the general education setting for more than 80% of the time. ACPS rate was 70.5% compared to 48.0% and 47.0% in the state and nation respectively.
- **Health Impairments.** ACPS students with health impairments were educated at a higher rate (83.1%) in general education for more than 80% of the time, compared to the state and national rates of 69.2% and 65.5% respectively.
- **Specific Learning Disability.** ACPS students with a specific learning disability were educated at a substantially higher rate (89.3%) in the full inclusion setting (more than 80% of the time) than the state rate of 70.7% or the national rate of 69.5%.

<sup>53</sup> Division data 2017-18 provided to PCG January 2018. State and National Data FFY 15:  
<https://osep.grads360.org/#report/apr/2015B/publicView?state=VA&ispublic=true>

**Exhibit 33. Percentage of ACPS Students (Age 6-21) with Autism, MD, and ID by Educational Setting, 2016-17<sup>54</sup>**



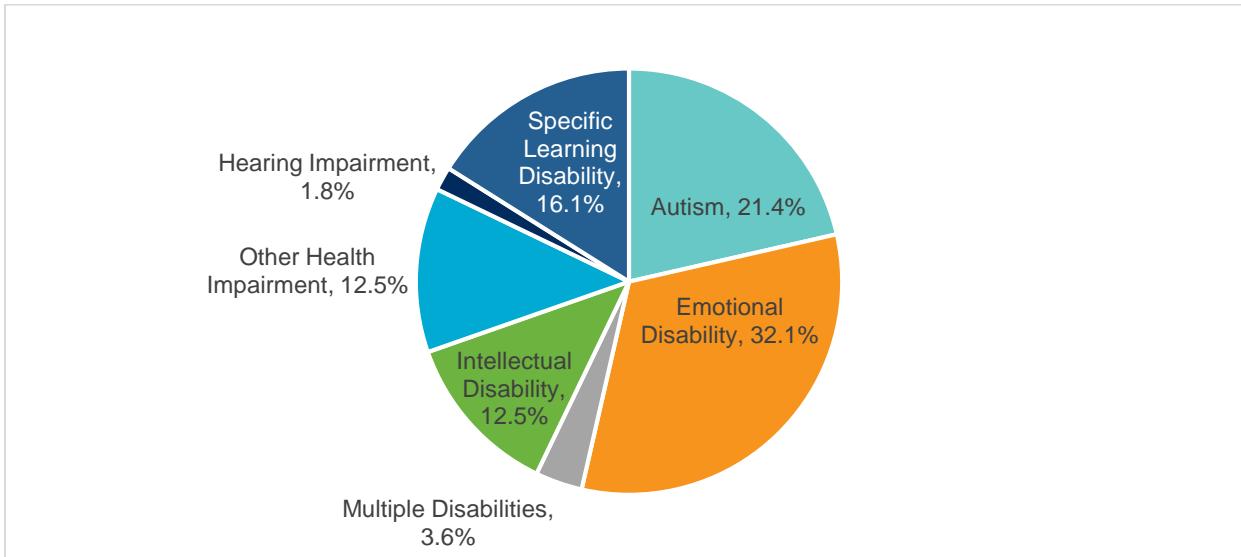
- Autism.** Compared to the state and nation, ACPS had more students with autism being educated in the general education classroom for 80% of the time. Additionally, ACPS had more students educated in the 40-79% setting at 31.3% than the state at 22.8% or nation at 18.1%.
- Intellectual Disability.** Of ACPS students with an intellectual disability, 12.5% were educated in general education for 80% or more of the time compared to 11.1% and 16.3% in the state and nation respectively. ACPS has a higher percentage of students being educated in the 40-79% setting (60.7%) compared to the state (30.4%) and nation (26.5%).
- Multiple Disabilities.** The ACPS rate of educating students with multiple disabilities (23.1%) for more than 80% of the time in general education is greater than the state and national rates of 8% and 13.1% respectively. Additionally, ACPS has a higher rate of students educated in the 40-79% setting (38.5%) than the state (15.9%) and national (16.5%) rates.

### Separate Settings

The graph below shows the percent of ACPS students with disabilities who were educated in separate settings, disaggregated by disability type. Students with a primary disability of emotional disability, autism, and other health impairment constituted the largest portion of students being educated in separate settings with 55.9%, 25.4%, and 11.3% respectively. Students with multiple disabilities and an intellectual disability represented a smaller portion of the students in a separate setting.

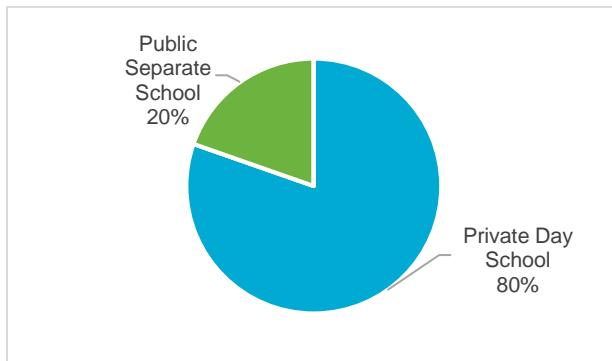
<sup>54</sup> ACPS 2017 end of year data provided to PCG June 2017, State and National Data FFY 15 obtained through Grads360 site: <https://osep.grads360.org/#report/apr/2015B/publicView?state=VA&ispublic=true>

**Exhibit 34. Percentage of ACPS Students (ages 6-21) with Disabilities by Disability in Separate Settings, 2016-17<sup>55</sup>**



According to 2016-17 data, 56 students had a separate setting placement. The chart below shows, of students with disabilities placed in a separate setting from where they were being educated, the vast majority (80%) were served in a private day school.

**Exhibit 35. Percentage of ACPS Students (ages 6-21) with Disabilities by Separate Setting, 2016-17<sup>56</sup>**



### **Educational Setting by Race/Ethnicity**

American Indian or Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander students with disabilities both had the highest rate of inclusion in the general education setting for more than 80% of the time at 100%. Hispanic students with disabilities had the third highest rate of inclusion in the general education setting at 81.6%, followed by students with two or more Races at 83.3%, White students at 80.9%, and Black or African American students at 76.8%. Asian students had the lowest rate of inclusion in the general education setting at 58.1%. Black or African American and Asian students were educated in separate settings at a higher rate of 6.5% and 6.3% respectively.

<sup>55</sup> ACPS end of year 2017 student level data provided to PCG June 2017.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.*

**Exhibit 36. Percentage of ACPS Students with Disabilities (ages 6-21) by Race and Educational Setting, 2016-17<sup>57</sup>**



<sup>57</sup> n<10 for American Indian or Alaskan Native and for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

### III. Multi-Tiered System of Supports

#### Key Strengths

- **ACPS MTSS 2015 framework.** The Division created an intervention framework that it has been implementing in schools for several years.
- **Cross-Departmental Leadership.** The initiative is currently co-owned by the Curriculum and Instruction and Student Services Departments.
- **Staff Survey.** 74% of staff agree that their schools use the MTSS framework with fidelity.
- **Technology Use.** UDL principles are embedded in technology tools and available to all students; assistive technology is widely used for SWDs.

#### Opportunities for Improvement

- **School Variances.** MTSS implementation varies greatly between schools. Some schools are farther along with it, depending on if they took part in trainings or used Response to Intervention (RTI) in the past.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** UDL does not appear to be a widely understood or implemented concept in ACPS, though OSI, in conjunction with other offices, has conducted trainings on the topic in the past.

This section provides information about ACPS's support for the implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework for all struggling students. It addresses the following areas: Overview of the MTSS Framework, Virginia Tiered Systems of Support (VTSS), Alexandria City Schools Multi-Tiered System of Supports 2015 (ACPS MTSS 2015), Key Strengths, Improvements, Opportunities, and Recommendations to Inform the Desired Results.

The provision of instruction/interventions and support to students within a framework of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) improves educational outcomes for **all** students, including those with Section 504 and IEP plans, and these and others who are English Learners (EL) and/or gifted/talented.<sup>58</sup> The framework focuses on prevention and the early identification of students who may benefit from instructional and behavioral interventions, as well as acceleration that remove barriers to learning.<sup>59</sup> When implemented as intended, MTSS leads to increased academic achievement by supporting rigorous core instruction and strategic/targeted interventions, and improved student behavior. Furthermore, the framework has been successfully used to support a reduction in disproportionate special education referrals of students based on race, gender, or EL subgroups.

Reflecting on the growing recognition of MTSS as a system wide framework for supporting student achievement and positive behavior, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes MTSS as a permissible usage of Title I funds. The Act defines MTSS as "a comprehensive continuum of evidence-

<sup>58</sup> See the Council of the Great City School's document, Common Core State Standards and Diverse Students: Using Multi- Tiered Systems of Support that outlines the key components of an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, interventions, and academic and behavioral supports needed by school districts in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The document is applicable also to school districts in states that have not adopted these standards.

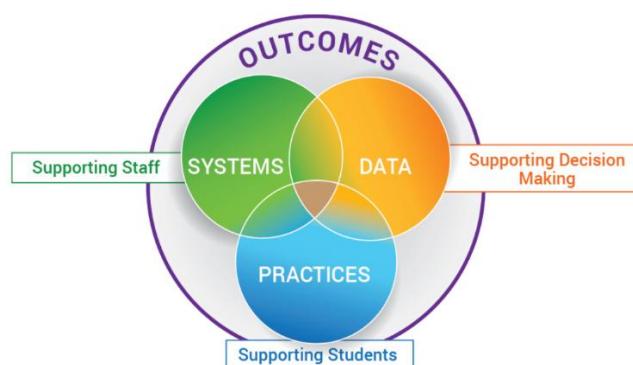
<sup>59</sup> MTSS reflects the merger of response to instruction/intervention (RTI2), which typically focuses on academic achievement, and a system used to focus on improving positive behavior support.

based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making.”<sup>60</sup> MTSS provides an overall framework for structuring and coordinating the provision of core instruction along with the additional behavioral supports, such as behavior modifications or mental health supports, some students require so that all are successful. MTSS is centered on a tiered system of support, where every student receives high quality core instruction, known as Tier 1. Some students need supplemental instruction, which is referred to as Tier 2, and a small cohort of students receive the most intensive intervention and supports, known as Tier 3. Movement among these tiers should be fluid. A student with acute needs does not need to progress through the tiers to get individualized support, and a student who needs extra support should not miss general instruction that is provided in Tier 1.

Under the MTSS framework, core instruction is evidence-based, rigorous and of high quality. By utilizing a universal design for learning system, learning differences are considered proactively rather than reactively. The instruction is culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate, and is implemented with integrity for all students. The framework is based on a presumption that some students require additional instruction in order to achieve grade level standards. Increasingly intensive tiers of academic and social/emotional support are targeted to meet student needs based on data-based problem-solving and decision-making; instruction is adjusted to continually improve both student performance and the rate at which it progresses. Furthermore, the process is used to assess (using student responses to the instruction) the effectiveness of the tiered instruction/interventions being implemented. Many states have established intervention systems that align to the core tenets of the MTSS process and branded them accordingly. In Virginia, MTSS has been adopted as the Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS).

## Virginia Tiered System of Supports

As noted on the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) website: VTSS “is a data-driven decision making framework for establishing the academic, behavioral and social-emotional supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students.”<sup>61</sup> The VTSS approach is systemic, requiring the use of evidence-based, system-wide practices that are implemented with fidelity, and frequent progress monitoring to enable educators to make sound, data-based instructional decisions for students. VTSS’s theory of action (pictured below) assumes that the process of integrating data, practices, and systems will positively affect student outcomes.



The essential elements of an effective VTSS framework with a school division and school are:

- Aligned organizational structure
- Data-informed decision-making
- Evidenced-based practices
- Family, school, and community partnerships
- Monitoring student progress
- Universal screening
- Evaluation of outcomes and fidelity

<sup>60</sup> Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized in 2015.

<sup>61</sup> Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/virginia\\_tiered\\_system\\_supports/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/virginia_tiered_system_supports/index.shtml)

School divisions in Virginia are supported by Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports Research and Implementation Center at the Virginia Commonwealth University Center for School Community Collaboration (VTSS-RIC). The goal of VTSS-RIC is to “build state and local capacity for sustained tiered system of academic, behavioral, social-emotional supports that are responsive to the needs of all students.”<sup>62</sup> The center offers professional learning and on-site coaching to school divisions across the Commonwealth. A review of the school divisions participating in the cohorts revealed that Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) has no schools currently listed as participating on the VTSS-RIC website.<sup>63</sup> However, ACPS adopted MTSS to align with state requirements that set expectation that all schools implement this framework to address the academic and behavioral needs of students with proactive interventions and has developed its own internal manual.

## Division Context

### MTSS Guidance

The Division has made a commitment to the implementation of an MTSS framework in all of its schools for the past several years. The previous superintendent made the implementation of this new framework a priority and was instrumental in supporting the roll-out and implementation of the ACPS MTSS 2015 guidance. This guidance clarifies that MTSS is an evidence-based approach to education that uses data-based problem solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. It is a complement to the ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan, reinforcing how educators can promote the achievement of all learners within the Division.<sup>64</sup> The Division also published a memo in the ACPS Express on October 6, 2016 stating that it is committed to ensuring that there are many ways to help struggling students learn and that those who need additional supports are successful.<sup>65</sup> MTSS is cited as one way that the Division provides these supports.

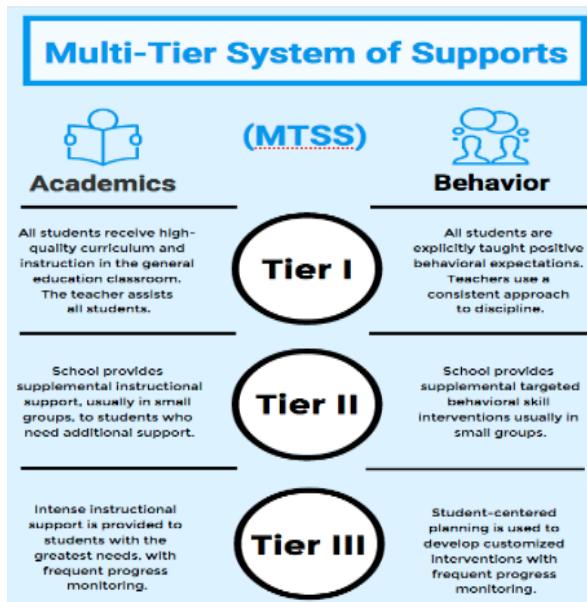
<sup>62</sup> Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS) Site. <https://vtss-ric.org/>

<sup>63</sup> VTSS Cohorts Site. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/virginia\\_tiered\\_system\\_supports/cohorts/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/virginia_tiered_system_supports/cohorts/index.shtml)

<sup>64</sup> ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/board/strategic-plan/strategic-plan.php>

<sup>65</sup> ACPS. <http://www.acpsk12.org/news/?p=4164>

The ACPS MTSS 2015 framework was developed to align with the shift that took place at the national and state level to address the supports and interventions necessary for struggling students in both academics and behavior. The framework guidance identifies three interrelated “tiers” for both academics and behavior. The key components of MTSS are that:



- All children receive high-quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom (Tier I)
- Universal screenings are used to help identify students who may need more support or other types of instruction
- Teaching strategies or methods are research-based interventions that have been proven to be effective in helping children be more successful with academics or behavior
- Progress monitoring is used as a way for teachers to take a snapshot of how children are doing on a specific skill.

When a child meets the goals developed by the school, the intervention is no longer needed and the child continues to receive support in the general education classroom. When progress monitoring shows that a child is not responding to the intervention, another approach or intervention may

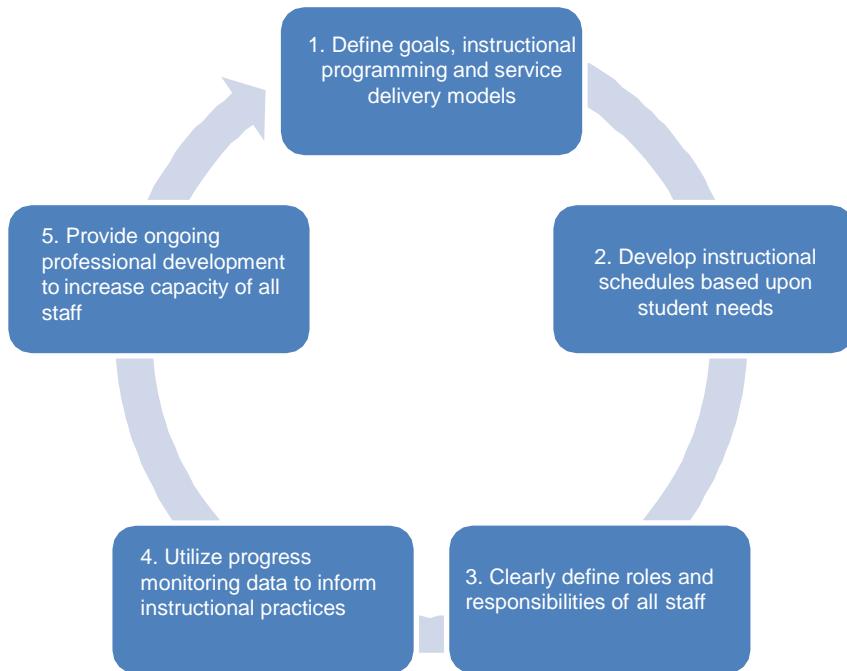
be tried. However, when a higher level of support is needed, children are given individualized instruction that further focuses on supporting the skills they need to be successful learners (Tier III).<sup>66</sup>

When students are provided the necessary evidence-based Tier III interventions and continue to struggle, the Student Support Team (SST) ensures that the pre-referral interventions are in place and delivered as prescribed. If a student continues to struggle, despite the high-fidelity implementation of targeted interventions, the SST may initiate an evaluation referral. Once the referral is initiated, the Child Study Team (CST) leads the evaluation process. The CST evaluation process may or may not lead to an eligibility determination.

Students with disabilities may also require intensive specialized instructional and intervention support. As such, ACPS has incorporated a section in the MTSS Implementation Guide that specifically addresses the “Students with Disabilities MTSS Intensive Intervention Process.” It sets the expectation that all schools must have their MTSS Intensive Intervention Process in place at the beginning of the school year. OSI provides support to school-based teams to help them identify specific target interventions, support staff training and provide resources to ensure implementation of intensive interventions at each level. School-based teams are encouraged to establish guiding principles when making decision about their MTSS Intensive Intervention Process as reflected in the graphic below:

<sup>66</sup> ACPS Express Article. <http://www.acpsk12.org/news/?p=4164>

## Principles for Successful Implementation



Additional guidance was developed by OSI to inform practices in the document *MTSS Guidance for Students with Disabilities: Reading & Math* for both elementary and secondary schools. This guidance, available on the OSI Canvas page, provides a list of appropriate Tier II and Tier III interventions for students with disabilities.

The ACPS MTSS 2015 framework provides the Division with a foundation upon which to build for a successful systemic schoolwide implementation. Many of the conversations with stakeholder focus groups and school visits attested to its adoption at varying stages of practice and the struggles experienced by practitioners to implement with fidelity. The current state of ACPS MTSS 2015 framework implementation is similar to the experiences of many other districts. Many schools across the nation have adopted MTSS, but studies indicate schools are still struggling to effectively implement a continuum of supports.<sup>67</sup>

## Central Office Leadership

The initiative is currently co-owned by the Curriculum and Instruction and Student Services Departments. Curriculum and Instruction continues to oversee and provide the overarching guidance for the Division's MTSS framework and processes, with special attention given to delivery of core instruction and academic tiered intervention. Student Services supports the delivery of universal and tiered evidenced-based behavior interventions, including Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). It has been reported that cross functional team members of departments within Curriculum and Instruction, including Specialized Instruction, meet periodically to address the fidelity of implementation of the ACPS MTSS 2015 framework and provide additional interpretative guidance as needed to personnel supporting MTSS or

<sup>67</sup> Balu, R., Pei Z., Doolittle, F., Schiller, E., Jenkins, J., & Gersten, R. (2015). Evaluation of response to intervention practices for elementary school reading (NCEE 2016-4000). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

implementing in schools. This leadership structure and cross-department collaboration are key strengths of MTSS in ACPS.

## Fidelity of Implementation

Focus group participants shared both the successes they see with MTSS in ACPS and the challenges they face with implementing it in practice. Many stated that this implementation continues to be a work in progress. The following themes emerged from these conversations:

- **School and Grade Variances.** Implementation varies greatly between schools, and occasionally between grades within the same school. This, in part, depends on if they took part in trainings or used Response to Intervention (RTI) in the past. Some schools do have a robust process, using multiple interventions and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of students in general education.
- **Elementary Schools/Early Grades.** Some of the schools appear to be further along in their understanding and development of practices than others, particularly schools serving elementary students or in K-8 school configurations. These schools seemed to articulate a better understanding of the framework given their focus on the early learning years.
- **Guidance.** There are inconsistencies regarding school teams' understanding and utilization of the ACPS MTSS 2015 guidance and its resources. In some schools visited, a clear focus on instruction was evident, school staff mentioned that SSTs met and implemented the problem-solving process to address the needs of struggling learners. Tiered interventions were scheduled and in place in accordance with ACPS MTSS guidance. In other schools, it was reported that MTSS was less structured and that school leadership did not seem to prioritize establishing conditions that allowed for improvement for teaching and learning or the provision of the necessary intervention supports for struggling learners.
- **Intervention Implementation.** The guidance says to continue implementing interventions for students even if they have been referred for evaluations. This is reportedly not always happening in practice, and often depends on how disruptive students are believed to be academically and/or behaviorally. It also depends on how the term "intervention" is defined. Academic and behavior intervention time is difficult to schedule due to the complexities of the master schedule processes and competing priorities in schools. As a result, it is sometimes left up to individual teachers to resolve.
- **Professional Development.** Targeted professional development on the framework has been provided to school principals and their SST staff to support the understanding and implementation of the framework in the past. Focus group participants believe more training is needed.
- **School Support.** Instructional Specialists are frequently asked to clarify and enforce the interrelationships and differences between the MTSS SST and special education Child Study Team (CST) processes. In some cases, school teams believe Instructional Specialists are "gatekeepers" to the referral process because they ask SSTs to produce evidence of their problem-solving approach and progress monitoring data.
- **SST Effectiveness.** The SST effectiveness is dependent on the interpretation of the MTSS guidance and support provided by the school's administrator, school psychologist, or Division leadership. Some schools have an SST team that understands and follows the eligibility guidelines effectively, while the eligibility process at other schools look different.

Focus group participants often identified consistent language and practices, and more training, coaching and dedicated resources and time as the most important "wish-list" items to support implementation efforts in schools across the Division.

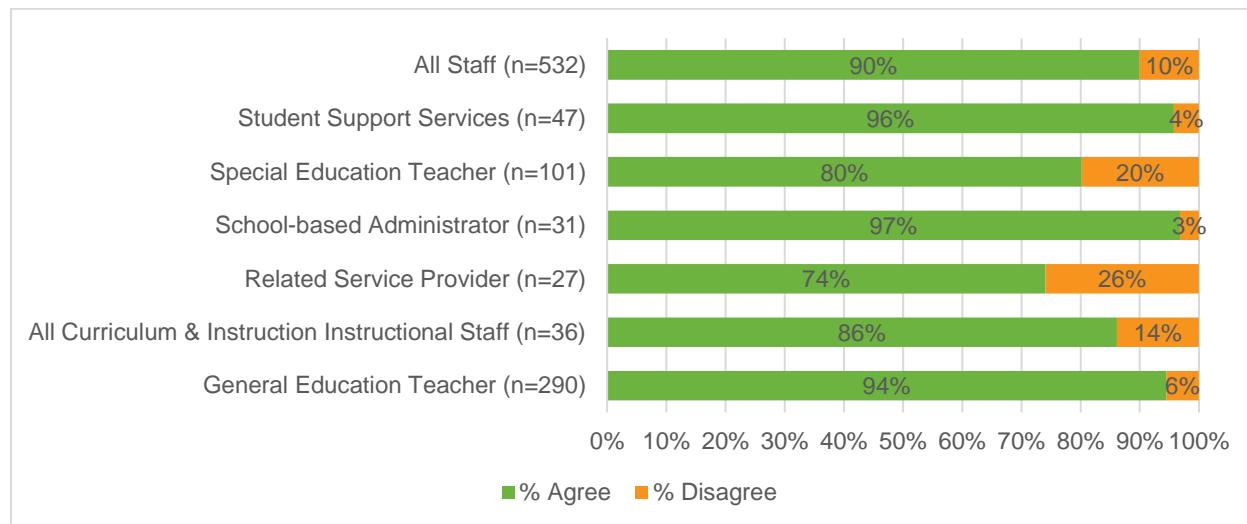
## Survey Data

Staff and parents were asked a series of questions about MTSS and pre-referral processes in the survey. Below is a summary of survey responses by role.

### Staff Survey

Overall, a large majority of staff (90%) believed that staff at schools try to meet a child's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation.

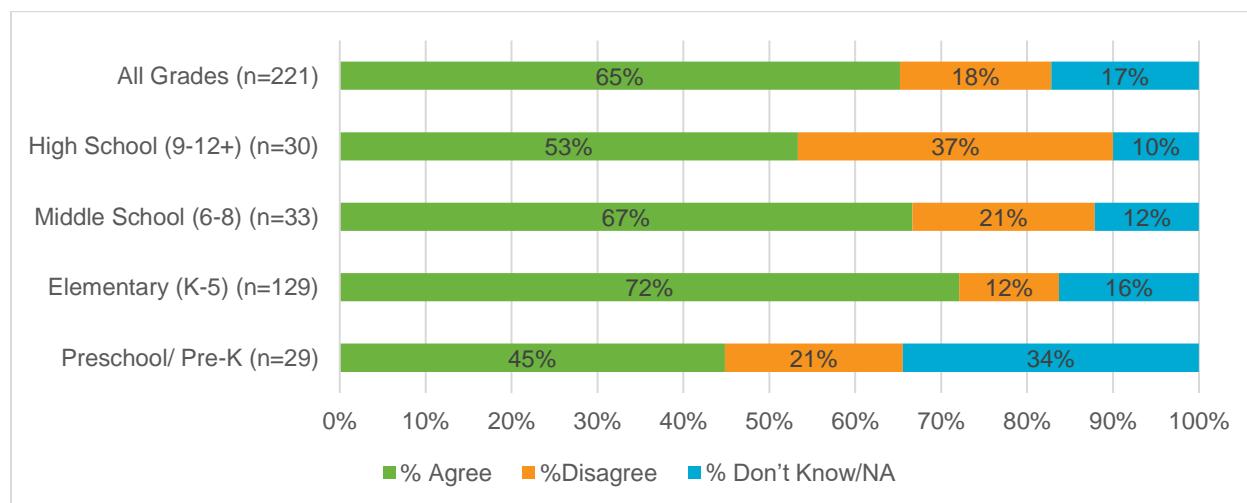
**Exhibit 37. Staff at my school(s) try to meet children's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation.**



### Parent Survey

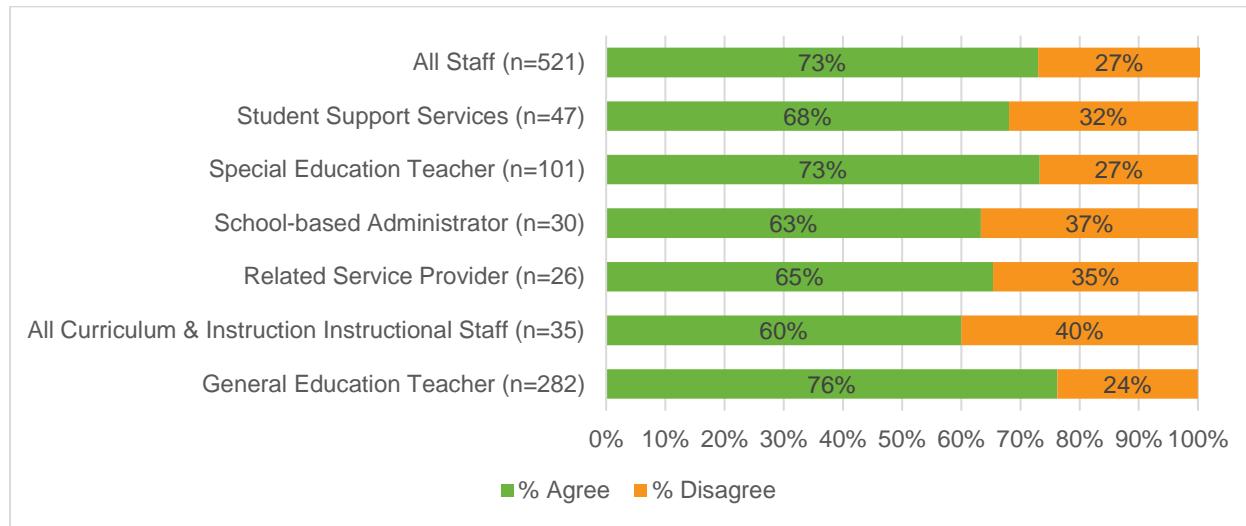
The majority of parents also agreed (65%) that school staff tried to meet their child's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation, but they were less in agreement than staff. The lowest rate of agreement (45%) and the greatest rate of uncertainty ("Don't know," 34%) was among parents whose children are at the preschool/Pre-K level.

**Exhibit 38. School staff tried to meet my child's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation.**



## Staff Survey

### Exhibit 39. My school(s) uses the MTSS framework with fidelity.



The majority of all staff (73%) reported they believed their school uses the MTSS framework with fidelity. The following staff roles disagreed with the statement at a higher rate than the all staff average (27%): Student Support Services (32%), School-based Administrator (37%), Related Service Provider (35%), All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff (40%).

## Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS)

As cited on the U.S. Department of Education website, 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.” The goal of CCEIS is to reduce the over-identification of students as disabled and in need of special education services through a positive, proactive approach. Under IDEA 2004, certain activities qualify as CCEIS, such as professional development for teachers and other staff on delivering scientifically-based academic and behavioral interventions or for the use of adaptive and instructional software. Districts can voluntarily set aside up to 15% of their federal IDEA funds for CCEIS activities. If, however, a state identifies significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity in a district, with respect to the identification of children as children with disabilities, the identification of children in specific disability categories, the placement of children with disabilities in particular educational settings, or the taking of disciplinary actions, the district must use 15% of IDEA funds for CCEIS for children in the district, particularly, but not exclusively, for children in those groups that were “significantly over-identified.”

Based on 2016-17 data submitted to VDOE, ACPS was determined to be disproportionate in its identification and overrepresentation of African American students with an emotional disability in special education and has been mandated to set-aside CCEIS funds for FY 2018-19. The CCEIS set-aside will have a significant impact on the funding that will be available to support the provision of supplemental services for student with disabilities and redistributes the dedicated funding towards strengthening and supporting coordinated early intervention (MTSS) practices in general education. This is the first time that ACPS has received this citation.

Implementing a school, data-driven, prevention-based framework for improving learning outcomes for every student through a layered continuum of evidence-based practices and systems will help mitigate and proactively address ACPS’s over-identification and overrepresentation of students of color and those that are culturally and linguistically diverse in special education.

## Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL provides an approach based on neuroscience and cognitive science and a framework for front-loading instructional design to reach a wider range of learners, including students with IEPs.<sup>68</sup> UDL provides a common, district-wide foundational set of practices that align with the districts' beliefs and vision and mission statements about the role of the teacher, how students learn best, and the purpose of education. UDL provides all educators a common set of understandings and language and practices for designing and implementing instruction that engages learners and proactively anticipates and responds to diversity in learners. Furthermore, UDL helps educators think strategically about their current practices and provides a framework to expand their thinking about planning and varied ways to engage students, present new learning, and facilitate the learning process.

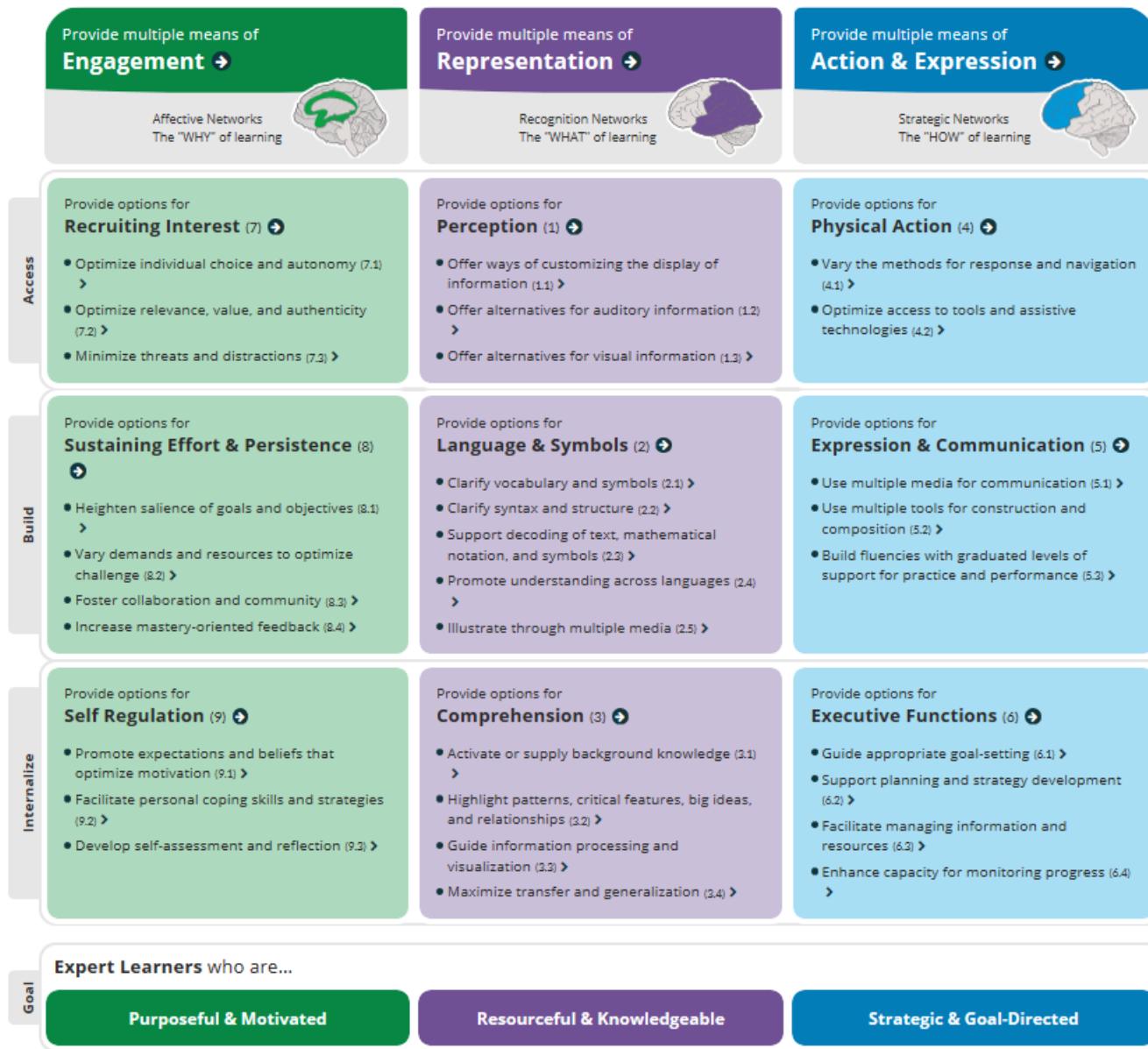
UDL is firmly grounded in the belief that every learner is unique and brings different strengths and weaknesses to the classroom. Traditional curricula are "one-size-fits-all," designed to meet the needs of a "typical" student. As a result, any student that falls outside this narrow category is presented with a host of barriers that impede access, participation, and progress in the general curriculum.<sup>69</sup> UDL can make instruction more accessible to all students when used in designing the district's curriculum, scope and sequence, pacing, lesson plans, and assessments. There are three main learning guidelines: multiple means of engagement-the why of learning, multiple means of representation-the what of learning, and multiple means of action and expression-the how of learning.

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<sup>68</sup> National Center on UDL. UDL Guidelines- Version 2: Research Evidence. <http://www.udlcenter.org/research/researchevidence>

<sup>69</sup> LD OnLine. <http://www.ldonline.org/article/13002/>

### Exhibit 40. Universal Design for Learning Guidelines, 2018<sup>70</sup>



## Division Practices

Based on focus group discussions, UDL does not appear to be a widely understood or implemented concept in ACPS, though OSI, in conjunction with other offices, has conducted trainings on the topic in the past. In 2015-16, OSI offered extensive professional development with CAST on UDL, but reportedly no participants signed up to attend.

Participants, from a variety of roles, were generally not familiar with the application of UDL principles in the classroom. It was briefly described by representatives from the Technology Department that the availability and use of technology through the Division-wide Chromebook initiative has started a broader

<sup>70</sup> CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>

conversation about UDL, specific to the role that devices and apps play for all learners. A mini “boot camp” was conducted last year on the use of technology tools to support UDL but additional training needs to occur to broaden this knowledge base.

When implemented consistently across a division such as ACPS, UDL has the potential to improve educational outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. As Strangeman, Hitchcock, Hall, and Meo, et al. note, “poor performance may reflect curriculum disability rather than student disability.”<sup>71</sup> As the Division develops its plan to improve the academic achievement of students with disabilities and revisits access points to the core curriculum, UDL should be considered a key lever. The Division should engage in Division-wide training to support the full-scale adoption of UDL and continue to explore ways in which technology tools can be used to support teachers. Providing all students equal access and participation in the general education curriculum will lead to improved progress overall.

ACPS disability-specific data highlighted in this report point to the Division’s increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse student population. It is critical that the Division have policies and practices that ensure all student have meaningful and equitable academic opportunities to succeed. UDL is a practice that supports designing instruction to address the needs of all diverse and struggling learners. When paired with a strong and robust MTSS framework, UDL will support the provision of well-designed instruction that is data driven and augmented by the delivery of tiered academic and behavior interventions to all struggling students.

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<sup>71</sup> LD OnLine. <http://www.ldonline.org/article/13002>

## IV. Referral and Eligibility

### Key Strengths

- **Staff Survey.** 87% of staff agree that prior to a referral for special education, the impact of a child's native language is considered.
- **Parent Survey.** 89% of parents overall responded that ACPS explained to them why their children need special education services in a way that they understood.
- **English Learner (EL) Guidance.** ACPS developed guidance to help school teams appropriately assess and support EL students with disabilities.

### Opportunities for Improvement

- **Early Intervention/Child Find Outreach.** These activities are difficult in ACPS's multicultural community where families speak many languages and may not know how to access available child find, referrals, screenings, evaluations, or parent services.
- **Cultural Diversity Support.** Focus groups expressed concern about the number of children of color or culturally and linguistically diverse that are referred to the CST and determined eligible for services.

MTSS allows educators to effectively intervene as soon as a student begins to struggle – to provide quality interventions within regular education programs at a much earlier stage in the course of students' educational problems, when assistance can be both more effective and timely, and before a potential special education referral is initiated. As explained by the RtI Action Network:

The emergence of high-quality research-based intervention programs under the MTSS methodology in public schools has created a modern continuum of services for students who struggle with the regular curriculum. Prior to the advent of MTSS programs, students who struggled with the regular curriculum faced either failure in regular programs or referrals to disability programs as their educational difficulties became serious enough to suspect that they might have a learning disability.

Despite the increasing use of MTSS as a support, it is important to be cognizant of the inherent complexities between a student's lack of response to MTSS tiered interventions and the potential need for Section 504 accommodations or special education services. The lines between these support structures have become a source of confusion and misconception in schools nationwide, and are heightened even further with specialized populations such as preschoolers and English Learners.

This section first reviews those dividing lines and examines the similarities and differences between programs and services provided under MTSS, Section 504, and special education programs under IDEA. The remainder of this section addresses federal and state guidance for these areas, in addition to referral, assessment, eligibility practices within ACPS.

### Relationship between MTSS, Section 504, and IDEA

The following information explains the relationship between the MTSS framework, Section 504 services, and IDEA's special education services.

## MTSS Framework

As explained in the previous chapter, MTSS provides an overall framework for structuring and coordinating the provision of core instruction along with the additional support some students require so that all are successful. The holistic nature of the MTSS framework requires the consideration of **all** students, including those with Section 504 and IEP plans, and these and others who are EL and/or gifted/talented<sup>72</sup>.

Under the MTSS framework, core instruction is evidence-based, rigorous and of high quality. By utilizing a universal design for learning, learning differences are considered proactively rather than reactively. The instruction is culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate, and is implemented with integrity for all students. The framework is based on a presumption that some students require additional instruction in order to achieve grade level standards. Increasingly intensive tiers of academic and social/emotional support are targeted to meet student needs based on data-based problem-solving and decision-making; instruction is adjusted to continually improve both student performance and the rate at which it progresses. Furthermore, the process is used to assess (using student responses to the instruction) the effectiveness of the tiered instruction/interventions being implemented.

## Section 504 Services

Students with Section 504 plans may require instruction/intervention that is provided through one or more of MTSS's increasingly intensive tiers. At any point during the MTSS process a student may be referred to determine whether he/she has a disability that meets Section 504 criteria. As discussed above, the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures, e.g., academic and social/emotional support, cannot be taken into consideration when determining a student's Section 504 eligibility. MTSS interventions are an example of such mitigating measures; however, the interventions themselves may be supplementary services appropriately included in a Section 504 plan.

## Special Education Services

With effective implementation of the MTSS framework, including the early identification of students when they are first having academic and/or social/emotional difficulties, it is more likely that fewer will present a need for a referral for special education services. In some cases, progress monitoring will provide data to suggest a need for special education.

Under the MTSS framework, special education is not considered to be a separate tier for instruction and intervention. Instead, it is viewed as a service delivery model that is integrated within the tier(s) of instruction/intervention and matched to a student's skill needs.<sup>73</sup> In most cases, the student's IEP incorporates these interventions, and identifies the personnel and educational setting (general education and/or separate) in which they will be provided. In some cases, the student's need for interventions will not be related to his/her disability and will be provided as determined by the problem-solving team.

As mentioned in the previous chapter on MTSS, OSI supports eligible students with disabilities by implementing the key components of the MTSS Intensive Intervention Program to create a system of services and supports that is needs-based and goal-oriented. The first key component is the use of a regular schedule of progress monitoring to identify students with disabilities who require additional intervention and support. Once students' level of need has been identified, school- staff must ensure

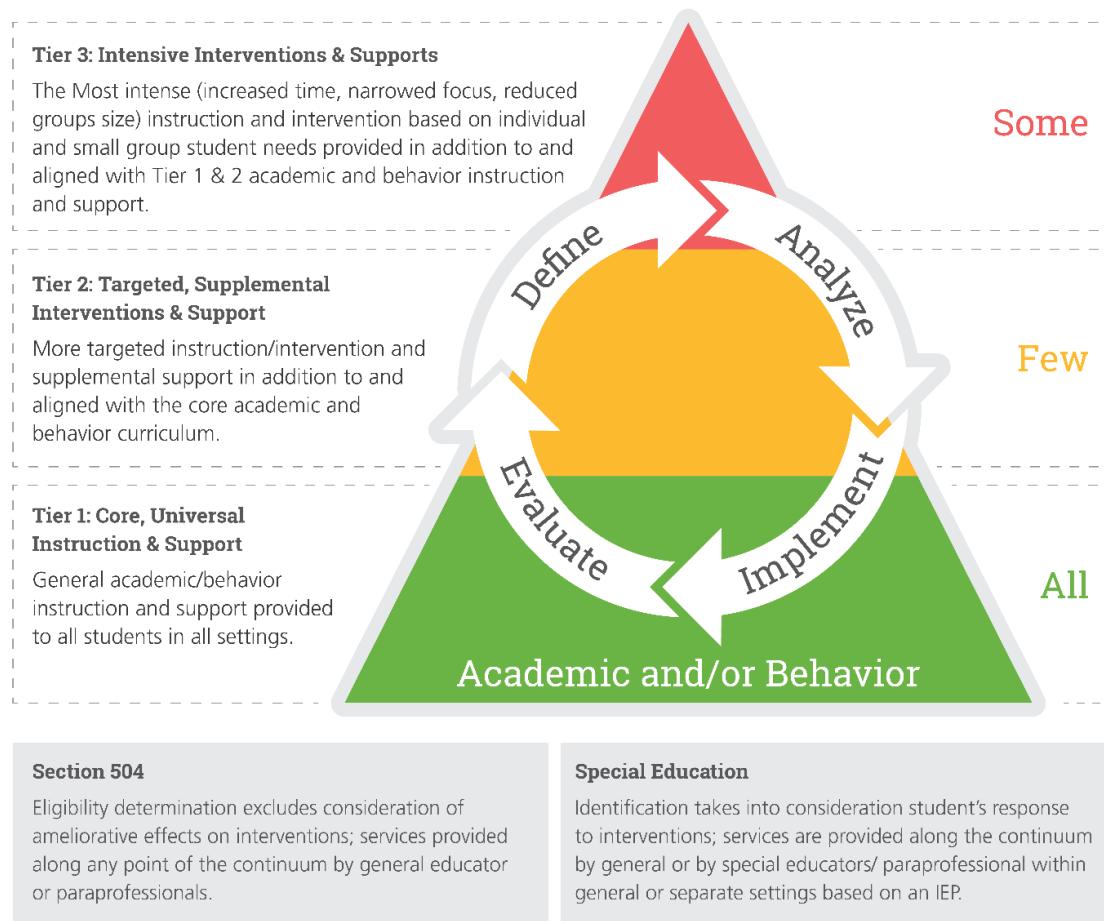
<sup>72</sup> See the Council of the Great City School's document, *Common Core State Standards and Diverse Students: Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support* that outlines the key components of an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, interventions, and academic and behavioral supports needed by school districts in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The document is applicable also to school districts in states that have not adopted these standards.

<sup>73</sup> Article: Tiered Instruction and Intervention in a Response-to-Intervention at Model. <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tiered-instruction-and-intervention-rti-model>.

implementation of data and evidence-based practices. Should regular progress monitoring show the need for more intensive intervention, or a student begins to show lack of expected progress, schools supplement academic core instruction by integrating intensive intervention. It is through the use of these targeted evidence-based intensive intervention programs that the performance of students with disabilities will be accelerated to a higher level.

The exhibit below reflects how MTSS, Section 504 services and special education services intersect.

**Exhibit 41. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**



## IDEA Regulatory Guidance

IDEA guarantees a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities, from birth to age 21. The steps in the special education process include:

- Child find
- Identification and referral
- Evaluation
- Determination of eligibility
- If found eligible, development of an individualized education program (IEP) and determination of services

## Early Childhood Guidance

Virginia's IDEA programs support the skills development of young children with disabilities. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) website references that Early Childhood Special Education (Part B of IDEA) and Early Intervention (Part C of IDEA), in Virginia, provides services for children from birth to kindergarten age who qualify according to state and federal law. All localities in the state have services available for children in this age group who are eligible.<sup>74</sup>

Early Intervention (EI) promotes the development of infants and toddlers ages birth to three years with developmental delays and disabilities, while Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) supports the education of older preschoolers. Both programs address social-emotional, cognitive, and self-care skills critical for children to succeed in the PK-12 system. The EI and ECSE programs have different eligibility criteria, but both provide services to children with disabilities who need support for skills development. Federal law establishes minimum eligibility criteria but allows states some flexibility in defining and expanding those criteria. Children may be eligible for only EI, only ECSE, or both programs as they get older. ECSE programs are managed by each local school division.

There are two methods for identifying and referring a child to ECSE. The first is a referral, usually by an educator or a parent. The second is through the Child Find program mandated by IDEA. Child Find continuously searches for and evaluates children who may have a disability through the implementation of Child Find activities. These processes are implemented for both EI and ECSE to help find and identify children with disabilities ages birth–21 in need of programs and services.

### **School Age Guidance**

IDEA requires that students referred for special education services receive a nondiscriminatory comprehensive evaluation. The school district is required to complete the evaluation within 60 days of the referral date. In Virginia, school divisions must ensure that all evaluations are completed and that decisions about eligibility are made within 65 business days of the receipt of the referral by the special education administrator or designee and, within 30 days of eligibility determination, an IEP must be developed.

The evaluation is to be conducted by a multidisciplinary team that will consist of individuals who can bring different perspectives and expertise to the evaluation. The evaluation must be comprehensive and use evaluation tools and strategies that are technically sound and accepted. Informal observations and documentation of the student's past work should also be used during the eligibility determination meetings. Assessments may not be biased in regard to race, culture, language, or disability. The materials and procedures must be culturally and linguistically sensitive and administered in the language and form most likely to provide accurate information on what the child knows and can do.

School divisions are responsible for providing services to all children with disabilities who are deemed eligible as a child with a disability in accordance with the Virginia regulations. If it is determined through an appropriate evaluation that a child has one of the disabilities identified but only needs a related service and not special education, the child is not a child with a disability under this part. If the related service required by the child is considered special education rather than a related service under Virginia standards, the child would be determined to be a child with a disability.

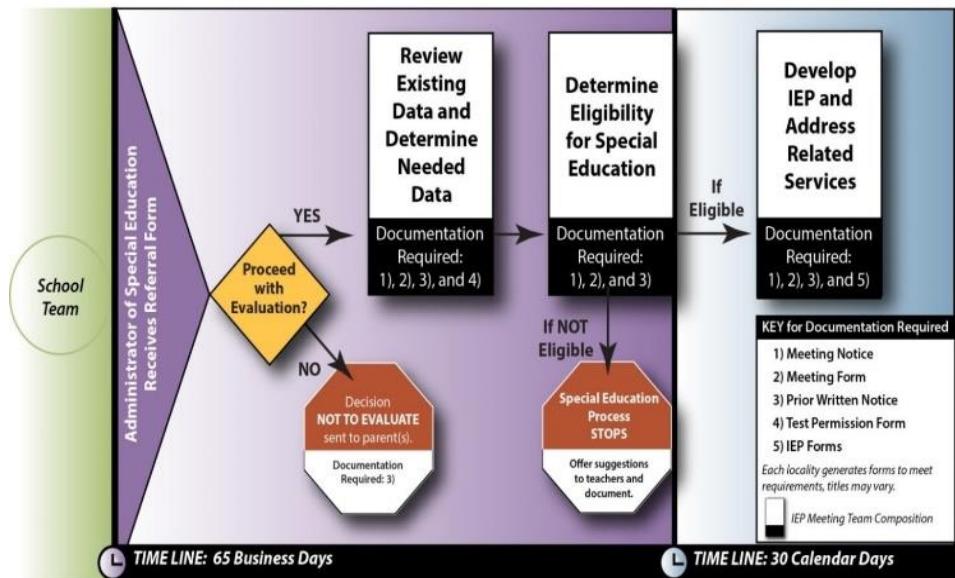
The following graphic serves as a visual representation of the Virginia DOE Special Education Process for Referral from a School Team.

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<sup>74</sup> Virginia DOE Early Childhood. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/early\\_childhood/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/early_childhood/index.shtml)

Exhibit 42. Special Education Process<sup>75</sup>

### Special Education Process: Referral From A School Team



School divisions must develop their own programs to serve all eligible children with disabilities in the most effective way possible.

#### Eligibility (FAPE)

IDEA states that each child, ages three to 21, is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). A student is considered eligible for special education services if (1) the child has a disability as defined by IDEA which negatively impacts his/her educational performance, and (2) the child needs special education services in order to benefit from education.

Not all students are determined to be eligible for special education services. There are multiple reasons why a student may not qualify for special education services including not having a disability that negatively impacts his or her education. However, these students may need help to access the academic curricula. In these situations, the school would need to work out a plan to provide other academic or behavior interventions and support services for students.

If the IEP team determines that the student is eligible for special education services, then a formal Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will be formed to develop a plan of special education services for the student.

## Special Education Referral and Eligibility Division Practices

### Early Childhood

#### Strengths

The ACPS website provides information to parents and members of the community at large on the programs and services it provides for EI and ECSE who are found eligible to receive special education

<sup>75</sup> Evaluation and Eligibility for Special Education and Related Services: Guidance Document, Virginia Department of Education and Student Services. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/evaluation-and-eligibility/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/evaluation-and-eligibility/index.shtml)

services. It states that the eligibility determinations for special education services is a carefully managed process guided by the *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia* (January 25, 2010). Referrals, screenings and evaluations for these programs are required in order to make eligibility decisions in compliance with Virginia regulations by a team of professionals only when parent permission is granted. This demonstrates that both the state regulations and the division policies and procedures are aligned to comply with IDEA requirements for children with disabilities. OSI has an Early Childhood Specialist that supports the implementation of Child Find practices throughout the school division and collaborates on the transition of eligible children from IDEA Part C to Part B. There is strong interagency collaboration to make these transition processes work and that children are referred, screened, and evaluated as needed.

Once a child is found eligible, either an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed as required in accordance with requirements under IDEA Part C, or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed in accordance with IDEA Part B, cooperatively by the student's parents and other required members of the IEP team. Once students are deemed eligible, special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment in the neighborhood school to the maximum extent appropriate for children with disabilities so they may be educated with children who are not disabled. Citywide special education services are also provided in specific situations when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

### Opportunities for Improvement

Although the OSI's early childhood policies and procedures governing referral and eligibility are aligned with federal and state requirements, there are still inconsistencies in implementation and understanding expressed by stakeholders. The following is a summary.

- Early Intervention and Early Childhood Child Find outreach activities are difficult in ACPS's multicultural community where families speak many languages and may not know how to access available child find, referrals, screenings, evaluations, or parent services.
- There is a need for more communication and public awareness of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education programs and services.
- There is a need for a more coordinated effort to help students with disabilities prepare for and transition to kindergarten. This includes more conversation between preschool and kindergarten teams regarding IEP goals and establishing consistent academic and social-emotional expectations for transitioning students. (Training in this area started in 2017-18.).
- Because each school's culture and approach to inclusion is different within ACPS, transitioning students with disabilities can be served in very different settings in kindergarten depending on the philosophy of the school.

## School Age

### Strengths

The ACPS Office of Specialized Instruction (OSI) in its application of the Virginia Department of Education's *Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia*, developed its own ACPS OSI Initial Referral and Eligibility Policies and Procedures, revised March 2013. These policies and procedures provide guidance for the Child Study Team (CST) to address the necessary steps in compliance with all federal and state requirements. OSI also implemented internal processes to guide and assist the eligibility committee in consistently applying the appropriate criteria for students who are being considered for eligibility under the Virginia regulations and help document the committee's decision. Each school's CST under the supervision of the principal is charged with the implementation of these policies and procedures, and provided training and support by OSI to help develop a common understanding in the implementation of practices with fidelity in the division's schools.

There was a strong belief among focus group participants that staff try to do their best to meet children's needs in general education prior to referral for a special education evaluation.

### Opportunities for Improvement

There are still inconsistencies expressed by stakeholders that in some schools not everyone has a common understanding of the policies and procedures, and there may be some training gaps for CST members charged with the implementation of these practices. Every school reportedly has a different way of handling special education referrals. For example, some schools do not require vision or hearing screenings, even if the primary concern is a speech/language disability. Processes are highly dependent upon the school psychologist in the building and on the skill level of the CST team within the school. Intensive training on the content of the Division's handbook took place when it was first rolled out to build initial internal capacity, but it has not been a priority in subsequent years given the changes in Division administration and staff.

It has been reported that some schools have patterns of referring more students to the CST or determining more students eligible for services using the same criteria than others. This heightens the importance of having consistent processes in place to monitor referrals, evaluations, eligibility, and special education placements, since reducing inappropriate placements will reduce inappropriate referrals and ensure that all students are getting the pre-referral interventions in general education first, in order to succeed in the curriculum.

**Exhibit 43. Percentage of All Initial Special Education Referrals by School, 2016-17<sup>76</sup>**

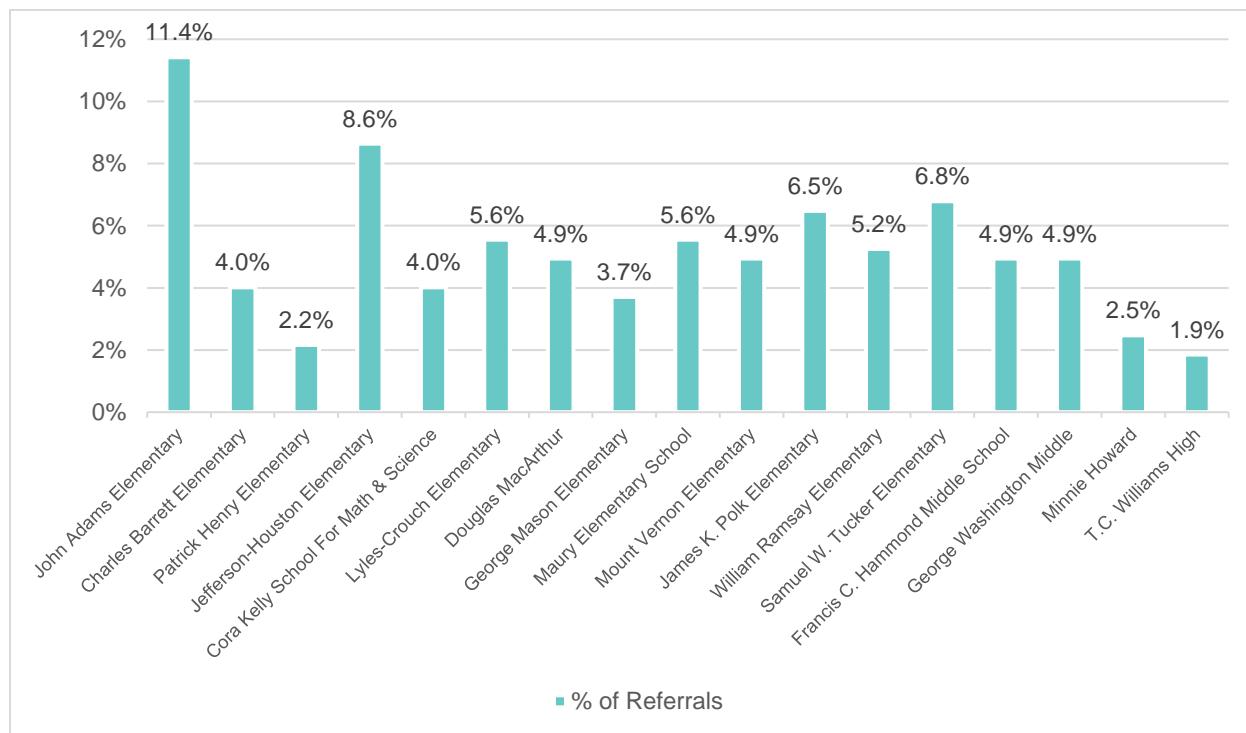


Exhibit 43 shows the proportion of initial special education referrals by school. Among elementary schools, the lowest was Patrick Henry Elementary (2.2%) and the highest was John Adams Elementary (11.4%). Both middle schools had the same rate of 4.9%. The high school rates (Minnie Howard at 2.5% and T.C. William at 1.9%) were among the lowest in the Division.

<sup>76</sup> End of Year 2017 student level data provided by ACPS in June 2017, excludes out of district placement

It was also reported that students that have advocates that understand how the special education process works are quicker to move through the process and access programs and services, thus creating an issue in equity. Further, it was reported that a child's struggles in one academic area were dismissed because of academic strength in another area, until the parent made a "huge issue" of it. There is a need for more public awareness and training on how the special education process works so that all parents can equally advocate and work through these processes on behalf of their children.

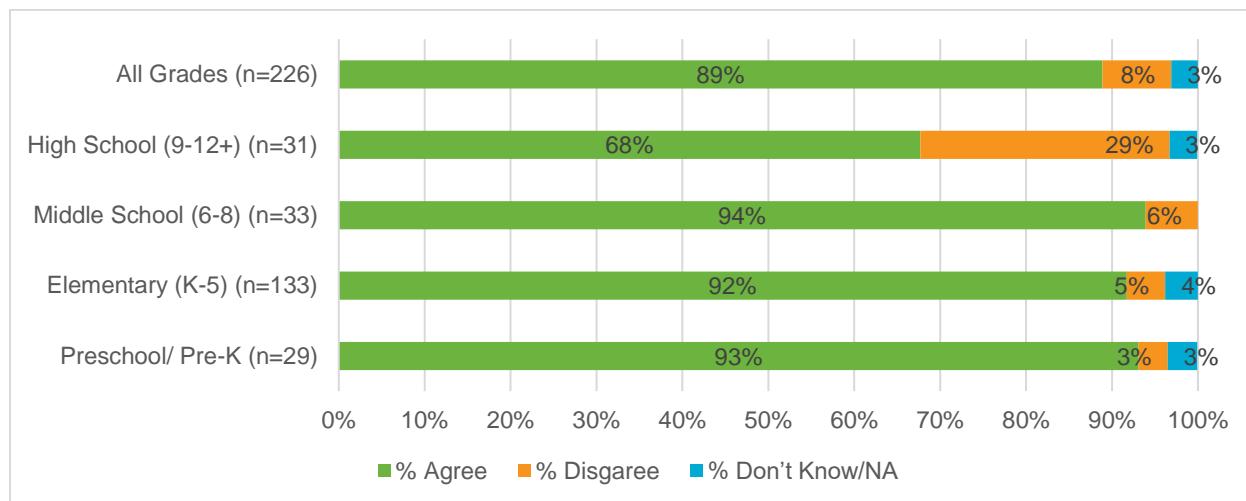
## Survey Results

The staff and parent surveys asked several questions about the referral, eligibility, and reevaluations processes to gauge perceptions among different stakeholders.

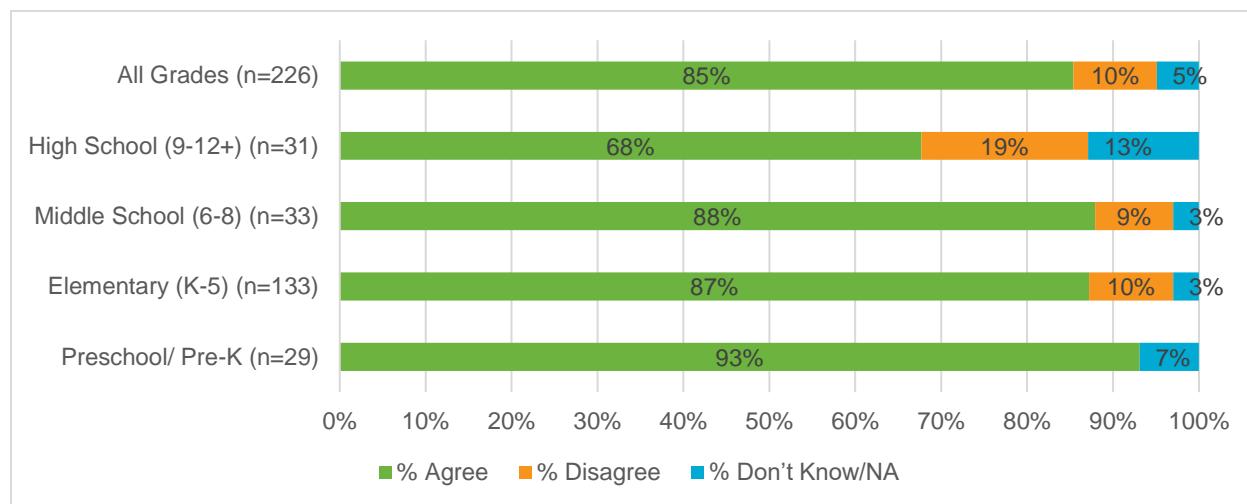
### Parent Survey

In terms of communication regarding students' need, the majority of parents (89%) responded that ACPS explained to them why their children needed special education services in a way that they understood. Parents of students in high school and above (grades 9-12+) expressed far lower agreement with this statement (68%) than parents of students in earlier grades.

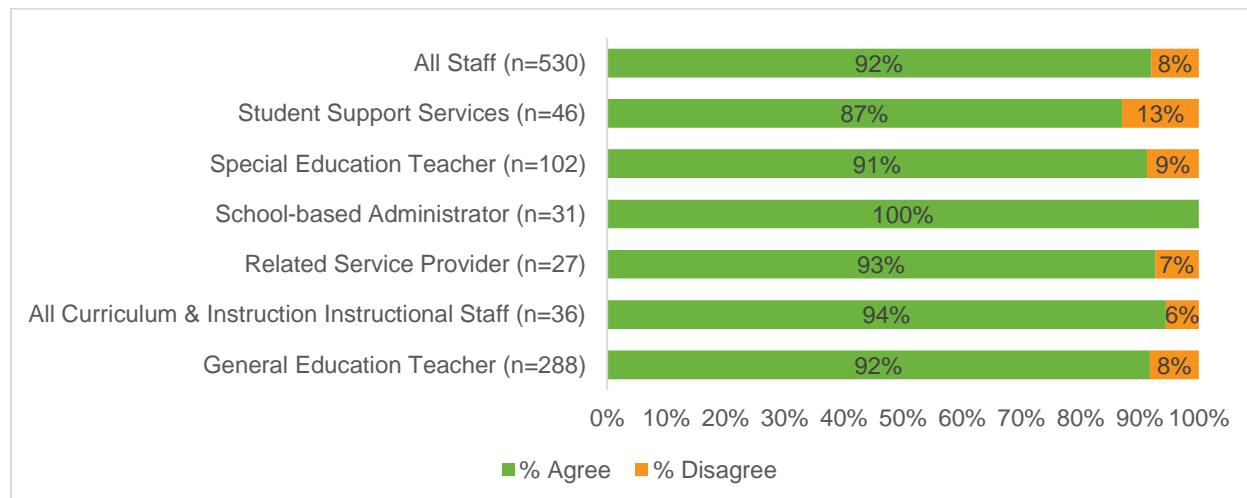
**Exhibit 44. ACPS staff explained to me why my child needs special education services in a way that I was able to understand.**



Parents were also asked about the extent to which a student's last special education evaluation identified their child's strengths and needs. Overall, 85% of parents agreed with this statement. Parents in grades PreK-8 expressed higher levels of agreement (93% for preschool/Pre-K, 87% for elementary school, and 88% for middle school).

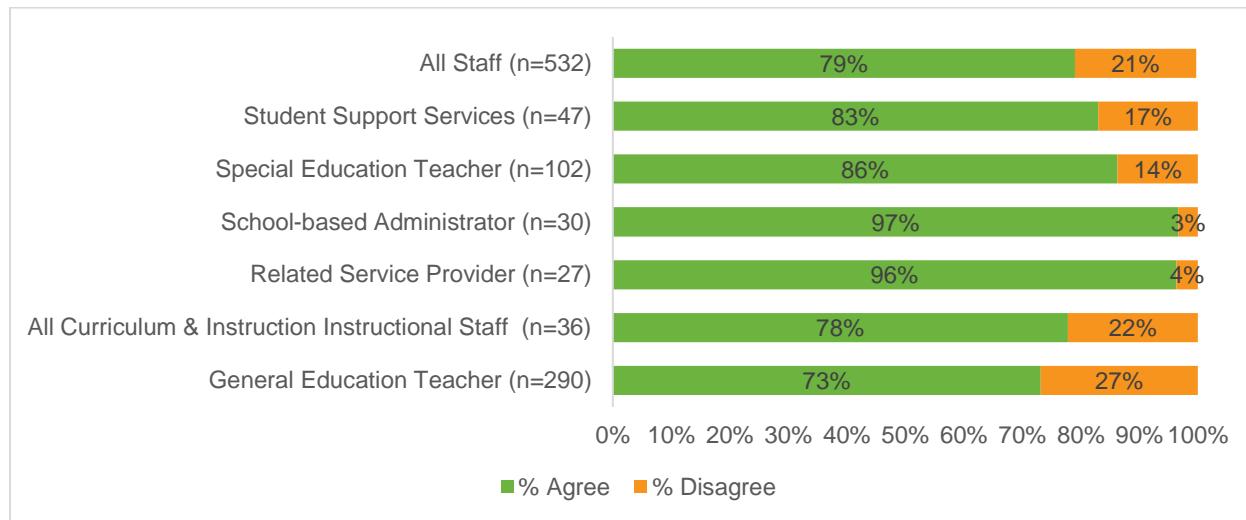
**Exhibit 45. My child's last special education evaluation identified his/her strengths and needs.****Staff Survey**

Staff were asked similar questions about student evaluations. Overall, they were positive about their content and usefulness. Specifically, the majority of staff agreed (92%) that students' evaluations identified their strengths and needs, a rate that was seven percentage points higher than the all parent average.

**Exhibit 46. Special education evaluations for students in my building(s) identify their strengths and needs.**

Staff were also asked whether initial evaluation and/or reevaluation results provided them with meaningful insight into students' educational needs. Related service providers and school-based administrators had the highest level of agreement (97%), while general education teachers had the lowest (73%).

**Exhibit 47. Special education evaluation results provide me with meaningful insights into students' educational needs.**



## English Learners with a Suspected Disability

English Learners (ELs) and Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners (RAIELs) are a highly diverse group, encompassing important subgroups such as students born in the United States whose home language is one other than English or with refugee status, unaccompanied minors, and students with limited or interrupted formal education. ELs and RAIELs enter schools at all grade levels, with varied initial English proficiency levels, educational backgrounds, and home language literacy levels. These students bring unique and valued strengths to the classrooms, but also frequently face shared challenges. While RAIELs share with other ELs a common need to acquire English proficiency, they also often have needs that non-recently arrived ELs do not typically have. These include mental, physical, and social needs that are shaped by dislocation and trauma exposure; academic needs that pertain to limited or interrupted prior formal schooling; and adjustment to the norms and characteristics of a new country, community, and school setting. Given this wide range of challenges, it is no surprise that education agencies struggle to develop policies and practices that adequately address both the ELs' and RAIELs' needs.

As noted in a July 2015 WestEd study, which included an extensive review of the literature and research across schools, districts, and states, two factors were identified that lead to inconsistent identification of students who may have learning disabilities: 1) a lack of understanding among teachers about why EL students are not making adequate progress, and 2) a poorly designed and implemented referral processes. The study also reviewed state guidelines and protocols from 20 states with the largest populations of EL students on the practices of how they identify and support ELs who have disabilities.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Elizabeth Burr, Eric Haas, Karen Ferriere. Identifying and supporting English learner students with learning disabilities: Key issues in the literature and state practice, WestEd July 2015. Pages 2-14.

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL\\_2015086.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2015086.pdf)

Virginia is one of only five states referenced that have publicly available manuals designed to aid educators in identifying and supporting English Learners who are also students with disabilities.<sup>78</sup>

As stated in VDOE's "Handbook for Educators for Students Who Are English Language Learners with Suspected Disabilities," the purpose of these policies and procedures is to provide guidance and assistance in the identification and assessment of students who are ELs with suspected disabilities for possible eligibility for special education and related services in accordance with IDEA requirements.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the Virginia Guidance Document for Evaluation and Eligibility of Special Education and Related Services has a section specifically addressing cultural and linguistic differences in practices and provides additional resources.<sup>80</sup>

### Strengths

Given the high number of ELs and RAIELs enrolled and attending ACPS, OSI used the guidance provided in the Virginia policies and procedures and conducted its own extensive review of the literature to develop the Bilingual Team Handbook "Guidelines for Intervention and Assessment" in August of 2014. The development of the handbook was an initiative undertaken to address a perceived and analyzed problem with the referral, evaluation and eligibility process of ELs with suspected disabilities and an attempt to address them and provide guidance for school teams to assist in the identification and assessment of students who are ELs with suspected disabilities.

The team members involved in the planning process included bilingual psychologists and speech and language pathologists. Collaboratively, the EL office, Student Services, and OSI worked together to develop the Bilingual Team Handbook, train stakeholders on how to distinguish between whether a student is struggling with instruction because it is a second language acquisition, or if it is a special education issue. Extensive training and support helped build internal capacity during the initial roll-out. Training was also required for all new teachers hired in the Division to provide them the necessary foundations to understand and implement these practices. The guidance and best practices delineated in the handbook are currently used when evaluating a student who is EL with a suspected disability to help to make sure that the right students are dually identified as EL and a child with a disability.

It is widely believed among stakeholder groups that the Division has made significant improvement as a result of implementing these practices, and as evidenced by the fact that although approximately 32.1% of the ACPS student population are ELs, only about 10.8% of this population are dually identified as EL SWDs.

PCG analyzed referral data provided by ACPS, comparing the total number of EL and non-EL students referred for special education and the total number of students found eligible. In 2016-2017, 324 students were referred for special education (104 were EL students), 250 evaluations were completed (75 were EL students), and 206 students were found eligible (56 were EL students).

The exhibit below shows that, of all students referred for a special education evaluation, 32.1% were EL students and 67.9% were non-EL students. Of those referred for special education, 17.3% of EL students were found eligible for special education, compared to 35.3% of non-EL students.

<sup>78</sup> Strategies to Identify and Support English Learners with Learning Disabilities, January 2016.

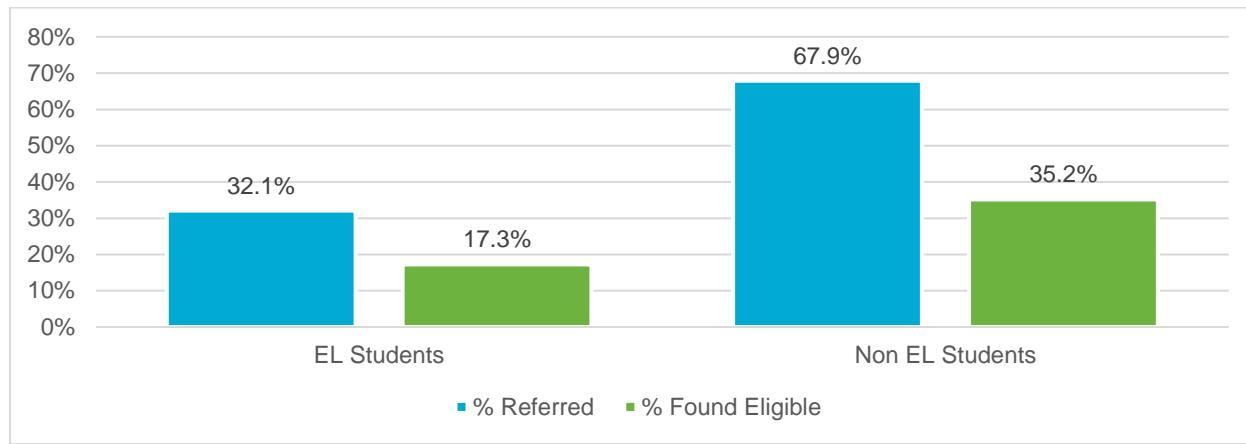
<https://www.scribd.com/doc/315790370/Strategies-to-Identify-and-Support-English-Learners-With-Learning-Disabilities>

<sup>79</sup> Handbook for Educators for Students Who Are English language Learners with Suspected Disabilities, Virginia DOE, April 2015.  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/esl/resources/handbook\\_educators.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/esl/resources/handbook_educators.pdf)

<sup>80</sup> Guidance Document - Virginia Department of Education.

[www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/disabilities/guidance\\_evaluation\\_eligibility.docx](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/disabilities/guidance_evaluation_eligibility.docx)

**Exhibit 48. Percentage of EL Students Referred and Found Eligible for Special Education vs. Non-EL Students, 2016-17<sup>81</sup>**



There is a perception among focus group participants that teams are less inclined to initiate an immediate referral to the CST and, instead, provide appropriate pre-referral strategies and interventions to struggling ELs with suspected disabilities. Since both EL and OSI offices report to the Chief Academic Officer, there is greater opportunity for these teams to meet as needed to address the continuous improvement of these practice as members of the C&I department.

### Opportunities for Improvement

In interviews and focus groups, staff and administrators report there are significant language barriers in some ACPS schools with high number of students who are EL and parents who do not speak English, which adversely impacts meaningful engagement to help them access programs, services and supports in their school communities. Concerns were expressed about the number of children of color or culturally and linguistically diverse that are referred to the CST and determined eligible for services. This may indicate that there is a cultural context that needs to be explored in the implementation of pre-referral interventions and strategies to ensure that the interventions implemented address the cultural and linguistic needs of children who continue to struggle. More data may need to be gathered to determine whether these difficulties stem from language or cultural differences, from a lack of opportunity to learn, or from a disability. Bilingual assessment policies, procedures, and practices may need to be reviewed and training provided to strengthen practices for determining the language to be used in testing. An assessment of language dominance and proficiency should also be completed before further testing is conducted for students whose home language is other than English.

Although the guidelines delineated in the Bilingual Team Handbook are being followed and implemented throughout the Division, there are still opportunities to continue to develop a common understanding and strengthen the fidelity of implementation of practices among school level teams. Focus group participants expressed that even though the Division has a Bilingual Team Handbook with clearly delineated policies and procedures to address ELs with suspected disabilities, the initial rollout and communication of the handbook and support for its implementation has “lost some of its steam.” Participants also wanted more training and refreshers for CSTs to help them develop a better understanding of the policies, procedures and practice referenced in the Bilingual Team Handbook since there have been many changes in Division staff since the last roll out. Some indicated that collaborative meetings to continue to refine and address gaps in practices between the EL and SPED offices are not occurring with the urgency, frequency, and consistency of the past. Additionally, comments were also made that when ELs are found eligible for

<sup>81</sup> End of Year 2017 student level data provided by ACPS June 2017.

special education programs and services it was still unclear how to address instructional supports within the IEP (including possible accommodations and modifications).

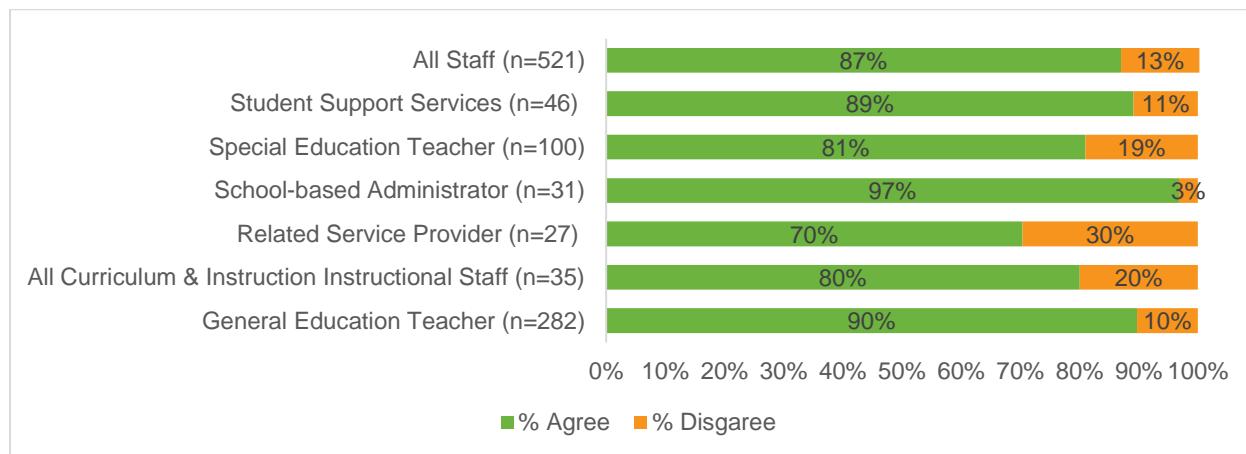
The referral data for ELs with a suspected disability should also be systematically collected and analyzed to determine trends in discrepant patterns of disproportionality so that proactive action can be taken to mitigate causal factors. More training and support also needs to be provided to school level teams and teachers to continue to build strong foundations for second language acquisition through the implementation of the processes delineated in the handbook and providing effective research-based instructional and communication strategies for ELs.

## **Survey Results**

Staff were asked if the impact of a child's native language was considered prior to a referral to special education. Nearly 97% of school-based administrators agreed with this statement. Related service providers (70%), Curriculum and Instruction staff (80%), and Special Education teachers (81%) were less in agreement.

### **Staff Survey**

**Exhibit 49. Prior to a referral for a special education, the impact of a child's native language is considered.**



## **Section 504**

### **Regulatory Guidance**

As noted in the 2014 Disability Statistics Annual Report for the 4.2 million school-aged children with disabilities in the United States, Section 504 of *The Rehabilitation Act* (Rehab Act) is an important piece of legislation because it protects their right to equal opportunity in education.<sup>82</sup> The Act prevents discrimination on the basis of disability, and Section 504, in particular, applies to any program receiving federal funding in all K-12 schools. Under Section 504, an individual with a disability (also referred to as a student with a disability in the elementary and secondary education context) is defined as a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.<sup>83</sup>

School districts have a number of obligations under Section 504, including the following:

<sup>82</sup> 2014 Disability Statistics Annual Report. [http://www.researchondisability.org/docs/default-document-library/annualreport\\_2014\\_draft5.pdf?sfvrsn=2](http://www.researchondisability.org/docs/default-document-library/annualreport_2014_draft5.pdf?sfvrsn=2)

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Code. 29 U.S.C. § 705(9)(B), (20) (B).

- Conduct appropriate child find and initial evaluations
- Provide periodic reevaluations of students with disabilities
- Provide eligible students with FAPE through the provision of a Section 504 plan to meet the individual educational needs of eligible students as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met
- Provide education to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Provide established standards and procedures in the identification and evaluation process
- Provide transportation under specific individual circumstances and conditions
- Provide equal access to parents who have a disability
- Provide students with disabilities equal access to nonacademic and/or extracurricular services
- Establish and implement a system of procedural safeguards regarding the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of FAPE to a student
- Ensure behavior in question is not a manifestation of a student's disability during disciplinary proceedings
- Before placing students with disabilities in any educational program, schools must evaluate carefully each student's skills and special needs
- Federal requirements provide standards for proper evaluations and placement procedures
- The tests and evaluation materials that are used are chosen to assess specific areas of the student's needs
- Only trained individuals may administer the tests or evaluation materials

As referenced in the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) Frequently Asked Questions About Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities, Section 504 requires recipients to provide to students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met. An appropriate education for a student with a disability under the Section 504 regulations could consist of education in regular classrooms, education in regular classes with supplementary services, and/or special education and related services.<sup>84</sup>

For students with disabilities who do not require specialized instruction but need the assurance that the law entitles them to equal access to public education and services, a 504 Plan document must be created to outline their specific accessibility requirements. Students with 504 Plans do not require specialized instruction, but, like the IEP, a 504 Plan should be updated annually to ensure that the student is receiving the most effective accommodations for his/her specific circumstances. A 504 Plan ensures that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and provide access to the learning environment.

As referenced in the *Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)*, of the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, each state-operated program providing educational services to persons of school age and the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton shall provide a free appropriate public education to each qualified person with a disability of school age and provide procedural safeguards in accordance with the Virginia Department of Education's 504 plan. (34 CFR 104.33).<sup>85</sup> The state also provides guidance, training, and

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<sup>84</sup> Frequently Asked Questions About Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities.  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

<sup>85</sup> Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children in Virginia, Compliance with Section 504, Page 85.  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/regulations/state/regs\\_spced\\_disability\\_va.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/regs_spced_disability_va.pdf)

support for school divisions to support their implementation and compliance with Section 504 federal and state requirements.<sup>86</sup>

## Division Practices

### Strengths

ACPS's Department of Student Services developed the "Section 504 Procedural Guidance Manual for Administrators & Staff" that is used to guide practices and ensure compliance with federal and state requirements.<sup>87</sup> This manual defines the responsibilities of building administrators and school staff, as well as parent's/guardian's and student's role in protecting the rights of all students who meet the definition of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). It also serves to provide a formalized system of identifying and serving students with disabilities as defined under Section 504 (including the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA)) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), thus enabling ACPS to ensure that all rights are protected and that a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) is provided. The procedures clearly delineate the processes that must be adhered to for child find, referral, screening/records review, eligibility and the development of a 504 plan.

Compliance with these procedures ensures that students have opportunities to access, and receive benefit from, school-related programs and activities available within the school division. Although services and supports provided to eligible students under Section 504 may not produce identical results or level of achievement with nondisabled peers, the services and supports are designed to offer an equal opportunity to gain benefit. This manual is not an exhaustive statement of all rules and procedures required by these laws, but rather is an effort to assist staff, parents/guardians, students, and other users in understanding how Section 504 is implemented in ACPS.

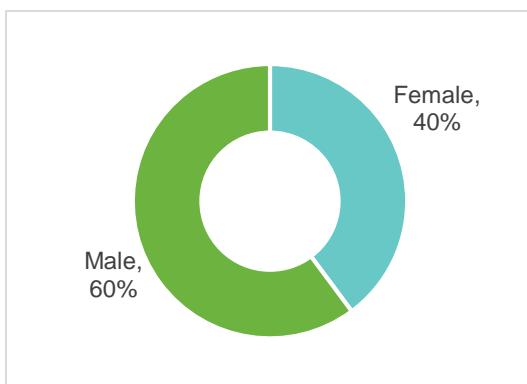
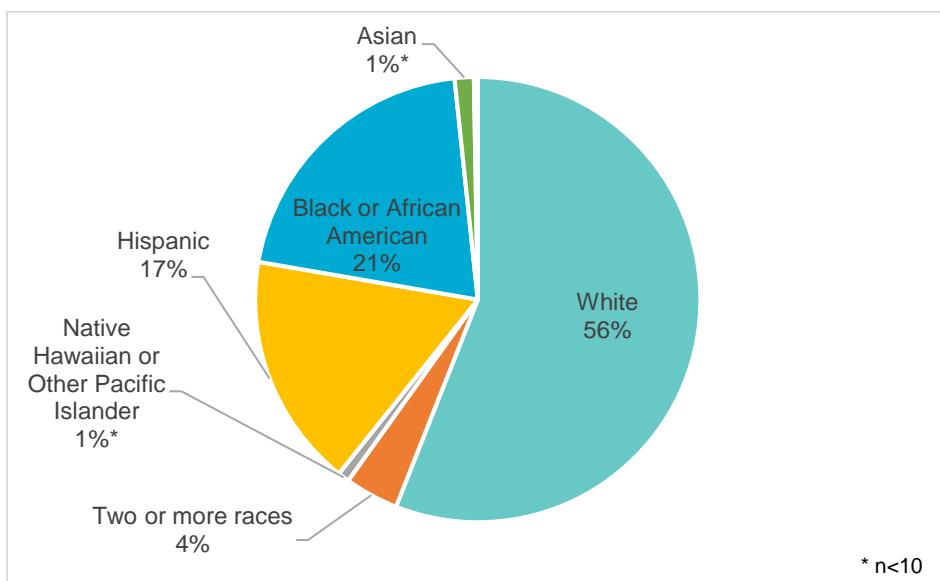
The ACPS 504 processes for referral and evaluation to determine eligibility is handled by school counselors, who are the designated 504 coordinators. They work in collaboration with school teams to address the needs for services of struggling students. It was reported by focus group participants that the ACPS numbers of 504 eligible students continues to grow. For the 2015-16 school year, 359 students had a 504 plan, approximately 2.3% of the total student population. The exhibits below compare the number of students with 504 plans by gender and race.

<sup>86</sup> Section 504 Keys to Implementation in Virginia's Schools.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/tech\\_asst\\_prof\\_dev/section\\_504\\_implementation\\_va.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/tech_asst_prof_dev/section_504_implementation_va.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> ACPS Section 504 Procedural Guidance Manual.

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/cms/lib/VA01918616/Centricity/Domain/827/section-504-manual.pdf>

**Exhibit 50. Percentage of Students with 504 Plans by Gender, 2016-17<sup>88</sup>****Exhibit 51. Percentage of Students with 504 Plans by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-17<sup>89</sup>**

The Student Services Department has done a lot to inform, guide, and support school staff on the implementation of these processes and is conducting its own internal compliance audit of 504 this year to assess how schools are using 504 plans to target support for eligible students. The ACPS policies and procedures were developed and aligned to comply with all federal and state requirements governing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These policies and procedures were updated during the 2017-18 school year to address changes in practices in or recent updates from the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

Policy documents are revisited each summer to make the necessary adjustments based on feedback from staff, OCR, Virginia Department of Education, etc. As an example, the Section 504 committee reviewed all students with health care plans in the fall of 2017 to assess the degree of impairment or disability. This was done in order to provide better clarity to schools between an individual health plan (IHP), a 504 Plan, or an IEP. School nurses also inform families of students with IHPs of Section 504 annually and the possibility that their child may be eligible under Section 504. A letter is provided for the parent to determine whether or not they wish to pursue Section 504 eligibility. Additional guidance about

<sup>88</sup> End of Year 2017 student level data provided by ACPS in June 2017.

<sup>89</sup> *Id.*

this was included in the ACPS 504 Procedural Guidance Manual. Staff (administrators, SST) are trained to know that students with IHP are entitled to the non-discriminatory protections of 504 even if they are not determined to be eligible.

As part of the updated manual, ACPS also added a yearly requirement for school Student Support Teams (SST) to consider whether any students with IHPs needed to be referred for Section 504 screening.

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

There is a perception among stakeholders that more and more parents are requesting a 504 plan for struggling students to address instructional and testing accommodations in the elementary grades, and that there is another sharp increase as they approach high school. The Division should conduct a further analysis to determine the types of accommodations, supplemental aides, and services being provided through a 504 plan in order to determine trends and discernible patterns of changes in the data over time.

As part of the review and revisions to the policies and procedures annually, continued attention should be also given to best practices for the development and implementation of 504 plans. It would also be important to have monitoring procedures updated to ensure that the general education teachers are implementing 504 plans with fidelity to prevent instances of non-compliance. Stakeholders also expressed concern that there are no set times for OSI and Student Services to meet areas of co-practice that have an impact on both special education and 504 policies and practices.

## V. Teaching, Learning, and Social Emotional Support for Students with Disabilities

### Key Strengths

- **Co-Teaching.** ACPS has made significant investments in, and has prioritized, co-teaching.
- **Staff Survey.** 92% of all staff agree that their schools provides an inclusive environment for SWDs, and 95% agree that instructional staff at their schools treat students with disabilities with respect.
- **Interventions.** There is clear guidance as to how each intervention should be used to support SWDs in Tiers II and III.
- **Citywide Classes.** They are well resourced and supported from OSI.
- **Assistive Technology.** Low and high tech devices are available and well-utilized to support students.

### Opportunities for Improvement

- **Academic Optimism and High Expectations.** ACPS needs to further cultivate the idea that all students can achieve at high levels, regardless of their disability or other factors.
- **Co-Teaching.** Site-based management has had a significant effect on special education management, programming, performance, accountability, and co-teaching outcomes.
- **Specially Designed Instruction.** Though a great emphasis has been placed on providing guidance, resources, and training to build capacity for the implementation of SDI, it is still an emerging practice.

This section of the report is devoted to results, how ACPS is supporting teaching and learning for students with IEPs, and how the Division provides specialized instruction, related services, and supplementary aids/services that enable students with disabilities to receive the educational benefits to which they are entitled.

While compliance indicators remain important, under the new Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) framework, the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has sharpened its focus on what happens in the classroom to promote educational benefits and improve outcomes and results for students with disabilities. This change is based on data showing that the educational outcomes of America's children and youth with disabilities have not improved as expected, despite significant federal efforts to close achievement gaps. The accountability system that existed prior to the new one placed substantial emphasis on procedural compliance, but it often did not consider how requirements affected the learning outcomes of students.<sup>90</sup> This shift is having a great impact in guiding the priorities of special education department nationwide, including in ACPS. Districts need both to raise the level of and access to high levels of rigor, and also to generate a culture of academic optimism.<sup>91</sup>

These issues have become even more significant with the March 27, 2017 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*.<sup>92</sup> In this decision, the Court updated its prior standard for determining a school district's provision of an appropriate education for students with disabilities. This

<sup>90</sup> April 5, 2012, RDA Summary, U.S. Department of Education. [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/rdasummary.doc](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/rdasummary.doc)

<sup>91</sup> Hoy, W. K., Tarter, C. J., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2006). Academic optimism of schools: A force for student achievement. Working Paper – The Ohio State University. <http://www.waynehoy.com/school-academic-optimism/>

<sup>92</sup> Supreme Court of the United States. Retrieved from [https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-827\\_0pm1.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-827_0pm1.pdf)

case centered on the importance of establishing ambitious and challenging goals that enable each student to make academic progress and functional advancement, and advance from grade to grade. Progress for a student with a disability, including those receiving instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards, must be appropriate in light of his/her circumstances. Furthermore, yearly progress must be more demanding than the “merely more than de minimis” standards that had been used by some lower courts. For children with disabilities, receiving instruction that aims so low would be tantamount to “sitting idly . . . awaiting the time when they were old enough to ‘drop out.’”<sup>93</sup> The Court made it clear that IDEA demands more. The recommendations in this report serve to bolster the OSEP’s recent shift toward improving instructional outcomes.

## Academic Optimism and Growth Mindset

**Academic Optimism.** Dr. Wayne Hoy and his colleagues suggest that connecting three important characteristics of schools can produce a potent and positive influence on academic achievement, even in the face of low socioeconomic status, previous performance, and other demographic variables such as school size or minority enrollment.<sup>94</sup> Hoy’s definition of “academic optimism” is grounded in social cognitive theory and positive psychology. It embraces the following characteristics:

- **Academic emphasis** – the extent to which a school is driven by a belief system that includes high expectations for students to achieve academically
- **Collective efficacy of the faculty** – the belief that the faculty can make a positive difference in student learning
- **Faculty’s trust in parents and students** – faculty, administrators, parents, and students cooperate to improve student learning; trust and cooperation among parents, teachers and students influences student attendance, persistent learning, and faculty experimentation with new practices

Adding “optimism” as a third factor in determining success (in addition to talent and motivation) provides a positive force for learning referred to as “academic optimism.” A school with high “academic optimism” believes that faculty can make a difference, students can learn, and achieve high levels of academic performance.

Various ACPS stakeholder groups, including parents, noted that the expectations for students with disabilities are often low and that these students should not only be exposed to higher level work but held that the whole school community needs to *believe* that they can achieve at high levels.

**Growth Mindset.** Dr. Carol Dweck’s research on fixed vs. growth mindset complements Dr. Hoy’s work. Dweck’s research supports that in a fixed mindset, students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and “that’s that,” and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never challenging themselves in order to prevent others from thinking they are not smart. In a growth mindset, students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching, and persistence. They believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it. Teachers who believe in a growth mindset that all students can learn, support the academic optimism’s construct. As teachers and students begin to believe that hard work, perseverance, and belief can change the student growth trajectory, a paradigm shift will take root within each school

<sup>93</sup> US Supreme Court. <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/580/15-827/opinion3.html>

<sup>94</sup> Hoy, W. K., Tarter, C. J., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2006). Academic optimism of schools: A force for student achievement. Working Paper – The Ohio State University. <http://www.waynehoy.com/school-academic-optimism/>

leading to maximum student and teacher success.<sup>95</sup> Students who believe (or are taught) that intellectual abilities are qualities that can be developed (as opposed to qualities that are fixed) tend to show higher achievement across challenging school transitions and greater course completion rates.<sup>96</sup>

A culture of “academic optimism” in special education will create an environment where growth mindset can be cultivated. This supports the academic optimism’s construct and sets high expectations for the instruction, support and services delivered to students with disabilities, which will lead to greater student achievement. The development of a growth mindset is critical for the success of all students who are struggling or are high achievers.

Some schools in ACPS have adopted the growth mindset principles, with posters in some classroom explaining its tenets. This adoption appears to be site-specific though, and will need to be adopted consistently, along with training for all staff, across the Division for the greatest impact.

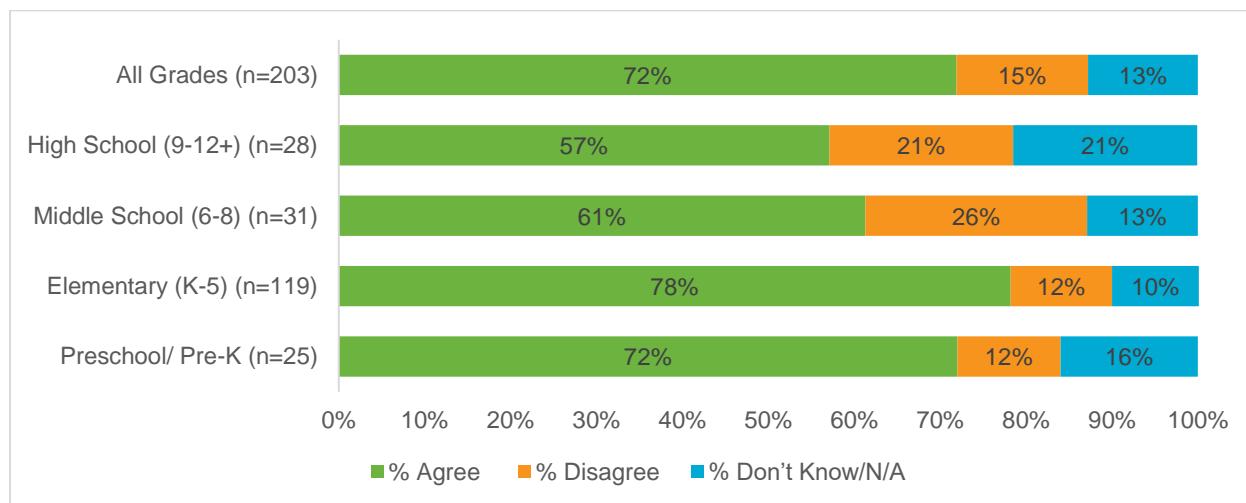
## ***Survey Results***

### **Parent Survey**

As part of the survey, parents were asked if they believed that staff had high expectations for their child and the extent to which they were satisfied with the academic progress made by their children.

Among parents, nearly three-quarters (72%) indicated that they agree that the teaching staff in ACPS, including therapists, have high expectations for their child, with some variation by grade level. Specifically, parents of children in middle school and high school were less in agreement with this statement (61% and 57% respectively) than those in elementary (78%) and Preschool/Pre-K (72%).

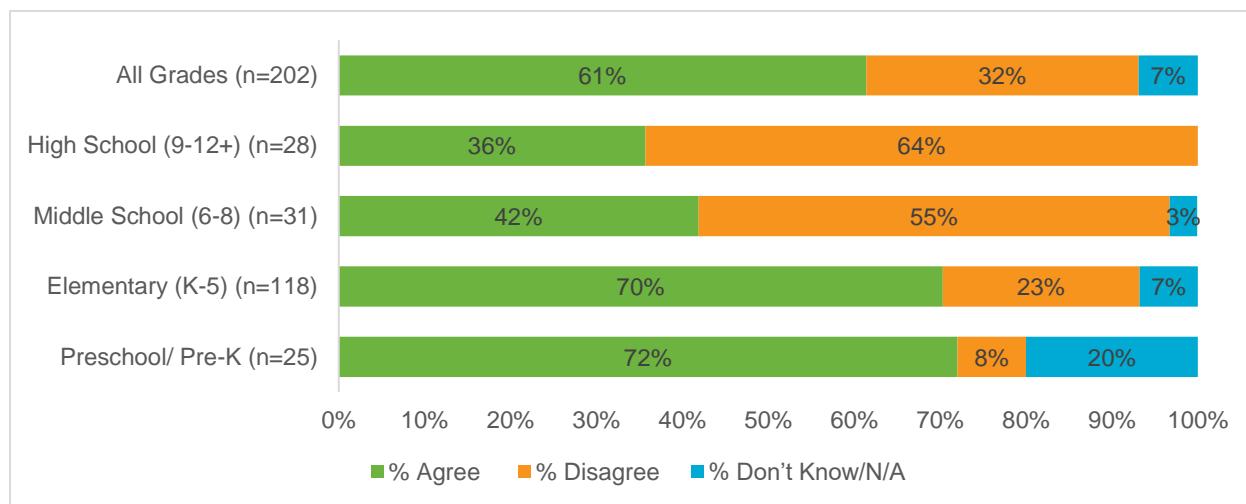
#### **Exhibit 52. The teaching staff, including therapists, have high expectations for my child.**



Parent's satisfaction with their child's academic progress follows a similar pattern seen in responses to other questions: satisfaction was higher in elementary school (72%), and lowest in high school (36%). Overall, 61% of parents at all levels agreed that they were satisfied with their child's academic progress in school.

<sup>95</sup> Dweck, Carol. S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Constable & Robinson Limited, 2012.

<sup>96</sup> Yeager, David Scott; Dweck, Carol S. Mindsets that Promote Resilience: When students Believe that Personal Characteristics Can Be Developed, *Educational Psychologist*, v47 n4 p302-314 2012.

**Exhibit 53. I am satisfied with my child's overall academic progress in school.**


## Early Childhood Supports and Services

Most 3- to 5-year-olds with disabilities learn best when they attend preschools alongside their age-mates without disabilities to the greatest extent possible. These settings provide both language and behavioral models that assist in children's development and help all children learn to be productively engaged with diverse peers. Studies have shown that when children with disabilities are included in the regular classroom setting, they demonstrate higher levels of social play, are more likely to initiate activities, and show substantial gains in key skills—cognitive skills, motor skills, and self-help skills.<sup>97</sup> Participating in activities with typically developing peers allows children with disabilities to learn through modeling, and this learning helps them prepare for the real world. Researchers have found that typically developing children in inclusive classrooms are better able to accept differences and are more likely to see their classmates achieving despite their disabilities. They are also more aware of the needs of others. The importance of inclusive education is underscored by a federal requirement, which requires that the extent to which young children (three to five years of age) receive the majority of their services in regular early childhood programs, i.e., inclusively or in separate settings, be included as a state performance-plan indicator.

There is no requirement in the state for universal public preschool education, which presents a challenge for ACPS in attempts to create enough integrated general education settings for preschoolers with disabilities to participate. As described in the previous section, ACPS did not meet the state target for the majority of time spent in the regular early childhood program in 2013-14 or 2014-15 but did exceed the state target in 2015-16. Focus group participants expressed concern that sometimes preschool students are limited in the inclusive options available and must travel to other schools because of where seats are available or programs are located.

<sup>97</sup> Book Chapter: How Do Children Benefit from Inclusion?. <http://archive.brookespublishing.com/documents/gupta-how-children-benefit-from-inclusion.pdf>

## Supporting Instruction and Inclusion in the General Education Setting

For students with disabilities to improve their academic achievement and reduce the achievement gap with their nondisabled peers, they need to be included in the core curriculum and receive evidence-based interventions that are targeted and implemented with fidelity. Though ACPS's inclusion rates for 2013-14 and 2014-15 exceeded the state target, this is an area that will continue to benefit from focused attention to ensure ACPS continues to meet the targets in the future. Additionally, schools with ACPS vary with respect to the extent to which students are educated in general education classes, and the extent to which special and general educators co-teach to educate these students. The variance ranges from a very high degree of inclusivity where almost all students are educated within general education classes to very little inclusiveness.

Overall, focus group participants recognized the value of including students with IEPs in general education learning. There is a consensus that ACPS has been committed to promoting and expanding inclusive educational opportunities for students. There also seems to be a growing recognition that general education classes provide the best setting for almost all students with IEPs to receive rigorous instruction in the core curriculum. Both special education and general education focus group participants for the most part echoed this mindset.

Feedback from focus group participants was mixed regarding the extent to which students are provided access to general education classes and the sufficiency of support teachers and students are provided. As with most school divisions, there are schools that are viewed as being highly inclusive and supportive, implement practices in accordance with the guidance provided and those that do not. Participants agreed that principals set the tone for the extent to which their schools implement the guidance provided for effective inclusive practices. There was consensus that general and special educators need more guidance and training regarding the provision of instruction that is rigorous and aligned to the state standards in a way that enables diverse learners including students with IEPs to learn the content and to demonstrate proficiency.

Schools also need to create an environment in which each student is expected to learn, be supported and demonstrate learning at high levels. All teachers need more training and support throughout the school year to confidently implement differentiated instruction, accommodations and modifications, and specially designed instruction. The implementation of UDL, which is an evidenced-based universal framework used in general education classrooms to address the needs of diverse learners, was rarely mentioned by stakeholder groups. Division administrators note that inclusion remains a challenging area, despite training provided at different times through external consultants and the Division's Instructional Specialists, and that there are still challenges with implementation of scheduling, collaborative planning and co-teaching models of support.

The special education resources now on Canvas including the co-teaching walk through tool have been helpful but inconsistently used in schools as support tools to develop a common understanding and better support teachers. There are still significant gaps in the training and support provided to schools. Although guidance, training and support is available, there is very little that the Division currently does to hold schools accountable. Many staff referenced challenges to expanding inclusion in some schools because of factors such as culture, level of buy-in, and willingness to fully embrace students with disabilities. The effective and efficient scheduling of teachers so that there is sufficient time to plan and balance the competing priorities for their assigned caseloads needs greater attention in order to make inclusion work. Case managers focus primarily on how much time they need to spend supporting students in general education or special education classrooms during the school day and lose sight on the preparation necessary to implement high yield co-teaching models and providing standard's aligned instruction to children with disabilities.

Collaborative planning may also be impacted by either not scheduling the time or, if scheduled, by other priorities that arise during the school day. Based on classroom observations and student shadowing performed by PCG, it would be an invaluable investment for the Division to ensure that collaborative planning time is scheduled on the master schedule for all co-teachers. Training and coaching on the implementation of high-yield co-teaching practices should also be scheduled through cohorts as soon as teachers are partnered so that they are well prepared to instruct and support children with disabilities in schools.

### **Past Inclusion Efforts**

In an effort to increase the number of children with disabilities served in the least restrictive education environment, ACPS commissioned a report several years ago to help improve efforts in this area. The 2011 report, titled *Alexandria City Public Schools: A Plan for Enhancing Inclusive Practices*, drove the development of a strategic plan. In order to achieve the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, a detailed Division Educational Plan was developed to “create an inclusive learning environment in which every child with disabilities has access to the standard curriculum based on Standards of Learning (SOL) across a continuum of services.”

A team of school-based administrators, parents, central office personnel, general education teachers, special education teachers, and outside consultants was convened to develop a comprehensive plan to address inclusive practices in ACPS. The group’s mission was to develop a framework of goals, objectives, metrics, targets and tasks to be implemented over a three-year period to make certain that the necessary conditions and resources are in place to significantly raise the achievement of students with disabilities while providing services in the least restrictive and most appropriate learning environment.

The objectives of the Inclusion Plan were aligned with objectives of the Division Education Plan. In addition, schools were to provide individualized support to each student based on the student’s academic and emotional needs using tiered responses to ensure that all students achieve academic growth. An inclusion workgroup was created, in part, in response to three previous evaluative reports: one resulting from the federal monitoring review through the VDOE in 2008, and the other from two comprehensive qualitative assessments of the Special Education Program conducted by the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), one in 2009 and one in 2011. Many of the goals delineated in the initial plan were achieved, and meaningful progress was made in promoting and supporting a culture that is conducive to the implementation of inclusive practices throughout the school division.

ACPS then hired a consultant, Dr. Lisa Dieker, to provide training and technical assistance to schools. Dr. Dieker is a nationally recognized expert and author in the area of inclusive practices.<sup>98</sup> The focus of the professional learning centered on the tenets of co-teaching, the development of school-based inclusion plans, and addressing the needs of diverse learners in the general education classroom. In the summer of 2010, all principals were invited to meet individually with Dr. Dieker to reflect upon and discuss their readiness level in the area of inclusive practices for the upcoming school year. It was reported that out of a total of 19 building administrators, seven took advantage of this opportunity to help them build foundations for inclusive practices.

### **Current Inclusive Instructional Practices**

Under current leadership, ACPS continues to build on previous efforts with a greater emphasis on results driven accountability. Dr. Marilyn Friend was hired as a consultant in an effort to continue to promote, expand and strengthen inclusive practices in Division schools.<sup>99</sup> A major emphasis of this engagement

<sup>98</sup> Lisa Dieker Resume. <https://edcollege.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/06/LDieker.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> Marilyn Friend Website. [http://www.marilynfriend.com/about\\_us.htm](http://www.marilynfriend.com/about_us.htm)

was to support the implementing high yield co-teaching models based on the extensive research conducted by Dr. Friend, and her colleague Lynn Cooke, in real classrooms using effective methods for partnering that yield results.<sup>100</sup> In their book, *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals*, they identify "co-teaching as a specific service delivery option that is based on collaboration."<sup>101</sup> As a service delivery option, co-teaching is designed to meet the educational needs of students with diverse learning options, and is "an approach for providing services to students with disabilities or other special needs, one based on providing specialized instruction while simultaneously ensuring access to the general curriculum and a least restrictive environment."<sup>102</sup>

Dr. Friend identifies six models for partnering and delivering co-teaching support to students which include:

1. One Teach/One Assist
2. One Teach/One Observe
3. Alternative Teaching
4. Team Teaching
5. Station Teaching
6. Parallel Teaching

Of the six models, Dr. Friend identifies three as high-yield strategies: Alternative Teaching, Parallel Teaching, and Station Teaching. ACPS is implementing these high-yield strategies.

ACPS's current emphasis has been on building an evidence-based co-teaching framework that provides guidance for teachers partnered to support children with disabilities in the general education setting as co-teachers. To that end, comprehensive guidance and resources have been developed and made accessible through the Curriculum and Instruction dashboard (via Canvas) to support the implementation of high yield co-teaching models, collaborative practices, planning and scheduling and to clarifying roles for delivering high quality instruction to SWDs in the general education classroom.

The quality and effectiveness of co-teaching is available in varying degrees around the Division. The training is aligned to the extensive research on co-teaching conducted by Dr. Friend. Training components have been developed and sessions scheduled on the master calendar by the Division to train administrators and cohorts of teachers in the implementation of high-yield co-teaching models to support this effort. Onsite coaching has been provided to schools implementing co-teaching by both the consultant and the Division's OSI Instructional Specialists.

In an effort to build confidence in practice and fidelity of implementation co-teaching walk-through tools were developed, and the Division's Instructional Specialists provided training and support to school administrators in the use of these tools to monitor the fidelity in implementation of practices. The data collected from the walk-throughs helps to inform the training, coaching and support changes necessary to continue to build capacity. It has been reported that there are now many more co-teaching team sections assigned on the master schedules of schools than in previous years; however, the co-teaching pairs are not mandated to attend training or required to attend the cohort training so many still do not attend. Focus group participants also indicated that the training provided on high yield co-teaching models has been helpful. School practitioners are now more cognizant and focused on maximizing opportunities for learning and achieving outcomes and results for children with disabilities. The walkthrough tools have also helped in developing a common understanding of what co-teaching should look like in practice and how to better support teachers implementing practices.

<sup>100</sup> Co-Teaching Approaches. <http://marilynfriend.com/approaches.htm>

<sup>101</sup> Friend, Marilyn and Cook, Lynne, *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals*, Eighth Edition. 2017. Pearson Education, Inc.

<sup>102</sup> *Id.*

ACPS's inclusive scheduling guidance specifies that time be dedicated within the master schedule for face-to face or electronic co-planning; however, teachers report that planning takes place before or after school and electronically and most often it is left up to them to find the time. Focus groups also reported that the ratio of students with disabilities to students without disabilities can be disproportionate in inclusion sections on school master schedules, and many classes have more than a third of the students with IEPs, making it difficult for teachers to adequately meet the needs of students who are functioning multiple grade levels below enrolled grade. They also reported that co-teaching sections are frequently populated with other diverse children of similar abilities (e.g., EL or other at-risk factors), which impacts the level of instruction. In order to address the minute requirements on IEPs, special education teachers are often scheduled for short periods of time in and out of classrooms on the master schedule to provide co-teaching support to students on their assigned caseloads. Although there is written guidance and support provided on scheduling for inclusion, there are still some inconsistencies on the approaches used for scheduling children with disabilities receiving co-teaching support in each building. Some schools seek external support and assistance with scheduling and others do not.

The role of the special educator is to adapt general education lessons for students with disabilities and to develop accommodations so that these students can access the core content to the extent possible. Special educators are not trained to be subject matter experts in every content area and in every grade; they are trained on how to provide effective, individualized specially designed instruction (SDI) across all content areas and grades. This has led to the misperception, in ACPS and elsewhere, that special education teachers are not familiar with core content. It also has led to special education teachers taking on a teaching assistant role in co-teaching partnerships and to, more frequently than not, rely on the one teach/one assist co-teaching model.

Classroom and student observations in ACPS revealed that general education and special education teachers are still struggling in many cases with implementing co-teaching models of support beyond the one teach/one assist model and to defining their respective roles. In very few instances were high yield co-teaching models of support evident in practice observed across schools. This was verified and observed in practice during the phases of this review when school visits, classroom observations, and student shadowing took place.

### ***Student Shadowing Observation 1***

Student is a middle school level male with a specific learning disability (SLD) who was observed in three settings: reading and science in the general education setting and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The original schedule provided through PowerSchool did not match the student's actual schedule, but the school was able to provide more accurate information that morning.

During the first observed class, three staff were present: a general education teacher, special education teacher, and one assistant to support their class of 20 students. The general education teacher primarily presented material to the whole class including a read aloud, but the teachers alternated between leading and assisting. There was some confusion at the start of the lesson about which assignments/readings had been completed and what should be done that day. Teachers conferred but did not seem clear about where they were in the sequence. As students got settled, one teacher awarded points for positive behavior which she registered on students' individual cards. As students collected their work folders and sat down, Student was complimented for "doing a good job" adhering to the routine. However, once class commenced, the student became distracted. He participated minimally and did not follow along during the read aloud: his book was closed and he leaned on one hand and doodled instead. When the class transitioned to individual work, Student completed only a portion of his graphic organizer. When a teacher came over to check in, she asked him a question, and then instructed him what to fill in the first column of the sheet so that he could keep pace with his peers. One teacher noted that he was off task and provided a correction, but only once, and he became distracted again soon thereafter. Although there were three staff in the room, the student's behavior and engagement was uneven. At the end of the period, the student completed an online quiz. In this setting we did not observe the student's accommodations in practice, such as confirming the instructions for the activity. Student took a seat in the back row of the room when he arrived. He was included as part of the group, but there was limited interaction built into the lesson. His classroom work was mostly individual work with some whole group at the beginning.

In science, 24+ students sat at two-person tables facing the front of the room and the teacher. There were two co-teachers in the class using one teach, one assist co-teaching model. As a whole class they watched a video, then read and answered questions on a worksheet, and then completed the answers on the overhead together. In this class, Student was engaged for the whole period. He responded to questions posed to the whole class, completed his work, took notes during the discussion, and interacted with his seat partner. Behavior expectations were set and maintained by the teachers, though they did not keep a visible record. Student selected a seat toward the rear of the classroom, but his engagement was actively monitored as the teachers circulated. The teachers also checked in with him to reinforce the instructions. In this class, all students received the same instruction; no specially designed instruction or differentiation was observed.

In the third observation, the EAP class, the student was seated at a desk configuration with three other peers. The class had less than 10 students so there is not much difference in seating choice in terms of proximity to the teacher. Few students stayed on task throughout the lesson including Student who talked and joked with his peers, which appeared to distract them from completing their work. Students were all instructed in the same manner on the same material and no differentiation of instruction was observed. The teacher used extended wait time with all students (an accommodation in Student's IEP). The teacher corrected student's behavior but had limited direct interaction with individual students otherwise, despite the small class size.

Overall, Student's participation varied between classes. and classroom activities did not reflect his IEP. Verbal feedback for the student from teachers was moderate. The student was integrated into his classes, but he was not engaged unless he was interested. The students' experience did not seem differentiated from the experience of his peers in whichever class, and no specially designed instruction was observed.

## Inclusive Culture

Researchers note that when students with disabilities are included in the general education setting they have better academic outcomes, stronger peer relations, and a higher self-esteem.<sup>103</sup> Developing an inclusive culture that is fully accepting and successfully functioning across a district, and in individual school buildings, requires coordinated vision and leadership. There is no place called inclusion—"inclusion is not a student, a classroom, or a school. Rather, inclusion is a belief that ALL students, regardless of labels, should be members of the general education community."<sup>104</sup>

Focus groups explained that the culture and climate of the school, and its implementation of inclusive practices, varies depending on the school's administration and teachers. Though some said the message about co-teaching has been consistent over the past few years, the implementation never seems to take hold. An issue highlighted by Division and school staff as well as parents was related to the lack of perceived accountability with collaborating/co-teaching/inclusion teaching. Some schools have "glimmers of excellence" – in part because of stable school leadership and an environment that has been fostered to make inclusion work. In other schools, school leadership has been unstable, which has prevented roots from taking hold. There is a general sense that though the Division has done a lot of training, staff feel there is so much more work to be done, and that they are at a loss as to how to keep making progress.

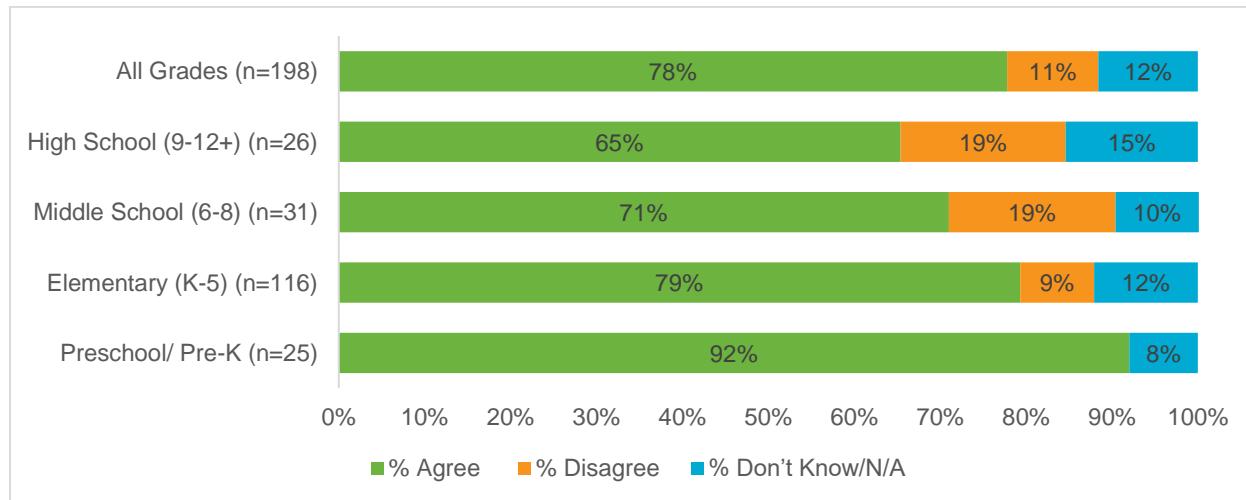
## Survey Results

### Parent Survey

The parent and staff surveys posed a series of questions about the perceptions of inclusion for students with disabilities in their schools, how welcoming the culture is for SWDs, and the extent to which students are included in various activities. Responses to these questions are displayed below.

Overall, the majority of parents who responded to the survey agree/strongly agree that their child's school is an inclusive environment (78%). Parents of middle school (71%) and high school students (61%) were less in agreement than parents of elementary level (79%) and pre-K students (92%).

#### Exhibit 54. My child's school is an inclusive environment.



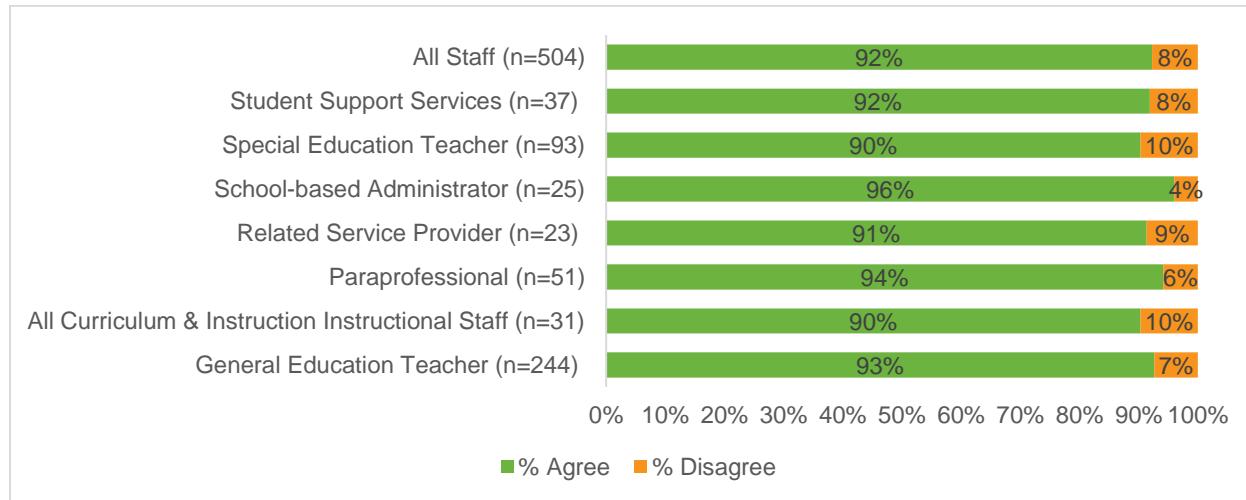
<sup>103</sup> Braunsteiner, Maria-Luise & Mariano-Lapidus, Susan (2014). A perspective on inclusion: Challenges for the future. *Global Education Review*, 1 (1). 32-43.

<sup>104</sup> Pratt, C. (1997). There is no place called inclusion. *The Reporter*, 2(3), 4-5, 13-14. Accessed at: <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/There-is-No-Place-Called-Inclusion>

## Staff Survey

Overall, 92% of staff agree that their school provides an inclusive environment for SWDs.

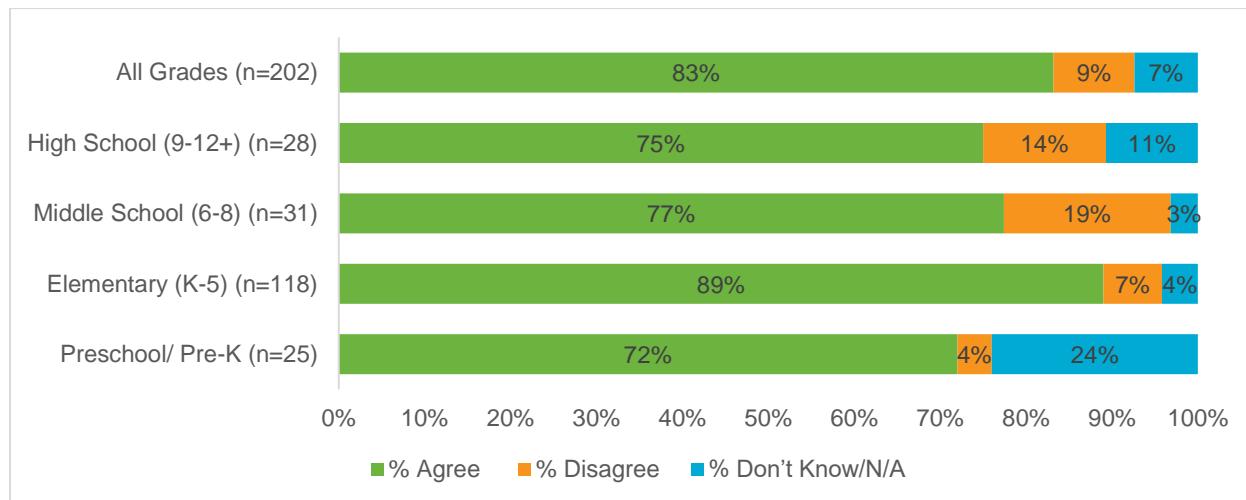
### Exhibit 55. My school(s) provide an inclusive environment for students with disabilities



## Parent Survey

The majority of parents (83%) indicated that their children have the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities. Responses ranged from 72% in Pre-K to 89% in elementary school. Fewer parents at the high school (75%) and middle school (77%) level agreed.

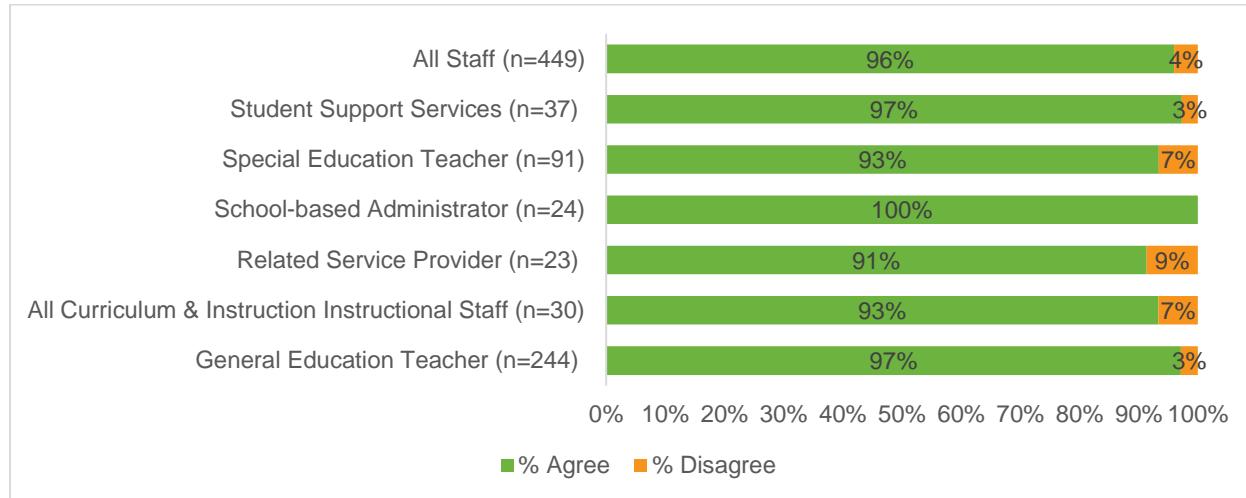
### Exhibit 56. My child has the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and sporting events.



## Staff Survey

The majority of staff agree/strongly agree that students with disabilities at their school(s) have the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and sports across all school levels (responses ranged from 91-100%).

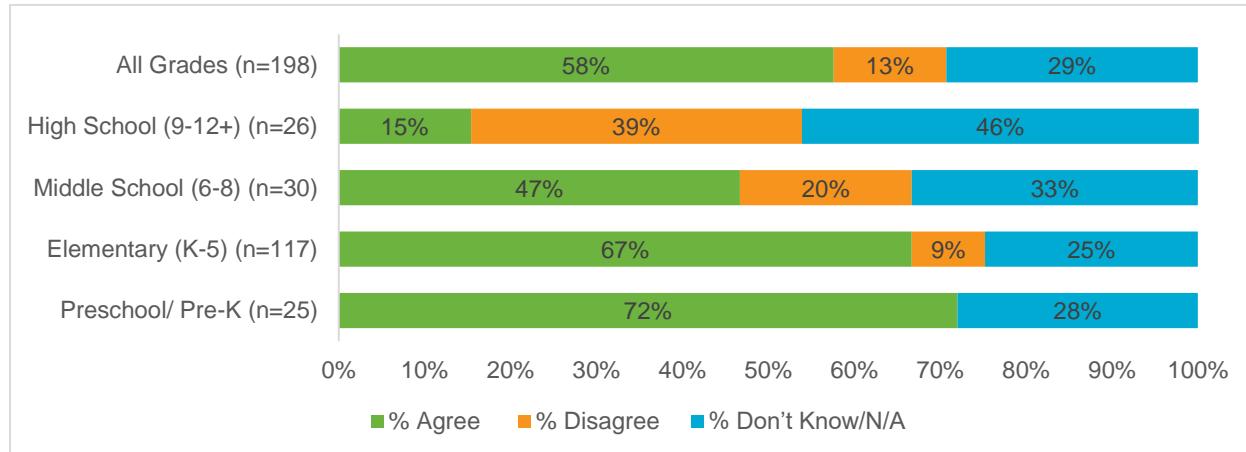
**Exhibit 57. Students with disabilities at my school(s) have the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and sports.**



**Parent Survey**

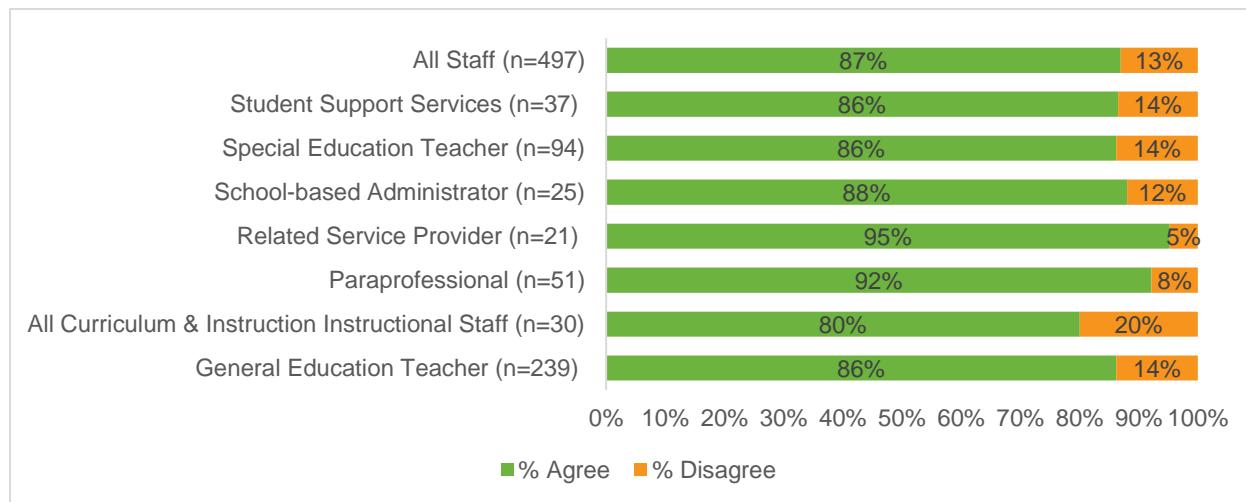
While a majority of parents at all grade levels (58%) reported that school office staff were aware of the needs of their child with disabilities, many also did not know (29%). More than twice as many parents of high school students disagreed (39%) than agreed (15%), and most reported that they don't know (46%) whether office staff are aware of their student's needs. Nearly half of middle school parents agreed (47%), and one third (33%) did not know.

**Exhibit 58. School office staff are aware of the needs of my child with disabilities in the building.**

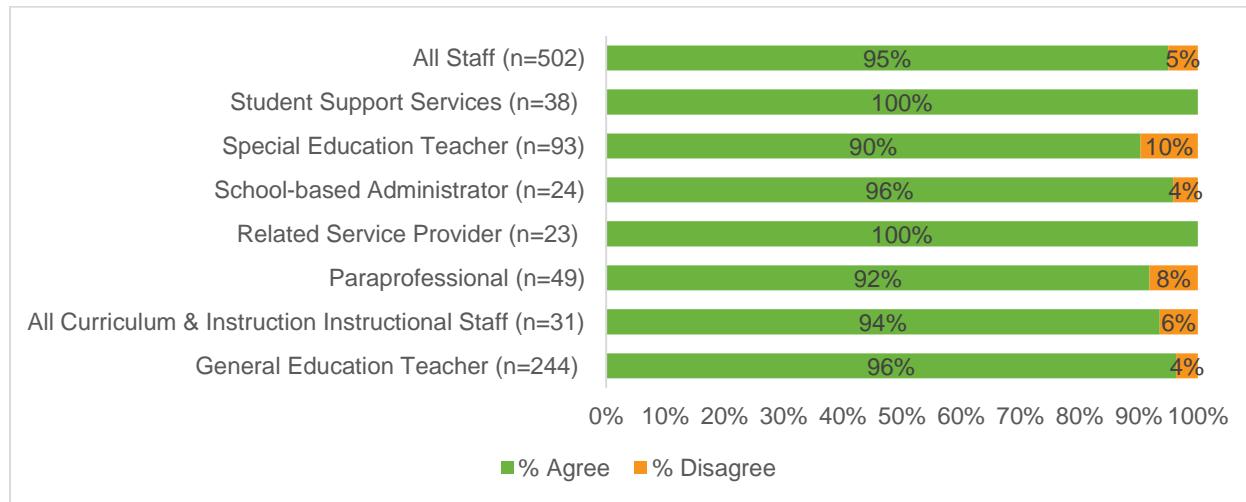


**Staff Survey**

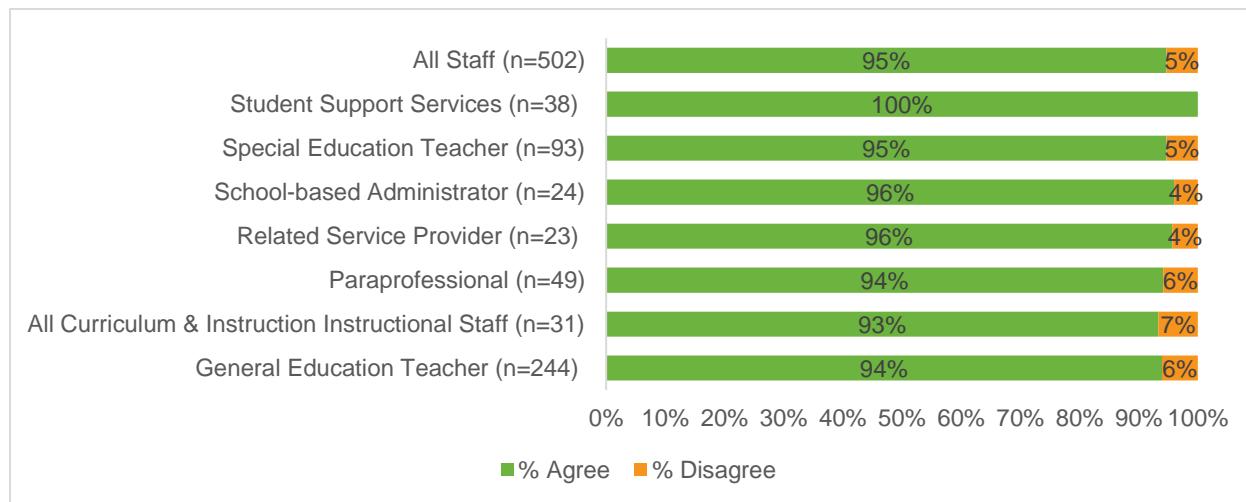
Overall, school personnel report that school office staff are aware of the needs of families of SWDs in the building (87%). Staff agreement by role ranges from 80% among all curriculum and instruction instructional staff to 95% among related service providers.

**Exhibit 59. School office staff are aware of the needs of families of students with disabilities in the building.**

Staff overall were very positive about whether instructional staff at their school treat students with disabilities with respect. Across all roles, 95% agreed. Responses ranged from 90% among special education teachers to 100% among related service providers and student support services.

**Exhibit 60. Instructional staff at my school(s) treat students with disabilities with respect.**

Staff were similarly very positive about whether support staff at their school treat students with disabilities with respect. Among all staff 95% agreed. Responses ranged from 93% in agreement among all curriculum and instruction instructional staff to 100% among staff in students support services.

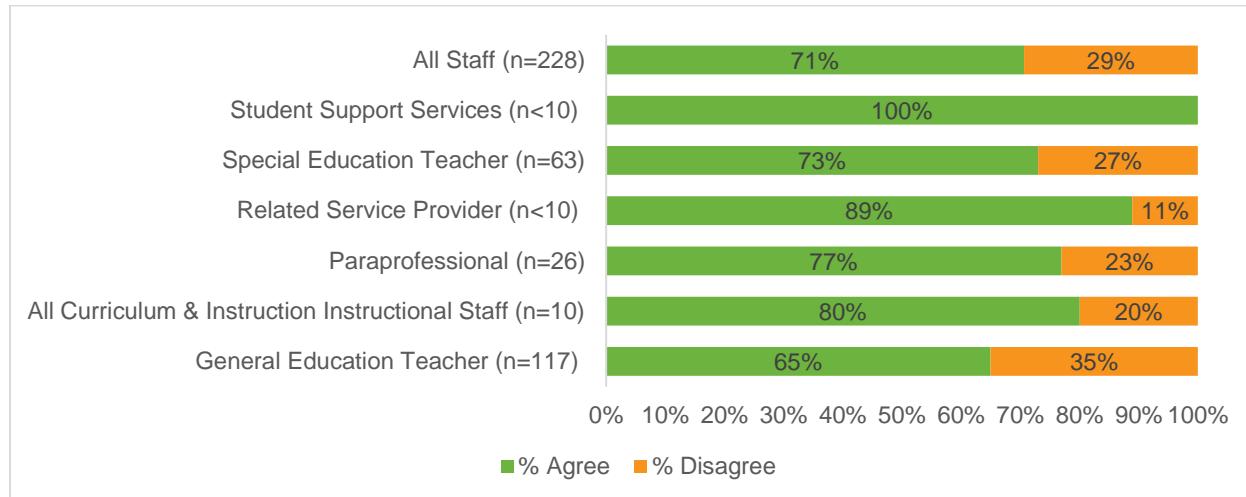
**Exhibit 61. Support staff at my school(s) treat students with disabilities with respect.****Perceptions of Co-Teaching**

In open response questions on the survey, staff shared mixed opinions about the success of co-teaching in ACPS. They also offered a range of suggestions for improvement.

**Survey Results**

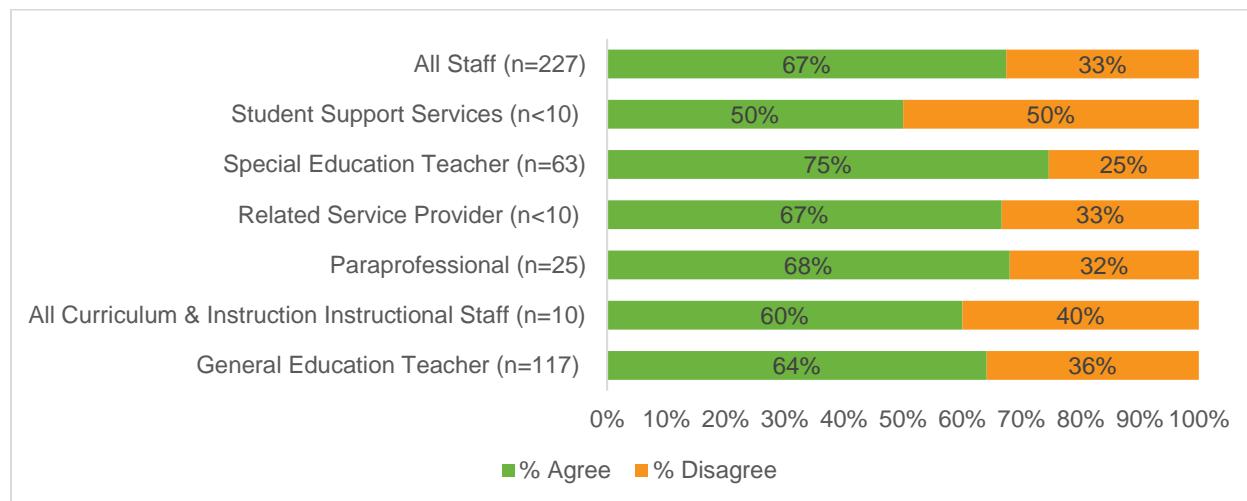
The staff survey asked questions specifically about co-teaching. Almost half of the survey respondents (47%) reported that they work or worked in a co-teaching classroom in the last 12 months.

Among survey respondents teaching in co-teaching classrooms, the majority of staff (71%) agreed that students recognize co-teachers as equal partners in the learning process. The majority of both general education teachers (65%) and special education teachers (73%) agreed with this statement.

**Exhibit 62. In co-teaching classrooms in my school, students recognize both teachers as equal partners in the learning process.**

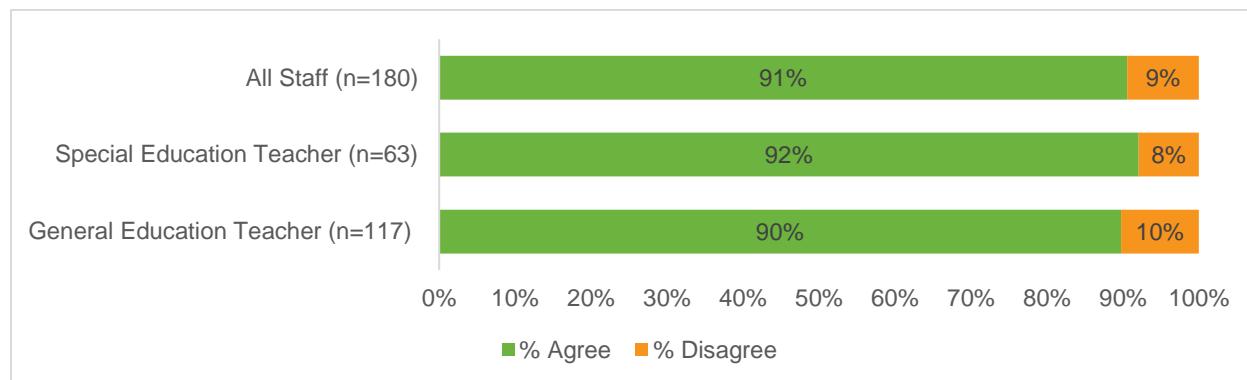
Overall, 67% of teachers in co-teaching setting feel that planning is the shared responsibility of both teachers. Responses ranged from 50% in agreement among student support services staff to 75% among special education teachers.

**Exhibit 63. In co-teaching classrooms in my school, planning is the shared responsibility of both teachers.**

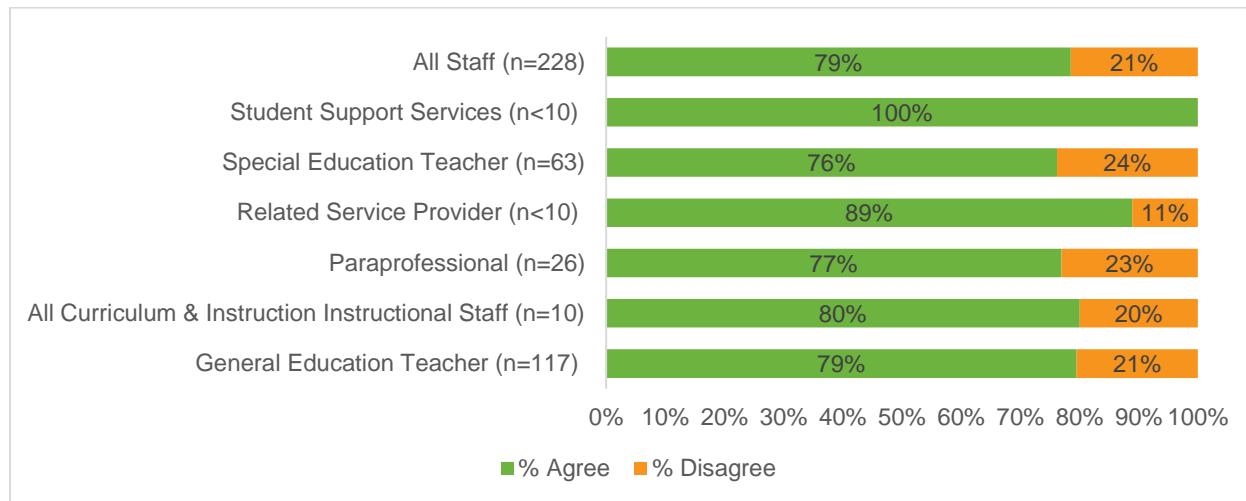


The majority of teachers in a co-teaching setting feel that their partners treat them with respect (91%). Similarly, a high percentage of teachers agree that behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers (79%).

**Exhibit 64. My co-teaching partner teacher treats me with respect**



**Exhibit 65. In co-teaching classrooms in my school, behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers.**



As noted, staff perceptions of co-teaching, specifically related to shared planning and partnership were mixed. The following is a list of illustrative comments:

- “I feel like some of our Special Education staff members are not comfortable really co-teaching in the classroom. They end up acting like more of a paraprofessional than another lead teacher in the classroom.”
- “The special education teachers who are co-teachers at my school do not create lessons that promote student achievement and growth.”
- “There are not enough special education teachers so co-teaching is episodic. Co-teachers are not classroom partners in planning or collaborative planning time.”
- “If co-teaching is to be done with fidelity, a co-teacher needs to be present full-time side by side with the classroom teacher, not just placed in the classroom for an hour.”

Though these comments were submitted as part of the survey, the themes they illuminate were mirrored by focus group participants.

## Specially Designed Instruction and Intervention Implementation

In order for all students, including those with IEPs, to meet high academic standards and fully demonstrate their knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics, their instruction must be flexible, yet challenging, and incorporate scaffolds and accommodations to overcome potential learning barriers. It is essential that the curriculum be designed to enable all students to successfully access and engage in learning without changing or reducing instructional goals. In order to meet the needs of all diverse learners in the classroom it is important to implement UDL (in the general education classroom as solid core instruction), Differentiated Instruction, Accommodations and Modifications, and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) based to the support access and success of the learners. Implementing such a balanced mix of appropriate supports while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum can be challenging, but needed to support diverse learners.

It must also be remembered that the “I” in IEP stands for individualized and that the rate of learning for students with disabilities may be different, but not less. These students often need more time to master concepts through specialized approaches that are proven to be effective based on their instructional needs, measured performance, and recognized disability. ACPS is cognizant of the persistent achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers and the Division

systematically collects and analyzes student achievement and outcomes and results data from a variety of sources. Division schools have processes in place to systematically review, share and have frank conversations around all subgroup data with a focus on closing the achievement gap.

Focus group participants shared that both the elementary and secondary principals participate in data chats with their respective supervisors. During these data chats the overall performance and gains of students with disabilities are also analyzed, school specific strategies are implemented and refined contingent on whether student progress is on track with the targets set or not. Some schools also reported having structures in place to analyze and review their own data and conduct frank conversations to support school improvement efforts. OSI is engaged in the data chats and walkthroughs organized by the Division with its elementary and secondary schools and conducts internal conversation focused on the data as a department to determine how to best support schools in closing the achievement gap for students with disabilities. As a result, a lot of focus has been placed on putting the “individualized” back into the IEP by providing resources and supporting schools in the implementation of co-teaching, SDI, and interventions for students with IEPs. There is a renewed sense of urgency to drive student achievement by implementing evidenced-based frameworks to guide the work.

As has been mentioned throughout this report, site based management has had a significant effect on special education management, programming, performance and accountability. Every program in a school is dependent upon that school's leadership team and their training, experience, level of ownership and approach to educating students with disabilities. It was reported that some schools willingly embrace students with disabilities and use Division provided resources or purchase specialized interventions and curricular materials for them. Others take more reserved frameworks and approaches or have divergent perspectives regarding inclusion and toward learning or supporting evidence-based approaches to design, differentiating instruction, accommodate, modify or provide specially designed instruction to meet students' needs. The consistent theme that focus group participants shared was that programs and systemic implementation of some of these practices are, in fact, not evident or inconsistent and these variances occur in great part because of the competing priorities, beliefs, culture and degree of ownership established at each school.

*Rigor is creating an environment in which students are expected to learn at high levels, each student is supported so he or she can learn at high levels and each student demonstrates learning at high levels.<sup>1</sup>*

-Blackburn, 2008

In ACPS, instruction for students with disabilities is aligned to the Virginia Standards for Learning, and students are tested on either the state assessment or alternate assessment as delineated in their IEP. Teachers are expected to provide standards-aligned instruction, develop standards-aligned IEPs, deliver academic interventions and supports to students with disabilities in both general education or special education. The combination of heightened accountability, teacher evaluations, and test

scores have created a high stakes environment for teachers and students. This makes it essential that core instruction for students with disabilities be rigorous, that they are provided the instructional and testing accommodations and modifications, SDI, and supplementary aides and services which are individualized based on needs identified in the IEP. It is also critically important to ensure the fidelity of implementation of all of the above through progress monitoring of the instruction, supports, and interventions delivered. Together the sum of all of these elements will support the elevation of rigor in the instructional academic interventions provided to students with disabilities.

## SDI Overview

When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed in 1975, the mandate was to ensure that students with disabilities have access to appropriate programming in public schools. After four decades, the term specially designed instruction received further definition in the IDEA-R (2004) reauthorization. However, there are still questions that need to be answered about what that mandate

truly encompasses, and how SDI fits into designing quality instructional programs for children with disabilities and how it should be monitored to ensure it is truly SDI and being implemented with fidelity.

## Virginia DOE SDI Guidance

The Virginia Department of Education's website references the Federal and State definition of special education and specially designed instruction as<sup>105</sup>:

**“Special education”** means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent(s), to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction conducted in a classroom, in the home, in hospitals, in institutions, and in other settings and instruction in physical education. The term includes each of the following if it meets the requirements of the definition of special education. (§ 22.1-213 of the Code of Virginia; 34 CFR 300.39).

- i. Speech-language pathology services or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service under state standards;
- ii. Vocational education; and
- iii. Travel training.

**“Specially designed instruction”** means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction: (34 CFR 300.39(b)(3)).

- i. To 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, so that the child can meet the educational standards that apply to all children within the jurisdiction of the local education agency.

Extensive research has been conducted regarding effective teaching and learning strategies in general education. However, when it comes to instructional strategies for special education, the research and findings are very limited. Like ACPS, many school divisions are now implementing MTSS. As a result, many teachers are now asking how can instruction be specially designed when even general education is required to differentiate, monitor progress, and provide interventions for children who are not responding to universal instruction? Many teachers are experiencing difficulties distinguishing between what are considered general education instruction, differentiation and interventions and specially designed instruction.

SDI is the “heart and soul” of special education. Many school divisions across the nation have developed policies and procedure in order to clarify distinctions and provide guidance to help develop a common understanding on the best practices that will support the effective implementation of SDI. These guidance documents are intended to inform IEP teams, administrators, educators and practitioners as they determine the need for, plan, and implement SDI for students with disabilities who require an IEP. Central to this effort is to better define and improve the delivery of SDI with a growth mindset to support continuous improvement in special education and the provision of SDI.

In January of 2015, VDOE developed and published a document to help clarify the relationship between SDI, Core Instruction and Interventions within MTSS for educators. It highlighted that the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 made it clear that children with disabilities are to be considered first and foremost general education students. It also emphasized that effective core instruction and interventions are to be provided for all students including children with disabilities who need various levels of supports to master grade

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<sup>105</sup> VDOE Website Definition of Special Education and Specially Designed Instruction [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/)

level state standards. Students with disabilities are entitled to SDI, including intensive interventions when the intensity of their needs warrants this level of support<sup>106</sup>.

## ACPS SDI Implementation

As referenced in the ACPS Specially Designed Instruction Resource Guide, SDI describes the unique instructions that is provided based on a student's individual learning needs. It includes explicit instruction and pedagogical approaches which allow students to access the curriculum. This resource guide and the accompanying supportive tools are made accessible to practitioners through the Curriculum and Instruction dashboard on Canvas. These resources provide a solid foundation to help build a common understanding and support the implementation of SDI for children with IEPs. Training and support on what specially designed instruction is, how to implement it and what it looks like, along with accompanying resources to support this initiative has been a huge undertaking spearheaded by the Division. SDI Walkthrough tools were also developed and recently updated by OSI to monitor the implementation of SDI and determine the professional development and coaching support needed by teachers and paraprofessionals to strengthen practices. Training and support has been provided to school administrators and in some cases walk-throughs implemented using these protocols in collaboration with the school's assigned Instructional Specialist.

There is a general feeling among focus group participants that, although a great emphasis has been placed on providing guidance, resources, training, and developing walk-through tools to support and build capacity for the implementation of SDI, it is still an emerging practice and a work in progress. Practitioners are generally still unclear on what SDI is, what it looks like, and what makes it special or different. Principals and Instructional Specialists report that during walkthroughs conducted there is very little evidence in practice of SDI being implemented to address the individual needs of the students with IEPs.

During the school visits and classroom observations conducted during the phases of this program review at Division schools, observers also noted that there was also little evidence of SDI being implemented in practice for students with IEPs in general or special education classrooms. Instruction tended to be the same as all other students in the classroom with only subtle differences noted on how instruction was delivered on some occasions for some students with IEP, but this was not the norm.

In many general education classrooms where co-teaching was observed in practice, the instruction of students with disabilities did not appear to be different from what was being taught to typically developing same-aged peers. For example, in one classroom after receiving teacher directed instruction all students were being taught to write a complete paragraph containing all of the required components. The students with disabilities were being supported using an alternative teaching model by the co-teacher. However, their activity was the same with no apparent differentiated instructional strategy, modification or adaptation taking place to address individual student needs that connected to the IEP. The learning materials and tools used were all the same. The only difference observed during instruction was that it was provided in a small group at a table in the back of the classroom. In some cases, specially designed instruction was seen in situations where the student was receiving instruction in a citywide classroom such as daily living skills (e.g., communication, attention, behavior control, self-care). What makes instruction truly individualized and specially designed for a student with a disability and different from what a general education student receives is how the instruction is linked to the student's IEP goals and objectives. These examples demonstrate the gaps and opportunities that exist to continue to strengthen SDI and IEP linkages.

<sup>106</sup> Virginia Guidance Document: What is "Special" About Special Education? Specially Designed Instruction for Students With Disabilities Within a Multi-tiered System of Supports.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/program\\_improvement/eligibility\\_determination/2015/jan/specially\\_designed\\_instruction.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/program_improvement/eligibility_determination/2015/jan/specially_designed_instruction.pdf)

Some of the barriers affecting SDI implementation noted were the limited opportunities to schedule training and provide onsite coaching support. Making the connections on where in the IEP are the students' areas of need to be addressed through SDI and understanding what it should look like. There is also a need to train school level SDI champions who are willing to assume a facilitator role at their school and establish of an SDI professional learning community of practice that is supported with resources, coaching as needed by OSI, and inclusive of both general education and special education teachers.

### ***Student Shadowing Observation 2***

Student is an upper elementary level male with autism spectrum disorder who was observed during a math lesson in a general education setting. The assignment was aligned to the Virginia Standards for Learning. The level of instruction was rigorous, and all students were expected, and sometimes supported, to learn and demonstrate learning at high levels. There was only one teacher present throughout the lesson. The teacher provided students with opportunities to access support as needed upon request at the small group table and was observed providing such support to students who went to the table personally seeking the support.

However, Student did not seek access or support from the teacher. Instead, he worked independently, sometimes crouched on top of his seat, distracted, pulling at his cheeks, making faces, talking to himself, singing or looking around while working on the assignment. The student did not receive any individual attention during the instructional period from the teacher. The other students were not distracted by the behaviors and continued to work.

At the end of the period, after the teacher provided directions for all students in the classroom to turn in their assignments, Student turned in his assignment and placed it in the designated folder. The only accommodation observed being provided during instruction was individual seating. Student was seated at a desk by himself, it was unclear whether this was his choice or as assigned. Instruction was not differentiated, to address this individual learner's difference. Distractions aside, the student appeared to be able to work independently to complete the activity as did all other students in the classroom. Although there were opportunities to redesign the instructional task to keep this learner engaged and on task, no teacher action to do so was initiated during the instructional period observed.

The student's IEP prescribed minimal support in the general education setting. It appeared that the frequency of services prescribed were being delivered. There was no co-teacher supporting this student during the instructional period observed. Instruction was solely provided by the general education teacher with no apparent collaboration taking place with any other teacher or paraprofessional during the classroom observation period. Delivery of specially designed instruction was not observed but the student would have benefitted from some strategies to redirect behavior, increase on task time and continue to be consistently engaged in the learning activity.

### ***Student Shadowing Observation 3***

Student is a female with autism spectrum disorder who is in a lower elementary grade. She was observed in a general education class of 20 students during a math lesson. There were two adults in the room, the teacher and a paraprofessional. The room was bright and well organized, with desks in small islands of 4-5 and designated areas throughout the room for reading and small group activities. The room was rich in resources and print with student work and anchor charts posted throughout the room.

The teacher began the lesson at the front of the class at the interactive whiteboard with students seated on the carpet in front of her. Student sat near the front of the group, and a paraprofessional sat in a chair behind her. On the schedule provided, the period was scheduled as a co-taught class, but the co-teacher was not present during the observation period.

Students ran through a few sample problems as a group, and the teacher modeled previously taught strategies on the board. Students were then requested to turn and talk with partners to reach a solution. Student was assigned to work in a group with two other students. Essential questions were posted, and PBIS expectations and rewards were posted and reinforced by the teacher. All students were periodically encouraged to congratulate themselves for working hard. The overall tone of the instruction was playful and rigorous. Student was individually praised for her behavior, and later for sharing a response, albeit tentatively, with the whole group.

The teacher then instructed students to move to assigned stations and set a timer. Students were familiar with the routine and settled quickly into their small group tasks. Student was hesitant about changing stations but was directed and encouraged by her teacher.

Student's first station was with the teacher at a small table with 3 other students. While the whole group work was not differentiated to specific learner needs, station work more clearly supported students at different levels. The problems reviewed with the teacher were simpler and the strategies were re-introduced and thoroughly reviewed. Each student brought their white board from the whole group exercise. The teacher used her own personal white board to model answers and explain her work. Then she asked the students, "can you make your board look like mine?" Student fulfilled the request then got to work independently on the next problem. The visual strategy for problem solving was the same one used with the larger group but the teacher offered more guidance to the small group. When prompted, Student called out an answer in unison with the other students, but her attention began to wane as the lesson wore on. The teacher redirected her attention, and she was drawn back into the activity, but only briefly. She was unfocused in subsequent stations. During the station work, the paraeducator supported other students.

Overall, Student was integrated and included in the group through deliberate attention and direction from her teacher. Accommodations such as preferential seating were observed, and she received instruction that was targeted toward her specific needs including frequent checks for understanding and support through transitions. She interacted minimally with peers but did so as requested for partner work. During a movement break in between stations, Student engaged in the collective movement activity with the whole class.

## Interventions for Students with Disabilities

Identifying proven instructional practices and strategies that will close these persistent achievement gaps is a challenge facing nearly every school district in the U.S. today. Today many students, including those in ACPS, continue to struggle to acquire literacy and mathematics skills in our standards of learning based approach. Concerns about this issue led to the implementation of MTSS, which includes robust core instructions and tiering academic interventions and behavioral supports, to address the needs all struggling students throughout the school year. When viewed through the lens of the MTSS framework the intensity of the SDI being provided to SWDs can also fluctuate based on the need or student's response to the SDI being provided.

Special education interventions should always be reviewed and evaluated according to rigorous research. OSI has placed great emphasis in identifying, adopting and purchasing research and evidence-based reading and math interventions for students with IEPs. In order for interventions to achieve their intended effect though, they must be done right the first time, and "getting it done right" requires rigorous application of scientifically based procedures, which are designed with strict protocols for delivering these interventions with fidelity. Given the persistent achievement gap for students with disabilities, ACPS cannot afford to perform educational interventions with students that do not produce predictable and reliable educational outcomes.

OSI has developed MTSS Guidance for Students with Disabilities in Reading and Math interventions, which clearly delineates protocols for implementation. Division schools refer to this guidance and have a variety of instructional materials and intervention resources available to support academic interventions, all are referenced as research and evidence-based and culturally and age appropriate. These intervention resources support tier II and III intensive academic interventions for all elementary and secondary students.

OSI's Instructional Specialists are assigned to support the implementation of the interventions throughout the Division's schools and have been working with school principals to support scheduling intervention time and train teachers to deliver the interventions for students with IEPs. These interventions are meant to provide guidance to schools and promote a level of consistency for using reading, literacy and math interventions that meet the specificity of being research and evidence-based to address student intervention needs.

The list of interventions for students with IEPs are listed and defined in the MTSS Guidance for Students with Disabilities in Reading and Math. Clear guidance is included as to how each intervention should be used. This includes, in summary:

### Tier III Interventions

#### *Guidance*

- These interventions are for students more than 2 grade levels below
- Progress monitoring should be done at least every 2 weeks
- Interventions should be provided in addition to core instruction (45 minutes/day)

## Approved Interventions

### Exhibit 66. Tier III Interventions

Subject	Grades	Intervention
Reading – Decoding	1–5	IMSE Orton-Gillingham Protocol
	3–5	Corrective-Reading-Decoding
	6–12	Flex Literacy
Reading – Comprehension	4–12	Flex Literacy
Reading – Fluency/Automaticity	1–12	Great Leaps
Math	1–8	Number Worlds

## Tier II Interventions

### Guidance

- These interventions are for students approximately 1 grade level below
- Progress monitoring should be done at least monthly
- These interventions are designed to supplement core instruction and target skills based on data
- They are to be administered in small groups, at least 3x per week
- They can also be provided in the general education setting as a station

## Approved Interventions

### Exhibit 67. Tier II Interventions

Subject	Grades	Intervention
Reading – Decoding	K–12	Orton-Gillingham based-strategies*
Reading – Comprehension	4–12	Achieve3000 (KidBiz/TeenBiz)
Reading – Fluency/Automaticity	1–12	Great Leaps
Reading – Memory & Auditory Processing	1–12	Fast ForWord
Math	K–5	Number Worlds
	K–12	Hands on Standards
	6–12	Imagine Math

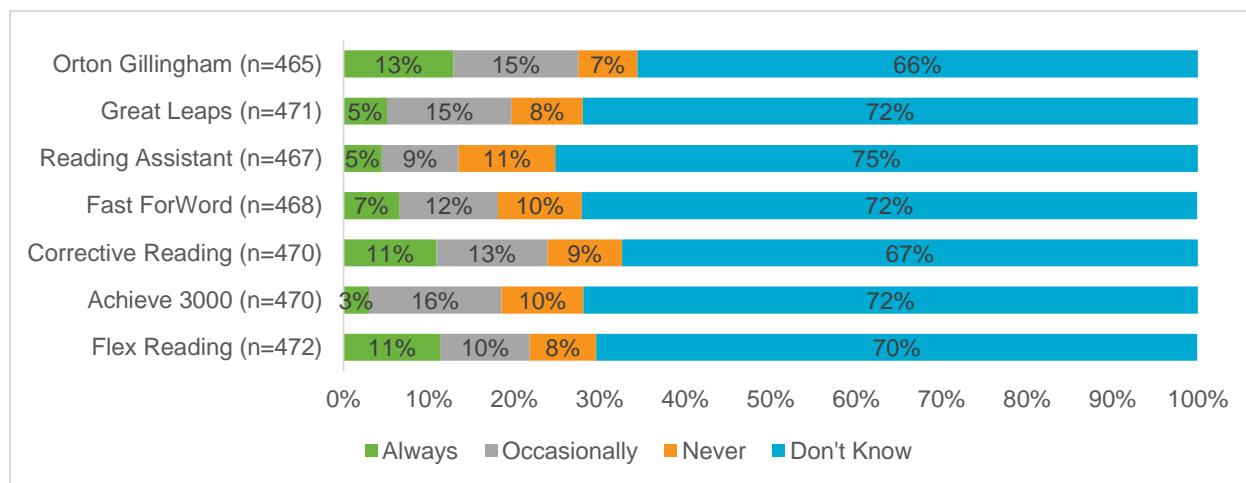
\*Orton-Gillingham based strategies can be used with support from the Instructional Specialist if the teacher has not been trained in the IMSE Orton-Gillingham Protocol.

## Survey Results

As part of the survey, staff were asked about the extent to which they use specific reading and math interventions in their schools.<sup>107</sup>

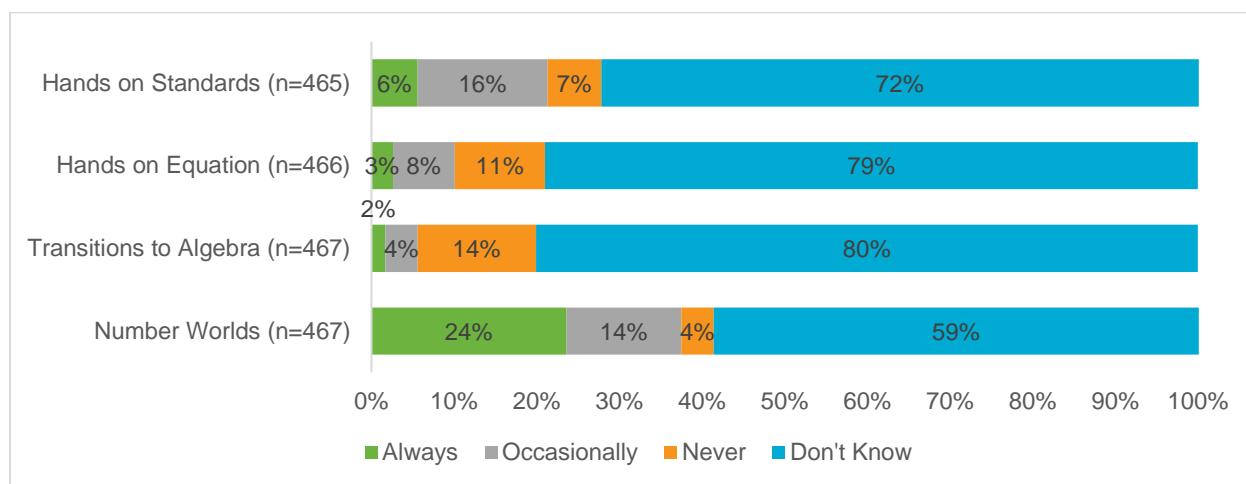
<sup>107</sup> Though not noted as such in the survey question, the intervention list aligns to those listed in the MTSS Guidance for Students with Disabilities in Reading and Math.

### Exhibit 68. Reading Interventions Implemented



When asked if their school uses different reading interventions than the ones listed in the exhibit above, 48% reported yes and 52% reported no. Of those that reported yes, they specified that the following additional ones were used: Fundations, Lexia, Leveled Literacy Instruction, PALS, Smarty Ants, Read 180, and Success for All.

### Exhibit 69. Math Interventions Implemented



Compared to reading, a lower percentage (42%) of staff reported using math interventions other than those listed above. Of those that reported yes, they specified that the following additional ones were used: AbleNet Math, Connected Math Concepts (CMC), Do the Math, Reflex Math, Think Through Math, Touch Math, and Khan Academy.

In the case of both reading and math, staff noted that their schools use interventions but that they do not always know the names of them, or might not be aware of all interventions used if they teach a different subject.

### Implementation

Focus group participants voiced awareness of the purchasing, training and implementation of these interventions for students with IEPs. Some indicated that they had been trained and were using them, others had received them and were waiting to be trained. Some indicated that their schools had not yet scheduled intervention time. Overall, there was appreciation and recognition for the value that these

dedicated interventions would bring to improve outcomes and results for students with IEPs. During school visitations and classroom observations, many of these interventions were evidenced in practice, with varying degrees of implementation. In some cases, materials were just arriving or the classes were newly created for students with IEPs who were struggling. In other cases, there was a clear routine for integrating intervention delivery into the instructional day of the students. The teachers and paraprofessionals assigned to provide these interventions seemed to be striving to build skill and confidence while delivering these interventions to students. Particularly at the elementary school level, students seemed to be receptive and engaged.

Some of the concerns voiced were that in some schools the right interventions are not being matched to the needs of the specific students with IEPs, that training, support for implementation of these interventions was happening all too quickly so there was a hurried feeling of "catching-up" to deliver the intervention and that more coaching support would be helpful. Some focus group participants in schools with more robust intervention systems in place indicated that buy-in worked better when they were included from the beginning in the decision-making process to adopt, purchase, be trained and implement interventions for their school. They also mentioned frustration with the timing that some interventions are rolled-out in schools. In some cases, the year may have already been underway and resources arrived, but training and support is slow to catch up. In those instances, it was up to each individual teacher to quickly learn to use the intervention and implement it while they are learning it. There was a desire expressed for intervention materials, training and support to be in place before the school year began so the roll-out is smoother.

OSI is commended for making it a priority to provide much needed interventions for student with IEPs aligned with results driven accountability to positively impacts outcomes and results for SWDs. If SWDs are to achieve at high standards, OSI cannot afford the luxury of guessing or speculating which interventions might work for students with IEPs to achieve successful outcomes from these interventions. It will be essential to progress monitor and track the student gains and performance over time to qualify the return on investment based on student success measures.

ACPS is on the right course by continuing to focus on strengthening core instruction, tiered interventions, and supports for all students in general education, paired with differentiation, co-teaching, accommodations and modifications, SDI, and supplementary aides and services for students with disabilities. Taken together, these activities establish a solid foundation to develop a continuum of frameworks that will provide the guidance, tools and resources to better support schools in creating an environment in which all students are expected to learn, be supported, and demonstrate learning at high levels. Some of the foundations that have been rolled-out, such as the MTSS Handbook, High Yield Co-Teaching Models, Guidance on SDI, Guidance on Reading and Math Interventions for SWDs and the accompanying resources, tools, training and supports for schools, are helping to craft a cohesive strategy around elevating instruction and supports for struggling students. Monitoring the fidelity of implementation will be the key to improved outcomes and further success.

## Progress Monitoring

Focus group participants and staff report that they do conduct progress monitoring to support the required progress reporting on IEP goals and use a variety of tools to do so. Training on progress monitoring and reporting are addressed as part of IEP Online system training, as well as in OSI teacher and administrator special education compliance trainings and institutes. In addition, OSI has provided ongoing training and support for the implementation of AIMSweb Plus which is used for benchmarking and progress monitoring assessments, as evidenced by the list of trainings offered during the 2016-17 school year.

Some special education teachers reported that although training and resources are provided, they still struggle to simplify the data collection necessary to measure and report progress on their students' annual IEP goals and objectives. Some also indicated that progress monitoring at their schools does not

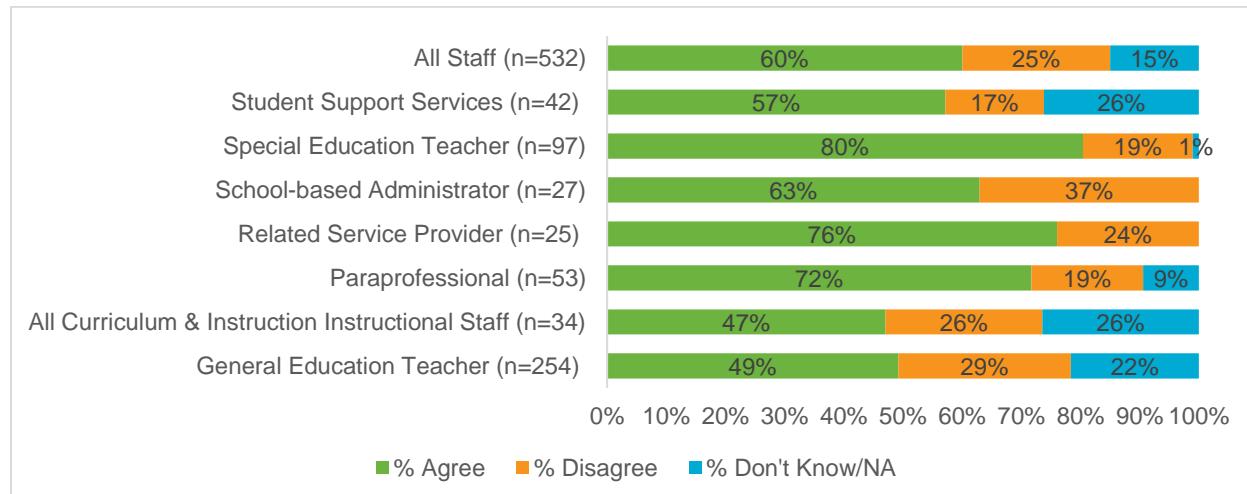
seem to be a priority, and it is not a required expectation. There are variances on how teachers are held accountable by school principals for making sure that progress monitoring of IEP goals is done and that the data are available to substantiate whether a student made progress or not during progress reporting. If a principal does not require it, or hold staff accountable for completing reports, they reportedly do not get it done. As a result, progress monitoring and reporting may not be timely and accurately completed. And although there are policies and procedures to guide systemic compliance and technology resources to support progress monitoring and reporting, there appears to be a lack of consistency between schools on using progress monitoring data to support decisions when preparing for and completing progress reports, or bringing in supportive evidences of progress for discussion at IEP annual reviews. In both the 2015-16 and 2016-17 OSI Project Plans, there was a significant focus on progress monitoring including detailed use of AIMSweb and data review meetings. It was reported that schools did not implement AIMSweb with any sort of fidelity; nor did they participate in data meetings as directed. When this happens, the Division and/or school becomes far more vulnerable to accusations of non-compliance.

In light of the recent *Endrew vs. Douglas County* case in which the United States Supreme Court held that, under IDEA, schools must provide students an education that is “reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.”<sup>108</sup> The *Endrew* case provided significant implications for districts, school personnel and parents to consider in order to guide and strengthen practices in three key areas: 1) designing ambitious IEP goals, 2) implementing IEPs with fidelity, and 3) regularly monitoring progress. Progress monitoring enables more frequent assessment to demonstrate growth toward individualized goals and documents each student’s response to instructional changes. It informs instruction included that which is provided to students with disabilities on the IEP annual goals and objectives. It is critically important for ACPS to ensure there are consistent, well understood, and adhered to policies and practices around progress monitoring in special education.

## Survey Results

Staff were asked questions on the survey related to progress monitoring. Overall, 60% of staff agreed/strongly agreed that student progress toward IEP goals is analyzed and regularly discussed. Responses varied by role, with 80% of special education teachers in agreement while only 47% of Curriculum and Instruction instructional staff agreed.

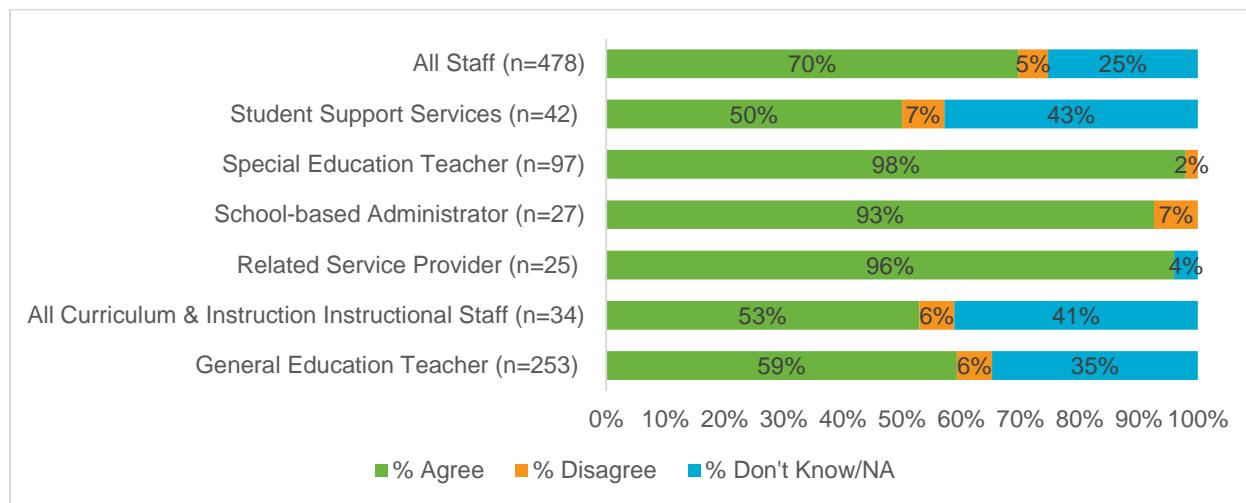
**Exhibit 70. Student progress toward IEP goals is analyzed and discussed regularly.**



<sup>108</sup> U.S. Department of Education Q&A on Free Appropriate Public Education. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/endrew-qa>

Overall, the majority of staff (70%) agreed/strongly agreed that students' IEP progress on goals are documented and reported to parents when report cards are issued. As with the previous survey question, responses varied by role. Student support services personnel had the lowest level of agreement (50%) while special education teachers had the highest (98%).

**Exhibit 71. Students' IEP progress on goals are documented and reported to parents when report cards are issued.**



## Discipline and Behavior Supports

ACPS has the Code of Student Conduct Grades K-12 governing the discipline of all students.<sup>109</sup> ACPS also adopted Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) schoolwide. There are policies and procedures for conducting Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and developing Behavior Interventions Plans (BIPs), problem solving teams to address students struggling with behavior, Autism and Behavior Support Specialists to support schools in addressing the needs of the students with disabilities they serve, and programs such as Restorative Practices.<sup>110</sup>

Focus groups shared that although ACPS adopted PBIS schoolwide, the value it is given and its implementation varies dependent on the support of the school's leadership. This was noted during classroom observations, in that in some schools there was clear evidence of rules and expectations, while in others evidence was minimal. There are PBIS designated leads in schools charged with supporting the implementation. Schools continue to be challenged in understanding and addressing the underlying causal factors that result in perceived inappropriate student behaviors and how to effectively address them with the resources available. It was mentioned that there are inconsistencies in monitoring the fidelity of implementation of the plans developed for students. Sometimes the plans do not seem to address need or significantly impact a change in behavior. There was a general perception that more and more children are experiencing trauma and mental health issues in schools and that the resources and supports are insufficient to proactively address the presenting problems.

There was also a general sense that, although the Division employs Autism and Behavior Support Specialists who provide direct guidance and support to schools in addressing the needs of students with disabilities exhibiting challenging behaviors, the process for implementing the recommended behavioral

<sup>109</sup> ACPS Code of Student Conduct K-12 <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/cms/lib/VA01918616/Centricity/Shared/documents/code-of-conduct.pdf>

<sup>110</sup> Restorative Practices is a framework that supports the idea that positive relationships are essential to maintaining community and repairing relationships when harm has occurred.

supports and documenting whether the interventions are working or not delays the process for students getting the more intensive services offered in citywide programs. And, when difficult behavioral situations arise that require disciplinary action, there is a strong “push” to remove them from the classroom or school, and to consider sending them “somewhere else” for more intensive support. School-based staff choose to default to a change in placement and more restrictive environments without first attempting to ameliorate student behavior challenges with interventions. Consideration for a more restrictive, citywide placement and potential change to a different school should be done with the utmost thought, care, and attention to the student’s individual need, implemented strategies, and documented progress. ACPS’s policies and practices attest to the Division’s attention to these issues.

The increasing challenges sometimes exhibited in the behavior of the growing number of the students with autism spectrum disorders was also a concern. Training and support is provided to teachers serving these students with autism spectrum disorders on implementing evidence-based practices, but they are still challenged by some of the problem behaviors their students exhibit and the nature and persistence of the behavior which makes interventions difficult.

The OSEP Dear Colleague Letter of August 1, 2016, referenced that:

the letter is a part of the Department’s broader work to encourage school environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning, where educators actively prevent the need for short-term disciplinary removals by effectively supporting and responding to behavior. In keeping with this goal, this letter serves to remind school personnel that the authority to implement disciplinary removals does not negate their obligation to consider the implications of the child’s behavioral needs, and the effects of the use of suspensions (and other short-term removals) when ensuring the provision of FAPE.<sup>111</sup>

This letter is meant to remind school systems that it is required to provide positive behavioral supports to students with disabilities who need them. Repeated use of disciplinary actions may suggest inappropriate, or ineffective, behavioral interventions and supports are not being used. Failing to consider and provide for needed behavioral supports in an IEP is likely to result in children not receiving FAPE. In order to ensure ACPS is not cited for disproportionately disciplining students with disabilities in the future, the Division should conduct an analysis of its policies, procedures, and resources that guide and provide supports, with a greater focus on addressing the needs of the students most frequently suspended from school. This analysis should also include a review of students by disability category, by school, by number of days disciplined, and by type(s) of infraction. These data should then be reviewed alongside students’ FBAs, BIPs, and IEPs to determine where gaps in support might be occurring.

The VDOE Discipline Of Children With Disabilities Technical Assistance Resource Document for Implementing the Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 Amendments and Federal Regulations and the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia provides useful guidance to assist Division leadership, school administrators and parents in operationalizing their local education agency laws and regulations relative to the discipline of students with disabilities.<sup>112</sup> These resources should be reviewed as part of the analysis.

## ***Survey Results***

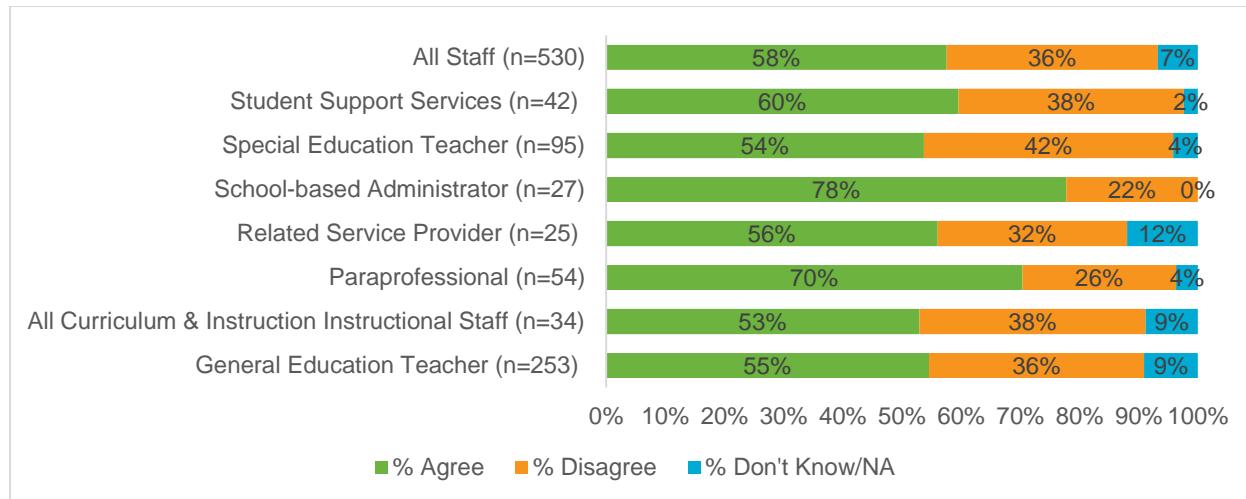
Staff were asked about the availability of behavioral supports for students with disabilities on the survey. Overall, 58% agreed that once students were identified as eligible for special education, the behavioral supports necessary to meet individual student needs are available at their school. Responses ranged

<sup>111</sup> U.S. Department of Education. OSEP Dear Colleague Letter August 1, 2016 <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/files/dcl-on-pbis-in-ieps--08-01-2016.pdf>

<sup>112</sup> VDOE Discipline of Children with Disabilities Technical Assistance Resource Document. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student\\_conduct/discipline\\_children\\_disabilities.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_conduct/discipline_children_disabilities.pdf)

from 53% agreed/strongly agreed among curriculum and instruction instructional staff to 78% among administrators.

**Exhibit 72. Once eligible for special education, the behavioral supports necessary to meet individual student needs are available at my school(s).**



## Citywide Programs

All ACPS schools provide special education and specially designed instruction for students with disabilities; however, only select schools house citywide programs. There are four types of citywide programs – those that serve students with autism spectrum disorders, those with an intellectual disability, those with multiple disabilities, and those with emotional/behavioral needs. Students instructed in these programs have moderate to significant disabilities and require more intensive supports during the school day. Generally, students with emotional/behavioral disorders, though they are in citywide programs, receive instruction in the general education curriculum and take the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. Typically, students in the citywide programs for intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities primarily receive instruction on the alternate curriculum, or Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL) Curriculum, and participate in the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). Students in citywide programs for autism participate in the SOL or ASOL curriculum and take the appropriate aligned assessment depending on their IEP.

OSI has dedicated Autism and Behavior Support Specialists who are responsible for building the capacity of teachers and paraprofessionals to implement programs, services and evidence-based practices for this class of students served in citywide programs. In the event that a student is transitioning from a citywide program to a less restrictive setting, an Instructional Specialist will work alongside an Autism and Behavior Support Specialist to create a plan that best supports the student.

According to focus group participants, decisions on where programs are located are often based on whether there is space available at a school or the school administrator's willingness to host a citywide special education program. The location of the citywide programs are, therefore, not always informed by student needs. Staff expressed concerns about inequities of where programs are located and gaps that exist for certain programs. Sometimes students must travel quite a distance from their home schools to attend citywide programs. There were some perceptions expressed by focus group participants that OSI was "gatekeeping" to prevent students from accessing citywide programs. Another perception was that students are tracked into citywide programs through IEP team meeting decisions and once they get in, they do not seem to leave them. OSI does play an active role in monitoring referrals to citywide programs. Though OSI does not have the authority to overrule an IEP team decision, it is critically

important that they follow procedures, provide data, and respect LRE rights for students, while supporting school teams with identifying the appropriate placement for students with intensive needs. Moving a student to a more restrictive placement should not be taken lightly, as is noted in the ACPS Guidance Document.

Focus group participants did not share specific concerns about the alternate curriculum (i.e., ASOL curriculum) or the materials available to support instruction in citywide programs. Classes appeared to be well equipped with textbooks, materials equipment, supplies, technology and assistive technology as needed. With regards to technology, interactive white boards, personal devices, and low and high tech assistive technology devices were available, used, and supported. There was also a variety of instructional web-based programs and software resources available in classrooms serving students instructed in the ASOL curriculum. Some classrooms implemented the NY2 Unique Learning System to supplement the instruction for students taking the alternate assessment.<sup>113</sup> Focus groups participants indicated that if counseling is offered to students then counselors attend the IEP meetings. If a behavior goal requires teacher consultation be provided, then this service is offered and delivered. These citywide classrooms appeared to be equipped with the technology, materials, equipment, supplies and resources needed to address student needs.

There were greater inconsistencies noted in the structure in place for classroom management, organizing the classroom environment, and how instruction and supports were delivered for student with emotional/behavioral disabilities than there were in the classes for students with autism spectrum disorders. The classes serving students with autism spectrum disorders tended to have stronger common visible elements in place for how the room was arranged, the use of visual schedules, and the provision of evidence-based behavioral and instructional practices. In many schools, there were classrooms observed in which teachers appeared to need more professional development and coaching support to strengthen practices, as their classrooms were less structured and chaotic than what was the norm. For example, in some classrooms visited at the elementary school level, the adults in the classroom were not working in unison and having a difficult time implementing the instructional routines, managing the complexities of the students' behaviors, and providing the individual and group instruction.

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<sup>113</sup> n2y LLC Site. <https://www.n2y.com/unique-learning-system/>

### ***Student Shadowing Observation 4***

Student is a secondary level female with multiple disabilities who is part of a citywide program. At the time of the observation, there were five adults in the room, one teacher and four paraeducators, and seven students. The classroom was rich in instructional materials and technology. The room was set up with a teacher directed small group instructional area, designated student work areas, and materials and manipulatives neatly stored in bins. Charts and posters were prominently displayed including visual schedules and other reminders to assist the students with transitions.

At the time of the observation, the classroom teacher was initiating a transition to an activity that included student work packets that appeared to be aligned to a functional and modified curriculum for the students with disabilities. One of the adults distributed the packets to the students. The teacher directed the class from the front of the room and used the interactive white board to project the upcoming sequence of learning activities. One of the adults left the room, and the teacher instructed the students that they would have to work on the packets on their own today.

The teacher cued students to the appropriate response for the activity (e.g., find X, point to X). When students accomplished the task, the adults provided immediate verbal praise, "good job!" All the adults worked collaboratively together to support the students in the room. Student received targeted assistance from one of the adults throughout the lesson. Students were mostly listening to the teacher with the adults in the room providing guidance and support to follow along.

The level of support needed by each student varied. Student and her classmates were provided specially designed instruction to support the learning activity and address individual academic and cognitive deficits as well as individual behavioral needs. Students were also provided specialized assistive and adaptive technology (e.g., communication device, text to speech, switches to respond, etc.) when appropriate. The specialized instruction taking place in this classroom was aligned to alternate standards for learning and their teacher used supplemental curriculum resources purchased by the district that aligned to these standards, but it was difficult to determine the learning expectation and what strategies were being implemented to reach it.

All of the adults in the room actively supported students to engage in the task and learn at their own level, though some were more skilled than others at providing the necessary supports and eliciting student's participation. Student worked through the sequence of activities in her packet in the designated time with support and assistance from the classroom teacher and the paraeducator. Overall, the services and supports prescribed were being delivered in the appropriate educational environment as delineated in Student's IEP.

## Related Services

Related services include speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, adapted physical education, assistive technology (AT), and transportation. Contracted service providers are also hired to fill in to provide IEP-driven related services to students. Focus groups reported that related service providers have high workloads/caseloads and that meeting the service minutes of the students they serve can be a constant challenge. They also reported that it is sometimes difficult to find candidates for new or vacant related services positions and these are unfilled until a suitable candidate is found.

Some of the staffing challenges reported are directly related to the number of students requiring related services. It was mentioned that an efficiency study in 2012 was conducted that made recommendations to reduce related services personnel and that positions were eliminated. This had a significant impact on caseload and imposed further challenges for the provision of services. Related services personnel in focus groups indicated that their caseload numbers have increased since then, and there have been no changes or adjustments to the allocation formulas. They indicated that they looked at other divisions and how they were staffing and mirrored that process to determine the number units needed (workload adjustments). There was disappointment expressed that this information was presented but the allocations are still the same. Additional information about the staffing formula is included in Chapter VI: Support for Teaching and Learning.

Focus group participants report that there is a lot of teamwork and collaboration regarding the provision of related services in schools and that related service providers respond quickly to emails and concerns. Some of the challenges expressed are in providing the necessary training, in that training is sometimes behind the curve and reactive instead of proactive. Sometimes not all the right services personnel on the IEP team are invited to IEP meetings; some indicated they found out about meetings for students on their caseload, and for whom that they could provide input, after the meeting occurred. Additionally, scheduling and communication were overarching themes. At times, the schedules for students receiving related services were not transparent to teachers, services get cancelled or rescheduled as a result. Information on changes to the schedule may not be timely. It was reported that missed time for student service is tracked on a chart and that contracted service providers are assigned to provide the make-up services. Though there are policies, procedures, and protocols to guide related services processes at a Division level, the implementation varies between schools. Some related service providers expressed a lack of continuity in the communication of these processes and expectations and not sure who to call for clarification or concerns. Further, schools do not seem to know the protocol to seek expertise of key personnel, so it becomes incumbent for related services personnel to educate the schools and those requesting their help on the support and services available.

Transportation as a related service is provided to students with disabilities. Practices are in place to address length of ride to mitigate instances when students may be on a bus ride that is too long to get to a program or school location that they have been placed for services. Additional information about transportation is included in Chapter VI: Support for Teaching and Learning.

## Assistive Technology

Technology integration is a critical aspect of differentiated instruction and provides meaningful access to learning activities. Rather than relying on the teacher for direct support, students with disabilities can be taught to use technology as a means for gaining academic independence and problem-solving skills.

ACPS and OSI have made significant investments over time to providing access to technology and assistive technology to both schools and students throughout the Division. Focus group participants often alluded that schools are rich in technology resources to augment and support instruction. The increased availability of technology in schools has enabled design elements that help to build capacity. There is a

greater focus on blended learning, integrating web-based tools, software, apps and other resources to support instruction and enhance the availability of assistive technology. The OSI special education team has done a great job supporting this work. As an example, it was reported that Instructional Specialists were instrumental in supporting and turning over the use of *Quizlet*<sup>114</sup> in the schools.

Procedures are in place to evaluate and address the need for low or high assistive technology for students with IEPs based on needs. According to school based and OSI staff, the Division provides guidance on assistive technology (AT) policies and practices along with support to schools on how to support students with disabilities these devices. Support is also provided to students assigned a high-tech assistive device resulting from an assistive technology evaluation. There is a general feeling that staff in OSI and in schools are knowledgeable about AT. OSI has also developed and implemented an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) plan, in addition guidance and forms for school-based staff.

There is close collaboration between OSI and Technology Services in the purchase and support for the devices being used in schools to support all students and individual students with IEPs. When it is determined that a student needs a specific assistive technology device ordered and assigned, processes are in place to initiate the request and order the equipment. Once it arrives, it is assigned to the student and all relevant parties that will support the student's use of the device are trained and supported in how to do so. During focus groups, it was mentioned that sometimes these procedures do not work as intended and an expensive piece of equipment may need to be rush-ordered for a student. There is a need for a more structured process between the assistive technology evaluation, determining the need for a specific device, purchasing the tool, and training the student, parents, and school staff on it.

Overall, the technology and assistive technology available and in use in classrooms well positions efforts to enrich, provide meaningful access and support the instruction of students in the classroom and aligned to improve outcomes and results for students. There were no complaints or concerns voiced during any of the focus group sessions about students not being provided the technology or assistive technology they need, nor was this observed in practice during school visits, classroom observations, or student shadowing.

## Support for English Learners

ACPS provides a program of language instruction so that students meet the same challenging academic content and student achievement standards that all students are expected to meet while they develop English language proficiency. The program for English Learners is designed to improve the education of ELs by assisting them in learning English and in meeting state content standards. Curriculum follows grade level standards of learning and Virginia's English language proficiency (ELP) standards. Eligibility for EL program services is based on student performance on the WIDA Screener and the annual ACCESS for ELs English language proficiency test. The EL Program offers instruction, from an EL teacher, to students at five levels of English language proficiency (ELP), as defined by VDOE. Exit criteria in VA for the 2017 and 2018 ACCESS tests was set at an overall proficiency level 4.4 or higher on the ACCESS for ELs 2.0 or level 5 on the ELP Checklist for visually/hearing impaired students. Students who exit on those criteria are in monitor status for four years. Students who have limited English proficiency (LEP) may also be eligible for special education.

In ACPS, students are provided EL support in schools they attend by EL teachers. As mentioned in previous chapters, OSI developed the Bilingual Team Handbook "Guidelines for Intervention and Assessment" in August of 2014. The development of the handbook was an initiative undertaken to address a perceived and analyzed problem with the referral, evaluation, and eligibility process of ELs with

<sup>114</sup> Quizlet is a free website providing learning tools for students, including flashcards, study and game modes. <https://quizlet.com/>

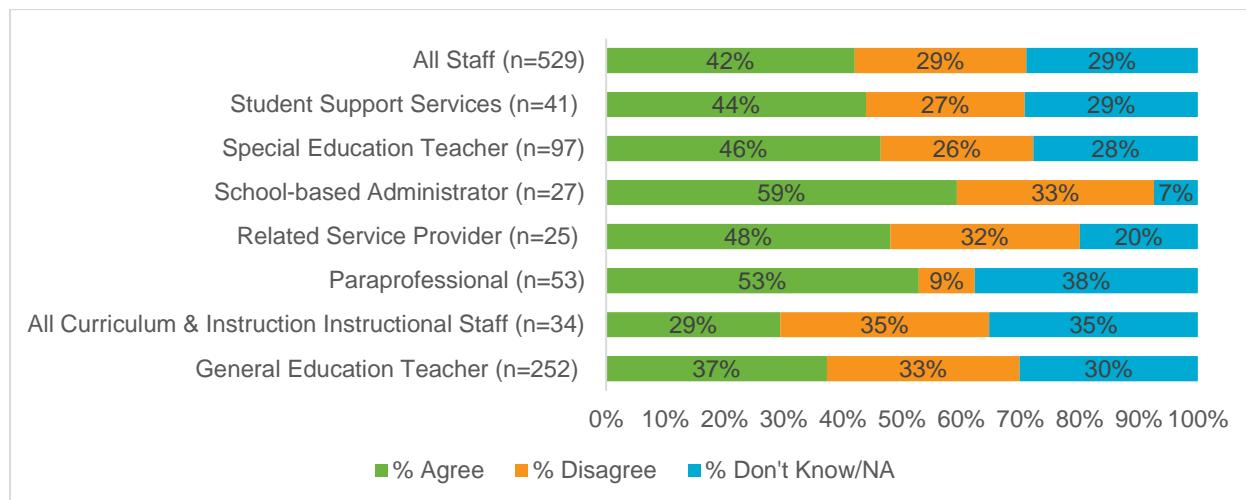
suspected disabilities and an attempt to address them and provide school teams guidance to assist in the identification and assessment of students who are ELs with suspected disabilities. The next phase of this work should be not only to reinforce these practices but to monitor the fidelity of implementation of SDI and interventions for EL students with disabilities to ensure they receive appropriate classroom support.

Additionally, dual language programs are also offered for children to learn another language while receiving the same high quality academic curriculum as students throughout the division. ACPS offers K-5 Spanish-English two-way dual language programs at John Adams Elementary School and Mount Vernon Community School. These schools include students with disabilities into the dual language programs, offering in class resource support in both English and Spanish.

## Survey Results

The staff survey asked whether services at their school for dually identified students are meeting student needs. Overall, 42% of all staff agreed. The highest levels of agreement were among school-based administrators (59%) and paraprofessionals (53%) and the lowest were among Curriculum and Instruction instructional staff (29%) and general education teachers (37%). However, it should be noted that nearly a third of respondents in most roles indicated that they did not know.

**Exhibit 73. Services for dually identified (English Learner students with disabilities) students at my school(s) are meeting student needs.**



## Support for Dually Identified Gifted and Talented Students

Through a series of departmental work plans developed throughout the years that build upon each other, Student Services has continued to set goals to increase disproportionate student populations' (Black or African American and Latino) and increase awareness and access to TAG and Honors classes. There has been an emphasis on promoting TAG referral/identification and honors enrollment of Black and Latino students and outreach to raise parental and community awareness. Strategies have been implemented to help identify and better serve students that are under-represented in TAG and Honors classes which also includes dually identified and talented and gifted students (SWDs/Gifted, EL/Gifted, 504/Gifted). In addition to general assessments used to identify gifted students, school psychologists have focused on identifying twice exceptional students through the evaluations conducted as part of the eligibility and reevaluation process. TAG indicator data show that 2% of TAG students are also identified as students with disabilities (n~38) for 2016-17. Dually identified TAG students were observed in classrooms as part of the overall schools observations but were specifically selected as part of the student shadowing observations.

Continued efforts need to be placed on providing information and conducting outreach to promote enrollment to student and parents throughout the Division's culturally and linguistically diverse community to increase Black/Latino parents' knowledge and understanding of ACPS TAG referral/identification process and characteristics of talented and giftedness. Focus group participants mentioned that there is a need for more persistent, and consistent, education outreach with targeted marketing to better inform the students and their parents regarding gifted characteristics referral, criteria and eligibility as well as the benefits of what classes serving TAG and Honors students will afford them. It was mentioned that access to the classes serving TAG and Honors students is still lacking in underserved communities. This was verified and observed during the school visits, classroom observations and student shadowing that took place during the phases of the program review. The student demographics in the classes serving TAG and Honors students did not reflect or come close to the diversity observed in other classes in the same schools.

## Extended School Year (ESY)

According to the Virginia Department of Education technical assistance document, ESY refers to special education and/or related services provided beyond the normal school year of a school division for the purpose of providing FAPE to a student with a disability. These services, provided by a local education agency, are distinct from enrichment programs, summer school programs, and compensatory services and are not simply an extension of time. The consideration of ESY services is a part of the IEP process.

Historically, some school divisions have focused on providing ESY services primarily as a means to address regression and recoupment issues. Recent case law developments in Virginia, however, have shown that ESY should be viewed more generally as a means to address the issue of FAPE. In other words, the focus of an IEP team should be on whether the student will receive FAPE if ESY services are not provided, and not merely on whether the student is entitled to ESY. The concept of regression may enter into the equation because un-recouped regression, over time, may be evidence that FAPE is not being provided. However, the standard articulated in controlling legal precedent in Virginia is broader. Furthermore, the IEP team must determine whether the benefits the child gained during the regular school year will be significantly jeopardized if the student does not receive ESY. If ESY is determined to be required, these services, at no cost to the parent, will vary in type, intensity, location, inclusion of related services, and length of time, depending on the individual needs of the student.

The IEP must address the provision of ESY services, if required, in order for the student to receive FAPE, in accordance with the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia (Virginia Regulations), must have a statement of the projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of the services. Thus, any IEP that complies with this requirement already has a built-in mechanism to address the duration of services, whether for the length of the school year or some longer or shorter time.<sup>115</sup>

ACPS's policies and procedures are aligned to comply with both federal and state requirements for the provision of ESY to students with disabilities. OSI provides extended school year services (ESY) as part of its summer school and enrichment programs to student with disabilities eligible to receive such services as identified in their IEPs. Services are offered on specified beginning and end dates, duration of time and location of services. Students are provided transportation as a related service.

Focus group participants did not express concerns regarding the provision or availability of ESY services for students with disabilities. It was indicated that eligible students received their services as identified in their IEPs at designated school locations. It was also reported that the Division has taken measures to ensure the ESY program is efficiently managed. However, although not broken, the process of aligning

<sup>115</sup> VDOE Technical Assistance Document on ESY.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/regulations/federal/extended\\_schoolyear\\_services.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/federal/extended_schoolyear_services.pdf)

students based on eligibility and services at summer sites, hiring all the necessary personnel so that services are in place for students during the summer, and obtaining feedback from the personnel and schools providing such services could always be improved upon.

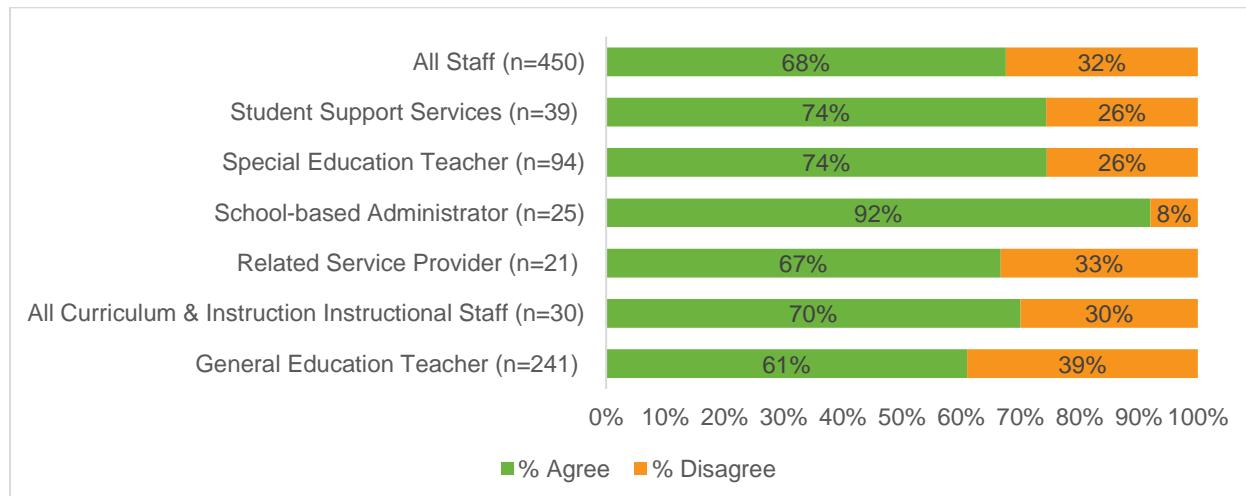
## Matriculation/Vertical Transitions

Stakeholder groups reported that matriculation and vertical transitions have been difficult areas of practice for many years. Meetings are scheduled for students matriculating/transitioning from prekindergarten to kindergarten, elementary to middle, middle to high school. Concerns were raised that sometimes the people facilitating and attending these meetings are not familiar with what the services look like in a classroom at receiving schools, which results in IEPs being written incorrectly. In instances like these, the schools that the students are matriculated in must review and update the IEP to ensure that student's needs and services match. It was also mentioned that there is a similar disconnect with the student information used to generate school, student and teacher caseload schedules in PowerSchool, when schedules are printed and pulled they sometimes do not match what is happening at the school. This was especially prevalent at the elementary level. Scheduling decisions are sometimes made for students with IEPs without revising the IEP. During school visits and observations conducted, the student's schedules printed on PowerSchool at times did not appear to match the actual schedules thus pointing to a possible disconnect in the processes for checks and balances to ensure that the schedules and IEPs matched since these can change between grading periods and/or semesters, especially at the secondary level.

## Survey Results

All staff were asked survey questions about student transitions from grade to grade within their school and from building to building. Regarding grade to grade transitions, the majority of teachers agreed that there is a coordinated matriculation process in place to share information about students with disabilities (68%). Responses ranged from 61% among general education teachers to 92% among school administrators.

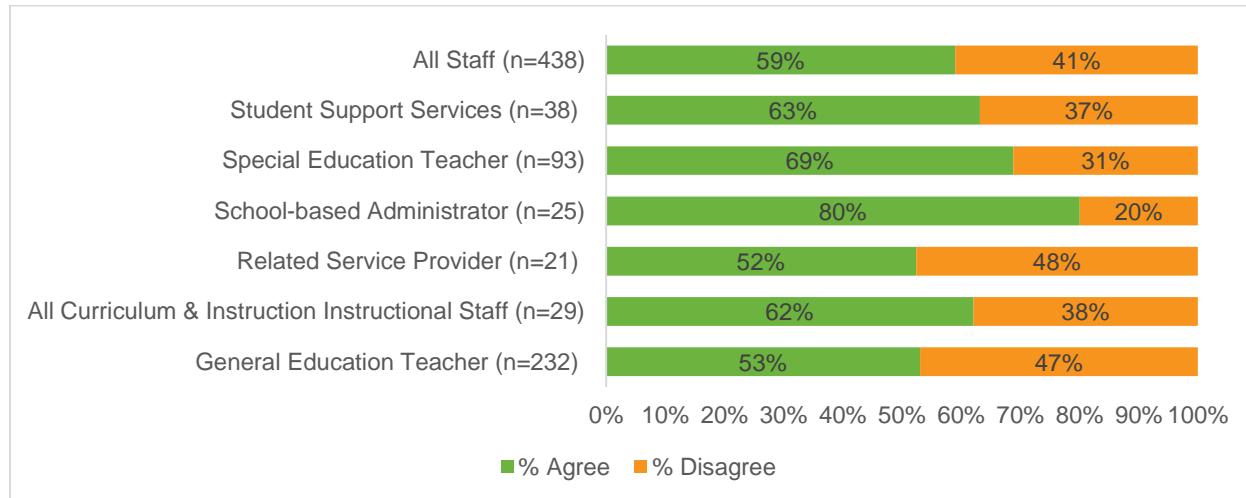
**Exhibit 74. When a student moves from grade to grade within my school, there is a coordinated matriculation process in place to share information about students with disabilities.**



Regarding students' transitions between buildings, 59% of staff agreed that there is a coordinated matriculation process in place to share information about students with disabilities. These results varied by role: general education teachers and related service providers had the lowest levels of agreement.

(53% and 52% respectively) while special education teachers and administrators had higher rate of agreement (69% and 80%),

**Exhibit 75. When a student moves from building to building within ACPS, there is a coordinated matriculation process in place to share information about students with disabilities.**



## Post-Secondary School Transition

Transition services are provided through the student's IEP. Transition Specialists are assigned to schools and work with community organizations, link students with college, conduct transition fairs with employers and colleges/universities, facilitate work-based community training, do assessments, develop partnerships with local businesses, and help students advocate for themselves. Transition Specialists reportedly work well with schools, colleges, and agencies and are reportedly instrumental in supporting the transition IEP process. They lead training on how to conduct required transition assessments so that the results help guide the process to develop measurable goals, instructional programs, and services. The training also focuses on how to write the IEP and provide the instructional program that addressing the transition goals developed for students. Staff are also trained in the process of developing all of the required transition IEP components correctly on IEP Online. Building student capacity for self-determination is supported through the use of the "I'm Determined" curriculum for self-advocacy.

OSI provides a variety of transition services to students based on the measurable post-secondary goals developed in the areas of travel training, community-based instructions, setting up an apartment, and running a school based enterprise. Other transition services available to students include 9<sup>th</sup> grade job sampling, 10<sup>th</sup> grade on the job internship and school internships. During 11<sup>th</sup> grade and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, students can spend part of the day at a worksite. OSI has cultivated a substantial number of partnerships with area organizations so that students with disabilities can gain valuable experience. The following community partners provide internship/employment opportunities for student with disabilities attending T.C. Williams High School:

- Belcher Consulting, Inc.
- Big Lots
- Burlington
- Catholic Charities Food Pantry
- Chinquapin Recreation Center – King Street
- Crothall Healthcare – INOVA Hospital

- Edible Arrangements
- Fairlington Pizza
- Great Harvest
- Greenstreet Gardens
- Habitat for Humanity
- INOVA Alexandria Hospital
- Jack Taylor's Toyota of Alexandria, VA
- Lacrosse Unlimited – Bradlee Center
- Marriott- Residence Pentagon City
- Morrison Management – INOVA Hospital
- ODS Security Solutions – INOVA Hospital
- Old Navy – Potomac Yards
- Palette 22
- Party City – Bailey's Crossroads
- Pet Smart – Potomac Yards
- Pet Valu – Bradlee Center
- PIES Fitness Yoga Studio
- Rackroom Shoes – Potomac Yards
- Safeway – Bradlee Center
- Salvation Army
- Scramble Indoor Play
- Senzu Juicery
- St. Clements Episcopal School
- Sunoco Service Station – North Quaker Lane
- United States Patent and Trade Office
- UpCycle – Creative Reuse Center
- Urban Alliance Program
- Woodbine Rehabilitation and Health Care Center

Students in their terminal year at ACPS are also offered the opportunity to apply and attend Project Search, which offers additional workplace experience. One key strength reported by stakeholder group members is that agency linkages are made in post-secondary transition plans. School-based staff report that overall, the transition resources provided by OSI are coordinated and helpful.

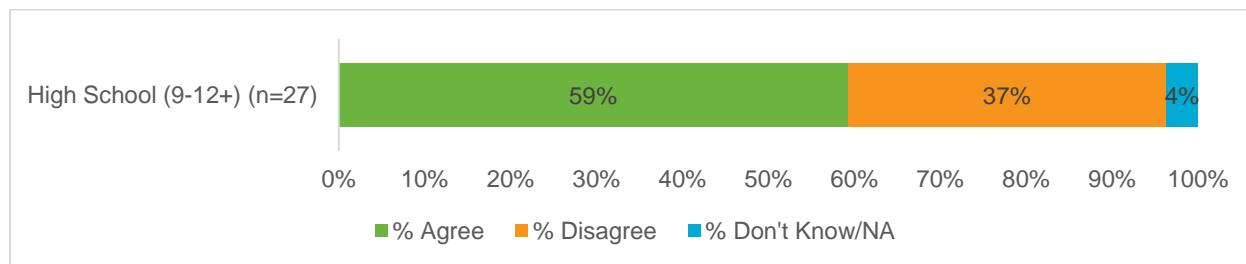
## Survey Results

### Parent Survey

Parents were asked a series of questions regarding post-secondary school transition planning at ACPS, covering topics such as how the IEP team communicates transition services, how staff encourage student participation in IEP meeting, and whether the transition plan considers the students interest.

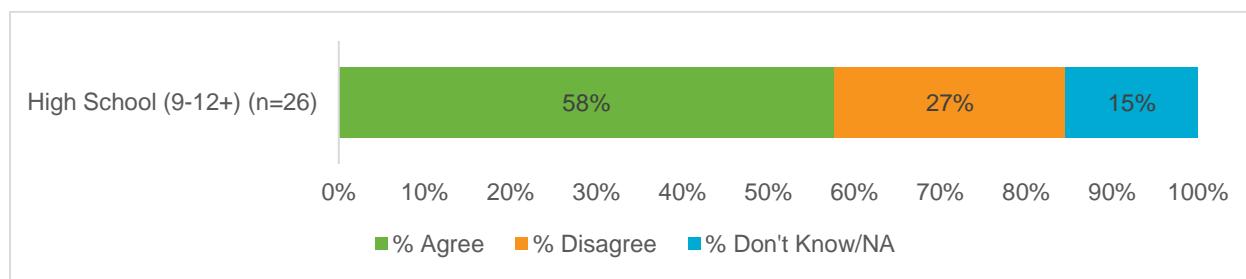
When asked if the IEP team discussed their child's transition services and activities to prepare him/her for life after high school, 59% of high school parents agreed and 37% disagreed.

**Exhibit 76. Did the IEP team discuss your child's transition services and activities to prepare him/her for life after high school, e.g., career interests, education, work, etc.?**



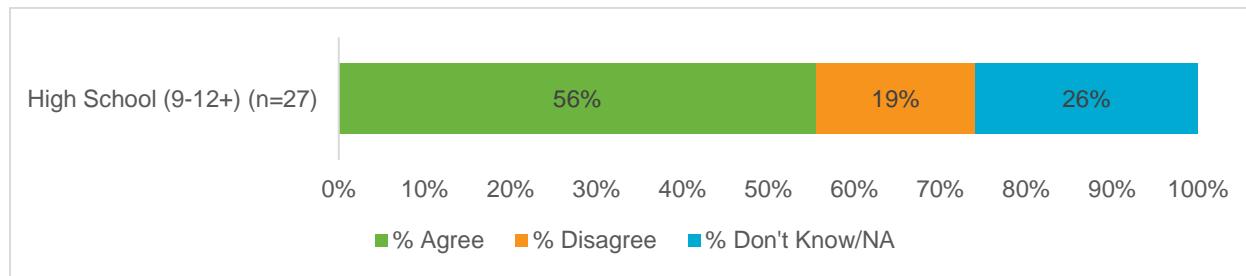
When asked if school staff actively encourage their child to participate in IEP meetings, 58% of high school parents agreed and 27% disagreed.

**Exhibit 77. Do school staff actively encourage your child to participate in IEP meetings?**



When asked if their child's interests were taken into consideration when developing the transition plan, 56% of high school parents agreed, 19% disagreed, and 26% did not know.

**Exhibit 78. Were your child's interests taken into consideration when developing the transition plan?**



## Out of District Placements

In the 2015-16 school year, 4.2% of ACPS students with disabilities were placed in private out of district placements or non-public schools, either by the Division, parents, or the state's foster care system. As noted in Chapter II: Characteristics of Students with Disabilities, a third of these students are those with emotional/behavior disorders. Over 20% have autism, and 16% have a specific learning disability.

Division personnel report that the requests for out of district placements continue to increase. Stakeholders reported that sometimes they work through OSI's process to secure private placement for children who continue to struggle in the schools, and that parents often strongly advocate for this option. However, ACPS is closely monitoring placements, and IEP teams have been trained to consider a range of options prior to making the determination that an out of district placement is needed. From the 2013-14 to the 2015-16 school years, there was a half a percentage point decrease in out of district placements. Though ACPS's annual percentages still exceed the state targets, this decrease is a positive indication

that the Division is monitoring these placements and diligently working to support students in Division schools.

## Placement and Access to Timely Services

OSI has internal policies and procedures in place to ensure that there is access to placement and timely services for students with disabilities determined eligible in accordance with federal, state and local requirements. The timelines for evaluation are tracked using the 55-day eligibility calendar. The date for eligibility must be within 55 business days from the date the referral was received. If the student is found eligible for special education services, an IEP must be developed within 30 calendar days. These data are collected, monitored and reported annually to the VDOE. The Performance Report Issued for Alexandria City Public Schools dated June 1, 2017, reflects that it met the targets set for SPP/APR Indicator 11—Children with parental consent for initial evaluation, who were evaluated and eligibility determined within 65 business days.<sup>116</sup> Training to comply with these requirements is included in OSI training calendar and conducted using the resources and administrative guidance developed and available for users on *Canvas*. Focus group members indicated that guidance from central office in this area has gotten better and that there is a system in place to monitor these data. It was also acknowledged that there are times when delays in obtaining access to timely services do occur but overall everyone engaged in these processes strives to meet the requirements and provide eligible students the services they need.

## IEP Compliance

OSI has internal policies and procedures in place to provide information that will support the development of compliant IEPs for students with disabilities. All related IEP guidance and resources are available for users on *Canvas*. IEPs are developed electronically using the IEP Online web-based special education management systems where all student records developed in the system are maintained. In addition, OSI developed an IEP checklist to provide guidance so that all steps in the process are completed in compliance with requirements. There are reports that can be generated from both IEP Online and PowerSchool that are used by division and school staff to monitor IEP and special education compliance. Training in the essential components to comply with IEP requirements is included in the OSI training calendar.

Focus group participants reported that OSI has a comprehensive change of placement process. Data are collected and analyzed before every IEP meeting. OSI has guidance documents, resources, and internal rubrics for monitoring the activities or actions conducted for IEP compliance and for determining the functioning of programs or services compared to what is required by VDOE regulations for the purpose of accountability. Focus group participants indicated that although there are many IEP team members involved in the development of the IEP and responsible parties charged with its implementation, case managers tend to be the most accountable person for IEP compliance. IEP compliance needs to be owned responsibly with shared accountability at all levels of the Division and its schools.

## Fidelity of Implementation

According to the National Center for Intensive Interventions, fidelity refers to how closely prescribed procedures are followed and, in the context of schools, the degree to which educators implement programs, assessments, and implementation plans the way they were intended. When we implement

<sup>116</sup> ACPS Special Education Performance Report.

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/reports\\_plans\\_stats/special\\_ed\\_performance/division/2015-2016/spp-app/alexandria.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/special_ed_performance/division/2015-2016/spp-app/alexandria.pdf)

interventions and assessments with fidelity, intervention teams can make more accurate decisions about an individual student's progress and future intervention needs. In addition, fidelity of implementation to the data-based individualization (DBI) process, across multiple students in a school, helps to ensure that staff have the necessary resources and processes in place to support strong implementation for individual students.<sup>117</sup> Fidelity of implementation within the context of the IEP implies that all special education services documented in a student's IEP must be delivered by the persons specified. Further, the delivery of special education services must be documented and must match the frequency, duration, and location specified in the student's IEP.

In review of OSI policies and procedures there was limited guidance to address fidelity of implementation, except for the information referenced in the ACPS Individual Education Program guidance. Focus group participants shared some examples in which fidelity of implementation breaks down, such as:

- Co-teachers not being in the classroom as scheduled to provide the required frequency of support delineated in the IEP
- Related services sessions that are cancelled and have to be made up
- Specially designed instruction not being provided to students
- Progress monitoring of IEP goals with data collection not systematically kept or made available at meetings to review progress
- Special education resource teachers being pulled from their daily schedule to attend IEP meetings or parent conference during instructional time
- Scheduling and planning limitations that impact teachers' ability to plan what they must deliver as delineated in the IEPs (e.g., accommodations, modifications, adaptations, co-teaching, specially designed instruction, interventions)

It is important that ownership and accountability for the fidelity of implementation of the IEP engages everyone so that it becomes a shared responsibility (e.g., OSI staff, building administrators, special education chairs/leads, case managers, special education and general education teachers, related services personnel, parents).

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<sup>117</sup> National Center on Intensive Intervention. <https://intensiveintervention.org/implementation-support/fidelity-resources>

## VI. Support for Teaching and Learning



This section provides information about ACPS's support for the teaching and learning of students with IEPs. It addresses the following areas: Organization and Collaboration, Human Capital, Professional Development, Communication, Technology and Data Use, Transportation, Procedural Matters, Fiscal Issues, and Accountability for Desired Results.

### Organization and Collaboration

#### School Division Overview

##### Strategic Mission and Vision



In the summer of 2014, the ACPS school board initiated a long-range, stakeholder driven strategic planning process designed to document the needs of the school division, analyze the current educational landscape, and understand the aspirations of the Alexandria City community. This work eventually culminated in a revised mission and vision and the ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan, which serves as the foundation document for all of the actions of the

Division.<sup>118</sup> The plan reflects the Division's commitment to equity, access, differentiation, and inclusion for all students and measured objectives targeted at reducing the academic achievement gap across race/ethnicity, income, disability, and language subgroups, decreasing suspension rates of minority students (particularly males), and preventing over-identification of racial/ethnic minorities for remedial or special education services. The ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan contains the following six goals:

- 1. Academic Excellence and Educational Equity:** Every student will be academically successful and prepared for life, work, and college.
- 2. Family and Community Engagement:** ACPS will partner with families and the community in the education of Alexandria's youth.
- 3. An Exemplary Staff:** ACPS will recruit, develop, support, and retain a staff that meets the needs of every student.
- 4. Facilities and Learning Environment:** ACPS will provide optimal and equitable learning.
- 5. Health and Wellness:** ACPS will promote efforts to enable students to be healthy and ready to learn.
- 6. Effective and Efficient Operations:** ACPS will be efficient, effective, and transparent in its business operations.

The Division produces an annual ACPS 2020 Scorecard, a public document that shows progress made toward meeting the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

Schools align their School Education Plans to the strategic plan and use school-specific data to identify SMART (Specific, Measurable, Aggressive and Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) goals that guide their actions throughout the school year. Through a root-cause analysis, schools identify the top strategies used to reach their SMART goals and create action plans to support the strategies. Departments have mapped their department work plans to these strategic plan goals and measurable objectives have been developed.

### **Governance**

Under the 2017-18 school year, the Division was led by Interim Superintendent, Dr. Lois Berlin, under the direction of nine elected school board members. The city is divided into three districts, and three members are elected from each district. The members serve three-year terms and hold meetings twice a month. ACPS is a school division on the precipice of transition, however, with a newly selected, permanent superintendent slated to start in July 2018. Dr. Gregory Hutching, Jr. was selected by the school board to serve in this capacity. He is a former ACPS director of pre-K-12 initiatives and T.C. Williams High School graduate.<sup>119</sup> Staff have expressed an excitement over the background he brings to this role and his commitment to narrowing the achievement gap for diverse student populations.

Since the departure of ACPS's prior superintendent, Dr. Alvin Crawley, in June 2017, the Division has generally operated under the previously established organizational structure. The following graphic depicts how ACPS is structured into functional offices. The Office of Specialized Instruction (OSI) is housed within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. A recent proposal was approved by the school board at the May 2018 meeting, which advocated for changes to the organization of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, namely to incorporate Elementary School and Secondary

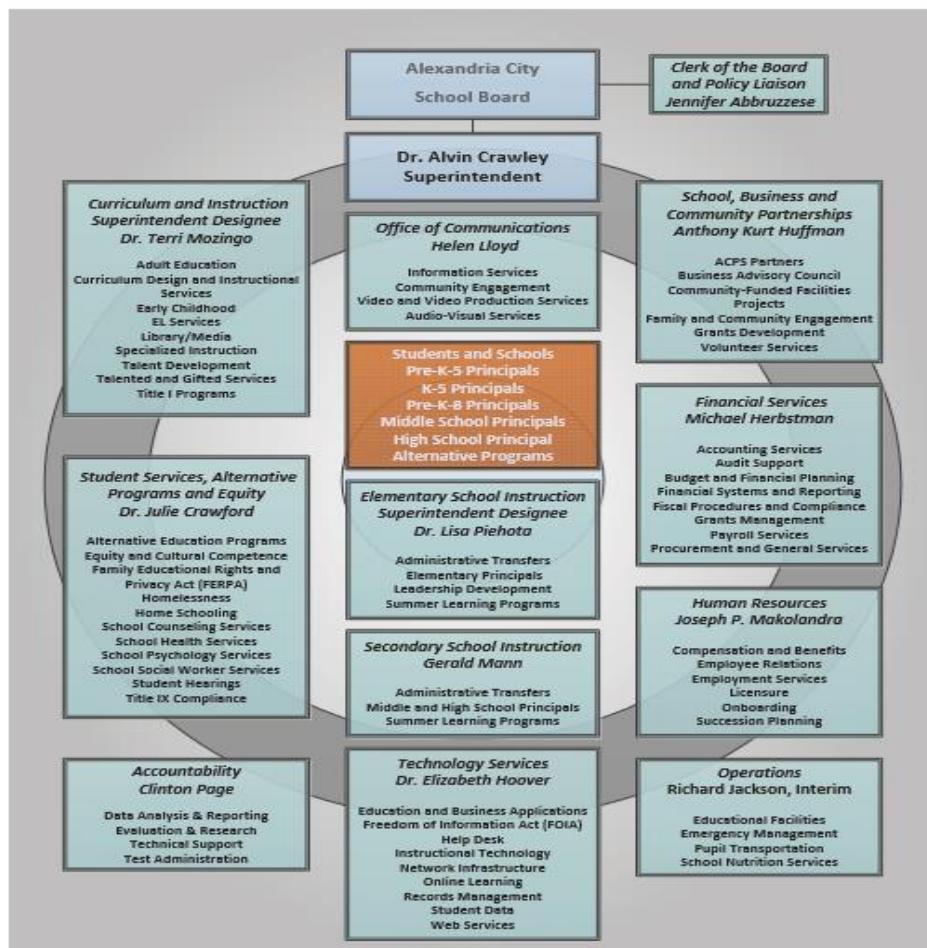
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<sup>118</sup> ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan. <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/329>

<sup>119</sup> ACPS. <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Domain/43>

School Instruction into the office. This reorganization can hopefully serve to generate more collaboration between Specialized Instruction and School Instructional Support.

**Exhibit 79. ACPS Organizational Chart<sup>120</sup>**



## School Leadership and Site Based Management

ACPS operates under a site-based management (SBM) philosophy whereby individual division sites (schools) and their respective building principals have significant budgetary and programmatic autonomy, including for special education. Traditionally in the United States, SBM has aimed to involve parents and teachers in decision making; improve decisions through devolution from central office to the site and increase job satisfaction and professionalization of teachers and enhance student performance.<sup>121</sup> Under this model, principals are given autonomy on the hiring of school employees, the development of school-based programs, and budgeting – including, to some extent, the spending of special education dollars, and are held accountable for successfully meeting goals and objectives.

SBM appears to be a relatively ingrained tenet of ACPS's operations and management structure, though there reportedly had not clearly been a point in time, or proactive determination, about how this

<sup>120</sup> ACPS. From FY 18 Budget Book.

<sup>121</sup> Guerra, Jackson, Madsen, Thompson, & Ward, 1992.

decentralization should operate within the Division. The impact of SBM on special education is explored further in this section, as well as in other areas of this report.

## School Plans

School Education Plans are required by ACPS to be submitted annually by each school. For each school, there is a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Driven, Time-Bound) goal in the areas of math, reading, science, and the teaching, empowering, leading and learning (TELL) survey. All plans must demonstrate a direct connection to the ACPS 2020 Plan. Improving the achievement of students with disabilities is mentioned across many of the schools' math, reading, and science goals. Additionally, all 16 ACPS schools also have a goal specific to special education. The following is a compilation of the special education goals by school. All goals focus on improving the academic outcomes of students with disabilities, as measured primarily by math and/or reading SOL scores.

### Exhibit 80. Special Education Goals by School, 2016-17

School	Goal
<b>Charles Barrett Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers will increase their knowledge in and application of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) strategies, resulting in the following levels of achievement by Students with Disabilities, as measured by the SOL Test: <b>reading</b> 64.90% and <b>math</b> 65.00%.</li> </ul>
<b>Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students receiving special education services in grades 3rd-5th, will improve their <b>math</b> skills as measured by achieving a minimum of 52% (5-point increase) passing rate on the SOL math test.</li> </ul>
<b>Douglas MacArthur Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All 4th and 5th grade students with disabilities will increase the pass rate on the <b>math</b> and <b>reading</b> SOL by 5%.</li> </ul>
<b>George Mason Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase performance of SWD on the <b>reading</b> and <b>math</b> SOL by 4%.</li> </ul>
<b>James K. Polk Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with disabilities will improve their <b>math</b> and <b>reading</b> skills as measured by a 5-point increase in the percentage of SWD students passing this year's SOL math and reading test.</li> </ul>
<b>Jefferson-Houston School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proficiency rate for SPED students will increase to no less than a 50% pass rate as measured by the <b>end of year state assessment</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>John Adams Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with Disabilities will increase pass rate to 50% in <b>math</b> and 67% in <b>reading</b> as measured by the reading and math SOL tests, (math: 38% to 50% and reading: 53% to 63%).</li> </ul>
<b>Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with disabilities will improve proficiency in all academic areas as measured by a 5% increase in the percentage of students with disabilities passing this year's SOL tests in <b>math</b> and <b>science</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Matthew Maury Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students (K-5) receiving special education services will demonstrate at least one year's growth in <b>reading</b> as measured by Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. By June 2017, all students (3-5) receiving special education services will demonstrate at least one year's growth in <b>mathematics</b> as measured by the Think Through Math Benchmark Assessment. By June 2017, 47% of students (3-5) receiving special education services will pass the math SOL and 42% of students (3-5) receiving special education services will pass the reading SOL.</li> </ul>
<b>Mount Vernon Community School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All MVCS students with disabilities (SWD), will make measurable progress in the areas of <b>reading</b> and <b>math</b>. SWD will increase their reading performance from</li> </ul>

School	Goal
	48% to 53% on the reading SOL SWD will increase their math performance from 40% to 45% on the math SOL.
<b>Patrick Henry Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PHES will increase proficiency in <b>mathematics</b> for students in the SPED subgroup by a minimum of 10%, as evidenced on the Spring 2017 SOL assessment.</li> </ul>
<b>Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SWD subgroup will show a 5% or greater increase on the spring 2017 SOL <b>math</b> and <b>reading</b> tests.</li> </ul>
<b>William Ramsay Elementary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>William Ramsay will increase the unadjusted pass rate of students with disabilities (SWD) on <b>all SOL tests</b> to 50% or higher per content area.</li> </ul>
<b>Francis C. Hammond Middle School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with disabilities will show a 50% gain on <b>all End of Course SOL tests</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>George Washington Middle School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the pass rate of SWD to 40% or better on <b>reading</b> SOL. By June 2017, increase the pass rate of SWD to 40% or better on <b>math</b> SOL.</li> </ul>
<b>T.C. Williams High School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with disabilities (SWD) in <b>SOL End of Course</b> classes will increase skill as measured by a 5 percentage point gain on spring SOL tests.</li> </ul>

Of the 16 schools, nine schools have reading and math goals, two schools have just math goals, one school has math and science goals, and four schools have goals for all content areas. It is commendable that each school has a specific special education goal. As the Division continues to focus on how to improve the outcomes of student with disabilities, it should continue to ensure these goals are included. In the future, schools should also determine other ways in which progress made by students with disabilities can be quantifiably measured and that the established goals are equitable and appropriately set high expectations for all students.

### Monthly Governance Meetings

The Executive Directors of the Offices of Elementary and Secondary School Instruction facilitate monthly governance meetings with school-based administrators and their leadership teams at five schools: Jefferson-Houston Elementary School, William Ramsey Elementary School, George Washington Middle School, Francis C. Hammond Middle School, and T.C. Williams High School. Governance does not occur at every school but is tiered to those schools identified through state and/or federal accountability systems as needing support. These meetings are not just about school-level accountability; they are about providing a problem-solving support structure for schools. Representatives from other central offices, including OSI, participate in these meetings. While the governance meetings can vary in focus between schools, all meetings include a review of student level data (such as discipline, attendance, performance, early warning indicators, etc.). Last year's focus for the governance meetings was on instructional pacing and analyzing which students were missing specific standards. In some cases, schools were required to complete a template that reflected how lesson plans aligned to and reflected standards for discussion at the governance meetings. Strategies were then provided to schools in the form of support from various offices. The governance meetings are a promising practice within APCS. OSI should explore ways in which these meetings can be used to provide the consistent, yet targeted, support necessary to all schools to improve the outcomes for students with disabilities.

## Office of Specialized Instruction

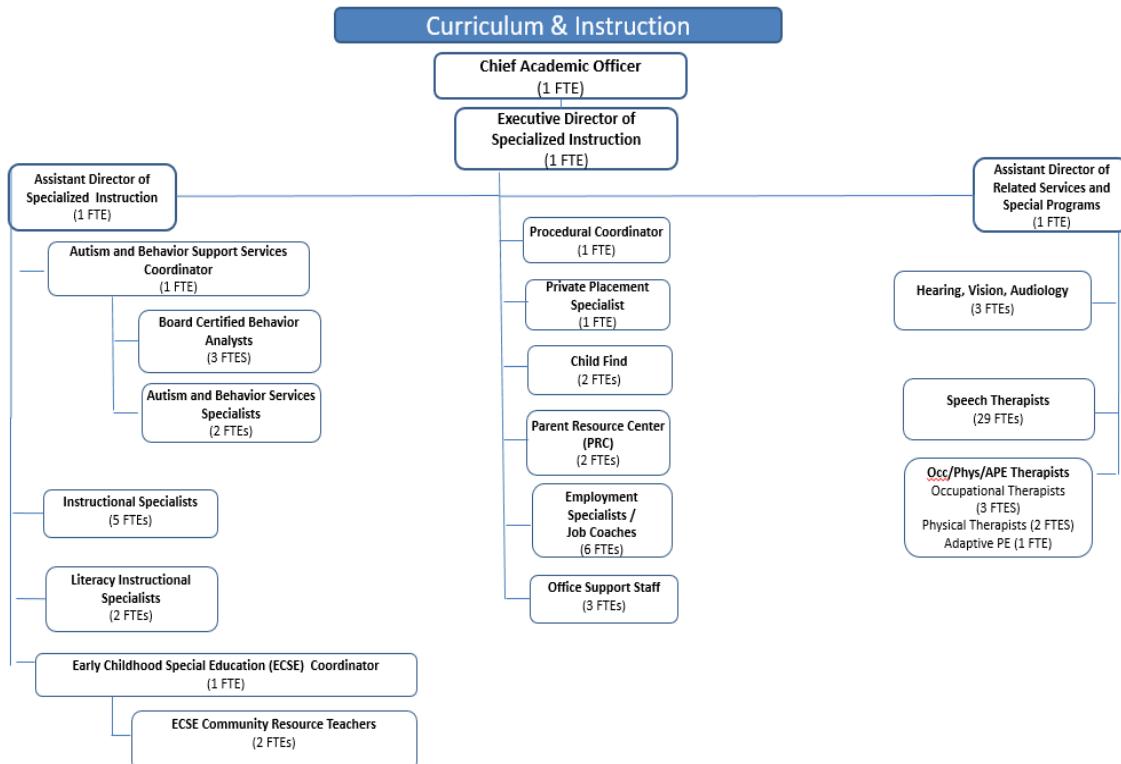
### Organization

The Office of Specialized Instruction (OSI) is charged with ensuring that students with IEPs have a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. With a responsibility that requires the consistent implementation of federal and local mandates, OSI is tasked with important, yet sometimes competing, responsibilities – respecting the site based leadership within each school while also promoting practices to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities and ensuring the consistent adherence to the law.

OSI is one of five offices within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I). Over the past few years, OSI/C&I have messaged four tenets, or key areas of focus, for special education service delivery: 1) specially designed instruction (SDI), 2) best practices in co-teaching, 3) interventions for reading/math, and, 4) progress monitoring. These tenets are widely known by school and central office staff, as evidenced by numerous references to them during focus group conversations. OSI is under the leadership of Ms. Theresa Werner, Executive Director. Ms. Werner has been in this role since 2015. She reports to the Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Terri Mozingo. Given the Division's focus on improving instructional outcomes for students with disabilities, it is imperative that OSI continues to be a part of C&I for the purposes of teacher training, alignment of interventions and resources to the core curriculum, and inclusive practices.

Prior to Ms. Werner's appointment to the Executive Director role, OSI was reorganized. Additionally, in 2017 another reorganization took place resulting in the structure depicted below. The organization within OSI has remained relatively the same since 2015, with only minor adjustments made to the Instructional Specialist role and that of the Assistant Director for Related Services and Special Programs.

**Exhibit 81. OSI Organizational Chart**



The Executive Director directly oversees procedural compliance, private placements, child find, the parent resource center, transition services including job coaching, and other support staff. This position has 17 direct reports, inclusive of the two Assistant Directors, and maintains the overall responsibility for the

operational and fiscal efficacy of the unit, in addition to the leading the vision for special education in schools across the Division.

### **Specialized Instruction**

The Assistant Director of Specialized Instruction supervises autism and behavior support services, instructional support for inclusive practices, and early childhood services. There are a total of 19 FTEs within this unit (excluding the Assistant Director). This unit is primarily responsible for overseeing the delivery of instructional services and providing training and job embedded coaching for special education and general education teachers specific to the four special education tenets listed above.

This structure is aligned to the office's mission of improving instructional outcomes for students with disabilities in that Instructional Specialists and Behavior Specialists spend the majority of their time in schools coaching teachers on inclusive practices and citywide programs respectively.

#### *Instructional Specialists*

Currently the office has a total of seven Instructional Specialist positions, one of which has been vacant during the 2017-18 school year. (This position is slated to be filled for the start of the 2018-19 school year.) The Instructional Specialists are responsible for the following three essential functions.

#### **Instructional Services**

- Assisting special education teachers in the development of standards-based IEPs that are aligned to the general curriculum and the Virginia Standards of Learning
- Providing ongoing feedback opportunities through coaching and modeling of inclusive practices through capacity building for administrators, teachers and support staff
- Developing and implementing professional learning opportunities for special education and general education teachers in co-teaching, inclusive practices and data collection and analysis
- Possessing knowledge of general education and special education curriculum, assessment, and classroom accommodations and modifications

#### **Specialized Instruction**

- Providing modeling of current practices in the areas of inclusive practices, specially designed instruction and service delivery for special education teachers in inclusive and/or resource learning environments
- Assisting teachers in the development and implementation of differentiated lesson plans that provide access to the general education curriculum
- Demonstrating skills and knowledge of differentiation of instruction and varying teaching methodologies and strategies

#### **Assessment and Progress Monitoring**

- Overseeing the collection, analysis, and interpretation of summative data regarding students with disabilities
- Facilitating ongoing progress monitoring in the areas of reading and math for students with disabilities

The assignment of Instructional Specialists to specific schools/school levels is reevaluated each year. For the next school year, it is projected that two Instructional Specialists will support secondary schools: one will support a combination of elementary schools and secondary schools, and four will support elementary schools. The conversion of Patrick Henry Elementary to a K-8 school and the opening of the new Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School impacts the way the Instructional Specialists will be assigned. The current positions are sufficient to cover support to grades K-12. However, given the growing Pre-K population and the feedback from focus groups about the challenges associated with adequately preparing students with special needs for kindergarten both academically and functionally, the Division should consider adding an additional Instructional Specialist position focused on best instructional

practices in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classrooms, supporting students as they transition from ECSE to kindergarten, supporting schools/teachers to ensure successful kindergarten transitions, and supporting needs identified for additional support in all elementary schools. These staff serve a crucial coaching and support role for school staff, and the Division should continue to capitalize on their strong skills.

#### *Autism and Behavior Support Services*

Additionally, the office has a total of five staff dedicated to autism and behavior support. Three of these positions are Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and two of them are Autism and Behavior Support Specialists. They are directly supervised by an Autism and Behavior Support Coordinator.

Collectively, these staff are responsible for the following essential functions.

#### **Instructional Services**

- Provides oversight to the instructional program for learners in assigned citywide self-contained programs and consultative support for learners with autism, intellectual, or emotional disabilities in the general education setting. Supports general education teachers to assist them in the planning and implementation of accommodations or modifications to meet mandates of individual education programs
- Implements instruction in communication and social skill development at the instructional level of the students to enhance peer relationships and collaborative participation in the general education classroom
- Works as a team member to develop a model instructional program in alignment with the Division-wide special education plans
- Instructs students in a variety of educational environments (e.g., classroom, playground, field trips) to enhance skill development across a variety of settings

#### **Specialized Instruction**

- Provides in-classroom coaching and modeling of instructional methods and behavior intervention procedures for school-based staff
- Analyzes academic, personal, social and environmental conditions to better understand the variables that may impact the behavior of the learner with disabilities
- Analyzes academic demands and provides specific recommendations that will increase school staff capacity for implementing specialized instruction that will impact student success
- Participates as a key team member in comprehensive functional behavior assessments and develops and monitors the implementation of behavior intervention plans
- Adapts general education curriculum or implement alternative reading/math programs to provide students with instructional materials to meet their educational needs
- Provides expertise with the observation & evaluation of students with ASD during the eligibility process
- Manages student behavior to provide a safe and optimal learning environment using the principles of positive reinforcement and consistent implementation of behavioral techniques

#### **Assessment and Progress Monitoring**

- Evaluates data and recommends specialized instructional changes based on the interpretation of data
- Monitors the implementation of evidenced based strategies designed for learners with disabilities
- Assesses student progress towards objectives, expectations, and/or goals (e.g., behavioral, social, motor development and communication skills, academic needs, vocational abilities) using consistent data collection to provide feedback to students, families and administration
- Supervises and instructs paraprofessionals in the instructional and data collection methods required and provide the materials to complete the tasks assigned to paraprofessionals

Like the Instructional Specialists, these staff serve a critical role in supporting school staff and providing the resources, knowledge, and skills necessary to improve programming.

### **Related Services and Special Programs**

The Assistant Director of Related Services and Special Programs supervises hearing, vision, audiology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, and speech therapy.<sup>122</sup> There are a total of 35 FTEs within this unit (excluding the Assistant Director). This unit is primarily responsible for overseeing the delivery of related services. It was reported by focus group participants that there has been a recent emphasis placed on improving cross-disciplinary practices for related service providers, and that this has resulted in greater communication and support provided to related services providers.

### **OSI Support to Schools**

OSI is charged with providing students with disabilities a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 as well as Virginia code. However, day-to-day oversight of teachers, personnel management within their buildings, and staff development falls to principals and/or assistant principals under the direction of the Elementary and Secondary School Executive Directors. School administrators do not have oversight of special education funding in their buildings. Both in ACPS, as well as nationally, one of the greatest tension-points between SBM and special education administrators often happens at the school level. On one hand, school leaders want support from OSI on program, policy, and compliance matters. On the other hand, these same leaders want to maintain their autonomy to deliver an instructional program to meet the needs of students within their buildings. To compound matters, many of the school leaders charged with making site based special education decisions often lack any formal special education training, special education credentialing, or special education teaching experience. It has been noted that SBM and special education policy have fundamentally different assumptions. SBM assumes local school autonomy while special education policies were “constructed with traditional governance and bureaucratic assumptions for top-down control, tight coupling, and accountability.”<sup>123</sup> Striking the right balance between school autonomy and effective accountability measures is complex work.

Without clear guidance about the role of OSI and the role of schools in managing special education, there will continue to be confusion around, and inconsistency of, service delivery. These conflicting assumptions exist in ACPS and manifest in various ways. The following themes on this topic emerged during focus groups and interviews.

**Accountability.** Focus groups report that OSI is viewed as a support to schools but cannot control uniformly implemented special education policies, practices, and procedures or require schools to abide by guidance they provide. OSI is believed to have limited authority to ensure legally required services are delivered or policies followed. For example, OSI has purchased research-based interventions and provided training on them to school staff; schools are not required to use them.

**Gatekeeping.** There is a perception among school staff that OSI is preventing or limiting access to services, either for those students in general education who are struggling or for students with disabilities. However, this perception could be because OSI staff are charged with verifying the fidelity of interventions and services and asking the “hard questions” about student progress and the level of high quality support provided to a student.

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<sup>122</sup> A detailed description of these positions is not provided because there is clarity within the Division as to the role of these staff and the mandated supports they provide to students.

<sup>123</sup> Marshall, C. and Patterson, I. (2002). 'Confounded policies: Implementing site-based management and special education policy reforms.' *Educational Policy*, 16(3), 351—86.

**Collaboration.** Focus groups also reported that OSI is viewed as unsupportive to schools and parents, unwilling to collaborate to find a mutually agreed upon solution, and to respond in a timely manner to requests for help or concerns.

Interviews with teachers, related service providers, and school leaders consistently raised the following questions, in synthesis:

- Who is in charge of special education: building principals or OSI?
- Who is responsible for implementing the consistent use of student resources?
- Who is responsible for overseeing special education mandates coming from the state?
- Who is responsible for making sure that programs are equitably funded?
- Who has responsibility for assuring equity, quality, and staff development?

Though some site leaders and division administrators spoke to the benefits of the flexibility that comes with SBM, the vast majority of focus group participants, representing staff at various levels and positions, as well as parents of students with disabilities, expressed concern about the unintended consequences of a decentralized system of schools with the autonomy to select their own methods and resources for providing special education services and instruction in core content areas. They worried that the result of this level of local control has caused inequities, inefficiencies, and ineffectiveness of services and support from central office, fragmentation and duplication of effort leading to escalating costs and inconsistent practices across the Division.

Though the challenges that ACPS faces as it relates to special education and SBM are not uncommon, considerable attention will need to be paid to this issue, particularly as the Division strives to improve its outcomes for students with disabilities. The Division must establish clear expectations around the roles of OSI and schools in special education—a well-articulated and communicated tiered support structure in which schools retain the ability to make decisions specific to their school population but within “guardrails” established by OSI. In this type of model, OSI’s level of support would vary depending on whether or not individual schools are meeting defined benchmarks. If individual schools are not meeting agreed upon expectations (i.e., a school’s special education referral rate is exceeding the division average, for example), OSI would increase its level of involvement and directives to the school. More autonomy and flexibility would be given to schools that are performing well on defined expectations.

### **Interdepartmental Collaboration**

Organizational silos are pervasive in the educational sector. Historically, siloed, or segmented, special education departments have been commonplace, with only tangential connections to the core curriculum and instructional initiatives of a district. In the case of ACPS, however, the OSI is well integrated into C&I, and partnerships with other offices are evident and strong. For example, OSI is actively partnering with the Transportation Office to develop training for bus drivers and attendants and with the Department of Accountability to assess the progress of students with IEPs on the Standards of Learning (SOLs) by school/grade and subject. The Executive Director of OSI serves on the CAO’s leadership team, and participates in school governance meetings. The impact of various Division-wide initiatives on students with special needs appears to be considered more often than not.

Although collaboration occurs, there are several areas that would benefit from additional attention.

**Student Services, Alternative Programs, and Equity.** In ACPS, the OSI intersects with the Office of Student Services, Alternative Education, and Equity in various capacities to serve students with disabilities. In particular, Student Services personnel: attend intervention team meetings and participate in developing interventions and strategies for students who are experiencing social, emotional, and/or behavioral issues that are impacting their learning; prepare social history reports for the social-cultural component of initial and triennial student referrals for special education and attend multi-disciplinary eligibility team meetings; provide IEP individual special education counseling for students; and participate

in team development of Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans for students. Having special education responsibilities housed in both OSI and Student Services is particularly precarious for school psychologists, school nurses, school counselors, and social workers who serve on IEP teams. These staff, predominately field-based, manage their workloads while also reporting, either formally or informally, to OSI and/or Student Services. Without clear or consistent guidance from these departments, school staff reported that they are often left to interpret potentially conflicting direction on their own.

Communication between Specialized Instruction and Student Services does not appear to occur routinely or consistently, or to be formalized to address areas of mutual concern at a strategy level. This can be attributed, in part, to the fact that while routine meetings occur between the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief of Student Services at an executive cabinet level, the Executive Director for Specialized Instruction is not a participant and does not have a formal mechanism in which to partner with the Chief of Student Services. Interview/focus group participants also acknowledged that this interdepartmental collaboration is important but not easy to accomplish. It will be particularly critical for these offices to coordinate on multiple issues in the coming year, such as on equity and cultural competence initiatives and MTSS. ACPS was recently cited for disproportionately identifying African American students with an emotional disability. These offices must spearhead a joint plan to address the issue and to determine how the Division will direct the funding required for Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS). Another initiative that will require partnership is around identification/referral practices for English Learners.

**Human Resources.** There is reportedly substantial interaction and partnership between OSI and Human Resources. For example, Human Resources actively seeks out job recruitment fairs and attends them with OSI staff. Given the strong foundation already in place, OSI and Human Resources should continue to explore ways in which they can work together to recruit and retain special education staff.

**Elementary and Secondary Instruction.** Collaboration between these offices needs to be strengthened to leverage and maximize the impact of division resources on improved instructional outcomes for students with disabilities. Personnel at all levels expressed a desire for intentional collaboration and a shared theory of action around co-teaching. Further, since principals rely upon direction from their respective school executive director, it is imperative that the executive directors of OSI and Elementary and Secondary Education instruction uphold a consistent message. OSI and Elementary/Secondary Instruction need to reach a shared agreement on how to support schools and how to consistently communicate this agreement to schools.

## Human Capital

According to the ACPS FY 2018 Budget Book, the total salary and benefits expenditures for the Division comprise approximately 85.6 percent of the total combined funds budget.<sup>124</sup> This statistic aligns with the notion expressed in current research about human capital and workforce development in school districts. Namely, that “human capital is the largest single investment K–12 districts make...Building a stronger teacher workforce requires the thoughtful orchestration of multiple processes working together in a human capital system.”<sup>125</sup> The process of building such a workforce in ACPS, specifically to support students with special needs, is a work in progress. Concerns about school based staffing—from filling vacancies with qualified staff to retaining high quality teachers—permeated through a vast number of focus group sessions and was a significant part of responses received in the administered surveys.

<sup>124</sup> ACPS FY 2018 Budget Book. p. 17.

<sup>125</sup> Myung, J., Martinez, K., and Nordstruma, L. (2013). Human Capital Framework for a Stronger Teacher Workforce. Carnegie Foundation White Paper, p. 3. [https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Human\\_Capital\\_whitepaper2.pdf](https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Human_Capital_whitepaper2.pdf)

This section provides information about current recruitment/hiring and retention practices in the Division and provides comparable staffing ratio data to illustrate how ACPS compares to other districts nationwide.

## Recruitment/Hiring Practices

There was considerable feedback from focus group participants regarding vacant special education related positions, the time it takes to fill the positions, the quality of long term substitutes while positions remain vacant. The following is a summary of focus group participants' concerns related to recruitment and hiring.

- **Geographic Area.** The broader Alexandria/DC metro area is known to have a high transiency rate, given the concentration of military and other government appointments there. Spouses of personnel in these positions may become teachers or paraprofessional in ACPS during their time in the area, only to be transferred out two or three years later when the post assignment ends. Further, the area has a high cost of living and limited affordable housing for teaching or other school-based staff. Commuting to ACPS from outlying areas is untenable because of the traffic conditions so hiring and retaining staff who live outside of the immediate area is challenging. ACPS staff report that a substantial percentage of staff who leave their position in the Division do so for family or personal reasons (i.e., transfer of spouse, move out of state, commute time, etc.). Also, with the concentration of school divisions near ACPS, the competition for available and qualified staff is significant.
- **Job Demands.** Focus group participants noted that, like other school districts nationally, many demands are placed on ACPS special education staff. Recruiting staff willing, able, and qualified to take on these jobs is becoming increasingly complicated, especially when it was stated that ACPS has "exceptionally high standards."
- **Timing of Offers.** Many cited a "catch 22" when it comes to hiring teaching staff for the upcoming school year. On one hand, teaching staff cannot be "pre-hired," or offered an advance contract when there is no budgeted position available (e.g., if enrollment projections do not substantiate a new hire, current staff have not submitted a notice of intent to retire or leave their position at the end of the school year, or the Division's budget has not yet been approved). On the other hand, there is a "gentleman's agreement" within Northern Virginia area school divisions that precludes ACPS from hiring teachers from other school divisions after June 15<sup>th</sup>. Given the limited staffing pool in the area and the high competition between school divisions for staff, the window is extraordinarily short to ensure all positions are staffed for the following school year.
- **Special Educator Substitutes.** There is not a sufficiently large pool of qualified substitutes to substitute for absent teachers, particularly in a long-term situation.
- **Related Service Provider Vacancies.** Recruiting related service providers remains a challenge, with not enough qualified staff (with Virginia specific educational experience) to fill existing positions. The Division utilizes contractors to fill some positions, but even in this arrangement, there are vacancies. Hard to fill positions include vision itinerants, occupational therapists, and orientation and mobility specialists.
- **Highly Qualified Certifications.** There is a perception that teachers hired under a provisional, or temporary, certification leave at a higher rate. This means the Division often may have to rehire for the same position only a year or two after the position was initially filled.

The Division's Human Resources Department is reportedly always in "recruitment mode." They attend recruitment fairs in various states, particularly Pennsylvania, and engage retirees to fill positions when possible. The Division does not currently have, or plan to offer, signing bonuses.

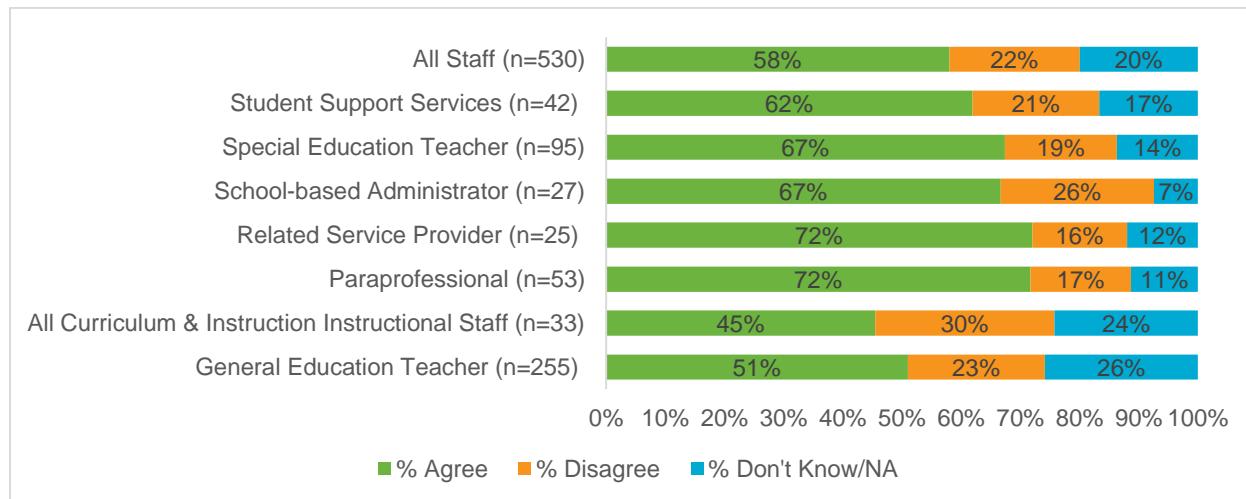
## Survey Data

ACPS staff were asked whether the Division is effective at recruiting and hiring qualified staff servicing students with disabilities. Overall, about three quarters of related service providers and paraprofessionals

agree that ACPS is effective at recruiting and hiring qualified special education staff. Approximately half of general education teachers and curriculum and instruction instructional staff agreed with this statement.

### Staff Survey

#### Exhibit 82. ACPS is effective at recruiting/hiring qualified staff servicing students with disabilities.



If staff disagreed or strongly disagreed (22%) that ACPS is effective and recruiting and hiring qualified staff serving students with disabilities, they were invited to elaborate on their response in a comment box. Overall themes across responses include concern that some newly hired staff lacked the necessary qualifications or experience to fulfil their assignment. In addition, staff felt that administrators might lack awareness of the skill set required for special educators to be successful. There was a perception that the hiring cycle in ACPS was too late to hire top candidates resulting in a narrower pool of qualified applicants. Staff also expressed concerns about ACPS's salary scale and its impact on recruitment for special educators. Staff also expressed concerns that ACPS did not have a competitive reputation for providing support and training to special education staff.

Focus group and survey data indicate the need to continue the Division's vigilance with recruiting special educators. Goal #3 "An Exemplary Staff" of the ACPS 2020 plan focuses on staffing. The Division may want to develop a specific key performance indicator for special education recruitment as part of this effort.

### Staff Retention

The reasons that teachers leave special education jobs include poor job satisfaction, stress, an expansive workload, and a lack of support from administrators. These themes are well noted in the current literature and research studies and are often cited as factors that contribute to the high attrition rate—over 13%—of special educators nationally.<sup>126</sup> This rate is nearly double that of general education teachers. Similarly, concerns about special education staff turnover and retention practices in ACPS were mentioned across many focus group conversations. Themes included:

- **Turnover rates.** There is a strong perception that turnover rates, especially among special education teachers and related service providers, are exceptionally high. This leads to issues around inconsistent service delivery and staff training.

<sup>126</sup> National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services. <https://specialedshortages.org/about-the-shortage/>

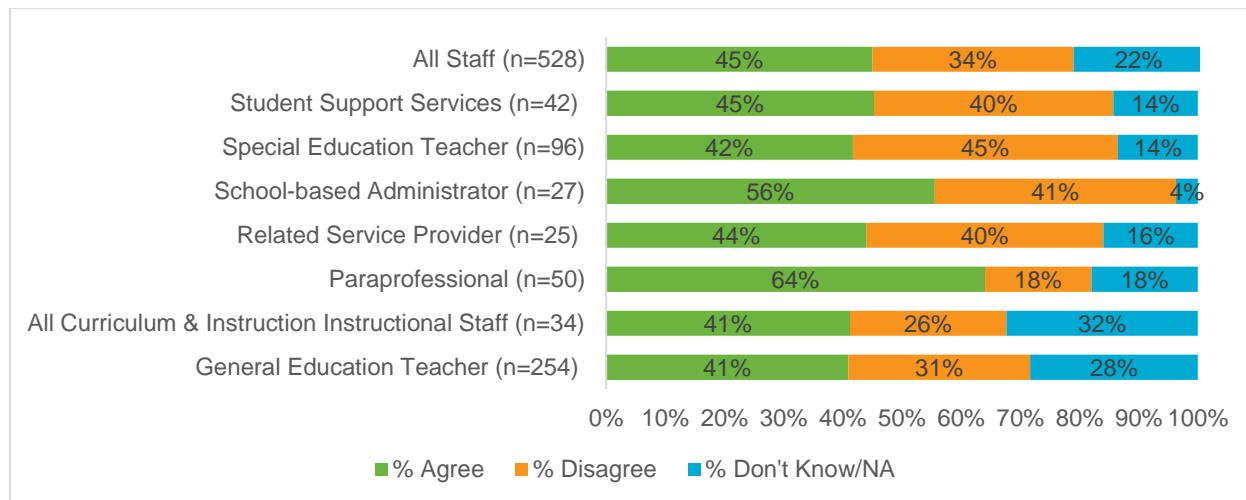
- **Lack of training/mentoring.** Staff expressed that a lack of relevant training made their jobs more challenging. Though the Division has a first-year special educator mentoring program, staff commented that the training program for all staff needs to be further developed and strengthened.
- **Alternative Certification.** Many focus group participants questioned why the Division is not more actively supporting paraprofessionals who would like to become teachers. They questioned why there is not a formal program to support this pathway.
- **High Caseloads.** High caseloads/work demands were expressed as primary reasons for staff leaving. It was specifically cited that related service providers struggle to get all service times completed and that make up is hard. The number of meetings required with a high caseload requires staff to miss direct service time.

## Survey Data

### Staff Survey

Fewer staff agree that ACPS is effective at retaining staff, with less than half of general education teachers, instructional specialists, related service providers, special education teachers, and student support services staff agreeing.

**Exhibit 83. ACPS is effective at retaining qualified staff servicing students with disabilities.**



If staff disagreed or strongly disagreed (34%), they were invited to elaborate on their response in a comment box. Overall themes regarding retention of special education staff in ACPS across all survey comments resonated with focus group comments noted above. Specifically, staff highlighted concerns about working conditions including support from Division administrators, school-based administrators and teachers at schools; too high caseloads and required paperwork, as well as holding unrealistic expectations for what special education teachers can do (i.e., juggling multiple responsibilities including jumping from subject to subject). An administrator noted, "It is important to have high expectations for teachers and students; however, the expectations ...are unrealistic..." In addition, staff expressed their perception that there are limited training opportunities and a general lack of collaboration and level of support at schools. Staff also noted that a lack of communication or inconsistent communication from OSI as well as a perception that central office does is disrespectful toward special education teachers as evidenced through the issuing of mandates, etc. Another area of concern was the lack of accountability for low quality teachers, which increases demands on high quality staff) and the fact that the high turnover in service providers and also in teaching force overall in ACPS creates a compounding burden for staff who remain in the division. In addition, staff noted inconsistent MTSS implementation across schools.

### Staff Departure Data

Given the perception from focus group participants and survey respondents that staff retention is a concern, further analysis was done to explore the issue. Staff departure data for 2015-16 and 2016-17 were analyzed against the total budgeted number of positions in each category for that year. Nationally, the annual attrition rate for special educators is 13%.<sup>127</sup> In both years, ACPS exceeded this rate for special educators by 9.2 percentage points in 2015-16 and 7.8 percentage points in 2016-17.

**Exhibit 84. 2015-16 ACPS Staff Departure Data<sup>128</sup>**

Position	Total Budgeted FTE	FTE Departed	Attrition %
<b>Instructional Specialist</b>	6.5	1.0	15.4%
<b>Paraprofessional</b>	122	17.0	13.9%
<b>Special Education Teacher</b>	135	30.0	22.2%
<b>Speech Pathologist</b>	27	6.0	22.2%
<b>Teacher Specialist</b>	22	5.0	22.7%

**Exhibit 85. 2016-17 ACPS Staff Departure Data<sup>129</sup>**

Position	Total Budgeted FTE	FTE Departed	Attrition %
<b>Instructional Specialist</b>	5.5	1.0	18.2%
<b>Paraprofessional</b>	124	22.0	17.8%
<b>Special Education Teacher</b>	144	30.0	20.8%
<b>Speech Pathologist</b>	28	7.0	25.0%
<b>Teacher Specialist</b>	21	4.0	19.0%

Similar to the recruitment, the Division may want to develop a specific key performance indicator for special education retention as part of the ACPS 2020 plan.

## Special Education & Related Services: Personnel Ratios & Support

Each ACPS school site has staff, based on student need and determined by principals, to support the provision of special education and related services. Teaching and learning for students receiving special education services are impacted by school-division staffing patterns. Virginia state code, through its Standards of Quality (SOQ), requires divisions to maintain very specific caseload requirements. In this section, information is provided that compares ACPS staffing ratios to other school districts, other

<sup>127</sup> National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services. <https://specialedshortages.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/HECSE-Shortage-Special-Ed-Expertise-Among-Teachers-Faculty.pdf>

<sup>128</sup> Staff departure data provided to PCG and compared to budgeted positions in the ACPS FY 18 Budget Book in order to calculate the Attrition percentage.

<sup>129</sup> *Id.*

information relevant to their roles, and recruitment to fill staff vacancies. It does not, however, provide caseload comparisons to other school divisions, as this information is not publicly available.

Information used to compare ACPS staff ratios to other school districts was provided through several surveys conducted by the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, and was supplemented by data from reviews conducted independently, or with the Council of Great City Schools and Public Consulting Group over the past five years.<sup>130</sup> Data from 69 other school districts provide a general understanding of districts' staffing levels in the following areas: special educators, instructional assistants, speech/language pathologists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. See Appendix C. ACPS Staffing Ratios Compared to Other Districts for detailed information for each surveyed school district. The data do not give precise district comparisons, and the results need to be used with caution. At times, district data are not uniform (e.g., including or excluding contractual personnel, varying methods for collecting and reporting student counts) and are impacted by varying levels of private and public placements, where personnel outside a district provide special education/related services to a group of district students. However, these data are the best available and are useful to better understand staffing ratios for school districts. ACPS has provided detailed staff ratios by school for special educators, speech/language pathologists, psychologists, counselors, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. When informative, relevant information is referenced below. It should be noted that ranking begins with school districts having a *low average number of students to one staff person*.

### Special Education Teachers and Instructional Assistants

This section provides information about ACPS special education teacher and instructional assistant ratios compared to other school districts, and feedback about their availability and use. Staffing ratios and other data regarding related-services personnel are summarized below.

**Exhibit 86. Average Number Students with IEPs for Each Special Educator and Paraprofessionals<sup>131132</sup>**

Areas of Comparison	Special Educators	Paraprofessionals
Number of ACPS Staff FTE	162	151
ACPS Student w/IEP-to-Staff Ratio	10.8:1	11.6:1
All District Average Ratios	14.6:1	15.5:1
ACPS Ranking Among Districts	12 <sup>th</sup> lowest ratio out of 69 reporting districts	21 <sup>st</sup> lowest ratio out of 69 reporting districts

As reported in Appendix C, ACPS has an overall average of 10.8 students with IEPs (including those with speech/language needs only) for each special educator. This average is lower than the 14.6-student average of all districts in the survey, thus ACPS has the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest ratio among the 69 reporting school

<sup>130</sup> Sue Gamm, Esq. compiled and continues to maintain this list. She grants PCG permission to use the data in reports.

<sup>131</sup> As noted, information used to compare ACPS staff ratios to other school districts was provided through a survey conducted by the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, which was supplemented by data from reviews conducted independently, or with the Council of Great City Schools and Public Consulting Group. Districts included in Appendix C collect and report data using different methods and different points of time, therefore student headcounts and staffing totals may vary.

<sup>132</sup> ACPS student headcount data obtained from 2016-17 VDOE December 1 Child count Reports:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/reports\\_plans\\_stats/child\\_count/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/child_count/index.shtml). ACPS staffing ratio calculations based on budgeted positions in the ACPS FY 18 Budget Book

districts. ACPS has an overall average of 11.6 students with IEPs for each paraprofessional, which is less than the all-district average of 15.5 students, making ACPS 21<sup>st</sup> of the 69 reporting districts.

### Related Service Providers

This section provides information about ACPS-related service provider staffing ratios compared to other school districts, and feedback about their availability and use. Staffing ratios and other data regarding related-services personnel are summarized below.

Exhibit 87. Average Number Students with IEPs for Each Related Service Provider<sup>133134</sup>

Areas of Comparison	Psychologists	Speech/ Language	Social Workers	OTs	PTs
<b>Number of ACPS Staff FTE</b>	20	28	24	4	1.5
<b>ACPS Student w/IEP-to-Staff Ratio</b>	89.0:1	62.6:1	92.3:1	438.5:1	1,169.3:1
<b>All District Average Ratios</b>	170.4:1	113.9:1	339.0:1	410.0:1	1,028.0:1
<b>ACPS Ranking Among Districts</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> lowest ratio out of 63 reporting districts	11 <sup>th</sup> lowest ratio out of 68 reporting districts	8 <sup>th</sup> lowest ratio out of 46 reporting districts	47 <sup>th</sup> lowest ratio out of 67 reporting districts	49 <sup>th</sup> lowest ratio out of 67 reporting districts

- **Psychologists.** There is one division psychologist for an average of 89.0 students with IEPs compared to the surveyed district average of 170.4 students, ranking ACPS as 6<sup>th</sup> of the 63 reporting districts.
- **Speech/Language Pathologist.** There is one division speech/language pathologist (SLP) for an average of 62.6 students with IEPs compared to the surveyed district average of 113.9 students, ranking ACPS as 11<sup>th</sup> of the 68 reporting districts.
- **Social Workers.** There is one division social worker for an average of 92.3 students with IEPs compared to the surveyed district average of 339.0 students with IEPs, ranking ACPS as 8<sup>th</sup> of the 46 reporting districts.
- **Occupational Therapists (OT).** There is one division OT for an average of 438.5 students, compared to the surveyed District average of 410.0 students, ranking ACPS as 47<sup>th</sup> of the 67 reporting districts.
- **Physical Therapists.** There is one division physical therapist for an average of 1,169.3 students, which is less than the surveyed district average of 1,028.0 students, ranking ACPS as 49<sup>th</sup> of the 67 reporting districts.

### Peer Division Comparison

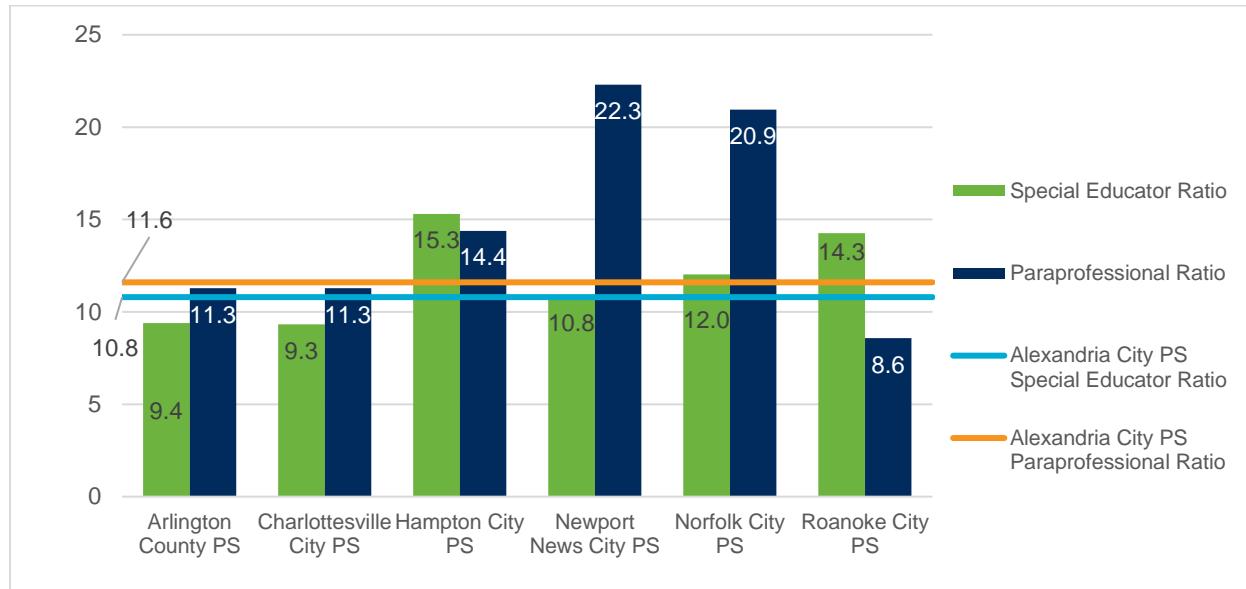
PCG analyzed staffing data from eight peer school divisions in Virginia to compare current staffing levels for the following positions: special education teacher, paraprofessional, psychologists, speech/language

<sup>133</sup> As noted, information used to compare ACPS staff ratios to other school districts was provided through a survey conducted by the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, which was supplemented by data from reviews conducted independently, or with the Council of Great City Schools and Public Consulting Group.

<sup>134</sup> ACPS staffing ratio calculations based on budgeted positions in the ACPS FY 18 Budget Book

pathologists, social workers, orthopedic therapists, and physical therapists. Data were obtained through each division's 2017-18 Annual Budgets.

**Exhibit 88. Peer Division Comparison: Special Educator and Paraprofessional Ratio to SWD, 2017<sup>135</sup>**



When comparing special education student per teacher ratios, ACPS' ratio of 10.8 special education teachers per student with a disability was lower than the following three school divisions: Hampton City (15.3:1), Roanoke City (14.3:1), and Norfolk City (12.0:1).

ACPS had a lower student per paraprofessional ratio (11.6:1) than the following divisions: Newport News City (22.3:1), Norfolk City (20.9:1), and Hampton City (14.4:1).

**Exhibit 89. Peer Division Comparison: Related Service Provider Ratio to SWDs, 2017<sup>136</sup>**

Peer Division	Psychologists	Speech/ Language	Social Workers	OTs	PTs
<b>Alexandria City Public School</b>	87.7:1	62.6:1	73.1:1	438.5:1	1,169.3:1
<b>Charlottesville City Public School</b>	146.8:1	--	146.8:1	--	--
<b>Hampton City Public School</b>	331:1	155.8:1	294.2:1	662:1	882.7:1
<b>Newport News City Public School</b>	202.1:1	--	3,435:1	--	--
<b>Norfolk City Public School</b>	176.7:1	116.1:1	172.9:1	2,032:1	677.3:1
<b>Roanoke City Public School</b>	--	--	75.9:1	708.7:1	--

<sup>135</sup> ACPS staffing data provided by Division in March 2018. Peer Division staffing data accessed via Division Budgets. Data not available for Arlington County, Harrisonburg City and Winchester City.

<sup>136</sup> *Id.*

Aside from the PT ratio, ACPS had lower staffing ratios for related service providers than the comparable Virginia divisions.

## Professional Development

Quality teaching in all classrooms and skilled leadership in all schools will not occur by accident. It requires the design and implementation of the most powerful forms of professional development. High quality professional development must be sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused (not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences) to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and teacher's performance. Research reports that elementary school teachers who received substantial professional development—an average of 49 hours—boosted their students' achievement by about 21 percentile points.<sup>137</sup>

Yet, most professional development today is ineffective. Though districts, including ACPS, spend a considerable amount of time and resources on arranging workshops for teachers and other staff, research has shown that programs that are less than 14 hours have no impact on student achievement or on teaching practices.<sup>138</sup> Recent studies have concluded that effective professional development adheres to the following principles:

- The duration of professional development must be significant and ongoing to allow time for teachers to learn a new strategy and grapple with the implementation problem.
- There must be support for a teacher during the implementation stage that addresses the specific challenges of changing classroom practice.
- Teachers' initial exposure to a concept should not be passive, but rather should engage teachers through varied approaches so they can participate actively in making sense of a new practice.
- Modeling has been found to be a highly effective way to introduce a new concept and help teachers understand a new practice.
- The content presented to teachers shouldn't be generic, but instead grounded in the teacher's discipline (for middle school and high school teachers) or grade-level (for elementary school teachers).<sup>139</sup>

As OSI develops a longer term and universal professional learning plan geared toward improving student outcomes, continued implementation of these principles will be paramount. Additionally, it will be critical for OSI to have the authority to require staff to attend relevant PD.

## Survey Data

### Staff Survey

ACPS staff were asked a series of survey questions about their professional development experiences and needs. The following is a summary of responses.

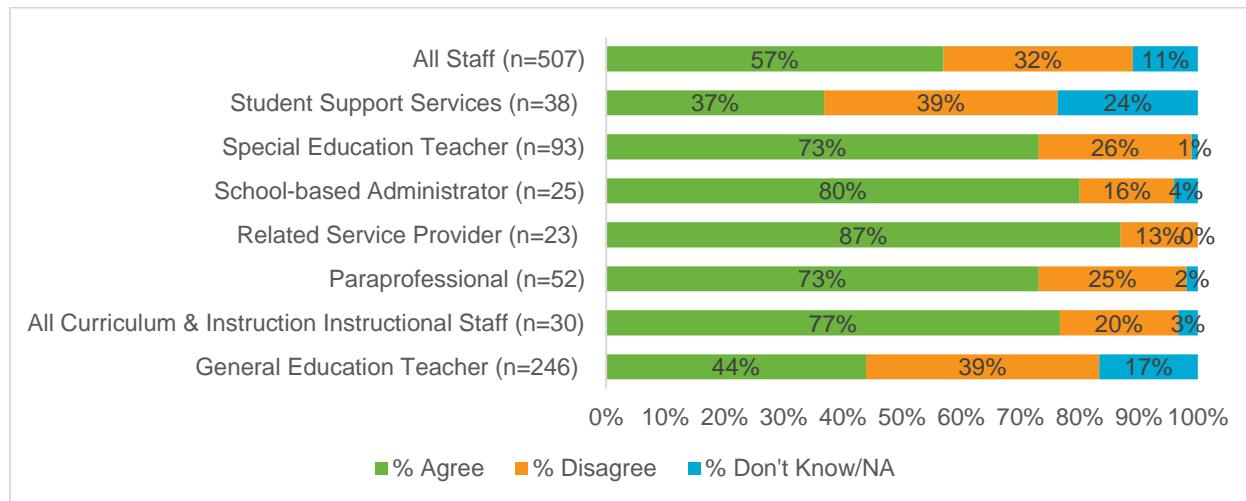
Overall, 57% of staff agree/strongly agree that professional development that they have attended in ACPS enables them to better support teaching and learning of students with IEPs. General education teachers and student support services staff had the lowest levels of agreement (44% and 37% respectively). The majority of staff in other roles agreed.

<sup>137</sup> Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement. Issues & Answers. REL 2007-No. 033. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory, October 2007. Findings based on nine studies that meet What Works Clearinghouse standards.

<sup>138</sup> Gulamhussein, A. (2013). Teaching the Teachers: Effective Professional Development in an Era of High Stakes Accountability. National School Boards Association, Center for Public Education.

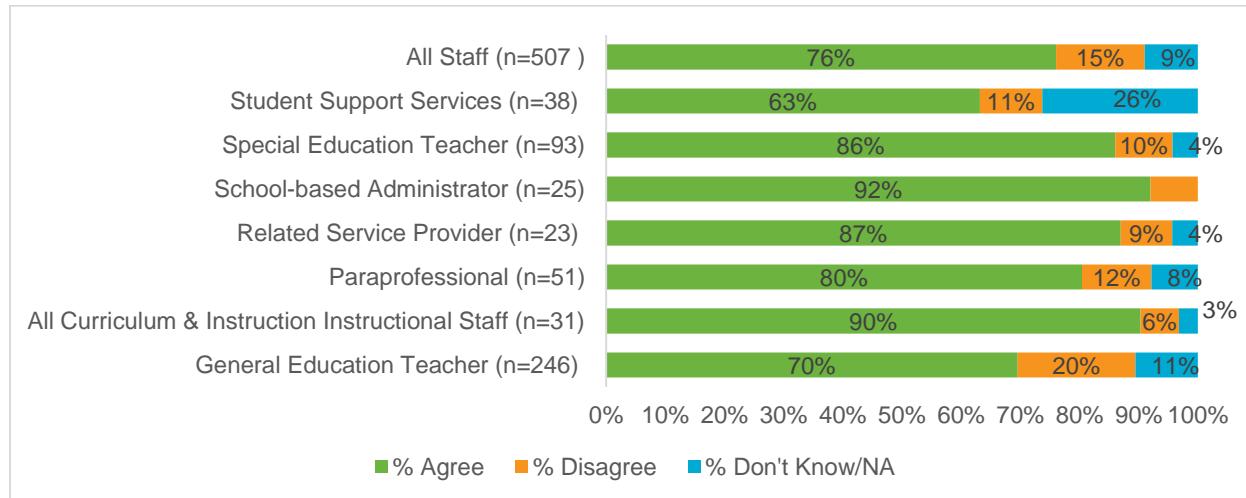
<sup>139</sup> *Id.*

**Exhibit 90. Professional development that I have attended at ACPS enables me to better support teaching/learning of students with IEPs.**



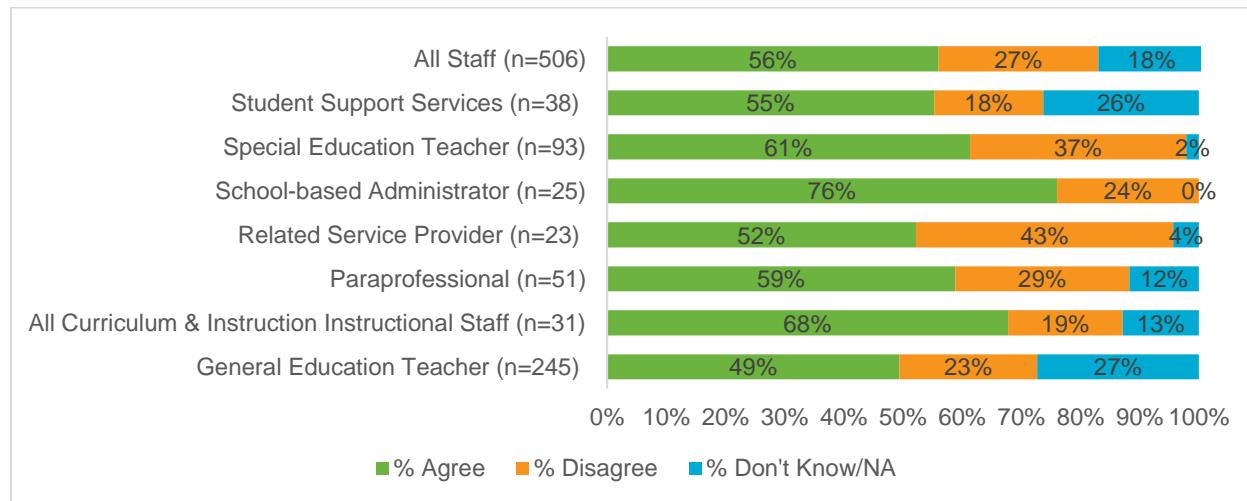
The survey also asked a series of questions about specific roles and the need for additional professional development to support teaching and learning for students with disabilities. Overall, the majority of staff (76%) indicated that general educators at their school need more professional development to provide instruction aligned to the ACPS curriculum. The highest levels of agreement were among school-based administrators (92%), curriculum and instruction instructional staff (90%) and related service providers (87%) while fewer general educators agreed (70%).

**Exhibit 91. General educators at my school(s) need more professional development (PD) related to strategies for providing students with disabilities with instruction aligned to the ACPS curriculum**



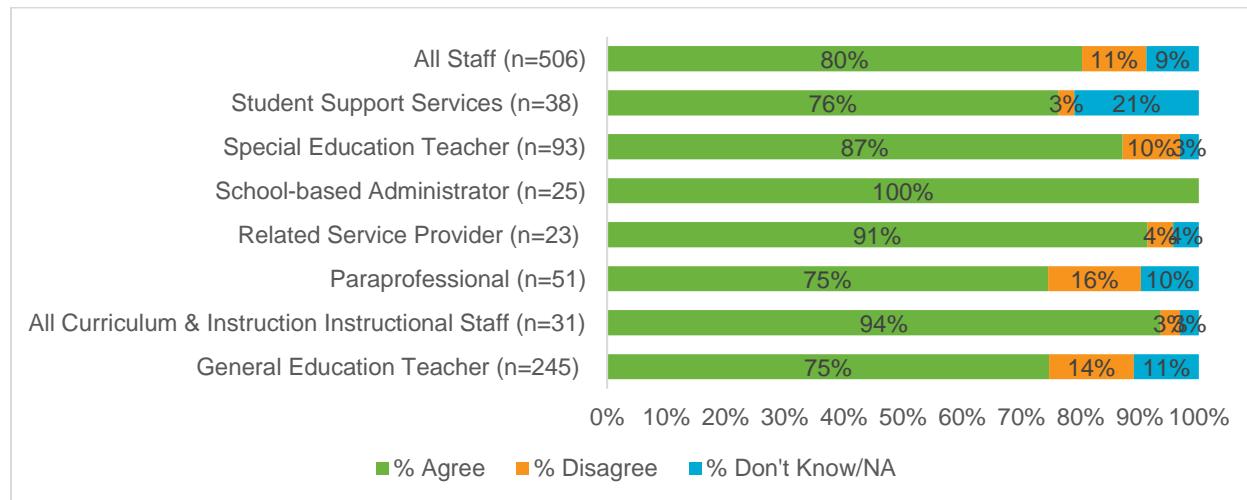
Staff were asked a similar question with regard to professional development needs among special educators. The highest rates of agreement were from school-based administrators (76%), and curriculum and instruction instructional staff (68%). In comparison, 61% of special education teachers agreed.

**Exhibit 92. Special educators at my school(s) need more professional development (PD) related to strategies for providing students with disabilities with instruction aligned to the ACPS curriculum.**

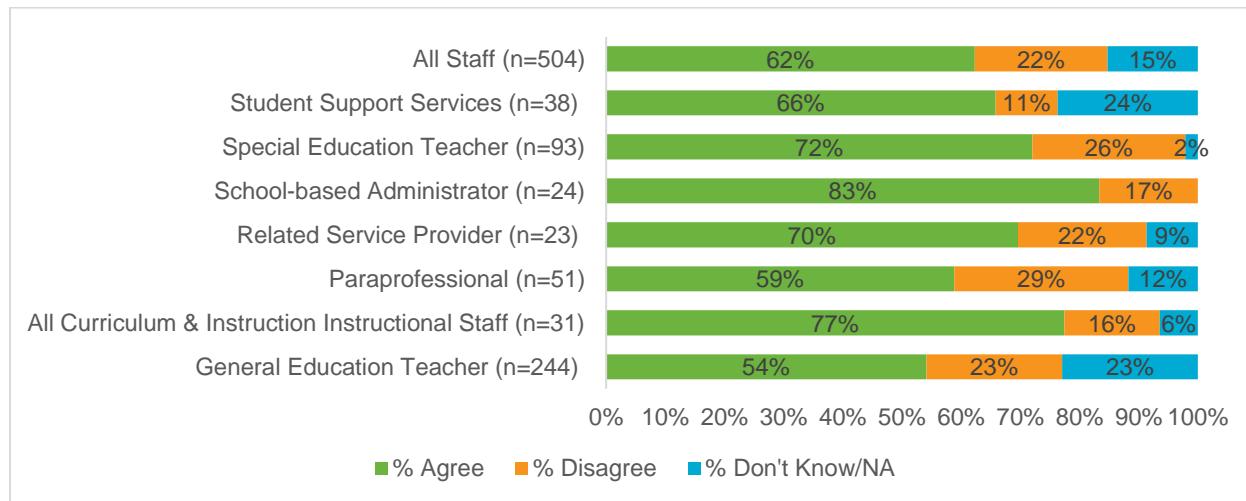


There was general agreement from the majority of staff that both general educators and special educators need more professional development to address the social/emotional needs of students with disabilities in their classes.

**Exhibit 93. General educators at my school(s) need more PD regarding strategies for addressing the social/emotional needs of students with disabilities in their classes.**

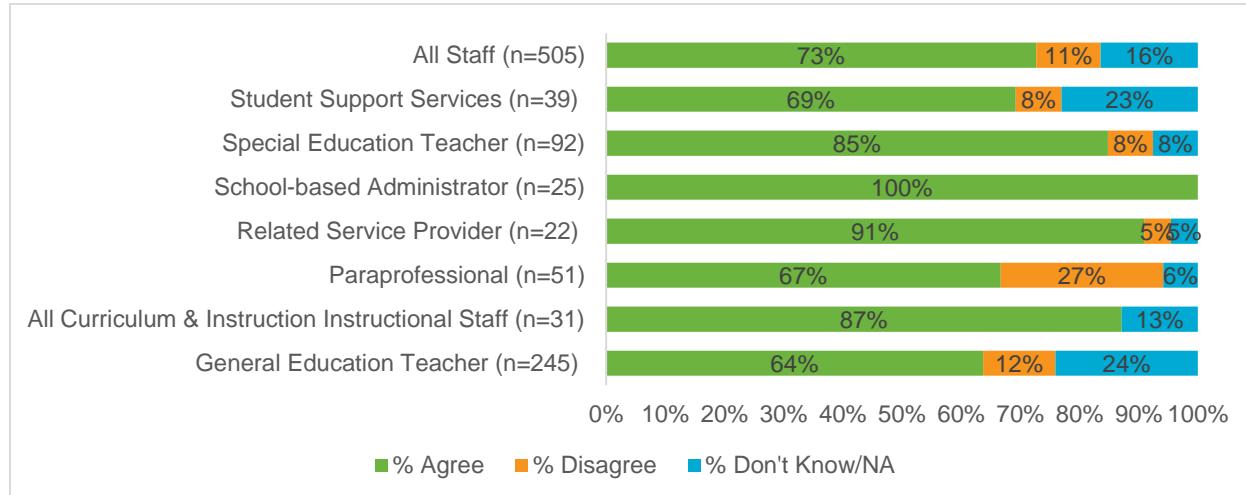


**Exhibit 94. Special educators at my school(s) need more PD regarding strategies for addressing the social/emotional needs of students with disabilities in their classes.**



Staff were also asked about the PD needs of paraprofessionals, specifically to support students with disabilities in general education classes. The majority of staff in all roles agreed including 100% of school-based administrators.

**Exhibit 95. Paraprofessionals require more PD regarding supporting students in general education classes.**



Overall, staff in all roles indicated that more professional development among general educators and special educators is needed to support students with disabilities.

## Professional Development Offerings

Each year OSI develops a master training schedule, aligned to its departmental priorities: inclusion high yield strategies, coaching support, specially designed instruction, behavior, and reading/math interventions. Instructional Specialists work with each school at the start of the year to develop a school-based training schedule that align to these priorities. The majority of training is school-based and not conducted on a Division-wide basis.

OSI provided an extensive number of professional development offerings, including professional learning community (PLC) meetings, during the 2016-17 school year. There were nearly 170 sessions offered, including:

- ABA Support & Teaching Procedures
- AbleNet Math Curriculum
- Aut/ID/MD Citywide Teachers Monthly Series
- Accelify: How to use the Medicaid billing system
- AIMSweb Plus for School Leaders
- AIMSweb Plus Training for Special Education Teachers
- BCBA Group Supervision series
- Behavior Strategies for Working with Students with Autism for Special Ed Paraprofessionals
- Career Prep and Secondary MD Teacher Trainings
- Child Study Coordinator Meeting
- Child Study/Eligibility Chairperson Training
- Collaboration and Teaming for Special Ed Paraprofessionals
- Co-Teaching Cohort
- Crisis Intervention Training 2017 SY
- Crisis Prevention & Intervention REFRESHER
- Developing Social-Communication Skills for Students with Autism: A PLC
- Equals Math Pre-Algebra & Geometry training
- FBAs, BIPs, and Data Collection for Special Ed Paraprofessionals
- Family Life Education Adaptation Meeting
- New Special Education Teacher Institute
- Related Services Staff Meeting
- Speech Language Pathologists Monthly Meeting and PD
- TCW Choices Program Monthly Training Series

This list highlights the frequent nature in which OSI develops and conducts professional learning offering for school-based and other staff. The PD provided is embedded into school-based meetings and/or team meetings. Additional training is provided on Division PD days and includes engaging and interactive activities. PD is offered for all staff, and is purposefully designed to provide relevant and applicable training to every teacher/therapist/paraprofessional in specialized instruction.

Additionally, coaching and modeling are provided to special education teachers and co-teaching pairs in the areas of: Co-Planning, High Yield Models of Co-Teaching, SDI and Implementation of Interventions. Autism and Behaviors Specialists/ BCAs also provide weekly coaching and modeling in each citywide classroom related to implementation of best instructional practices for self-contained classrooms settings for students more significantly impacted by their disability.

## **Barriers to Effective Professional Development**

OSI has offered a plethora of training opportunities to teachers for the past 8 years, but attendance has been a challenge. For example, at the request of school-based staff and administrators, OSI developed and offered differentiated training for novice co-teaching pairs and veteran co-teaching pairs (those who have been co-teaching together for at least one year) at the elementary and secondary levels, early in the school year during 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. Unfortunately, these trainings had to be cancelled due to little or no enrollment.

Following several years of holding Division-wide trainings with little attendance, or canceling sessions due to low attendance, OSI decided to provide school-based professional learning. This has helped somewhat to ensure that staff attend the trainings. However, it continues to be difficult to provide school-based

training due to several barriers. These include: teachers want to use release days for paperwork and not for PD, PLCs devote time to team building and student chats, schools have competing priorities for teacher time, and PD attendance is primarily voluntary. OSI has also offered additional modules to schools during the PD week prior to the beginning of school; but only one school arranged for this training from OSI in the past five years. It was reported that many trainings, though planned by OSI, are frequently cancelled at the school-level.

For the past several years, ACPS has not permitted offices to mandate attendance outside of Division-designated PD days. Therefore, teacher attendance at afterschool or summer training is low, unless teachers receive extra compensation to attend. Even with extra compensation, multiple sessions have been canceled due to low (below 5) or no enrollment. Attempting to provide PD during the work day does occur on a limited basis, but it can be extremely disruptive to instruction due to the need for substitute teachers. While teachers who attend PD are more likely to implement instructional best practices, uneven attendance contributes to the inconsistent practices in the Division. In order to increase participation in PD, OSI needs to have the authority to mandate those PD sessions that the Division determines are critical for supporting the academic and functional outcome growth for students with IEPs.

## Training Needs

Focus group participants in all roles concurred that additional job embedded, coaching support needs to occur in order to encourage teachers' skill development. They said that training often feels incomplete, in that the one workshop approach is insufficient and not individualized to the specific needs of teachers and/or paraprofessionals. Teachers specifically requested more follow-up and coaching support, with opportunities for demonstration and more information on how to incorporate learned strategies into their daily work. It is unclear how administrators follow up to determine the extent to which information learned is used in the classroom, or the frequency of which these trainings were offered at each school. Currently, most trainings occur face to face, with only limited use of blended or online learning options. This is an area that Division leadership have expressed as a need in the near future.

As part of the staff survey, general education and special education staff were asked to rank the top three professional development topics that they believe would be the most helpful to them in the role in which they currently serve. School administrators were also asked to select the top three topics most important to the staff in their buildings. "Knowledge of and skills to provide differentiated instruction in core academic areas (i.e., math, reading, writing)" ranked the highest by school staff and by school administrators for their school staff. The full rankings list, by respondent role, is included in the exhibit below.

**Exhibit 96. Professional Development Topics: Rankings by School Staff and Administrators**

Rank	General Education and Special Education School Staff: Topics for their own learning	School Administrators: Topics for their own learning	School Administrators: Topics for their general education and special education school-based staff
1	Knowledge of and skills to provide differentiated instruction in core academic areas (i.e., math, reading, writing)	Intervention Strategies	Knowledge of and skills to provide differentiated instruction in core academic areas (i.e., math, reading, writing)
2	Intervention Strategies	Federal, state, and district special education regulations	Co-teaching/inclusive practices
3	Behavior intervention plans (BIPs)	Impact of EL on decision to refer	MTSS Process prior to referral for special education
4	Intensive reading interventions	Using/analyzing data to inform instruction	Intervention Strategies

Rank	General Education and Special Education School Staff: Topics for their own learning	School Administrators: Topics for their own learning	School Administrators: Topics for their general education and special education school-based staff
5	Impact of EL on decision to refer	Knowledge of and skills to provide differentiated instruction in core academic areas (i.e., math, reading, writing)	Positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS)
6	Facilitating inclusion in general education	MTSS Process prior to referral for special education	Collaborating with paraprofessionals
7	Specific disability information (e.g., autism, emotional disability, etc.)	Specific disability information (e.g., autism, emotional disability, etc.)	Facilitating inclusion in general education
8	Positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS)	Positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS)	Specific disability information (e.g., autism, emotional disability, etc.)
9	Co-teaching/inclusive practices	Co-teaching/inclusive practices	Impact of EL on decision to refer
10	Discipline	Facilitating inclusion in general education	Using/analyzing data to inform instruction
11	MTSS Process prior to referral for special education	Discipline	Increasingly intensive reading interventions
12	Intensive math interventions	Progress monitoring	Increasingly intensive math interventions
13	Assistive technology	Reevaluation Process	Functional behavior assessments (FBAs)
14	Collaborating with paraprofessionals	Teaching students with curriculum aligned with alternate standards (Aligned Standards of Learning – ASOLs)	Behavior intervention plans (BIPs)
15	Progress monitoring	Virginia Alternate Assessment Program	Teaching students with curriculum aligned with alternate standards (Aligned Standards of Learning – ASOLs)
16	Federal, state, and district special education regulations	Child Study Process	Progress monitoring
17	Child Study Process	IEP Process	Discipline
18	Functional behavior assessments (FBAs)	-	IEP Process
19	Teaching students with curriculum aligned with alternate standards (Aligned Standards of Learning – ASOLs)	-	Federal, state, and district special education regulations
20	Using/analyzing data to inform instruction	-	-
21	Postsecondary transition planning	-	-
22	IEP Process	-	-
23	Reevaluation Process	-	-
24	Virginia Alternate Assessment Program	-	-

## Accountability

The perception of quality and applicability of the professional development trainings offered by OSI varied greatly depending on the role of those in focus groups. Some focus group participants acknowledged that OSI spends a great deal of time offering school-based trainings and job embedded coaching for teachers on a consistent basis. Others stated that not enough relevant or informative training occurs.

Further, schools' responsiveness to receiving training from OSI varies. As one focus group participant person stated: "it depends on the principal of the school... the principal needs to ensure training is occurring and also attend the trainings themselves. This does not always happen." As an OSI staff person noted, two schools initiated and welcomed the support and training, one school fluctuated in responsiveness, one requested a compromise to make it work, and two requested all-staff training on a consistent basis. Another two schools refused offers to train special education teachers on a consistent basis, preferring instead to reach out for assistance when needed. While some schools allow teachers to attend trainings and attempt to schedule after school trainings during a time that staff are already required to remain after school, there was consistent feedback from various focus group participants that sessions are often not well attended.

Among all survey respondents, 41% list time as the biggest obstacle preventing them from attending professional development offered by ACPS. The second most cited reason (from 29% of respondents) is that the topics offered do not apply to their role. Additionally, 14% of respondents selected "too few classes" and 2% listed "not interested." The remaining 11% selected "other reason." These include not wanting to leave students to attend PD, while others did not want to attend after school due to competing demands of commuting and childcare. Staff also noted the repetition in course offerings

Each school has set ambitious SOL goals for its student with disabilities. Ongoing, sustained professional development should be a significant part of each school's plan to meet the stated objectives. Without a plan to mitigate the obstacles noted here, and to hold staff accountable for participating in appropriate trainings relevant to their role, these goals will not be met.

## Transportation

Generally, there is good communication between the Transportation and Specialized Instruction Departments regarding the needs of students with IEPs. The Transportation Department has a dedicated coordinator for specialized transportation who is responsible for serving as a liaison between the departments and troubleshooting any concerns. The Division recently hired a new Transportation Director, who started in January 2018. The position had been vacant for the first part of the 2017-18 school year. The departments are now beginning to meet routinely to review data, such as the length of rides for students, the place/location of scheduled rides, ride types, etc. and proactively plan.

**Transportation Routing.** The Division uses EduLog, a transportation software system, for scheduling and routing. Generally, all efforts are made to provide transportation to a student on an existing Division bus route; however, at times private cabs are used. The Transportation and Specialized Instruction Departments have recently started planning together to discuss equitably distributing citywide programs as to shorten the ride for students traveling across Alexandria City outside of their neighborhood schools.

**Complaints.** There are few formal complaints pertaining to Transportation services for students with IEPs. The Division uses a radio system to communicate with drivers routed to buses; this communication system allows for quick resolution of issues such as missed or late buses, or situations in which the parent is not there to meet the bus and the student must continue riding the route until the parent is

located. Occasionally conflict mediation meetings are required when there is a disagreement between the parent and the driver/aide on how a student's behavior can/should be handled.

**Training.** The Transportation and Specialized Instruction Departments have recently started discussing training for transportation staff on understanding and addressing the needs of students with disabilities. The goal is to ensure bus drivers and aides have the tools necessary to be successful in transporting special populations. Training has been provided in the past as part of new employee orientation, but it was basic in nature and did not go deeply into best practices. Additional planning needs to occur in this area.

**Medicaid Billing and Tracking.** The Division currently bills and receives reimbursement for transportation services. Documentation occurs for all students receiving transportation, regardless of if they are Medicaid-eligible or not. The Division would like to explore how to automate an attendance process to ease the burden of this documentation and to ensure there are mechanisms in place to account for a student's location at all times in the transportation process (e.g., be able to pinpoint where a student gets on and off the bus by location).

**Equipment.** ACPS uses a variety of vehicle types to transport students with disabilities, ranging from division-owned buses to cabs. Division-owned vehicles have specialized safety equipment such as car seats and harnesses. New buses have integrated seats designed for small children (e.g., Pre-K).

## Technology Use

Like many school systems nationwide, ACPS is taking a proactive, but measured, approach to the integration of technology tools within its schools and classrooms. The Department of Technology Services is not only charged with managing the long-range IT plan for the Division but also with providing a reliable infrastructure and tools to enhance the teaching and learning process. Several specific initiatives, which directly and indirectly support students with disabilities and other struggling learners, are underway:

- Continued use of Chromebooks in grades 4-12 Division-wide, for use at home and in class to support blended learning. Many staff spoke to the value of this initiative and the supports that the Division has provided to promote equity, specifically that Mi-Fi<sup>140</sup> devices are provided for lower income students to support online access at home and that the UDL tools within the devices provide access tools for all students. OSI staff have reportedly embraced the use of technology and routinely provide support to school teams on how to use specific programs and applications to support students with disabilities.
- Implementation of a behavior intervention monitoring tool (HERO). One school will be piloting this system in the 2017-18 school year.
- Conversion to a new learning management platform, Canvas. This tool is a mechanism for both distributing information to staff and also a document repository. The goal is to have a common place to access resources across departments and schools and enhance communication efforts.
- Conversion to the state IEP system. ACPS will begin using the state IEP system in 2018-19, a move that should help the Division streamline special education state reporting requirements.

As cited earlier in the report, one area of improvement noted by focus groups was the need for increased communication between OSI and Technology Services specific to assistive technology decisions made by IEP teams.

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<sup>140</sup> A "Mi-Fi" is a wireless router that acts as mobile Wi-Fi hotspot.

## Procedural Matters

During the 2017-18 school year, ACPS transitioned from Blackboard to the Canvas Learning Management System. OSI uses Canvas as a shared site to house its procedure manuals, guidance, and resources; the site is a wealth of information for school and central office staff. Focus groups reported that guidance documents exist and are clear, but they are not always adhered to or well used. They also reported that given the transiency of the area and turnover rates, it is difficult for teachers to generalize the guidance and processes used in ACPS. School staff were unaware of a special education central office staff list or description of their areas of expertise. However, OSI holds lead teacher meetings on a monthly basis with multiple members of the central office staff for the purpose of building capacity at the school level to address basic questions. Additionally, each school has an Instructional Specialist that is readily available in person, by email or phone to address any questions or find any information needed.

School teams report using the IEP at a Glance document to provide general education and elective teachers with information about the students with disabilities in their classes. Though this was reported by some staff as an effective tool when communicating about student need, the use of the IEP at a Glance is not a standardized procedure across schools or teams.

## Finance

School districts often face an enormous financial burden when it comes to educating its highest-need students. As with all school districts across the country, in ACPS the area of special education is seen as a constant for expanding costs. The following section reflects fiscal data pertaining to special education spending and staffing.

### Alignment to the ACPS 2020 Plan

Each year, the School Board provides guidance to the Superintendent and staff regarding budget priorities for the upcoming school year. These priorities range from academic achievement to operational effectiveness and are tied to the goals set forth in the ACPS 2020 Plan. As delineated in the FY 18 Budget Book, the School Board approved the following FY 18 Budget Priorities:

- **Core Achievement:** Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Writing and World Language
- **Student Services:** special education, English Learners, talented and gifted/honors support/opportunities for acceleration, student, family and community engagement, and student health and wellness.
- **Targeted Intervention:** gap group achievement, pre-kindergarten initiatives, alternative education programming and substance abuse prevention and intervention services.
- **Recruitment, Training and Retention:** effective recruitment, creative retention strategies, leadership development/ succession planning and cultural competency training.
- **Operational Effectiveness:** revenue and grants development, communications, optimal and equitable learning environments and redistricting.<sup>141</sup>

All school and department budgets were created with these priorities as a focus. In addition, all budget decisions by the Superintendent and Leadership Team are based on budget priorities and their relationship to the strategic plan. Funds dedicated to the increased achievement of students with disabilities are evident in the budget priorities and FY 18 allocated dollars specific to the area of Student Services. Additionally, budget priorities in all other areas (such as highly effective teachers and family

<sup>141</sup> ACPS FY 18 Budget Book.

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/cms/lib/VA01918616/Centricity/Domain/803/FY%202018%20Final%20Budget%20Book.pdf>

workshops) also have a direct impact on support provided to students with disabilities and their families. The exhibit below shows specific funding areas to support these budget priorities and the strategic plan.

**Exhibit 97. FY 18 Budget Alignment to ACPS 2020**

ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan	FY 2018 Budget Priorities	FY 2018 Final Budget
<b>1. Academic Excellence and Educational Equity: Every student will be academically successful and prepared for life, work and college.</b>	<p><b>Core Achievement:</b> Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Writing and World Language</p> <p><b>Student Services:</b> Special Education, English Learners, Talented and Gifted/Honors Support/Opportunities for Acceleration</p> <p><b>Targeted Intervention:</b> Gap Group Achievement and Alternative Education Programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Education, EL and TAG staffing</li> <li>Intervention funds</li> <li>Secondary staffing</li> <li>Cultural Competency materials and training</li> <li>Expansion of AVID support</li> <li>Restorative Practices position (School Cultural Specialist)</li> <li>Textbooks and testing materials</li> <li>Curriculum Management system</li> <li>Increase electives at Minnie Howard campus</li> <li>Instructional Science Specialist</li> </ul>
<b>2. Family and Community Engagement: ACPS will partner with families and the community in the education of Alexandria's youth.</b>	<b>Student Services:</b> Student, Family and Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translation support</li> <li>Support for Registration and Assessment of EL students</li> <li>Family/Community survey</li> <li>Parent Liaison alignment</li> <li>Continued support for programs and workshops offered to ACPS students and families</li> </ul>
<b>3. An Exemplary Staff: ACPS will recruit, develop, support and retain a staff that meets the needs of every student.</b>	<b>Recruitment, Training and Retention:</b> Effective Recruitment, Creative Retention Strategies, Competitive Salaries, Leadership Development/Succession Planning and Cultural Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full step increase for all eligible employees</li> <li>Professional learning</li> <li>Teacher mentors</li> <li>Secondary staffing</li> <li>Staff compensation benefits</li> <li>Cultural competency materials and training</li> </ul>
<b>4. Facilities and the Learning Environment: ACPS will provide optimal and equitable learning environments.</b>	<b>Operational Effectiveness:</b> Equity in Maintenance and Capacity, Optimal Learning Environments and Redistricting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology licenses</li> <li>Custodial contract work</li> <li>Maintenance of electrical systems</li> </ul>
<b>5. Health and Wellness: ACPS will promote efforts to enable students to be healthy and ready to learn.</b>	<p><b>Student Services:</b> Student Health and Wellness</p> <p><b>Targeted Intervention:</b> Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secondary Substance Abuse specialist</li> <li>Continued support of the City's Safe Routes to School and Bike/Pedestrian Plan</li> <li>Continue providing snacks for all Pre-K and kindergarten students</li> </ul>

ACPS 2020 Strategic Plan	FY 2018 Budget Priorities	FY 2018 Final Budget
<b>6. Effective and Efficient Operations: ACPS will be efficient, effective and transparent in its business operations.</b>	<b>Operational Effectiveness:</b> Revenue and Grants Development, Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued focus on grant development and support for grant management support personnel</li> <li>New initiatives will strengthen operations and support to schools</li> </ul>

## Costs Per Pupil

The exhibit below shows the total average cost per pupil for all students, general education students, special education students, and English learner students. From FY 17 to FY 18, there was a decrease in all per pupil cost categories, including a -1.3% decrease in special education. However, from FY 14 to FY 18, there was an average all student increase of 1.3%. In special education, the increase over this time period was 2.4%.

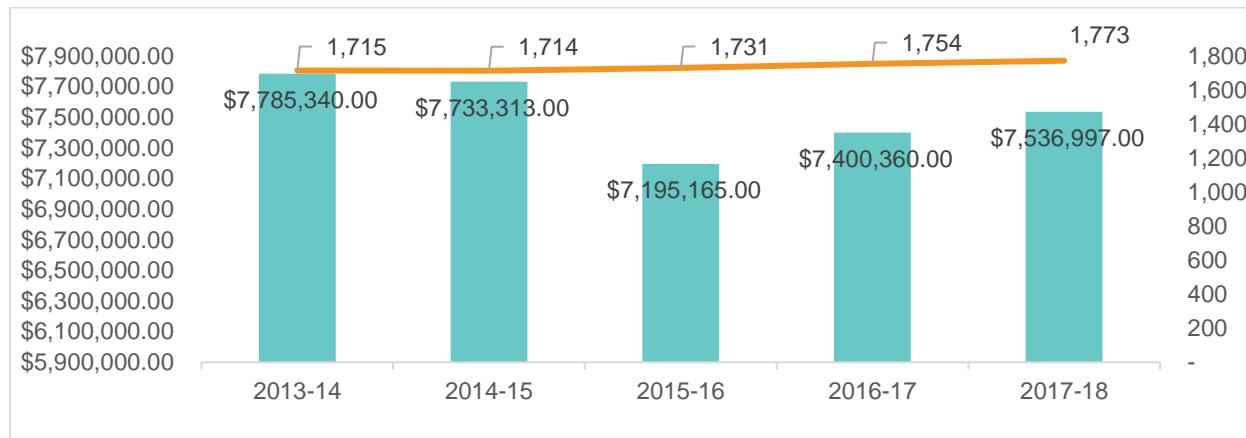
Exhibit 98. Cost Per Pupil, FY 14 to FY 18

New Enrollment/objects	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Final Budget	FY 2018 Final Budget	Percent Change FY 2017 to FY 2018	Percent Change FY 2014 to FY 2018
<b>Average All Students</b>	\$16,977	\$16,731	\$16,514	\$17,216	\$17,193	-0.1%	1.3%
<b>General Education</b>	\$13,794	\$13,542	\$13,261	\$13,881	\$13,743	-1.0%	-0.4%
<b>Special Education</b>	\$33,228	\$32,601	\$32,825	\$34,492	\$34,032	-1.3%	2.4%
<b>English Learner</b>	\$17,407	\$17,368	\$17,239	\$17,653	\$17,523	-0.7%	0.7%

## Special Education Costs

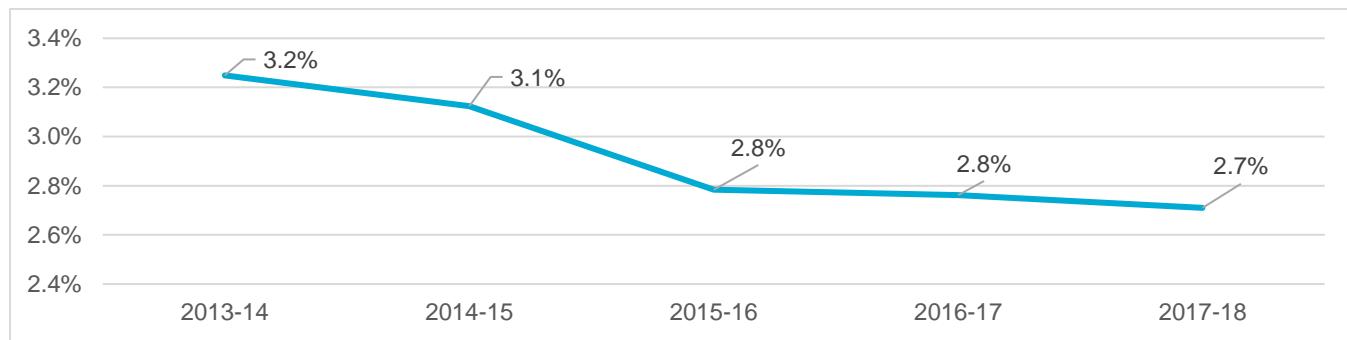
The exhibit below reflects the budgeted totals for special education and special education enrollment from 2013-14 to 2017-18. During these school years, the total amount budgeted for special education decreased by \$248,343, from \$7,785,340 to \$7,536,997. At the same time, the number of students with IEPs, ages 3-21, increased from 1,715 to 1,773 (an increase of 58 students).

**Exhibit 99. Five-year Comparison of Total ACPS Special Education Budgeted Amounts & Total Special Education Enrollment (ages 3-21)<sup>142</sup>**



The exhibit below shows the percent of special education budgeted dollars compared to the total of the Division's budgeted revenue. In 2013-14, the special education budgeted amount was 3.2% of the Division's total budgeted revenue. This percent decreased to 3.1% in 2014-15, 2.8% in 2015-16, 2.8% in 2016-17, and 2.7% in 2017-18.

**Exhibit 100. Percent of ACPS Special Education Budgeted Amount to School Division Budgeted Revenue<sup>143</sup>**



## IDEA Funds

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Federal funds under Part B, of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are available for preschool and school-age special education programs. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to children and youth with disabilities. Projected funding for IDEA Part B totals \$2.91 million for the grant period of July 1, 2016 to September 30, 2018. <sup>144</sup>

As noted in the Division's IDEA grant application, these funds primarily support specialist positions in the areas of behavior support, Autism, communications and compliance, specifically:

- 6.0 FTE Instructional Specialists

<sup>142</sup> ACPS. FY 18 Budget Book, p. 167 and p. 407.

<sup>143</sup> ACPS. FY 18 Budget Book, p. 167 and p. 407.

<sup>144</sup> ACPS. FY 18 Budget Book, p. 73.

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/cms/lib/VA01918616/Centricity/Domain/803/FY%202018%20Final%20Budget%20Book.pdf>

- 1.0 FTE Compliance Director
- 1.0 Procedural Coordinator
- 1.0 FTE Early Childhood Coordinator
- 1.0 FTE Autism-Behavior Support-ID-MD Coordinator
- 3.0 FTE Behavior Support/ BCBA Specialists
- 2.0 FTE Behavior Support Specialists
- 1.0 FTE Placement Specialist
- 1.0 FTE Assistive Technology Specialist
- 1.0 FTE Parent Support Specialist
- 1.0 FTE Speech and Language Pathologist
- 1.0 Special Education Teacher
- 3.0 FTE Employment Specialists

An early childhood special education teacher is funded through the preschool portion of the IDEA grant. Additionally, funds are apportioned for materials and supplies to support educational programming for students with emotional disabilities, students with autism, students with visual and hearing impairments as well as students with multiple disabilities. Funds are also allocated for instructional supplies, software and online charges, therapy supplies, and assistive technology software/augmentative communication devices.

Salaries and benefits comprise 95%+ of the IDEA funds annually. Division personnel expressed concern about the rising costs of salaries and benefits for these staff paid through the grant, as IDEA funds are not increasing at the same rate. In the coming years, the Division will need to assess how best to financially support these positions, while still maintaining the same level of service to schools. This will become an even more critical point since the Division will have to set aside CCEIS funds in the coming school year pursuant to the recent disproportionality finding by VDOE.

## Position Allocations

### Special Education Teachers and Paraprofessionals

Special education students are reported, per federal and state requirements, by primary disability category and level of service:

- **Disability category:** The student's disability category is determined during the special education eligibility process. State regulations mandate that all students receiving special education services are identified with a specific disability by age 7.
- **Level of service:** Student service levels have been modified to more appropriately tier service times and are categorized by the percent of instructional support:
  - Level I: 0-30%; 1.0 Points
  - Level II: 31-49%; 1.5 Points
  - Level III: 50-70%; 2.0 Points
  - Level III: 50% or more; 2.5 Points (Autism, Intellectual, Emotional and Multiple Disabilities)
  - Level IV: 71% or more; 2.5 Points

Per the data above, allocation of special education staffing is determined by disability category and level of service. Schools are allocated special education staff based on an average of 18 points per teacher and paraprofessional. Teacher allocations are calculated based upon points generated by students on staff caseloads at all levels (1-4). Paraprofessional allocations are calculated based upon points generated by students in levels 3 and 4 within the school. Points are assigned based on the amount of special education services by each student's IEP.

In an effort to further support inclusion and co-teaching across content areas, the formula was revised beginning in FY 2017 by adjusting the service intensity point values which determine staff ratios and further differentiating levels of service values. This resulted in additional teachers and paraprofessionals at both elementary and secondary schools. All elementary schools continue to have a base staffing ratio of three teachers and two paraprofessionals. The revised formula will continue for FY 2018 and is projected to generate an additional 5.00 FTE special education teachers and 6.00 FTE special education paraprofessionals for kindergarten to grade 12.

All paraprofessional I and certified nursing assistant positions are placed in a centralized pool allowing more flexibility as students move from school to school. In the FY 2018 budget, 5.0 FTE special education reserve teacher and 2.0 FTE special education paraprofessional positions will continue to be included. Both pools remain at the same level as the FY 2017 final budget. The program continues to improve instructional delivery to special education students and to implement inclusionary models.

There are special ratios for specific citywide classes requiring a more restrictive placement, including early childhood special education, autism, intellectual, emotional and multiple disability. For FY 2018, the paraprofessional staffing ratio in intellectual emotional and multiple disability citywide classes increased to 2.0 FTE per classroom to allow for more support in these classes.<sup>145</sup>

**Exhibit 101. FY 18 ACPS Staffing Ratios in Citywide Learning Environments<sup>146</sup>**

Disability/Program	Students with Disabilities	Teacher	Paraprofessional
<b>Autism classroom (including preschool)</b>	6 students	1 teacher	2 paraprofessionals
<b>Multiple Disability classroom</b>	6 students	1 teacher	2 paraprofessionals
<b>Intellectual and Emotional Disabilities classroom – elementary</b>	8 students	1 teacher	2 paraprofessionals
<b>Intellectual and Emotional Disabilities classroom – secondary</b>	8 students	1 teacher	1 paraprofessional
<b>Early Childhood special education classroom</b>	8 students	1 teacher AM class  1 teacher PM class	1 paraprofessional shared across AM/PM classes

The exhibit below provides a breakdown of school-based special education staffing by site.

- **Special Education Teachers.** In FY 17, there were 81.0 FTE special education teachers at the elementary school level and 62.0 FTE special education teachers at the secondary school level. In FY 18, these numbers increased to 84.0 FTE and 64.0 FTE respectively.
- **Paraeducators.** In FY 17, there were 68.0 FTE paraprofessionals at the elementary school level and 33.0 FTE paraprofessionals at the secondary school level. In FY 18, these numbers increased to 73.0 FTE and 34.0 FTE respectively.
- **Certified Nursing Assistants.** There were 9.0 FTE certified nursing assistants in both FY 17 and FY 18.
- **Non-Ratio IEPs.** There were 30.0 FTE non-ratio paraprofessionals in both FY 17 and FY 18.

<sup>145</sup> ACPS. FY 18 Budget Book, p. 167.

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/cms/lib/VA01918616/Centricity/Domain/803/FY%202018%20Final%20Budget%20Book.pdf>

<sup>146</sup> *Id.*

- Speech Language Pathologists.** There were 28.0 FTE speech/language pathologists in both FY 17 and FY 18.

The Division has also set aside a reserve of 5.0 FTE special education teacher positions and 2.0 FTE for paraprofessional positions in anticipation of special education student enrollment increases or shifts between schools during the course of the school year.

**Exhibit 102. FY 18 ACPS Staffing Numbers by Site<sup>147</sup>**

	Education Enrollment		Special Education Staffing												Change in FTE, FY 2017 Final Budget to FY 2018 Final Budget											
	FY 2017 Dec	FY 2018 Projected	FY 2017 Final Budget						FY 2018 Final Budget						Tchers	Paras	Cert Nurs Asst	Non-Ratio IEPs	Total	Tchers	Paras	Cert Nurs Asst	Non-Ratio IEPs	Total		
			Tchers	Paras	Cert Nurs Asst	Non-Ratio IEPs	Total	Tchers	Paras	Cert Nurs Asst	Non-Ratio IEPs	Total	Tchers	Paras	Cert Nurs Asst	Non-Ratio IEPs	Total	Tchers	Paras	Cert Nurs Asst	Non-Ratio IEPs	Total				
Charles Barrett	44	51	6.00	4.00	-	-	10.00	6.00	4.00	-	-	10.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Cora Kelly	54	43	9.00	12.00	-	-	21.00	9.00	14.00	-	-	23.00	-	-	-	-	2.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.00	-	
Douglas MacArthur	49	38	4.00	2.00	-	-	6.00	3.00	2.00	-	-	5.00	-1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-1.00	-	
George Mason	37	32	3.00	2.00	-	-	5.00	3.00	2.00	-	-	5.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
James K. Polk	48	41	5.00	6.00	-	-	11.00	5.00	6.00	-	-	11.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Jefferson Houston	69	101	12.00	8.00	-	-	20.00	13.00	8.00	-	-	21.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	-	
John Adams	71	152	17.00	14.00	-	-	31.00	18.00	16.00	-	-	34.00	1.00	2.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.00	-	
Lyles-Crouch	37	26	4.00	4.00	-	-	8.00	4.00	4.00	-	-	8.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Matthew Maury	29	26	3.00	2.00	-	-	5.00	3.00	2.00	-	-	5.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Mount Vernon	71	56	5.00	3.00	-	-	8.00	6.00	4.00	-	-	10.00	1.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.00	-	
Patrick Henry	40	44	4.00	4.00	-	-	8.00	4.00	4.00	-	-	8.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Samuel Tucker	39	54	5.00	3.00	-	-	8.00	5.00	3.00	-	-	8.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
William Ramsey	53	43	4.00	4.00	-	-	8.00	5.00	4.00	-	-	9.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	-	
<b>Elementary Total</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>81.00</b>	<b>68.00</b>	-	-	<b>149.00</b>	<b>84.00</b>	<b>73.00</b>	-	-	<b>157.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>8.00</b>	-
Francis C. Hammond	150	145	14.00	10.00	-	-	24.00	13.00	10.00	-	-	23.00	-1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-1.00	-	
George Washington	152	157	15.00	6.00	-	-	21.00	15.00	6.00	-	-	21.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TC Williams Minnie Howard Campus	105	103	7.00	2.00	-	-	9.00	8.00	2.00	-	-	10.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	-
TC Williams King Street Campus	244	324	26.00	15.00	-	-	41.00	28.00	16.00	-	-	44.00	2.00	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.00	-	
<b>Secondary Total</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>62.00</b>	<b>33.00</b>	-	-	<b>95.00</b>	<b>64.00</b>	<b>34.00</b>	-	-	<b>98.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3.00</b>	-
Teacher Reserve	-	-	5.00	2.00	-	-	7.00	5.00	2.00	-	-	7.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Ratio Para	-	-	-	-	-	-	30.00	30.00	-	-	-	30.00	30.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Certified Nursing Assistants	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.00	-	9.00	-	-	9.00	-	9.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chance for Change	5	3	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Satellite Campus	-	-	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Placements: Other	53	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tuition Paid Another Division	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Speech Language Impairment	217	253	28.00	-	-	-	28.00	28.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other Total</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>35.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>30.00</b>	<b>76.00</b>	<b>35.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>30.00</b>	<b>76.00</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0.00</b>	-
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,569</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>178.00</b>	<b>103.00</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>30.00</b>	<b>320.00</b>	<b>183.00</b>	<b>109.00</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>30.00</b>	<b>331.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>6.00</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>11.00</b>	-

## Related Service Providers

In 2012, ACPS commissioned a *Report on Occupational and Physical Therapy Department of Alexandria City Public Schools: Current State of Practice, Roles of Therapists, and Efficient Service Delivery*. The study consisted of staff interviews, caseload reviews, and observations. At that time, the staff consisted of 8 occupational therapists (OTs), 2 physical therapists (PTs). The average caseload for an OT was 21.9. The special education child count then was 1,661 students.

Since that time, the Division's special education population has increased, and the staffing model has evolved. As of August 2018, when staffing allocations were adjusted for the 2017-18 school year, the special education child count was 1,893. There are 4 full-time OTs and 1 part-time (9 hours per week) OT, and 1 full-time PT and 2 part-time PTs. The average caseload per full time OT is 60 students.

This year, ACPS shifted to a workload model for OTs and PTs after consulting with surrounding localities. Factors such as travel time, meetings, evaluations, lunch, planning time, and Medicaid billing documentation are considered. The instructional day was dividing into 15-minute increments, or units, to determine monthly instructional support needs for each school. Related service staff caseloads are assigned based upon a composite total of units per school so workloads are the most equitable. The speech-language pathologist assignments have been calculated using a workload formula for the last two years. Caseloads are examined several times throughout the year to maintain equitable assignments.

<sup>147</sup> ACPS. FY 18 Budget Book, p. 167.

ACPS continues to grow, it will be important to review related service provider allocations at least annually to assess whether or not additional positions are needed/warranted.

### **Rising Costs**

ACPS's Finance Office is projecting that the Division's expenditures over the next five years will outpace its projected revenue. In FY 18, expenditures are expected to be \$261,894,427, while anticipated revenue is \$256,861,495. By FY 23, the gap widens even more, with a projected expenditure amount of \$339,549,347 and anticipated revenue amount of \$286,069,106. As such, the Division has started to assess ways in which costs can be contained. For FY 18, OSI had to plan for a 5% reduction in its budget. As a Division, further cost reductions will be necessary for FY 19 and beyond. In light of IDEA's maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement, ACPS will need to carefully budget and document special education expenditures to assure than required funds are set aside for special education in subsequent years. Budgetary cuts may adversely impact the Divisions' MOE, which could initiate a citation from the state.

Current cost drivers within special education reportedly include the increasing use of taxi cabs for transportation of students, tuition for students in private day placements, and extended school year costs. In response, OSI revamped ESY programming this past year to improve efficiencies and costs. A closer review of special education finances needs to be undertaken to assess how funds are used and opportunities to further streamline operations. This review should also include an in-depth review of how to maximize Medicaid reimbursement dollars.

## VII. Collaboration, Communication, and Parent Engagement

### Key Strengths

- **Staff Survey.** 94% of staff agree parents are given a meaningful opportunity to participate in IEP meetings.
- **Parent Engagement.** SEAC and other parent groups are actively engaged in the Division's special education initiatives.
- **Parent Resource Center.** The PRC provides useful trainings and resources for parents of students with disabilities.

### Opportunities for Improvement

- **Equity.** Parents feel that services are not available on an equitable basis. Those who are prepared to advocate and research are believed to have greater access to services for their children.
- **Staff Survey.** Only 54% of staff agree that they feel informed about the Division's special education initiatives.
- **Progress Updates.** Only 65% of parents feel that they are getting adequate information about their child's performance.

As part of this review, ACPS wanted to gain a deeper understanding of how the overall culture and climate of the Division and its schools impacted attitudes towards and accountability for special education service delivery. While culture is intangible, it is not undefinable. Every school has "underlying assumptions about what staff members will discuss at meetings, which teaching techniques work well, how amenable the staff is to change, and how critical staff development is... that core set of beliefs underlies the school's overall culture."<sup>148</sup> Its traditions, policies and norms are shaped, enhanced, and maintained through the principal and teacher-leaders. Taken together, each school culture within a district contributes to its overall culture.

This chapter summarizes findings from ACPS specific to perceptions of: collaboration, communication, and parent engagement.<sup>149</sup> These factors influence the way culture is broadly defined and understood in ACPS.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is a critical feature of any successful special education program. In order to provide the maximum support for teaching and learning for students with disabilities, and given the many people involved at different levels of ACPS and the complexity of students' needs, the Division's activities must be aligned, coordinated and focused. Collaboration, however, is not only structural, as in the formally established mechanisms by which particular roles or groups should work together, it is also cultural. Part of this review examined the culture of collaboration within ACPS to support its students with disabilities and their families.

Staff and parents were asked a series of questions on surveys about collaboration within and across the Division and with parents and families. Questions focused on school leadership, staff support and

<sup>148</sup> [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/admin275.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin275.shtml)

<sup>149</sup> Another element of collaboration is co-teaching. Survey results related to inclusion and co-teaching practices are included in the Teaching and Learning chapter.

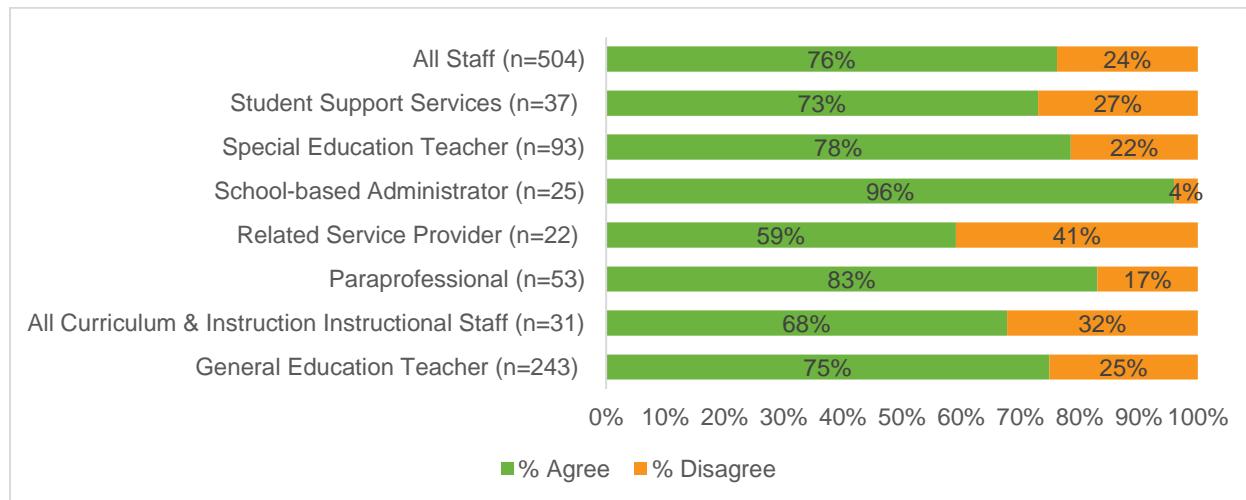
resources, and staff collaboration for students with disabilities. The following is a summary of those results.

## School Leadership

Collaborative school cultures are perceived more and more as being essential for better schools. Therefore, one of the important roles of a principal should be that of culture builder. Effective principals set a positive tone, model commitment, set standards, and hold staff accountable to those standards. They teach and coach about the communication commitment and provide resources in any way they can to help improve communication among parents, staff, and students. They can also establish the foundation of an inclusive culture.

Data below, from the staff survey, show the extent to which staff believe ACPS principals provide active leadership for special education and are engaged in supporting students with disabilities.

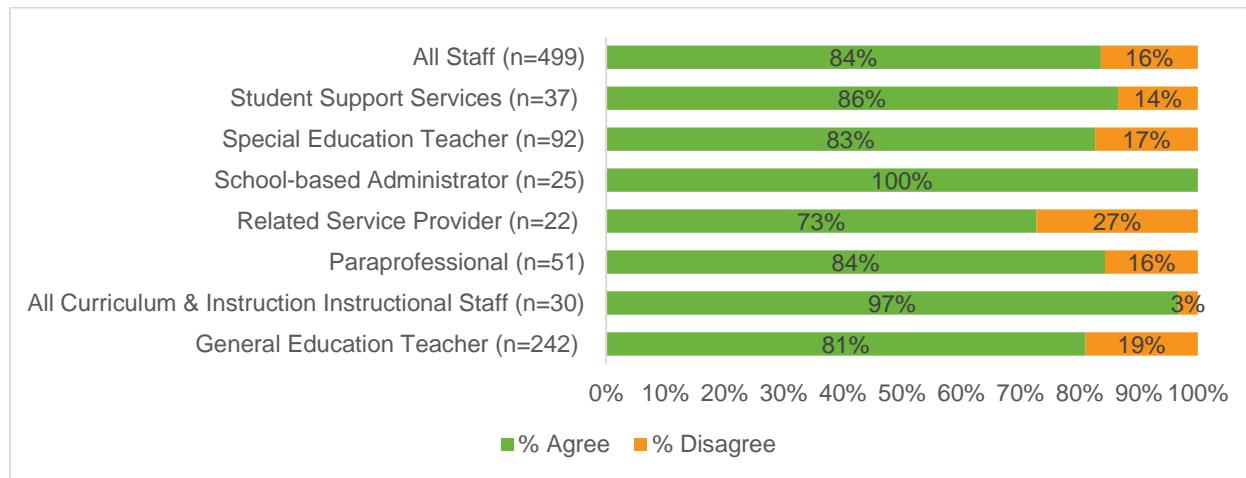
**Exhibit 103. The administrators, including the principal, at my school(s) provides active leadership for special education.<sup>150</sup>**



Regarding school leadership to support special education, the majority of staff agreed that the administrators, including the principal, at their school(s) provide(s) active leadership for special education. The majority of administrators concur (96%). Related service providers (59%) and Instructional Specialists (68%) were less positive than staff in other roles (from 73% to 96%). Compared across school levels, staff in most roles were more positive in elementary and preschool levels (see Appendix I).

<sup>150</sup> Note: Administrators were asked a slightly different question: "I provide active leadership for special education at my school."

**Exhibit 104. The administrators, including the principal, at my school(s) are engaged in supporting students with disabilities.<sup>151</sup>**



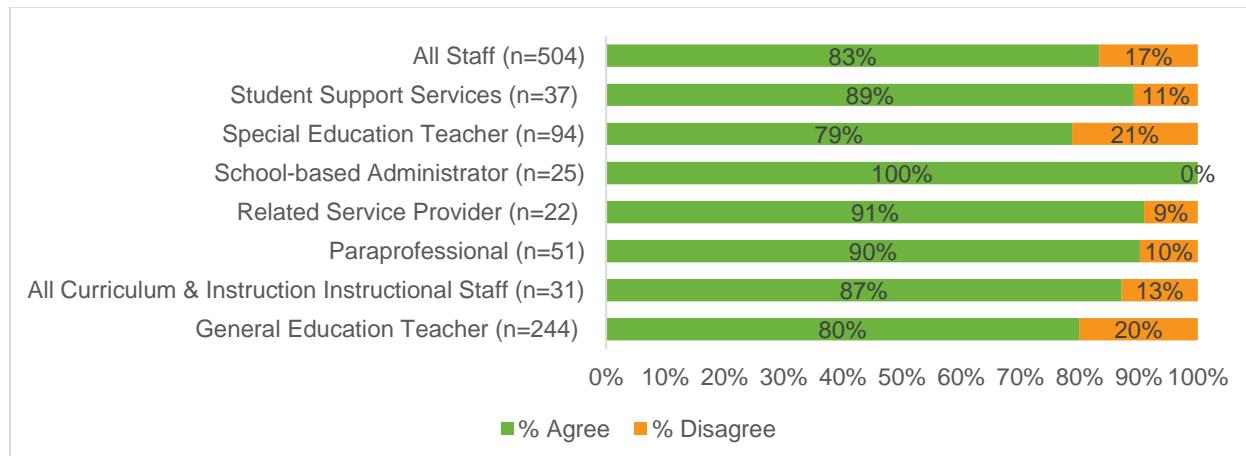
On this similar question, staff were also overwhelmingly positive about administrators' engagement in supporting students with disabilities in their school (from 73% to 100%).

## Staff Support and Resources

Collaboration begins with finding time, and having time built into the school schedule, to connect with colleagues, to share thoughts, and provide support. When teachers engage in high-quality collaboration that they perceive as extensive and helpful, there is both an individual and collective benefit.<sup>152</sup>

Data below, from the staff survey, show the extent to which ACPS staff agree with knowing who to ask for assistance and feeling supported.

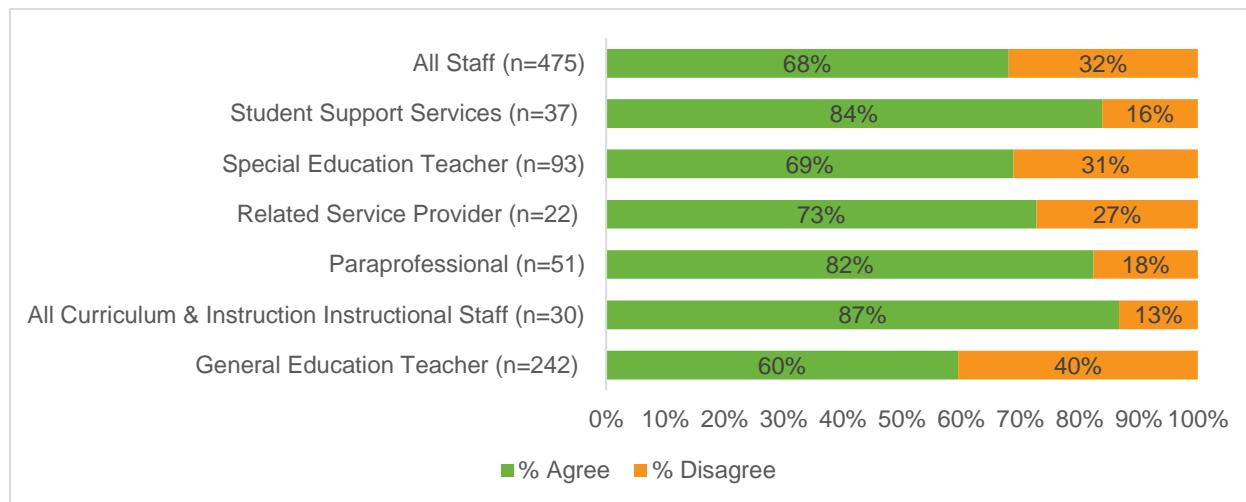
**Exhibit 105. If I encounter difficulty with a student, I know who to ask for assistance.<sup>153</sup>**



<sup>151</sup> Note: Administrators were asked a question with slightly different wording: "I am engaged in supporting students with disabilities at my school."

<sup>152</sup> Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S., McQueen, K., & Grissom, J. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(3), 475-514.

<sup>153</sup> Administrators were asked a slightly different question.

**Exhibit 106. When seeking assistance for a particular student need, I feel I receive effective support.**

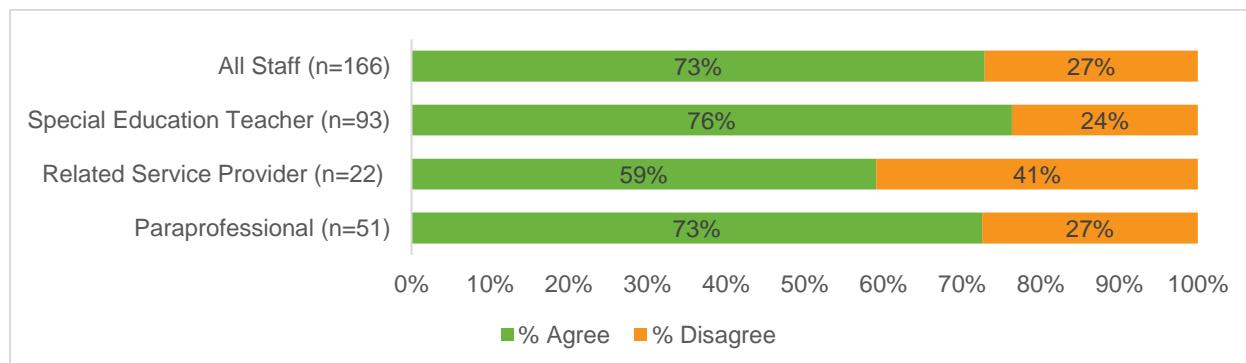
Overall, staff felt supported in their schools to assist students with disabilities. Specifically, across all roles, the majority of staff agreed (from 79%-91%) that if they encounter difficulty with a student, they know who to ask for assistance. This was lower for middle and high school regardless of role, except administrators who agree 100% at all school levels that staff know who to ask for support. When staff seek assistance for a particular student need, the majority also agreed that they receive effective support, though it was lowest among general education teachers (60%) and special education teachers (69%) across all grades, and was lower at the middle school and high school levels for general education teachers in particular (see Appendix I).

## Effective Collaboration Processes

Collaboration means purposefully building interpersonal relationships and communicating routinely. When teachers and other staff come together to share information, resources, ideas, and expertise, learning becomes more accessible and effective for students.<sup>154</sup>

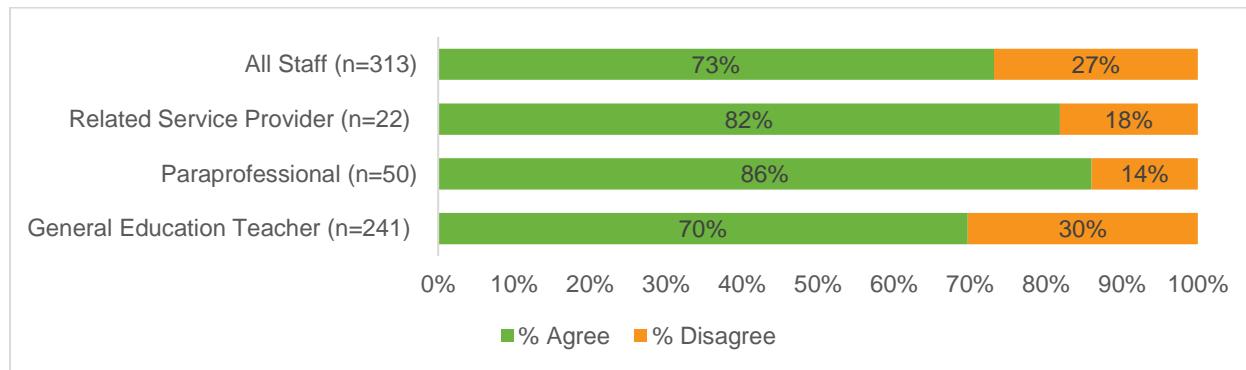
School-based staff were asked survey questions about communication within their schools to support students with disabilities. Overall, school-based staff were positive about processes to support students with disabilities and information sharing among different roles.

### Exhibit 107. I receive the information I need from general educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.



<sup>154</sup> Curriculum Services Canada. <http://curriculum.org/secretariat/leadership/files/LeadershipIdeasPromoting.pdf>

**Exhibit 108. I receive the information I need from special educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.**

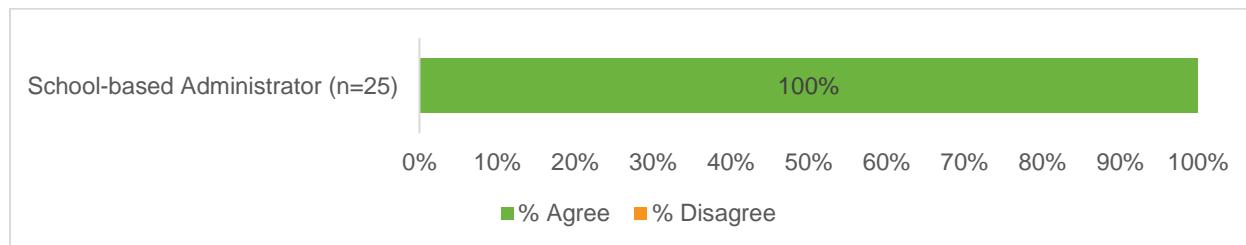


The majority of special education teachers (76%), paraprofessionals (73%) agreed they receive the information they need from general educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs. Related service providers were in less agreement (59%).

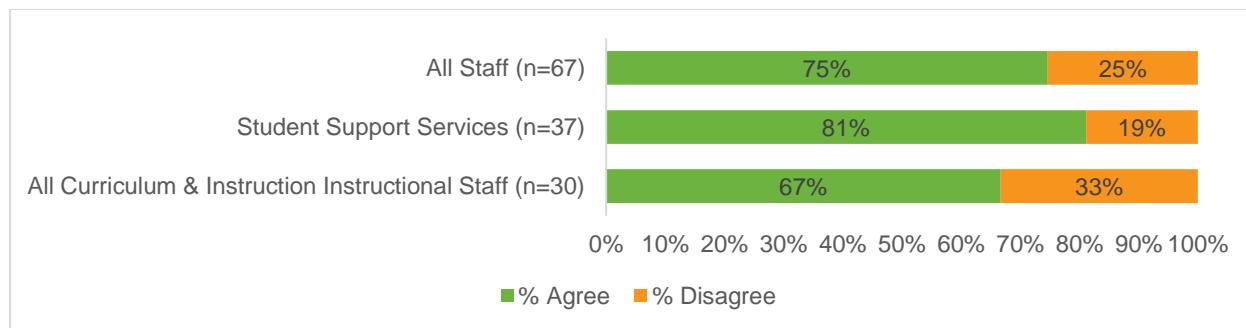
When evaluating whether they receive the information they need from special educators, the majority of paraprofessionals (86%) and related service providers (82%) agreed, while general education teachers were slightly lower at 70%.

For both questions, general education teachers and special education teachers were less positive about receiving information from each other about the needs and progress of students with IEPs at the middle school (general educators from special educators: 56% and special educators from general educators: 71%) and high school levels (67% and 62% respectively).<sup>155</sup>

**Exhibit 109. Staff in my building have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities.**



**Exhibit 110. Staff in the building(s) I support have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities.**



<sup>155</sup> Survey results by role are included in the Appendix.

Asked to evaluate whether staff in their building or buildings have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities, the great majority of school-based administrators (83%) and student support services staff (81%) were positive. While the majority of All Curriculum & Instructional Staffs agreed, they were overall slightly less positive (67%).

## Communication

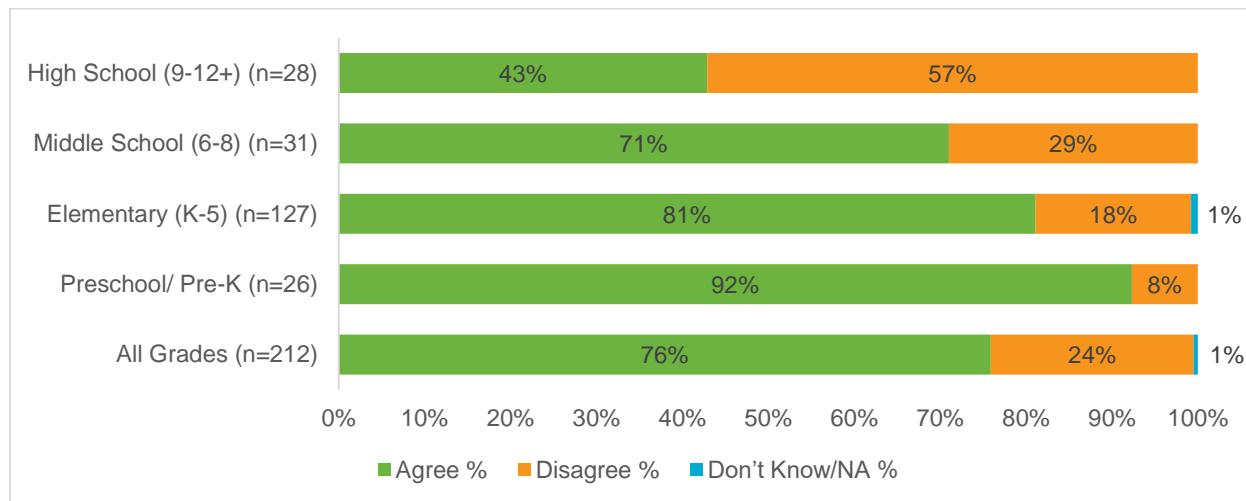
The Department of Communications within the Division is responsible for the official distribution of information to central office staff, school-based staff, and parent and the wider community. The Communications team is comprised of seven staff members and manages several outreach platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, as well as an internal publication called *ACPS Insider*, and an external newsletter that is sent to parents called *ACPS Express*. Due to the wide variety of opportunities available to transmit information to the ACPS community, and preferences among stakeholders for one format over another, the Communications Department publishes the same information in multiple places (e.g., email, text, robo-call, Facebook, and Twitter). To promote access, important messages and materials for parents are translated from English into the three most prevalent languages (Spanish, Arabic, and Amharic).

The Communications Department also manages the platform for school-level websites. This promotes consistency among the schools in format, but schools themselves are responsible for the content posted. ACPS is in the process of making the websites for schools and the Division Section 508 compliant. The Department also manages special initiatives, such as the recent Disability Awareness Week campaign, and routinely attends community forums to understand key issues raised by parents and others.

## School—Parent

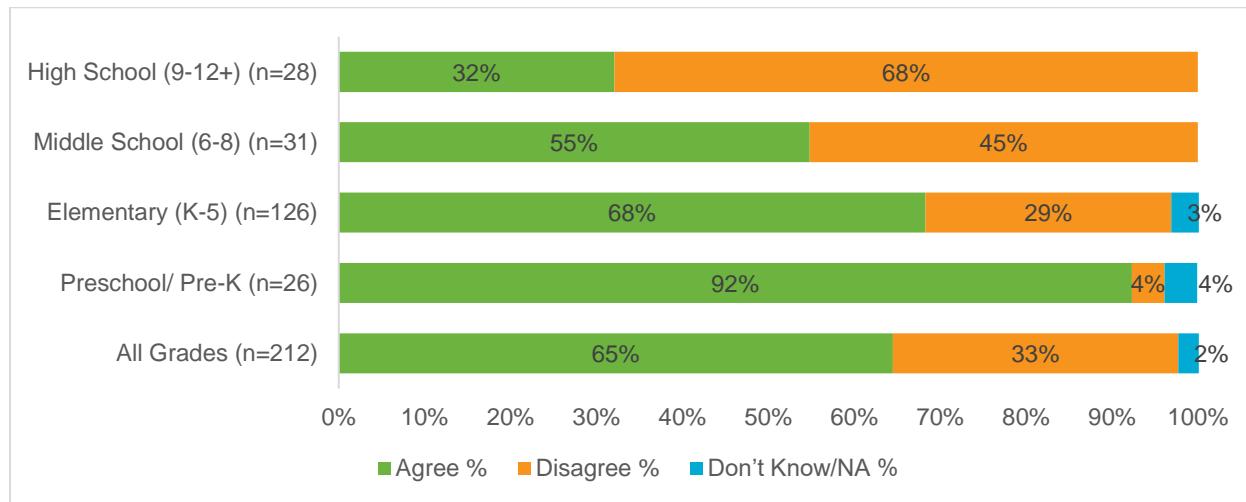
Despite the many pathways to share information, a wide variety of focus group participants, including parents, expressed concern about communication regarding special education processes and services, and noted that there is not a structured process in place to deliver needed information regarding special education to parents and families, or among teachers within school buildings. There was still a sense that too much is left to parent networks, or “water cooler” conversations between staff, and word of mouth. Parents felt that services are not available on an equitable basis; parents who are prepared to advocate and research are better able to access services for their child. Additionally, informal communication channels in the Division lead families with a stronger network to information that is not readily accessed by all (such as school quality). In addition, general educators reported that they are often not informed of initiatives related to special education.

**Exhibit 111. School staff have communicated effectively with me.**



The parent/family survey also asked questions about communication with ACPS. Across all grades, 76% of parents felt that school staff communicate effectively with them. However, there was a steady decline in this perception as students move up through the grades: while 92% of Pre-K parents were positive about communication with ACPS, only 44% of high school parents share this view.

**Exhibit 112. I am getting adequate information about my child's performance.**

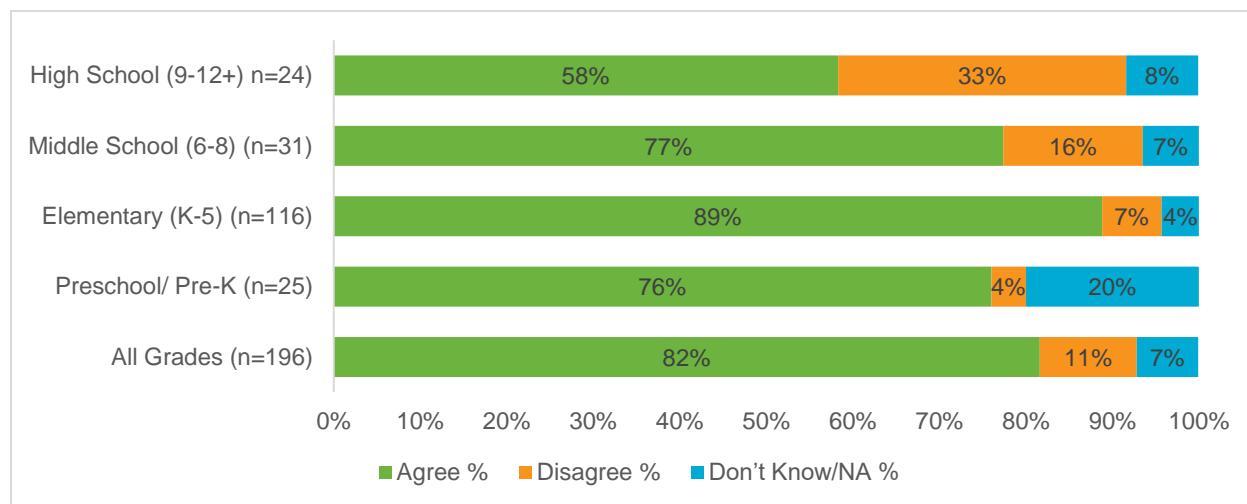


A similar pattern follows with parents' responses regarding whether they receive adequate information about their child's performance. Overall, 65% reported receiving adequate information. Pre-K parents were overwhelming positive (92%) while only 55% of middle school parents and only 32% of high school parents agreed.

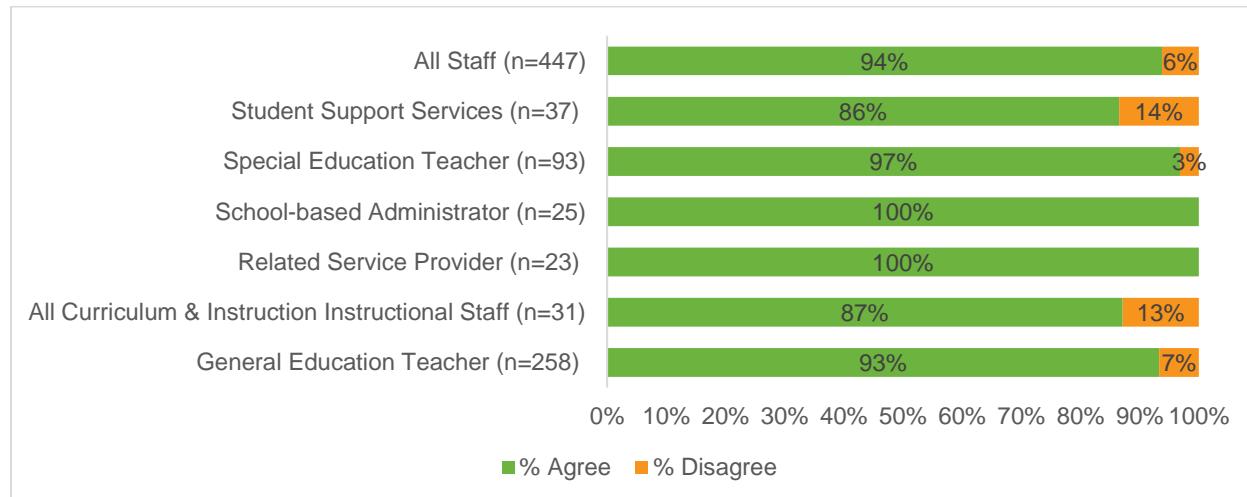
In some cases, parents highlighted communication as one area of strength in the Division.<sup>156</sup> Parents noted strong communication overall through phone calls, emails, the accessibility and responsiveness of particular staff and teachers to communicate about student's progress and strategies to use at home to support their students. For example, one parent commented, "I have excellent communications with my son's teacher. She is very informative and understands my son's needs. She is also very knowledgeable and provides great insights in how to work with my son at home." Another noted, "They keep me in the loop. I'm in touch with them weekly and they see me as part of the team."

Conversely, parents also highlighted a range of challenges in their communication with school personnel. Specifically, parents noted that there is a large variation in communication at different schools, and that parents must initiate most contact to obtain information about their students. In addition, parents noted that communication is further strained by inconsistent staff from year-to-year. Comments included: "Communication is a big challenge. There is a huge variation of communication between schools and that there is little communication unless parents push for it," and "Because of the inconsistencies between staff year to year, it falls to the parent to coordinate and keep all student's information and plan together."

<sup>156</sup> This section includes data from both the open response section in the parent survey and parent focus groups.

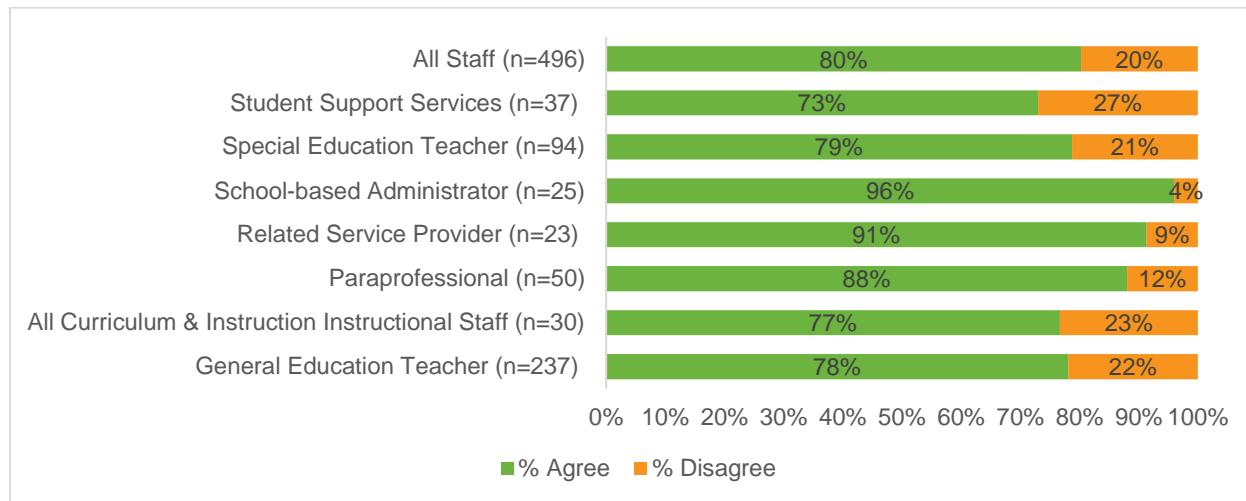
**Exhibit 113. The administrators at my child's school respond to me.**

Finally, parents were asked whether the administrators in their child's schools are responsive. Overall the majority of parents reported that administrators respond to them (82%). Following the pattern seen in responses to other questions, the perception of administrator's responsiveness generally declines as student's grade level increases.<sup>157</sup> The highest level of agreement was among parents of elementary level students (89%) and the lowest was among parents of high school students (64%).

**Exhibit 114. Parents at my school(s) are given a meaningful opportunity to participate during IEP meetings.**

<sup>157</sup> The exception is Preschool/PreK, which has 20% Don't know/ N/A rate, making it lower than elementary.

**Exhibit 115. My school(s) communicates effectively with parents about the resources available for students with disabilities.**

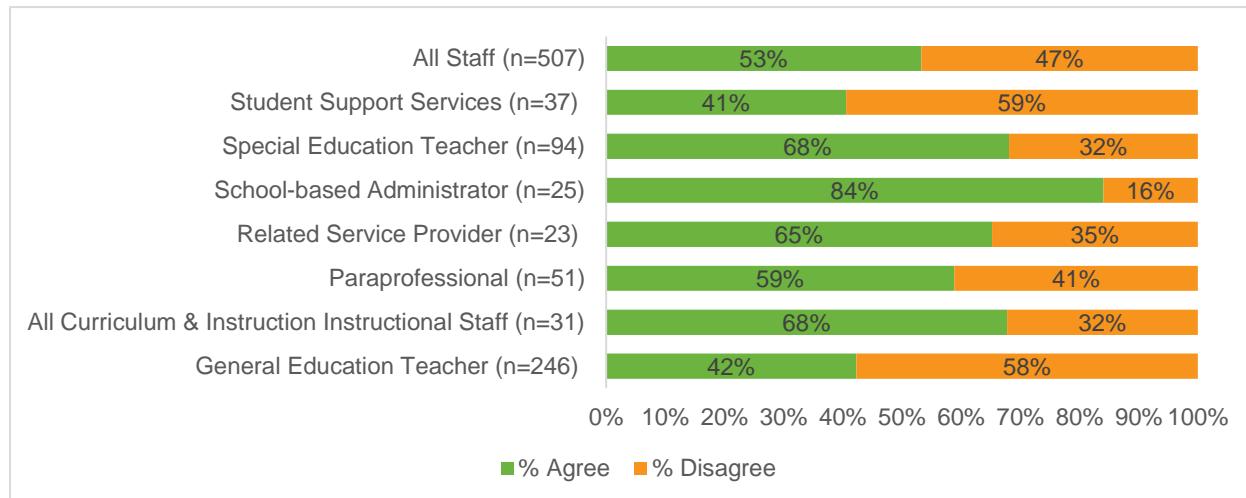


With regard to communication with parents, the majority of staff (between 87% and 100% by role) agreed that parents at their school(s) are given meaningful opportunities to participate during IEP meetings. In addition, across all staff roles, the majority agreed that their school communicates effectively with parents about the resources available for students with disabilities (between 73% and 96%). Findings among staff are in contrast to the survey responses (see below) and comments, as well as focus group comments from parents.

## Division—Staff

PCG also included survey questions about communication within the Division about special education and students with disabilities. In terms of communication between the Division and staff, different roles had different perceptions. Overall, school administrators were the most in agreement that they feel informed of Division initiatives regarding special education (84%) followed by special education teachers (68%) and instructional specialists (68%). General education teachers and student support services staff felt the least informed among the various roles (42% and 41% respectively).

**Exhibit 116. I feel informed about the Division's special education initiatives.**



## Parent Engagement

Many parents of students receiving special education services in ACPS are, on the whole, extremely active and engaged. There are a number of groups that help to support their activities. These include formal and informal structures such as the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Parent Resource Center (PRC), and a parent's support group (informally referred to as the "Panera Group.")

### Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

The most prominent parent group of students with special needs is the Alexandria Public Schools' Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), a mandated structure by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The SEAC role is to:

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.<sup>158</sup>

The ACPS SEAC currently has 11 members who are appointed by the school board for two-year terms, though the bylaws allow for up to 18 voting members. The bylaws require that the majority of the committee be comprised of Alexandria City parents of children with disabilities or individuals with disabilities and one teacher. Local school division personnel, including one School Board Liaison, and one school principal, can serve as non-voting consultants to the committee.<sup>159</sup> The Executive Director of OSI is the current staff liaison to the SEAC. The SEAC is one of six ACPS School Board Advisory Committees, and it holds monthly public meetings. ACPS staff report at each meeting on services and activities related to students with disabilities in the Division.

SEAC has several ongoing initiatives but sets an annual scope of work in the fall. The scope for the 2017-18, school year was presented to the school board in November 2017 and is framed within the context of ACPS 2020, the strategic plan for the Division.<sup>160</sup> The scope set two priorities for the school year:

1. "Continue to advocate for a full examination of the current state of special education within the district by focusing attention and resources on the current Special Education Evaluation being conducted by Public Consulting Group, including advocating for the expansion of the on-site evaluations to include every school in the district."
2. "Advocate for the implantation (*sic*) of a district wide disability awareness plan."

There are also specific plans tied to each of the six goals established in the Strategic Plan. These include the establishment of subcommittees for particular work such as "the purposes of understanding and

<sup>158</sup> 2017-2018 ACPS SEAC Scope of Work. <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/1233>

<sup>159</sup> ACPS SEAC Bylaws. <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/cms/lib/VA01918616/Centricity/Domain/1025/spedbylaws.pdf>

<sup>160</sup> 2017-2018 ACPS SEAC Scope of Work. <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/1233>. SEAC uses the term "district" in these priorities.

reporting on academic strategies and interventions in use by ACPS" and to "review the quality of Summer School and Enrichment Programs available to students with disabilities."

In the 2017-18 plan, SEAC also affirms the review of special education services conducted by PCG and to "ensure that [review] is given the level of attention and resources necessary to provide a comprehensive look at the state of specialized instruction within the district." In addition, "the SEAC will position itself to advocate effectively for the full implementation of any recommendations contained in the Special Education Evaluation final report."<sup>161</sup> The SEAC is influential in keeping special education a priority of the School Board and the ACPS SEAC was instrumental in securing division funds to conduct this special education review as well as the expanded scope of work. Other work in 2017-18 includes activities to increase awareness of disabilities and promote inclusion among parent initiative programs in schools through their Division-wide pilot program, The Inclusion Project. Also, SEAC planned to help improve the reach and efficacy the Parent Resource Center (see below) this year.

SEAC works with the Division annually to award three Anne Lipnick Awards for Specialized Instruction to exemplary educators in the following categories:

- **Specialized Instruction:** The outstanding special education instructor or related service provider who shows extraordinary abilities in the development of instructional or social practices that promote achievement and participation for students receiving special education services
- **Inclusion:** The outstanding general education teacher who demonstrates exemplary inclusionary practices.
- **Paraprofessional Support:** The outstanding paraprofessional who consistently goes above and beyond in their engagements with special education students.<sup>162</sup>

In addition, the SEAC issues an annual report reflecting on SEAC activities throughout the year and their observations regarding the state of special education services within ACPS.

The relationship between the Division and SEAC has been uneven. Historically, Division and SEAC members report a strained, and at times, adversarial relationship. Many attribute a lingering bitterness between SEAC and the Division to past distrust and challenges experienced when collaborating on key initiatives, such as the Disability is Natural campaign and Disability Awareness Week. SEAC members participated in the hiring process of the current Executive Director of Specialized Instruction after the departure of the former one. SEAC and Division staff report that the relationship is beginning to change and that both parties share a willingness to collaborate in new ways.

SEAC has been impatient and vocal about the pace of change for students with disabilities in the Division, and the ways in which they believe the Division should address their concerns. At the same time, opportunities for collaboration, according to many outside SEAC, have been met by constant critique. SEAC members articulated a range of concerns regarding what they see as systemic issues for students with disabilities and their families in ACPS. These include the priority areas described in their work plan but also:

- Communication/ Parent outreach, training and support
  - There is a belief that the Division is lacking in structural processes to share information with all parents about special education and services.

<sup>161</sup> 2017-2018 ACPS SEAC Scope of Work. <http://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/attachments/a4886b16-2cfa-4ade-969a-52ec48ce1730.pdf>

<sup>162</sup> These three annual awards provide an opportunity for parents and fellow educators to acknowledge and honor the work of outstanding special educators, general education teachers, related service providers and paraprofessionals whose classroom and therapeutic practices exemplify excellence in specialized instruction in the spirit of true inclusion.

<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/2240>

- Too much is left to information sharing among parents, which leads to inequities (parents with more social or other capital are better able to navigate the system to get what they want for their children)
  - SEAC tries to share information about the Parent Resource Center.
  - Parents feel they are not equal partners and report feeling bullied by central office.
- Teacher education training and PD
  - Teachers and school leaders need more training regarding the needs of students with disabilities and inclusive practices, and believe this training should focus on taking a holistic, total child approach.
  - Teachers need additional training regarding the integration of technology to support students with disabilities, as SEAC believes they are not doing an adequate job right now.
  - SEAC wants the Division to reorient toward core competencies model for students with disabilities, recognizing that not all students are college bound.
- Accountability/Structural and reporting arrangements within ACPS
  - Executive Director has limited ability to hold schools or principals accountable.
  - There is limited accountability in the implementation of IEPs with fidelity and that oversight is not strong by the principal or Division. There is concern that principals have no accountability for educational outcomes for students with disabilities.
  - Middle and high school special education services are perceived to be very weak in terms of meeting students' needs and the requirements of the IEP.
  - Overall, SEAC members observe inconsistency of practice in IEP development by the type of program students are in (e.g., citywide vs. co-taught) and in-service delivery. It is reportedly dependent on individual staff.
- Hiring trained and qualified staff
  - ACPS has improved in hiring quality personnel, but there is a perception that the Division has a history of nepotism in hiring (i.e., friends, neighbors, family). SEAC members note that this is changing, but the effects of the longstanding practices are still in evidence. There is also the perception that ineffective staff are relocated within the system rather than let go.
  - SEAC members also note that staffing gaps exist for too long. These unfilled positions stress teams in addressing students' needs.
- Service Delivery
  - SEAC is concerned that students' schedules are not developed with the big picture in mind (e.g., the range of services that a student needs and a student who has a combination of academic, behavioral, social skills, or other services). Students' schedules are still driven by the needs of the institution instead of the child.
  - Inclusion is not well executed; "inclusion is in the eye of the beholder;" what it looks like depends on your perspective as a teacher or parent or other role. It is done well in pockets, but it is not meaningfully executed in all schools.
  - There is concern that once children are assigned to citywide programs they are not able to transition to a more inclusive setting.
  - SEAC feels that leadership is critical but building leaders do not share the same commitment to students with special needs and their inclusion with the general education population. One members explained, "We have some really great people. When empowered by principals, you see the success." They observe high variability between schools regarding delivery of services and mentioned a decline in transition planning and employer partnership opportunities. Further, they noted that ACPS uses the same

interventions when they are not showing results for students. In addition, they observe inconsistent use of tools like AIMSweb.

- Expectations
  - Overall there is a sense that teachers have low expectations for students with disabilities.

Over time, SEAC has taken on a self-proclaimed “watch dog mentality,” which they believe was needed to push for change within ACPS. While this approach has given the group a powerful voice, there are reports that other parents do not believe SEAC is representative of them or their experiences and that SEAC’s role requires better delineation.

## Parent Support Groups

In addition to the SEAC, ACPS has several informal parent support groups. A Division-wide group, known as the “Panera Group,” named for their once weekly meeting location. Membership in the group is fluid and the meetings are left unstructured to provide a forum for parents and guardians to share concerns. The Executive Director of Specialized Instruction attends on nearly a monthly basis.

Parents also report that school-based special education support groups have also formed, and mentioned one specifically at Charles Barrett Elementary. This group administered a survey at their school concerning support for students with special needs, including topics such as collaborative planning time for faculty.

Parent focus groups shared a variety of strengths and concerns about the ACPS special education program. Parents noted that ACPS has some “really great” teachers and case managers, who come to IEP meetings prepared and know the cases of each student. Citywide programs are widely viewed as strong and supportive for students with challenging needs. They also shared a wide range of concerns, including:

- **Communication:** Parents indicated that communication with teachers and schools is “a big challenge,” with huge variation between schools and grades.
- **Advocacy:** Parents believe they have to advocate for services and that they always have to be ready for “battle” to advocate for what they believe their children need. Some noted that the Division is only responsive “if you raise enough of a ‘stink,’ and are loud enough.”
- **Transition planning:** Parents perceived transition planning in the Division as “weak,” with no clear plan for students to become their own advocates.
- **Student effort:** Parents believe that there is little appreciation among school staff for how hard kids with disabilities work to hold it together during the day.
- **Inconsistent Service Delivery between schools:** Parents indicated that they believe there is “massive” inconsistency between service delivery among schools, which could be in part because principals have a lot of autonomy.
- **Staff turnover:** Parents described the challenges posed by staff vacancies and staff turnover in terms of service delivery consistency.
- **Resources for parents:** Many parents don’t know about the Parent Resource Center (PRC) and the resources that are available to them there. Others know about it but cannot access it because the PRC is only open during the school day.

## Parent Resource Center (PRC)

The Anne R. Lipnick Special Education Family Resource Center, also known as the Parent Resource Center, or the PRC, is located on the Minnie Howard Campus of T.C. Williams High School. The PRC offers parents who are seeking guidance or support in navigating special education policies and procedures. They have developed a range of user-friendly materials for parents.

The PRC is open every school day from 8:30-3:30. According to PRC materials and ACPS staff, the following services are offered at no cost to all residents of Alexandria with children ages 2 to 22, regardless of whether they are enrolled in public school, private school, preschool, or at home:<sup>163</sup>

- A lending library with over 500 books and DVDs on a variety of disabilities and parenting issues;
- A list of service providers in the community, such as speech therapists, math tutors and respite care providers;
- Support groups for parents;
- A workshops series for parents on various disabilities and general parenting topics;
- Individual confidential consultations to help parents understand their child's special education services and to support them with the challenges of raising a child with a disability or learning difference.

The PRC is an office of ACPS within Specialized Instruction and is staffed by two full-time ACPS employees. Parents learn about the PRC in variety of ways: through PTA presentations, social media channels (e.g., Twitter and Facebook), a listserv, family engagement series, postcards sent out in four languages, newsletters, and flyers sent home with students and distributed at IEP meetings. PRC staff also make a monthly report to the SEAC of their activities including<sup>164</sup>:

- The volume of PRC Contacts
- Family Engagement Workshop Series and Other Workshops
- Raising Awareness of PRC/Community Outreach/Transition
- Support Groups
- Materials borrowed from the library
- Outreach activities

Despite efforts to publicize resources and supports for parents, staff note that awareness of the PRC is still limited. For example, a recent report to the SEAC in February 2018 indicated that the PRC had 145 people "following" and 119 "likes" on Facebook, and 59 Twitter followers (LearnwithThePRC). The listserv relies on the Division's email contact information for parents and has more than 1,299 subscribers. In the same report, PRC staff reported that the number of contacts was increasing, but overall, attendance at PRC events remained low.

PRC staff consult with individual parents on a range of issues. Unfortunately, they report that parents often come to them once a situation has escalated and that they are a last step before parents seek legal action. In addition, because they are Division employees, some parents expressed concern that their information would not remain confidential or that staff would remain impartial. However, because ACPS is a relatively small school division, PRC staff believe they can help parents access the right materials and resources quickly.

As a matter of access for families who speak languages other than English, the PRC works with translators to schedule Spanish-only parent events. PRC staff report that they encourage parents to advocate for themselves and their children through increased information. For example, the PRC uses YouTube to train parents in a specific process or topic. In addition, to providing families with information, the PRC also provides advocacy training/coaching to parents using an interactive avatar program that

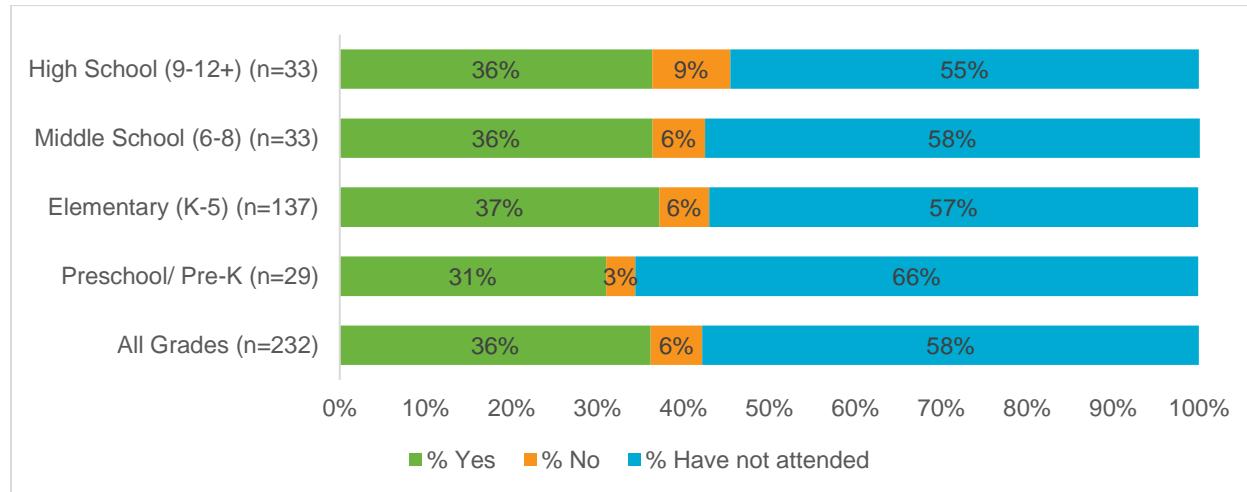
<sup>163</sup> ACPS. <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/prc>

<sup>164</sup> Parent Resource Center report to SEAC, February 9, 2018. <http://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/attachments/ca3fb6eb-14ba-4f9b-9446-50cff6dc918c.pdf>

offers parents the opportunity to practice in a low-stakes environment. The training helps parents develop confidence asking questions and in IEP meetings, such as asking about accommodations, etc.

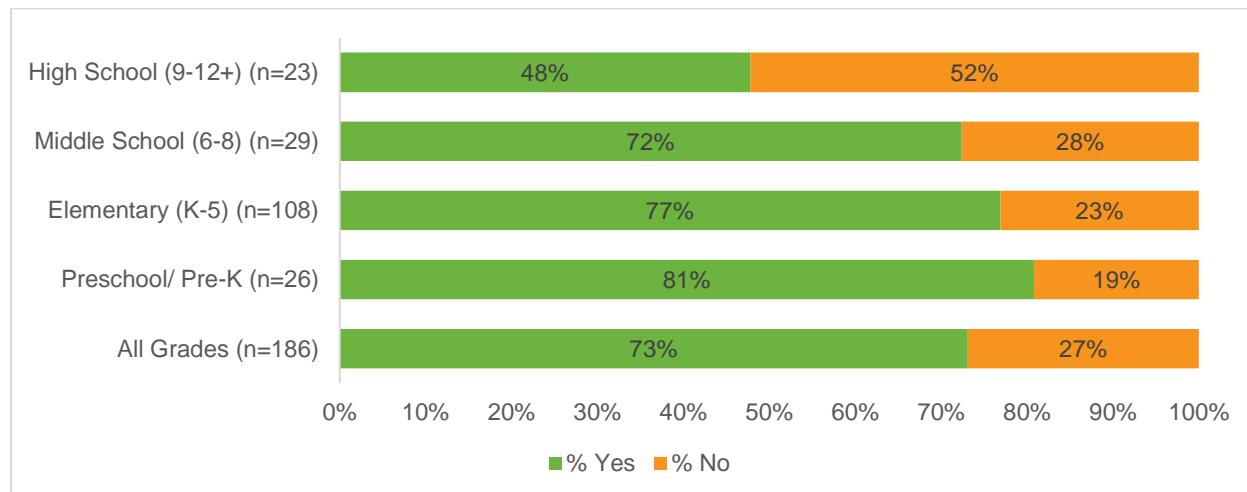
Some of the challenges related to awareness and usage of PRC resources, including attendance at events, were confirmed by responses to the parent survey. For example, regarding attendance, 58% of parents who responded to the survey had not attended any parent training or information sessions.<sup>165</sup> Among parents who did attend, the majority reported that the sessions were helpful.

**Exhibit 117. The parent training or information sessions that I have attended have been helpful to me.**



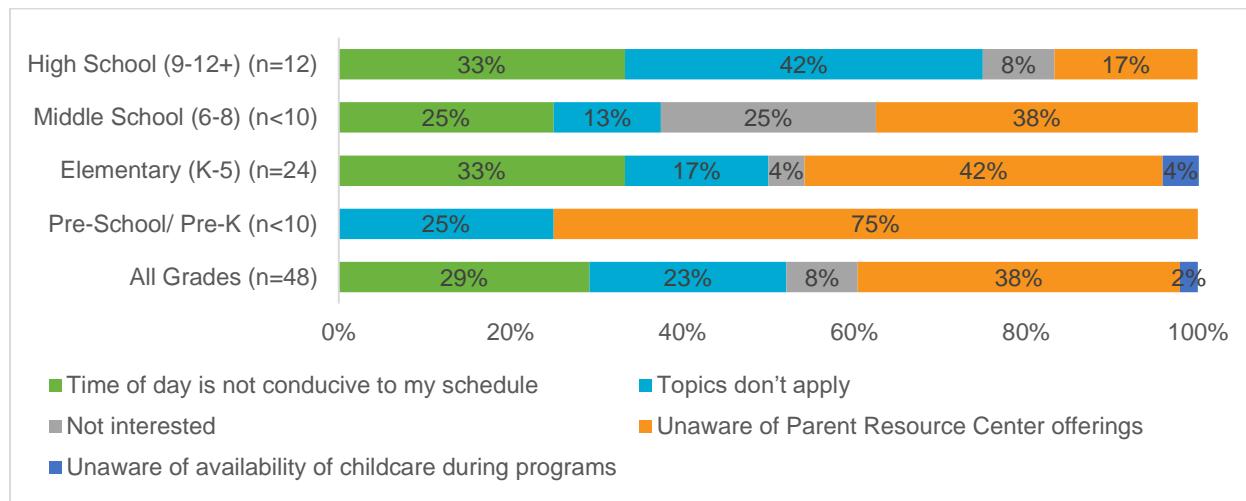
Regarding resources provided by the PRC, the majority of parents (73%) indicated that the PRC meets their needs, but the differences among grade levels reflect a broader pattern, with only 45% of parents of high school children agreeing, versus 81% of preschool/Pre-K parents.

**Exhibit 118. Do the resources at the Parent Resource Center meet your needs?**



<sup>165</sup> The survey question did not specify that these parent trainings and information sessions were specific to those offered by the PRC.

### If not, why?



Parents who disagreed were asked why the resources did not meet their needs. The largest proportion of parents reported that they were unaware of PRC offerings (38%), while 29% reported that the time of day of events was not conducive to their schedule, and 23% report that the topics of sessions did not apply to their situation. This was particularly true among high school parents (42%).

These findings were affirmed in focus groups where parents expressed concern about the timing of PRC events. Division staff also noted that the availability of resources during school hours limits who can access them. Additionally, parents noted that finding child care was a challenge, in that it is not always possible to find a child care provider skilled in caring for a child, or children, with special needs.

## **VIII. Recommendations**

PCG saw ample evidence that ACPS has a solid foundation on which to build. As noted throughout this report, the Division has many notable strengths including its significant commitment to inclusive practices, its passionate and knowledgeable staff, and its willingness to undertake this review as part of a continuous improvement cycle. These strengths have grown as a result of ACPS's investments in training and resources and its focus on providing high quality services and support to students with disabilities.

However, without a sense of urgency and an unrelenting commitment to implementing the recommendations in this report with fidelity, the Division will stagnate. Enacting change, the kind of change that will fundamentally improve outcomes of all students, and especially those with disabilities, requires focus, a strong vision from the superintendent and enacted by senior leadership staff, an appropriate allocation of resources, mandated professional development, and clear, non-negotiable, accountability measures. This type of reform requires the involvement and commitment of every staff person and a willingness to establish high expectations for students with disabilities. PCG has every reason to believe that ACPS is fully committed in carrying forward the recommendations in this report, will actively engage a wide range of stakeholders with the planning process, and is positioned for an upward trajectory.

The recommendations and action steps below address each of the components necessary to ensure that special education instruction/services identified for students are appropriate and meaningfully delivered, and that human and physical materials are available to provide identified instruction/services, expectations are clear, training is available, and ACPS/school leaders are accountable for their practices. When these issues are addressed, special education programming will be more appropriate and effective. The action steps listed under each recommendation below are organized in a manner that provides a comprehensive view of the activities required to initiate comprehensive change, and are not listed in priority order. Although components of the action steps can be implemented within a shorter timeframe, full-scale implementation of the recommendations may take three-to-five years.

## 1. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

- *Build on the MTSS process & curricular frameworks to develop/implement a unified and clear structure for **academic achievement, positive behavior, and social/emotional learning** for ALL students that incorporates a **universal design for learning***
- *Continue to invest in **Division-level and school-level training**, and capacity building to scale up and **improve fidelity of implementation***

### Action Steps

- 1) **Strengthen Core Instruction.** Focus on analyzing the expectations, quality and provision of strong and rigorous core instruction to all students first which involves changing the general education teachers' culture and perspectives.
- 2) **Reinstitute the MTSS Multidisciplinary Division Leadership Team.** Reinstitute the Division-level leadership team to review, update, operationalize and monitor the fidelity of implementation of the evidence-based practices delineated in the ACPS MTSS 2015 Framework.
- 3) **Provide Guidance on and Practices Delineated in ACPS MTSS 2015.** Update them so that they reflect that all ACPS schools must provide proactive, preventative services for struggling students of color as well as those that are culturally and linguistically diverse.
- 4) **Develop Training Plans, Course Components and Methods of Delivery.** The MTSS Division-level leadership team must also review and update the training plan, course components and methods for delivery to better support school cadres build internal capacity to implement practices with fidelity.
- 5) **Implement Best Practices for MTSS.** Incorporate best practices by providing cross-disciplinary teaming, access to professional development and including consistent language and practices.
- 6) **Consider Cultural Context of the Progress and Problem-Solving Processes.** Consider the implications of race, class, and culture constructs when developing student intervention plans. Be willing to abandon deficit models that emphasize students and/or families as the sole, inherent source of low student achievement outcomes.
- 7) **Monitor the SST Process.** Develop transparent and widely accessible key performance indicators (KPIs), data collection systems, and analysis to enable Division leadership at the central office and schools to review MTSS implementation and student growth, identify patterns, solve problems, and make informed decisions. Review and expand upon rubrics currently in use to have a universal set of documents that are relevant based on grade levels, and types of schools.
- 8) **Schedule Time to Meet, Problem Solve, Review Progress Monitoring Data and Provide Interventions.** Ensure principals schedule time for SST Teams to implement the problem-solving process, meet and review progress monitoring and intervention data, be empowered and be held accountable on adjusting school schedules to provide the necessary supports for all struggling students.
- 9) **Ensure Accountability.** Include in the Division's system of accountability measurable expectations for implementing the core curriculum and MTSS framework. Establish, communicate, support, and monitor clear expectations and "non-negotiables," establishing clear lines of accountability and responsibility across departments and schools, aligning them with relevant standards and guidance. Incorporate the expectations into administrator, principal, teacher, paraprofessional aides, and related-service personnel evaluations. Have schools incorporate activities into their school improvement plans that would enable them to meet these expectations.

**10) Implement Universal Design for Learning.** Provide clear guidance and mandatory training for all Division teachers on the principles of UDL and how these principles can be applied in the development of curriculum, instruction and assessment. A greater understanding and implementation of UDL can make learning accessible to all students and can help close achievement gaps between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

## 2. Special Education Referral, Assessment, and Eligibility Practices

- Develop a **systematic data analysis process** for analyzing special education referral, assessment, and eligibility practices in order to develop meaningful strategies to affect change
- Monitor **data trends over time** to determine patterns, use these data to: inform improvement strategies and consistency and appropriateness of practices (specifically for students in high-risk areas to prevent over-identification)

### Action Steps

#### 1) Early Childhood

- Continue to improve public awareness of EI and ECSE with a lens of meeting the needs of the underserved in the multicultural and linguistically diverse school community.
- Continue to review existing referral, screening, and evaluation practices to determine if these are both effective and efficient to adequately address the needs for culturally and linguistic diverse children for EI and ECSE.
- Examine current screening practices including locations where screenings and evaluations are conducted, and the personnel dedicated to support these processes to strengthen equity and access, transition between IDEA Part B and Part C, to link children struggling with needed EI and ECSE services.

#### 2) Special Education

- Make sure that general education interventions according to the step-by-step process delineated in the Division's handbooks supporting the implementation of MTSS are being implemented with fidelity throughout the Division.
- Make sure school level teams collect information from a wide range of sources so the result of the assessment team's integration and interpretation can be as unbiased as possible. Making sure to consider language, cultural background, and MTSS.
- Review referral, eligibility and placement data at the school level to discern patterns of over-representation as well as under-representation. Being aware of these patterns in schools can help administrators, teachers and assessment teams avoid similar pitfalls.

#### 3) English Learners

- Constitute a committee comprised of members of the EL and OSI departments, school practitioners and parent representative to review and update the Bilingual Team Handbook "Guidelines for Intervention and Assessment."
- Ensure that the guidelines clearly specify the exit criteria for English language support programs for English Learner students in special education.
- Disseminate the updated manual to all Division practitioners through a comprehensively planned and supported roll-out.
- Provide ongoing professional development to all educators responsible for implementing these guidelines to support the fidelity of Division practices and to all staff engaged in the evaluation process to address ELs' language acquisition and its consideration during special education evaluations.
- Implement practices to engage and involve parents of ELs and children with disabilities who are also English Learners (e.g., home language surveys or questionnaires).

- f) Implement strategies to engage native and non-native English speaking parents of children who are ELs so they can meaningfully participate as referenced in the practices below:
  - i) Post signs in public areas in several languages
  - ii) Employ bilingual staff proficient in the appropriate languages spoken in the community.
  - iii) Translate all related forms, notices, consent documents, and evaluations, including the ISP, IEP 504 Plan or EL Plan, as well as other instructional, informational, or key documents into the native language of the parent and provide oral interpreter assistance with documents for those whose language does not exist in written form.
  - iv) Use web-based IEP management technology to translate all IEP related documents, forms, notices and consents in real-time, providing these crucial educational documents before, during, and after IEP meetings, engaging families meaningfully in the special education process.

#### 4) Section 504

- a) Continue to refine and update the ACPS 504 Guidance Handbook annually.
- b) Continue to train and create opportunities for all practitioners to understand and implement these procedures as delineated in the ACPS 504 Guidance Handbook.
- c) Update the monitoring procedures to ensure that general education teachers are implementing 504 plans with fidelity.
- d) Continue to review the data of students with IHP to determine if they would benefit from the supports of a 504 Plan.
- e) Review and analyze the results of the internal 504 audit being implemented and develop a plan to address the findings.
- f) Consider allocating resources to support professional development that assists staff in making appropriate accommodations that will benefit all students.

### 3. Academic Optimism, Rigor, and High Expectations

- *Build a system-wide culture of **academic optimism and high expectations** for ALL students*
- *Create an **unrelenting expectation regarding instruction** that clearly communicates to schools, and the broader community that a key focus of the Office of Specialized Instruction is to ensure that students with disabilities make significant progress, to the extent possible, in the general education curriculum, receive rigorous standards-aligned instruction, and experience the high quality delivery of interventions, differentiation, accommodations, modifications and specially designed instruction in every class*

#### Action Steps

- 1) **Build Structures and Processes.** Emphasize in the training and support provided to principals the importance of building structures and processes in schools to increase **academic optimism** and nurture **a climate of acceptance, high expectations and achievement for all students**.
- 2) **Set Expectations for Organizing Schools.** Set expectations for principals to organize their schools to increase academic optimism and develop structures and processes that support and enable teaching and learning for all students.
- 3) **Build Master Schedules that Enable Collaboration.** Require schools to prioritize creating master schedules that enable general and special education teacher collaboration, joint planning, and professional development.
- 4) **Elevate Rigor.** Ensure that all professional development designed and delivered elevates rigor for all students and is focused on best practices for implementing strategies to motivate learners, sets high expectations, provide necessary supports, address differentiation and demonstrate mastery of learning.
- 5) **Provide Outcome Driven Professional Development.** Design all professional development so that it is a coherent, relevant and useful professional learning process that is measurable by indicators and provides professional learning and ongoing support to transfer that learning to practice.
- 6) **Implement Evidenced-Based Practices that Enable Student Success.** Implement evidence-based instructional practices that will impact increasing expectations, providing high levels of engagement, and integrating appropriate support and scaffolding to increase students' motivation.
- 7) **Measure Instructional Beliefs and Practices.** Conduct an annual survey to measure teachers' instructional beliefs and practices and analyze by school and role. Develop a plan for each school site to improve its results over time.

## 4. Inclusive Practices

- **Build upon ACPS's commitment to co-teaching** by continuing to provide professional development and coaching to improve collaboration and implement high yield co-teaching models
- **Establish policies and procedures** that clarify school level non-negotiable scheduling strategies, responsibilities for actively supervising and evaluating teaching teams for consistency and high-quality practice, and institutionalizing high yield co-teaching expectations

### Action Steps

- 1) **Implement Written Guidelines with Fidelity.** Refine current written guidelines, and consolidate guidance where appropriate, to provide clear expectations and directions to all and provide an institutionalized record to which all staff, including new teachers, can refer and be held accountable.
- 2) **Develop Scheduling Guidelines.** Develop scheduling guidelines that can be accessed as a resource through Canvas on the Division's website to support inclusive practices in schools. Provide ongoing training and support to schools to use and implement these guidelines. Consider clustering classes according to content area of instruction and assigning special education teachers as co-teachers to support students aligned to their content area of expertise. Provide guidance on when, where, and a minimum length of time co-teaching teams should collaborate.
- 3) **Provide Consistent, On-going, Mandatory Professional Development.** Professional development serves as the basis for creating common understanding and shared experiences among all staff and provides a foundation upon which other systems change supports can be anchored. Build upon the current professional development plan specific to co-teaching and ensure it is embedded in the larger Division-wide training plan. Create multiple avenues for this training, including more traditional workshops, job embedded coaching (i.e., observing and providing feedback to peers as they are conducting co-teaching lessons), in addition to expanding the cohort trainings.
- 4) **Create Effective Co-Teaching Teams.** When co-teaching teams have spent time to develop effective communication, have established a cohesive working partnership, and are seeing positive results in student achievement, administrators must seriously consider the investment in time and effort that it takes to create an effective partnership and seek ways to maintain these teams. Develop a plan to enable successful co-teaching teams, whenever possible, to remain together from year to year. Conduct a review of co-teaching teams annually to ascertain the success of the partnership and make changes to staffing pairs when needed.
- 5) **Create Accountability Structures.** Include in the Division's system of accountability measurable expectations for implementing co-teaching. Establish, communicate, support, and monitor clear expectations and "non-negotiables," establishing clear lines of accountability and responsibility across departments and schools, aligning them with relevant standards and guidance. Incorporate the expectations into administrator, principal, teacher, paraprofessional aides, and related-service personnel evaluations. Have schools incorporate activities into their school improvement plans that would enable them to meet these expectations.
- 6) **Develop Effectiveness Measures.** Develop a process to collect effectiveness measures on co-teaching models of support. Use the OSI co-teaching walkthrough tools to inform practice and crosswalk data to carefully consider how these practices impact to the Division's objectives and address student needs.

## 5. Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Targeted Interventions

- Use a variety of **quantitative and qualitative assessment data** to determine if interventions and SDI are being implemented with fidelity and use these data to determine the extent to which students with disabilities division-wide **are increasing** their achievement, social/emotional development, and positive behavior under the current configuration SDI & interventions
- Assess the **fidelity of implementation** and **effectiveness of SDI and targeted interventions for EACH student with a disability** by analyzing data
- Provide teachers and IEP teams with **ongoing training** so that they have the tools necessary to determine progress on IEP goals
- Review guidance and tools currently in use **to establish expectations** regarding regular data collection, problem-solving, and changes to instruction necessary to support student achievement and social/emotional growth

### Action Steps

- 1) **Enhance SDI Guidance.** Enhance current SDI guidance and resources available through Canvas to help teachers and administrators make stronger connections on where SDI is addressed in the IEP process and how to utilize the information to inform planning and instruction for co-teaching.
- 2) **Seamlessly Integrate High-Yield Co-Teaching Practices and SDI.** Place a stronger emphasis in the training, support and resources guiding the provision of specially designed instruction to support co-teaching.
- 3) **Design SDI with Results in Mind.** Train co-teachers in how to design, plan, implement and assess lessons for the students they are supporting using SDI from IEPs.
- 4) **Develop Effectiveness Measures Using SDI and Co-Teaching Walkthrough Tools.** Develop a process to collect effectiveness measures on the use of SDI during co-teaching. Use the OSI co-teaching and SDI walkthrough tools to develop the measures that inform practice, analyze the trend data to carefully consider how these practices, when paired together, impact the Division's objectives and address student needs, outcomes and results.
- 5) **Elevate Importance of SDI in IEP Training.** Ensure that all IEP training includes a strong component on how to address the students' need for SDI, document it, implement with fidelity, monitor, report on progress and is used to inform planning and instruction.
- 6) **Monitor SDI Effectiveness.** Develop a self-assessment tool to help IEP teams monitor SDI for effectiveness and provide training to strengthen compliance and practices.
- 7) **Communicate SDI Progress to Parents.** Consider developing guidance for IEP teams and case managers on how SDI progress is best communicated to parents. Require IEP teams to conduct progress monitoring.

## 6. Leadership and Accountability

- *Develop a multifaceted set of actions to specify how ACPS will incorporate **measures of accountability for schools and central office leaders** that are designed to ensure the delivery of a world-class education for all students*
- *Develop measures to drive **key strategies** for positive changes in behavior, processes, and culture, while **encouraging continuous improvement and innovation***

### Action Steps

- 1) **Establish Special Education Expectations.** From the Superintendent's and Chief Academic Officer's Offices, empower the Executive Director of Specialized Instruction with the authority to lead the Division's special education programming. Such authority means the Executive Director is in charge of special education for the division; he/she is responsible for implementing equitable and consistent use of resources, overseeing and implementing special education mandates coming from the state, ensuring that the program is adequately and equitably funded, and for supporting schools with sufficient and appropriate staff development. Additionally, the Director should have the license to initiate and lead mandatory site or Division-wide programming and direct special education decisions at the site-level.
- 2) **Develop Guidelines.** Be clear about the role of central office in supporting the learning of students receiving special education: schools must be responsible and accountable for the teaching and learning process while the OSI's role is to provide adequate resources, clear guidance, and professional development, and support schools in the consistent and effective implementation of programs and services.
- 3) **Revise Special Education Manual.** Consolidate existing guidance into an interactive, web-based ACPS special education manual to support user-friendly and transparent access to procedures/practices relevant to the management/operation of special education and to which school staff can be held accountable for implementing.
  - a. **Public Access.** Provide public access to the revised manual by posting the document on the ACPS special education webpage, and provide links to available on-line resources. Train staff on it and regularly update it with current information and resources.
  - b. **Content.** Include criteria, procedures and practices for each area relevant to the implementation of these recommendations, e.g., criteria for child find; referring students for a special education evaluation; inclusive instruction for preschool children; support for on-going needs of preschool children and school-aged students who are referred but are not evaluated or not qualified for services; expectations and tools to facilitate communication to teachers regarding the IEP-specified needs of students in each of their classes; participation of general education teachers in IEP meetings; role of various IEP participants and general/special education personnel in various circumstances, etc.
  - c. **Collaboration with Stakeholders.** Collaborate with preschool personnel, principals, other school-based groups, and SEAC representatives to consider information and resource links that would be useful for each relevant group to include in the manual.
  - d. **Parents/Families.** In collaboration with local parent and advocacy groups, plan face-to-face training and on-line modules to provide parents an understanding of the information in the manual. If feasible, publish a modified document appropriate for parents and supplement it with one-page brochures to further access to this information. Ensure training is accessible to parents with diverse linguistic needs and sensory limitations.

## 7. Inter-Departmental Collaboration

- *To leverage their collective resources and support to schools, strengthen the collaboration between OSI and other departments, specifically: 1) Human Resources, 2) Student Services, Alternative Programs, and Equity, 3) Elementary and Secondary Instruction, and 4) English Language Services.*
- ***Establish standing cross-functional work groups*** to meet on a regular schedule to jointly address Division processes and drive success in practices.

### Action Steps

- 1) **Identify Joint Initiatives.** Identify the areas of work that the Specialized Instruction department has in common with Human Resources, Student Services, Elementary and Secondary Instruction, and English Language Services (and referenced throughout this report), and establish respective responsibilities and collaboration required to leverage their collective resources.
- 2) **Establish Routine Meetings.** Establish a schedule for routine, collaborative meetings between OSI and these other departments, including the individuals necessary to share information, problem-solve, and resolve issues.
- 3) **Communicate and Develop Collaborative Decision Making.** Establish a consistent, collaborative, and integrative approach towards improvement by jointly setting goals for initiatives and creating cross-functional workgroups.
- 4) **Monitor Progress.** Set goals for all cross-departmental initiatives and determine key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure progress made on them.

## 8. Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Morale

- *Improve the Division's human capital system by:*
  - **devoting more time and resources to intentional recruitment, including performance measures in the application and selection processes;**
  - **providing new teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals with opportunities to build their skills and gradually assume increased responsibility;**
  - **offering new staff opportunities and time to grow; and**
  - **implementing professional learning systems that support continuous growth.**

### Action Steps

- 1) **Improve Retention Rates.** Review the Division's recruitment and hiring processes and develop a plan to improve retention rates for special education teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals. Monitor retention/data on a quarterly basis. Conduct staff focus groups of new teachers (1-5 years), senior teachers (6-10 years), and veteran teachers (11+ years) to further understand the challenges they face at their specific stage of teaching and what factors need to be in place for them to stay in their positions.
- 2) **Explore Incentives.** Explore the possibility of creating incentives (e.g., financial, supportive working conditions, induction programs, professional development, mentoring and support) to attract and retain highly effective special education teachers in the neediest schools. Consider providing signing bonuses and stipends to attract and keep special education teachers in the profession (condition based on number of years of employment).
- 3) **Rethink Recruitment.** Consider providing both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for teachers when designing recruitment programs and policies.
- 4) **Assess Teacher Assignments.** Ensure that teacher recruits hired and placed are the right fit for the school.
- 5) **Create Partnerships with Universities.** Partner with institutions of higher learning to better prepare future and existing special education teachers and paraeducators to become teachers.
- 6) **Develop Alternative Certification Programs.** Continue developing/supporting high-quality in-division alternative certification programs for critical shortage areas. If possible, fund the participants with a condition of X years of employment.
- 7) **Grow Your Own.** Grow your own teachers and paraprofessionals by providing them ongoing job-embedded professional development
- 8) **Create Incentives to Add-on Certification.** Provide incentives for out of field teachers to take the test to add special education certification and/or if already a special education teacher to add content area certification
- 9) **Support High Need Schools.** Consider placing interns for some of their field experiences in high-needs schools to develop confidence in practice in addressing the needs of the struggling learners.

## 9. Fiscal

- *Analyze allocation of personnel to ensure staff who support students with disabilities are employed in sufficient numbers and that adequate resources are available to meet student needs*
- *Continue to ensure that special education funding for schools and central office, takes into consideration:*
  - *the severity of student needs and types of support services needed*
  - *implementation of a full continuum of service delivery models*
  - *coaching support needed for school-based staff, and*
  - *compliance with special education legal requirements*

### Action Steps

- 1) **Conduct an In-Depth Analysis of Staffing Allocations.** Create a workgroup with representatives from school and central office leadership (including Special Education and Finance) to evaluate the current special education school-based funding model and assess the extent to which current staffing supports the intended outcomes of effective service delivery and the continued enhancement of co-teaching. If revisions are necessary, engage a broad group of stakeholders to develop and review them. Review personnel ratios and caseload data included in this study, reallocate or add resources to ensure that ACPS expectations regarding the provision of SDI/related services are reasonably capable of being met. Make the revised formula transparent and evaluate needed changes for the short and long term.
  - a. **Related Service Providers.** For speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists, consider how equitable caseloads can be maintained while improving stable school assignments; and establish expectations for collecting data and monitoring/showing student progress.
- 2) **Schedule Efficiently and Monitor Caseloads of School Personnel.** Maximize the use of the personnel resources available in schools to provide instruction and related services to students with disabilities by scheduling, monitoring and adjusting the caseloads to better utilize the existing resources with greater efficiency.
- 3) **Add Instructional Specialist Position.** At minimum, add 1.0 Instructional Specialist position to focus on: best instructional practices in ECSE classrooms, transition from ECSE to kindergarten process and decision making, supporting schools/teachers to ensure successful kindergarten transitions, and supporting needs identified for additional support in all elementary schools.
- 4) **Jointly Establish a CCEIS funding plan.** Determine how funds will be used more effectively to produce improved student outcomes and reduce the over identification of African American students with an emotional disability. Create a monitoring plan to assess, on an ongoing basis, if the funding allocation is having an impact and make adjustments as necessary. Ensure the plan is agreed upon and coordinated between OSI, Student Services, and Finance.
- 5) **Assess Cost Drivers.** Establish standards and protocols to monitor all high cost expenditures and costs that have been trending upward.
  - a. Develop and use standard reports that will help track trends in special education spending (e.g. Membership Enrollment Count, Personnel/Staffing, Allocations, Transportation, Private Placements, Litigation and IDEA Grant Management).
  - b. Eliminate multiple entry points for special education data in technology systems for cleaner data and help minimize errors that could impact special education funding.

- c. Develop internal processes for meeting with OSI Executive Director to review all budgets and expenditures for special education across multiple funding sources, plan for each year's cycle of IDEA entitlement grant submission and develop joint strategies to effectively manage and monitor costs.

## 10. Culture, Equity, and Parent Engagement

- *Identify and provide **systemic supports necessary for all students who are struggling in school***
- *Strengthen links between school and home to help **culturally and linguistically diverse parents** help their children learn and gain equal access to all ACPS educational programs and services*
- *Enhance parent and community engagement by creating **warm, respectful and welcoming environments** and be flexible in accommodating spectrum of family needs*
- *Respond to the **strengths in the diversity** to create a culture that promotes the **successful inclusion and integration of students with disabilities** and other underserved, at-risk and economically disadvantaged students*

### Action Steps

- 1) **Establish a Division Special Education Family Engagement Team.** Establishing a team of division- and school-level educators, staff members, family members, parents of students with disabilities, and community representatives for the planning process enables the Division to benefit from the collective perspectives they bring.
  - a. **Create a Vision Statement for Family Engagement.** Discuss core beliefs about family engagement and create a vision statement that expresses agreed-upon ideals. It can be shared with other stakeholders to build family engagement support across the Division.
  - b. **Develop a Plan to Strengthen Trusting Relationships.** Develop a plan that includes the following objectives (and includes others that ACPS identifies):
    - i. All staff learn about the assets and challenges among families in the school community through home visits.
    - ii. Teachers and staff listen without judgment and establish two-way communication channels with family members.
    - iii. Teachers across the Division greet families and students before school or at beginning of class, in their native languages when possible.
    - iv. Teachers make regular phone calls home with positive messages and ask for feedback from families.
  - c. **Develop Plan for Strengthening Connections to Student Learning.** Develop a plan that includes the following objectives (and includes others that ACPS identifies):
    - i. Division and school staff understand the barriers to their families in getting children to school and they engage in meaningful dialogue with families about community resources and the importance of attendance.
    - ii. Teachers hold class meetings to discuss with families how progress on English language acquisition is monitored and how families can support their English Learner student with a disability.
    - iii. Staff can engage in meaningful dialogue with families about how they can support their English Learner student and/or student with an IEP.
- 2) **Evaluate Family Engagement Annually.** Evaluate the implementation and impact of family engagement activities. Review the action plans for strengthening trusting relationships and strengthening connections to student learning with the family engagement committee.

## IX. Appendices

### Appendix A. Division Data Reviewed

The following list of documents were provided to PCG by ACPS and reviewed as part of PCG's document analysis process.<sup>166</sup>

1. Description of EC supports for EL and AT
2. EL/SPED Handbook
3. Blackboard weblink – Instructional Support for ELs with IEPs
4. Blackboard weblink – AT consult request form
5. Career and Transition Project SEARCH
6. Division Guidance – Coordinated Set of Activities
7. Division Guidance – Transition Plan Development Tips Rev 2014
8. Manual - Transition Requirements and IEP Online v2282017
9. Specialized Instruction PD Roster
10. 2017-18 school year calendar
11. 2017-2018 School Schedules
12. Staffing/allocation description of Related Services Personnel
13. Targeted Adult Assistance Planning Guide
14. Blackboard weblink - ACPS procedures and guidance
15. PDF of 2014 State Performance Indicators
16. PDF of 2015 State Performance Indicators
17. PDF of 2016 Performance State Indicators
18. 2017-18 WRES Scheduled 092217
19. 2017-18 WRES EL Schedule
20. ACPS SPED Legal Expenses FY 2017
21. TCW FGI 5 year FAMO Detail Report
22. 2016 VA On-Time Graduation and Dropout Rates\_v1
23. Sample CAAR 2016-17 SY
24. Sample SDBQ Pivot 2017
25. Sample - Incomplete Progress Report
26. Copy of Compliance Report March
27. Referral/ Eligibility Status Report – Jan 2017
28. List - Testing accommodations
29. Analysis of Transition Goals
30. ACPS 2020 Scorecard for the 2015-2016 School Year
31. Assessment Update Results from 2015-16
32. Quarterly Updates Q3 Attendance Tables 16-17
33. Quarterly Updates Q3 Discipline Tables 16-17
34. 2015-16 Family Engagement brochure
35. Information Document - Anne R. Lipnick Special Education Parent Resource Center
36. PRC report to SEAC June 2017
37. ACPS 2020 Data Dashboard
38. ACPSiDashboard\_ACPS Statistics
39. Assessment Update August 2016
40. School Quality Profiles

<sup>166</sup> During the comprehensive review, ACPS transitioned their document repository from Blackboard to Canvas. The list of documents and links reviewed reflects the Blackboard platform.

41. OT PT Report - 2012
42. 2012 Student Observation Summary
43. 2013 D/HoH resource list
44. 2013 D/HoH assessment tool
45. 2013 Deaf and HoH review
46. Internal Note Regarding Audiologist Needs
47. Professional Development presentations: SDI Writing, Co-teaching, SDI Reading, Matriculation to Middle School, SDI Interventions, Data Collection and Use,
48. New Teacher Training Powerpoint - 2017
49. Blackboard link to Instruction aligned with core standards and curriculum
50. Standards-Based IEP 1.25
51. Strategic Plan-2020
52. ACPS 2020 Scorecard for the 2015-2016 School Year
53. Division Strategic Plan ACPS 2020
54. Special Education Plan (all schools)
55. MTSS Manual
56. SOL pass rates for SWD 2012-13 through 2014-15
57. SOL pass rates for SWD 2013-14 through 2015-16
58. SOL pass rates for SWD 2014-15 through 2016-17
59. 2016 PowerPoint for Private School Consultation Meeting
60. Child Study Training presentations (Feb, March, April 2017)
61. Gen Ed Training v2015
62. Special Education Administrators Training revised
63. Blackboard link to Students Educated in Gened Classes
64. Citywide interventions and programs overview
65. List - Interventions for Students with IEPs
66. Change in Placement Protocol
67. Citywide Program Description
68. Parent Brochure – Citywide Program draft 11-30-15
69. External Report - Evidence Based practices for students with severe disabilities v2014
70. Citywide teachers by school 2017-2018
71. Curriculum Evaluation and Division Action Plan PowerPoint v2016
72. Curriculum Evaluation Memo and Report v2016
73. Data tables on SOLvV-program for SWDs
74. General Info - 1 Organization Chart from FY2017 Approved Budget
75. Sample Teacher Schedules – Inclusion, Self-Contained
76. Guidance on reading SOL v VAAP performance results
77. TAG Accountability Indicators program table
78. 2011 Follow-up Report to Sped Review
79. 2009 Sped Review Report

## Appendix B. PCG Team Members

**Dr. Jennifer Meller**, a Senior Consultant for PCG Education, brings expertise at the district level in the areas of data use, fiscal policy, and operational effectiveness as applied to special education, behavioral health, and school health services. She has a strong background in understanding the organizational policies and practices essential to support the instructional needs of students with disabilities and has worked with numerous districts and state departments of education across the county delivering special education consulting services. She has over 15 years of experience in project management, training, and educational policy and has managed a variety of projects for PCG Education that involve community/stakeholder engagement, data management, and process improvement. She has served as a subject matter expert on over a dozen full scale and targeted special education reviews nationally and served as the project manager for a research engagement with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation designed to inform the Foundation's Data Team about current educational trends and develop a strategy for future investments. Prior to joining PCG Education, Jennifer was the Director of Operations in the School District of Philadelphia's Office of Specialized Instructional Services, where she focused on implementing student-focused data management systems, oversaw several multi-million-dollar federal grants, and was responsible for policy and compliance. This work received written commendation from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Bureau of Special Education) and recognition from other urban school districts. Jennifer earned an Ed.D. in Educational and Organizational Leadership and a MS.Ed. in Higher Education Management, both from the University of Pennsylvania. She also has a B.A. in English from Dickinson College.

**Will J. Gordillo**, Senior Associate at PCG, currently supports projects focused on ELA and mathematics implementation throughout the United States. More specifically, he works to provide professional development that supports a successful transition to new standards with a focus on addressing the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Mr. Gordillo provides implementation and leadership support to PCG as a subject-matter expert in the areas of special education and gifted education. He addresses the presenting needs of his education clients as a thoughtful partner with a focus on business development, consulting services, targeted program reviews and technical assistance, program design and implementation, blended professional development and instructional coaching as well as special education instructional leadership, coaching, and mentoring. Prior to joining PCG in 2015, Mr. Gordillo served as Executive Director responsible for exceptional education for Palm Beach County school district, the 11<sup>th</sup> largest school district. He also previously led special education for Miami Dade County Public Schools, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest urban school district in the nation. As the special education leader, he was responsible for day-to-day management and operation including, fiscal and federal compliance for the provision of special education, Section 504, gifted education and psychological services. Mr. Gordillo earned his Master's Degree in Reading K-12 at the University of La Verne and his Bachelors in Special Education at Florida International University. He has completed postgraduate studies at Nova Southeastern University leading towards certification in Educational Leadership.

**Anna d'Entremont**, a Senior Consultant based in Boston, has nearly two decades of education management experience. She has worked with numerous state agencies and districts across the country to support initiative development, strategic planning and program review. Most of this work focuses on special education. Prior to joining PCG in 2008, Anna was the Director of Operations of the Edward W. Brooke Charter School in Boston, MA. In this role, she served as co-director and the operational leader of a high-performing K-8 urban charter school. Anna also worked as a Program Officer at New Visions for Public Schools, where she managed a diverse portfolio of initiatives designed to support and develop innovation in 85 new small high schools across New York City. Anna began her career as a bilingual kindergarten teacher for the Houston Independent School District and as an elementary school ESL teacher in the DC Public Schools. She is also a Teach for America alumna, completed graduate coursework in the Teaching of ESL at the University of St. Thomas, and received her Ed.M. in Education Policy from Teachers College, Columbia University, in Education Policy.

**Dr. Christine Donis-Keller**, Senior Associate at PCG, has worked in the field of education and evaluation research for 25 years. With PCG she has conducted a range of implementation and impact evaluations of state and district-wide school reform initiatives. Her expertise is in qualitative research, in particular development of research instruments and protocols conducting interviews, focus groups, surveys, and case studies to understand program effectiveness. At the Institute for Education and Social Policy at New York University (NYU), Christine led evaluations on the implementation of the Annenberg Challenge grant to New York City to foster the growth of smaller learning environments, a five-year evaluation of a national school reform model focused on K-3 literacy, and supported an evaluation of an inclusion program serving students with autism in New York City public schools. At the Center for Education Policy, Research and Evaluation at Univ. of Southern Maine, she led a three-year research study of school district consolidation, and provided research support to the legislative Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. She has worked as a research consultant for several organizations including the National Association for State Boards of Education and the Institute for Educational Leadership, and served as foundation program staff at the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership. She received her doctorate in the sociology of education from NYU and a B.A. from Barnard College. She has published research on theme high schools, the four-day school week, and school district reorganization.

**Matthew Scott**, a Consultant for PCG Education, provides project support and coordination for PCG Education clients. Mr. Scott brings 10 years of education management experience specializing in accreditation, strategic planning, program quality review, learning assessment processes, and education policy. Prior to joining PCG, Mr. Scott spent 7 years as the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Accreditation, and Regulatory Affairs for a specialized graduate school. In this capacity, Mr. Scott oversaw a portfolio of strategic growth and regulatory initiatives, including an initial institutional accreditation effort, new program development, enrollment management, and state approval processes. Mr. Scott began his career as a student advisor and leadership development professional for the University of the Pacific. Mr. Scott earned a M.A in Educational Administration and Leadership from the University of the Pacific, and a B.A. in Political Science from California State University, Long Beach.

## Appendix C. ACPS Staffing Ratios Compared to Other Districts 167168

### ACPS Staffing Ratios: Special Education Teacher, Paraprofessional, Speech-Language therapist, and Psychologist

Ratios for Special Educator, Paraeducator, Speech/Lang, and Psychologist	State	Total Enrollment	Incidence		Special Educator			Paraeducator			Speech/Lang			Psychologist		
			% Spec	Spec/All	Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:	
						Spec	All		Spec	All		Spec	All		Spec	All
Agawam Public Schools	MA	4,347	15.1%	656	39	16.8	111.5	100	6.6	43.5	15	43.7	289.8	3	218.7	1449.0
Alexandria City Public Schools	VA	15,105	11.6%	1,754	162	10.8	93.2	151	11.6	100.0	28	62.6	539.5	20	89.0	766.8
Atlanta Public Schools	GA	43,443	11.4%	4,950	431	11.5	100.8	224	22.1	193.9	65	76.2	668.4	22	225.0	1974.7
Anchorage School Dist	AK	48,154	14.1%	6,779	716.8	9.5	67.2	786.4	8.6	61.2	65	104.3	740.8	44.7	151.7	1077.3
Arlington Pub Sch	VA	21,231	13.9%	2,952	343	8.6	61.9	262	11.3	81.0	38	77.7	558.7	22	134.2	965.0
Austin Pub S D	TX	84,676	9.5%	8,062	772.5	10.4	109.6	824	9.8	102.8	70.5	114.4	1201.1	34.6	233.0	2447.3
Baltimore City Publ Sch	MD	82,824	15.5%	12,866	1,121	11.5	73.9	620	20.8	133.6	92	139.8	900.3	NA	NA	NA
Baltimore County P Sch	MD	107,033	11.3%	12,127	1025.4	11.8	104.4	2305	5.3	46.4	187.5	64.7	570.8	85.3	142.2	1254.8
Boston Public Schools	MA	54,966	21.0%	11,534	1200	9.6	45.8	800	14.4	68.7	147	78.5	373.9	48	240.3	1145.1
Bellevue SD	WA	18,883	10.3%	1,947	82.7	23.5	228.3	118.6	16.4	159.2	17.4	111.9	1085.2	17.3	112.5	1091.5
Bridgeman	CT	20,300	12.9%	2,618	204	12.8	99.5	254	10.3	79.9	25	104.7	812.0	33	79.3	615.2
Buffalo Public Schools	NY	46,583	16.6%	7744	753	10.3	61.9	439	17.6	106.1	109	71.0	427.4	62	124.9	751.3
Cambridge Publ Schools	MA	6,000	20.0%	1,200	176	6.8	34.1	103	11.7	58.3	20	60.0	300.0	22	54.5	272.7
Carpentersville	IL	19,844	15.8%	3,139	227	13.8	87.4	380	8.3	52.2	43	73.0	461.5	28	112.1	708.7
Chicago Public Schools	IL	397,092	13.7%	54,376	4,649	11.7	85.4	4,228	12.9	93.9	390	139.4	1018.2	261	208.3	1521.4
Cincinnati Publ Schools	OH	51,431	17.4%	8,928	457	9.5	112.5	801	11.1	64.2	62	144.0	829.5	57.7	154.7	891.4
Clark Cty School Dist	NV	309,476	10.4%	32,167	2,247	14.3	137.7	1,346	23.9	229.9	299	107.6	1035.0	180	178.7	1719.3
Cleve Hts-UnivHtsCty	OH	6,000	18.3%	1,100	83	13.3	72.3	58	19.0	103.4	7	157.1	857.1	8	137.5	750.0
Compton Unified SD	CA	26,703	11.2%	2,981	126	23.7	211.9	118	25.3	226.3	5	596.2	5340.6	14	212.9	1907.4
DeKalb 428	IL	6,249	14.1%	879	58	15.2	107.7	205	4.3	30.5	9	97.7	694.3	7.5	117.2	833.2
DesMoines Public Schls	IA	31,654	15.3%	4,854	493	9.8	64.2	358.5	13.5	88.3	37.3	130.1	848.6	11.5	422.1	2752.5
D.C. Public Schools	D.C.	48,991	17.6%	8,603	669	12.9	73.2	653	13.2	75.0	90	95.6	544.3	78	110.3	628.1
Davenport Comm Sch	IA	15,302	12.1%	1,857	188	9.9	81.4	287	6.5	53.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Deer Valley Unified SD	AZ	36,086	9.1%	3,289	190	17.3	189.9	229	14.4	157.6	49	67.1	736.4	108	30.5	334.1
Denver Public Schools	CO	78,352	11.7%	9,142	592	15.4	132.4	528	17.3	148.4	94	97.3	833.5	98	93.3	799.5
ESD 112	WA	13,764	14.4%	1,987	55	36.1	250.3	158	12.6	87.1	20	99.4	688.2	12	165.6	1147.0
Elgin U-46	IL	40,525	13.1%	5,304	252.8	21.0	160.3	288.5	18.4	140.5	71.9	73.8	563.6	20	265.2	2026.3
Everett Publ Schools	WA	6,100	17.2%	1,049	74	14.2	82.4	51	20.6	119.6	4	262.3	1525.0	5	209.8	1220.0
Fort Worth	TX	79,885	7.7%	6,144	520	11.8	153.6	450	13.7	177.5	73	84.2	1094.3	31	198.2	2576.9
Greenville County	SC	70,282	14.1%	9,894	463	21.4	151.8	376	26.3	186.9	93	106.4	755.7	25	395.8	2811.3
Houston Indepen SD	TX	200,568	8.7%	17,489	1,625	10.8	123.4	1,145	15.3	175.2	158	110.7	1269.4	NA	NA	NA
Kalamazoo Publ Schools	MI	12,100	13.8%	1,667	70	23.8	172.9	79	21.1	153.2	15	111.1	806.7	NA	NA	NA
Kent Pub Schools	WA	27,196	11.3%	3,069	148.7	20.6	182.9	318	9.7	85.5	32.3	95.0	842.0	25	122.8	1087.8
Lake Washington	WA	26,864	11.7%	3,145	155.1	20.3	173.2	241.5	13.0	111.2	32.6	96.5	824.0	24.7	127.3	1087.6
Kyrene School District	AZ	17,910	8.6%	1,544	141	11.0	127.0	124	12.5	144.4	27	57.2	663.3	14	110.3	1279.3
Lakota Local	OH	18,500	9.7%	1,800	126	14.3	146.8	120	15.0	154.2	39	46.2	474.4	18	100.0	1027.8
LAUSD	CA	521,880	12.7%	66,236	5,331	12.4	97.9	6,466	10.2	80.7	496	133.4	1051.2	514	129.0	1016.3
Lincoln	NE	1,060	12.1%	128	21	6.1	50.5	21	6.1	50.5	5	25.6	212.0	2	64.0	530.0
Madison Pub Schls	WI	27,185	14.0%	3,808	347	11.0	78.3	448	8.5	60.7	86	44.3	316.1	49	77.7	554.8
Marlborough Pub Sch	NJ	4,833	24.8%	1,198	141	8.5	34.3	115	10.4	42.0	7	171.1	690.7	4	299.5	1208.8
Memphis City	TN	110,863	15.0%	16,637	912	18.2	121.6	655	25.4	169.3	53	313.9	2091.8	58	286.8	1911.4
Miami-Dade	FL	376,264	10.6%	40,012	2,500	16.0	150.5	1,226	32.6	306.9	209	191.4	1800.3	206	194.2	1826.5
Milwaukee	WI	78,533	20.9%	16,406	1281	12.8	61.3	988	16.6	79.5	169	97.1	464.7	136	120.6	577.4
Montgomery Cty Sch	AL	146,812	11.7%	17,226	1,588	10.8	92.5	1,398	12.3	105.0	293	58.8	501.1	97	177.6	1513.5
Naperville 203	IL	17,982	11.0%	1978	150	13.2	119.9	237	8.3	75.9	33	59.9	544.9	22	89.9	817.4
New Bedford	MA	12,692	20.9%	2,655	204	13.0	62.2	205	13.0	61.9	26	102.1	488.2	9	295.0	1410.2
Oak Park Sch Dist 97	IL	5,400	16.2%	875	78	11.2	69.2	90	9.7	60.0	14	62.5	385.7	8	109.4	675.0
N. Chicago (in Dist.)	IL	3803	16.1%	614	39	15.7	97.5	27	22.7	140.9	8	76.8	475.4	5	122.8	760.6
Oakland Unified SD	CA	33,312	16.2%	5401	404	13.4	82.5	175	30.9	190.4	47	114.9	708.8	43.5	124.2	765.8
Pittsburgh Pub Schools	PA	28,000	18.2%	5,096	359	14.2	78.0	252	20.2	111.1	40	127.4	700.0	16	318.5	1750.0
Portland Public Schools	OR	46,596	14.0%	6,513	355	18.3	131.3	535	12.2	87.1	92	70.8	506.5	56	116.3	832.1
Prince William County Schools	VA	90,930	10.1%	9,148	774	11.8	117.5	362	25.3	251.2	67	136.5	1357.2	32	285.9	2841.6
Providence	RI	23,695	18.8%	4460	340	13.1	69.7	339	13.2	69.9	40	111.5	592.4	28	159.3	846.3
Renton	WA	14,343	14.7%	2,108	129	16.3	111.2	294	7.2	48.8	20	105.4	717.2	15	140.5	956.2
Rockford Pub S	IL	28,973	14.0%	4,065	336	12.1	86.2	334	12.2	86.7	49	83.0	591.3	24	169.4	1207.2
Round Rock	TX	43,000	7.7%	3,313	369	9.0	116.5	171	19.4	251.5	41	80.8	1048.8	29	114.2	1482.8
San Diego Unified SD	CA	132,500	12.3%	16,300	1,100	14.8	120.5	1,300	12.5	101.9	196	83.2	676.0	129	126.4	1027.1
Saugus	MA	3,012	15.3%	462	28	16.5	107.6	29	15.9	103.9	6	77.0	502.0	NA	NA	NA
Sch Dist of Philadelphia	PA	168,181	20.0%	33,686	1,535	21.9	109.6	610	55.2	275.7	99	340.3	1698.8	100	336.9	1681.8
Scottsdale	AZ	26,544	10.9%	2,891	246	11.8	107.9	230	12.6	115.4	39.4	73.4	673.7	28.4	101.8	934.6
Shelby County (Memphis)	TN	114,760	12.7%	14,556	852	17.1	134.7	768	19.0	149.4	55	264.7	2086.5	60	242.6	1912.7
St. Paul	MN	38,086	18.8%	7,152	523	13.7	72.8	536	13.3	71.1	97	73.7	392.6	19	376.4	2004.5
Sun Prairie Area 5 Dist	WI	6,656	10.5%	697	62	11.2	107.4	93	7.5	71.6	14	49.8	475.4	7	99.6	950.9
Tacoma Pub Sch	WA	32,412	12.0%	3,894	172.5	22.6	187.9	223	17.5	145.3	33.6	115.9	964.6	27	144.2	1200.4
Tucson Unified SD	AZ	56,000	14.5%	8,092	409	19.8	136.9	419	19.3	133.7	61	132.7	918.0	54	149.9	103

## ACPS Staffing Ratios: Social Worker, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy

Ratios for Social Workers, Nurses, OTs & PTs	State	Total Student Enrollment	Total Special Ed	Social Worker			Nursing (School/RN, etc.)			Occupational Therapy		Physical Therapy		
				Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio		Number	
					Spec	All		Spec	All		Spec	All		
Agawam Public Schools	MA	4,347	656	NA	NA	NA	8	82.0	543.4	3	218.7	3	218.7	
Alexandria City Public Schools	VA	15,105	1,754	24	73.1	629.4	19	92.3	795.0	4	438.5	1.5	1169.3	
Atlanta Public Schools	GA	48,154	6,779	NA	NA	NA	112.8	60.1	426.9	21.9	309.5	7.8	869.1	
Anchorage School Dist	AK	43,443	4,950	30	165.0	1448.1	58	85.3	749.0	12	412.5	3	1650.0	
Arlington Pub Sch	VA	21,231	2,952	15	196.8	1415.4	30	98.4	707.7	20	147.6	6	492.0	
Austin Pub S D	TX	84,676	8,062	21	383.9	4032.2	68	118.6	1245.2	19	424.3	13	620.2	
Baltimore City Publ Sch	MD	82,824	12,866	193	66.7	429.1	78	164.9	1061.8	20	643.3	5	2573.2	
Baltimore County P Sch	MD	107,033	12,127	48.7	249.0	2197.8	179.8	67.4	595.3	65.2	186.0	27	449.1	
Boston Public Schools	MA	18,883	1,947	4	486.8	4720.8	13.2	147.5	1430.5	5.3	367.4	5.3	367.4	
Bellevue SD	WA	54,966	11534	NA	NA	NA	100	115.3	549.7	67	172.1	17	678.5	
Bridgeport	CT	20,300	2,618	38	68.9	534.2	28	93.5	725.0	7	374.0	2	1309.0	
Buffalo Public Schools	NY	46,583	7744	48.5	159.7	960.5	NA	NA	NA	75	103.3	29	267.0	
Cambridge Publ Schools	MA	6,000	1,200	16	75.0	375.0	0	NA	NA	16	75.0	7	171.4	
Carpentersville	IL	19,844	3,139	36.5	86.0	543.7	27.5	114.1	721.6	22	142.7	6	523.2	
Chicago Public Schools	IL	404,151	50,566	355.7	142.2	1136.2	334	151.4	1210.0	115	439.7	35	1444.7	
Cincinnati Pub Schools	OH	51,431	8,928	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	19	469.9	5	1785.6	
Clark Cty School Dist	NV	309,476	32,167	NA	NA	NA	173	185.9	1788.9	68	473.0	29	1109.2	
Cleve Hts-UnivHtsCty	OH	6,000	1,100	7	157.1	857.1	5	220.0	1200.0	2	550.0	1	1100.0	
Compton Unified SD	CA	26,703	2981	1	2981.0	26703.0	1	2981.0	26703.0	1.5	1987.3	0.5	5962.0	
DeKalb 428	IL	6,249	879	8	109.9	781.1	7	125.6	892.7	3.4	258.5	1.3	676.2	
DesMoines Public Schls	IA	31,654	4,854	25.8	188.1	1226.9	58.4	83.1	542.0	7	693.4	4.8	1011.3	
D.C. Public Schools	D.C.	48,991	8,603	90	95.6	544.3	127	67.7	385.8	48	179.2	16	537.7	
Davenport Comm Sch	IA	15,302	1,857	NA	NA	NA	7	265.3	2186.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Deer Valley Unified SD	AZ	36,086	3,289	NA	NA	NA	37	88.9	975.3	19	173.1	4	822.3	
Denver Public Schools	CO	78,352	9,142	74	123.5	1058.8	77	118.7	1017.6	25	365.7	12	761.8	
ESD 112	WA	40,525	5,304	56	94.7	723.7	59.5	89.1	681.1	25.2	210.5	4	1326.0	
Elgin U-46	IL	13,764	1,987	NA	NA	NA	5	397.4	2752.8	6	331.2	3	662.3	
Everett Pub Schools	WA	6,100	1,049	2	524.5	3050.0	11	95.4	554.5	2	524.5	3	349.7	
Fort Worth	TX	79,885	6,144	NA	NA	NA	106	58.0	753.6	16	384.0	10	614.4	
Greenville County	SC	70,282	9,894	20	494.7	3514.1	132	75.0	532.4	14	706.7	4	2473.5	
Houston Indepen SD	TX	200,568	17,489	26	672.7	7714.2	25	699.6	8022.7	17	1028.8	8	2186.1	
Kalamazoo Pub Schools	MI	12,100	1,667	5	333.4	2420.0	2	833.5	6050.0	4	416.8	3	555.7	
Kent Pub Schools	WA	27,196	3069	2.2	1395.0	12361.8	NA	NA	NA	12.8	239.8	4.8	639.4	
Lake Washington	WA	17,910	1,544	NA	NA	NA	4	386.0	4477.5	2	772.0	2	772.0	
Kyrene School District	AZ	26864	3145	NA	NA	NA	23.6	133.3	1138.3	19.3	163.0	3.3	953.0	
Lakota Local	OH	18,500	1,800	6	300.0	3083.3	14	128.6	1321.4	8	225.0	2	900.0	
LAUSD	CA	521,880	66,236	94	704.7	5552.5	164	402.9	3174.3	250	264.8	45	1487.1	
Lincoln	NE	1,060	128	5	25.6	212.0	2	64.0	530.0	2	64.0	1	128.0	
Madison Pub Schls	WI	27,185	3,808	68	56.0	399.8	38	100.2	715.4	34	112.0	13	292.9	
Marlborough Pub Sch	NJ	4,835	1,198	9	133.1	537.2	10	119.8	483.5	4	299.5	2	599.0	
Memphis City	TN	110,863	16,637	55	302.5	2015.7	68	244.7	1630.3	11	1512.5	9	1848.6	
Miami-Dade	FL	376,264	40,012	NA	NA	NA	206	194.2	1826.5	65	615.6	23	1739.7	
Milwaukee	WI	146,812	17,226	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	112	153.8	61	282.4	
Montgomery Cty Sch	AL	78533	16,406	140	117.2	561.0	101	162.4	777.6	30	546.9	13	1262.0	
Naperville 203	IL	17982	1978	27	73.3	666.0	29	68.2	620.1	4	494.5	3	659.3	
New Bedford	MA	12,692	2,655	67	39.6	189.4	30	88.5	423.1	11	241.4	3	885.0	
Oak Park Sch Dist 97	IL	3,803	614	10	61.4	380.3	NA	NA	NA	3.6	170.6	1.6	383.8	
N. Chicago (in Dist.)	IL	5,400	875	12	72.9	450.0	8	109.4	675.0	7	125.0	1	875.0	
Oakland Unified SD	CA	28,000	5,096	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Pittsburgh Pub Schools	PA	33,312	5315	19	279.7	1753.3	30.8	172.6	1081.6	12	442.9	2	2657.5	
Portland Public Schools	OR	46,596	6,513	10	651.3	4659.6	NA	NA	NA	20	325.7	9	723.7	
Prince William County Schools	VA	90,930	9,148	4	2287.0	22732.5	NA	NA	NA	22	415.8	9	1016.4	
Providence	RI	23,695	4460	35	127.4	677.0	NA	NA	NA	11.5	387.8	4.5	991.1	
Renton	WA	14,343	2,108	0	NA	NA	17	124.0	843.7	15	140.5	3	702.7	
Rockford Pub S	IL	28,973	4,065	26	156.3	1114.3	32	127.0	905.4	12.5	325.2	4.5	903.3	
Round Rock	TX	43,000	3,313	NA	NA	NA	1	331.0	43000.0	10	331.3	3	1104.3	
San Diego Unified SD	CA	132,500	16,300	NA	NA	NA	129	126.4	1027.1	40	407.5	10	1630.0	
Saugus	MA	3,012	462	4	115.5	753.0	5	92.4	602.4	2	231.0	1	462.0	
Sch Dist of Philadelphia	PA	168,181	33,686	NA	NA	NA	280	120.3	600.6	20	1684.3	20	1684.3	
Scottsdale	AZ	26,544	2,891	NA	NA	NA	31	93.3	856.3	13.8	209.5	3.8	760.8	
Shelby County (Memphis)	TN	114760	14556	66	220.5	1738.8	79	184.3	1452.7	29.22	498.2	12.84	1133.6	
St. Paul	MN	38,086	7,152	92	77.7	414.0	33	216.7	1154.1	36	198.7	12	596.0	
Sun Prairie Area S Dist	WI	6,656	697	8	87.1	832.0	1	697.0	6656.0	5	139.4	2	348.5	
Tacoma Pub Schl	WA	32,412	3,894	NA	NA	NA	1.2	3245.0	27010.0	19	204.9	11	354.0	
Tucson Unified SD	AZ	56,000	8,092	26	311.2	2153.8	53	152.7	1056.6	10	809.2	4	2023.0	
Washeoe County Dist	NV	63,310	8,551	NA	NA	NA	35	244.3	1808.9	12	712.6	7	1221.6	
Williamson Cty Schl	TN	12,725	1688	19	88.8	669.7	7	241.1	1817.9	11	153.5	7	241.1	
West Aurora SD	IL	30,942	4,093	NA	NA	NA	37	110.6	836.3	22	186.0	5	818.6	
Worcester	MA	24,825	5,172	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	12	431.0	5	1034.4	
<b>Averages</b>				<b>339</b>		<b>2846</b>		<b>332</b>		<b>3005</b>		<b>410</b>		<b>1028</b>

**ACPS Staffing Ratios: Percentage of Students with IEPs of Total Enrollment & Students with IEPs to Staff Ratio in Ascending Order**

Rank	% IEPs	Special Educators	Paraeducators	Speech/Lang Pathologists	Psychologists	Social Workers	Nurses	Occupational Therapists	Physical Therapists
1	7.7%	6.1	4.3	25.6	30.5	25.6	58.0	64.0	128.0
2	7.7%	6.8	5.3	43.7	54.5	39.6	60.1	75.0	171.4
3	8.6%	8.5	6.1	44.3	64.0	56.0	64.0	103.3	218.7
4	8.7%	8.6	6.5	46.2	77.7	61.4	67.4	112.0	241.1
5	9.0%	9.0	6.6	49.8	79.3	66.7	67.7	125.0	267.0
6	9.1%	9.5	7.1	57.2	89.0	68.9	68.2	139.4	282.4
7	9.5%	9.6	7.2	58.8	89.9	72.9	75.0	140.5	292.9
8	9.7%	9.8	7.5	59.9	93.3	73.1	82.0	142.7	348.5
9	10.1%	9.9	8.3	60.0	99.6	73.3	83.1	147.6	349.7
10	10.3%	10.3	8.3	62.5	100.0	75.0	85.3	153.5	354.0
11	10.4%	10.4	8.5	62.6	101.8	77.7	88.5	153.8	367.4
12	10.5%	10.8	8.6	64.7	109.4	86.0	88.9	163.0	383.8
13	10.6%	10.8	9.7	67.1	110.3	87.1	89.1	170.6	449.1
14	10.9%	10.8	9.7	70.8	110.3	88.8	92.3	172.1	462.0
15	11.0%	11.0	9.8	71.0	112.1	94.7	92.4	173.1	492.0
16	11.2%	11.0	10.2	73.0	112.5	95.6	93.3	179.2	523.2
17	11.3%	11.2	10.3	73.4	114.2	109.9	93.5	186.0	537.7
18	11.3%	11.2	10.4	73.7	116.3	115.5	95.4	186.0	555.7
19	11.4%	11.5	11.1	73.8	117.2	117.2	98.4	198.7	596.0
20	11.6%	11.5	11.3	76.2	120.6	123.5	100.2	204.9	599.0
21	11.7%	11.7	11.6	76.8	122.8	127.4	109.4	209.5	614.4
22	11.7%	11.8	11.7	77.0	122.8	133.1	110.6	210.5	620.2
23	11.7%	11.8	12.2	77.7	122.8	142.2	114.1	218.7	639.4
24	12.0%	11.8	12.2	78.5	124.2	156.3	115.3	225.0	659.3
25	12.1%	11.8	12.3	80.4	124.9	157.1	118.6	231.0	662.3
26	12.1%	12.1	12.5	80.8	126.4	159.7	118.7	239.8	676.2
27	12.3%	12.4	12.5	83.0	127.3	165.0	119.8	241.4	678.5
28	12.7%	12.8	12.6	83.1	129.0	188.1	120.3	258.5	702.7
29	12.7%	12.8	12.6	83.2	129.8	196.8	124.0	264.8	723.7
30	12.9%	12.9	12.9	84.2	134.2	220.5	125.6	299.5	760.8
31	13.1%	13.0	13.0	95.0	137.5	249.0	126.4	309.5	761.8
32	13.3%	13.1	13.0	95.6	140.5	279.7	127.0	325.2	772.0
33	13.5%	13.2	13.2	96.5	142.2	300.0	128.6	325.7	818.6
34	13.7%	13.3	13.2	97.1	144.2	302.5	133.3	331.2	822.3
35	13.8%	13.3	13.3	97.3	149.9	311.2	147.5	331.3	869.1
36	13.9%	13.4	13.5	97.7	151.7	333.4	151.4	365.7	875.0
37	14.0%	13.7	13.7	99.4	154.7	383.9	152.7	367.4	885.0
38	14.0%	13.8	14.1	102.1	159.3	486.8	162.4	374.0	900.0
39	14.0%	14.1	14.4	104.3	165.6	494.7	164.9	384.0	903.3
40	14.1%	14.2	14.4	104.7	169.4	524.5	172.6	387.8	953.0
41	14.1%	14.2	15.0	105.4	177.6	651.3	184.3	407.5	991.1
42	14.1%	14.3	15.3	106.4	178.7	672.7	185.9	412.5	1011.3
43	14.4%	14.3	15.9	107.6	194.2	704.7	194.2	415.8	1016.4
44	14.5%	14.8	16.4	110.7	198.2	1395.0	216.7	416.8	1034.4
45	14.7%	15.2	16.6	111.1	208.3	2287.0	220.0	424.3	1100.0
46	15.0%	15.4	16.7	111.1	209.8	2981.0	241.1	431.0	1104.3
47	15.1%	15.7	17.3	111.5	212.9		244.3	438.5	1109.2
48	15.3%	16.0	17.5	111.9	218.7		244.7	439.7	1133.6
49	15.3%	16.3	17.6	114.4	225.0		265.3	442.9	1169.3
50	15.5%	16.5	18.4	114.9	231.1		386.0	469.9	1221.6
51	15.8%	16.8	19.0	115.9	233.0		397.4	473.0	1262.0
52	16.1%	17.1	19.0	127.4	240.3		402.9	494.5	1309.0
53	16.2%	17.3	19.3	130.1	242.6		697.0	498.2	1326.0
54	16.2%	18.1	19.4	132.7	265.2		699.6	524.5	1444.7
55	16.6%	18.2	20.2	133.4	285.9		833.5	546.9	1487.1
56	17.2%	18.3	20.6	136.1	286.8		2981.0	550.0	1630.0
57	17.4%	19.5	20.8	136.5	295.0		3245.0	615.6	1650.0
58	17.6%	19.8	21.1	139.4	299.5		3313.0	643.3	1684.3
59	18.2%	20.3	22.1	139.8	318.5			693.4	1739.7
60	18.3%	20.4	22.7	144.0	336.9			706.7	1785.6
61	18.8%	20.6	23.9	157.1	376.4			712.6	1848.6
62	18.8%	21.0	25.3	171.1	395.8			772.0	2023.0
63	20.0%	21.4	25.3	191.4	422.1			809.2	2186.1
64	20.0%	21.9	25.4	262.3				1028.8	2473.5
65	20.8%	22.6	26.3	264.7				1512.5	2573.2
66	20.9%	23.5	26.3	313.9				1684.3	2657.5
67	20.9%	23.7	30.9	340.3				1987.3	5962.0
68	21.0%	23.8	32.6	596.2					
69	24.8%	36.1	55.2						
<b>Avg.</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>113.9</b>	<b>170.4</b>	<b>280.7</b>	<b>226.4</b>	<b>409.6</b>	<b>1027.6</b>

## Appendix D. Explanation of Terms

The following is a list of terms used in the report with a brief explanation of their meaning. When applicable, website addresses are provided for more information. Appendix E lists the terms by their acronyms.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).** The ADA is a federal wide-ranging civil rights law that prohibits, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act have the same requirements for school districts. (<http://www.ada.gov/>)

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** is a chronic condition that affects millions of children and often persists into adulthood. The condition can make it hard for a person to sit still, control behavior, and pay attention. These difficulties usually begin before the person is 7 years old. However, these behaviors may not be noticed until the child is older. ADHD includes some combination of problems, such as difficulty sustaining attention, hyperactivity and impulsive behavior.

(<http://nichcy.org/disability/specific/adhd>)

**Assistive Technology (AT)** includes a piece of equipment or product system that may be used by a person with a disability to perform specific tasks, improve functional capabilities, and become more independent. It can help redefine what is possible for people with a wide range of cognitive, physical, or sensory disabilities. AT can ensure that students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) by allowing access to the general education curriculum and settings, providing opportunities for active participation with same age peers, and facilitating progress toward their educational goals. In addition, AT can significantly impact independence, self-expression, self-esteem, and overall quality of life. (<http://www.vats.org/Default.htm>)

**Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervention Services (CCEIS)** are defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as services provided to students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) 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. Under specified circumstances, school districts may or must spend 15% of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds for these services.

([http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/ceis\\_pg3.html](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/ceis_pg3.html))

**Differentiated Instruction** is tailored to the learning preferences of different learners. Learning goals are the same for all students, but the method or approach of instruction varies according to the preferences of each student or what research has found works best for students like them.

(<http://www.ed.gov/technology/draft-netp-2010/individualized-personalized-differentiated-instruction - see also, http://www.diffcentral.com/index.html>)

**English Learner (EL).** Individuals learning the English language in addition to their native language.

**Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA).** First enacted in 1965, ESSA replaces the 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act, the primary federal law that impacts K-12 public education. The Act emphasizes systematic, comprehensive educational reform through improving equity, academic accountability, as well as curriculum, resources, and teacher quality. (<https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=ft>)

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).** Both Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require school districts to provide FAPE to students identified as having a disability. Section 504 covers students with disabilities who receive special education and/or supplementary aids and services, including related services. IDEA excludes students with disabilities who do not need special education services and only need supplementary aids and services, including related services. (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html>; and <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html>) Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Federal legislation that protects the privacy of students' personally identifiable information.

The law applies to all schools receiving funds from the U.S. Department of Education. (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpcos/ferpa/index.html>) Functional Life Skills is a countywide program designed for students with significant cognitive impairments coexisting with significant deficits in adaptive behaviors. The program includes a focus on functional daily living skills and communication.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** provides federal funding to state and local education agencies and requirements for the provision of special education and related services to eligible school aged students with disabilities. The law also provides funding and requirements for early intervention services for children birth through two. (<http://idea.ed.gov/>)

**Individual Education Plan (IEP)**. A written document that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting based on detailed IDEA requirements. The IEP has various components including each student's present levels of academic achievement/functional performance; measurable annual goals and benchmarks/short-term objectives; progress monitoring; services and program modifications/supports; the educational setting for services; assessment requirements; and postsecondary transition services and activities. (<http://nichcy.org/schoolage/iep/iepcontents>)

**Local Education Agency (LEA)** includes school divisions, such as the Alexandria City Public Schools.

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** is a term used to describe a student who is limited in English proficiency and who has not mastered English in the four domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Other terms often used to describe Limited English Proficient are ELL (English Language Learners) and EL (English Learner). (<http://www.education.com/definition/lep-limited-english-proficient/>)

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** is a core principle of Section 504 and IDEA that requires to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with those who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

**Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** is a framework supports the early identification of students struggling in academic and behavioral areas so that they may be provided with systematically applied strategies and targeted instruction at varying levels of intervention. It is an educational practice designed to ensure that all students have access to effective instruction and support to achieve positive outcomes. It is designed to reduce achievement gaps for all students, including general education students, English learners (ELs), and students receiving special education services. In addition, through this process students who are excelling may be identified and provided with enriched instruction and activities. (*Common Core State Standards and Diverse Students: Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support*)

**Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**. The U.S. Department's Office for Civil Rights has the responsibility for enforcing various civil rights laws pertaining to school districts, including Section 504. (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>)

**Parent Resource Center (PRC)**. APS's PRC is a resource and information center for families, staff and community members with programs and activities designed to provide support to families. The PRC has a great deal of materials geared toward families of children with special needs, yet also has many resources for families seeking information on general parenting topics as well. (<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/397>)

**Response to Intervention (RtI)**. Rigorous implementation of RtI includes a combination of high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction; assessment; and evidence-based intervention. Comprehensive RtI implementation will contribute to more meaningful identification of learning and behavioral problems, improve instructional quality, provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed in school, and assist with the identification of learning disabilities and other disabilities. (<http://www.rti4success.org>)

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504 or 504)** is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html>)

**Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).** The Virginia Department of Education requires each school division to have a special education advisory committee to provide advice about the unmet needs in the education of children with disabilities; assist in the development of long-range plans designed to provide needed services for children with disabilities; participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities; submit periodic reports to the school board; and assist the school division in interpreting educational plans to the community for meeting the needs of children with disabilities. SEAC carries out this purpose for the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). (<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/1233>) **Standards of Learning (SOL)** describe the Commonwealth's expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health and physical education, and driver education.

([http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards\\_docs/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/index.shtml))

**State Performance Plan (SPP).** IDEA requires states to monitor school districts under an SPP that includes baseline data, targets and improvement activities for indicators specified by the U.S. Department of Education. ([http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/reports\\_plans\\_stats/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/index.shtml))

**Student Support Team (SST).** The SST is an informal collaborative process that is designed to help promote students' success in the regular education classroom. Intervention strategies such as alternative or modified learning instruction and/or behavior management techniques may be developed to: improve the student's academic performance, improve the student's behavior, or improve and refine teaching skills so that the classroom teacher is able to teach students with diverse educational needs.

(<http://www.apsva.us/page/1979>)

**Title 1** is one section of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), which provides funds to school districts to improve the academic achievement of children from low-income homes. Funding is based on a minimum percentage of children from low-income families, typically the percentage of students eligible to receive free and reduced-price lunch. (<http://www.greatschools.org/definitions/nclb/nclb.html>)

**Transition Services.** IDEA defines "...transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including adult services, independent living, or community participation)." APS coordinates implementation of transition activities for students with disabilities from preschool age to young adulthood.

([http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/transition\\_svcs/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/index.shtml))

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** Through a UDL approach, curriculum is initially designed with the needs of all students in mind so that methods, materials, and assessment are usable by all. ([www.udlcenter.org/](http://www.udlcenter.org/))

**Universal Screening.** In the context of an RtI/MTSS prevention model, universal screening occurs for all students to help identify those who are at risk for learning difficulties. ([www.rtinetwork.org](http://www.rtinetwork.org))

**Washington Area Boards of Education (WABE)** previously known as the Metropolitan Area Boards of Education, was first established in 1971 as a means for area school divisions to share information, study common problems, and enhance cooperation among educational organizations. Each year, the group surveys its members to publish the annual WABE Guide. This guide enables local school systems to learn about each other by reporting comparable information in a standardized format. In addition, the WABE Guide is meant to be used by citizens as a source for consistent, reliable educational data.

(<http://www.fcps.edu/fs/budget/wabe/>)

## Appendix E. Acronyms

**ADA** Americans With Disabilities Act

**ACPS** Alexandria City Public Schools (or Division)

**SEAC** Special Education Advisory Committee

**AT** Assistive Technology

**CCEIS** Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervention Services

**CST** Child Study Team

**DD** Developmental Delay (disability)

**ED** Emotional Disability

**ED** U.S. Department of Education

**EI** Early Intervention

**EL** English Learner

**ELA** English Language Arts

**ECSE** Early Childhood Special Education

**ESSA** Every Student Succeeds Act

**FAP** Free Appropriate Public Education

**FERPA** Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

**ID** Intellectual Disability

**IDEA** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**IEP** Individualized Education Program

**LEA** Local Education Agency

**LRE** Least Restrictive Environment

**MTSS** Multi-Tiered System of Supports

**OCR** Office for Civil Rights

**OSEP** Office of Special Education Programs

**OSI** Office of Specialized Instruction

**OHI** Other Health Impairment (disability)

**PBIS** Positive Behavior Intervention Support

**PD** Professional Development

**PRC** Parent Resource Center

**PCG** Public Consulting Group

**RDA** Results Driven Accountability

**RtI** Response to Intervention

**SBM** Site-based Management

**Section 504** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

**SIS** Student Information System

**SLI** Speech/language Impairment disability

**SLD** Specific Learning Disability

**SOL** Virginia Standards of Learning

**SOPM** Standard Operating Procedures Manual

**SPP** State Performance Plan

**SST** Student Support Team

**SWD** Students with Disabilities

**VASS** Virginia Association of School Superintendents

**VDOE** Virginia Department of Education

**UDL** Universal Design for Learning

**WABE** Washington Area Boards of Education

## Appendix F. Classroom Observation Protocol

The purpose of this tool is to conduct walk-throughs in general and special education classrooms that serve students with disabilities. The tool will provide a snapshot that generates observation data and other pertinent information in order to develop strategies or programmatic reform, better serve students with disabilities, and improve the outcomes and results for this subgroup of students.

The tool is divided into three sections/focus areas:

- **Safe and Accessible Environment**
- **Functions and Elements of Explicit Instruction; and**
- **Specially Designed Instruction**

Subtopics listed in each section should be referenced, as observed, in the descriptive notes field. Reflections should be entered into a separate field, noting any strengths or areas of need.

### STEPS

1. Each team should select classrooms to visit from the master schedule, ensuring that students with disabilities are being educated in each classroom and that a mix of classrooms from the continuum are selected; e.g., general education classrooms, including co-taught classrooms, resource rooms, self-contained, and small group intervention classrooms, etc. A sufficient number of classrooms should be selected to ensure the observations are a representative sample of the school as a whole.
2. Each team should create a plan to visit and observe each room for at least 10-15 mins.
3. At the end of each classroom visit, allow 5-10 minutes to debrief the visit and come to consensus on which “Look-Fors” were observed.
4. Notes should be typed into the template the same day (or soon thereafter) and uploaded to PCG’s secure server for analysis.

***This tool is designed to collect data across a school or organization, it is not as an assessment tool for an individual teacher.***

<b>School:</b>  <b>Observer:</b>	<b>Teacher:</b>  <b>Room#:</b>	<b>Date:</b> _____  <b>Time In/Out:</b> ____ / ____  <b>Total Time:</b> _____  <b>#Teachers:</b> _____  <b>#Assistants:</b> _____	<b>Overview</b> (type of activity, who is providing instruction, co-taught, etc.):
<b>Part of Lesson:</b> B M E	<b>Grade Level:</b>		
<b>Lesson Design:</b>	<b>Content Area:</b>		

Whole Class Small Group Indiv Support		#Aides: _____  #Students: _____	
Focus Area	Descriptive Notes		Reflections (Strengths and Areas of Need)
<b>Safe and Accessible Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom Management</li> <li>• Behavior/Discipline (PBIS)</li> <li>• Positive Classroom Climate</li> <li>• Physical Organization</li> </ul>			
<b>Functions and Elements of Explicit Instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High yield instructional strategies (e.g. DI/UDL)</li> <li>• Access to Curriculum</li> <li>• Review and Introduction of the Lesson</li> <li>• Active Teaching-I Do</li> <li>• Guided Practice- We Do</li> <li>• Independent Practice- You Do</li> <li>• Lesson Closure</li> <li>• Student Engagement</li> <li>• Explicit Corrective Feedback</li> <li>• Instructional Match</li> <li>• Pacing</li> </ul>			

<p><b>Specially Designed Instruction</b> (e.g. direct instruction of targeted skills, accommodations, supports, related services, behavior intervention, accommodations, re-teaching) as delineated in IEP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adaptations to (content methodology, delivery of instruction)</li><li>• Basic Academics (reading, writing math)</li><li>• Behavior</li><li>• Communication</li><li>• Executive Function</li><li>• Post- Secondary Transition</li><li>• ELs</li><li>• Teaching Assistants/ Aides</li><li>• Consultation/collaboration</li><li>• <i>What are you seeing that is different? What strategies is the teacher using to address students' needs?</i></li></ul>		
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## Appendix G. Student Shadowing Protocol

**Observation Goals:** To document, for each student, the access that he/she has to high quality instruction, the fidelity of IEP implementation, the continuity of services, and overall experience as a student receiving special education services.

To assess the degree to which the student's schedule is followed, how the student receives his/her services, how lessons are differentiated, and how integrated the student is within the larger school environment (e.g., lunchroom, recess, elective classes).

**Areas of Focus:** Safe and Accessible Environment; Functions and Elements of Explicit Instruction; Specially Designed Instruction

**Overview:**

Date:	School:	Grade Level:
Student:	Day/Time of Obs:	# Students:
Disability:	Class Period:	# Teachers/Assist:
Gender:	Content Area:	

**Lesson/activity summary (type of activity, who is providing instruction, and materials):**

.....

- 1) **How is the classroom organized? Where is the observed student receiving instruction?**

**2) How was the student participating in the lesson?**

Academic Speaking	Academic Listening	Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Student to student	<input type="checkbox"/> Student mostly listening to student	<input type="checkbox"/> Student is reading silently
<input type="checkbox"/> Student to small group	<input type="checkbox"/> Student mostly listening to teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Student is off task
<input type="checkbox"/> Student to whole class	<input type="checkbox"/> Student mostly listening to small group	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher to student	<input type="checkbox"/> Student mostly listening to whole class	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher to small group		
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher to whole class		

**Notes:**

**3) How are the student's activities during the class period reflective of what is delineated in the student's IEP (in terms of expected accommodations and/or modifications)?**

**4) What specially designed instructional (SDI) strategies are the teacher and/or paraprofessional using to address the student's needs?**

**5) Employing event recording, indicate how many of the following are delivered to the student during the observation period:**

Number of opportunities to respond (OTR) \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal praise statements for academics (VPA) \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal praise statements for social behavior (VPB) \_\_\_\_\_

Academic corrections (AC) \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal reprimands for social behavior (VRB) \_\_\_\_\_

**6) During the observed time period, to what extent are staff in the classroom collaborating to support the student's needs? How often are staff members communicating**

**7) To what extent is the student integrated with the larger school community/peers?**

## Appendix H. Staff Survey

### Special Education Survey for ACPS Staff

PCG Education has been contracted by the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACSP) to conduct a review of the district's special education services. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your experience with special education services in the district as an ACPS staff member in order to identify program strengths and areas for improvement.

We expect it should take about 20 minutes to complete. Your answers will be confidential. Thank you for participating in this survey. Your comments and feedback are very important!

#### Section 1 – School Level/Population You Serve

1. Which one of the following best describes your position relative to special education services?
  - (1) Special Education Teacher
  - (2) General Education Teacher (including EL or Encore teacher)
  - (3) School Principal/Assistant Principal
  - (4) Related Service Provider (OT, PT, Speech, etc.)
  - (5) Instructional Specialist or Specialized Instruction Program Coordinator
  - (6) Student Support Services (Social Worker, Psychologist, Nurse, Counselor)
  - (7) Paraprofessional
2. Do you serve more than one school?
  - No
  - Yes. If yes, please answer the questions globally for all schools you serve. After each section, you will have the opportunity to provide additional feedback via a comment box. The comment box is for you to note any significant discrepancies on that given topic between the schools you serve.
3. What school level(s) do you serve? Please select all that apply.
  - Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten
  - Elementary (K-5)
  - Middle School (6-8)
  - High School (9-12)

## Section 2 – Pre-referral & Eligibility Experiences (including triennial reevaluations)

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. (Scale: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree)

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
2.1	Staff at my school(s) try to meet children's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation.				-	
2.2	Special education evaluations for students in my building(s) identify their strengths and needs.				-	
2.3	Special education evaluation results provide me with meaningful insights into students' educational needs.				-	
2.4	My school(s) uses the MTSS framework with fidelity.				-	
2.5	Prior to a referral for a special education, the impact of a child's native language is considered.				-	

2.6 Please indicate any differences in Pre-Referral and Eligibility Experiences across the schools that you serve (comment box).

## Section 3 – IEP Process (including initial IEP development, annual reviews, and amendments)

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements (Scale: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree)

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
3.1	I am a valued member of the IEP team, and my opinion is respected.				-	
3.2	I feel comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns at IEP meetings.				-	
3.3	IEP teams discuss how students with disabilities can interact with typical students to the maximum extent appropriate.				-	
3.4	IEP meetings are scheduled with enough time for each party to share and discuss all needed information to make decisions.				-	
3.5	All IEP team members are equal contributors in the IEP development process.				-	

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
	If you disagree, why?					
3.6	The IEP development process is driven by the child's best interests. If you disagree, please comment on what factors you believe drive the IEP process.					-
3.7	IEP teams discuss instruction and support in general education classes to the maximum extent possible (LRE) in making service recommendations for students with disabilities.					-

3.8 Please indicate any differences in the IEP Process across that schools that you serve (comment box).

## Section 4 – Service Delivery

**Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements** (Scale: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree/Don't Know or Not Applicable)

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
4.1	The general education teaching staff have high expectations for students with disabilities to ensure continued progress.					
4.2	The special education teaching staff, including related service providers, have high expectations for students with disabilities to ensure continued progress.					
4.3	School administrators have high expectations for students with disabilities to ensure continued progress.					
4.4	Students' IEP progress on goals are documented and reported to parents when report cards are issued.					
4.5	The special education program/services at my school(s) are of high quality.					
4.6	Students with disabilities at my school(s) are offered a continuum of services that meet their needs.					
4.7	Once eligible for special education, the behavioral supports necessary to meet individual student needs are available at my school(s).					
4.8	My school(s) uses <b>Station Teaching</b> in co-teaching classes with fidelity.					
4.9	My school(s) uses <b>Parallel Teaching</b> in co-teaching classes with fidelity.					

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
4.10	Services for dually identified (English learner students with disabilities) students at my school(s) are meeting student needs.					
4.11	Student progress toward IEP goals is analyzed and discussed regularly.					
4.12	Planning effective services and activities for post-secondary transition begins for students at age 14 at my school(s).					
4.13	Paraprofessionals at my school(s) are used effectively to support the needs and progress of students with IEPs.					
4.14	Special education teachers at my school are used effectively to support the needs and progress of students with IEPs.					
4.15	Related Service providers (OT, PT, Speech Therapists) at my school are used effectively to support the needs and progress of students with IEPs.					
4.16	ACPS is effective at recruiting/hiring qualified staff servicing students with disabilities. If you disagree, why? (comment box; display logic- display only if Disagree/Strongly Disagree)					
4.17	ACPS is effective at retaining qualified staff servicing students with disabilities. If you disagree, why? (comment box; display logic- display only if Disagree/Strongly Disagree)					
4.18	My school(s) offers a continuum of services to meet the needs of students with disabilities.					

Please indicate how often your school uses the following interventions for students with disabilities (Scale: Always/Occasionally/Never/Don't Know)

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
4.19	Flex Reading (Reading Intervention)					
4.20	Achieve 3000 (Reading Intervention)					
4.21	Corrective Reading (Reading Intervention)					
4.22	Fast ForWord (Reading Intervention)					
4.23	Reading Assistant (Reading Intervention)					

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
4.24				Great Leaps (Reading Intervention)		
4.25				Orton Gillingham (Reading Intervention)		
4.26				Number Worlds (Math Intervention)		
4.27				Transitions to Algebra (Math Intervention)		
4.28				Hands on Equation (Math Intervention)		
4.29				Hands on Standards (Math Intervention)		
4.30				Other Reading Intervention(s): Y/N - specify exact intervention		
4.31				Other Math Intervention(s): Y/N specify exact intervention		

4.32 Please indicate any differences in Service Delivery across that schools that you serve (Comment Box).

## Section 5 – Communication, Collaboration, and Parent Engagement

**Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements** (Scale: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree/Don't Know or Not Applicable)

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
5.1	The administrators, including the principal, at my school(s) provides active leadership for special education.	I provide active leadership for special education at my school.	The administrators, including the principal, at my school(s) provides active leadership for special education.			
5.2	The administrators, including the principal, at my school(s) are engaged in supporting students with disabilities.	I am engaged in supporting students with disabilities at my school.	The administrators, including the principal, at my school(s) are engaged in supporting students with disabilities.			

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
5.3	If I encounter difficulty with a student, I know who to ask for assistance.	If staff in my school encounter difficulty with a student, they know who to ask for assistance.		If I encounter difficulty with a student, I know who to ask for assistance.		
5.4	When seeking assistance for a particular student need, I feel I receive effective support.	When seeking assistance for a particular student need, staff in my school feel they receive effective support.		When seeking assistance for a particular student need, I feel I receive effective support.	When seeking assistance for a particular student need, I feel I receive effective support.	
5.5	I receive the information I need from general educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.	I receive the information I need from special educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.	Staff in my building have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities.	Staff in the buildings I support have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities.	I receive the information I need from general educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.	I receive the information I need from teachers to support the progress of students with IEPs.
5.6	Parents at my school(s) are given a meaningful opportunity to participate during IEP meetings.					-
**5.7	My school(s) provide an inclusive environment for students with disabilities.					
**5.8	Students with disabilities at my school(s) have the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and sports.					-
5.9	Typically developing students at my school treat their peers with disabilities with respect.					
5.10	Instructional staff at my school(s) treat students with disabilities with respect.					
5.11	Support staff at my school(s) treat students with disabilities with respect.					
**5.12	School office staff are aware of the needs of families of students with disabilities in the building.					
5.13	I feel informed about the Division's special education initiatives.					
5.14	My school(s) communicates effectively with parents about the resources available for students with disabilities.					

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
5.15	When a student moves from grade to grade within my school, there is a coordinated matriculation process in place to share information about students with disabilities.				-	
5.16	When a student moves from building to building within ACPS, there is a coordinated matriculation process in place to share information about students with disabilities.				-	
5.17	Do you work in a co-teaching classroom? Y/N	In co-teaching classrooms in my school, students recognize both teachers as equal partners in the learning process.			-	
5.18		In co-teaching classrooms in my school,			-	
5.19	In co-teaching classrooms in my school, planning is the shared responsibility of both teachers.	In co-teaching classrooms in my school, planning is the shared responsibility of both teachers.			-	
5.20	My co-teaching partner teacher treats me with respect.			-		

### 5.21 Do you work in a co-teaching classroom?

If yes: (Scale: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree/Don't Know or Not Applicable)

5.22 Students recognize both teachers as equal partners in the learning process.

5.23 Behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers.

5.24 Planning is the shared responsibility of both teachers.

5.25 My co-teaching partner treats me with respect.

5.26 Please indicate any differences in Communication, Collaboration, and Parent Engagement practices across that schools that you serve (Comment Box).

## Section 6– Professional Development and Training

**Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements** (Scale: Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree/Don't Know or Not Applicable)

	(1) Special Education Teacher	(2) General Education Teachers	(3) Principals/Assistant Principals	(4) Instructional Specialists & Student Support Services	(5) Related Service Providers	(6) Paraprofessionals
6.1	Professional development that I have attended at ACPS enables me to better support teaching/learning of students with IEPs.					
6.2	General educators at my school(s) need more professional development (PD) related to strategies for providing students with disabilities with instruction aligned to the ACPS curriculum.					
6.3	Special educators at my school(s) need more professional development (PD) related to strategies for providing students with disabilities with instruction aligned to the ACPS curriculum.					
6.4	General educators at my school(s) need more PD regarding strategies for addressing the social/emotional needs of students with disabilities in their classes.					
6.5	Special educators at my school(s) need more PD regarding strategies for addressing the social/emotional needs of students with disabilities in their classes.					
6.6	Paraprofessionals require more PD regarding supporting students in general education classes.					

6.7 Please indicate any differences in Professional Development and Training across that schools that you serve (Comment Box).

## Section 7 - My Professional Development and Training

**7.1 Please rank the top 3 PD areas would be most helpful to you in your current role.** (Rank: 1, 2, 3)

- Knowledge of and skills to provide differentiated instruction in core academic areas (i.e., math, reading, writing)
- Increasingly intensive reading interventions
- Increasingly intensive math interventions
- Positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS)
- Facilitating inclusion in general education
- Functional behavior assessments (FBAs)
- Behavior intervention plans (BIPs)
- Teaching students with curriculum aligned with alternate standards (Aligned Standards of Learning –ASOLs)
- Specific disability information (e.g., autism, emotional disability, etc.)

- Assistive technology
- Co-teaching/inclusive practices
- Collaborating with paraprofessionals
- Federal, state, and district special education regulations
- Postsecondary transition planning
- Using/analyzing data to inform instruction
- Progress monitoring
- Virginia Alternate Assessment Program

**7.2 What is the biggest obstacle that prevents you from participating in professional development?**

- Time
- Location
- Topics don't apply
- Too few classes offered
- Not interested
- Other (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

**Section 8– Additional Comments**

9.1 Please list what you believe your school(s) does exceptionally well in delivering special education services to students with disabilities. (250 characters)

9.2 Please list what you believe should be changed or be improved in the delivery of special education services in your school(s). (250 characters)

## Appendix I. Staff Survey Results

### Pre-referral & Eligibility Experiences (including triennial reevaluations)

Table I1. Staff at my school(s) try to meet children's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation.

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	95%	6%	0%	100%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%	96%	4%	0%	96%	4%	0%
	(n= 290)			(n<10)			(n= 172)			(n= 45)			(n= 70)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	86%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	60%	40%	0%	80%	20%	0%
	(n= 36)			(n<10)			(n= 24)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	74%	26%	0%	71%	29%	0%	69%	31%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n= 27)			(n<10)			(n= 16)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	97%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	87%	13%	0%
	(n= 31)			(n= 0)			(n= 19)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	80%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%	78%	22%	0%	74%	26%	0%	82%	19%	0%
	(n= 101)			(n= 10)			(n= 45)			(n= 19)			(n= 27)		
Student Support Services	96%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n= 47)			(n<10)			(n= 27)			(n<10)			(n= 11)		
All Staff	90%	10%	0%	(n= 532)											

Table I2. Special education evaluations for students in my building(s) identify their strengths and needs.

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%	84%	16%	0%	90%	10%	0%
	(n= 288)			(n<10)			(n=170)			(n=44)			(n=71)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	94%	6%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	80%	20%	0%	80%	20%	0%
	(n= 36)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n= 27)			(n<10)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n= 31)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	91%	9%	0%	90%	10%	0%	91%	9%	0%	84%	16%	0%	96%	4%	0%
	(n= 102)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=19)			(n=28)		
Student Support Services	87%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	88%	13%	0%	70%	30%	0%
	(n= 46)			(n<10)			(n=27)			(n<10)			(n=10)		
All Staff	98%	8%	0%	(n= 532)											

**Table I3. Special education evaluation results provide me with meaningful insights into students' educational needs.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	73%	27%	0%	100%	0%	0%	79%	21%	0%	64%	36%	0%	63%	37%	0%
	(n=290)			(n<10)			n=172			(n=44)			(n= 71)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	78%	22%	0%	100%	0%	0%	88%	13%	0%	60%	40%	0%	40%	60%	0%
	(n=36)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	96%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=27)			(n<10)			(n= 16)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	97%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=30)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n=19)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	86%	14%	0%	70%	30%	0%	91%	9%	0%	79%	21%	0%	89%	11%	0%
	(n=102)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=19)			(n= 28)		
Student Support Services	83%	17%	0%	100%	0%	0%	89%	11%	0%	75%	25%	0%	73%	27%	0%
	(n=47)			(n<10)			(n= 27)			(n<10)			(n= 11)		
All Staff	79%	21%	0%	(n= 532)			(n= 532)			(n= 532)			(n= 532)		

**Table I4. My school(s) uses the MTSS framework with fidelity.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	76%	24%	0%	100%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%	64%	36%	0%	63%	37%	0%
	(n=282)			(n<10)			n=170			(n=44)			(n=65)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	60%	40%	0%	100%	0%	0%	54%	46%	0%	50%	50%	0%	80%	20%	0%
	(n=35)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	65%	35%	0%	57%	43%	0%	75%	25%	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	(n=26)			(n<10)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n=0)		
School-based Administrator	63%	37%	0%	0%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%	67%	33%	0%	13%	88%	0%
	(n=30)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	73%	27%	0%	100%	0%	0%	76%	24%	0%	68%	32%	0%	63%	37%	0%
	(n=101)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=19)			(n=27)		
Student Support Services	68%	32%	0%	100%	0%	0%	74%	26%	0%	63%	38%	0%	55%	46%	0%
	(n=47)			(n<10)			(n=27)			(n<10)			(n=11)		
All Staff	73%	27%	0%	(n=521)			(n=521)			(n=521)			(n=521)		

**Table I5. Prior to a referral for a special education, the impact of a child's native language is considered.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	90%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	86%	14%	0%	84%	16%	0%
	(n=282)			(n<10)			(n=171)			(n=44)			(n=64)		
All Curriculum & Instructional Staff	80%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%	79%	21%	0%	75%	25%	0%	80%	20%	0%
	(n=35)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	70%	30%	0%	57%	43%	0%	81%	19%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	(n=27)			(n<10)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	97%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=31)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	81%	19%	0%	100%	0%	0%	91%	9%	0%	58%	42%	0%	73%	27%	0%
	(n=100)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=19)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	89%	11%	0%	100%	0%	0%	96%	4%	0%	88%	13%	0%	73%	27%	0%
	(n=46)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n<10)			(n=11)		
All Staff	87%	13%	0%												
	(n=521)														

**IEP Process (including initial IEP development, annual reviews, and amendments)****Table I6. I am a valued member of the IEP team, and my opinion is respected.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	79%	21%	0%	100%	0%	0%	81%	19%	0%	68%	33%	0%	78%	22%	0%									
	(n=268)			(n<10)			(n=161)			(n=40)			(n=64)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	91%	9%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%									
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Related Service Provider	88%	12%	0%	83%	17%	0%	87%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	N=0	N=0	N=0	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=30)						(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	90%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	74%	26%	0%	92%	8%	0%									
	(n=100)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=19)			(n=26)											
Student Support Services	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	86%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=44)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n<10)			(n=10)											
All Staff	85%	15%	0%																					
	(n=501)																							

**Table I7. I feel comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns at IEP meetings.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	82%	18%	0%	100%	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	69%	31%	0%	84%	16%	0%									
	(n=267)			(n<10)			(n=161)			(n=39)			(n=64)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	94%	6%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Related Service Provider	96%	4%	0%	83%	17%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=30)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	91%	9%	0%	100%	0%	0%	89%	11%	0%	90%	11%	0%	93%	7%	0%									
	(n=101)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=19)			(n=27)											
Student Support Services	96%	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	96%	4%	0%	86%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=44)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n<10)			(n=10)											
All Staff	85%	15%	0%																					
	(n=501)																							

	Table I8. IEP teams discuss how students with disabilities can interact with typical students to the maximum extent appropriate.														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	79%	21%	0%	100%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%	60%	41%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=264)			(n<10)			(n=160)			(n=37)			(n=64)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	74%	26%	0%	100%	0%	0%	88%	13%	0%	20%	80%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	(n=35)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	84%	16%	0%	100%	0%	0%	80%	20%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=30)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	86%	14%	0%	80%	20%	0%	87%	13%	0%	79%	21%	0%	92%	8%	0%
	(n=100)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=19)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	96%	4%	0%	50%	50%	0%	90%	10%	0%
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=10)		
All Staff	82%	18%	0%	(n=496)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)		

Table I9. IEP meetings are scheduled with enough time for each party to share and discuss all needed information to make decisions.

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	72%	29%	0%	100%	0%	0%	76%	24%	0%	59%	41%	0%	66%	34%	0%
	(n=267)			(n<10)			(n=160)			(n=39)			(n=65)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	74%	26%	0%	100%	0%	0%	79%	21%	0%	40%	60%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=35)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	72%	28%	0%	83%	17%	0%	67%	33%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	71%	29%	0%
	(n=30)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%	90%	11%	0%	89%	11%	0%
	(n=101)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=19)			(n=27)		
Student Support Services	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	86%	14%	0%	78%	22%	0%
	(n=43)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	78%	22%	0%	(n=501)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n<10)		

**Table I10. All IEP team members are equal contributors in the IEP development process.**

	Grade Level															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
General Education Teacher	72%	28%	0%	100%	0%	0%	76%	24%	0%	69%	31%	0%	60%	40%	0%	
	(n=268)			(n<10)			(n=161)			(n=39)			(n=65)			
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	54%	46%	0%	100%	0%	0%	54%	46%	0%	20%	80%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
	(n=35)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Related Service Provider	76%	24%	0%	50%	50%	0%	87%	13%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
School-based Administrator	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	75%	25%	0%	83%	17%	0%	
	(n=29)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Special Education Teacher	73%	27%	0%	100%	0%	0%	76%	24%	0%	61%	39%	0%	67%	33%	0%	
	(n=100)			(n=10)			(n=45)			(n=18)			(n=27)			
Student Support Services	71%	30%	0%	100%	0%	0%	81%	19%	0%	57%	43%	0%	50%	50%	0%	
	(n=44)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n<10)			(n=10)			
All Staff	72%	28%	0%	(n=501)												

**Table I11. The IEP development process is driven by the child's best interests.**

	Grade Level															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
General Education Teacher	81%	19%	0%	100%	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	77%	23%	0%	80%	20%	0%	
	(n=268)			(n<10)			(n=161)			(n=39)			(n=65)			
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	82%	18%	0%	100%	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	67%	33%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
	(n=33)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Related Service Provider	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	33%	67%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	N=0	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=30)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Special Education Teacher	84%	16%	0%	80%	20%	0%	91%	9%	0%	68%	32%	0%	85%	15%	0%	
	(n=100)			(n=10)			(n=44)			(n=19)			(n=27)			
Student Support Services	86%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	86%	14%	0%	67%	33%	0%	
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
All Staff	84%	16%	0%	(n=498)												

**Table I12. IEP teams discuss instruction and support in general education classes to the maximum extent possible (LRE) in making service recommendations for students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
General Education Teacher	80%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%	70%	30%	0%	73%	27%	0%	
	(n=264)			(n<10)			(n=160)			(n=37)			(n=64)			
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	78%	22%	0%	100%	0%	0%	78%	22%	0%	67%	33%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
	(n=32)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Related Service Provider	88%	12%	0%	83%	17%	0%	87%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
School-based Administrator	97%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	86%	14%	0%	
	(n=30)			(n=0)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Special Education Teacher	87%	13%	0%	89%	11%	0%	91%	9%	0%	79%	21%	0%	85%	15%	0%	
	(n=99)			(n<10)			(n=44)			(n=19)			(n=27)			
Student Support Services	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	86%	14%	0%	60%	40%	0%	
	(n=43)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=10)			
All Staff	83%	17%	0%	(n=493)												

**Service Delivery****Table I13. The general education teaching staff have high expectations for students with disabilities to ensure continued progress.**

	Grade Level															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
General Education Teacher	81%	14%	6%	100%	0%	0%	84%	13%	3%	69%	13%	8%	77%	11%	11%	
	(n=257)			(n<10)			(n=156)			(n=36)			(n=62)			
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	47%	38%	15%	50%	0%	50%	52%	39%	9%	40%	60%	0%	25%	25%	50%	
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Paraprofessional	81%	16%	3%	100%	0%	0%	77%	19%	3%	82%	18%	0%	82%	9%	9%	
	(n=62)			(n<10)			(n=31)			(n=17)			(n=11)			
Related Service Provider	76%	20%	4%	83%	17%	0%	67%	27%	7%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
School-based Administrator	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	50%	50%	0%	20%	80%	0%	
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Special Education Teacher	71%	23%	6%	67%	0%	33%	79%	21%	0%	63%	37%	0%	65%	23%	12%	
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)			
Student Support Services	74%	17%	10%	100%	0%	0%	84%	8%	8%	57%	29%	14%	56%	33%	11%	
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
All Staff	75%	19%	6%	(n=544)												

Table I14. The special education teaching staff, including related service providers, have high expectations for students with disabilities to ensure continued progress.																									
	Grade Level																								
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)												
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A										
General Education Teacher	78%	14%	8%	100%	0%	0%	86%	10%	4%	72%	17%	11%	61%	23%	16%										
	(n=257)			(n<10)			(n=156)			(n=36)			(n=62)												
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	65%	29%	6%	100%	0%	0%	70%	22%	9%	40%	60%	0%	50%	50%	0%										
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Paraprofessional	93%	6%	2%	100%	0%	0%	92%	4%	4%	93%	7%	0%	91%	9%	0%										
	(n=55)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n=15)			(n=11)												
Related Service Provider	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
School-based Administrator	77%	23%	0%	0%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%	50%	50%	0%	40%	60%	0%										
	(n=26)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Special Education Teacher	95%	3%	2%	100%	0%	0%	95%	2%	2%	100%	0%	0%	89%	8%	4%										
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)												
Student Support Services	88%	7%	5%	100%	0%	0%	88%	4%	8%	86%	14%	0%	88%	13%	0%										
	(n=41)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
All Staff	84%	11%	5%																						
	(n=535)																								

**Table I15. School administrators have high expectations for students with disabilities to ensure continued progress.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	79%	10%	11%	100%	0%	0%	90%	4%	6%	64%	17%	19%	58%	21%	21%
	(n=257)			(n<10)			(n=156)			(n=36)			(n=62)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	65%	32%	3%	100%	0%	0%	74%	22%	4%	60%	40%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	78%	18%	4%	100%	0%	0%	89%	8%	4%	67%	27%	7%	64%	36%	0%
	(n=55)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n=15)			(n=11)		
Related Service Provider	76%	20%	4%	67%	17%	17%	73%	27%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	85%	11%	4%	0%	0%	0%	94%	0%	6%	100%	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	84%	11%	525%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	79%	11%	11%	65%	23%	12%
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	93%	2%	5%	100%	0%	0%	92%	4%	4%	100%	0%	0%	89%	0%	11%
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	80%	12%	8%												
	(n=537)														

**Table I16. Students' IEP progress on goals are documented and reported to parents when report cards are issued.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	59%	6%	35%	100%	0%	0%	75%	5%	20%	31%	6%	64%	35%	8%	57%
	(n=253)			(n<10)			(n=154)			(n=36)			(n=60)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	53%	6%	41%	50%	0%	50%	61%	0%	39%	0%	40%	60%	75%	0%	25%
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	96%	0%	4%	100%	0%	0%	93%	0%	7%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	80%	20%	0%
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	98%	2%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	50%	7%	43%	0%	0%	100%	60%	0%	40%	43%	14%	43%	33%	22%	44%
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	70%	5%	25%												
	(n=478)														

**Table I17. The special education program/services at my school(s) are of high quality.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	58%	30%	12%	100%	0%	0%	65%	28%	8%	47%	36%	17%	46%	34%	20%
	(n=256)			(n<10)			(n=156)			(n=36)			(n=61)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	50%	38%	12%	100%	0%	0%	52%	39%	9%	40%	40%	20%	25%	50%	25%
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	82%	18%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	67%	33%	0%	73%	27%	0%
	(n=55)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n=15)			(n=11)		
Related Service Provider	92%	8%	0%	83%	17%	0%	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	78%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%	50%	50%	0%	40%	60%	0%
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	79%	20%	1%	89%	11%	0%	86%	14%	0%	79%	21%	0%	65%	31%	4%
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	64%	29%	7%	0%	0%	100%	84%	8%	8%	57%	43%	0%	57%	43%	0%
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	67%	26%	7%	(n=536)											

**Table I18. Students with disabilities at my school(s) are offered a continuum of services that meet their needs.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	62%	26%	12%	100%	0%	0%	67%	23%	10%	49%	37%	14%	55%	29%	16%
	(n=254)			(n<10)			(n=154)			(n=35)			(n=62)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	65%	24%	12%	100%	0%	0%	70%	26%	4%	60%	0%	40%	25%	50%	25%
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	72%	20%	8%	83%	0%	17%	67%	27%	7%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	100%	0%	0%	80%	20%	0%
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	67%	32%	1%	89%	11%	0%	65%	33%	2%	63%	37%	0%	65%	35%	0%
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	67%	29%	5%	100%	0%	0%	67%	23%	10%	49%	37%	14%	55%	29%	16%
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=154)			(n=35)			(n=62)		
All Staff	65%	27%	8%	(n=479)											

**Table I19. Once eligible for special education, the behavioral supports necessary to meet individual student needs are available at my school(s).**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	55%	36%	9%	100%	0%	0%	56%	40%	5%	54%	37%	9%	49%	30%	21%									
	(n=253)			(n<10)			(n=154)			(n=35)			(n=61)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	53%	38%	9%	50%	50%	0%	61%	26%	13%	40%	60%	0%	25%	75%	0%									
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	70%	26%	4%	100%	0%	0%	68%	28%	4%	60%	33%	7%	82%	18%	0%									
	(n=54)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n=15)			(n<10)											
Related Service Provider	56%	32%	12%	50%	33%	17%	67%	20%	13%	33%	67%	0%	0%	100%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	78%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%	89%	11%	0%	75%	25%	0%	40%	60%	0%									
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	54%	42%	4%	63%	13%	25%	51%	47%	2%	56%	44%	0%	54%	42%	4%									
	(n=95)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=18)			(n=26)											
Student Support Services	60%	38%	2%	100%	0%	0%	76%	20%	4%	57%	43%	0%	11%	89%	0%									
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	58%	36%	7%																					
	(n=530)																							

**Table I20. My school(s) uses Station Teaching in co-teaching classes with fidelity.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	32%	24%	44%	33%	0%	67%	40%	21%	40%	23%	37%	40%	19%	26%	55%									
	(n=252)		(n<10)			(n=152)			(n=35)			(n=62)												
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	32%	29%	38%	0%	0%	100%	44%	26%	30%	20%	60%	20%	0%	25%	75%									
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	48%	15%	37%	100%	0%	0%	40%	8%	52%	47%	33%	20%	55%	9%	36%									
	(n=54)		(n<10)			(n=25)			(n=15)			(n=11)												
Related Service Provider	68%	0%	32%	33%	0%	67%	73%	0%	27%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	50%	46%	4%	0%	0%	0%	77%	24%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	80%	20%									
	(n=26)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	53%	26%	22%	22%	11%	67%	70%	19%	12%	47%	42%	11%	39%	31%	31%									
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)											
Student Support Services	10%	7%	83%	100%	0%	0%	12%	0%	88%	0%	0%	100%	0%	33%	67%									
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	38%	22%	39%																					
	(n=530)																							

**Table I21. My school(s) uses Parallel Teaching in co-teaching classes with fidelity.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	32%	27%	40%	33%	33%	33%	38%	27%	35%	26%	37%	37%	23%	23%	55%
	(n=253)			(n<10)			(n=153)			(n=35)			(n=62)		
All Curriculum & Instructional Staff	29%	38%	32%	0%	0%	100%	39%	39%	22%	20%	60%	20%	0%	25%	75%
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	47%	13%	40%	100%	0%	0%	42%	13%	46%	40%	20%	40%	55%	9%	36%
	(n=53)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n=15)			(n=11)		
Related Service Provider	64%	0%	36%	33%	0%	67%	73%	0%	27%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	41%	56%	4%	0%	0%	0%	61%	39%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	80%	20%
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	51%	27%	23%	22%	0%	78%	65%	21%	14%	42%	42%	16%	42%	35%	23%
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	12%	7%	81%	100%	0%	0%	16%	0%	84%	0%	0%	100%	0%	33%	67%
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	37%	25%	38%	(n=531)											

**Table I22. Services for dually identified (English learner students with disabilities) students at my school(s) are meeting student needs.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	37%	33%	30%	100%	0%	0%	42%	34%	24%	37%	37%	26%	23%	27%	50%									
	(n=252)			(n<10)			(n=152)			(n=35)			(n=62)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	29%	35%	35%	0%	0%	100%	30%	48%	22%	40%	20%	40%	25%	0%	75%									
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	53%	9%	38%	100%	0%	0%	52%	8%	40%	64%	7%	29%	27%	18%	55%									
	(n=53)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n=14)			(n=11)											
Related Service Provider	48%	32%	20%	17%	17%	67%	47%	47%	7%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	59%	33%	7%	0%	0%	0%	67%	28%	6%	50%	50%	0%	40%	40%	20%									
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	46%	26%	28%	22%	0%	78%	65%	23%	12%	32%	32%	37%	35%	35%	31%									
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)											
Student Support Services	44%	27%	29%	100%	0%	0%	56%	12%	32%	14%	43%	43%	25%	63%	13%									
	(n=41)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	42%	29%	29%																					
	(n=529)																							

**Table I23. Student progress toward IEP goals is analyzed and discussed regularly.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	49%	29%	22%	33%	33%	33%	56%	27%	17%	49%	23%	29%	33%	38%	30%									
	(n=254)			(n<10)			(n=155)			(n=35)			(n=61)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	47%	27%	27%	50%	0%	50%	52%	17%	30%	20%	80%	0%	50%	25%	25%									
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	72%	19%	9%	67%	33%	0%	76%	20%	4%	53%	27%	20%	90%	0%	10%									
	(n=53)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n=15)			(n=10)											
Related Service Provider	76%	24%	0%	100%	0%	0%	80%	20%	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	100%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	63%	37%	0%	0%	0%	0%	78%	22%	0%	25%	75%	0%	40%	60%	0%									
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	80%	19%	1%	100%	0%	0%	81%	19%	0%	68%	32%	0%	68%	32%	0%									
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=43)			(n=43)											
Student Support Services	57%	17%	26%	100%	0%	0%	60%	12%	28%	43%	29%	29%	56%	22%	22%									
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	60%	25%	15%																					
	(n=532)																							

**Table I24. Planning effective services and activities for post-secondary transition begins for students at age 14.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	17%	6%	77%	0%	0%	100%	13%	1%	87%	23%	14%	63%	27%	15%	58%									
	(n=249)			(n<10)			(n=151)			(n=35)			(n=60)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	24%	6%	71%	0%	0%	100%	17%	0%	83%	40%	20%	40%	50%	25%	25%									
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Related Service Provider	32%	0%	68%	17%	0%	83%	20%	0%	80%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	52%	0%	48%	0%	0%	0%	33%	0%	67%	100%	0%	0%	80%	0%	20%									
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	55%	3%	42%	0%	0%	100%	28%	2%	70%	90%	0%	11%	92%	8%	0%									
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)											
Student Support Services	24%	15%	61%	0%	0%	100%	13%	4%	83%	71%	0%	29%	22%	56%	22%									
	(n=41)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	29%	5%	66%																					
	(n=473)																							

**Table I25. Paraprofessionals at my school(s) are used effectively to support the needs and progress of students with IEPs.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	46%	29%	25%	67%	33%	0%	57%	29%	14%	29%	34%	37%	27%	27%	47%									
	(n=252)			(n<10)			(n=154)			(n=35)			(n<10)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	39%	30%	30%	50%	50%	0%	46%	27%	27%	0%	60%	40%	50%	0%	50%									
	(n=33)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	87%	9%	4%	100%	0%	0%	88%	12%	0%	86%	7%	7%	82%	9%	9%									
	(n=53)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n=14)			(n=11)											
Related Service Provider	56%	40%	4%	67%	17%	17%	60%	40%	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	100%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	74%	19%	7%	0%	0%	0%	78%	22%	0%	75%	25%	0%	60%	0%	40%									
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	67%	25%	7%	78%	0%	22%	77%	23%	0%	47%	47%	6%	62%	23%	15%									
	(n=95)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)											
Student Support Services	67%	14%	19%	100%	0%	0%	76%	8%	16%	86%	14%	0%	22%	33%	44%									
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	57%	25%	18%																					
	(n=527)																							

	Table I26. Special education teachers at my school are used effectively to support the needs and progress of students with IEPs.														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	57%	29%	14%	100%	0%	0%	67%	25%	9%	43%	34%	23%	38%	37%	25%
	(n=251)			(n<10)			(n=153)			(n=35)			(n=60)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	56%	21%	24%	100%	0%	0%	70%	13%	17%	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	87%	8%	6%	100%	0%	0%	92%	4%	4%	71%	21%	7%	90%	0%	9%
	(n=53)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n=14)			(n=11)		
Related Service Provider	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	82%	15%	4%	0%	0%	0%	89%	11%	0%	75%	25%	0%	60%	20%	20%
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	74%	24%	2%	78%	11%	11%	84%	16%	0%	58%	42%	0%	68%	28%	4%
	(n=96)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=25)		
Student Support Services	66%	17%	17%	100%	0%	0%	76%	8%	16%	71%	29%	0%	25%	38%	38%
	(n=41)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	67%	22%	11%	(n=527)											

Table I27. Related Service providers (OT, PT, Speech Therapists) at my school are used effectively to support the needs and progress of students with IEPs.															
	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	55%	14%	32%	100%	0%	0%	65%	14%	22%	43%	14%	43%	34%	14%	53%
	(n=252)			(n<10)			(n=155)			(n=35)			(n=59)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	47%	24%	29%	100%	0%	0%	44%	26%	30%	60%	0%	40%	25%	50%	25%
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	77%	11%	11%	100%	0%	0%	80%	8%	12%	71%	14%	14%	73%	18%	9%
	(n=53)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n=14)			(n=11)		
Related Service Provider	96%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	82%	11%	7%	0%	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	100%	0%	0%	60%	0%	40%
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	74%	19%	7%	89%	11%	0%	81%	16%	2%	79%	16%	5%	54%	27%	19%
	(n=97)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	69%	14%	17%	100%	0%	0%	68%	16%	16%	86%	0%	14%	56%	22%	22%
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	65%	14%	21%												
	(n=530)														

**Table I28. ACPS is effective at recruiting/hiring qualified staff servicing students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	51%	23%	26%	67%	0%	33%	57%	20%	23%	43%	26%	31%	39%	31%	31%									
	(n=255)			(n<10)			(n=155)			(n=35)			(n=35)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	46%	30%	24%	50%	50%	0%	50%	27%	23%	20%	40%	40%	50%	25%	25%									
	(n=33)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	72%	17%	11%	100%	0%	0%	80%	8%	12%	64%	29%	7%	55%	27%	18%									
	(n=53)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n=14)			(n=11)											
Related Service Provider	72%	16%	12%	83%	0%	17%	67%	27%	7%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	67%	26%	7%	0%	0%	0%	72%	22%	6%	100%	0%	0%	20%	60%	20%									
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	67%	19%	14%	50%	25%	25%	67%	21%	12%	68%	16%	16%	72%	16%	12%									
	(n=95)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=25)											
Student Support Services	62%	21%	17%	100%	0%	0%	72%	12%	16%	43%	29%	29%	44%	44%	11%									
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	58%	22%	20%																					
	(n=530)																							

**Table I29. ACPS is effective at retaining qualified staff servicing students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	41%	31%	28%	67%	0%	33%	49%	27%	24%	29%	34%	37%	27%	39%	34%									
	(n=254)			(n<10)			(n=154)			(n=35)			(n=62)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	41%	27%	32%	50%	50%	0%	44%	26%	30%	20%	20%	60%	50%	25%	25%									
	(n=34)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	64%	18%	18%	100%	0%	0%	75%	8%	17%	54%	23%	23%	40%	40%	20%									
	(n=50)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n=13)			(n=10)											
Related Service Provider	44%	40%	16%	33%	33%	33%	53%	33%	13%	33%	67%	0%	0%	100%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	56%	41%	4%	0%	0%	0%	61%	39%	0%	75%	25%	0%	20%	60%	20%									
	(n=27)			(n=0)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	42%	45%	14%	33%	56%	11%	40%	47%	14%	32%	63%	5%	56%	24%	20%									
	(n=96)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=19)			(n=25)											
Student Support Services	45%	41%	14%	100%	0%	0%	60%	28%	12%	14%	57%	29%	22%	67%	11%									
	(n=42)			(n<10)			(n=25)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	45%	34%	22%																					
	(n=528)																							

**Please indicate how often your school uses the following reading interventions for students with disabilities.**

**Table I30. Flex Reading**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	0%	0%	5%	95%	20
Elementary (K-5)	9%	12%	8%	72%	275
Middle School (6-8)	36%	10%	3%	52%	73
High School (9-12)	4%	10%	12%	75%	104
All Levels	11%	10%	8%	70%	472

**Table I31. Achieve 3000**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	0%	0%	5%	95%	20
Elementary (K-5)	3%	14%	10%	73%	274
Middle School (6-8)	4%	22%	7%	67%	72
High School (9-12)	2%	19%	12%	67%	104
All Levels	3%	16%	10%	72%	470

**Table I32. Corrective Reading**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	5%	5%	5%	85%	20
Elementary (K-5)	14%	16%	7%	64%	274
Middle School (6-8)	11%	11%	12%	66%	73
High School (9-12)	5%	7%	13%	76%	103
All Levels	11%	13%	9%	67%	470

**Table I33. Fast ForWord**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	5%	5%	5%	85%	20
Elementary (K-5)	8%	14%	11%	67%	273
Middle School (6-8)	4%	4%	13%	79%	71
High School (9-12)	4%	12%	7%	78%	104
All Levels	7%	12%	10%	72%	468

**Table I34. Reading Assistant**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	0%	0%	5%	95%	20
Elementary (K-5)	5%	10%	13%	72%	271
Middle School (6-8)	4%	4%	11%	80%	71
High School (9-12)	4%	11%	10%	75%	105
All Levels	4%	9%	11%	75%	467

**Table I35. Great Leaps**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	0%	0%	5%	95%	20
Elementary (K-5)	6%	19%	8%	67%	275
Middle School (6-8)	8%	13%	4%	75%	72
High School (9-12)	3%	7%	12%	79%	104
All Levels	5%	15%	8%	72%	471

**Table I36. Orton Gillingham**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	5%	0%	5%	90%	19
Elementary (K-5)	21%	23%	3%	53%	275
Middle School (6-8)	0%	1%	11%	87%	71
High School (9-12)	2%	4%	14%	80%	100
All Levels	13%	15%	7%	66%	465

**Table I37. Does your school use other reading interventions?**

	% Yes	% No	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	27%	73%	15
Elementary (K-5)	56%	44%	258
Middle School (6-8)	41%	59%	68
High School (9-12)	33%	67%	89
All Levels	48%	52%	430

**Please indicate how often your school uses the following math interventions for students with disabilities.**

**Table I38. Number Worlds**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	5%	5%	5%	85%	20
Elementary (K-5)	31%	19%	2%	48%	273
Middle School (6-8)	29%	7%	4%	60%	73
High School (9-12)	3%	8%	9%	80%	101
All Levels	24%	14%	4%	59%	467

**Table I39. Transitions to Algebra**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	0%	5%	5%	90%	20
Elementary (K-5)	1%	2%	17%	80%	271
Middle School (6-8)	3%	11%	11%	75%	73
High School (9-12)	3%	5%	11%	82%	103
All Levels	2%	4%	14%	80%	467

**Table I40. Hands on Equation**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	0%	0%	5%	95%	20
Elementary (K-5)	3%	8%	12%	76%	270
Middle School (6-8)	0%	14%	8%	78%	73
High School (9-12)	3%	3%	11%	84%	103
All Levels	3%	8%	11%	79%	466

**Table I41. Hands on Standards**

	% Always	% Occasionally	% Never	% Don't Know	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	0%	0%	5%	95%	19
Elementary (K-5)	9%	22%	5%	64%	272
Middle School (6-8)	0%	15%	7%	78%	72
High School (9-12)	3%	2%	10%	85%	102
All Levels	6%	16%	6%	72%	465

**Table I42. Does your school use other reading interventions?**

	% Yes	% No	Total Responses
Preschool/ Pre-K	27%	73%	11
Elementary (K-5)	42%	58%	238
Middle School (6-8)	52%	48%	60
High School (9-12)	39%	61%	75
All Levels	42%	58%	384

**Communication, Collaboration, and Parent Engagement****Table I43. The administrators, including the principal, at my school(s) provides active leadership for special education.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	75%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	69%	31%	0%	57%	43%	0%									
	(n=243)			(n<10)			(n=149)			(n=35)			(n=56)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	68%	32%	0%	100%	0%	0%	70%	30%	0%	80%	20%	0%	25%	75%	0%									
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	83%	17%	0%	100%	0%	0%	86%	14%	0%	79%	21%	0%	75%	25%	0%									
	(n=53)			(n<10)			(n=29)			(n=14)			(n<10)											
Related Service Provider	59%	41%	0%	80%	20%	0%	54%	46%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	0%									
	(n=22)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	79%	22%	0%	100%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%	56%	44%	0%	77%	23%	0%									
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=16)			(n=26)											
Student Support Services	73%	27%	0%	100%	0%	0%	73%	27%	0%	71%	29%	0%	71%	29%	0%									
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	76%	24%	0%																					
	(n=504)																							

**Table I44. I provide active leadership for special education at my school.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
School-based Administrator	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)		

**Table I45. The administrators, including the principal, at my school(s) are engaged in supporting students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	81%	19%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	77%	23%	0%	71%	29%	0%									
	(n=242)		(n<10)			(n=149)			(n=35)			(n=55)												
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	97%	3%	0%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=30)		(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Paraprofessional	84%	16%	0%	100%	0%	0%	86%	14%	0%	85%	15%	0%	75%	25%	0%									
	(n=51)		(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)												
Related Service Provider	73%	27%	0%	80%	20%	0%	77%	23%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	0%									
	(n=22)		(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Special Education Teacher	83%	17%	0%	100%	0%	0%	88%	12%	0%	67%	33%	0%	77%	23%	0%									
	(n=92)		(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=15)			(n=26)												
Student Support Services	87%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%	82%	18%	0%	100%	0%	0%	86%	14%	0%									
	(n=37)		(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
All Staff	89%	16%	0%																					
	(n=499)																							

**Table I46. I am engaged in supporting students with disabilities at my school.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)		(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)			

**Table I47. If I encounter difficulty with a student, I know who to ask for assistance.**

	Grade Level																								
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)												
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A										
General Education Teacher	80%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%	74%	26%	0%	72%	28%	0%										
	(n=244)			(n<10)			(n=149)			(n=35)			(n=57)												
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	87%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	60%	40%	0%	75%	25%	0%										
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Paraprofessional	90%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	85%	15%	0%	88%	13%	0%										
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)												
Related Service Provider	91%	9%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%										
	(n=22)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Special Education Teacher	79%	21%	0%	75%	25%	0%	88%	12%	0%	65%	35%	0%	73%	27%	0%										
	(n=94)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)												
Student Support Services	89%	11%	0%	100%	0%	0%	91%	9%	0%	86%	14%	0%	86%	14%	0%										
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
All Staff	83%	17%	0%																						
	(n=504)																								

**Table I48. If staff in my school encounter difficulty with a student, they know who to ask for assistance.**

	Grade Level															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)			

**Table I49. When seeking assistance for a particular student need, I feel I receive effective support.**

	Grade Level																								
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)												
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A										
General Education Teacher	60%	41%	0%	100%	0%	0%	66%	34%	0%	51%	49%	0%	46%	55%	0%										
	(n=242)			(n<10)			(n=149)			(n=35)			(n=55)												
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	87%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	90%	10%	0%	75%	25%	0%	75%	25%	0%										
	(n=30)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Paraprofessional	82%	18%	0%	100%	0%	0%	82%	18%	0%	85%	15%	0%	75%	25%	0%										
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)												
Related Service Provider	73%	27%	0%	80%	20%	0%	69%	31%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%										
	(n=22)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Special Education Teacher	69%	31%	0%	50%	50%	0%	70%	30%	0%	69%	31%	0%	73%	27%	0%										
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=16)			(n=26)												
Student Support Services	84%	16%	0%	100%	0%	0%	91%	9%	0%	71%	29%	0%	71%	29%	0%										
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
All Staff	69%	31%	0%																						
	(n=504)																								

**Table I50. When seeking assistance for a particular student need, staff in my school feel they receive effective support.**

	Grade Level															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
School-based Administrator	88%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)			

**Table I51. I receive the information I need from general educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.**

	Grade Level																								
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)												
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A										
Paraprofessional	73%	28%	0%	100%	0%	0%	71%	29%	0%	77%	23%	0%	6255%	38%	0%										
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)												
Related Service Provider	59%	41%	0%	60%	40%	0%	62%	39%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	0%										
	(n=22)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Special Education Teacher	76%	24%	0%	86%	14%	0%	86%	14%	0%	71%	29%	0%	62%	39%	0%										
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)												
All Staff	73%	27%	0%																						
	(n=166)																								

**Table I52. I receive the information I need from special educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.**

	Grade Level																								
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)												
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A										
General Education Teacher	70%	30%	0%	67%	33%	0%	74%	26%	0%	56%	44%	0%	67%	33%	0%										
	(n=241)			(n<10)			(n=149)			(n=34)			(n=55)												
Paraprofessional	86%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%	82%	18%	0%	92%	8%	0%	88%	13%	0%										
	(n=50)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)												
Related Service Provider	82%	18%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	0%										
	(n=22)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
All Staff	73%	27%	0%																						
	(n=313)																								

**Table I53. Staff in my building have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
School-based Administrator	83%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%	100%	0%	0%	25%	75%	0%	
	(n=24)			(n=0)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)			

**Table I54. Staff in the building(s) I support have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%	70%	30%	0%	25%	75%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=30)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Student Support Services	81%	19%	0%	100%	0%	0%	82%	18%	0%	86%	14%	0%	71%	29%	0%
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	77%	23%	0%	(n=91)											

**Table I55. Parents at my school(s) are given a meaningful opportunity to participate during IEP meetings.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	94%	6%	0%	96%	4%	0%
	(n=238)			(n<10)			(n=147)			(n=33)			(n=55)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	87%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	97%	3%	0%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	96%	4%	0%
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n<10)		
Student Support Services	87%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%	96%	5%	0%	86%	14%	0%	57%	43%	0%
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	94%	6%	0%	(n=447)											

**Table I56. My school(s) provide an inclusive environment for students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	76%	24%	0%	95%	5%	0%
	(n=244)			(n<10)			(n=151)			(n=33)			(n=57)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	90%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%	90%	10%	0%	80%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	94%	6%	0%	83%	17%	0%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	91%	9%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	88%	13%	0%
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	90%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	88%	12%	0%	84%	16%	0%
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=25)		
Student Support Services	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	96%	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	71%	29%	0%
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	92%	8%	0%												
	(n=504)														

**Table I57. Students with disabilities at my school(s) have the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and sports.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	97%	3%	0%	100%	0%	0%	97%	3%	0%	97%	3%	0%	97%	4%	0%
	(n=244)			(n<10)			(n=151)			(n=33)			(n=57)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	80%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=30)			(n<10)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	91%	9%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=24)			(n=0)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	93%	7%	0%	88%	13%	0%	98%	2%	0%	93%	7%	0%	88%	12%	0%
	(n=91)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=15)			(n=25)		
Student Support Services	97%	3%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	96%	4%	0%												
	(n=449)														

	Table I58. Typically developing students at my school treat their peers with disabilities with respect.															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
General Education Teacher	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	84%	16%	0%	88%	13%	0%	
	(n=242)			(n<10)			(n=151)			(n=32)			(n=56)			
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	84%	16%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	80%	20%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Paraprofessional	96%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=50)			(n<10)			(n=27)			(n=13)			(n<10)			
Related Service Provider	87%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Special Education Teacher	93%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%	
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=25)			
Student Support Services	95%	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
	(n=38)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
All Staff	92%	8%	0%	(n=502)												

	Table I59. Instructional staff at my school(s) treat students with disabilities with respect.															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
General Education Teacher	96%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%	97%	3%	0%	91%	9%	0%	96%	4%	0%	
	(n=244)			(n<10)			(n=151)			(n=34)			(n=56)			
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	94%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Paraprofessional	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	92%	8%	0%	88%	13%	0%	
	(n=49)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n=13)			(n<10)			
Related Service Provider	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
School-based Administrator	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
	(n=24)			(n=0)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
Special Education Teacher	90%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%	91%	9%	0%	94%	6%	0%	84%	16%	0%	
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=25)			
Student Support Services	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	
	(n=38)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)			
All Staff	95%	5%	0%	(n=502)												

**Table I60. Support staff at my school(s) treat students with disabilities with respect.**

	Grade Level																								
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)												
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A										
General Education Teacher	94%	6%	0%	100%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%	86%	14%	0%	98%	2%	0%										
	(n=246)			(n<10)			(n=151)			(n=35)			(n=57)												
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	60%	40%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=30)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Paraprofessional	94%	6%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)												
Related Service Provider	96%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
School-based Administrator	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%										
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Special Education Teacher	95%	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	94%	6%	0%	92%	8%	0%										
	(n=94)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)												
Student Support Services	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=38)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
All Staff	95%	5%	0%																						
	(n=507)																								

**Table I61. School office staff are aware of the needs of families of students with disabilities in the building.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	86%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%	91%	9%	0%	74%	27%	0%	81%	19%	0%
	(n=239)			(n<10)			(n=149)			(n=34)			(n=53)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	80%	20%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	50%	50%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=30)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	93%	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	95%	5%	0%	100%	0%	0%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=21)			(n<10)			(n=12)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	88%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	86%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%	88%	12%	0%	82%	18%	0%	81%	19%	0%
	(n=94)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	87%	14%	0%	100%	0%	0%	91%	9%	0%	86%	14%	0%	71%	29%	0%
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	87%	13%	0%	(n=497)											

**Table I62. I feel informed about the Division's special education initiatives.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	42%	58%	0%	67%	33%	0%	44%	56%	0%	43%	57%	0%	36%	64%	0%
	(n=246)			(n<10)			(n=150)			(n=35)			(n=58)		
All Curriculum & Instructional Staff	68%	32%	0%	100%	0%	0%	70%	30%	0%	60%	40%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	59%	41%	0%	100%	0%	0%	57%	43%	0%	69%	31%	0%	38%	63%	0%
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	65%	35%	0%	83%	17%	0%	54%	46%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	84%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	68%	32%	0%	75%	25%	0%	67%	33%	0%	53%	47%	0%	77%	23%	0%
	(n=94)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	41%	60%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	29%	71%	0%	14%	86%	0%
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	53%	47%	0%	(n=507)											

**Table I63. My school(s) communicates effectively with parents about the resources available for students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	78%	22%	0%	100%	0%	0%	80%	20%	0%	74%	27%	0%	74%	27%	0%
	(n=237)			(n<10)			(n=145)			(n=34)			(n=55)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	77%	23%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	50%	50%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	(n=30)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	89%	11%	0%	8330%	17%	0%	88%	13%	0%
	(n=50)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=12)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	91%	9%	0%	100%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	79%	21%	0%	100%	0%	0%	79%	21%	0%	59%	41%	0%	85%	15%	0%
	(n=94)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	73%	27%	0%	100%	0%	0%	82%	18%	0%	71%	29%	0%	43%	57%	0%
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	80%	20%	0%												
	(n=496)														

**Table I64. When a student moves from grade to grade within my school, there is a coordinated matriculation process in place to share information about students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	61%	39%	0%	67%	33%	0%	66%	34%	0%	50%	50%	0%	54%	46%	0%
	(n=241)			(n<10)			(n=148)			(n=34)			(n=56)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	70%	30%	0%	100%	0%	0%	63%	37%	0%	80%	20%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=30)			(n<10)			(n=19)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	67%	33%	0%	60%	40%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	(n=21)			(n<10)			(n=12)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	92%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	75%	26%	0%	100%	0%	0%	74%	26%	0%	77%	24%	0%	65%	35%	0%
	(n=94)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	74%	26%	0%	100%	0%	0%	83%	17%	0%	71%	29%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	(n=39)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	68%	32%	0%	(n=450)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)		

**Table I65. When a student moves from building to building within ACPS, there is a coordinated matriculation process in place to share information about students with disabilities.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	53%	47%	0%	67%	33%	0%	52%	48%	0%	49%	52%	0%	57%	43%	0%
	(n=232)			(n<10)			(n=142)			(n=33)			(n=54)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	62%	38%	0%	100%	0%	0%	61%	39%	0%	40%	60%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=29)			(n<10)			(n=18)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	52%	48%	0%	80%	20%	0%	50%	50%	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	(n=21)			(n<10)			(n=12)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	82%	18%	0%	75%	25%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	69%	31%	0%	100%	0%	0%	70%	30%	0%	71%	29%	0%	58%	42%	0%
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=17)			(n=26)		
Student Support Services	63%	37%	0%	100%	0%	0%	64%	36%	0%	86%	14%	0%	38%	63%	0%
	(n=38)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	59%	41%	0%	(n=438)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)		

**Table I66. Do you work in a co-teaching classroom, or have you within the past 12 months?**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	51%	49%	0%	0%	100%	0%	55%	45%	0%	56%	44%	0%	39%	61%	0%
	(n=238)			(n<10)			(n=145)			(n=34)			(n=56)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	30%	70%	0%	0%	100%	0%	35%	65%	0%	40%	60%	0%	25%	75%	0%
	(n=33)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	60%	40%	0%	50%	50%	0%	65%	35%	0%	54%	46%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	(n=47)			(n<10)			(n=26)			(n=13)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	39%	61%	0%	33%	67%	0%	39%	62%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	5%	96%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	(n=22)			(n=0)			(n=15)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	72%	28%	0%	17%	83%	0%	81%	19%	0%	80%	20%	0%	64%	36%	0%
	(n=89)			(n<10)			(n=43)			(n=15)			(n=25)		
Student Support Services	5%	95%	0%	0%	100%	0%	10%	91%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	(n=37)			(n<10)			(n=21)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	48%	52%	0%												
	(n=489)														

**Table I67. In co-teaching classrooms in my school, students recognize both teachers as equal partners in the learning process.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	65%	35%	0%	0%	0%	0%	79%	21%	0%	42%	58%	0%	36%	64%	0%									
	(n=117)			(n=0)			(n=76)			(n=19)			(n=22)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%	0%									
	(n=10)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	77%	23%	0%	100%	0%	0%	88%	13%	0%	50%	50%	0%	67%	33%	0%									
	(n=26)			(n<10)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Related Service Provider	89%	11%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%									
	(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n=0)											
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%									
	(n<10)			(n=0)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n=0)											
Special Education Teacher	73%	27%	0%	100%	0%	0%	77%	24%	0%	67%	33%	0%	69%	31%	0%									
	(n=63)			(n<10)			(n=34)			(n=12)			(n=16)											
Student Support Services	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%									
	(n<10)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n=0)			(n=0)											
All Staff	71%	29%	0%																					
	(n=228)																							

**Table I68. In co-teaching classrooms in my school, planning is the shared responsibility of both teachers.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	64%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%	72%	28%	0%	47%	53%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	(n=117)			(n=0)			(n=76)			(n=19)			(n=22)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	86%	14%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	(n=10)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	68%	32%	0%	100%	0%	0%	69%	31%	0%	60%	40%	0%	67%	33%	0%
	(n=25)			(n<10)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	67%	33%	0%	50%	50%	0%	60%	40%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n=0)		
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	(n<10)			(n=0)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n=0)		
Special Education Teacher	75%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%	79%	21%	0%	58%	42%	0%	75%	25%	0%
	(n=63)			(n<10)			(n=24)			(n=12)			(n=12)		
Student Support Services	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	(n<10)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n=0)			(n=0)		
All Staff	67%	33%	0%	(n=227)											

**Table I69. In co-teaching classrooms in my school, behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	80%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	86%	15%	0%	63%	37%	0%	73%	27%	0%
	(n=117)			(n=0)			(n=76)			(n=19)			(n=22)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=10)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	77%	23%	0%	100%	0%	0%	88%	13%	0%	50%	50%	0%	67%	33%	0%
	(n=26)			(n<10)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	89%	11%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n<10)			(n=0)		
School-based Administrator	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	(n<10)			(n=0)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n=0)		
Special Education Teacher	76%	24%	0%	100%	0%	0%	79%	21%	0%	58%	42%	0%	81%	19%	0%
	(n=63)			(n<10)			(n=34)			(n=12)			(n=16)		
Student Support Services	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	(n<10)			(n=0)			(n<10)			(n=0)			(n=0)		
All Staff	79%	21%	0%	(n=228)											

**Table I70. My co-teaching partner teacher treats me with respect.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	95%	5%	0%	79%	21%	0%	82%	18%	0%
	(n=117)			(n=0)			(n=76)			(n=19)			(n=22)		
Special Education Teacher	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	97%	3%	0%	83%	17%	0%	88%	13%	0%
	(n=63)			(n<10)			(n=34)			(n=12)			(n=16)		
All Staff	91%	9%	0%	(n=180)											

## Professional Development and Training

**Table I71. Professional development that I have attended at ACPS enables me to better support teaching/learning of students with IEPs.**

	Grade Level																								
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)												
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A										
General Education Teacher	44%	39%	17%	33%	33%	33%	41%	41%	18%	49%	34%	17%	48%	40%	12%										
	(n=246)			(n<10)			(n=150)			(n=35)			(n=58)												
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	77%	20%	3%	100%	0%	0%	80%	15%	5%	75%	25%	0%	50%	50%	0%										
	(n=30)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Paraprofessional	73%	25%	2%	100%	0%	0%	72%	24%	3%	77%	23%	0%	63%	38%	0%										
	(n=52)			(n<10)			(n=29)			(n=13)			(n<10)												
Related Service Provider	87%	13%	0%	100%	0%	0%	77%	23%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
School-based Administrator	80%	16%	4%	0%	0%	0%	77%	18%	6%	75%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Special Education Teacher	73%	26%	1%	50%	50%	0%	76%	21%	2%	61%	39%	0%	84%	16%	0%										
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=42)			(n=18)			(n=25)												
Student Support Services	37%	40%	24%	100%	0%	0%	46%	32%	23%	43%	43%	14%	0%	63%	38%										
	(n=38)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
All Staff	57%	32%	11%																						
	(n=507)																								

**Table I72. General educators at my school(s) need more professional development (PD) related to strategies for providing students with disabilities with instruction aligned to the ACPS curriculum.**

	Grade Level																								
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)												
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A										
General Education Teacher	70%	20%	11%	67%	0%	33%	76%	15%	9%	77%	14%	9%	48%	38%	14%										
	(n=246)			(n<10)			(n=150)			(n=35)			(n=58)												
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	90%	7%	3%	100%	0%	0%	85%	10%	5%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Paraprofessional	80%	12%	8%	100%	0%	0%	71%	14%	14%	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%										
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)												
Related Service Provider	87%	9%	4%	83%	0%	17%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
School-based Administrator	92%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	88%	12%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%										
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
Special Education Teacher	86%	10%	4%	50%	13%	38%	86%	14%	0%	94%	6%	0%	92%	4%	4%										
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=42)			(n=18)			(n=25)												
Student Support Services	63%	11%	26%	100%	0%	0%	68%	0%	32%	71%	14%	14%	38%	38%	25%										
	(n=38)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)												
All Staff	76%	15%	9%																						
	(n=507)																								

**Table I73. Special educators at my school(s) need more professional development (PD) related to strategies for providing students with disabilities with instruction aligned to the ACPS curriculum.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	49%	23%	27%	67%	0%	33%	49%	22%	29%	60%	20%	20%	43%	29%	28%
			(n=245)			(n<10)			(n=149)			(n=35)			(n=58)
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	68%	19%	13%	100%	0%	0%	70%	25%	5%	60%	20%	20%	50%	0%	50%
			(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)
Paraprofessional	59%	29%	12%	100%	0%	0%	50%	32%	18%	62%	31%	8%	75%	25%	0%
			(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)
Related Service Provider	52%	44%	4%	33%	50%	17%	69%	31%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%
			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)
School-based Administrator	76%	24%	0%	0%	0%	0%	65%	35%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
			(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)
Special Education Teacher	61%	37%	2%	63%	25%	13%	64%	33%	2%	44%	56%	0%	68%	32%	0%
			(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=42)			(n=18)			(n=18)
Student Support Services	55%	18%	26%	100%	0%	0%	50%	18%	32%	71%	14%	14%	50%	25%	25%
			(n=38)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)
All Staff	56%	27%	18%												
			(n=506)												

Table I74. General educators at my school(s) need more PD regarding strategies for addressing the social/emotional needs of students with disabilities in their classes.																
	Grade Level															
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)			
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	
General Education Teacher	75% (n=245)	14%	11%	67% (n<10)	0%	33%	78% (n=149)	11%	11%	80% (n=35)	11%	9%	64% (n=58)	24%	12%	
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	94% (n=31)	3%	3%	100% (n<10)	0%	0%	95% (n=20)	0%	5%	80% (n<10)	20%	0%	80% (n<10)	20%	0%	
Paraprofessional	75% (n=51)	16%	10%	100% (n<10)	0%	0%	68% (n=28)	14%	18%	85% (n=13)	15%	0%	75% (n<10)	25%	0%	
Related Service Provider	91% (n=23)	4%	4%	83% (n<10)	0%	17%	92% (n=13)	8%	0%	100% (n<10)	0%	0%	100% (n<10)	0%	0%	
School-based Administrator	100% (n=25)	0%	0%	0% (n=0)	0%	0%	100% (n=17)	0%	0%	100% (n<10)	0%	0%	100% (n<10)	0%	0%	
Special Education Teacher	87% (n=93)	10%	3%	75% (n<10)	0%	25%	91% (n=42)	10%	0%	94% (n=18)	6%	0%	80% (n=25)	16%	4%	
Student Support Services	76% (n=38)	3%	21%	100% (n<10)	0%	0%	73% (n=22)	0%	27%	86% (n<10)	0%	14%	75% (n<10)	13%	13%	
All Staff	80% (n=506)	11%	9%													

**Table I75. Special educators at my school(s) need more PD regarding strategies for addressing the social/emotional needs of students with disabilities in their classes.**

	Grade Level														
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)		
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A
General Education Teacher	54%	23%	23%	67%	0%	33%	53%	24%	22%	60%	17%	23%	52%	24%	24%
	(n=244)			(n<10)			(n=148)			(n=35)			(n=58)		
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	77%	16%	7%	100%	0%	0%	75%	20%	5%	60%	20%	20%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Paraprofessional	59%	29%	12%	100%	0%	0%	61%	18%	21%	54%	46%	0%	50%	50%	0%
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)		
Related Service Provider	70%	22%	9%	67%	0%	33%	69%	31%	0%	67%	33%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=23)			(n<10)			(n=13)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
School-based Administrator	83%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	81%	19%	0%	75%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	(n=24)			(n=0)			(n=16)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
Special Education Teacher	72%	26%	2%	88%	13%	0%	81%	14%	5%	50%	50%	0%	68%	32%	0%
	(n=93)			(n<10)			(n=42)			(n=18)			(n=25)		
Student Support Services	66%	11%	24%	100%	0%	0%	68%	5%	27%	71%	14%	14%	50%	25%	25%
	(n=38)			(n<10)			(n=22)			(n<10)			(n<10)		
All Staff	62%	22%	15%	(n=504)											

**Table I76. Paraprofessionals require more PD regarding supporting students in general education classes.**

	Grade Level																							
	Across All Grades			Preschool/ Pre-K			Elementary (K-5)			Middle School (6-8)			High School (9-12)											
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A									
General Education Teacher	64%	12%	24%	67%	0%	33%	71%	11%	17%	60%	6%	34%	47%	19%	35%									
	(n=245)			(n<10)			(n=149)			(n=35)			(n=58)											
All Curriculum & Instruction Instructional Staff	87%	0%	13%	100%	0%	0%	90%	0%	10%	60%	0%	40%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=31)			(n<10)			(n=20)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Paraprofessional	67%	28%	6%	100%	0%	0%	75%	18%	7%	46%	54%	0%	63%	25%	13%									
	(n=51)			(n<10)			(n=28)			(n=13)			(n<10)											
Related Service Provider	91%	5%	5%	83%	0%	17%	92%	8%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=22)			(n<10)			(n=12)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
School-based Administrator	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%									
	(n=25)			(n=0)			(n=17)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
Special Education Teacher	85%	8%	8%	63%	13%	25%	95%	5%	0%	83%	17%	0%	76%	4%	20%									
	(n=92)			(n<10)			(n=41)			(n=18)			(n=25)											
Student Support Services	69%	8%	23%	100%	0%	0%	74%	0%	26%	71%	14%	14%	50%	25%	25%									
	(n=39)			(n<10)			(n=23)			(n<10)			(n<10)											
All Staff	73%	11%	16%																					
	(n=505)																							

## Appendix J. Survey for Parents/ Families of Students with Disabilities

PCG Education has been contracted by the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) to conduct a review of the district's special education services. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your experience as a parent of a child receiving special education services in order to identify program strengths and areas for improvement.

**If you have more than one child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), please complete one survey for EACH of your children.** We expect it should take about 15 minutes to complete. Your answers will be confidential. Thank you for participating in this survey; your comments and feedback are very important!

### Section 1 – About Your Child

Please provide the following information about your child and experiences.

- 1) Your child's grade level.
  - Pre-School
  - Elementary (K-5)
  - Middle School (6-8)
  - High School (9-12)
  - Career and Transition (12+)
- 2) Your child's primary disability:
  - Autism
  - Deaf-Blindness
  - Developmental Delay
  - Emotional Disability
  - Hearing Impairment (including Deafness)
  - Intellectual Disability
  - Multiple Disabilities
  - Orthopedic Impairment
  - Other Health Impairment
  - Specific Learning Disability
  - Speech or Language Impairment
  - Traumatic Brain Injury
  - Other Health Impairment
  - Visual Impairment, including Blindness
  - Don't know
- 3) Is your child receiving all of their special education services through a citywide program?
  - Yes
  - No
- 4) If Assistive Technology is on my child's IEP, the equipment or device was provided.
  - Yes
  - No
  - N/A
- 5) Have you had disagreements or concerns about your child's eligibility, placement, goals, services, etc.?
  - No
  - Yes
    - If yes, did staff treat you with respect?
    - If yes, were you satisfied with how staff attempted to resolve your concerns?
- 6) The parent training or information sessions that I have attended have been helpful to me.
  - Yes
  - No
  - I have not attended a parent training or information session

## Section 2 – Pre-referral & Eligibility Experiences (including triennial reevaluations)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
7) School staff tried to meet my child's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation.	<input type="radio"/>				
8) My child's last special education evaluation identified his/her strengths and needs.	<input type="radio"/>				
9) ACPS staff explained to me why my child needs special education services in a way that I was able to understand.	<input type="radio"/>				
10) ACPS staff offered to explain my rights to me and answered my questions.	<input type="radio"/>				

## Section 3 – IEP Process (including annual reviews)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
11) In planning my child's most recent IEP, I felt I was a valued member of the IEP team and my opinion was respected.	<input type="radio"/>				
12) The information I provided about my child was considered when planning and writing his/her most recent IEP.	<input type="radio"/>				
13) In developing my child's IEP, I feel I am a respected partner with my child's teachers and other service providers.	<input type="radio"/>				
14) I understand what is discussed at IEP meetings.	<input type="radio"/>				
15) I feel comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns at IEP meetings.	<input type="radio"/>				
16) Teachers/school staff have communicated effectively with me.	<input type="radio"/>				
17) I am getting adequate information about my child's performance.	<input type="radio"/>				
18) I feel my child's IEP is an effective working document in guiding and tracking my child's education.	<input type="radio"/>				
19) My child's progress report effectively communicates positive progress and/or lack of progress.	<input type="radio"/>				

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
20) At your child's most recent IEP meeting, did the team discuss the possibility of receiving special education services in the general education class to the maximum extent appropriate?	<input type="radio"/>				

## Section 4 – Service Delivery

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
21) My child's teachers are aware of his/her learning needs.	<input type="radio"/>				
22) My child's therapists, e.g., occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech-language pathologist, are aware of his/her learning needs.	<input type="radio"/>				
23) The teaching staff, including therapists, have high enough expectations for my child to ensure continued progress.	<input type="radio"/>				
24) My child's academic program is preparing him/her effectively for the future.	<input type="radio"/>				
25) Special education staff, including therapists, are skilled in providing the services and support my child needs.	<input type="radio"/>				
26) A general education teacher comes to my child's IEP meeting when general education is being considered.	<input type="radio"/>				
27) I am satisfied with my child's overall academic progress in school.	<input type="radio"/>				
28) My child is developing skills that will enable him/her to be as independent as possible.	<input type="radio"/>				
29) My child has the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and sporting events.	<input type="radio"/>				
30) I believe that my school delivers high quality education programs and services for students with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>				
31) I am satisfied with my child's overall special education services.	<input type="radio"/>				

32) Is your child age 14 or older?

- No
- Yes (If yes, answer the questions below)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
32a) Did the IEP team discuss your child's transition services and activities to prepare him/her for life after high school, e.g., career interests, education, work, etc.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32b) Do school staff actively encourage your child to participate in IEP meetings?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32c) Were your child's interests taken into consideration when developing the transition plan?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33) Do you speak a language other than English in your home? (Yes/No qualification question)

- No
- Yes (If yes, answer the questions below)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
33a) Were you asked if you would like to have an interpreter in IEP meetings to discuss your child's special education needs and services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33b) If you asked for an interpreter, was one provided at IEP meetings?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33c) Do the translation services provided at the IEP meeting help you understand all of the information you need to know?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Section 5– Parent Experience

Please provide the following information about your experience at ACPS.

34) Do the resources at the Parent Center meet your needs?

- Yes
- No. If not, why:
  - Time
  - Location
  - Topics don't apply
  - Not interested

35) School staff respond to my concerns within 2 business days.

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
36) The administrators at my child's school are engaged in supporting students with disabilities.	<input type="radio"/>				
37) My child's school is an inclusive environment.	<input type="radio"/>				
38) The administrators at my child's school respond to me.	<input type="radio"/>				

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
39) School office staff are aware of the needs of families of students with disabilities in the building.	<input type="radio"/>				
40) Transportation meets my child's individual needs.	<input type="radio"/>				

## Section 6– Additional Comments

Please list what you believe your school does exceptionally well in delivering special education services to students with disabilities. (250 characters)

Please list what you believe should be changed or be improved in the delivery of special education services in your school. (250 characters)

## Appendix K. Results: Survey for Parents/ Families of Students with Disabilities

**Table K1. Responses by Disability**

	All Grades	Pre-School/ Pre-K	Elementary (K-5)	Middle School (6-8)	High School (9-12+)
Autism	25%	27%	24%	31%	26%
Deaf-Blindness	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Developmental Delay	14%	33%	15%	6%	3%
Emotional Disability	3%	0%	2%	3%	6%
Hearing Impairment (including Deafness)	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Intellectual Disability	4%	3%	6%	0%	0%
Multiple Disabilities	9%	10%	6%	6%	26%
Orthopedic Impairment	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Other Health Impairment	9%	0%	7%	13%	21%
Specific Learning Disability	16%	0%	18%	28%	15%
Speech or Language Impairment	12%	20%	15%	6%	0%
Visual Impairment (including Blindness)	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Don't know	3%	0%	3%	6%	3%
Total Responses	233	30	137	32	34

**Table K2. Is your child receiving all of their special education services through a citywide program?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	55%	26.0%	19.0%	236
Preschool/ Pre-K	61%	29.0%	9.7%	31
Elementary (K-5)	58%	20.3%	21.7%	138
Middle School (6-8)	52%	33.3%	15.2%	33
High School (9-12+)	41%	41%	18%	34

**Table K3. If Assistive Technology is on my child's IEP, the equipment or device was provided.**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	27%	19%	54%	228
Preschool/ Pre-K	21%	28%	52%	29
Elementary (K-5)	26%	14%	60%	134
Middle School (6-8)	23%	23%	55%	31
High School (9-12+)	38%	26%	35%	34

**Table K4. Have you had disagreements or concerns about your child's eligibility, placement, goals, services, etc.?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	46%	54%	0%	233
Preschool/ Pre-K	23%	77%	0%	30
Elementary (K-5)	42%	58%	0%	137
Middle School (6-8)	58%	42%	0%	33
High School (9-12+)	73%	27%	0%	33

**Table K5. If yes, did staff treat you with respect?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	80%	20%	0%	106
Preschool/ Pre-K	100%	0%	0%	n<10
Elementary (K-5)	89%	11%	0%	57
Middle School (6-8)	94%	6%	0%	18
High School (9-12+)	42%	58%	0%	24

**Table K6. If yes, were you satisfied with how staff attempted to resolve your concerns?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	47%	53%	0%	102
Preschool/ Pre-K	43%	57%	0%	n<10
Elementary (K-5)	57%	43%	0%	56
Middle School (6-8)	44%	56%	0%	18
High School (9-12+)	24%	76%	0%	21

**Table K7. The parent training or information sessions that I have attended have been helpful to me.**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	36%	6%	58%	232
Preschool/ Pre-K	31%	3%	66%	29
Elementary (K-5)	37%	6%	57%	137
Middle School (6-8)	36%	6%	58%	33
High School (9-12+)	36%	9%	55%	33

**Table K8. School staff tried to meet my child's needs in general education prior to a referral for a special education evaluation.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	65%	18%	17%	221
Preschool/ Pre-K	45%	21%	34%	29
Elementary (K-5)	72%	12%	16%	129
Middle School (6-8)	67%	21%	12%	33
High School (9-12+)	53%	37%	10%	30

**Table K9. My child's last special education evaluation identified his/her strengths and needs.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	85%	10%	5%	226
Preschool/ Pre-K	93%	0%	7%	29
Elementary (K-5)	87%	10%	3%	133
Middle School (6-8)	88%	9%	3%	33
High School (9-12+)	68%	19%	13%	31

**Table K10. ACPS staff explained to me why my child needs special education services in a way that I was able to understand.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	89%	8%	3%	226
Preschool/ Pre-K	93%	3%	3%	29
Elementary (K-5)	92%	5%	4%	133
Middle School (6-8)	94%	6%	0%	33
High School (9-12+)	68%	29%	3%	31

**Table K11. ACPS staff offered to explain my rights to me and answered my questions.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	92%	6%	2%	226
Preschool/ Pre-K	100%	0%	0%	29
Elementary (K-5)	92%	6%	2%	132
Middle School (6-8)	94%	3%	3%	33
High School (9-12+)	84%	16%	3%	31

**Table K12. In planning my child's most recent IEP, I felt I was a valued member of the IEP team and my opinion was respected.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	82%	14%	4%	213
Preschool/ Pre-K	89%	4%	8%	26
Elementary (K-5)	85%	11%	4%	127
Middle School (6-8)	90%	10%	0%	31
High School (9-12+)	55%	41%	3%	29

**Table K13. The information I provided about my child was considered when planning and writing his/her most recent IEP.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	83%	12%	6%	213
Preschool/ Pre-K	92%	0%	8%	26
Elementary (K-5)	86%	8%	6%	127
Middle School (6-8)	74%	19%	7%	31
High School (9-12+)	51%	23%	0%	39

**Table K14. In developing my child's IEP, I feel I am a respected partner with my child's teachers and other service providers.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	84%	12%	4%	212
Preschool/ Pre-K	92%	0%	8%	26
Elementary (K-5)	87%	9%	5%	126
Middle School (6-8)	81%	16%	3%	31
High School (9-12+)	69%	31%	0%	29

**Table K15. I understand what is discussed at IEP meetings.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	96%	2%	1%	213
Preschool/ Pre-K	96%	0%	4%	26
Elementary (K-5)	97%	2%	2%	127
Middle School (6-8)	97%	3%	0%	31
High School (9-12+)	93%	7%	0%	29

**Table K16. The school team makes me feel comfortable to ask questions at IEP meetings.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	90%	8%	2%	212
Preschool/ Pre-K	89%	4%	8%	26
Elementary (K-5)	93%	6%	1%	126
Middle School (6-8)	94%	7%	0%	31
High School (9-12+)	72%	21%	7%	29

**Table K17. I feel comfortable expressing concerns at IEP meetings.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	92%	7%	1%	213
Preschool/ Pre-K	89%	4%	8%	26
Elementary (K-5)	94%	6%	1%	127
Middle School (6-8)	97%	3%	0%	31
High School (9-12+)	79%	21%	0%	29

**Table K18. School staff have communicated effectively with me.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	76%	24%	1%	212
Preschool/ Pre-K	92%	8%	0%	26
Elementary (K-5)	81%	18%	1%	127
Middle School (6-8)	71%	29%	0%	31
High School (9-12+)	43%	57%	0%	28

**Table K19. I am getting adequate information about my child's performance.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	65%	33%	2%	211
Preschool/ Pre-K	92%	4%	4%	26
Elementary (K-5)	68%	29%	3%	126
Middle School (6-8)	55%	45%	0%	31
High School (9-12+)	32%	68%	0%	28

**Table K20. I feel my child's IEP is an effective working document in guiding and tracking my child's education.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	69%	27%	4%	212
Preschool/ Pre-K	89%	8%	4%	26
Elementary (K-5)	76%	19%	5%	127
Middle School (6-8)	55%	45%	0%	31
High School (9-12+)	36%	61%	4%	28

**Table K21. My child's IEP progress report effectively communicates how he/she is doing.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	61%	30%	9%	208
Preschool/ Pre-K	73%	8%	19%	26
Elementary (K-5)	66%	24%	10%	123
Middle School (6-8)	58%	42%	0%	31
High School (9-12+)	32%	64%	4%	28

**Table K22. At your child's most recent IEP meeting, did the team discuss the possibility of receiving special education services in the general education class to the maximum extent appropriate?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	65%	20%	16%	212
Preschool/ Pre-K	48%	30%	22%	27
Elementary (K-5)	73%	11%	16%	126
Middle School (6-8)	61%	32%	7%	31
High School (9-12+)	46%	36%	18%	28

**Table K23. My child's teachers are aware of his/her learning needs.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	76%	18%	6%	202
Preschool/ Pre-K	92%	0%	8%	25
Elementary (K-5)	82%	11%	7%	119
Middle School (6-8)	58%	39%	3%	31
High School (9-12+)	52%	44%	4%	27

**Table K24. My child's therapists, e.g., occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech-language pathologist, are aware of his/her learning needs.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	76%	6%	18%	202
Preschool/ Pre-K	88%	0%	12%	25
Elementary (K-5)	85%	4%	11%	118
Middle School (6-8)	55%	10%	36%	31
High School (9-12+)	54%	14%	32%	28

**Table K25. The teaching staff, including therapists, have high expectations for my child.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	72%	15%	13%	203
Preschool/ Pre-K	72%	12%	16%	25
Elementary (K-5)	78%	12%	10%	119
Middle School (6-8)	61%	26%	13%	31
High School (9-12+)	57%	21%	21%	28

**Table K26. My child's academic program is preparing him/her effectively for the future.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	63%	23%	13%	202
Preschool/ Pre-K	76%	4%	20%	25
Elementary (K-5)	68%	19%	14%	118
Middle School (6-8)	48%	39%	13%	31
High School (9-12+)	50%	43%	7%	28

**Table K27. Special education staff, including therapists, are skilled in providing the services and support my child needs.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	71%	17%	12%	202
Preschool/ Pre-K	92%	4%	4%	25
Elementary (K-5)	77%	11%	12%	118
Middle School (6-8)	48%	32%	19%	31
High School (9-12+)	54%	36%	11%	28

**Table K28. A general education teacher comes to my child's IEP meeting when general education is being considered.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	71%	9%	19%	203
Preschool/ Pre-K	40%	12%	48%	25
Elementary (K-5)	83%	6%	11%	119
Middle School (6-8)	68%	13%	19%	31
High School (9-12+)	54%	18%	29%	28

**Table K29. I am satisfied with my child's overall academic progress in school.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	61%	32%	7%	202
Preschool/ Pre-K	72%	8%	20%	25
Elementary (K-5)	70%	23%	7%	118
Middle School (6-8)	42%	55%	3%	31
High School (9-12+)	36%	64%	0%	28

**Table K30. My child is developing skills that will enable him/her to be as independent as possible.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	69%	24%	7%	203
Preschool/ Pre-K	72%	8%	20%	25
Elementary (K-5)	76%	19%	6%	119
Middle School (6-8)	55%	39%	7%	31
High School (9-12+)	54%	43%	0%	28

**Table K31. My child has the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and sporting events.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	83%	9%	7%	202
Preschool/ Pre-K	72%	4%	24%	25
Elementary (K-5)	89%	7%	4%	118
Middle School (6-8)	77%	19%	3%	31
High School (9-12+)	75%	14%	11%	28

**Table K32. I believe that my school delivers high quality education programs and services for students with disabilities.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	60%	27%	13%	203
Preschool/ Pre-K	76%	4%	20%	25
Elementary (K-5)	67%	20%	13%	119
Middle School (6-8)	36%	48%	16%	31
High School (9-12+)	43%	54%	4%	28

**Table K33. I am satisfied with my child's overall special education services.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	66%	30%	4%	203
Preschool/ Pre-K	88%	12%	0%	25
Elementary (K-5)	73%	23%	4%	119
Middle School (6-8)	42%	55%	3%	31
High School (9-12+)	36%	64%	0%	28

**Table K34. Is your child age 14 or older?**

	% Yes	% No	Total Responses
All Grades	50%	50%	58
Middle School (6-8)	3%	97%	30
High School (9-12+)	100%	0%	28

**Table K35. Did the IEP team discuss your child's transition services and activities to prepare him/her for life after high school, e.g., career interests, education, work, etc.?**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	61%	36%	4%	28
Middle School (6-8)	100%	0%	0%	n<10
High School (9-12)	59%	37%	4%	27

**Table K36. Do school staff actively encourage your child to participate in IEP meetings?**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	59%	26%	15%	27
Middle School (6-8)	100%	0%	0%	n<10
High School (9-12+)	58%	27%	15%	26

**Table K37. Were your child's interests taken into consideration when developing the transition plan?**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	54%	18%	29%	28
Middle School (6-8)	0%	0%	100%	n<10
High School (9-12+)	56%	19%	26%	27

**Table K38. Do you speak a language other than English at home?**

	% Yes	% No	Total Responses
All Grades	23%	77%	201
Preschool/ Pre-K	32%	68%	25
Elementary (K-5)	25%	75%	118
Middle School (6-8)	23%	77%	31
High School (9-12+)	7%	93%	27

**Table K39. Were you asked if you would like to have an interpreter in IEP meetings to discuss your child's special education needs and services?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	75%	21%	4%	47
Preschool/ Pre-K	63%	25%	13%	8
Elementary (K-5)	80%	17%	3%	30
Middle School (6-8)	71%	29%	0%	7
High School (9-12+)	50%	50%	0%	n<10

**Table K40. If you asked for an interpreter, was one provided at IEP meetings?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	63%	7%	30%	43
Preschool/ Pre-K	88%	0%	13%	8
Elementary (K-5)	57%	7%	36%	28
Middle School (6-8)	67%	0%	33%	6
High School (9-12+)	0%	100%	0%	n<10

**Table K41. Do the translation services provided at the IEP meeting help you understand all of the information you need to know?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	52%	12%	36%	42
Preschool/ Pre-K	63%	25%	13%	8
Elementary (K-5)	52%	7%	41%	27
Middle School (6-8)	50%	0%	50%	6
High School (9-12+)	0%	100%	0%	n<10

**Table K42. Do the resources at the parent resource center meet your needs?**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	73%	27%	0%	186
Preschool/ Pre-K	81%	19%	0%	26
Elementary (K-5)	77%	23%	0%	108
Middle School (6-8)	72%	28%	0%	29
High School (9-12+)	48%	52%	0%	23

**Table K43. If not, why?**

	All Grades	Pre-School/ Pre-K	Elementary (K-5)	Middle School (6-8)	High School (9-12+)
Time of day is not conducive to my schedule	29%	0%	17%	25%	33%
Topics don't apply	23%	25%	17%	13%	42%
Not interested	8%	0%	4%	25%	8%
Unaware of Parent Resource Center offerings	38%	75%	42%	38%	17%
Unaware of availability of childcare during programs	2%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Total Responses	48	4	24	8	12

**Table K44. School staff respond to my needs within 2 business days.**

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know/ N/A
All Grades	84%	16%	193
Preschool/ Pre-K	92%	8%	26
Elementary (K-5)	90%	11%	114
Middle School (6-8)	72%	28%	29
High School (9-12+)	63%	38%	24

**Table K45. The administrators at my child's school are engaged in supporting students with disabilities.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	72%	15%	13%	199
Preschool/ Pre-K	76%	8%	16%	25
Elementary (K-5)	80%	10%	10%	117
Middle School (6-8)	71%	19%	10%	31
High School (9-12+)	39%	39%	23%	26

**Table K46. My child's school is an inclusive environment.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	78%	11%	12%	198
Preschool/ Pre-K	92%	0%	8%	25
Elementary (K-5)	79%	9%	12%	116
Middle School (6-8)	71%	19%	10%	31
High School (9-12+)	65%	19%	15%	26

**Table K47. The administrators at my child's school respond to me.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	82%	11%	7%	196
Preschool/ Pre-K	76%	4%	20%	25
Elementary (K-5)	89%	7%	4%	116
Middle School (6-8)	77%	16%	7%	31
High School (9-12+)	58%	33%	8%	24

**Table K48. School office staff are aware of the needs of my child with disabilities in the building.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	58%	13%	29%	198
Preschool/ Pre-K	72%	0%	28%	25
Elementary (K-5)	67%	9%	25%	117
Middle School (6-8)	47%	20%	33%	30
High School (9-12+)	15%	39%	46%	26

**Table K49. Transportation meets my child's individual needs.**

	% Agree	% Disagree	% Don't Know/ N/A	Total Responses
All Grades	67%	10%	23%	198
Preschool/ Pre-K	64%	4%	32%	25
Elementary (K-5)	72%	9%	20%	116
Middle School (6-8)	65%	10%	26%	31
High School (9-12+)	50%	23%	27%	26



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